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# Strategic Management and its impact on university's Service Quality: The role of Organisational Commitment

Albadry, Omaila Munawar

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Plymouth University

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**Strategic Management and its impact on university's  
Service Quality: The role of Organisational Commitment**

By

**Omaima Munawar Albadry**

A thesis submitted to the Plymouth University  
in partial fulfilment for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

Faculty of Business  
Plymouth Graduate School of Management

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# **Strategic Management and its impact on university's Service Quality: The role of Organisational Commitment**

**Omaima Munawar Omar Albadry**

## **Abstract**

The higher education sector in developing countries is currently facing several challenges generated by a dynamic environment and characterised by rapid technological change and increased demand. This thesis aims to examine the direct and indirect associations between the components of the strategic management, as well as its impact on service quality of university institutions within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Additionally, this thesis tests a mediation effect regarding organisational commitment within the relationship between strategic management and service quality.

This thesis employs a quantitative method, and a theoretical model is built based on thorough literature reviews concerning strategic management and service quality. With regard to the findings of the empirical research, six main constructs were successfully validated as multi-dimensional constructs. These were used as within structural equation modelling to analyse influencing factors—be they positive or negative—and the degree to which the creation and operations of such collaborations were successful. The structural paths support hypotheses suggesting that strategic management process has a direct positive influence on organisational commitment and that commitment makes a positive, though weak, contributions to service quality. However, the direct impact of strategy implementation and evaluation upon service quality is insignificant. Furthermore, the result showed a partial mediation between strategic planning and service quality, as well as between strategy formalisation and service quality. However, the relation between implementation and service quality, as well as between evaluation and service equality is fully completed.

The proposed model was tested empirically using survey data obtained from those 404 senior managers and academic staff from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's

Universities who were involved on this study. This thesis synthesises the Social Exchange Theory, Perceived Organisational Support theory and a relational view to explain how commitment influences the Strategic Management process as well as the attributes of Service Quality.

## **Dedication**

*This work is dedicated to*

*my wonderful parents, sisters and brothers*

*For their unfailing love, support, and prayers throughout the course of this  
dissertation*

*May Allah bless them all.*

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## List of abbreviations

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Full term</b>
KSA	The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
SM	Strategic management
SP	Strategic planning
SQ	Service quality
OC	Organisational commitment
AC	Affective Commitment
CC	Continuance Commitment
NC	Normative Commitment
UV	University's Vision
UM	University's Mission
SO	Strategy objectives
IS	Internal Scan
ES	External Scan
FSP	Formalisation of Strategy
SI	Strategy Implementation
ESP	Strategy Evaluation
TQM	Total Quality Managemnt
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
VIFs	Variance Inflation Factors
ARS	Average R-squared
APC	Average Path Coefficient
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
NPOs	Non-profit organisations

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## **Author's declaration**

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Committee.

This study was fully financed by Jazan University, Ministry of Education. Relevant scientific seminars and conferences were regularly attended at which work was often presented.

The following activities were undertaken in connection with the programme of study:

- Attended and passed advanced course in general English with IELTS preparation in Oxford, 2009, 2010.
  - Attended and passed advanced two courses in English for Academic purposes, Oxford Brooks University, 2010.
  - Attended on a number of courses in data analysis, in particular courses on 'Quantitative & Qualitative Analysis', University of Plymouth, 2012.
  - Attended and passed course in higher education discipline "learning and teaching for general teaching associates", (GTA), University of Plymouth, 2014.
  - Attended and passed course in higher education discipline "General Teaching Associate Course" (PGCAP600), University of Plymouth, 2015.
- **Professional qualifications during the programme of study:**
- Certificate of Professional Development, Learning and Teaching for General Teaching Association (GTA), University of Plymouth, 2012.
  - Certificate of Professional Development, General Teaching Associate Course (PGCAP600), University of Plymouth, 2015.
- **Professional memberships during the programme of study:**
- Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, UK.
  - A member of the British Academy of Management (BAM), UK.

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- 8th Saudi Students Conference in the UK – 2015

➤ **Reviewer:**

I am a reviewer for Personnel Review Journals.

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**Signed:**

# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background of the study

Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) are becoming obliged to respond to the extremely challenging environmental forces that could threaten their existence. Bryson (1988a) posits that without strategic planning (SP), NPOs would struggle to successfully face challenges such as oil disasters, demographic changes, or IT developments. Studies support the view that in order to increase the quality of their services, non-governmental organisations should implement strategic management (SM) approaches (Yarmohammadian et al., 2001). In the past thirty years, SM has become a standard part of managerial thinking and practice within industrial firms. However, only recently have the public and NPOs become aware of the advantage of SM in helping to increase the quality of the organisation (Revankar et al., n.d).

Poister (2010) identifies that the benefit of SM and SP is to show an overall picture of the system which combines the subjective assessment of standards, objectives analysis, goals, and futuristic thinking for the purpose of charting action plans to give the company direction. In the same vein, Kettunen (2002) states that the advantage of SP is to take an overview of the whole organisation, its environment, its vision and mission, its values, its culture, its direction and its strategic choice for the greater future.

Universities as NPOs have difficulty improving their quality, productivity and competitiveness compared to other organisations and businesses. However, universities are more valuable than industrial or commerce organisations because they train and supply employees to those industries (Lombardi, 2001). Cameron

and Smart (1998) identify that lack of planning is the reason those universities respond poorly during financial difficulties and declining resources.

Furthermore, SM and SQ are applied widely at different levels of higher education (HE) to ensure high quality outcomes. However, they have been developed independently of each other (Kettunen and Kantola, 2007). The role of service quality (SQ) has also received increasing attention and has become critical to the accomplishment of an organisation (Landrum et al., 2007). According to the studies, there are many indicators which stress the importance of SQ in education institutions (Harvey and Knight, 1996; Ham and Hayduk, 2003; Angell et al., 2008; Yeo, 2008; Al-alak and Bekhet, 2011). Studies suggest that SQ programs are more likely to succeed if a strong management commitment is applied. In addition, a number of scholars assert that SM and SQ initiatives need to be combined with organisational commitment (OC) in order to achieve the required results (Reeves and Hoy, 1993; Rogers et al., 1993).

Over the years, attention around the concept of commitment has increased widely in organisational psychological research (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Cohen, 1993; Meyer, 1997; Gutierrez et al., 2012; Huang et al., 2012; Meyer et al., 2012). There is a tendency for the definitions to have a behaviour-related focus. Weiner (1992) clarified the concept of commitment as the 'sense of being bound emotionally or intellectually to some course of action'. Sheldon (1971) defined commitment in terms of an attitude. This type of attitudinal commitment is 'an orientation towards the organisation, which links or attaches the identity of the person to the organisation' (p.148).

In that case, Meyer and Allen (1997) define OC as a state of mind which determines an employee's perceived relationship with the company, and

subsequently has a bearing on their decision to remain in employment with the organisation.

Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964), the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) and the concept of perceived organisational support (POS) (Eisenberger et al., 1986; 2001) were each developed in an attempt to understand employee attitude and behaviour, and to describe the psychological processes which underlie them (Setton et al., 1996; Wayne et al., 2002). Tansky and Cohen (2001) identify POS as building OC among employees. A high POS from the employee - which raises the likelihood of felt obligation - will result in an increase in their support of the organisation and its goals, their commitment to the organisation, and their expectation of reward for improved performance (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). Further, Grönroos (1983) asserts that employees who are well treated by their employers, in turn, treat their customers well; in addition, if an employee feels that their organisation is committed to them, they are more likely to commit themselves to the organisation in return (Fuller et al., 2003). Steers and Porter (1991) argue that perceptions drive behaviour, therefore feedback from employees should be evaluated. Positive consideration from the firm could provide an indication that the employee's efforts will be rewarded. Consequently, the social exchange between employer and employee can be described using the concepts of POS and SET theories.

Nevertheless, a causal link amongst the three factors of SM, OC, and SQ, particularly on SM steps, has not been examined empirically. For this very reason, the current study attempts to do so. Firstly, the investigation of the impact of the SM process consists of four main variables which are:

(1) Strategic planning, which includes vision, mission, goals and objectives, and internal and external evaluation;

- (2) Strategy formalisation;
- (3) Implementation; and
- (4) Evaluation on the OC of the senior managers and academic staff in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

Secondly, the study explores the impact of SM consisting of four main processes which are:

- (1) Strategic planning;
- (2) Formalisation;
- (3) Implementation; and
- (4) Evaluation on Service Quality.

Thirdly, the study examines the relationship between the academic staff's OC and SQ. Finally, the study investigates the indirect relationship between the independent variables (Strategic Planning, Formalisation, Implementation, and Evaluation) on the KSA Universities' SQ through OC. There is a lack of empirical study to support these claims, in particular with regards to a developing country such as KSA.

This chapter provides an overview of the study including a statement of the research problem, research aim, objectives and research questions. Finally, the chapter delivers the structure of this thesis and summary.

## **1.2 Statement of the research problem**

During the last two decades, HEIs have begun to adopt models and practices from the business sector to phase out traditional systems of educational practice and improvement. According to Shattock (2000), in order for universities to be successful, they require a new method of SM which involves a holistic view of their activities so that institutional strengths can be managed and reinforced.

Bush and Coleman (2000) state that SM was used in order to improve an organisation; transforming it from its current condition to a more desirable future situation. A holistic and shared understanding of how an institution adapts to its situation and educational policy is essential in meeting the demand to develop actions for an improved future.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is the largest country in the Arabian Peninsula. Recently, the KSA's Ministry of Education has focused more on developing the HE system. The KSA announced the beginning of its Future Plan for HE in a project called Aafaq; this means 'horizons' and is a futuristic perspective of HE in KSA designed to be delivered over a 25 year period. The Ministry stress that in order to create and fulfil the need for a sustainable and competitive academic development, it is necessary to prepare a progressive and ambitious long-term plan based around HE. Challenges associated with this development include issues around academic excellence, a high population growth rate, labour market requirements for highly qualified graduates, and the correspondence level between the capacity of its institutions and those of the production and service sectors in the field of scientific research and technical development. The Aafaq plan looks to tackle these issues by upgrading the most effective features of the HE process. Hence, The Ministry of Finance provided a large amount of funding for the education sector, more than a quarter of the total budget allocation of around SR 217 (US \$57.9) billion, which represents 25 percent of Fiscal Years 1436/1437 (2015) total appropriations. The Government expenditures for the National Budget for FY 1436/1437 (2015) are budgeted to be SR 860 (US \$229.3) billion.

The budget for General Education includes 500 projects for renovation of existing school buildings and 11 projects for rehabilitation of existing sport centres, which

has an estimated approximate price of SR 405 (US \$108) million. For HE, the budget includes an allocation of SR 12.3 (US \$3.28) billion to renovate and complete college campuses in several universities, as well as the opening of 3 new universities. Furthermore, provision must be made for the scholarship programme, as there are over 27,000 students studying abroad and they and their dependants receive governmental support. The budget for this is an estimated SR 22.5 (US \$6) billion, which does not include scholarships for government employees. In addition, the budget caters for a number of projects including the creation of new technical and vocational colleges, the operation of a new College of Excellence, and a contingency to cover additional costs relating to existing services, with a total cost of around SR 2.4 (US \$0.64) billion (Ministry of Finance, 2015).

A country's public expenditure on HE as a percentage of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is an indicator of the country's efforts to support and develop its HE sector. Most importantly, as shown in Table 1.1 below, government expenditure on HE has increased year on year.

**Table 1-1 KSA Government Expenditure on Education**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total budget</b>	<b>Education &amp; training appropriation</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Increasing from the previous year %</b>
2011	\$144 Billion SR 540.000.000.000	\$ 40 Billion SR 150.000.000.000	27.7	8
2012	\$ 187.2 Billion SR 702.000.000.000	\$ 45 Billion SR 168.000.000.000	24	12.5
2013	\$ 221.1 Billion SR 829.000.000.000	\$ 54.4 Billion SR 204.000.000.000	24.6	20.8
2014	\$ 228 Billion SR 855.000.000.000	\$ 56 Billion SR 210.000.000.000	24.6	2.9
2015	\$ 229.3 Billion SR 860.000.000.000	\$57.9 Billion SR 217.000.000.000	25.3	3.4

**Source: created by the author**

However, spending money is not enough to achieve goals, to accelerate educational improvement, or to place KSA universities among the top rated 100 universities in the world rankings. Key elements seem to be missing from the KSA's policy on HEIs. According to Alhudaithy (2014), Saudi Arabia HE is receiving criticism that its teaching provision is inadequate and its research output limited. Furthermore, the country faces many challenges in creating a highly qualified workforce to meet workplace demands. In the previous era there has been increasing demand from Saudi society that the efficiency of the education system be enhanced to meet current requirements (Smith and Abouammoh, 2013), both in the quality of its teaching and in the range of courses provided.

Due to increasing competition among universities worldwide, marketing has become an important concept for any institution of HE. Hadikoemoro (2002) notes that in the education market, the service provided is the unique factor that differentiates a university from its competitors. According to Noaman et al. (2015), universities cannot overlook the issue of SQ, even in developing countries. Thus, investment in quality systems and tools for improvement are necessary to deal with this issue.

Therefore, in order to fully understand the extent and adoption of any new management instruments like SM within HEIs, it is necessary to observe and challenge the conceptual framework of actual structures, behaviours and adopted policy instruments at different levels therein. The researcher chose SM as an independent variable due to its particular outcomes, the importance which it enjoys within the global HE sector, and the awareness as a greater priority which the KSA government is now giving to SM approach in order to improve numerous effective mechanisms of HEIs procedures and outcomes.

However, it is not enough just to create plans. Plans are generally ignored (Armstrong, 1982). The issue is how to bring this plan to life and how to manage and link this plan with other management tools which could lead to its accomplishment and, in turn, improve various organisations' aspects including OC and SQ. The quality of HE available in a particular country is strongly associated with that country's competitiveness (Borahan and Ziarati, 2002). The increase in quality services provided by HE institutions results in the achievement of a more competitive climate, in an educational context (Kassim et al., 2013).

The last two decades have seen a significant increase in academic quality and the interest in it (Coates, 2005). Quality in universities refers to a set of attributes, dimensions and characteristics that relate to their services (Saif, 2014) in addition to academic and non-academic aspects, infrastructure, and the internal and external environments (Abu Nabah, 2004). Kassim et al. (2013), state that the application of SQ can be helpful to HEIs by creating a competitive advantage, and thus helping them deal with a new or changed environment. Therefore in order for HEIs to continually improve their services, it is vital that they monitor their quality.

Furthermore, commitment has been found to have a positive effect on the success and swiftness of the implemented strategy (Dooley et al., 2000). Previous studies suggest that some management tools could either moderate or mediate that linkage. According to Zafiroopoulos and Vrana (2008), improvement in SQ can only be achieved if HEIs understand which quality attributes stakeholders need satisfied. For Berry and Parasuraman (1997), quoted by Shah (2009), an organisation can improve SQ by being responsive to and understanding the experience of its stakeholders. Therefore, it has been noted that there is a distinct lack of empirical studies on the relationships between the SM process, OC, and

SQ delivery from the academic staff perspective as a group of stakeholders. This research is important as it relates to SM's contribution to knowledge, particularly its ability to generate potentially useful information to support future improvement in the implementation and practices of SM in the KSA's HE sector and other countries. To the best of researcher knowledge, this is the first study to investigate the senior managers' and academic staff's perceptions at Saudi universities towards the relationships between the SM process, OC, and SQ.

### **1.3 Research gap and contribution**

Despite the extensive number of studies on strategy, there has been relatively little examination of the practice of SM in the Middle East region (Elbanna, 2006). Al-Shaikh (2001) conducted a study to investigate the extent to which SP exists in Arab organisations, and his findings concluded that SP is predominantly lacking. In addition, the practice and use of SP frequently fails. The value of SM and its consequences should be communicated to managers more effectively, ideally through business schools and training organisations. He mentioned the need for future research to be carried out on this area. Hence, in this respect, this study hopes to contribute to the literature in this dynamic field. Crittenden et al. (2004) stress that NPOs need to be aware of the potential benefits of the SM approach in improving their performance. Furthermore, Falshaw et al. (2006) are concerned about the relationship between formal SP and other performance measures, such as quality.

Despite the documented positive effects of SM on organisational success, few empirical studies, based on strong theories, were found in the literature. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, very few studies have been conducted in this

area in the context of developing nations generally and in particular the Arab nations.

Agus et al. (2007) identified that the majority of studies focus on SQ within European or American public organisations, and further studies should be considered to investigate SQ in developing countries. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there were a few recent studies conducted on Saudi HEIs which dealt with the issue of SQ (Kassim et al., 2013; Alhudaithy, 2014; Nasseef, 2014; Noaman et al., 2015). However, all these studies focused on measuring the satisfaction of students regarding SQ delivered by the university from the perception of students, and excluding the perception of academic staff as another stakeholder. According to Giertz (2000) and Shah (2009), stakeholders will be attracted to particular products or services based on their perception of quality, with that perception determining their attitude towards quality work. Faganel (2010) supports this view with the observation that by ensuring the service is clear, accurate and reliable, academic staff's perceptions of SQ are improved. Subsequently, this improvement inspires a greater level of commitment and engagement throughout the strategy process.

Therefore, the researcher of the current study hopes to add to the lacking of knowledge in investigating SQ in the developing nations in general, and Arab countries in particular, from another stakeholder view; namely the senior managers and academic staff.

According to Al-Rashdan (2007), there is a necessity to totally re-examine HE planning and policies if modern day requirements are to be met. El-Maghraby (2011), Alhudaithy (2014), and Noaman et al. (2015) stress the need for KSA's HEIs to apply a quality improvement process to all educational systems in the

academic and administrative division. This is especially so in many of the emergent established universities that desire to integrate quality into normal planning. According to the KSA's Ministry Deputyship for Planning and Information statistics, the number of public universities increased from 8 in 2003 to 25 in 2011.

Furthermore, in response to the KSA's future plan for HEIs, the Aafaq project has committed to certain principles, including the building of a SP culture in universities; a commitment to quality; and ensuring that they achieve and expand the participation of stakeholders and their aspirations (Aafaq Project, 2015), this study found.

In order to implement successful strategies, organisations have a requirement to develop those strategies which their staff will commit to put into practice. The strategy should then help guide the employees' behaviour in the direction intended. It is proven that commitment has a positive effect on how rapidly and how successfully a strategy is implemented (Dooley et al., 2000). It is also stated that commitment increases motivation amongst employees, shortens the time taken to apply the strategy, and allows more swift response to changes in the organisation (DeMeyer and Van Hooland, 1990; Dooley et al., 2000). Prior studies also support this claim; Armstrong (1982) determined that improved business performance is strongly linked to commitment to strategy.

The concept of OC has been widely studied in the US as a significant feature affecting job outcomes such as turnover (Porter et al., 1974), job effort, and performance (Mowday et al., 1979; Becker and Kernan, 2003). However, to the knowledge of researcher and according to Al-Kahtani (2012), the literature on the Saudi public sector shows that the notion of OC has been seldom studied.

Moreover, Al-Kahtani (2012) has suggested conducting further study of commitment using different tools and samples, in order to gauge the commitment level of public sector staff in other parts of Saudi Arabia. Substantial attention is given to the concept of OC in Western countries, however in Saudi Arabia it has been generally ignored, particularly with regard to the public sector. For this reason, any research carried out in this area would be worthwhile, as it would fulfil a shortage of research on this theory in the public sector and in HE in particular. Furthermore, the researcher presents this study because the previous literature lacks relevant empirical evidence around effective education environments and their relationships with the three variables, which is the angle adopted by the current research.

Furthermore, prior research views OC as a dependent variable for antecedents such as age, tenure, and education, and as a predictive indicator in organisational behaviour and outcomes such as job satisfaction, work motivation, turnover, intention to leave, absenteeism, and performance (Meyer et al., 1993; Allen and Meyer, 1996). Additionally, there were a number of studies which established a positive link between OC and other constructs (e.g. Maignan et al., 1999; Brammer et al., 2007; Turker, 2009; Rego et al., 2010; Stites and Michael, 2011). Weng et al. (2010) studied the relationship between the four factors of career growth with the three components of OC conceptualised using Meyer and Allen (1997)'s model.

Hence, previous studies in the field of strategy and SQ have tested the impact of SM or SP on SQ as one construct. However, this thesis tests the SM constructs as individual items since SM is considered to be a set of practices and contains multifaceted phases which lead to high levels of quality. Nevertheless, a considerable number of studies focus on the direct relationships between SM and

SQ, SP and OC, SP and SQ, and SP and OC. The literature suggests that some features may either moderate or mediate that linkage; nevertheless, there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding these moderating or mediating factors. Most importantly, scholars have not investigated extensively these potential associations particularly as individual items.

Consequently, it seems likely that SM may predict OC and, in turn, SQ. Based on the previous studies, the researcher concludes that previous research were concerned largely with the direct correlation between SM and SQ or between SM and OC. Nevertheless, a few empirical studies have been conducted on the mediation relationships between the SM process, SQ, and OC construct. Furthermore, the influence of OC on these relationships, specifically within the HE sector, remains unapproved. Hence, the previous literature is lacking in empirical evidence regarding the direct and indirect link between SM and SQ, and specifically regarding the constructs that mediate the indirect associations.

Additionally, previous studies deal with commitment as an independent variable which might either affect work outcomes or as a dependent construct which affects antecedent variables (Suliman, 2002). However, in this study, the construct is measured as a means of mediation. Most importantly, the majority of the previous literature was conducted in Western countries. Yet, this research investigates these correlations in a non-Western setting, namely KSA.

Lastly, in most studies, OC is conceptualised and measured from the perspective of managers (Ahmed and Parasuraman, 1994; Sureshchandar et al., 2002). Recently, Forrester (2000) asserted that the concept would be better defined from the perspective of the employee. On one hand, the assessment of SQ attributes in Saudi HEIs was measured from student's perspective (Kassim et al., 2013;

Alhudaithy, 2014; Noaman et al., 2015). On the other hand, it has been identified that the perceptions of SQ by academic staff is improved when service is clear, accurate and reliable (Faganel, 2010). Hence, any negative response from stakeholders is assists as an indication to management where areas of improvement needed.

Therefore, in order to fill this gap in the literature, this study aims to answer the following main question:

- What are the effects of Strategic Management on Service Quality through the mediating role of Organisational Commitment in KSA's public and private higher education institutions?

This is achieved by proposing and validating empirically a comprehensive SM model, and producing a conceptual framework for the SM procedures and their impact on OC which leads to the enhancement of SQ in KSA's HEIs.

#### **1.4 Research aim**

This aim of this research is to explore the direct and indirect associations between the components of SM, OC and SQ in KSA's universities.

#### **1.5 Research objectives**

To address the research aims, the study seeks to fulfil the following objectives:

1. The direct effects of SM components, namely strategic planning (vision, mission, objectives and environmental analysis), strategy formalisation, strategy implementation, and strategy evaluation on OC from the perspective of the KSA universities' senior managers and academic staff.

2. To determine the direct effects of SM components, namely strategic planning (vision, mission, objectives, and environmental analysis), strategy formalisation, implementation, and evaluation on SQ from the perspective of the KSA universities' senior managers and academic staff.
3. To identify the direct relationship between OC and SQ in KSA's universities.
4. To find out the mediating role of OC in enhancing the relationship between SM and the delivery of SQ.
5. Provide recommendations to policy and decision makers and other actors by establishing tactics for achieving the SM process, to enhance the SQ of the organisations and to consider the importance of OC in improving such interactions.

Achieving these objectives would greatly assist in filling a gap in the literature. Furthermore, conclusions drawn from research can benefit universities' management and stakeholders who are looking to develop strategic practices within the HE sector.

### **1.6 Research questions**

In order to address the study's aims and objectives, the following main thesis questions are pertinent to the phenomenon examined by this study. These are:

- 1) What are the direct effects of SM components, namely SP (which includes vision, mission, objectives, and analysis), formalisation, implementation and evaluation on OC in Saudi Universities?

- 2) What are the direct impacts of SM components, namely SP (which includes vision, mission, objectives, and analysis), formalisation, implementation and evaluation on SQ in KSA's universities?
- 3) What are the direct effects of OC on SQ in Saudi universities?
- 4) Does OC mediate the relationship between SM and SQ in KSA's HEIs?

### **1.7 Research methodology overview**

The researcher has confirmed that the design of the methodology used in this study is appropriate in providing answers to the research questions, and in testing the research hypotheses. The research employs a quantitative method, with both primary and secondary data considered. For primary data, the researcher conducts a questionnaire. The questionnaire is used mainly for SM process assessment, SQ attributes, and OC in Saudi universities and is directed at senior managers and academic staff. For secondary data, the researcher employs a literature review on SM definitions in both for-profit and NPOs, its functions, its benefits, and an overview of the KSA setting, its education system, and a brief of HEI statistics. In addition, the researcher reviewed the previous studies on SQ and OC. Finally, using the extended Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Perceived Organisational Support (POS) theory, evidence is provided to further understand the role of OC to support the current model developed in this study.

Therefore, this study design is appropriate in determining convergence of perspective and corroboration of results from the perspectives of KSA universities' senior managers and academic staff.

## 1.8 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is constructed of eight chapters.

Chapter 1: introduces the background of the study, the study problem, identifies a gap in the literature, the importance of the study, its aim and objectives, and the research questions, as well as presenting the structure of the whole thesis. The chapter ends with a summary of its contents.

Chapter 2: provides an overview of research context and profile of Saudi Arabia, and general background about the system of education and HEIs in KSA. It covers the general characteristics of HEIs, and the development and growth of HEIs in KSA.

Chapter 3: introduces a comprehensive literature review on SM, OC, and SQ. It discusses the relationship between SM and quality. It is followed by the theoretical paradigms and SET and POS theories adopted for this study.

Chapter 4: conceptualises the causal relationships among SM, OC, SQ and the mediating role of OC developed in this study. The study hypotheses are provided after a discussion of each component of the conceptual framework.

Chapter 5: covers the methodology of the study and research design including research design process, data collection method, questionnaire design, and sampling design are presented. Subsequently, validity and reliability of the measurements as well as the main data analysis techniques are discussed.

Chapter 6: This chapter focuses on the quantitative analysis conducted for this research. This includes the analysis of the demographic data on the respondents using SPSS 20, the analytical approach used in this research and the techniques used to analyse the data, that is structural equation modelling, and the reasons for choosing them. The measurement of the dependent and independent variables is

discussed in detail. The results of the structural equation modelling are then discussed.

Chapter 7: Debates the main results of empirical analysis. It also links the findings of both stages with the literature review in order to provide the overall findings of the study.

Chapter 8: presents the conclusion of the study. It summarises the findings of the study and presents implications for theory and practice. The chapter also provides recommendations to policy makers at KSA HEIs, limitations and suggestions for future research directions, and is concluded by reflection and assessment.

## **1.9 Summary**

This chapter has provided the reader with an introduction to the research study. It has also presented also a statement of the research problem, the significance of the study, the research aim and objectives, questions, a brief description of the methodology and the structure of the thesis. The research represents the first attempt to examine in detail the process of SM, OC, and SQ as these affect KSA's HEIs. As such, it has the potential to make a significant original contribution to knowledge in the field of study, on general strategy, OC and SQ culture, and the behavioural and cultural influences on these procedures. In addition, the research has the potential for practical aspects in that the study examines current practices of SM, OC and SQ at the institutional level. Given the findings of this research, this provides an opportunity to improve on current practices. Finally, it may be possible for any lessons, learnt as a result of this study, to be distributed within the region and other countries since they may face similar complications.

## **Chapter 2      Resaerch context**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter introduces a profile of the research context which is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), beginning with an overview of the kingdom, government system, culture, and the impact of Islamic religion. The education system of KSA is discussed, along with HE structure and the recent substantial growth in colleges and universities. Additionally, NCAAA, Aafaq project and the ambitions of the education sector surrounding HE in KSA will be examined.

### **2.2 Brief of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia country profile**

Saudi Arabia is located in the Middle East. Its roots can be traced back to the earliest nations of the Arabian Peninsula. Historically, the peninsula has played a central role as an ancient trade and education centre, and as the homeland of Islam (Saudi Embassy, 2012). The formal name of the country is ‘Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’ (*Al Mamlakah al Arabiyah as Suudiyah*); it also has an independent Muslim Arab monarchy which was officially established on September 23, 1932 by King Abdul-Aziz Al Saud (Library of Congress, 2006; Al-Sadan, 2000). Up until the 1950s, Saudi Arabia was an undeveloped country with nothing in the way of resources or technology. Life was very modest, with mud house-style dwellings, much the same as previous centuries. After the discovery of oil, this situation changed dramatically throughout the country, with health, social, educational, and transportation fields improving rapidly (Al-Abdulkareem, n.d). Oil was discovered in the eastern part of the country, and was extracted from the mid-twentieth century onwards, thus accounting for the majority of KSA’s

economy. Islam originated in Saudi Arabia, and all its citizens are Muslims. The national language is Arabic, and the word Islam in Arabic means ‘submission to the will of God’ (Al-Abdulkareem, n.d).

KSA is bordered to the north by Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait; to the east by the Gulf, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates; to the south by the Sultanate of Oman and Yemen; and to the west by the Red Sea. Saudi Arabia is located in a strategically important position, between Africa and the Asian mainland, and with frontiers along the Arabian Gulf and the Red Sea (Saudi Embassy, 2012).

The capital city of Saudi Arabia is Riyadh. The kingdom was divided in 1993 into thirteen provinces: Makkah, Medina, Riyadh, Eastern Province, Northern Province, Asir, Al-Baha, Hail, Al-Jawf, Jazan, Najran, Tabuk, and Al-Qassim. The country occupies around 80 percent of the Arabian Peninsula and, measuring approximately 2,150 000 square kilometres, is the largest country in the Middle East (see Fig. 2.1). In addition, the state now claims a place in world affairs, as it is connected to the global economy via its oil reserves which drive its perpetuating improvement (Wynbrandt, 2010).



Figure 2.1 Saudi Arabia map

### 2.3 **Government system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia became an official state in 1932 by King Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud, and subsequently during the 1930s, the KSA's economy faced severe restriction. Opportunely, however, geologists discovered vast oilfields which were easily obtainable following the great depression which considerably increased the outlook for KSA's economy (Library of Congress, 2006). Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy, and its Constitution is based on the Holy Book of Islam which is the Qur'an and Shari'ah law; or in other words, *sunna*, which means the customs or practices which are based on the words and deeds of Muhammad, make up the constitution of the state. Neither government nor Saudi society agrees with the idea of separating church and state. The KSA is held in special regard through the Muslim world due to the holy places of Makkah and Medina being located there. The central point of Hajj is located in Makkah City, and more than three million Muslims make pilgrimage to it each year from all over the world (Al-Rasheed, 2002).

### 2.4 **Culture and religious influences**

As Saudi Arabia is the homeland of Islam, and is home to the two Holy Mosques at Makkah and Medina, Saudi society is therefore heavily influenced by its monarchy and constitution which is based on the Qur'an and Shari'ah law. The king leads the government and the council of ministries, which are the executive and administrative forms (Al-Saggaf, 2004; Oyaid, 2009; Alebaikan, 2010). Citizens of the KSA regard Islam as a complete structural unit which encompasses personal, social, and business practices and gives guidance on how to conduct them (Al-Munajjed, 1997). Al-Saggaf (2004) points out that:

*'Islam plays a central role in defining the culture, and acts as a major force in determining the social norms, patterns, traditions, obligations, privileges and practices of society' (p.1).*

Saudi culture is mainly determined by the Islamic religion. Indeed, all characteristics of social and cultural life are centred on the Muslim religion and Muslim religious identity (Al-Salloom, 1989).

Islamic values and code of conduct dictate all areas of life, so therefore it is impossible to understand issues around education in Saudi Arabia without mentioning them. Thus, it is necessary for all academic curricula to follow the laws of Islam, and as such, educational opportunities for females are still limited due to the need to conform to traditional gender roles. It should be noted that Islam holds education in extremely high regard. It is considered that education and religion are inseparable. Therefore, in accordance with Islamic law, it is necessary that boys and girls be strictly segregated throughout their educative career, both in terms of buildings and teachers (Library of Congress, 2006; Oyaid, 2009).

## **2.5 Government budget**

Oil revenues increased substantially after 2002, and the country began making large monetary surpluses. Prior to this time, low oil prices and high government spending resulted in frequent budgetary deficits. The budget for Saudi Arabia in 2006 included a government spending total of around US \$90 billion, which was an increase of 20% on 2005. The government's strategy is to utilise oil revenue to improve socio-economic conditions, and the plan prioritises education, health and social affairs, municipal services, transportation, and infrastructure. Despite these plans for significant spending, a budget surplus of US \$15billion was predicted in

2006, based on estimated revenues of US \$104 billion. Approximately 20% of this revenue is from non-oil income. The country's ascent into the World Trade Organisation is expected to lead to reductions in tariff and duty revenue.

Oil revenue is so significant to the Saudi economy that its government imposes only minimal taxes, and there is no a capital gain or VAT. However, social security is funded in part from a payroll tax, and an Islamic tithe with a net rate of 2.5% is collected from both individuals and businesses. There a varying rates of tax for non-Saudi individuals and joint ventures (Library of Congress, 2006).

## **2.6 Educational situation in the Kingdom**

Education is considered by government as key to the expansion of Saudi Arabia's economy (Almalki, 2011). Consequently, the Ministry of Education has had its power increased in order to raise the level of education in the KSA. The plan is to invest in strategies and detailed research based on the improvement and development of educational outcomes over the coming years, and the analysis of successful global experiences from which to take benefit.

Historically, after the birth of Islam (632 AD), Muslim countries were a place of education, boasting established institutes, universities, and libraries that were exceptional in the world. This was known as the 'Golden Age' - a time when the Islamic world was an innovative place of learning and contributed to the fields of astronomy, art, philosophy, physics, and medicine, while other states were still caught up in the Dark Ages (Saudi Embassy, 2012).

The education in Saudi Arabia began with *Kuttabs* (the function of Kuttab schools was to teach Islamic studies, memorise the Qur'an, and reading and writing), where a small part of the population attended in order to obtain knowledge of the Qur'an (Al-Sadan, 2000; Rugh, 2002).

Yet, universal education for all Saudis citizens dates back only a few eras. Rugh (2002) and Alromi (2001) explain that in 1925, shortly after King Abdul-Aziz had unified the state, he established a Directorate of Education and the first formal primary school in Saudi Arabia was established. The school, while modest and subject to numerous difficulties, stood for years as a single advanced bastion of education. Several further schools were built in 1936; however they could not be considered fully fledged elementary schools until 1939. At that time, only 2,319 pupils were enrolled in school from the entire country. As the nation grew wealthier, the demand for education increased greatly, and by 1949 the number of elementary schools had grown to 182 with the total number of children enrolled standing at 21,409. According to Shalaby (1987), the first Saudi Teacher Institution was established in 1928 by the Saudi Directorate of Education to deal with the increasing demand for schoolteachers. According to Alamri (2011) there were about 365 schools educating 42000 pupils by 1950, but females were not allowed to attend the schools. However, in 1959, King Saud discussed the issue of providing education for women. Then, in 1960, the first school for females was established in Riyadh after gaining support from religious scholars.

In 1935, King Abdul-Aziz sent Saudi students to Egypt to study, as at that time, the Egyptian education system was considered to be good. By 1951, 169 students were in Egypt studying to become teachers back in Saudi Arabia. In the years that followed, students were sent all over the world, including Lebanon, Germany, Switzerland, and the USA.

In 1950 more than 90% of KSA citizens were illiterate, according to the UNESCO estimation. Consequently the Saudi government were concerned about this high rate of illiteracy and resolved to make education a high priority. In addition, other factors contributed to the need to build and improve Saudi Arabia's human

resources, to develop the country, and to modernise the economy – all of which needed skilled personnel to achieve. In order to encourage people to attend schools, the government provided free education at all levels and disciplines, and provided monthly grants to students from poorer families. Transport and curricula were also included in this provision. For higher education, the state provided free accommodation for all students, as well as providing monthly university grants which are still provided to this day. Subsequently, there has been a rapid expansion of educative accomplishment in recent years. Saudi elementary education is divided up into three stages: elementary, intermediate, and secondary, with an optional kindergarten level (Al-Abdulkareem, n.d).

The Directorate of Education was established in 1925. Twelve months later it was followed by the basic instructions which went on to create a centralised national system of government. Once the Ministry of Education was established in 1953, a new era began in the development of modern education. Public education began to increase across the country, and more schools were opened. Due to the speed at which education was growing, the Ministry of Education had to create ‘school districts’ in different areas of the country in order to distribute responsibility more evenly. By 1958, a uniform education system had been agreed upon, by Saudi Arabia and other Arab League members, consisting of a 6-year elementary, a 3-year intermediate, and a 3-year secondary cycle with a separate higher education program. High regard was given to human resource improvement, infrastructure, education, and economic and social resources due to their high importance to the National Development Plans (Educational system in Saudi Arabia, 2006).

## **2.7 Purpose of education in Saudi Arabia**

The aim and purpose of education for any state is to satisfy the needs of the society and to reflect their cultural standards, system of living, and to represent the cultural values, beliefs and ideology of its citizens. To this end, the Saudi education system's main purpose is the continuation of its Islamic educational heritage. The educational policy charter launched in 1970 and the aim of the policy has not changed since this time. The fact that the KSA's political, social, and economic rules are based on Islam means this is not surprising. Another critical purpose for education is to lower the rate of illiteracy, which arose at the beginning of King Abdul-Aziz Ibn Saud's reign and affected a staggering 90% of the population.

Saudi's educational objectives represent a continuation of Islamic principles. The Saudi educational system has been strongly impacted by the Islamic religion, and Islam has greatly affected the curriculum on all educational levels for both boys and girls. Al Salloom (1991) stresses that 'Islam is not only integral to Saudi education but also serves as the very essence of the curriculum'.

## **2.8 Higher education in KSA**

The premier institution of HE in KSA was founded in Riyadh in 1957 as Riyadh University, and in 1982 was renamed King Saud University. At the start of its establishment in 1957, there were only nine lecturers who taught 21 students. In those days there was no commitment to HE improvement. Specifically, there was no provision to award diplomas or bachelor degrees on the topics of Islamic studies or the Arabic language. Males and females were accepted into most universities, as now, however the University of Petroleum and Minerals in Dhahran and the Islamic University in Al-Madinah enrol only males, and Princess

Noura bint Abdulrahman University in Riyadh only admits females (Almalki, 2011).

The educational systems and their procedures have been created according to Islamic systems, traditions and customs. A section of the Ministry of Education became separate in 1975, and became known as the Ministry of Higher Education. This department was then responsible solely with higher education, and among these responsibilities were:

- Proposing the establishment of higher educational institutions and authorising them to offer special programs in accordance with the country's needs.
- Creating and administering universities and colleges in the KSA.
- Raising the level of communication and coordination between institutions of higher learning, and coordinating with other governmental ministries and agencies in terms of their interests and needs in higher education.
- Representing the government abroad in all educational and cultural affairs, through various cultural and educational offices distributed over 32 countries.

The last five decades have seen considerable growth in Saudi Arabia's higher education (HE) environment. Currently many universities and colleges offer graduate programs awarding masters and doctoral degrees in some fields. In a similar way to other educational elements in the Kingdom, HE is based around the National Development Plan and is designed and evaluated on that basis. HE is viewed as vital to fulfil the potential of the Kingdom's greatest resource - its people (Educational system in Saudi Arabia, 2009).

The culture of Saudi Arabia is heavily influenced by Islam, and the societal customs such as segregation of men and women affect many aspects of life,

including education. According to Islamic law, there must be separate learning environments for each gender, and as such, classes are provided in separate facilities; those for females have female-only staff and lecturers, or in certain cases are connected via closed-circuit television to male lecturers (one-way video, two-way audio) (Alebaikan, 2010). There are numerous separate ‘girls colleges’, mostly called Teachers Training College for Women, all of which are supervised by The Ministry of Higher Education (Rugh, 2002) currently renamed The Ministry of Education.

Therefore, the goals of HE are similar to the goals of educational levels anywhere, but with the added Saudi culture which consists mainly of Islamic doctrine and approach to life, which regulates human behaviour with regard to ethics, in addition to the ambitious social and economic goals that the Kingdom endeavours to achieve through comprehensive development.

## **2.9 Current higher education in KSA**

The Ministry of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia was established for the purpose of HE supervision in the country. However, in January 2015 this department merged together with the Ministry of Education and was renamed as such. The newly formed Ministry of Education drew up a new long-term plan using huge resources for the purpose of providing the economy with the highly skilled and sophisticated manpower it needs to run successfully. The plan’s objectives were to establish:

- New institutions of HE throughout the country and expand existing ones.
- Undergraduate and postgraduate programs in most disciplines at these universities and colleges.

### 2.9.1 Growth in number of universities

The growth in the number of universities in the KSA is one of the key features of the HE development process that has made advanced improvements in the past few years. The Kingdom has witnessed unprecedented development in the creation of new universities and the expansion of existing ones, as well as in the development of new academic programmes and disciplines.

**Table 2-1 Illustration of the growth of universities from 2005 to 2013**

Year		2005	2013	Total Growth Rate
Number of Universities	Public	15	25	67%
	Private	5	9	80%
	Total	20	34	70%

Source: Higher education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, (2014, p.41).

Despite the fact that private organisations started in the last decade, there is a good figure of private institutions which provide HE and their number is increasing steadily (Alamri, 2011). Table 2.1 illustrates the growth of universities between 2005 and 2013. The number of universities has increased from 20 in 2005 (15 of which were public and five were private), to 34 universities in the Kingdom in 2012 (25 of which were public and nine were private), with a total growth rate of 70% (Higher Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2014).

### 2.9.2 Growth in number of colleges

Similar to universities, the number of colleges dramatically increased. Table 2.2 demonstrates that the total number of colleges in 2013 increased to 497 public colleges and 72 private colleges, whereas in 2005, there were 311 public colleges

and 16 private colleges. The total growth rate of colleges was 74% during the comparison period.

**Table 2-2 Number of colleges (2005 - 2013)**

Year		2005	2013	Total Growth Rate
Number of Colleges	Public	311	524	68%
	Private	16	68	325%
	Total	327	592	81%

Source: Higher education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, (2014, p.48)

Table 2.2 shows that the growth rate of private colleges was 350% and that the growth rate of public colleges was 60%. The number of universities and colleges in the KSA has witnessed substantial growth as a result of the efforts made to expand the Saudi HE sector to the levels set by successive developmental plans.

Presently, universities in Saudi Arabia offer the awards of diploma, bachelor's, master's and PhD degrees in numerous disciplines. In order to gain a bachelor's degree, one must complete four years' study in the humanities or social science field, or five to six years in the field of medicine, engineering or pharmacy. Subjects are taught in Arabic, with the exception of science and technology subjects for whom English is used. Saudi public universities have increased in number from 8 in 2004 to 25 currently (Ministry of Higher Education, 2012). The majority of the new universities were converted from pre-existing colleges. Further, more recently a large and growing number of private colleges and vocational organisations have been established, including the Arabic Open University and Prince Sultan University. One of three main challenges which faces the Saudi HE system, according to Alkhazim (2003), is lack of funding. He posits that 'difficulties in meeting rising demand to admit more students,

difficulties in meeting outcome quality in relation to work force needs, and difficulties in securing more resources'. However, during King Abdullah's reign between 2005 and 2015, significant attention and an enormous budget was invested in HE and associated research.

When the idea came about for a global, graduate-level university dedicated to research, King Abdullah gave his full support; thus, the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) was created in the West Province, with ambitions of becoming one of the world's leading research institutes. King Abdullah funded \$10 billion to the university, establishing it as the sixth wealthiest in the world in 2009, before it had even opened, according to the Chronicle of Higher Education (2008).

Figures released by UNESCO indicate that 58% of the total student population in KSA universities are women; hence the country has increased its focus on encouraging women to attend HE. In 1970, the first female colleges were established for the provision of qualified teachers for female public schools. Subsequently these colleges were combined and converted into the Princess Nora bint Abdulrahman University, which in 2008 was the largest women's university in the world (Alebaikan, 2010).

Alsaleh (2008) states that the Ministry of Education is the largest provider of employment opportunities for women in the KSA; 83.4% of the women employed by the government are in the education sector. He also notes that 5.4% of employment opportunities within the Ministry of Health are offered to women.

Abalhassan (2007) indicates that there is now a trend to offer a variety of majors that have not been traditionally offered in the past. According to Alsaleh (2008), it has been necessary to aim towards the restructure of universities in order to address the imbalance between human studies and technology and sciences; there

is an excess of graduates from the human science discipline, particularly among women. In support of this opinion, a study by the Riyadh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) identified that there are too few qualified graduates from the science and technology field, and found that ‘graduates of engineering, medicine and sciences met only 12.5 % of the Kingdom needs in the last five year plan’ (Gangal, 2009).

More recently, HE policy emphasised the requirement to move towards the transformation of Saudi society into a society of knowledge. From an educational perspective, this move is justified as it aims to strike a balance between the production of knowledge, the utilisation of that knowledge, and an educational output which meets the needs of both the labour market and national development. The balance of these factors results in a positive reflection of the universities’ and HEIs’ ability to serve the community, as well as demonstrating their dynamic approach to research and education.

In support of the efforts of universities and institutions of HE to raise their programs to advanced levels, the Ministry has taken a number of specific initiatives to improve the level of quality in universities.

### **2.9.3 National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA)**

The National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA) was established in Saudi Arabia in 2004 in order to determine the criteria for academic assessment and accreditation, and for accrediting the programmes provided by postsecondary organisations. The Commission is committed to a strategy of encouraging, supporting, and evaluating the quality

assurance processes of postsecondary institutions (National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment, 2011).

Designed to ensure quality in education, the Commission was part of an initiative for quality learning which also ensures that educational organisations maintain the highest international standards. According to the NCAAA, the mission of the organisation is 'to encourage, support and evaluate the quality of post-secondary institutions and the programs they offer' (2010). To clarify, the Commission aims to achieve three main objectives: to ensure the quality of learning outcomes, to monitor management and support services of HE organisations for their efficiency, and the evaluation of the impact of HEIs on research and development and their quality (NCAAA, 2010). In addition to the NCAAA, the initiative includes HEIs and other stakeholders, such as government, community agencies, and businesses, who all work together to achieve the objectives in the most effective way.

#### **2.9.4 AAFAQ Project (Horizons)**

To continue the development of Saudi Arabia's HE system and to promote a knowledge-based economy and move from oil to a worldwide centre for high-technology research, Saudi Arabia has launched a research initiative called 'Aafaq' or Horizons; a long-term initiative designed to implement a strategy for HE across a 25 year period. The project was established in 2005. The 25-year plan is intended to improve higher education opportunities for women, boost scientific research and tackle the country's shortage of scientists in critical fields. Aafaq is an Arabic term that means *Horizons*, which reflects the futuristic nature of the plan. It defines the aims and objectives for the entire higher education system, and attempts to provide a framework of strategic planning for implementation by the

country's public universities. Its main objective was to address the challenges that face the development of Saudi HE and to propose a future plan for the next 25 years:

*“The main objective of the AAFAQ project is to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of the Higher Education System in Saudi Arabia, through the preparation of an ambitious, futuristic, practical, and long-term plan that identifies vision, value, standards for performance measurement, and resource requirements. It additionally aims to improve adequate utilization of human and financial resources; and encouraging universities to allocate more resources for R&D [Research & Development] and community service. The project is geared to produce a detailed implementation plan for Higher Education for the first 5 years and proposes a mechanism for institutions of Higher Education for continued strategic planning and implementation of strategic and operational plans”.*  
(Aafaq project, 2015)

The Aafaq project considers various features of HE, for example health education, engineering and technology, education for women, and private HE (Aafaq project, 2015). Saudi Arabia is a country spanning over two million square kilometres and has a current population of approximately 27 million, of which 60% are aged under 25. Many new universities have been founded over the last ten years in order to meet the objectives of Aafaq; 70 Saudi Arabian towns and cities now have their own university or campus, thus with 24 public and eight private universities, there are presently 1.2 million students attending HE establishments in the KSA (Smith and Abouammoh, 2013).

## 2.10 Summary

This chapter presented an overview of the case study of this research which is the brief of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, its resources, its culture and religious impacts, policy education, and its condition, and finally some initiatives for HE improvement in the KSA.

## **Chapter 3 Literature review**

### **3.1 Introduction**

A variety of concepts, strategies, models, and phrases have been presented over the course of time to the business community by management experts, enterprise leaders, and consultants. This section defines a number of terms used in this study that require specification. These are clarified to facilitate the reader's understanding of this study. This chapter encompasses three sections.

The first section gives definitions on strategy, different views of strategy approaches, a description of key phases in strategic management, a description of its history and use in business, and strategic planning (SP) for NPOs and its benefits. In addition, the SP practice, its unique aspects at HE, why HE desires SP, the HE customers, and the strategic plan steps will be provided.

Section two illustrates a variety of concepts on quality, strategic quality, and SQ dimensions and measurements. In addition, SQ in HEIs will be clarified. Section three clarifies the concept of OC, its facets, and its measurements. Moreover, a variety of studies on OC will be illustrated.

Finally, the theoretical paradigms on the concept of Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Perceived Organisational Support Theory (POS) will be delivered.

### **3.2 Strategy**

The word *strategy* and the adjective *strategic* are derived from the Greek term *strategos*. This word was created during the Byzantine Empire, of the late third century A.D. It describes a military governor or a leader with financial and judicial responsibilities (PBW, 2012).

Guralnik, (1983) Webster's Dictionary defines strategy as follows:

- *“The science of planning and directing large scale military operations, specifically (as distinguished from tactics), of manoeuvring forces into the most advantageous position prior to actual engagement with the enemy.*
- *A plan or action based on this.*
- *Skill in managing or planning, especially by using stratagems” (p. 1799).*

Moreover, in the business and academia field, the word *strategy* is defined in diverse ways. For example, Porter (1996) defines strategy as the conception of a unique position involving a diverse set of actions.

Mintzberg et al. (1998) argue that there is no single, universally accepted definition of strategy. However, there are some general aspects of agreement about the nature of strategy, for instance:

- Strategy considers both organisation and environment.
- Strategy includes a number of thought procedures.
- Strategy is a complex method.
- Strategy encompasses issues of both content and procedure.
- Strategy affects overall welfare of the organisation.
- Strategies occur in different stages.

Johnson and Scholes (2002) describe strategy as being the direction and scope of an institution over a substantial period of time, which is advantageous for the organisation due to its ability to configure resources successfully in a changing environment, therefore meeting the needs of the market and the stakeholders’ expectations.

### **3.3 Strategic Management (SM)**

Since the 1950s, various management researchers and consultants have developed theories, tools, and models for SM. For example, Ansoff, in his book *Strategic*

Management Theory (1979), describes SM as a series of management business with a combination of day-to-day operational decisions of enterprises and long-term planning and decision-making (Zhongqiu and Xinmin, n.d). SM could also be viewed as organisational decision making within political, social and cultural processes (Johnson and Scholes, 1993, cited in Kettunen, 2002). SM includes taking a view of the entire organisation (Kettunen, 2002).

### 3.4 Strategic Planning (SP)

Strategic planning has been described by various scholars in differing, yet complementary methods, and there is no commonly accepted definition for SP. According to Meising and Anderson (1991), SP is simply the adjustment of an organisation to its environment. Bryson (2004) explains SP as ‘a deliberative, disciplined approach to producing fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organisation (or other entity) is, what it does, and why’ (p.6).

Robson (1997) describes SP as a means of maintaining consistency between an organisation’s resources, objectives and various opportunities, which are often changeable. Additionally, he suggests that SP is a tool which can define and document a business approach that can lead to an increase in profits and help the business to grow.

Mintzberg (1987) states that SP is a central key element of SM and, frequently, is used in business as a synonym for it. SP deals with the future, it sets objectives and direction, but it is also based upon the current situation and the past. Moreover, Tapinson et al. (2005) assert that SP is the set of procedures assumed to improve a variety of strategies that will contribute to the achievement of institutional direction.

Bryson (1988a) defines SP as:

*“A disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions shaping the nature and direction of an organisation’s (or other entity’s) activities within legal bounds” (p.73).*

Additionally, Bryson (2004) classifies SP as ‘a set of concepts, processes, and tools for shaping what an organisation (or other entity) is, what it does, and why it does it’. Kotler and Murphy (1981) refer to SP as a development and maintenance process for a strategic fit between an organisation and its changeable marketing opportunities.

Whittington (2004) makes the situation clearer when he states ‘Strategy is something that people do. From this perspective, strategy can be seen as a social practice’.

Jarzabkowski (2003) illustrates ‘The strategic planning cycle is a powerful practice for distributing an increasingly consistent interpretation of desirable strategic activity based upon accountability and financial viability’. To conclude, SP is the early stage and foundation of SM (Coskun, 2011).

### **3.5 Strategic tools**

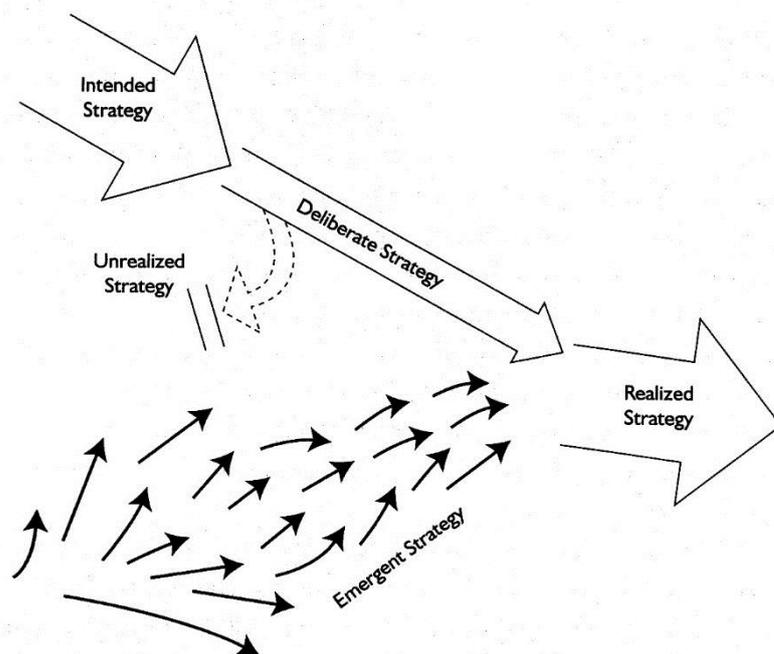
Clark (1997) considers the position of strategic tools as ‘enabling mechanisms to improve strategic thinking’. He acknowledges that a number of authors stress the importance of strategic tools in providing a structure for analysis and communication. In addition, Gunn and Williams (2007) use the word *tool* to include any systematic method or procedure that the strategist has engaged to inform their strategic decision-making.

### 3.6 Stakeholders

Haberberg and Rieple (2008) specify the stakeholders as individuals who hold a concern in an organisation's activities, success, and failure, and thus have a desire to influence its behaviour.

### 3.7 Different views of strategy

Mintzberg and Waters suggest a five - part model in which intended strategy eventually develops into realised strategy (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985; Mintzberg, 1994). Mintzberg and Waters (1985) identify five core types of strategy which they consider to be applicable within various firms, namely emergent strategy, intended strategy, deliberate strategy, realised strategy, and unrealised strategy, as illustrated below (Fig. 3.1).



**Figure 3.1 Deliberate and emergent strategies**

**Source: Mintzberg and Waters (1985)**

Organisational strategy, as first argued by Mintzberg (1978), can be the result of either the intended, the emergent, or both. Real world strategies fall in between

deliberate and emergent strategies, as stated by Mintzberg and Waters (1985). They came to this conclusion by comparing intended strategies with realised strategies; that is, strategies which came from a planning process versus the real actions of the organisation.

Mintzberg and Waters (1985) suggest not only a deliberate–emergent strategy continuum, but also the fact that various strategy types can exist within this continuum. These strategies include planned, entrepreneurial, ideological, umbrella, process, unconnected, consensus, and imposed strategy types. According to Lynch (2009), two distinct perspectives of SM arise through disagreement, namely the prescriptive approach and the emergent approach. Andersen (2000) believes that the process of strategy formation can be either top-down (deliberate) or bottom-up (emergent), depending on the requirement of the organisation to face the environment changes.

### **3.7.1 Two approaches of strategy**

The prescriptive approach, which can also be referred to as rational, deliberate, or intended, means that strategic analysis, development, and implementation are linked together sequentially as the three main areas of SM. This means that the strategy is approved in advance, and can be applied once the company has carried out developmental analysis. When following the emergent approach, also often referred to as realised or non-rational, the strategy is developed via trial and error, and it would be inappropriate to make a distinction between the implementation and the developmental stages (Lynch, 2009).

### 3.7.1.1 **Planned prescriptive approach**

According to Mintzberg (1985), prescriptive strategy is a course of action created with intention. Ansoff (1975) describes this approach as a procedure made up of a series of steps, generally including the identification of the firm's mission statement, establishing aims and objectives, and specifying strategies. This comes after the firm has established which opportunities best match its capabilities, through scanning its environment (Fahey, 1981). Deliberate strategy is a strategy that is carefully planned; it involves a well-articulated and formalised planning process. Commonly with deliberate strategy, assumptions are checked, SWOT analyses are conducted, specific plans are formulated, and then the organisation tracks its performance according to plan. Deliberate or prescriptive approach strategies reflect a Newtonian philosophical approach to the universe and are characteristic of much of the scholarly thinking concerning SP in the 1960s and 1970s (Ansoff, 1965; Steiner, 1969; Andrews, 1971; Newman and Logan, 1971). Deliberateness, according to De Wit and Meyer (2004), is when one acts intentionally. Those people who act deliberately and with intention think before doing something; they make a plan first, and then apply it.

A prescriptive approach is taken when all options available are analysed and considered rationally by the organisation, and the most appropriate option is then chosen. If this criterion is followed, then the best results should be delivered. Lynch (2009) recommends a range of techniques in order to determine how viable each option is, including how consistent it is with the mission statement, or the response of the shareholders to an option. Jamil and Shah (2015) describe the benefits of the prescriptive approach as being flexible; changes can be predictably forecast and strategy can be adjusted accordingly.

### 3.7.1.2 **Emergent strategy approach**

Emergent strategy can be defined as internally consistent patterns of competitive actions and reactions that spontaneously arise over time as organisations navigate within their operating environments. This definition recognises that emergent strategies may occupy one end of a deliberate–emergent continuum which represents different fundamental behaviours concerning the strategic process. Bargaining, positive feedback, and chance can all facilitate decision making within an emergent strategy (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985).

An emergent strategy is more of an informal process, using a trial and error process whereby those involved in the organisation learn more about their environment, their competition, and the best way to benefit from it (Senge, 1990). Moreover, this approach can be seen as a response to unexpected difficulties and opportunities (McGee et al., 2005) or an ‘unplanned strategy’ takes a course of action that is perceived by the firm as a strategic option (Mariotto, 2003).

The major difference between prescriptive and emergent strategy is considering the focus, direction, and control, i.e. getting things done. Deliberate strategy represents the formalisation of strategy, being developed top-down and involving only top management, while on the other hand, emergent strategy is associated with processes from daily activities or decisions, such as the participation of the entire organisation and being developed bottom-up (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985).

Furthermore, deliberate strategy is the planning-based approach, whereas emergent strategy is the process of learning over time to provide the potential to explore and solve firm’s issues (Oliver, 2008). However, both deliberate and emergent approaches are important and must be adopted by an organisation because deliberate strategies are effective for giving direction and control in order

to get desired things done, while emergent strategies give the opportunity for strategic learning through responding to events as they happen (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985). In summary, both deliberate and emergent strategies could share various features (Mintzberg and Waters, 1975), therefore the situation and nature of the desired outcome will determine which strategic approach to adopt (Shah and Jamil, 2015).

### **3.8 A history of strategic planning**

Historically, the beginnings of SP can be found in the military during the late third century. Strategy, according to Webster's *New World Dictionary*, is 'the science of planning and directing large-scale military operations, of manoeuvring forces into the most advantageous position prior to actual engagement with the enemy' (Guralnic, 1986). Taking its term and roots from the military model, early models of official SP 'reflected the hierarchical values and linear systems of traditional organisations. Undertaken by elite planning role at the top of the organisation, its structure was highly vertical and time bound (Wall and Wall, 1995).

### **3.9 Strategic management (SM) and strategic planning (SP)**

The two terms of SM and SP are used interchangeably, in many cases, but the general understanding is that SM is more comprehensive than strategic planning in that it includes the application and evaluation of the results of strategic plans (Franklin, 2011). In other words, SM is involved in organising a firm's strengths and weaknesses to gain benefit from its external opportunities and minimise its external threats (Adeleke et al., 2008).

While Crisp (1991) distinguishes SP from SM:

*“Strategic planning is a set of activities designed to identify the appropriate future direction of a college, and includes specifying the steps necessary to move in that direction. Strategic management, on the other hand, is concerned with the total process of planning, implementing, monitoring and maintaining the strategy over a longer period” (p.3).*

Steiner (1979) describes SP as the effort of a company, in a formal way, to set in place their basic objectives, purpose, and policies. Detailed plans outlining ways in which they will implement their policies and strategies are developed.

SP should not also be confused with long range plans. Bryson (1988b) points out the differences between them in the following: first, SP focuses on resolving critical strategic issues whereas long range planning has a focus on merging organisational goals and objectives into its current programs. Second, SP covers both internal and external environment assessments which might not be highly considered by long range planning. Third, SP is linked to an organisation’s vision and mission statement which is lacking in long range planning. Finally, SP considers a wide range of change scenarios necessary for organisation’s future survival and sustainability.

Stonehouse and Pemberton (2002) state that SP assists with long-term goals; in the setting of them, their development and implementation, and the redistribution or allocation of resources needed to achieve these long-term goals.

### **3.9.1 The functions of strategic management (SM)**

SM encompasses realistically deliberative and disciplined efforts in organisational aims. Hence, the procedure looks to enhance strategic thinking, learning, and acting around key issues. This includes deliberating on ways to link purposes, structure, resources, staff, political issues and procedures in an effective way

(Bryson, 2010). Additionally, Poister (2010) states one of the most significant functions of SM is to scan internal and external environments, collecting data from different sources and methods of observing circumstance to go in between dynamic circles of SP. The resulting logic of how things attitude can be invaluable in determining the timing and nature of SP efforts. Frequently, for instance, strategic planning efforts applicably involve plan updates or enhancements of current strategy, or otherwise observing methods in order to advance existing primacies more successfully. Goldsmith (1995) asserts the importance of the consistent, comprehensive and long term thinking that SM involves, so that managers can cope with challenges that most businesses face at the end of the twentieth era.

To avoid failure of the plan and to confirm its implementation, the strategic plan should be part of an SM system. The following components, as Plant (2009) illustrates, are a framework of a holistic SM:

1. Strategic planning to place organisational goals and department and program aims.
2. Design of organisational structures and procedures to simplify goals and aims.
3. Organisational communication and decision-making procedures that assist shared problem solving and action.
4. Design success reward systems that deliver incentives.
5. Resources and technology allocated to provision predictable performance.
6. The budget procedure and accountability methods.
7. Funding for skills improvement and learning.
8. Good communication system between staff and citizens.

### 3.9.2 Benefits of strategic planning

Strategic planning contributes massively to organisational effectiveness, and for this reason it has been welcomed by all sector types across the world (Arasa and K'Obonyo, 2012). Greenley (1986) notes that SP contributes positively to the performance of organisations through its core values, and therefore it can be viewed as a vehicle through which performance is improved.

According to Yarmohammadian et al. (2001), SP has a trend to inspire people to think ahead. Organisations often focus on the short-term, however SP looks at the long-term vision and realisable mission as well as strategic ways to accomplish them. It has been assumed that institutes which focus on the long-term through SP raise their quality performance to a higher level than those who do not. Subsequently, one of the SP aims is long-term performance, quality and progress. Another benefit of SP is communication; strategic plans enable communication between managers and staff, stakeholders, and others.

In order to establish the relationship between business performance and SP, numerous empirical studies have been conducted with varying results. An empirical study of data from nine surveys conducted by Greenley (1986) on the relationship between company performance and SP in the manufacturing trade resulted in mixed conclusions. He noted that around half of the data set showed a positive link between SP and performance; however the remainder concluded that their higher levels of performance did not necessarily correspond with SP application.

Poister (2010) suggests the benefit of SP is to take a big picture of methods that combine objectives analysis, subjective assessment of standards, goals, primacies, and futuristic thinking to chart action plans for the future. Similarly, Bryson (1988a) points out some clear benefits of SP in government and NPOs in the

United States; for example, SP can help them think in a strategic way, identify future direction, create team work and expertise, resolve major organisational difficulties, develop performance, and support decision makers. Lerner (1999) gives an illustration in engaging in an SP procedure and how it benefits universities in different ways. For instance, SP can:

- Produce a framework to the direction a university should take to realise its future.
- Create a framework for achieving an advantage among competitors.
- Allow the university to set primacies.
- Make the university work together towards their desired goals.
- Target to align the university with its environment.

Moreover, Bryson (2010) observes further benefits from SP, including enhancing strategic thinking, learning and jobs, deciding what are the best strategies and understanding framework, developing effective decision-making which leads to decisions which in turn leads to institute goals and increased effectiveness in organisation and responsiveness.

### **3.9.3 Strategic management for non-profit organisations**

SM is necessary for NPOs to assess whether their mission is being achieved, and to what degree, and takes action to achieve it if necessary (Franklin, 2011). Crittenden et al. (2004) stress that non-profits must be aware of the potential benefits of the SP approach, and once their mission achievement has been measured, how they might improve on their performance. They argue that greater benefits could be achieved by non-profits if strategic planning is applied.

NPOs are becoming obliged to respond to the extremely challenging environmental forces that could threaten their existence. Bryson (1988a) asserts

that as a result of environment troubling, such as oil disasters, changing value, demographic changes, and IT, NPOs will not be able to successfully face challenges without SP. Eisenberg (2004) mentions that some of the external forces include donors' budget cuts, staff shortage, organisation size and scope of operations, changing customer demands, frequent policy changes, intense competition with other existing as well as emerging non-profits, competition for international donor funds, accountability pressures imposed by multiple stakeholders groups including public administrators, legislators, and citizens, and lastly, continuous government failure to satisfy public desires which increase the public demand for the services offered by these organisations.

In response to these pressures, SM was recently introduced to the public and non-profit sector, especially by the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. Hence, since the 1980s, the public sector has seen a variety of attempts to develop effectiveness and efficiency among the entry of private sector tools and strategies. The reform movement could be called 'New Public Management' (NPM) era or 'New Steering Model' which is characterised by formulating strategic plans, and has been implemented almost globally but with diverse consequences (McBain and Smith, 2010; Ghoneim, 2012). Studies acknowledge that SP is a ubiquitous practice for most governments and NPOs. Goldsmith (1995) observes that people have been convinced that SM can apply to all sorts of institutes, not just for the private sector where it originated. He furthermore illustrates SM as a conscious enterprise started in the private sectors; leaders in other sectors are set to use this method to develop their efficiency. There are variances between the government sector and private sector. For instance, NPOs seldom sell their services, they do not have enough autonomy and they infrequently face market competition. Thus, SM does not discount these types of differences. SM methods can be used to fit

any businesses setting. Nutt and Backoff (1992) specify some characteristics of the public sector that can shape SM, such as environmental factors, and include the impact of political degrees. Another characteristic is the transactional feature, for example the possibility of an impact which is much wider than in a private business, public inspection of all transactions, and hence the necessity for accountability and possession which is collective and thus administration must include societal beliefs such as equality, openness, and honesty. Bryson, (2010) states some case studies representing its helpfulness in NPOs in the United States over the last two decades. Yarmohammadian et al. (2001) present globalisation as waves challenging most private and public sector organisations such as universities. Countries cannot face competition by decreasing their cost. They stressed that countries must change their strategy toward more sophisticated strategies which is important for developing countries, because more than 99% of the businesses there represent over 70% of employment opportunities. This change must respond to a culture that inspires innovation of the next generation of organisations and bring everyone together for the future.

#### **3.9.4 The benefits of strategic management in non-profit organisations**

SM is a collaborative process that defines how a firm intends to achieve their vision of success (Revankar et al., n.d). Griggs (2003) reveals that in both for-profit and non-profit organisations, SM does lead to improved performance. Reasons for this include the fact that the rules governing strategies and SP theories can be applied comparably to both types of organisation. In addition, SP is able to unite the behaviours of any type of organisation with its future aims. Franklin (2011) and Ramanathan (1982) assert that SP is a critical part of SM,

which helps NPOs craft and realise strategies aimed at greater performance effectiveness, improved accountability, and sustainable competitive advantage.

Bryson and Alston (2005) state that SP in the for-profit sector makes sure that organisation keep to a similar approach when dealing with corporate value for stakeholders. There are definite benefits for NPOs adopting SP; among them the ability of SP to aid an NPO to fit environment, the ability of SP to make requirements clear, the ability for SP to effectively focus on the company mission, and the creation of assessment tools for the measurement of organisational effectiveness. To this end, SP is imperative for NPOs (Ramanathan, 1982). In addition, SP can allow an organisation to focus on consequences instead of methods. It can also bring together disparate parts of the company, uniting its vision, and can more precisely define desires (Kaufman et al., 2003). An organisation is permitted to determine its own requirements under the strategic plan, and those needs can subsequently be converted into services and supplied to society (Bryson and Alston, 2005). The purpose of a non-profit must be to benefit society (Lake, n.d).

Nevertheless, over time as society changes, NPOs often find themselves less effective at serving than originally intended. SP allows them to examine the current external environment in relation to their own function in an effort to devise tactics for more effectively fitting that environment (Bryson and Alston, 2005). Furthermore, NPOs find themselves struggling to serve their mission as effectively as they once did. This is often the result of a shift in resources necessary to serve a changing society (Lake, n.d).

Moxley (2004) explains that SP invites a better understanding of an NPO's external environment, which then leads to the formulation of strategic plans designed to improve performance. It is argued that NPOs communicate their

intentions to their stakeholders by means of mission-based SP, which attracts support from the stakeholders as the legitimacy is improved. In short, NPOs furthermore have to adopt a more entrepreneurial method in managing their businesses as LeRoux (2005) suggests.

### 3.9.5 **Apply strategic management in higher education**

HEIs serve as the engines of economic growth. They serve society in various ways and they craft intellectual capital and human that makes wellbeing life. Universities are struggling with quality and productivity, success and competitiveness, just like any other enterprise or business. However, they are more important than industry or commerce because they feed those enterprises (Lombardi, 2001). Peach et al. (2005) contend that the benefit of effective SM involves more than achieving outcomes - financial returns, for example. Some research in universities mentioned to the importance of SM in periods of crisis. Cameron and Smart (1998) presented in their research of HEIs in the United States, focusing on the methods that these organisations could remain effective during financial difficulties and decreasing resources. They conclude that universities who respond poorly to such crises do so due to lack of planning.

Yarmohammadian et al. (1980) outline SP in HEIs as:

*“a conscious process by which an institution assesses its current state and the likely future condition of its environment, identifies possible future states for itself, and then develops organised strategies, policies and procedures for selecting and getting to one or more of them”*(p.2097).

While Rowley et al. (1997) define SP as:

*“... A formal process designed to help a university identify and maintain an optimal alignment with the most important elements the environment within which the university resides” (p.14).*

This environment consists of ‘the political, social, economic, technological, and educational ecosystem, both internal and external to the university’. The reforms presented in the education sector in Western countries in recent years was forced by several elements, such as an increase in students’ statistics, finance limitations by governments, internationalisation, and the need of policy managers to adopt scientific management and the desire for transparency by universities to their stakeholders. That made many universities changes their systems, such as careful financial budgeting and quality management, especially performance measurement system. Many universities’ funding is now reliant on performance measures, teaching and research quality (Ter Bogt and Scapens, 2009). Universities have variety of students, business partnerships, and different programs which make senior managers’ roles in universities particularly complex. Hang and Phan (1999) make the point, ‘...the continual globalisation of education, coupled with easy access to information technology has resulted in an unprecedented increase in consumer choice, which consumers exercise with increasing alacrity and discrimination’. Kotler and Murphy (1981) argue that colleges and universities are not establishing a strategic planning capability. They are generally just good at operations. They see the overall concept of planning in HE being at these stages:

- (1) Costing and scheduling.
- (2) Short-term planning.
- (3) Long-term planning - this type of planning supports universities in evaluating the external environment to set priorities and strategies.

There are also various difficulties that institutes should be aware of in relation to accepting the essentials of strategic management and planning. For instance, David (2005) outlines that:

*“Strategic management must not become a self-perpetuating bureaucratic mechanism. It must be a self-reflective learning process that familiarises managers and employees in the organisation with key strategic issues and feasible alternatives for resolving those issues. Strategic management must not become ritualistic, stilted, orchestrated, ought to have formal, predictable, and rigid. Words supported by numbers, rather than numbers supported by words, should represent the medium for explaining strategic issues and organisational responses. A key role of the strategist is to facilitate continuous organisational learning and change”* (p. 19).

Bryson (1989), Stoner (1994), and Viljoen (1995) argue that direction is provided by SP in order to identify the direction the organisation is going, and clarifying this for its members so that they know where best to utilise their efforts.

Consequently, effective SM in universities can help in solving the vast challenges counted in this study and many more which has made it impossible for any Saudi university to be listed in the world’s best 100 universities without a clear future direction.

### **3.9.6 Unique aspects of strategic management in higher education**

Universities are different as institutions in both their goals and organisation compared to industry or manufacturing organisations. It would be inappropriate to apply planning to a university that was originally formulated for manufacturing or service organisations. Universities are a collection of faculties and schools which prepare students to be professionals in certain areas, or imparting them with intellectual wisdom and academic skills. Moreover, universities have their independence, unlike the industrial field. Authority is by colleagues through academic boards and groups. Achieving strategies in a university is more

problematic than other organisations. Change managers are required to be clear about their individual purposes, as well as internal and external parts of the university. Plans must consider the political issues as well as communal and economic environment to be effective (Anderson et al., 1999). The most important characteristic which differs universities from other organisations is the philosophy leading the educational projects. HE's tasks are teaching, researching and providing a facility to society (Wattananimitkul, n.d).

Universities-based SP varies from the business model in some ways. When identifying these variances, universities can raise understanding of the SP method and process (Lerner, 1999). In other words, SM processes in HE diverge from the procedure of a business organisation due to a great awareness of professionals, democratised planning, and managerial inflexibility (Kotler and Murphy, 1981). Hence, business models and university models differ in ways of time frame, consensus, value system, customers and context (Lerner, 1999).

### **3.9.7 Who are the higher education customers?**

HE delivers a wide range of possible advantages in different forms for a number of corresponding and differing beneficiaries. Weaver (1976) claims that there are four groups as potential clients: the government, its commissioners, staff, and the actual customers (society as a whole).

Conway et al. (1994) claim that to create satisfactory strategies and face customers' requests, organisations might have some debate between clients regarding their viewpoints. Organisations, thus, had to contest for funds from both public and private sectors and also compete for potential learners. Higher education required a focus on marketing. Thomas (1980) mentioned the importance of 'stakeholders' in the SP procedure, an institution's existence being

dependent on terms that are consistent with such people. The unique problem of HE is that students are both customers and products at the same time. Lovelock and Rothschild (1980) note this phenomenon; there is advanced development in HE, and a student becomes an institution's product in addition to being one of its users.

According to Conway et al. (1994), exploratory research was undertaken to assess the degree to which institutions in the new university and college sector of HE in the UK were applying a market direction to their SP process. Organisations' mission statements were considered to conflict students, in that they can be both customer and product at the same time. Effective strategies depend on considering of the needs of customers in the market to supply the exact goods and facilities successfully and professionally.

### **3.9.8 Why higher education needs strategic management**

Studies conceded the need for the non-governmental sector to apply SM approaches to increase the quality of its facilities (Yarmohammadian et al., 2001). Kettunen (2002) presents that SM should view the organisation as a whole - its environment, its place, its values, its key aims, its culture, its direction, and its strategic choice for the greater future. In other words, SM can bridge the path between the perceived current condition and the desired future condition. He also alludes to the role of SM in allowing senior managers of educational organisations to improve their institutions as a whole, and to combine curriculum, finance, staff, and external relations. SP is a procedure which spans across all parts of the organisation, continuously linking short-term and long-term planning.

According to Lerner (1999) there are some challenges facing universities who are involved in a SP choice such as a global increase in demand for HE with a drop in

government funding, level of competition between HEIs, gradual technological advance and converting to new models of HE. Consequently, SP is an important stage that any university should take in order to face these challenges. Hence, Chang (2008) states that in recent years, the education system has changed in varying degrees on account of rapid changes driven by globalisation, IT improvement, competition, and difficult financial conditions. Furthermore, frequent changes of governments and agenda in many countries lead to a variety of planning procedures and development. According to Dooris et al. (2004), SP in universities is a complicated issue, dynamic, and deals with real environment. Moreover, it can create effective consequences to help academic institutions, or it can be ineffective. Shattock (2000) assumed that when universities had a predictable upcoming, planning process could work well. However, they are less applicable when the environment is unstable. Successful universities must consider the environment, competitive advantage, opportunism, earnings generation, cost decreasing, and the importance of reputation. This framework of vital characteristics stresses a new method to SM in universities requiring universities to take a holistic vision of their actions. Similarly, Pidcock (2001) states that SP could help in assessing the awareness of the firm's vision, its process, and their actual practice. Yarmohammadian et al. (2001) suggest that the purpose of SP in HE is to assess strengths, weaknesses, aims and future predictions, and to shape a more effective organisation.

According to Kettunen (2002), the competition that HEIs face means that the demand for education is being impacted by various elements which are complex, and they must respond to these. Zhongqiu and Xinmin (n.d) specify some ways to develop SM in universities; the first one is a deep understanding of SM realisation. Second is putting scientific SM method. Third, promote

implementation of SP into actuality performance. Fourth, create a realistic assessment mechanism.

### **3.9.9 A history of higher education strategic management**

The first attention to SM in HE was originally focused on amenities and space planning during the initial period of development. The first significant official meeting of HE planners was a 1959 programme joined by twenty-five campus organisers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. With irregular meetings throughout the following years, key members of that group eventually founded the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) in 1966 with 300 members, mostly with a main concern in campus/facilities planning (Dooris et al., 2004). Thus, SP has been applied in HE for almost fifty years (Hughes and White, 2005).

SM is the most required tool to accelerate universities' and colleges' development (Zhongqiu and Xinmin, n.d). They point to the first SM techniques used in HE beginning in the United States. Thus, the high reputation of American education relies on SM. They emphasised that quality improvement should be the first task for colleges and universities.

From about the mid-1970s through to the mid-1980s, HE faced a group of challenging demographic, economic, and technological developments (Holmes, 1985). Kaplan and Norton (1996) claim that a 1983 publication of George Keller's Academic Strategy provides a further step during that period, as colleges and universities focused on SP. The 1980s' notion of planning stressed its use as a coherent tool for organised and logical development of the academic institution.

Planning at that period was about concepts such as strategic position, shareholder ethics, and SWOT analyses. From the 1980s and into the early 1990s, the

visibility of planning in HE continued to increase. Keller's 1983 book was called the most important HE book of the decade by both the New York Times and Change magazine. During the 1980s to 1990s, planning was more broadly adopted by universities. Furthermore, from 1995 into 21<sup>st</sup> century, HE planning had moved further on in its role and competitiveness to business change and quality development (Dooris, 2002; 2003).

### 3.9.10 Steps in a strategic management process

Many authors have made a strong case for the development of strategic processes tailored to the needs and capabilities of individual organisations. However, strategy development should take into account three key dimensions of strategy: strategy process, strategy content and strategy context (De Wit and Meyer, 1998). SM is designed to effectively relate the organisation to its environment. The environments comprise political, social, economic and technological features (Sharplin, 1985). SM views a firm as a system built from subsystems. It allows the whole organisation and the relationship between the parts to be looked at, rather than only dealing with each discrete part without reference to others (Arasa and K'Obonyo, 2012). Similarly, Kotter (1996) claims that the application of SP can transform and reposition a company.

Although every SM procedure is designed specifically for the needs of an individual institute, every ideal model includes the majority of these principal tasks:

- *Mission and goals*: any organisation must consider the purposes for which organisation occurs and form a vision of what the organisation wants to be in the future.

- *Analysis:* In this step an organisation should scan the external environment and internal resources.
- *Formulation:* formulate a strategy to reach the goals.
- *Implementation:* implement the best strategy chosen in suitable economical and sensible method.
- *Monitoring:* assess and adjust performance in light of changing environments. These steps are accompanying; any change in any step will disturb the others. However, these activities overlap in practice. (Goldsmith, 1995; 1996).

Moreover, Poole (1990) states that the SP process can be perceived as ‘a continuous cycle in which the activities occur simultaneously or in varying order’ (p.40). According to him, almost all models of the SP process encompass the following elements:

- Environmental scanning;
- Developing a mission statement;
- Setting goals and objectives;
- Developing implementation plans;
- Implementing the plans;
- Monitoring the progress;
- Formal evaluation.

Wendy (1997) states that there are three main components of the SP process which assist in turning a company’s mission into a realistic aim. These components are strategic analysis, strategic choice, and strategic implementation. According to Wagner (2006), SP can be explained from four points of view

comprising environmental scanning, strategy formulation, linking goals to budgets, and SP as a process. Bryson (1988b; 2004) documents that the SP process involves planning on how to move forward with SM; identification and clarification of mission, vision and values; defining stakeholders and participants; describing roles; realisation of strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities; anticipation of potential strategic issues; determining aims to address these issues; clarification of an evaluative procedure; and assessment of the SM process.

Another point of view about the steps of SP was raised by Chang (2008) who mentioned the three steps as:

- Sector Analysis: in this stage planners scan external and internal sides of the education system including school education and all kind of education.
- Policy Design: A policy is a set of the goals and objectives. A clearly framed policy can play a significant operational part as reference for action and to guide future activities and decisions in education improvement in a coherent approach.
- Action planning: This step is planning for implementation. It is an instrument for identifying the goals and approaches to achieve them.

Other key fundamentals of SP have clarified by Baker et al. (1994);

- Mission and goals.
- Procedure to apply mission and goals.
- Evaluation program outcomes and data.
- Steps to maintain effective components and develop ineffective components.

Meanwhile, Crittenden and Crittenden (2000) mention five steps in the strategic planning process, which are: objective setting, situation analysis, alternative consideration, implementation and evaluation.

Consequently, strategic management steps can involve the following procedures:

#### **3.9.10.1 Developing the vision, mission statement and goals**

Hitt et al. (2011) illustrate *vision* as a picture of what the organisation desires to be and, in broad terms, what it needs to ultimately accomplish. On the other hand, *mission* identifies the organisational activities and functions under the vision. Lerner (1999) clarifies that *vision* lays out an organisation's motivation and purpose, whereas mission aims to set out key goals and objectives.

Plant (2009) claims *vision* works as a guide for decision making at all stages of organisation. So it is significant when engaging in an SP method to reflect how to align the organisation's strategic vision that covers all relevant stakeholders in the procedure with the frontline processes of the organisation. Dvir et al. (2004) emphasise that *vision* is a potentially powerful tool for producing towering levels of emotional attachment between employees and their organisations. Moreover, the first stage of planning anything is to identify the vision, mission and key objectives.

Bart and Hupfer (2004) define a *mission statement* as a short document designed to set out an organisation's purpose. Bart (1998) and Bart and Baetz (1998) emphasise a mission statement is an essential part of a company's identity. It is important as it communicates the organisation's intention and direction, and it can provide control over employee behaviour since they know what is expected. Additionally, a well thought out mission statement helps to balance the competing interests of investors.

Pearce (1982) highlights the significance of a mission statement for the firm. According to Desmidt et al. (2011), the importance of mission statements is a starting point of every strategic initiative. Klemm et al. (1991) state that a mission statement enriches an external institute's image and encourages employees. Conway et al. (1994) indicate that a mission statement should include the beliefs, values, and ambitions of the organisation, and its competitive strengths.

In SM the vision mentions mental images of the future, which become tangible in the form of mission statements. The mission statements of an organisation define its principal purpose and articulate the tasks of the organisation to its stakeholders. Plans are developed usually by managers to help accomplish higher-level intentions (Miller, 1998). According to Quinn (1980), goals can be described as 'what is to be achieved and when results are to be accomplished'. Goals do not address the question of how these objectives are to be achieved. They are basic statements of desired future objectives (McGee et al., 2005, p.14).

According to Baetz and Kenneth (1998), the stress on successful strategic management in universities has resulted in the organisational mission statement which is considered as the directorial of the attitude of education and the guide for the organisational route. Thus, Ganu (2013) stated, mission statements that communicate an organisation's mission are necessary features of an institute's strategic management process. The entire purpose of the organisation is expressed through this crucial document.

In the same line, Conway et al. (1994) mention the assumption of exploratory research to evaluate the degree to which HEIs are responsive to the complication of the student's role, and whether this complexity is considered in the development of an institution's mission statement. For that, the authors attempt to

measure the degree to which institutions recognise the sorts of customer that it is essential to be engaged with when expressing their strategic plans. Colleges, therefore have to formulate competitive strategies mission to meet students' needs.

Karmon and McGilsky (1997) state the significant need for a mission to be consistent between programme, college and university. Moreover, the mission must reflect the exclusive characteristics of each of them. Developing a mission statement should include all participants of the faculty because the mission statement will be used to lead future decisions about program, research and resource appropriation.

Mission statements at colleges and universities thus should carve out the 'competitive' position of the organisation in the educational market. An effective mission statement will explain the purpose of the organisation, its direction and the ends to which it will function. It will indicate the values and philosophy of the school and the core competencies that will help them achieve their mission (Sidhu, 2003).

In summary, Conway et al. (1994) state that the mission statement is the most important tool and element in the SP procedure. In short, the mission statement is the cornerstone of SP; it works as a navigator for the institute direction and the goals they want to achieve. Moreover, Theeb (2009) illustrates the purpose of defining the vision and the mission is not to deliver immediate solutions to immediate obstacles of HE, but how to improve a comprehensive structure to address the imbalance between current and upcoming development of HE systems with the desires of the new generation.

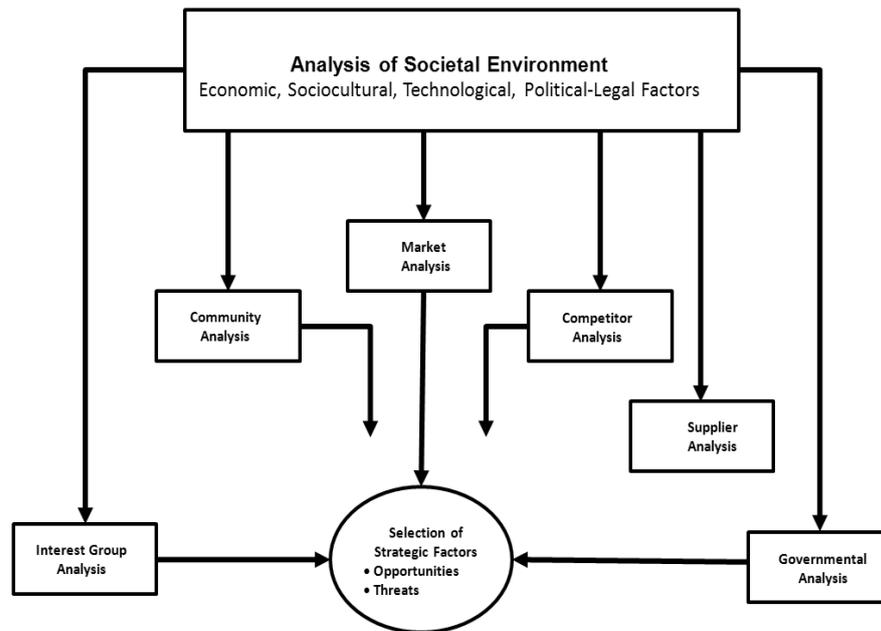
Regarding goals and objectives, Miller (1998) states that goals are attempts to improve the organisation's performance by making mission statements more

concrete. Objectives represent the operational definitions of goals in more precise terms and describe what needs to be accomplished in order to reach the goals.

#### **3.9.10.2 Environmental scanning and analysis**

Lerner (1999) asserts that the organisation must analyse both its external and internal environment once the vision, mission and goals are clearly formulated. Analysis of statistics about organisation's external environment (socioeconomic, demographic, political, legal, technological and international factors), as illustrated in Figure 3.2 should be made. Furthermore, Goldsmith (1995) supports that strategy producers' necessities scan the environment for growing opportunities and identify threats and variables that might affect their organisations. Industry analysis is the most commonly used method to scan the environment, as developed by Porter. Companies' have an obligation to be concerned about competition, which performed within the frameworks of the Porter Five Competitive Forces Model which include:

- 1) The competition among current competitors.
- 2) The risk of new competitors upcoming into the business.
- 3) The opportunity of alternative products that seem to be different while satisfy the same requirement as the present product.
- 4) The negotiation power of suppliers.
- 5) The negotiation power of buyers. The joint power of these forces defines the profit possible in the industry.



**Figure 3.2 Scanning the external environment**

**Source: Huger and Wheelan (1993)**

Another method of analysis is called the internal scan or self-examination (also referred to as doing a strategic audit). The common technique used to observe an internal scan is the portfolio matrix analysis. The technique looks at a business' product lines as an investment portfolio. A portfolio matrix compares strategic situations of various activities within the business, and provides a visual approach to decision making.

SWOT analysis is the combination of environmental scanning and self-examination. This is used to evaluate an organisation's strengths, weaknesses, external opportunities and threats. SWOT analyses help managers to understand the existing condition they face by listening, and classifying the internal and external factors. In other words, to turn between capabilities and opportunities while working around weaknesses and threats (Goldsmith, 1995).

### 3.9.10.3 Gap analysis

In this step universities or other organisations assess the difference between their existing position and desired position. Consequently, organisations can improve their strategies (Lerner, 1999).

### 3.9.10.4 Formalisation

Another distinct characteristic of strategic systems is *formalisation*. Formalisation refers to the policies, procedures and techniques which serve as a guide to the planning process within an organisation (Dutton and Duncan, 1987; Das et al., 1991; Lederer and Sethi, 1996). According to Hitt et al. (2001), formalisation is the degree of dependence that an organisation's activities have on formal processes and instructions. Olson et al. (2005) claim that appropriate behaviours can be defined through rules and procedures, and when individuals are clear about what is expected of them, they can better organise their behaviour and activities for their own benefit as well as that of the organisation.

Formalisation has been defined as 'the degree to which rules define roles, authority relations, communications, norms, sanctions, and procedures' (Jaworski and Kohli, 1993, p.56). In a similar approach, John and Martin (1984, p.172) define formalisation as 'the emphasis placed on following specific rules and procedures in carrying out plan formulation, including documentation of planning activities and adherence to job descriptions'. In light of this, formalisation can be viewed as a process control which seeks to set standards and rules so that plans do not deviate from the goal of the firm.

According to Segar et al. (1998), formalisation is beneficial for both the receiving and the processing of information. Strategic issues can be identified and stored systematically through formalised planning. These gains in efficiency mean that a

larger number of strategic issues can be considered within an organisational capacity. Additionally, as Olson et al. (2005) state, increased efficiency and reduced costs in administration can be gained from the implementation of formal rules and procedures.

Lederer and Mendelow (1986) state that formalised planning ensures that strategic goals are consistent with the organisation's articulated goals. In addition, an absence of formal organisational strategic plans could generate difficulties in recognising the objectives of the business. Consequently, the planning procedure could be badly damaged if there is a lack of formal business planning (McLean and Soden, 1977; Lederer and Mendelow, 1986; Lederer and Sethi, 1988).

Bai and Lee (2003) and Ranganathan and Sethi (2002) assume that the decision-making process is enhanced by formulation, as it increases the quality of the SP as tasks are better coordinated due to more frequent and improved communication. Hrebiniak, (2006) considers successful strategic results are best accomplished when those responsible for implementation are also part of the formalisation procedure.

Various studies (i.e. Alexander, 1985; Allio, 2005) touch on the fact that the effect of implementing a strategy is impacted by the type of strategy chosen, and how that strategy is developed (Kim and Mauborgne, 1993; Singh, 1998). Accordingly, an effective strategy has to build into the output of environment scanning, mission development and self-examination. Miller (1987) summarises that it makes the planning process easier, and the organisation's formal planning procedures are also facilitated (Pyburn, 1991). Jiang and Alis (2009) have further noted that organisations without this guideline will fail to achieve their long term objectives.

### 3.9.10.5 **Implementation**

In literature, strategy implementation is classified as a variety of methods. Misankova and Kocisova (2014) stress the importance of the SM role in achieving prosperity and competitiveness. In addition, they assert that strategic management is successful when strategic implementation is at its core. The central task of strategic implementation is for it to become a routine part of decision-making. Hrebiniak (2006) states that without effective implementation, business strategy cannot be successful.

Henry (2011) stresses the importance of communication and coordination with all stakeholders for the accomplishment of a plan's implementation. Corboy and O'Corrbui (1999) found that employees must believe that implementing the strategy is one of the organisation's top management priorities. Plant (2009) emphasises that the most important concern in the achievement of the strategic plan is its implementation. For that, he suggests that 'Successful implementation depends on the structure of the organisation'.

Conventionally the emphasis has been on organisational structure and system (Galbraith, 1980; Ansoff, 1984). In the same vein, Ikävalko and Aaltonen (2001) stress the importance of communicational and cultural aspects in strategy implementation.

Goldsmith (1995) categorises implementation into two key sides - one formal, and the other informal; they are the structure of the organisation (such as the classified relationship between employees), and the culture of the organisation (i.e. leadership style and the form of common values). Once a particular strategy is organised, a structure must be laid out to show how the strategy will be applied. Many public organisations are structured as bureaucracies (see Table 3.1) which are status quo oriented, centralised. In contrast, post bureaucratic organisations are

change oriented, decentralised, and results oriented. Because a holistic process involves various stakeholders in the development of the plan and integrates the various decision-making processes in the organisation (e.g. budgets, business plans, and key performance indicators), a post bureaucratic structure is better for achieving the successful implementation of the plan.

**Table 3-1 Bureaucratic versus post bureaucratic organisations**

BUREAUCRATIC VERSUS POSTBUREAUCRATIC ORGANIZATIONS	
BUREAUCRATIC ORGANIZATION	POSTBUREAUCRATIC ORGANIZATION
Organization centred	Citizen centred
Position power	Leadership
Rule centred	People centred
Independent action	Collaboration
Status quo oriented	Change oriented
Centralization	Decentralization
Process oriented	Results oriented

**Source: Kernaghan et al. (2000)**

Misankova and Kocisova (2014) analyse two methods used for strategy implementation in order to clarify an appropriate technique. The first method is Model ‘7S’ which was developed by Peterson and Waterman in the early 1980s. The model is based on seven internal firm indicators which should be combined for the implementation to be successful. These factors are strategy, structure, systems, style of leadership, staff, skills of employees, and shared values.

Another method for a successful strategy implementation is Balanced Scorecard which was developed by Kaplan and Norton (1992). The first book dedicated solely to this issue was entitled Balanced Scorecard: Translating Strategy into Action (Kaplan and Norton, 1996). Balanced Scorecard is a system which turns a

company's mission and strategy into a set of performance indicators. This then provides a framework from which the company can assess its own management and strategy systems. Significant value can be created with effective use of Balanced Scorecard as it can be used to implement strategies across the entire organisation, at all levels. As a management system, it identifies the most efficient use of resources (Mišanková and Kočišová, 2014).

Kaplan and Norton (1992) argue that the balanced score measurement should measure other connected components of financial performance such as customer, development perspectives, internal procedure, and learning, and not only for financial performance.

#### **3.9.10.6 Monitoring and evaluation**

This stage is very significant because poor decisions can be tough to reset. Hence, managers must fix timely assessments to prevent their businesses from encountering problems. Leaders often utilise gap analysis to find gaps between objectives and performance. Once gaps are found, steps must be taken to reposition the organisation's mission or structure to follow better paths in the future. Plant (2009) links the success of implementing the strategic plan to the organisation's capability to monitor success in reaching the plan's goals. Studies outline that less than 15% of annual organisations monitor actual as opposed to planned performance, and are missing out in the strategic plan.

Arasa and K'Obonyo (2012) conclude that the process of SP forms a firm's choice of strategy. It provides a framework from which a company can make decisions around future opportunities or potential threats.

Goldsmith (1995; 1996) suggests that in order to complete the SM process, it is necessary to sequence the main steps into four components. These are: creating

the strategic plan that includes vision, mission, objectives, and internal and external analysis; formalisation; implementation; and evaluation.

### **3.10 Service quality (SQ)**

The following section illustrates variety of concepts on Quality, SQ, SQ dimensions and measurements. In addition, SQ in HE will be clarified.

#### **3.10.1 Quality and service quality**

##### **3.10.1.1 Quality**

A number of exciting definitions of quality can be found within the literature; these definitions indicate the complicated issue of quality (Grönroos, 2000). Hence, the term quality is defined from diverse perceptions (Shaney et al., 2004). Furthermore, it is clear that earlier research attempted to define and measure the quality of physical goods and products, while ignoring the services sector which is more difficult to measure. Because of this, traditionally, product quality related to its technical specifications as quality control was more heavily researched in the manufacturing sector where tangible products could have their quality measured more easily.

Likewise, Crosby (1979) defined quality of goods as ‘conformance to requirements’. While Pariseau and McDaniel (1997) clarify quality from different views ‘quality is excellence’, ‘quality is value’, ‘quality is conformance to specifications’; and Pounder (1999) claims that quality is a ‘notoriously ambiguous term’ (p.156). Juran and Gryna (1988) state that ‘quality is fitness for use’ and ‘meeting and/or exceeding customers’ expectations’ (Parasuraman et al., 1985) or to delighting the customer (Peters, 1989).

In other arguments, quality may mean something different to each individual, as might the same individual have a different concept at other times (Zafiroopoulos et al., 2005). This is supported by Harvey and Green (1993) who define quality as 'relative to the user of the term and the circumstances in which it is involved. It means different things to different people; indeed the same person may adopt different conceptualisations at different moments. 'This raises the issue of whose quality' (p.10).

Butz (1995) states that about TQM:

*'Many authors argue that TQM (continuous improvement) is already linked to the company strategy because most strategic plans include quality goals, TQM is led by the senior management team, and projects are chosen based on their importance in achieving business success. While all of this is true, it doesn't go far enough. Strategic planning and TQM must become a single process' (p.106).*

According to Petruzzellis et al. (2006), a strategy of continuous improvement with regard to quality is important in addition to the demand from many stakeholders and their interests, either social or economic. Outcomes of a study by Samat et al. (2006) indicate that continuous improvement as one of TQM practices has positive effects on SQ.

Furthermore, Samat et al. (2006) state that a number of organisations in Malaysia have started to consider quality as a critical part of their business plan in order to encounter the challenges of the new global environment. TQM is not only restricted to product quality performance in the profit sector but it also covers a wider aspect of quality in the non-profit sector. From extensive previous studies, it is acknowledged that the effective implementation of TQM can improve productivity (Garvin, 1983) and consequently lead to improvements in organisational performance e.g. service quality (see for example: Flynn et al.,

1994; Samson and Terziovski, 1999). The core emphasis of TQM is to increase overall quality including process quality and SQ as suggested by Ishikawa (1972), Crosby (1979), Deming (1986), and Juran (1988). Hence, quality systems like TQM could also lead to better SQ and organisational performance (Cook and Verma, 2002).

Institutions will benefit from the use of quality initiatives in the following ways:

- (1) Document and improve procedures;
- (2) Recognise consumer requirements and ensure that their services and products encounter those requirements;
- (3) Reorganise relationships between internal customers and providers and employees of the organisations and external customers and providers (Pryor et al., n.d).

In addition, quality improvement goes beyond examining products and process as influencing final outcomes that would contribute towards the competitive advantage of firms. Progressively, 'quality' has become a subjective term that is not solely judged by tangible satisfaction; it is considered with customers' expectations and perceptions (Harvey and Green, 1993; Lawson, 1992; Parasurman et al., 1988).

### **3.10.2 Quality in higher education (HE)**

Interest in the quality of university education has grown considerably over the last two eras (Coates, 2005). According to Piscopo (2013), it is important to define quality by the specific industry attributes that generate customer satisfaction for that particular industry, or for the specific business in which an organisation within that industry is engaged. Juran and Gryna (1988) clarified that quality is 'fitness of educational outcome and experience for use'. Similarly, Crosby (1979)

illustrates the term 'quality in education' as 'conformance of education output to planned goals, specifications and requirements'. In addition, quality is 'a relative concept, meaningful only from the perspective of those judging it at the time' (Higher Education Council, 1992, p.3).

It can be stated that quality in the education industry has therefore been evaluated in different ways. Hoy et al. (2000) outline quality in education as 'an evaluation of the process of educating which enhances the need to achieve and develop the talents of the customers of the process, and at the same time meets the accountability standards set by the clients who pay for the process or the outputs from the process of educating' (p.10). Tam (2001) admits that quality in HE is a 'relative concept', with respect to the stakeholders in HE and the conditions in which it is involved.

Colleges and universities as (Zhongqiu and Xinmin, n.d) claim that there is a need to achieve from the expansion of the improvement to the conception of improvement, to increase the quality of teaching, education, knowledge innovation and enrich the characteristics. That depends on improved academic position, level of teaching, planning development, implementation and other parts of SM which are the inevitable moves towards improving quality.

Clark (1986) stresses that universities are multipart institutes in which the agents have particular knowledge about their actions that manager do not share. Hence, it is their services which demonstrate their quality, through their characteristics and attributes (Saif, 2014), and incorporates academic and non-academic features, environment (both internal and external), and infrastructure (Abu Nabah, 2004). Borahan and Ziarati (2002) stress the correlation between a country's competitiveness and the quality of HE delivered within that country.

According to Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2003), quality initiatives in HE have two fundamental tasks - service and education. Services in HE are related to the general activities, such as, enrolment and amenities (such as cafeterias and recreation). Education services are related to teaching, research and community. Tan and Kek (2004) determine quality in education as the extent to which students' expectations and needs are met. Lewis and Smith (1994) mention the increased competition in the service industry where there are usually no actual products. This competition has led to numerous firms being more concerned with their internal and external customers. Akal (2008) mentions quality of education in terms of how they utilise modern technology, as this indicates quality at the administrative level. Due to the growing demand for quality, there is a requirement for an appropriate framework for HE, suggest Baig et al. (2006).

According to Kettunen and Kantola (2007), SM and quality are widely applied in different levels of HE to ensure high quality outcomes. However, SP and quality have been developed independently of each other but they meet in practice in many sorts of firms. Finally, the research on quality in HE shows that there is no specific explanation of quality, nor is one possible.

### **3.10.3 Service Quality (SQ)**

Service quality is a customer's subjective evaluation during the performance of services. It is a key for success and survival in the overall economy of many nations in the present global competition. Hence, many experts stress that SQ is the most useful and powerful tool to form business strategy (Zeithaml et al., 1996). Ahmed and Parasuraman (1994) define SQ as consciously choosing quality initiatives which will benefit the organisation's strategic operations and ensuring

those initiatives are implemented effectively by using appropriate quality leadership.

More attention is now paid to the role of SQ and is considered critical to the accomplishment of an institution (Landrum et al., 2007). According to Rao and Kelkar (1997), the delivery of high SQ is a strategy which is directly relatable to the success of an organisation, particularly during periods of competition. Numerous empirical and conceptual studies have focused on this topic, resulting in a general consensus that SQ impacts positively on an organisation's performance and placement amongst its competition.

Similarly, many worldwide economies are increasingly reliant on the service industry and its contribution to them. In view of the fact that competition in modern times is global, it is considered essential to deliver quality service in order to ensure survival and success (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Reichheld and Sasser, 1990; Zeithaml et al., 1990). Randall and Senior (1994) point out that this pressure to deliver quality services has even spread to the public sector, in order to improve both quality and efficiency (Robinson, 2003).

Customers desire a product that satisfies their needs and has an affordable price for good quality. Researchers and managers at organisations have considered service quality due to its influence on business performance, lower expenses, client satisfaction and profitability (Seth et al, 2005, cited in Babaei Ahari et al., 2012). SQ practices are vital for employee satisfaction. Maintaining SQ could be challenging task for the service firms. Hence, quality is everyone's responsibility and requires an interaction combination of people, materials, tools and the environment to produce an outcome (i.e. a service or product) (Besterfield et al., 2003, p. 126).

Zeithaml and Bitner (1996, p. 76) say that ‘. . . the issue of highest priority today involves understanding the impact of SQ on profit and other financial outcomes of the organisation’. Since the 1980s, SQ has been associated with profit increase, and it is realised as providing a significant advantage in competitive terms by creating reiteration sales, positive word of mouth feedback, and customer loyalty.

#### **3.10.4 Service Quality definition**

A comprehensive definition of SQ is notoriously problematic to create. From the perspective of Christou and Sigala, (2002) SQ was considered initially as an issue which needed to be resolved; it is a problem which is faced primarily at the tactical level, however more recently there have been significant improvements in organisations’ assessments of their service quality. In order to help businesses survive in the future, there needs to be an understanding of management models and assessment tools, and effective application of them to make sure customer-perceived quality is at its highest.

The concept of quality is the idea that the customer using the service will judge that quality based on their evaluation of experience (Zeithaml, 1987; Zammuto et al., 1996). Lewis and Booms (1983) were perhaps the first to outline SQ as a ‘measure of how well the service level delivered matches the customer’s expectations’ (p.100). Similarly, Zeithaml (1987) and Zammuto et al. (1996) conceptualise the definition as being based on the customer’s judgment; quality is perceived through their experience with the organisation. In addition, Parasuraman et al. (1990) conclude that a customer’s perceptions of SQ are a result of the comparison between their expectations before using the service and their actual experience of it. Rowley (1996) makes a similar point that perceived quality results from comparing expectations and actual experience, or their

perception of experience. Reisinger (2001) states that SQ is so subjective, therefore this accounts for the difficulty in clearly defining it. Some suggest that SQ derives from a comparison of expectations with perceived performance (Parasuraman et al., 1988a), while some argue that it originates from the comparison of performance and ideal standards (Teas, 1993) or even just from performance perceptions (Cronin and Taylor, 1992). Fox and Day (1988) argue that brand names have not been found to be reliable indicators of service quality relating to perceived quality for services firms.

The literature classifies two diverse aspects of SQ: a technical dimension which relates to the service being provided, and a functional dimension relating to how that service is delivered (Grönroos, 1983; 1984). On the other hand, Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1982) define SQ using three features:

- (1) Physical quality - this relates to aspects of service which are physical or tangible.
- (2) Interactive quality – this refers to the relationship between the customer and the organisation, and the interactive nature of this relationship.
- (3) Corporate quality – this relates to a service provider’s image, which is attributed to them through their potential and current customers’ perceptions. It is also suggested that corporate (or image) quality is more stable over time when compared with the first two features.

Furthermore, Grönroos (1982; 1984) was one of the first academics who dealt exclusively with SQ. According to him, SQ can be broken down into three sub-dimensions. The first is ‘the technical quality of the outcome’ which refers to the outcome, or what the customer gains from the service, and can be measured objectively without taking consumer opinion into account in a similar way to the assessment of product quality. In other words, it relates to what is actually

provided (knowledge, tangibles, technical solutions, etc.) during the service process.

The second is 'the functional quality of the encounter' which refers to the process of evaluating the manner of service delivery. This is often perceived subjectively, as it deals with the interaction between the customer and the service provider. The third sub-dimension is 'the company corporate image' which deals with a customer's overall perception of a company; this is based on several factors such as price and reputation of the organisation, as well as a combination of functional and/or technical factors (Owlia and Aspinwall, 1996). Grönroos (1990) also emphasises the importance of corporate image as yet another significant component in the perceived SQ model, much like Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1982; 1991)'s idea. In addition, image falls on different levels, for example product level or brand level (Grönroos, 1990). Customers tend to use the same service organisation and have contact with them, so they bring with them their previous perceptions and experiences each time they use the service (Grönroos, 2001).

Researchers have found that management initiatives in the form of organisational support, rewards, empowerment, and training are the main drivers of frontline employees' excellent customer service (Babakus et al., 2003). Kim et al. (2009) suggest that a successful service organisation relies on frontline employees who make face-to-face communications with customers.

It may be difficult to evaluate technical quality, or the 'what', in some organisations. Since customers cannot measure technical quality themselves, they must rely on different methods to build their quality perceptions (the 'how') (Grönroos, 1982). It is argued that in trying to determine quality, a customer must make a distinction between the quality of service delivery and the quality of the service outcome. This can only be judged after receipt of the service.

### 3.10.5 Service quality measurements

Reicheld and Sasser (1990) indicate that ‘quality does not improve unless you measure it’. Similarly, Harrington (1991) states that ‘If you cannot measure it, you cannot control it. If you cannot control it, you cannot manage it. If you cannot manage it, you cannot improve it’ (p.164). Moreover, Nasser et al. (2006) and Brown and Mazzarol (2009) illustrate the use of an applicable assessment tool, which would assist managers in evaluating the SQ provided by their organisations, and therefore being capable of designing better service delivery based on the results.

According to Choudhuri (2012), features of SQ vary from sector to sector, between states, between cultures, and over time as well. Each feature of the SQ for any specific service industry plays an important part in shaping perceptions within a customer’s mind.

Over the last decade, numerous assessments were conducted to measure the SQ in organisations. According to Zineldin (2002), the main issue of measurement and control of quality is to provide a true reflection of the way in which resources are consumed, which can be the subject of comparison among service production and delivery systems.

Parasuraman et al. (1985) suggest service outcomes should not be the only factor on which to evaluate quality, but the delivery process of the service should also be considered. Evaluation of process quality happens while the service is being performed, whereas outcome quality is evaluated afterwards. However, the measurement of SQ using something like SERVQUAL only measures a functional dimension, rather than both of them. Further to this point, SERVQUAL has been criticised for its lack of focus on both dimensions (Mangold and Babakus, 1991; Baker and Lamb, 1993; Richard and Allaway, 1993).

Additionally, Hurley and Estalami (1998) state scholars either evaluate the SQ as a perceived performance only, or as a gap in perception and expectation. Yet, the dimension of quality and the measurement technique to the SQ has been a frequently questioned (Parasuraman et al., 1993; Cronin and Taylor, 1994; Owlia and Aspinwall, 1996). In the same vein, Coulthard (2004) stresses that a significant argument has also been raised on the most appropriate methodology to measure perceptions of SQ.

Brady and Cronin (2001) and Kang and James (2004) acknowledge that researchers tend to select one of two concepts on which to base their work; the American perspective based primarily on Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988), or the European perspective based on Grönroos (1982, 1990). The American perspective of SQ focuses on functional quality attributes, whereas the European perspective focuses on technical quality and image as additional features of the SQ.

Abdullah (2006) and Brochado (2009) state that reviewing the literature reveals that the most commonly used scales to measure quality are SQ (SERVQUAL) (Parasuraman et al., 1988a), service performance (SERVPERF) (Cronin and Taylor, 1992); (Teas, 1993), importance-performance analysis (EP) (Ford et al., 1999), and the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) (Cullen et al., 2003), in order to create assessment models for quality measurement within HE. SERVQUAL is used for comparison between prior expectations and actual perceptions of the service. There are five gaps in the perceptions of SQ on an executive level and the service delivery responsibilities (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Zeithaml et al., 1986; 1990), while the SERVPERF only deals with service quality perceptions. Conversely, the EP method analyses the gap between performance perceptions and disregards customer expectations.

Abdullah (2004; 2006) proposes Higher Education Performance (HEdPERF); this is a new 41-item performance-based measuring scale which can more effectively represent determinants of the SQ relating to HE. The aim of this is to take into account all aspects of the service environment which the student experiences, as well as the academic factors.

However, Abdullah (2005) stresses that more attention is commonly paid to the SERVQUAL and SERVPERF instruments. Diverse studies using SERVQUAL concluded SERVQUAL has been one of commonly used technique and applied methods for the measurement of perceived SQ.

#### 3.10.5.1 **SERVQUAL scale**

Plenty of the studies to date have focused on using SERVQUAL instrument to measure SQ. Hence, marketing and industry literature relating to SQ widely quotes their use (Brown et al., 1993). Parasuraman et al. (1988) extend the SQ measurement debate by suggesting that SQ is a construct that is alike to an attitude and related, but not equivalent to consumer satisfaction. Hence, they proposed that SQ should be operationalised as a comparison between the consumer expectations of service providers and the performance of the organisations on a particular attitudes related to quality assessment. After reviewed the literature on quality measurement, they concluded that:

- (1) SQ is more problematic to assess than the quality of goods;
- (2) SQ results from comparing actual service performance and the level of expected service;
- (3) SQ perception encompasses the procedure of service delivery as well as the outcomes.

Wisniewski (2001) carried out a study on customer satisfaction within various Scottish Councils services using the SERVQUAL method. Anderson and Zwelling (1996) evaluated the SQ of four clinics at M.D. Anderson Cancer Centre clinics, the University of Texas, that need improvement in terms of patient perceptions of SQ. The SERVQUAL SQ measurement methodology was used and revised for use in healthcare settings. Using the service gap analysis method which compares expectations with perceptions, the results demonstrated that patients found the most significant problems across all clinics were waiting times and billing accuracy. When comparing each individual clinic, the best performers were shown to be the Medical Gastroenterology and Leukaemia clinics and the Medical Breast clinic the worst. Yet the performance differences measured here reflect different patient expectations, not different perceptions of service quality. Consequently, an organisation's SQ evaluation can be strongly impacted by customer expectations.

Jannadi et al. (2000) examined SQ at the Saudi Consolidated Electric Company in the Eastern Province (SCECO-East). Gap model (SERVQUAL) was applied in order to investigate which of the organisation's activities influence the perception of quality. SCECO-East then measured the level of SQ through answers given by their customers regarding their expectations of the company, and performance expectations around particular determinants of SQ; i.e. tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. In addition, two surveys were conducted amongst company staff – one amongst supervisors, and the other amongst frontline staff, principles, and supervisory staff who all have contact with customers. The samples were chosen randomly. The results of the study showed that perceived SQ is affected more by service performance than any other factor, and also explains variations in SQ, which means service delivery is the most

important area of improvement. Staff who have direct contact with customers agreed that Gap 4 does contribute to the problem, for example when service delivery fails to meet expectations, however not to the same degree as Gap 3. Therefore, a close relationship must be maintained between the company and its customers in order to reduce the gap between expectations and service delivery.

Yarmohammadiana et al. (2011) investigate SQ of a postgraduate school using SERVQUAL model applied in a non-governmental university 'Islamic Azad University-Khorasgan Branch'. The study method is descriptive-survey using a standard questionnaire of SERVQUAL to evaluate postgraduate students' perceptions toward present and predictable level of quality. SERVQUAL questionnaire includes five variables (guarantee, sympathy, facilities, responsibility and reliance). The results showed a negative gap between the perception of the present situation and expectations (the ideal situation) from the viewpoints of the students. Furthermore, the significant difference between students' expectations and current level of quality of services in responsiveness dimension of quality. The other dimensions were ranked in this order: empathy, assurance, tangibility, and the confidence in service quality.

A study by Munhurrun et al. (2010) investigates the difference between customer expectations of service, and frontline employees' perceptions of those customer expectations. SQ is measured amongst customers and staff in a public sector organisation in Mauritius, using SERVQUAL as a tool. The manner in which SQ expectations and perceptions were investigated is proven to be appropriate and reliable for a public service organisation such as this one. The results showed that even though the shortfall in meeting customer expectations is significant, the frontline staff do understand what these expectations are. The dimensions with the lowest ratings should therefore be the focus of these employees.

Hence, SERVQUAL has enjoyed extensive acceptance as a measure of SQ (Chebat et al., 1995; Furrer et al., 2000; Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003). To conclude, the SERVQUAL instrument seeks to measure SQ by taking two parallel sets of items and scoring them separately, using five features of service quality, namely tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The SERVQUAL model measures satisfaction with SQ as a ‘gap’ between customers' expectations and perceptions. Table 3.2 shows the elements of this model.

**Table 3-2 SERVQUAL dimensions**

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Items in scale</b>
Tangibles	The appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials	4
Reliability	The ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately	5
Responsiveness	The willingness to help customers and to provide prompt service	4
Assurance	The knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence	4
Empathy	The provision of caring, individualised attention to customers	5

**Source: Buttle, (1996); Khodayari and Khodayari (2011)**

### 3.10.5.2 Criticism to SERVQUAL measure

Asubonteng et al. (1996) and Buttle (1996) state that the SERVQUAL tool has been the subject of criticism even though it is used extensively. Critics cite lack of validity, dimensionality, and the use of different scores as reasons to potentially denounce it. This is particularly relevant to the five main variables and their dependence or independence (Carman, 1990; Babakus and Boller, 1992; Cronin and Taylor, 1992).

It is argued that criticisms of the SERVQUAL tool can be grouped into one of two categories – those associated with either theoretical or organisational issues (Buttle, 1996). Moreover, as Cronin et al. (1992) state, some of this criticism has been based on a lack of evidence regarding the gap between expectation and performance as a predictive measure of SQ.

Other research states that there might be a suspected reliability and validity result in the calculation of difference scores of SERVQUAL data, particularly if the expectation measure is truncated by ceiling effects and expectation is always higher than the perception of actual level of service. Eventually, they stress that the SQ construct appears best operationalised by measures of service firm's actual performance, which is the perceived performance without expectation (Brown et al., 1993). For instance, with some types of retail provider, the customer expectations of service are very high (Fogarty et al., 2000). Cronin and Taylor (1992) found evidence to support the view that the component related to performance out-performed SERVQUAL when it came to reliabilities. Parasuraman et al. (1988: 1993) admit that there is logic in the criticism, however they argue that in practice, truncation did not have much effect on reliabilities. Hence, SERVQUAL survey instrument is a reliable, valid and generalisable tool to measure SQ construct.

Although criticism has been abundant, SERVQUAL is still used in many contexts including public utilities (Babakus and Boller, 1992), banks (Kangis and Passa, 1997), travel agencies (Luk, 1997), universities (Galloway, 1998), police services (Donnelly et al., 2006), and hospitals (Bakar et al., 2008).

### 3.10.5.3 **SERVPERF scale**

As a consequence of these criticisms, researchers have established an altered approach to improve the measurement of SQ. The SERVPERF instrument which is one of the most commonly adopted techniques developed by Cronin and Taylor (1992) to overcome some of the limitations of the SERVQUAL. The SERVPERF instrument uses performance-only scales to measure SQ perceptions, in the belief that the SQ should be defined in terms of perception alone. Furthermore, numerous researchers have delivered proof that these performance related measures are superior to difference-score measures (McAlexander et al., 1994; Babacus and Boller 1992; Brady and Cronin, 2001).

Empirical evidence gathered by Cronin and Taylor (1992) demonstrates that the SERVQUAL is outperformed by SERVPERF across four industries: pest control, fast food, banks, and dry cleaning. Additionally, Jain and Gupta (2004) report that SERVPERF correlates more strongly overall SQ than SERVQUAL.

Cronin and Taylor (1994) recognised the dimensional instability of SERVPERF, and recommended that researchers confirm the dimensions of SQ specific to their individual research settings. The SERVPERF scale is made up of 22 perception items, and does not take expectations into consideration. Cronin and Taylor (1992) investigated four industries in their empirical research, and discovered that performance-only measurement performs considerably better than other measures of SQ. This means that SERVPERF is able to score SQ more accurately than SERVQUAL. Their argument is therefore that consumer perception of quality is best found in performance and that expectation does not play a role in this concept.

Nevertheless, many authors concur that customers' perceptions of services provided to them may depend on performance alone, which suggests that when

measuring SQ variance it is worth considering that performance-based measures can explain them (Oliver, 1989; Bolton and Drew, 1991a, 1991b; Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Boulding et al., 1993; Quester et al., 1995; Veerabhadrapa and Jayanna, 2013). These findings are consistent with other research that has compared these methods in the scope of service activities, thus confirming that SERVPERF (performance-only) results in more reliable estimations, greater convergent and discriminant validity, greater explained variance, and consequently less bias than the SERVQUAL and EP scales (Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman et al., 1994a; Quester et al., 1995; Llusar and Zornoza, 2000). In the same vein, various authors have supported the view that SERVQUAL is significantly inferior to SERVPERF (Babakus and Boller, 1992; Brown et al., 1993; Brady et al., 2002; Veerabhadrapa and Jayanna, 2013).

Furthermore, Veerabhadrapa and Jayanna (2013) apply the SERVPERF scale to evaluate and prioritise the dimensions of SQ of selected private banks within the banking sector in India. 22 items of the five dimensions of SQ, namely reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles were used to develop a self-administered questionnaire. Findings indicate that responsiveness was the most important dimension of the SQ followed by tangible, assurance, empathy, and reliability respectively. This helps the service providers to focus and design the services to keep their customers happy.

However, Van Dyke et al. (1997) recognise the unstable nature of these dimensions across industries. Brady and Cronin (2001) suggest that while perceptions of SQ are based on several features, no agreement is made about the precise nature of these features or their content. In contrast, findings from a study by Brochado (2009) conclude that SERVPERF presents the best measurement capability.

#### 3.10.5.4 **SERVQUAL VS SERVPERF**

Generally, most researchers acknowledge that the performance of an organisation is evaluated through consumer expectations, as they act as a point of reference to measure performance against. However, since there is no agreement on whether expectation can be used as a determinant of SQ, this means there are two opposing measurement paradigms; SERVQUAL, or the disconfirmation paradigm, which compares service perceptions with expectations, and SERVPERF, the perception paradigm, which deals only with the perceptions of SQ. They both have the same goal however the main difference is the way they calculate as well as which expectations they use, and how (Abdullah, 2005).

The theoretical roots of SERVQUAL are found in the gaps model; it utilises 22 different items to analyse the difference between performance perceptions and consumer expectations. Customer expectations are 'beliefs about service delivery that serve as standards or reference points against which performance is judged', whereas customer perceptions are 'subjective assessments of actual services experienced' through interaction with the providers (Zeithaml et al., 2006, p.49).

In spite of the validity and broad applicability of Parasuraman et al. (1988) of the SERVQUAL instrument, several replication studies have failed to provide indication to support these contentions (Coulthard, 2004). Numerous studies have failed to classify the five dimensions used in SERVQUAL (Carman, 1990; Babakus and Boller; 1992; Smith, 1995). In addition, the use of the expectation battery has been examined (Cronin and Taylor, 1994; 1992).

The quality of higher education was measured using a comparison of alternative instruments (Brochado, 2009). Five measures were examined for their performance relating to SQ, namely SQ (SERVQUAL), service performance (SERVPERF), importance-weighted SERVQUAL, importance-weighted

SERVPERF, and HE performance (HEdPERF). The measures showing the best capability were SERVPERF and HEdPERF, however it was not clear which of the two performed better.

Thus, owing to the limitations of the SERVQUAL method (Buttle, 1996), an approach based on performance was required – this is when SERVPERF was presented. This approach is based only on the perception component of SQ and in studies has shown to be more effective in variance clarification than SERVQUAL (Cronin and Taylor, 1994).

However, in spite of the above literature, the intangibility of services has made it problematic for performance criteria to be set, monitored and measured (Thakkar et al., 2006). Hence, one of the challenges for today's HEIs is to classify and implement applicable measurement tools that will determine the sustainability of service quality (O'Neill and Palmer, 2004).

### **3.10.6 Service Quality in public sector**

Interest in services, and especially in SQ, increased during the 1980s. The interest in quality actually started earlier in the manufacturing of goods that has to face a close control before the final product goes to the marketplace (Teas, 1993). Providing services in public organisations is less straightforward, as according to Gowan et al. (2001), it is necessary not only to meet requirements which are known to the organisation, but also to investigate unknown requirements, to allocate resources, to set priorities, and to account for actions.

In fact, SQ in the public sector is tangible and quality has become a subjective term (Harvey and Green, 1993; Parasuraman et al., 1988). Hence, Li and Kaye (1998) claim that SQ deals with corporate image, the environment, and interaction between people. According to Yeo (2008), the typical understanding of service

quality is the association between the professionalism-intimacy measure and its effect on learning. However SQ is also associated with other areas of higher education, such as the physical, psychological and institutional aspects. Process quality is judged by the customer while the service is being delivered, whereas output quality can only be judged afterwards, therefore it is necessary to differentiate between them. In addition, services differ greatly from products as they are not physical items which can be taken away and stored; a service only lasts as long as the process of delivery lasts.

SQ in public services has been discussed and researched by numerous scholars (Wisniewski and Donnelly, 1996; Rowley, 1998; Wisniewski, 2001; Brysland and Curry, 2001). Furthermore, research in the area of services deals greatly with the concept of quality as a theme (Parasuraman et al., 1988). There is clear support within the literature for the use of SERVQUAL in the public sector (Brysland and Curry, 2001). Barnes and Cumby (1995) assert that improvement in SQ has been previously found to increase customer satisfaction. Therefore, it is expected that SQ positively relates to performance which uses customer satisfaction as an indicator.

Quality requirements within public services change with consumer needs and expectations, yet these requirements are often slow to be addressed. This is largely because SQ practice in government organisations faces numerous difficulties, including being scrutinised by the public and the media, inability to make arbitrary decisions, and any decisions that are made being required to follow specific laws (Tiecher et al., 2002).

### 3.10.7 Service quality in higher education

It has been recognised that a successful university is one which understands students' demands and needs. Hence, marketing has become an important concept for any institution of HE to increase competition among universities worldwide (Alhudaithy, 2014). Recently, HE has been associated with the service sector as it provides an educational service to a large public, in a direct or indirect approach (e.g. students, parents, the local community, and future employers). Mostly, as Shekarchizadeh et al. (2011) claim, HEIs look to be providers of high quality services in every area of their organisation, from administration to education.

The concept of quality in HE is differing from business practices (Srikanthan, 1999). A more competitive education environment has gradually been achieved through quality of services provided by HEIs (Kassim et al., 2013). Awareness of SQ has become a vital strategic position for an organisation due to its impact on the post-enrolment communication behaviour of the students (Marilyn, 2005). According to Harvey and Knight (1996) Ham and Hayduk (2003), Angell et al. (2008), Yeo (2008), Al-alak and Bekhet (2011), and Noaman et al. (2015), there are many indicators in the literature that stress the how important it is to measure and monitor service quality in educational institutions. Tan and Kek (2004) claim that HEIs do not do as well against the competition when it comes to high SQ. Thus, it is crucial to assess SQ in an educational organisation in order to gain feedback and analysis of plans which have been implemented.

Similarly, Faganel and Macur (2005) claim the struggle for educational institutions to deliver superior SQ is due to the fact that they need to compete with other establishments for their students. Sigala and Baum (2003) state the influence and superior awareness of a new generation of students as consumers, who are more selective, informed and interactive regarding their future which makes

attracting students even more complicated and problematic. Brochado, (2009) after reviewing SQ literature suggests that educational organisations should be monitoring the quality of their services in order to make a commitment to continuous improvement. Therefore, acknowledgment of the importance of the SQ role in HE literature has received increasing consideration during the previous two eras.

Furthermore, SQ has become a strategic decision for many organisations of HEIs around the world. The improvement of HE SQ is found in the organisation's capability to make changes as and when necessary, fostering a culture for this within its operating systems and various decision-making processes (Mosadeghard, 2006).

From this perspective, educational procedures such as delivery of lessons, counselling, advising, and project supervision could all be deemed as services delivered to students who assume the role of customers (Yeo, 2008). As Grönroos (1984) points out, service quality is a perceived judgment. The approaches discussed in this chapter so far have focused on the consumer's perception of SQ; however Steers and Porter (1991) argue that the perception of the employee is important and should be evaluated, as their behaviour is driven by their perception and is therefore a valid detail to consider. Numerous studies support the view that there is a strong correlation between staff and customer perceptions of SQ (Schneider et al., 1980; Schneider and Bowen, 1985). Employee perceived SQ is defined as 'an employee's personal evaluation of the SQ that he or she delivers to customers' (Slåtten et al., 2011, p.207).

Angell et al. (2008) identify the service factors used by postgraduates in their quality evaluations, analyse the appropriateness of importance-performance analysis in the measurement of SQ, and provide a working example of

importance-performance analysis application in a UK-based university. The study employed a two-stage methodology incorporating qualitative convergent in-depth interviews to identify 20 service characteristics that were considered important, on a sample of postgraduate students in selected UK Universities when rating their service expectations and experiences. Results suggested that from the 20 services attributes, four service factors emerged; academic, leisure, industry links, and cost. Using importance-performance analysis in a UK university, the findings propose that the 'academic' and 'industry links' features of service quality are the most critical to postgraduates. The study's conclusions recommend that importance-performance analysis is an appropriate instrument for measuring SQ in postgraduate education.

Yeo (2008) investigated the impacts of SQ in HE and the perceptions associated with the implementation of a Singapore tertiary organisation. The study was based on the foundations of SERVQUAL, explores the relationship between customer perception and expectation, and analyses three major features of service standards: customer orientation, course design and delivery, and support services. Qualitative research was carried out in the form of detailed interviews and data were collected from internal and external samples (18 academics and ten existing students, and ten graduates and five industry representatives). Findings showed that SQ in HE is a continuous pursuit where expectations and perceptions are likely to change with circumstance and over time. SQ, consequently, should be assessed based on collective experience occurring within an environment which encourages open dialogue. In addition, the way students are perceived will have a bearing on the development of learning dynamics inside as well as outside of the classroom.

Vaniarajan and Vijayadurai (2010) determine which of the SQ factors are the most important among three groups of institutes, namely; specialised management

institutes, engineering colleges, and arts and science colleges. These important factors are placement facilities, learning outcomes, responsiveness, personality development, physical facilities, and academics. In addition, the study aims was to examine the students' perception of these features, with a view to discovering what impact they have on customer satisfaction. 20 students in their final year were chosen at random from each organisation to complete the questionnaire. The study found that the most important SQ dimensions in HEIs are placement facilities, learning outcomes, responsiveness, personality development, physical facilities, and academics. The findings also indicate that there is a considerable and positive impact on customer satisfaction from SQ factors.

Hill (1995) considers characteristics of current SQ theory within HE in Britain. He points out that as the student takes on the role of consumer in an HE environment, there are certain implications regarding SQ management in HEIs. Hill (1995)'s exploratory study monitored a group of 62 accounting undergraduates, who were asked to complete a questionnaire indicating their expectations and perceptions of service over a period of time. The resulting data indicated that there is a need to collect information about students' expectations, ideally before they arrive at university and continuing throughout their time there. In addition, there should be a strategy in place to manage students' expectations from enrolment through to graduation.

Brochado (2009) states that highly satisfied clients are expected to spread positive word of mouth about the organisations, hence attracting new customers with lower marketing rates. However, the identification of SQ features and the implementation of the accurate measurement scale is challenging for those who are attempting to gain a better understanding of the quality issues that HE internal and external customer face.

Consequently, there is general agreement that SQ is of high importance in HEI field. However, practitioners face serious challenges when attempting to identify and implement the right instrument, whilst trying to better understand the quality issues within the HE sector. Indeed, the application of a suitable tool would benefit university authorities by enabling them to assess their organisation's SQ.

#### **3.10.8 Service quality instruments in HE**

Although the total quality management philosophy established in the manufacturing industry has been recommended for the HE sector (Williams, 1993), the extent of its applicability and relevance to these manufacturing best practices have been strongly questioned due to the unique nature of in a HE service offering (Schwartzman, 1995). According to Svensson and Wood (2007), numerous students genuinely believe that they are customers of university because they have financial costs for their studies and/or they have paid their money.

Cheng and Tam (1997) point out that 'education quality is a rather vague and controversial concept' (p.23). Berry (1980) indicates service as behavioural rather than physical objects, and has been defined as activities and performance or acts.

Therefore, there is an extensive debate about the best method to gain better understanding of SQ in HE (Becket and Brookes, 2006). One of the contributing reasons to this arises from the nature of HE offering, which is more complex than other services such as retail businesses (LeBlanc and Nguyen, 1997). Harvey and Green (1993) state that an accurate definition of quality in HE is lacking due to its complex and multifaceted notion. Therefore, because SQ is an important feature, its measurement and management are equally important providing SQ has become a significant objective for most HEIs (Alves and Viera, 2006). Consequently,

consensus concerning ‘the best way to define and measure service quality’ (Clewes, 2003, p. 71) does not arise yet.

The measurement of quality turns out to be rather controversial, since defining quality is so difficult. In terms of measurement methodologies, it has been proposed by various researchers that SQ theory derives from the comparing expectations and perceptions (Parasuraman et al., 1988); whereas others suggest that performance perception is the only aspect to focus on (Cronin and Taylor, 1992), and that the expectations are not only irrelevant, but can even corrupt data by giving paradoxical information (Brochado, 2009).

In the context of HE SQ dimensions include:

- The appearance of the university’s physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials (tangibles).
- The ability of the university to perform the promised service dependably and accurately (reliability)
- The willingness of the university to help students and provide prompt service (responsiveness)
- The knowledge and courtesy of academic staff and their ability to convey trust and confidence (assurance) and the caring, individualized attention the university provides its students with (empathy).

The SERVQUAL tool, ‘despite criticisms by a variety of authors, still seems to be the most practical model for the measurement of SQ available in the literature’ (Cuthbert, 1996b, p.34). According to Parsuraman et al. (1988), it could be required to modify some of the dimensions, yet Parasuraman et al. (1991) alerted that the measure’s integrity could be compromised or lost by adding or removing items or dimensions.

In addition, SERVQUAL is applicable to any service sector which means it is appropriate to apply it to a higher education organisation. Parasuraman et al. (1988) state that SERVQUAL had been designed to be ‘applicable across a broad spectrum of services’ and that specific needs could be met through adaptation, and that its value would be seen when it is used to track SQ trends.

Thus, various studies have adapted this scale in HE such as Hampton (1993), who used SERVQUAL model to measure student satisfaction with professional service quality. He applied the gap model in order to analyse how students perceived service delivery. Hampton (1993, p.91) discussed the importance of measuring the satisfaction of students when delivering services, and he noted that ‘one should note that a gap between actual experiences and expectations of clients is the general definition of customer satisfaction’ and that ‘perhaps university education is one of those services where satisfaction and SQ are the same’. A negative correlation was found between satisfaction and gap scores, which mean that gap could be a measure of SQ. When SERVQUAL is used as a tool, it is able to determine the SQ level as well as identify any gaps in service. If the service delivered does not match the expectations of the customer, this is when a gap is created. The gap is then addressed through the identification and implementation of an appropriate strategy dealing with expectations, perceptions, or both (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Zeithaml et al., 1990).

The SQ of a public university health clinic was measured by Anderson (1995). She evaluated the SQ using 15 statements demonstrating the five-dimensions of SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988) at the University of Houston Health Center. The results revealed that patients were dissatisfied with all five SERVQUAL points, with the most dissatisfaction felt for assurance. At the other end of the scale, the patients were least dissatisfied with tangibles and empathy.

Clemes et al. (2007) used a hierarchical model to measure students' overall satisfaction at universities in New Zealand's HE sector with influential factors, three primary dimensions such as tuition fees (price), university image, and favourable future behavioural intentions, and ten sub-dimensions were (1) academic staff; (2) academic development; (3) physical attractiveness; (4) administration staff; (5) personal development; (6) library; (7) career opportunities; (8) course content; (9) social factors; and (10) academic staff availability. Demographic factors (i.e. age, ethnicity, gender) were used to compare students' perceptions of these constructs. The study's results establish SQ as having the greatest effect on satisfaction in HE.

Pariseau and McDaniel (1997) conducted another study using SERVQUAL to measure quality in two small private business schools, and they designated the same questionnaire to both staff and students. The results of the study suggest that there is a difference in perspective between faculty and students with regards to the quality of education; this fact could pose difficulties in terms of improvement direction. Another study by Ruby (1998) measured student satisfaction with the four areas of support related to the enrolment process, consisting of admissions, academic records, financial assistance and career services. He utilised the SERVQUAL model for this, and noted 'this model may not suit all areas of education it holds promise as a means for evaluating the quality of selected support services (p.339). However, according to Soutar and McNeil, (1996) numerous studies have been applying SERVQUAL in academic settings, despite some of the language being slightly business-oriented. Furthermore, Cuthbert (1996a) found SERVQUAL to be appropriate for measuring SQ in an HE setting. However, the results were not as satisfactory as had been anticipated; although the score for expectation was exceeded by the perception score for all dimensions

except tangibles, further data analysis indicated that the respondents may have had difficulties with comprehension due to the type of language used (Cuthbert, 1996b). In this vein, Zafiroopoulos and Vrana (2008) also used SERVQUAL as an instrument in their study regarding quality perception and expectation among students and faculty, which was adjusted for an educational setting. Although the SERVQUAL tool's indices show high reliability, there is a need to examine its validity. There are considerable implications in terms of strategy and management as the organisation's ability to align the attitudes of its staff and students is involved. Thus, since SERVQUAL clearly has its limitations in terms of applicability, it is still a useful tool for assessment of SQ along with other methods.

### **3.11 Organisational Commitment (OC)**

Academicians and practitioners have studied OC within all sectors, be it public, private, or non-profit, which reflects the significance of organisational commitment for organisations. OC is related to how much the employees of an organisation see themselves as belonging to the organisation, or parts of it, and whether they feel an attachment toward it (Meyer et al., 2013). Buchanan (1974) witnessed an increased attention in the concept of OC both theoretically, to illuminate the construct, and empirically, to determine the antecedents and consequences of commitment. Hence, during the 1990s, OC continued to be a major focus of research (Meyer et al., 2002). According to Benkhoff (1997), OC has been broadly explored because of its associations with performance. In addition, the observation of OC has drawn significant interest as researchers seek to clarify and understand how dedicated an employee is to their organisation (Lumley, 2010).

The construct of commitment has gained considerable attention for many years from those researching organisational psychology (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Cohen, 1993; Tett and Meyer, 1993; Meyer, 1997; Gutierrez et al., 2012; Huang et al., 2012; Meyer et al., 2012; Wayne et al., 2013). Furthermore, over the last two decades the construct of OC has been identified as a significant variable in sales management and in understanding the work behaviour of an organisation's employee literatures (Mowday et al., 1979; Jaros et al., 1993).

### **3.11.1 Organisational Commitment definitions**

Multiple definitions of OC have been recognised in the literature (O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986; Allen and Meyer, 1990; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1991, 1997). Like many definitions studied in the social sciences, OC has been clarified and measured in various ways by scholars who view it either according to the perspectives of their numerous disciplines (Al-Kahtani, 2012) or depending on the background of the researchers (Azeem, 2010; Yousef, 2010). A good amount of these definitions are based on commitment-related behaviours. For example, if someone is described as being 'bound by his actions' or we talk about 'behaviours that exceed formal and/or normative expectations', what is being described here is an obvious and observable demonstration of commitment (Mowday et al., 1979).

Others define commitment in terms of attitude. To clarify, there is an attitude of commitment when 'the identity of the person is linked or attached to the organisation' (Sheldon, 1971, p.143), or when 'the goals of the organisation and those of the individual become increasingly integrated or congruent' (Hall et al., 1970, p.176). A variety of researchers argue that employee commitment to an organisation depends on the personnel attitude (Potter 1982; O'Reilly, 1989).

Other studies define it on the basis of individual behavioural or psychological state, linking an employee to their firm (Meyer and Allen, 1997). Similarly, Weiner (1992) clarifies the concept of commitment as the 'sense of being bound emotionally or intellectually to some course of action'.

Mowday et al. (1982) define OC as 'the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation' (p.27). Moreover, commitment has been defined as a force that binds an individual to an entity or course of action of relevance to one or more targets (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001) and takes diverse methods including commitment to organisations (Mowday et al., 1982; Meyer and Allen, 1991). Tett and Meyer (1993) state that commitment to the firm improves from job satisfaction. Porter et al. (1974, in Tett and Meyer, 1993) assert that commitment is more stable than satisfaction but it takes longer to develop.

Meyer and Allen (1997) define OC as a psychological state or individual behaviours that characterises the employee's relationship with the organisation with its implications for the decision to continue membership in the organisation. Grönroos (1983) found that employees have a tendency to treat their customers well, if they in turn are treated well by their managers. Fuller et al. (2003) state that workers are more likely to commit themselves to the company when they feel that the company is committed to them. Hence, Tavitiyaman (2009) stresses that organisations must strive to deliver a message to frontline employees that the company is there to assist their job and they have an opportunity for their exceptional performance to be rewarded.

### **3.11.2 Organisational Commitment dimensions**

Bateman and Strasser (1984) state that OC can be operationally defined as ‘multidimensional in nature, involving an employee’s loyalty to the organisation, willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organisation, degree of goal and value congruency with the organisation, and desire to maintain membership’ (p.95). Based on a review of the literature, Meyer and Allen (1991) and Meyer et al. (2002) proposed a three-component model of OC encompassing the affective, continuance, and normative aspects of commitment. In addition, Allen and Meyer (1990) stress that employees are theorised to experience this force in the method of three cores, or attitudes: affective, normative, and continuance, which reveal emotional links, perceived obligation, and perceived sunk costs in relation to a target. Hence, since its conception, academics and researchers have given significant attention to the three component model (e.g. Jaros, et al., 1993; Eisenberger et al., 2010; Culpepper, 2011; Eisenberger et al., 2010; Gardner et al., 2011; Morin et al., 2011).

#### **3.11.2.1 Affective Commitment (AC)**

Affective commitment reflects commitment based on emotional attachment to a feeling of identity and level of involvement that a staff member has with its organisation (Mowday et al., 1979; O’Reilly and Chatman, 1986; Meyer and Allen, 1993). Porter et al. (1974) illustrate AC using three factors ‘(1) belief in and acceptance of the organisation’s goals and values, (2) a readiness to focus effort on helping the organisation achieve its goals, and (3) a strong need to maintain organisational membership’. In that vein, Mowday et al., (1982) stated, there are three features that together create the AC: a) a strong belief in the goals and values of the organisation and the employees’ acceptance of these, b) the

willingness to lend one's support to the organisation, and c) a desire of the employees to maintain their membership in the organisation.

Meyer and Allen (1984; 1990; 1991) described AC is based on how much individuals 'want' to continue in the organisation. Furthermore, Mowday et al. (1979) state that AC is 'when the employee identifies with a particular organisation and its goals in order to maintain membership to facilitate the goal' (p.225). Meyer and Allen (1997) define AC as 'the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation' (p.67). These feelings stem from the employee's first-hand experience that the organisation supports its employees, enhances their sense of personal importance and treats them fairly (Meyer and Allen, 1997). Hence, a diversity of researchers agreed that AC expresses the emotional attachment of the employees. These degrees of emotional commitment could create an integrated employees feeling of being a part of the organisation and identifying themselves with it (Porter et al., 1976; Mowday et al., 1979; Meyer et al., 2002; Meyer et al., 2013).

Furthermore, AC has a number of antecedents, including employee comfort and opportunity for self-expression (Meyer and Allen, 1988). If self-expression is an antecedent to AC and personalisation is a form of self-expression (Scheiberg, 1990), then personalisation is associated with commitment and, more specifically, with AC.

There are a number of studies which establish a positive link between affective commitment (AC) and other constructs (e.g. Maignan et al., 1999; Brammer et al., 2007; Turker, 2009; Rego et al., 2010; Stites and Michael, 2011). For example, a study by Farooq et al. (2014) examines the effect of perceived corporate social responsibility on employees' AC. Another study by Alniaçık et al. (2012) explores the relationships between career motivation, AC, and job satisfaction.

Ünal (2012) studies the link between dimensions of employees' job satisfaction with AC and CC.

Luchak and Gellatly (2007) researched the linear and nonlinear relationship between AC, CC, and work-related outcomes (turnover cognitions, absenteeism, and job performance). Their conclusions reflected those already observed in the literature, in that CC had a weaker association with work outcomes than AC.

#### **3.11.2.2 Continuance Commitment (CC)**

Continuance commitment refers to the desire to avoid potential costs which would result from a change in employer (e.g. relocation, loss of personal contact with colleagues, and wage losses). Therefore it refers to commitment based on any losses incurred through the leaving of the organisation (Hackett et al., 1994). In other words, CC reflects commitment based on the perceived costs, both economic and social, of leaving the organisation. CC is based on the individual's awareness of the lack of alternative opportunities and the costs associated with leaving the organisation. NC reflects a feeling of an employee's obligation to remain (Meyer and Allen 1984; 1990; 1991).

#### **3.11.2.3 Normative Commitment (NC)**

Normative Commitment is when an employee feels obliged to remain with the organisation (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Meyer and Allen (1991) argue that employees could experience all three forms of OC in variable degrees. It does not correspond to any individually felt attachment of the institution member. However, it reflects commitment based on perceived obligation and moral-ethical towards the organisation, for example rooted in the norms of reciprocity (Meyer et al., 2002; 2013).

Hence, various studies attempt to analyse the features of commitment. Several analyses have found negative correlations between AC, absences and fluctuation. Conversely, a positive correlation was found between AC and motivation, organisational citizenship behaviour, job satisfaction, performance, and productivity (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1997; Meyer et al., 2002; Davila and Garcia, 2012; Gutierrez et al., 2012; Dello et al., 2013).

Self-assessment of the employees revealed an association between performance and commitment (Meyer et al., 1993; Leong et al., 1994; Bycio et al., 1995; Lee and Gao, 2005). In a study by Qaisar et al. (2012), they found that there is a significant positive influence of OC on performance of police officers in Pakistan. A survey questionnaire was personally distributed among 150 low ranking officers. They examined the impact of three components of organisational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative commitment) in the context of a developing country, i.e. Pakistan. In that vein, various researchers have stressed the role of commitment in enhancing workforce performance and the positive correlation between OC and employee performance (Meyer et al., 1989; Morrow, 1993; Guest, 1997; Suliman and Iles, 2000).

### **3.11.3 Factors affecting employees' organisational commitment**

Numerous studies have been conducted to identify factors that can generate OC. For instance, Nguyen et al. (2014) found work conditions, team work, and relationship with management to be the best predictors of staff OC. Furthermore, research shows that there is a positive correlation between commitment and characteristics of the individual, for example their age (Mathieu and Zajac 1990), length of employment in a specific organisation (Luthans et al., 1985), and marital status (John and Taylor, 1999); however, the employee's education level was

negatively related to commitment (Glisson and Durick, 1988; Lok and Crawford, 2003).

Sommer et al. (1996) reveal that the OC among Korean employees increases with age and position. In the same vein, Hus (2002) proposes that older employees generally would be expected to have more knowledge about organisational operations and more commitment to their organisations than younger ones. This finding may be due to the fact that those in the higher positions who had been in the same position for years were older and had greater commitment. Similarly, according to Kim et al. (2009), employees who are in the early stage of their career are less likely to be committed to the organisation than managers who have worked for a longer time and received many rewards from the organisation. Ghonim (2007), on the other hand, found some differences, with statistical significance, in the level of OC according to employee gender and position at Al Najah National University in Jordan.

In addition, commitment has been found to be related to such characteristics as task autonomy (Dunham et al., 1994), feedback (Hutichison and Garstka, 1996), and job challenge (Meyer et al., 1998), as well as certain work experiences such as job security (Yousef, 1998), training and mentoring opportunities (Scandura, 1997), and supportive and considerate leadership style (DeCottis and Summers, 1987; Lok and Crawford, 2003).

There might be other factors which could enrich the OC. Human resources management practices, leadership styles, and trust within the firm (Meyer and Allen, 1997), organisational and national culture (Trice and Beyer, 1993; Lok and Crawford, 2003) and job satisfaction (Nguyen et al., 2014) were shown to have a significant impact on, and link to, increasing OC firm outcomes and successful strategy.

#### 3.11.4 OC measurements

Kanning and Hill (2013) conducted a study focused on the OC questionnaire (OCQ; Porter and Smith, 1970), which assists in the measurement of AC. The OCQ is a document consisting of 15 items whose reliability is well documented. The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine whether the contents of the scale can be translated while still keeping their meaning. Three variables were considered: job satisfaction, performance, and support of company values by the employees. The research respondents were employees of an industrial manufacturing company who operate globally, and included staff from production, administration, and service areas. In total, 2812 questionnaires were distributed in seven countries (Germany, USA, Canada, Poland, Hungary, Spain, and Malaysia). The result showed a significant positive association between OCQ, job satisfaction, self-assessed work performance, and the support of company values, which demonstrates that a greater workplace performance is given by employees when their commitment level is high.

Further empirical study by Lee and Gao (2005) was conducted to test a model on the relationships among two facets of commitment, namely AC and CC, three facets of job satisfaction (pay, co-worker, and supervisor), and two work outcomes (effort and propensity-to-leave). OC was measured by the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) which includes 15 items. The study sample was employees from a Korean retail store chain selected at random, and there were 289 usable responses. The model testing results showed that in the Korean retail setting: (1) satisfaction with pay and satisfaction with supervisor significantly increase both AC and CC; (2) satisfaction with co-workers positively influences AC but has no significant effect on CC; and (3) AC rises job effort but

declines the employees' propensity to leave the company, whereas CC decreases propensity to leave however does not increase job effort.

Hashim and Mahmood (2011a) designed a descriptive research that aimed to investigate the disparity between the state of commitment and SQ among academic staff in selected Malaysian Universities, both private and public. The results revealed that commitment to SQ among public academic staff were higher than their counterparts in the private universities at the Malaysian universities. In addition, Hashim and Mahmood (2011b) concluded that there was a certain amount of conflict between the academic leaders and staff; there was no alignment of their feelings and SQ delivery was not given high priority. Hence, they suggested to the policy makers and academic leaders at both university types that they should try to improve the commitment of their academic staff and prioritise SQ in the organisation.

In details, Luchak and Gellatly (2007) compared and tested linear and nonlinear relations between AC and CC and three commonly studied work outcomes (turnover cognitions, absenteeism, and job performance), observed in three different research settings. The result showed that the most common observation in the literature namely, that AC is more strongly related to work outcomes than is CC. Introducing a higher order CC term into the same equation, however, the researchers found that the linear model seriously understates the magnitude of effect of CC on turnover cognitions, absence frequency, and job performance. In addition, the results suggest that caution should be applied in the development of commitment theory based on empirical generalizations gathered from the linear model.

Commitment is most meaningfully assessed using three separate measures. Two of the commitment measures developed on the basis of this model was first used

in published research by Meyer and Allen (1984), and the third, by Allen and Meyer (1990). Since then, the measures, referred to as the AC, CC, and NC scales, have been administered in several studies. Consequently, there now a considerable body of evidence regarding the psychometric properties of the measures and their relations with other organisational and person variables (Allen and Meyer, 1996).

Hence, from the perspective of this study, OC can be viewed as attitudinal, since it corresponds with an individual's attitude towards an organisation (Allen and Meyer, 1990). For the measurement of OC, the current study intends to use the original commitment scale items proposed by Allen and Meyer (1990) and Meyer and Allen (1997; 1991). Items of the original measurement include affective (6 items), normative (7 items) and continuance scales (6 items). These scales are most commonly used in substantive research and there were numerous studies have assessed the construct validity of these scales (Allen and Meyer, 1996; Meyer et al., 2002).

### **3.11.5 OC in Arab culture / context**

In recent decades, in order to address the cross cultural applicability of the three organisational commitment modules of Meyer and Allen (1984; 1990), several studies have investigated the dynamics of the model in non-Western culture including Australia (Iverson and Buttigieg, 1999; Noordin et al., 1999), Belgium (Vanderberghe, 1996), Hong Kong (Chiu and Ng, 1999), Korea (Chang, 1999; Ko et al., 1997), China (Chen and Francesco, 2001; Cheng and Stockdale, 2001), Malaysia (Noordin et al., 1999; Hashim and Mahmood, 2011a; 2011b), in Arab settings such as the United Arab Emirates (Shaw et al., 2003; Yousef, 2000), the

Sultanate of Oman (Azeem, 2010) and Saudi Arabia (Al Meer, 1989; Bhuian and Abdul-Muhmin, 1997; Al-Kahtani, 2012).

Western and non-Western cultures have different views on the person's relationship with society for attitudes and behaviours (Wasti, 2003). For example, Asian cultures tend to emphasise the relatedness of individuals to each other and an interdependent view of the self, whereas Western cultures construe the self as an independent, autonomous and self-contained entity (Markus and Kitayama, 1991).

The impacts of variables (i.e. OC and work outcomes) on organisations are among the most widely researched and studied in Western organisational literature (Brown and Peterson, 1993; Low et al., 2001; Schwepker, 2001). However, little previous research has examined their inter-linkages in other countries, particularly in Arab/Gulf countries (Al-Meer, 1989; Alnajjar, 1996, 1999; Mazayed et al., 2014). In a few notable exceptions, Bhuian and Abdul-Muhmin (1997) explore the nature of job satisfaction and OC among 'guest-worker' expatriate salesforces in Saudi Arabia. An examination of 504 guest-worker sales personnel reveals that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their jobs with a slight inclination toward being satisfied. Results also provide support for the influence of the overall job satisfaction on the OC.

Shaw et al. (2003) investigate the relationships between OC and performance among guest workers and citizens at two commercial banks in the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.). Conclusions in this study demonstrated that OC and performance dimensions were not strongly related – either helping, or overall. Notably, the relationship between commitment and overall performance was not significant.

Within an Arab context as mentioned before, very few studies have investigated the role of commitment for organisations; for instance, Al-Kahtani (2012) aimed to identify significant components that may influence the correlation between demographic variables (e.g. age and education) and work related variables (e.g. job satisfaction, advancement, participation in decision making, working conditions, and job involvement) with OC. The sample consisted of 1022 employees from 15 different ministries of KSA in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Analysis of the data showed neither commitment nor non-commitment from the majority of the employees. Furthermore, there is a significant correlation between OC and the demographical variable of age. On the other hand, significance was found with the education variable, however it was deemed to be inversely related with OC. In detail the findings indicate that the more educated people could assume a higher expectation which organisations might be unable to accomplish. In addition, job satisfaction and additional work related variables such as participation in decision making, advancement, working conditions, and grade level were all found to be significantly related with OC.

Azeem (2010) conducted a study on a sample involving 128 employees from service industry in Muscat, the Sultanate of Oman. He investigated the nature of relationships with, and the impact of demographic factors (age and job tenure) and job satisfaction aspects (nature and content of the job, pay, supervision, promotion opportunities, and relationships with co-workers) on OC. Two self-administrated questionnaires were personally distributed at random. The findings showed a positive yet moderate relationship amongst job satisfaction facets, demographic factors, and OC. In addition, the most significant predictors of OC were found to be age, tenure, and overall job satisfaction.

Mazayed et al. (2014) conducted a study to identify the relationship and impact of job involvement and OC on organisational productivity in manufacturing/construction organisations of Arab/Middle Eastern countries. The study reveals that an individual who has high OC puts in outstanding efforts, as he is totally satisfied with his organisation, as well as the job. This research also highlights that performance of employees can be increased via involvement in decision-making. The study concludes that organisations with high employee commitment are performing more successfully than organisations with low employee commitment.

A study conducted by Al Meer (1989) in Saudi Arabia determined that East Asians employees have a tendency to exhibit a significantly higher level of commitment to their company than either Saudi or Western employees. Furthermore, results indicated that there is a positive significant relationship between tenure, education, and OC among Westerners. Some literatures, such as the study conducted by Oshagbemi (1997) which analysed levels of satisfaction of academic staff, emphasise the importance on the role of academicians as primary consumers and students as secondary consumers. Sim and Idrus (2004), Jusoh et al. (2004), and Sahney et al. (2008) concurred with this point, and they all stand by the notion that staff within the education sector are required to be committed enough to deliver high SQ, as this is the best strategy to adopt in order to retain customers and satisfy their needs and expectations.

Furthermore, the rewards of commitment for the organisation can mean increased employee tenure, limited turnover, reduced training costs, greater job satisfaction, acceptance of organisation's demands, and the meeting of organisational goals such as high quality (Mowday et al., 1982).

Beatson et al. (2008) found that perceived quality and perceived SQ were significantly impacted by perceived employee loyalty and commitment. In addition, prior research has established that employees who have a higher level of commitment to a company will remain loyal to that organisation, thus maintaining a lower rate of staff turnover (Hartline et al., 2000; Clark et al., 2008; Elmadag et al., 2008).

### **3.12 Higher education's stakeholder**

Higher education organisations are gradually moving towards service quality due to there being an increasing social requirement to assess the quality of organisations. However, before assessing the SQ, HE needs to identify who exactly the customer is in education. Rowley (1997) advises that organisations should measure quality while considering the perspectives of everyone involved, including the students, parents, staff, employers, business, and legislators.

Madu and Kuei (1993) explain that universities must acknowledge the views of its students, as they are the primary customers; the parents, as they are the customers who pay for their children to attend the institution; businesses, as they are customers who hire the students; and its own staff members, being customers who teach the students the necessary skills and knowledge required for employment. Furthermore, Kara and DeShields (2004) refer to various customers of educational institutions: students, staff, faculty, alumni, donors, and others. Burrows and Harvey (1992) specify a variety of stakeholders in HE, encompassing students, employers, teaching and non-teaching staff, government and its funding agencies, accreditors, validators, auditors, and assessors (including professional bodies). All of these stakeholders have a diverse opinion on quality, impacted by their specific concern in HE.

Cheng and Tam (1997) acknowledge both internal and external stakeholders when dealing with quality management and its process. Internal stakeholders consist of frontline staff and current students, while external stakeholders include employers, institutional management, government funding bodies, potential students, and professional bodies. Similarly, Al-Alak and Alnaser (2012) mention that, every stakeholder in HE (e.g. students, professional bodies, and governments) has their own idea about quality based on their specific requirements.

The way a scholar regards the quality of HE is on its capability to deliver a consistent flow of students with a high intelligence level in order to continue transmitting and advancing knowledge and skills. From a governmental perspective, they would regard high quality as a system which produces highly qualified scientists, engineers, architects, doctors etc. in whatever quantity society deems necessary. To an industrialist, it is regarded as a high quality institution if it can provide graduates who are open and flexible to acquire new skills and methods as required in industry (Reynolds, 1990). All of these examples represent legitimate expectations around quality in HE. Thus, the required measurements and standards to be applied will vary depending on the nature of the expectations of quality. In a study by Munhurrun et al. (2010), it was highlighted just how important it is for any organisation to identify areas of SQ that could be improved, by collecting data from its customers and employees. Therefore it is crucial that the organisation measures its SQ, checks for gaps between delivery and customer expectations, and makes any necessary improvements.

In order to exceed customer expectations, even public sector organisations must review their quality performance and look to improve it on a continual basis. Services differ from physical, or tangible, products as they are both produced and

consumed at the same time. There is therefore a much greater margin for error, however, due to the presence of the human element. This error is due to intangible behavioural processes that cannot be easily monitored or controlled (Bowen, 1986). Although there has been a significant amount of research on customers' perception of SQ (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Carman, 1990; Parasuraman et al., 1991; Babakus and Boller, 1992; Babakus and Mangold, 1992; Cronin and Taylor, 1992), relatively little attention has been paid to exploring the factors that impact on service employees' behaviour with regard to delivering SQ.

In this regard, Zafiropoulos and Vrana (2008) analyse the ways in which staff and students form opinion about quality within an HEI in Greece. The research was one of a very limited amount of investigations regarding perceptions of quality from both staff and students. The SERVQUAL instrument is used, with adjustments made to fit into an educational context incorporating the difference between the views of staff and students. Chua (2004) also uses SERVQUAL in an assessment of the attitudes of students, parents, faculty members. The result of this demonstrated that the dimensions of SERVQUAL are related to the process stage of the 'Input-Process-Output framework'. Oldfield and Baron (2000) used a performance only adaption of the SERVQUAL tool to investigate students' perception of SQ in HE. The outcome of this research has three dimensions of student-perceived SQ: 'requisite elements', which are enables students to fulfil their study obligations; 'acceptable elements', which are desirable but not essential to students; and 'functional elements', which are of a practical or utilitarian nature. When a comparison is made between the perceptions of first year students and final year students, indications show that quality perceptions change over the course of time, with 'acceptable elements' having increasing importance.

HEIs in the Middle East face several major challenges and risks due to scientific and technological development impacting on the service world. This pushes the Arab institutions to develop modernisation programmes in order to compete effectively and to deliver outstanding performance (Brookes and Becket, 2007).

Thus, a study by Al-Alak and Alnasar (2012) observed and attempted to assess the relationship between SQ features and overall level of SQ with students' satisfaction. SERVQUAL was used to gather data through the distribution of 301 questionnaires among selected undergraduate students from the Faculty of Business at the University of Jordan. The study's results indicated that the two most significant features of the SQ were assurance and reliability, and both had a significant positive relationship on student satisfaction.

A number of previous studies support the use of the current study to rely solely on SERVQUAL scale to measure the performance of SQ at Saudi universities. Thus, this study will investigate the view of the senior managers and academic staff from different universities in KSA using the SERVQUAL scale (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

### **3.13 Theoretical paradigms**

The theoretical positioning of this study is conducted by clarifying how those theories are related to this thesis. Cementing the theoretical position of a thesis is a demanding task, since there is no 'one best way' of doing it, and it involves underlining some insights at the expense of others (Barney, 2001). Therefore, this study relies on Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Perceived Organisational Support Theory (POS) to explain the relation between, and benefit of, the commitment as a mediator in work that normally goes between two parties as a social exchange relationship.

### 3.13.1 Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Perceived Organisational Support Theory (POS)

Organisational theorists define *work* as an exchange process into which employees put their effort and commitment, and in return, their organisation gives them physical and emotional benefits. This exchange is only beneficial to the organisation if they treat their employees generously, as in return they receive higher productivity and commitment from their staff (Levinson, 1965; Gould, 1979). Hence, Social exchange theory (SET) (Blau, 1964) describes the exchange being more than just a purely economic exchange and actually incorporates a social element. Organisational studies by Eisenberger et al. (2001) add further to this view by suggesting that the exchange between employer and employee gains socio-emotional resources, i.e. approval, respect, caring, recognition and support.

In organisational studies, the SET (Blau, 1964), the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) and the concept of Perceived Organisational Support (POS) (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2001) have been used in the description of the psychological processes which underlie employee attitudes and behaviours (Setton et al., 1996; Wayne et al., 2002). Positive consideration from the firm could provide an indication that employees' efforts will be rewarded. Consequently, the concept of POS can be used to explain this social exchange between employee and employer. It is developed when an employer recognises and meets the employee's socio-emotional needs, and refers to how much the employer values their contribution and wellbeing (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

To this end, POS would increase how much an employee feels obligated to support the organisation in attaining its objectives, their commitment to the organisation, and their expectation that they would be rewarded for an increase in

performance (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). Tansky and Cohen (2001) identified POS to build OC among employees. Additionally, Meyer and Smith (2001) conducted an empirical study which revealed that POS is a factor that partially mediates the relationships between HRM practices and OC. These arguments are based on the SET; the concept of POS which is the commitment of the organisation to the employee, and this concept can be further incorporated into organisational support theory (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). Based on the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), if an employee perceives high levels of POS in their organisation, they are much more likely to reciprocate; this reciprocation can take the form of positive attitude, commitment to the organisation and its goals, and a decrease in likelihood of leaving the company (Eisenberger et al., 1986; 1990; 1997). Similarly, it has been found that POS and academics' AC towards the university are strongly linked (Fuller et al., 2006). Therefore, POS incorporates the employee's perception of the extent to which their organisation cares about their contributions and wellbeing. POS also incorporates how fairly an employee feels they will be compensated in terms of the exchange of efforts, working conditions, and how helpful the organisation is with regards to making their job interesting (Aube et al., 2007). Employees will feel more obliged to respond favourably when they have a high POS, supporting the goals of the company and having a positive attitude to work (Loi et al., 2006). The relationship between POS and OC is generally explained in terms of social exchange and reciprocity. Using the perspective of SET, Eisenberger et al. (1986) argue that a high POS results in the employee feeling obligated. It is suggested that an employee who has a high POS will subsequently feel that they should be committed to their company, and further, feel obliged to return the company's

commitment to them by assisting in the support of organisational goals (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

This study focused on one stakeholder at the university, namely academic staff. Academic staff play a large role in delivering quality service within an HE environment; they are the organisation's operational core, and as such, their performance is a crucial determiner in students' perceptions of HE quality (Capellaras, 2005). High reputations can be built for an institution whose academic staff are motivated and committed, and this in turn attracts high-ability students, research funds and consultancy contracts (Rowley, 1996). Hence, academic staff who perceive their institution as being respectful and caring towards their wellbeing are more likely to reciprocate positively towards the organisation. This also has the benefit of stronger OC development.

Meyer and Allen (1997) indicate that an organisation that is successfully operating via POS can demonstrate ways in which it supports their employees, as signalled by antecedents linked to commitment.

Therefore, it is necessary to create a team of well-motivated academic staff who are committed to accomplishing the university's SM and SP; improve teaching and learning methods, strengthen research and innovation, strengthen Saudi's institutions of HE to world class standards, and embrace internationalisation in order to turn Saudi Arabia into a leading centre for education. These are all important steps towards realising the goals set out in the Aafaq Strategic Plan. The theoretical underpinning of SET and POS are grounds for further understanding of the role of OC and SM process for this study.

### 3.14 **Summary**

This chapter illustrated a theoretical background about SM, OC and SQ. A variety of definitions of SM and the link between SM and SP, the advantages of SM, and its functions were described. Additionally, an explanation of SM for NPOs in general and for the universities in particular was defined. Then steps of SM, diversity of notions on Quality, SQ, SQ dimensions and measurements, and the differentiation between SERVQUAL and SERVPERF were illustrated. The meaning of OC, its components, its measurements were clarified, and some studies on OC in an Arab context were demonstrated. The chapter concluded by illustrating the concept of Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Perceived Organisational Support Theory (POS), both of which are adopted in this study.

## **Chapter 4      Conceptual model and hypotheses**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter consisted of a review of existing knowledge and theories in order to obtain an appropriate theoretical framework, and to set the foundations for hypotheses development. Review of the above mentioned theories found that they present viable relationships between strategic management process (SM), organisational commitment (OC), and service quality (SQ).

Consequently, the current chapter illustrates the conceptual model which is based on theoretical foundations to describe and examine the relationships between research variables. It begins by discussing the importance of the integration between the SM process and OC, and outlines the benefits of adopting a commitment approach for an organisation's success. Then, the link between OC and quality initiatives, particularly SQ, is clarified. The mediating role of OC as an un-dimensional construct is presented. Finally, hypotheses of this study with regard to the relationships between the latent variables and the proposed conceptual framework are built.

### **4.2 Conceptual framework and hypotheses**

This study's aim is to investigate potential relationships between three management variables: SM, SQ, and OC in KSA HEIs. This section presents the hypotheses used to determine the relationships between these variables and the research's conceptual framework. The conceptual framework (Figure 4.1) and hypotheses were developed based on the literature review.

#### 4.2.1 Strategic Management and Organisational Commitment

The first step of SM process in the study is SP. Numerous studies suggest that SM can enhance OC. Wooldridge and Floyd (1990) point to the significant role of commitment in an effective strategy. Hence, van Breda (2000) illustrates that involvement with particular parts of strategic plan could result in an increase in OC. Similarly, Kettunen (2003) stresses the significance of managers, teachers, staff, and students being involved in the strategic plan process, as this leads to commitment which ultimately increase the chances of the plan being successful. Kohtamaki et al. (2012) state that organisations need highly skilled employees who will be able to create these strategies in such a way that staff will be willing to participate in their implementation.

Results from Cronley and Kim (2014) show significant indirect effects concerning familiarity with a strategic plan on SQ through OC. van Breda (2008) suggests that social workers have more enthusiasm towards applying the company's strategy when they are fully knowledgeable about it. Further, when they enjoy their work and are highly motivated, they will feel more of a commitment to the organisation, and subsequently their customers will be happier with the service and facilities they are using. Weiner (1982) states that the seemingly small contributions of the workers adopting the organisation's strategy can be regarded as participation towards a bigger plan, and White (1981) claims the plan then becomes more significant and meaningful. These studies illuminate the benefit and value of commitment to strategic plan.

Case study at the School of Accounting at Central Michigan University shows the importance of faculty involvement on strategic plan development and implementation. It is observed that the process of strategic plan creation will

never complete without a committed faculty. So it is fundamental for managers to search for resources to develop a successful strategic plan, such as lowered workloads and/or monetary incentives, to pay staff who are deeply involved in planning strategy (Karmon and McGilsky, 1997).

Cerpa and Verner (1998) and Earl (1993) stress that senior management commitment has been shown to lead to successful strategic information systems planning. In addition, Earl (1993), Gottschalk (1999), and Newman and Sabherwal (1996) assert that strategic information systems planning successes may be led by OC. Likewise, the major problem affecting strategic information systems planning success is the deficiency in OC (Cerpa and Verner, 1998).

In a study by Basu et al. (2002), the research goals were to discuss the relationships between strategic information systems planning, OC, and senior management, as well as the involvement of the team. They found that involvement from senior management led to the SP objectives being accomplished. The research also backed up the theory that as OC increases, strategic information systems planning accomplishment increases; that is, until it hits a peak, and as OC keeps increasing, success begins to reduce. This fits with the notion that excess organisation (with regard to OC) can be detrimental to successful SP. Furthermore, the research did not support the assumption that senior management participation predicted the success of strategic information systems planning. A simpler representation for the shortage of support reported by researchers is likely to be due to senior managers failing to manage and control strategic information systems planning in a simple way. Another finding is that research did not support the assumption that team involvement predicted the success of strategic information systems planning in any context. It is possible

that users are not involved in the actual SP practice, and additionally, that the users lack efficiency. It is then conceivable that such involvement by users is less important in strategic information systems planning practice than from senior managers.

In one example from limited empirical study, a questionnaire completed by social workers employed by the South African National Defence Fund found that involvement with certain features of strategic plan was associated with improved OC (van Breda, 2000). Another study by Alghannai and Bin Bon (2015) investigates the relationship between strategy formulation and organisational success and the mediating role of an organisation's continuous commitment (CC) in Libya's industrial sectors. A self-administered survey was employed to gather information from the 223 respondents through disproportionate stratified random sampling of employees working in different industries in Libya. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed for the hypothesis to be tested. The results indicate that an organisation's continuous commitment (CC) fully mediates the relationship between strategy formulation and organisational success in the Libyan industry context.

Most importantly, Bryson (1988b) states that an organisation with a lack of commitment should not create or engage in SP, especially at the senior management level. Albacete-Sa´ez et al. (2011) claim that top management's commitment is a crucial issue in accomplishing implementation of a firm's strategic priorities. In the same vein, Cerpa and Verner (1998) and Earl (1993) examine senior management practice and its role in SP; they found the involvement of senior management leads to the success of SP. Conversely, absence of OC is presented as a key problem which affects SP success. Similarly,

Zemke (1991) claims that any efforts towards development are likely to fail if management do not show the commitment necessary for the provision of quality service.

Kohtamaki et al. (2012) undertook an empirical study of 160 modest-sized Finnish IT businesses with the use of a questionnaire. The results showed that the companies' performance was affected positively by the use of cooperative SP, as this helps with commitment to strategy implementation. Hence, their study reflects the significance of individual participation in SP process to raise understanding of the strategy among personnel, thus encouraging commitment to strategy implementation.

Bryson (2010) notes that the advantages of SP include 'direct benefits to the people involved including enhanced morale, improved competency, and reduced anxiety' (p.S255). According to Tonnessen and Gjefsen (1999), a good understanding and perception of organisation strategy should also form a sense of affiliation and raise individual desire to work towards shared aims.

Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2006) show that vision, which clarifies and aligns personal and organisational values, is associated with improved employee commitment to the organisation. Outcomes from Ahiauzu and Asawo (2012) show a significant relationship between AC and NC with vision, while the association between CC and vision contributes only minimally among employee commitments within the Nigerian manufacturing industry. Similarly, Dvir et al. (2004) emphasise the potential role of vision as a powerful tool of emotional attachment among employees towards their firms. Liedtka (2000b) illustrates that a participative SP process could support the identification and explication of the vision and strategic objectives of the firms. In the same vein, researchers discuss

that involvement in the SP procedure results in employees feeling connected with their company, and through strategy promotes joint identification with the organisation (Cooper and Daily, 1997; Liedtka, 2000a; 2000b).

The second component of SP adopted in this study is mission. Campbell and Nash (1992) indicate that organisations often use mission statements as a tool to increase organisational employee commitment. Desmidt et al. (2011) suggest that the mission statement is a tool through which individuals can identify the values of the organisation to guide and inspire them towards the achievement of strategic goals. On the other hand, results from Pidcock (2001)'s study showed that staff perceptions of involvement in SP are very low. In addition to the commitment to the mission statement at New University in the UK is found to be low and generates little enthusiasm to all staff.

Lerner (1999) identifies mission as fundamental for setting the goals and objectives of the organisation. According to David and David (2003), a mission statement should be inspiring and employees should feel a part of the organisation after reading it. Similarly, Bart (1997) for instance investigated the senior managers of 88 leading North American corporations and found that the majority reported that OC was essential for mission statement acceptance. However, 73% were less satisfied with the process of mission statement creation, suggesting that managers and employees had been left out during the process, thus decreasing their commitment. Besides, Coulson-Thomas (1992) identifies top management commitment as crucial to the appropriate implementation of a mission statement, and Mullane (2002) points to the effective use of the mission statement to make it alive. Therefore, employees are willing to work when they see top management commitment.

The third component of SP adopted in this study is the creation of goals and objectives. Juan and Robert (2010) highlight that the advantage of commitment to the SM process includes the assistance and guidance it delivers to staff about the goals their firm is trying to accomplish. Similarly, Tonnessen and Gjeften (1999) argue that employees are more willing to work towards achievement of company goals when they fully comprehend the strategy, and this can only be attained through their involvement in strategic planning.

Campbell and Yeung (1991) found that an individual's emotional commitment to their firm was deepest when there was consistency between organisational and employee values (Bart et al., 2001), which could positively affect behaviour when the organisation demonstrated commitment. Furthermore, Ghoshal and Moran (1996) state that employees can match their goals to the organisation's through full comprehension of company strategy, and the belief that the objectives and purpose set out by the organisation are shared by all involved. Bart et al. (2001) state that an organisation's realistic goals can only be developed through a clear description of its purpose. Anderson et al. (1994) claim that employee fulfilment and commitment to achieve the objectives of the organisation results from using the tools and techniques to achieve these ends, and deliver a quality product or service to the customers.

Another component of SP process which this study adopts is internal and external analysis. Lerner (1999) states that the firm must analyse its external and internal environment once the vision, mission and goals are clearly formulated. According to Robinson (2003), SWOT analysis is a strategic tool which gives a company an understanding of its relationship to the external environment. Hence, SM should comprise the timely evaluation of strategy in place to achieve the firm's mission

(Hastings, 1996), to classify changes (Hung, n.d) and challenges (Tsiakkiros and Pashiardis, 2002) that affect the organisation.

The second step of SM procedure is formalisation. Prior literature has investigated the importance of such associations among formalisation and commitment. Dutton and Duncan (1987), Das et al. (1991), and Lederer and Sethi (1996) state that the importance of formalised planning is to confirm consistency of overall strategic goals of the firm in its structure, policies and written procedures. According to Auh and Menguc (2007), formalisation has produced mixed results, ranging from negative to positive effects.

Strategy formalisation promotes better task coordination through integration of planning and frequent communication (Ranganathan and Sethi, 2002; Bai and Lee, 2003). According to Dutton and Duncan (1987), Das et al. (1991), and Lederer and Sethi (1996), formalised planning is important for the confirmation of the organisation's goals in terms of its structure, policies and written procedures. Greene (1978), Stevens et al. (1978), and Morris and Steers (1980) suggest that formalisation is has a positive association with OC. For instance, formalisation may give employees the opportunity to decide more objectively about whether to align their goals with their organisation. Similarly, Michaels et al. (1988) discovered that the relationship between OC and formalisation in the field of sales and purchasing was a positive one.

On the other hand, Mathieu and Sajac (1990) state that formalisation has been shown to decrease employees' commitment to the organisation. Hartline et al. (2000) suggest that formalisation has a negative effect on employees' commitment to the organisation with a reduction of their AC. However, Michaels et al. (1996) found the relationship to be positive between formalisation and the

AC of Korean salespeople. Additionally, Greene (1978), Stevens et al. (1978), and Morris and Steers (1980) suggest that formalisation has a positive association with OC.

The third step of SM process adopted in this study is implementation. Slater et al. (2010) argue that effective strategy implementation is more significant than developing an excellent strategy. Furthermore, previous research suggests that a firm's capability for implementing strategy is one of the means to its success (Liedtka, 2000a; 2000b). Grant (1999) states that the successful application of strategy depends on several components, among them being the level of participation from the company's staff and higher management. Others refer to the point that successful implementation of business strategy depends largely on commitment, and capability to apply strategy is vital for business performance (Wooldridge and Floyd, 1990). For the accomplishment of strategy implementation, firms need the ability to create and improve these strategies in such ways that their employees will commit to achieving them (Kohtamaki et al., 2012). Studies agree that top management's commitment is a key issue in accomplishment role of the implementation of a firm's strategic priorities and quality management (Carols et al., 2011). Heracleous (2000) states that strategy implementation efforts may fail if the strategy does not enjoy support and commitment from the majority of employees and managers. Moreover, Alexander (1985) claims that obtaining employee commitment can promote successful strategy implementation.

The fourth step of SM process adopted in this study is strategy evaluation. Armstrong (1982) stresses the importance of developing an evaluation system that provides accurate feedback to maintain commitment to the plans.

Hence, employee's involvement in SP could support management to obtain a general agreement regarding company strategy (Kohtamaki et al., 2012). Moreover, commitment increases people motivation, and shortens the lead time required for strategy implementation (DeMeyer and Van Hooland, 1990; Dooley et al., 2000). van Breda (2008) mentions that the employee who is familiar with the organisation's strategy becomes more committed to their institute since they will, as Tonnessen and Gjefsen (1999) state, understand more of the organisation's strategy; this should create and increase individual commitment towards shared aims. Using this process, managers are able to develop a general agreement among personnel to support strategy application. According to this line of thought, OC could be playing a significant role. Therefore, based on the above, this study presents the following hypotheses:

H1. Strategic Planning has a positive impact on the academic staff's organisational commitment in Saudi Arabian universities.

H2. Strategy Formalisation has a positive influence on the academic staff's organisational commitment in Saudi Arabian universities.

H3. Strategy Implementation has a positive influence on the academic staff's organisational commitment in Saudi Arabian universities.

H4. Strategy Evaluation has a positive influence on the academic staff's organisational commitment in Saudi Arabian universities.

#### **4.2.2 The relationship between Strategic Management and Service Quality**

Harrington and Akehurst (1996) state that the SQ philosophy in recent years has gained in significance and has been the subject of much conceptual and empirical

examination. Nevertheless, few researchers have studied the strategic effects of applying a quality approach and its linkage with SP.

According to Price and Newson (2003), there has been a significant overlap between the strategic management and quality management approaches. Rensburg (2008) discusses Total Quality Management (TQM) as a tool that supports the implementation of strategy. Hence, a number of quality specialists argue that SM is vital for effective quality initiatives (Deming, 1986; Juran, 1988; Crosby, 1994). Apart from this, many authors suggest that the SM of organisations need to be integrated with quality initiatives (Butz, 1995; Chandler and McEvoy, 2000; Pryor et al., n.d.). In that case, integrating quality management in the organisation's strategy may be one factor that can lead management to deliver successful results and improve a firm's competitive advantage (Reed et al., 2000).

Performance improvement is, as Venkatraman and Ramnujam (1986) suggest, 'at the heart of strategic management' (p.801). Likewise, organisations' quality performance has been the centre of intensive investigation efforts in the last decade. How well an organisation implements its policies and programs and achieves its strategic commitment in terms of its mission and vision is of essential concern. In both private and public firms, leaders are becoming gradually more aware that a vital source of competitive advantage often arises from indigenous product and services (Muogbo, 2013). Notably, SP can enrich organisations' quality (Yarmohammadian et al., 2001). Bryson (2010) states that SP is a common tool for services improvement. As well as this, Revankar et al. (n.d.) claim that SP will enable to improve the quality system of the organisation. It assists to illuminate the firm's future direction, creating priorities and establishing

decisions across standards and functions in order to support its stakeholders effectively, efficiently, professionally, and responsibly.

The increasing importance of the service sector and the emphasis on SQ is widely acknowledged (Aldridge and Rowley, 1998; Petruzzelis et al., 2006). According to Elliot and Healy (2001), an improvement of SQ could increase the firm's contribution to its success. Furthermore, Rao and Kelkar (1997) state that the delivery of high SQ is the strategy that has been related to the most successful organisations, especially during times of intensive competition both domestically and internationally.

Quinn (1992) considers SQ as a fundamental component of strategic decision making for NPOs. Furthermore, SP is a potent method that potentially could improve SQ. White (2000) claims SP is the process that facilitates inter-organisational change. Therefore, Khamalah and Lingaraj (2007) stress that the SQ has become an important of SP for NPOs.

Similarly, Ahmed et al. (2010) state that SQ is a key strategic component for universities to create a positive perception in consumers' assessment. In addition, SQ is a key performance measure in educational excellence. Consequently, students can be motivated from both academic and administrative performance of their organisation.

Poister (2010) explains that SP is designed for public service organisations 'to chart a future direction and courses of action to ensure an organisation's vitality, effectiveness, and ability to add public value' (p.247). In addition, he illustrates that SP has the ability to strengthen organisations and improve their effectiveness using diverse methods. Quality programmes should, over a period of time, increase the potential income generated by an organisation while lowering the

cost of quality (Bank, 1992). Service organisations often initiate the process of quality development by making offers of recompense to retain unhappy customers, such as free vouchers as compensation for a failure. The planning process is an important element of quality (Juran and Gryna, 1993). Features of planning such as process design and analysis, capability analysis and equipment selection, market research, and product features can often be associated with the commencement of new products and services. Hence, it is necessary to incorporate planning in order to provide service quality (Stuart and Tax, 1996).

Karmon and McGilsky (1997) carried out three years' study at the School of Accounting at Central Michigan University to improve and implement strategic plan for the university's accounting program. They found that an effective strategic plan supplies a basis for continual improvement of the university programme, as well as accountability to its stakeholders. University stakeholders consist of alumni, current students, current graduate employers, faculty, administration, parents, and the Board of Trustees. Overall, active involvement of all stakeholders is essential to successful SP. Hence; the strategic plan was developed with a positive impact on faculty and program.

Bryson (2010) assures that SP produces a multitude of benefits, which include features relating to SP such as meeting mission objectives. Zineldin (2002) conducted a study to develop theoretical and empirical understanding of the relationship between SQ and Swedish banks' strategic positioning planning. In order for bank managers to occupy a strong market position, there is a need to understand the interaction between implementing strategies to develop quality products and services. The findings illustrate that delivery system and SQ were the significant quality criteria for customers.

Elbanna (2008) investigated the associations among SP practice, management involvement and SP efficiency. There were two steps involved in the critical review process. The first consisted of five academic staff members from a UAE university, and the second, in Egypt, was a test of the survey using 18 MBA students who had had good experience as executives in the Graduate School of Business of the Arab Academy for Science and Technology. Respondents were from both the foreign and the local private sectors. The sample represents a diversity of businesses: communication and information technology, industrial manufacturing, financial services, and education. Furthermore, participants were department or unit heads, experts, project managers, assistant managers, and general managers. Research findings indicate that SP practice is linked significantly with SP effectiveness, but does not include the participation of management. Further, the effectiveness of SP is developed by both SP practice and management participation.

Darandari et al. (2009) investigate the experience of some Saudi Arabian universities in introducing and developing of quality assurance system for HEIs. They mention the necessity of institutions in creating internal quality systems that lead to a high level of quality. In addition, these internal systems must include process of SP and reporting procedure based on evidence of quality outcomes and plan for improvement. Furthermore, El-Maghraby (2011) stresses the need of Saudi HEIs to apply quality improvement processes on all educational systems in the academic and administrative division. Especially in many of the emergent established universities, there is a need to integrate the quality systems into normal planning. There have been more than 10 universities established in the KSA within the last eight years.

According to Hemmasi et al. (2011), quality issues are becoming critical aspects for the SM of service firms. Kahveci et al. (2012) stress the importance of SP in HEIs as a systematic planning process deliberated to guide decisions about the development of education quality, research and development, application and service processes. A correlation analysis result of Arasa and K'Obonyo (2012)'s study mentions that organisations that reveal higher levels of SP achieve better in both financial and non-financial (e.g. SQ) indicators compared to those demonstrating insignificant levels of SP.

A study by Muogbo (2013) discusses the influence of SM on organisational development of certain manufacturing businesses in Anambra State, Nigeria. Results from the analysis indicate that the embracing of SM has an important impact on competitiveness and also affects manufacturing firms; SM also has an influence on employee's performance and that its adoption has considerably improved organisational productivity of manufacturing firms.

Research carried out by Harrington and Akehurst (1996) studies the nature of SQ in the UK hotel industry, and examines whether a potential relationship occurs between the adoption of SQ initiatives and business performance at the hotel unit level. An overwhelming number of participants stressed the significance of measuring SQ so it would help for a better strategic plan in future. Furthermore, Ooi et al. (2011) investigate the highly competitive service sector environment in Malaysia, where customers have an increased desire for high quality services and products. The key objective of their empirical study was to explore the association between TQM practices and SQ, and the nature of this relationship, from the perspective of sales and marketing managers in a number of small businesses. One of the six TQM dimensions measured was SP. The other five TQM

components were leadership, customer focus, information and analysis, process management, and human resource focus. In addition, the SERVQUAL scale was used as it is widely approved as an appropriate tool in SQ implementation and research. The results demonstrated that TQM practices have a significant positive impact on SQ within small service businesses.

Latorre-Medina and Blanco-Encomienda (2013) stress the significance of SM as a key to improve the quality of education. In their review of the present changing scenario and exploration into sustainable improvement in education, they found that there is an increasing consensus, both in Spain and also internationally, that there exist certain key components that are considered crucial to the achievement of this improvement. These components are strategic educational management, and effective educational leadership. Therefore the SM model is significant for educational quality which is the key determinant of educational consequences. In light of the above, an improvement in education depends on the quality of pedagogical leadership and the performance of those in leadership roles. Furthermore, the head of the organisation and the senior management team are considered as having an increasingly essential role to play in the management of that institution and its outcomes.

Cronley and Kim (2014) used SEM to assess the associations between familiarity with a strategic plan, technology access, OC and SQ, and employees. Findings illustrated an important direct association between technology access and SQ, in addition to an indirect association, through OC. Conversely, the impacts of familiarity with a strategic plan on SQ were completely mediated through OC. They conclude that SP as a concept lacks definition, and the strength and quality of the SP process can have various influences on diverse forms of an

organisation's performance, e.g. SQ. Yet, while SP remains common, further evidence is limited with regard to its use in the development of SQ, especially within HEIs.

Furthermore, Baird et al. (1994) emphasise that a firm which adopts formalised planning will place a greater emphasis on improving quality. According to Latzko (2006), a well-structured plan assures success by managerial involvement and integrating the concepts of quality into the structure of the firm. It is generally understood that process formalisation is associated with an organisation's performance (Walker and Ruekert, 1987), and to this end, formalisation of business processes improves the firm's efficiency through the standardisation of repetitive activities and transactions (Ruekert et al., 1985).

Additionally, SM should involve the timely evaluation of strategy in place to achieve the firm's challenges (Tsiakkios and Pashiardis, 2002) and to identify changes (Hung, n.d.) that affect the institution.

Hence, in an attempt to address this discrepancy in the literature, the current study intends to contribute to the knowledge of the link between SQ, and SM and SP by filling such a gap. Given the previous literature, this study develops the following hypotheses:

H5. Strategic Planning has a positive impact on Saudi Arabian universities' Service Quality.

H6. Strategy Formalisation has a positive impact on Saudi Arabian universities' Service Quality.

H7. Strategy Implementation has a positive impact on Saudi Arabian universities' Service Quality.

H8. Strategy Evaluation has a positive impact on Saudi Arabian universities' Service Quality.

#### 4.2.3 Organisational Commitment (OC) and Service Quality (SQ)

This study defines OC as how strongly an individual identifies with, and involves themselves in, a particular organisation (Mowday et al., 1982). A variety of researchers argue that the commitment of employees to an organisation depends on the attitude of the personnel (O'Reilly, 1989) and their psychological relationship with their firm (Mowday et al., 1982; Meyer and Allen, 1997).

Studies have mentioned that if a strong management commitment is present, the SQ programs are more likely to be achieved (Reeves and Hoy, 1993; Rogers et al., 1993). Tubbs and Dah (1991) assume that employees with more commitment to their organisation are more willing to work toward accomplishing the company's goals. Additionally, committed employees will be more productive to their organisations.

Prior research highlights the fact that a management that is committed to service quality has a significant effect on service delivery (Hartline and Ferrell, 1996; Boshoff and Allen, 2000), and if this area is neglected, there is a reasonable chance of failure of both service (Reeves and Hoy, 1993) and quality improvement programs (Zeithaml et al., 1990; Jenkins, 1992).

Mowday et al. (1982) illustrate how the rewards of commitment can increase acceptance of an organisation's demands, and the meeting of organisational goals such as high quality service. Similarly, Testa (2001) reveals that OC was linked with increased effort to deliver SQ.

Mathieu and Zajac (1990) and Meyer et al. (2002) mention that with regard to behavioural consequences, AC has been found to be positively relevant to a variety of work consequences (e.g. job performance, organisational behaviour, and attendance), whereas the same relation with CC has been found to be insignificant and negative. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) assert that an employee who experiences strong AC will be more likely to remain with their organisation, whereas an employee who reports strong CC will remain with his company only to avoid the costs connected with leaving. In addition, extensive AC advances SQ within for-profit organisations (He et al., 2012), and indications show that endeavours to involve employees with managerial activities and the clear communication of company missions and goals, shared with OC positively within this sector (Tsai and Wu, 2011).

Forrester (2000) demonstrates that it is useful to use employee evaluation techniques to assess management commitment towards SQ in an objective way. Hence, Newman (2001) alludes to the close relationship between senior management commitment and SQ from the perspective of employees. On the other hand, Reeves and Hoy (1993), Natalia and Subroto (2003), and Ashill et al. (2006) highlight mixed findings on the relationship among management commitment and customer perception of SQ.

Additional research finds that management commitment is linked to service recovery performance, through employees' AC (Ashill et al., 2006) and organisational outcomes (Harrison and Liska, 1994; Suliman, 2002). The main reason that quality improvement initiatives fail is lack of top management commitment (Jenkins, 1992), and if management is not committed then any attempt at improving service performance will be futile (Zemke, 1991).

In their study, Hashim and Mahmood (2011a) imply that academic leaders and decision makers at both university types (public and private) should consider increasing SQ as the university mission through classifying SQ as the number one objective through their academic staff commitment. They designed a descriptive research that aimed to investigate the difference in SQ commitment levels among academic staff in specific public and private Malaysian universities. The findings showed that commitment to SQ among public academic staff was at a higher level than those working in the private Malaysian universities.

A study conducted by Hashim and Mahmood (2011b) in private and public Malaysian universities concluded that the academic leaders do not give high priority to SQ delivery, and with regards to high SQ delivery, the universities' objectives were not shared with the staff. Hence, their study suggests that academic leaders at both university types and those who decide on policy should consider prioritising SQ, so as to increase the commitment of their academic staff.

The relationship between OC, especially affective commitment (AC) and service quality (SQ), seems logical, and a number of studies researching the for-profit sector assert that greater OC predicts SQ (e.g. Pitt et al., 1995; Rodwell et al., 1998; Tsai and Wu, 2011; He et al., 2012). They declared that excellent SQ performance is a major factor in gaining the edge over the competition both locally and worldwide.

In contrast, there are different results from Latting et al. (2004) who conducted a study within six human service organisations. They confirmed that increased OC did not lead to an increase employee perception of SQ. On the other hand, AC may create a willingness to fulfil organisationally recommended activities within the limits of organisational rules; such activities may or may not suit employees'

needs. In addition, managers should know that commitment in and of itself may have no direct effects on SQ. Carols et al. (2011) assert the important role of top management's commitment to accomplishing the implementation of the firm's strategic priorities and quality management.

Furthermore, findings from Cronley and Kim (2014)'s research highlights the significance of OC for SQ in non-profit human service organisations. They reiterate that OC has a critical role in mediation of the influence of familiarity with SP on perceived SQ among those employed at the metro zone command of the Salvation Army in the USA. Additionally, the theoretical articulation of AC, along with previous research into other sectors of employment (e.g. Tsai and Wu, 2011; He et al., 2012), asserts the clear role of SQ construct in human service organisations.

There were number of previous studies on the association between OC and SQ, however to date there has been relatively little empirical investigation. Consequently, this work addresses the overarching question of whether or not OC improves universities' SQ.

Based on the above, the study hypothesises that:

H9. The academic staff's Organisational Commitment has a positive impact on Saudi Arabian universities' Service Quality.

#### **4.2.4 Strategic Planning, Service Quality and Organisational commitment**

The mediating role is a controversial issue in management and other literature of social science. According to the literature, OC is a problematic task that deals

with individuals who vary physically, linguistically, culturally, educationally, and ethnically (Khan et al., 2013).

A significant amount of research focuses on the role of OC as a mediator. For instance, a study by Suliman (2002) examined the relationship between performance and perceived work climate, and the role of commitment as a mediator in this context. The research employed a self-administered survey among 783 employees from 20 industrial companies in the United of Arab Emirates. Samples were taken from all three management levels – top, middle, and lower – at random. The researchers took a multidimensional approach to commitment, which is the most recent, and the conclusions were that different mediation roles are played by OC and its features (NC and CC).

Another study by He et al. (2012) investigates the mediating role of affective commitment (AC) regarding management commitment to SQ, OC to employees, and employees' perceived SQ, as taken from the frontline employees at a resort company in the USA. The results of the SEM show that AC mediates the effect of management commitment to SQ on employee perceived SQ. Similarly, Bycio et al. (1995), and Luchak and Gellatly (2007) found a positive link of AC to work effort and performance.

Suliman (2002) also supports the view that commitment plays a significant mediating role, although the majority of the research applies un-dimensional constructs to measure commitment rather than attempting to investigate empirically. According to Mowday et al. (1982), Mathieu and Zajac (1990), Morgan and Hunt (1994), and Iverson et al. (1996), the mediating role of commitment in a work environment is considered the most important characteristic of the commitment.

Research suggests that improved SQ can be achieved through managerial efforts to educate employees about the organisation's purpose and mission, through enhancing organisational commitment among employees, and through the provision of the necessary resources needed for superior service delivery (van Breda, 2000; Tsai and Wu, 2011).

In addition, SQ within for-profit organisations can be improved by the AC (He et al., 2012), and there are other services that are positively attached with OC within this sector such as the attempts of employers to involve their staff in managerial plans and decision making, and to communicate the company's missions and goals to employees as explicitly as possible (Tsai and Wu, 2011).

On the other hand, Mowday et al. (1982), Mathieu and Zajac (1990), and Iverson et al. (1996), argue that the most characteristic features of commitment is the fact that it acts as a mediator in organisations. Yousef (2000) investigates this role in a study of 30 service organisations in the UAE, in order to explore the relationship between leadership behaviour, job satisfaction and performance. Findings suggest that staff who perceive their managers to be adopting participative leadership behaviour are more committed to their firms, perform higher than other employees, and are more satisfied with their jobs. Suliman (2002) discusses past studies which have dealt with commitments as an independent variable that might affect work outcomes, or as a dependent construct that can be impacted by demographic factors or other antecedent variables.

Cronley and Kim (2014) conclude that a poor organisational change can occur from limited participation from employees and unsystematic methods that lead to poor strategic planning. On the other hand, in addition to the improvements of service quality, change is more likely when there is high employee participation

and SP is implemented effectively. According to Reeves and Hoy (1993) and Rogers et al. (1993), achieving organisational results requires integrating the SM and quality initiatives with OC. According to Telford and Masson (2005), lecturer commitment is one of the quality values in congruence among HE stakeholders.

Consequently, it seems likely that SM may predict OC, and in turn, SQ. Based on the prior studies, the researcher can conclude that past studies focus widely on direct correlation between SM and SQ and between SM and OC. However, few empirical studies have been conducted on the relationships between SM, SQ and OC. Furthermore, the influence of OC on these relationships, specifically within HE, remains untested. Moreover, other previous literature was conducted in Western countries, whereas this research investigates these correlations in the non-Western setting of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Hence, the research results encourage the investigation of potential mediating variables as OC is a critical component in achieving the organisation SM.

Furthermore, OC in most studies is conceptualised and measured from the perspective of managers (Ahmed and Parasuraman, 1994; Sureshchandar et al, 2002). However, Forrester (2000) posits that the employee's perspective should determine the concept. Therefore, the current study seeks to address the gap in the literature by empirical examination of the relation between SM, perception of SQ, and the link with OC from senior managers and academic staff views in Saudi Arabia, based on a modified SERVQUAL instrument to measure five constructs: tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

Hence, this research suggests the following hypotheses:

H10. Strategic Planning has an indirect positive impact on Service Quality through the academic staff's Organisational Commitment in Saudi Arabian universities.

H11. Strategy Formalisation has an indirect positive impact on Service Quality through the academic staff's Organisational Commitment in Saudi Arabian universities.

H12. Strategy Implementation has an indirect positive impact on Service Quality through the academic staff's Organisational Commitment in Saudi Arabian universities.

H13. Strategy Evaluation has an indirect positive impact on Service Quality through the academic staff's Organisational Commitment in Saudi Arabian universities.

### 4.3 **Research model**

This study intends to create a model to fill a gap in the literature and to address unidentified issues regarding the interaction among SM process, OC, and SQ in the HEI sector. Figure 4.1 illustrates that there are four aspects of the model:

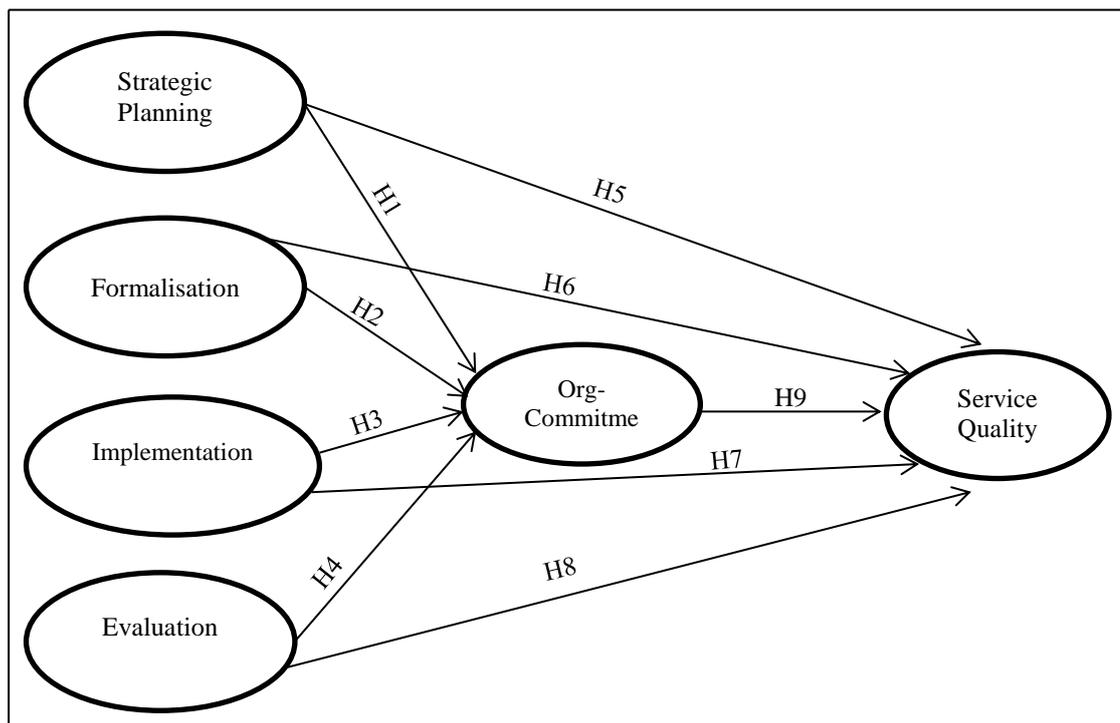
(1) The direct relationship of the Strategic Management process (that includes Strategic Planning, Formalisation, Implementation, and Evaluation) on Organisational Commitment of academic staff at Saudi universities.

(2) The direct impact of the Strategic Management process (that includes Strategic Planning, Formalisation, Implementation, and Evaluation) on Service Quality at Saudi universities.

(3) The direct relationships from Organisational Commitment to Service Quality.

(4) Finally, the study's model examines the indirect relationship from the Strategic Management process (that includes Strategic Planning, Formalisation, Implementation, and Evaluation) to Service Quality throughout the Organisational Commitment.

The study intends to examine the aforementioned hypotheses according to the four relationships listed above.



**Figure 4.1 The proposed conceptual framework**

#### 4.4 Hypotheses of the study

In order to answer the research questions, and based on the conceptual framework of this study, the following hypotheses are presented:

H1. Strategic Planning has a positive impact on the KSA universities' academic staff's Organisational Commitment.

H2. Strategy Formalisation has a positive influence on the KSA universities' academic staff's Organisational Commitment.

H3. Strategy Implementation has a positive influence on the KSA universities' academic staff's Organisational Commitment.

H4. Strategy Evaluation has a positive influence on the KSA universities' academic staff's Organisational Commitment.

H5. Strategic Planning has a positive impact on the KSA universities' Service Quality.

H.6. Strategy Formalisation has a positive impact on the KSA universities' Service Quality.

H7. Strategy Implementation has a positive impact on the KSA universities' Service Quality.

H8. Strategy Evaluation has a positive impact on the KSA universities' Service Quality.

H9. The academic staff's OC has a positive impact on the KSA universities' Service Quality.

**Indirect effects:**

H10. Strategic Planning has an indirect positive impact on Service Quality through the KSA universities' academic staff's Organisational Commitment.

H11. Strategy Formalisation has an indirect positive impact on Service Quality through the KSA universities' academic staff's Organisational Commitment.

H12. Strategy Implementation has an indirect positive impact on Service Quality through the KSA universities' academic staff's Organisational Commitment.

H13. Strategy Evaluation has an indirect positive impact on Service Quality through the KSA universities' academic staff's Organisational Commitment.

#### 4.5 Summary

To sum up, this chapter has presented the study's conceptual framework which brings together and discussed in detail the research's key constructs. Several studies have highlighted the potential of SM in enhancing the quality initiatives in general, and service quality in particular, of organisations. Hence, a variety of research that has linked SM and SQ is presented in this chapter. A lack of empirical research regarding the role of OC as mediator has been identified through critical analysis of the studies, particularly surrounding OC as a mediating variable among SM and SQ within academic settings in developing countries. Although decision makers within the HE sector endeavour to change and improve its performance and highlight the superiority of the Strategic Management system, there is no comprehensive research that concentrates on the procedure and components of SM and its impact on SQ through OC within HEIs environment.

Therefore, this chapter develops a specific model for the study, which consists of six constructs, and four processes of SM, OC, and SQ. This model is intended to investigate the impact of the SM process on SQ through the mediating effect of OC.

## **Chapter 5      Methodology**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the philosophies around the chosen methodology of this study, and the reason for selecting this methodology is explained. The quantitative and qualitative approaches and their definitions are also discussed, along with the reasons this research design and paradigm were chosen. A subsequent demonstration of data collection methods, motivation for selection, and a detailed description of the sampling is presented. Following that, a description of the latent variables and scale items, the time horizon of the collected data and a description of the pretesting of the questionnaire are detailed. Finally, data analyses of statistical techniques used to examine the accuracy of the data are also shown.

### **5.2 Research design**

The plans and procedures of the research decide the consistency of decisions from general assumptions to more comprehensive approaches to data collection and analysis, in the research design (Creswell, 2009). It involves the investigation of three main components: philosophy, such as pragmatic, constructivist, or postpositive; analysis strategy, such as quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods; and methods, such as interviews, questionnaires, or analysis procedure. Each of these components assesses different aspects of values, reality, and methodology (Creswell, 2009; Doyle et al., 2009).

In addition, Crotty (1998) mentions four key components for a research process which inform and illuminate each other: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods. The compatibility between these components shapes the research design. The terms world views, paradigms, epistemologies, ontology,

and theoretical lens are interchangeable expressions used by methodologists when determining the philosophical assumptions of research (Crotty, 1998; Lincoln and Guba, 2000; Creswell, 2009; Doyle et al., 2009). According to Collis and Hussey (2009), a research paradigm is ‘a framework that guides how research should be conducted based on people’s philosophies and their assumptions about the world and the nature of knowledge’ (p.55).

Additionally, Punch (2005) suggests that the whole idea of research design is to position the researcher within the empirical world. In other words, to accommodate both quantitative and qualitative methods in research design, he explained the theme of research design as:

*“Connecting the research questions to the data, showing how the research questions will be connected to the data, and what tools and procedures to use in answering them. Therefore it needs to follow from the questions, and to fit in with data”* (p.52).

Similarly, Bryman and Bell (2011) describe research design as a framework that assists in collection and analysis of the data. Consequently, Saunders et al. (2000) state that careful planning is essential to achieve research objectives and obtain accurate responses to all questions designed toward research issues to be addressed.

It has been shown that the purpose of research design is, therefore, to set up an appropriate method and a plan to determine convergence of perspectives and validation of findings from various points of view of universities’ senior managers and academic staff. The present study uses a quantitative approach in order to throw light on the theme of the research question and idea intensively to gain answers to research enquiries which can lead to achievement of the research’s aim and objectives. In particular, this research explores the role of SM, its association

with SQ and OC from the perspectives of senior managers and academic staff at Saudi universities.

### 5.3 Research philosophy

Research philosophy is a significant notion in research design because of its influence on the quality of management research (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). According to Easterby-Smith et al. (2008), understanding philosophical issues has several advantages:

- It can assist researchers in the identification of research methods applied in a particular study, and help elucidate research strategy being adopted. This comprises the type of data collection and its source, and how it helps to respond to the research questions.
- A sound understanding of the research philosophy leads to more diverse methodologies being evaluated, and thus the most suitable methods will be adopted.
- Finally, it could recognise the selection or alteration of the study.

In contrast, disregarding the research philosophy could impact on the quality of the study, potentially leading to the employment of inappropriate methods (Neuman, 2000). Saunders et al. (2012) assert that the term *research philosophy* refers to the nature and development of knowledge. Hence, there are varieties of research philosophies; this study focuses solely on two types of an epistemological position, namely positivism and interpretivism. Similarly, Brotherton (2008) asserts that positivism and post-positivism are the two most influential methodological paradigms in social science research; while Saunders et

al. (2009) suggest that realism and pragmatism have a relevant role as well. However, the theoretical differences between these two philosophies stem from two important concepts, which are ontology and epistemology.

### **5.3.1 Ontological perspective**

Blaikie (2007) considers the definition of ontology as being ‘the science or study of being’. Similarly, Bryman (2008) illustrates that ontology is concerned with knowledge, truth, the structure of world, and its reality. Howell (2013) asserts that ontology responds to the query of the existence of reality. Similarly, Blaikie (2007) states that ontology within social science is concerned with the claims and assumptions of social reality, and deals with the theory behind reality and the comprehension of existence.

Bryman and Bell (2011) cite the two perspectives to investigate ontologically as being objectivism, which asserts that the existence of social phenomena is due to reality being external to social actors; and constructivism, which points towards social phenomena being created by social interaction and in a continual state of revision. Collis and Hussey (2009) clarify that ontological assumptions deal with the nature of reality, while the epistemological approach clarifies what could be considered as valid knowledge.

### **5.3.2 Epistemological perspective**

According to Bryman and Bell (2011), epistemological issues are related to a discipline’s perceived acceptable knowledge, and raise the question of whether or

not a social environment can be measured using the same procedures, principles, and ethos as natural science.

#### 5.3.2.1 **Positivism**

Positivism is an epistemological position which promotes the use of natural science methodology when studying social reality (Bryman and Bell, 2011). This approach is commonly applied in natural science, where a single truth or reality is being investigated. The positivist position can be appropriately adopted in a social setting as long as the research follows specific methods and scientific principles (Webb, 1992). Commonly, a positivist philosophical assumption implies that the researcher and the subject are independent and objective. The findings are measurable, generalisable, and result from causal effects deduced from hypothesis testing (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991).

In other words, for positivism, the truth is found in the researcher's passive registration of the facts that establish reality (Johnson and Duberley, 2000). Hence, by applying such a philosophy to social sciences, it is claimed that the causal theory of human behaviour can result in developing models, regularities and laws that can predict human behaviour (Rosenberg, 2005).

Likewise, Easterby-Smith et al. (2012) contend that evaluation of a social environment must be from an objective angle rather than by subjective means such as reflection or intuition, as the positivist stance assumes that the social world exists externally. In the same vein, Guba and Lincoln (1994) and Tsoukas (1989) assert that positivism believes that science assesses independent facts quantitatively and the social world exists externally and objectively.

Positivists collect observable data and create hypotheses when investigating causal relationships, and use existing theory to assist in this (Saunders et al., 2012). In this stream, Creswell (2009) concludes that scholars begin with a hypothesis, gather data, and then determine whether or not the results support the hypothesis. This philosophy's assumptions are related to quantitative research, whereby causal relationships are defined in terms of research questions or hypotheses. VanderStoep and Johnston (2009) state that the quantitative methods used to investigate phenomena are associated with positivism.

#### 5.3.2.2 **Interpretivism**

In contrast to positivism, the second main philosophical paradigm in epistemology is interpretivism. Collis and Hussey (2009) illustrate that interpretivism is the investigation of social phenomena from an interpretive perspective. That means, as Howell (2013) states, interpretive perspectives view reality as being socially constructed. In other words, they take the view that issues relating to social science is fundamentally different from those relating to natural science (Bryman and Bell, 2011). This perspective believes that individuals have a dynamic interpretation of the world, rather than being responsive to external stimuli.

Hence, the researcher sets aside his own thoughts and communicates with the study from what exists in the social reality (Creswell, 2009). Furthermore, research only interprets reality from a subjective standpoint which deals with a situation's details, the reality behind these details and what motivates the action (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). When understanding human activities, interpretivism does not consider the perspective of the observer as a justifiable vantage point.

Thus, social science is seen as being subjective rather than objective (Saunders et al., 2012).

To conclude, interpretivism accentuates understanding about people's thinking, feeling, and communication. In collecting data, this philosophy is related to qualitative methods (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Consequently, rather than applying the quantitative methods assumed by positivists, interpretivists use methods that 'seek to describe, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world' (Van Maanen, 1983, p.9).

The aim of this study is to investigate the role of SM in the enhancement of the university's SQ through OC. There is an attempt at the identification of direct and indirect associations between the components of SM, OC, and SQ in KSA's universities. The primary constructs will be tested using a deductive approach based on existing theories, therefore can be viewed as positivist. POS theory states that employees will feel an obligation to commit to their organisation and work towards achieving its goals when POS is high (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Wayne et al., 1997; Rhodes et al., 2001). To this end, a positivist philosophical approach was identified as the most appropriate for use in answering the research questions set out in Section 1.6.

After reviewing all available literature regarding strategy, commitment, and SQ, it became clear that there is a distinct lack of research about these associations. Further, there has been no testing of the influence of OC on these associations, particularly within an HE context. It is believed that exploration of these relationships and clarification of them will benefit senior management personnel by providing them with a more effective understanding of the associations,

leading to effective SP. Furthermore, it should be possible to generalise findings from the KSA's HEIs across other countries. The researcher considers this reality to be external, and thus can be observed and measured objectively.

It has been posited that compared to an interpretive view, a positivist perspective is more likely to have implications for management (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). Howell (2013) indicates that a positivist perspective can provide an explanation of, and predictions for, the relationships between causes and effects. For studies concerning organisations, in particular, generalisable findings would enable management personnel to predict and react with their environments (Johnson and Duberley, 2000). When taking into account the abovementioned indications, it can be concluded that the most appropriate approach for the present study is the positivist approach.

#### **5.4 Research approach**

Concerning the use of theory, two forms of research approaches exist: inductive and deductive (Lewis and Thornhill, 2006; Saunders et al., 2012).

##### **5.4.1 Inductive approach**

This method initially focuses on observations which lead to the development of a hypothesis and theory in order to clarify those certain observations (Lancaster, 2005). It is a 'process where we observe certain phenomena and on this basis arrive at conclusions' (Sekaran, 2003, p.23). The researcher begins with data collection and then through analysis of these data can identify the nature of the problem, and use this information for theory development. Overall, it is argued

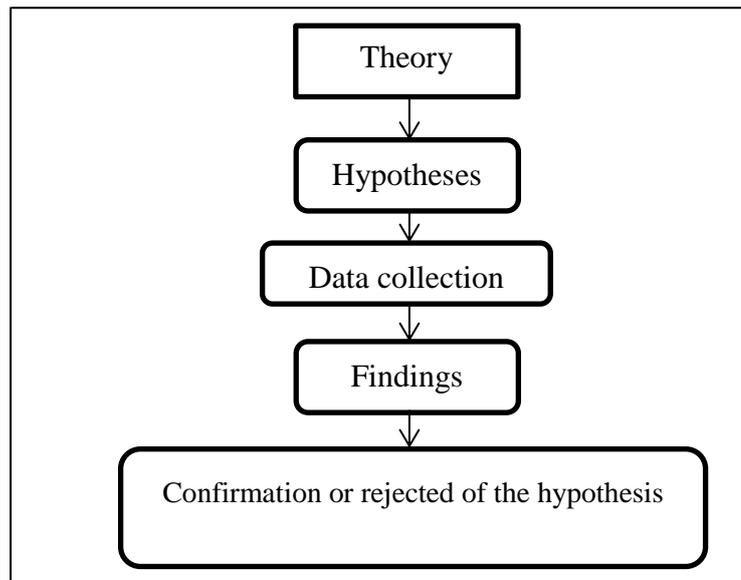
that the deductive approach is concerned with explaining what is happening, while the inductive approach deals with the question - why a phenomenon is happening (Saunders et al., 2012). Interpretivism is more likely to adopt the inductive approach (Saunders et al., 2012), and in conducting a qualitative study that follows the interpretivist approach (Bryman and Bell, 2003).

To conclude, while there is importance in linking these approaches to the research philosophy, it is not easy to decide between using the deductive or inductive approach. However, the chosen direction will help the researcher to ascertain exactly which strategies and methods to use for data collection (Saunders et al., 2009).

#### **5.4.2 Deductive approach**

Deductive research examines the causal relationships between variables through the use of quantitative data. During the study's first stage, a set of ideas are proposed and then tested via a range of experiments and empirical observations (Berg, 2012). The deductive approach is concerned with the stage of research at which the structure of a theory is evaluated and developed through empirical observations (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

Bryman and Bell (2007) illustrate the process of the deductive approach as being separated into six stages, namely theory, hypothesis, data collection, findings, confirming or rejecting hypothesis, and revising the theory. Figure 5.1 presents the steps of the deductive approach.



**Figure 5.1 The deduction approach stages**

**Source: Bryman (2004)**

Saunders et al. (2012) indicate that the deduction approach is more likely to be supported by positivism and involves the use of hypotheses to illustrate the causal relationships amongst variables, mainly using quantitative methods.

Consequently, the current study uses a deductive research method to take a methodological approach in order to answer research questions and to achieve its purpose (Bryman and Bell, 2007). This research is considered to be applied research that aims to clarify the cause and effect relationships between SM and SQ. A positivist approach's basic goal is to generalise the result to the larger population. This is known as the deductive approach, and for it to adhere to positivism, it must follow the structure of identifying the theory, and then testing it via empirical observation (Limpanitgul, 2009). Furthermore, the deductive process is arranged more consistently, since each step follows the last in a systematic manner and the conclusions are made through logical reasoning (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

As mentioned earlier in Section 1.6, the study considers the impact of SM process on SQ via OC. According to van Breda (2000), engagement with aspects of a strategic plan could relate to increased OC. Hence, the present research relies on social exchange theory (SET) and perceived organisational support theory (POS) in an attempt to investigate these relationships. The deductive approach is applied for the purpose of testing the thesis' conceptual framework, and the statistical findings found in the quantitative stages are used for supporting the generalisation of the study's results. It is through these outcomes that the researcher will decide whether to accept or reject the positive associations obtained from the previous theories. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) clarified that, in social science, it is generally agreed that the deductive approach is by far the most popular method to develop the theoretical knowledge base.

## **5.5 Research methods**

Research method is a part of research methodology. Kothari (2004) explains that 'when we talk of research methodology we not only talk about the research methods but also consider the logic behind the methods we use in the context of our research study and explain why we are using a particular method or technique and why we are not using others so that research results are capable of being evaluated either by the researcher himself or by others' (p.8). In social science studies, there are three research methods that can be used, namely quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods (Creswell, 2003).

### 5.5.1 Quantitative research

The purpose of quantitative research is to examine the causal relationships between variables, and to test theories against them (Bryman, 2012; Saunders et al., 2012). In addition, the quantitative process deals with procedures like statistical analysis or data collection techniques, for example questionnaires (Saunders et al., 2012). Using quantitative research enables the testing of theories through the identification of variables and examination of research relationships, and then collecting the results (Kothari, 2004).

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argue that there are numerous benefits of quantitative research as opposed to the qualitative approach. First, it tests and validates extant theories to explain how and why phenomena occur. Second, if researchers are using random sampling of the population, they can generalise the results as well as forming hypotheses before any data are gathered. Third, a quantitative approach helps support researchers in comparing their results with those from similar studies by using standard means. Fourth, conducting the analysis takes less time due to the use of statistical software.

Qualitative researchers have criticised quantitative methods, however. They argue that this approach involves designs that can have less engagement between the researchers, field, and individuals they are researching. Furthermore, there is a risk that statistical associations between variables may be arbitrarily interpreted by the researchers themselves (Berg, 2009; Bernard and Ryan, 2010).

### 5.5.2 Qualitative research

The second method is qualitative - a method which is considered to be in the same vein as constructivist research philosophy. Qualitative research generally utilises

an inductive approach. When using this method, the procedures of data analysis or interview techniques apply to the gathering of data. Furthermore, qualitative techniques make it necessary for researchers to understand the perceptions of others, as well as exploring the ways in which individuals structure their everyday lives (Saunders et al., 2009). Quantitative research is about understanding problems within a specific environment (Malhotra et al., 2012), and is based around words instead of numbers (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Qualitative research extracts and interprets people's attitude, perceptions and beliefs around a specific situation. The idea is to solve a research problem through the understanding of personal stories. This means that a qualitative method is an interpretive naturalistic approach (Thomas, 2003).

### **5.5.3 Mixed methods**

Mixed methods combine features from both qualitative and quantitative research. Research results can be corroborated by using this technique. Employing mixed methods might involve the use of data from different sources, complementing quantitative and qualitative results with each other, the use of qualitative data to help interpret the relationships between quantitative variables, or the use of diverse methods for various purposes within the same study (Saunders et al., 2009).

It is argued that the nature of the research problem should dictate which research method is the most suitable to apply (Noor, 2008). For this reason, the present study investigates the impact of SM process on university's SQ through employees' OC. In accordance with the positivist approach adopted in this study, a quantitative research design was adopted; its use was based on the positivism

paradigm. It is reported that positivism adopts a clear quantitative method as it assumes that social phenomena can be measured by research (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Saunders et al. (2009), as well as Bryman and Bell (2007), support this decision as they assert that a quantitative strategy is more often associated with a deductive approach, and allows the quantitative measurement of the truth.

Given these factors, the quantitative methodology is the most appropriate approach to measure senior managers and academic staffs' attitudes and behaviour towards relationships suggested in this study. This approach was employed to test the research's theoretical model, yet still taking into account the individual's perceptions and attitudes. This is in line with Gray (2009) who states that positivist philosophy posits that knowledge can only be achieved and justified through experience, observation and experimentation. The following sections describe the questionnaire surveys.

## **5.6 The use of survey method**

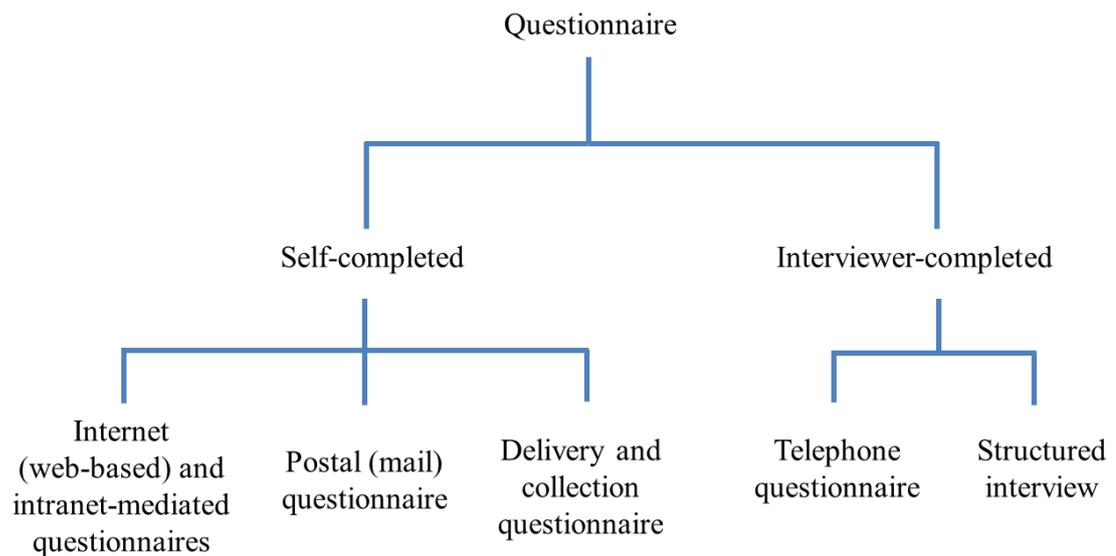
Several methods exist for collecting survey data, however the most frequently used data collection method in business research is the questionnaire survey. DeVaus (1995) defines the questionnaire as a tool for the systematic collection and organisation of data, and statistical analysis of the results. Collis and Hussey (2009, p.191) state that 'a questionnaire is a list of structured questions, which have been chosen after considerable testing with a view to eliciting reliable responses from a particular group of people'. Wiersma (1991) posits that the relationship between variables, such as the way people feel and behave towards an object, can be determined through survey research. For this reason, both exploratory and descriptive research studies use it.

Questionnaires can be divided into two key forms according to their administration process: self-administered and interviewer-administered.

- The self-administered questionnaire that is typically completed by the respondents, comprises three sub-categories: the delivery-and-collection questionnaire (hand delivered, then collected later), the postal questionnaire (hard copy with a cover letter, sent by post), and the internet-mediated questionnaire (via emails or a website).
- For the interviewer-administered questionnaire, the interviewer must record the responses; this could take the form of a telephone questionnaire (the interviewer telephones the respondent and completes the questionnaire based on his/her answer) or an interview questionnaire (where the interviewer completes the questionnaire by setting a face-to-face meeting with the respondent; also called 'interview schedules' (Saunders et al., 2007)).

Furthermore, Cooper and Schindler (2011) identify that data can be collected from a semi-structured interview survey either by interview in person or by telephone, or a structured questionnaire can be sent out via post, email, fax, the Internet, or a combination of these routes.

Bryman and Bell (2011) observe the significant growth in the number of online surveys over the last few decades. Email surveys and web surveys (through a website) are two types of online social questionnaire. Using a website method, a researcher can utilise varied styles, colours, and diversity in the format of questions in terms of appearance. Figure 5.2 illustrates types of questionnaire.



**Figure 5.2 Types of questionnaire**

**Source: Saunders et al. (2012, p. 420)**

Collis and Hussey (2009) mention a number of data collection methods used in a positivist study; these are postal questionnaires, internet questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, and telephone interviews. According to Saunders et al. (2009), the method of survey is connected to positivism philosophy and the deductive approach. Hence, to collect responses for this study, a self-administered structured questionnaire survey for data collection using the internet-mediated via the *Qualtrics* website was implemented by the researcher since it is more beneficial than the email and paper survey. Bryman (2012) stated that structured and self-administered questionnaires allow the researcher to obtain comparable and standardised responses so that the differences in these responses could be attributed to meaningful variations rather than to differences in the manner in which the questions were asked.

Potential respondents are informed by researchers of URL (web address) by texts, emails, phone calls, or in person. Participants can then use their own computer to visit the website and complete the questionnaire. The study uses this method as it

has several advantages. According to Saunders et al. (2012), emailing the survey gives more control and flexibility to the respondents, since they can respond in their own time and using their own personal computer. Another benefit of this method is that the researcher can distribute a large number of questionnaires over a wide geographical area without any cost. Moreover, participants will not be questioned in differing ways, as can be the case when being interviewed by someone else. Hence, the possibility of interviewer characteristics causing bias is removed. Finally, respondents can complete the questionnaire at their own pace and in their spare time, thus providing convenience (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

On the other hand, low response rates are the most experienced disadvantage of online questionnaires. This shortcoming is brought about for several reasons. Firstly, a low response rate results in problems with sample bias because there is then a higher chance that the participants who do participate are not representative of the population (Collis and Hussey, 2009). As an example, perhaps a higher proportion of managers submit an online questionnaire as they have more time to complete the survey compared to lower-level staff, who are usually busier. However, a 20% response rate is generally considered good, as anonymous respondents receive no encouragement towards their cooperation (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Secondly, researchers must only ask questions which are essential to the study, as too many unimportant questions can give rise to 'respondent fatigue' (Bryman and Bell, 2011). It is possible that respondents decide not to bother with the survey if they feel that the questions are not relevant to them, or they feel bored (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Lastly, if participants have any problems completing their survey, there is no way of determining it (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009).

Despite these disadvantages, response rates can be improved in several ways. If a good cover letter accompanies the questionnaire which explains the purpose of the study, this can increase the response rate. In addition, it can also be improved by clear instructions and an attractive layout (Bryman and Bell, 2011), as well as the use short questionnaires with closed questioning techniques (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Finally, sending out follow-up letters can also boost response rates (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009).

### **5.7 Questionnaire design**

There are three types of questionnaire that can be used: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. A structured questionnaire is made up of questions with the answers supplied. This type is suitable for quantitative studies. Semi-structured questionnaires are a mixture of open-ended and closed questions, and are appropriate for investigative studies. An unstructured questionnaire consists of open-ended questions which encourage free responses, and is commonly referred to as a 'topic guide.' This survey type is most appropriate for qualitative studies (Hague, 2002).

There are three formats that survey questions can take; closed, open-ended, and contingency questions. Often called multiple choice, closed questions provide respondents with a set of answers from which they must choose the most appropriate; the options are limited and the respondent has no scope for creativity with this line of questioning. Closed questions are sometimes called forced-choice questions (de Vaus, 2002) or closed-ended questions (Dillman, 2000; Siniscalco and Auriat, 2005). Responses are limited to 'yes' or 'no', or a range of answers can be chosen from but no elaboration is possible.

Conversely, open-ended questions give respondents the chance to provide their own answers and offer broad and unlimited views, by means of numbers or text. This form of questioning can aid the researcher in the collection of information or issues about the topic being investigated (Fink, 2003). Yet it may be time consuming to analyse (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Moreover, open-ended questions can be problematic to answer (Fink, 2003) and require more effort from respondents who might sometimes give up, resulting in a low response rate (Bryman and Bell, 2011). However, contingency questions can be used as a special type of closed question – these are designed to elicit a more detailed response from a sub-category of respondents about a question they have already answered (Siniscalco and Auriat, 2005).

A questionnaire can consist of four categories of information; beliefs/thoughts, attitudes, knowledge, and attributes and behaviour. The category of beliefs and thoughts refers to an individual's feelings, thoughts, judgements and perceptions. The knowledge category deals with respondents' knowledge around a particular issue. The third one is related to what respondents have done or do or will do, in the past, present and future and if they have planned to do something. The final category concerns the respondents' personal demographic characteristics such as gender, age, occupation, education, and income (Taylor-Powell, 1998). The survey for use in this study was designed to request a mixture of these information types.

The most commonly used variation of the summated rating scale is the Likert scale (Cooper and Schindler, 2011). This technique is often used in social science to evaluate attitude. This study adopts a five-point Likert scale, as it gives better results than a seven-point scale when dealing with smaller samples (Wilson,

2010). A five-point scale has a neutral mid-point which then caters for a participant who has no opinion on a matter (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012).

Yet, before moving on to the outline of the questionnaire, it is necessary to identify the main variables of the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 3.

## **5.8 Measurement variables**

Having clarified the research methods used in this research, this section considers the instruments chosen to measure the variables investigated in the current study. All of these measurements have already been tested and published in highly ranked journals. The following section begins with a look at the independent variable (SM) and then progresses to the dependent variable (SQ) and the mediator (OC).

### **5.8.1 The Independent variable/Strategic management process**

This section starts by clarifying the components of strategic management process developed from the literature review, in addition to some variables which are extracted from previous studies' questionnaires and modified in order that they are appropriate for an HE context. Table 5.1 shows 50 perceived variables of the process of strategic management, categorised into four dimensions: SP (vision, mission and goals, and internal and external environmental scanning), formalisation, implementation, and evaluation together with the sources they were drawn from. Participants were asked to specify the statements that best described the university's current practices and procedures of the strategic management.

**Table 5-1 Measurement items for Strategic Management components**

Construct/ Latent Variables	Questions items	Sources
<p><b>Vision</b></p> <p>(V)</p>	<p>The university's vision is always about a desirable future.</p> <p>The university's vision is considered as a necessary effective leadership tool, a process of inducing others to act toward common goals.</p> <p>The university's vision provides a sense of direction for organisational members.</p> <p>The university's vision stems from its importance to business strategy planning.</p>	<p>Kantabutra (2008)</p>
<p><b>Mission statement</b></p> <p>(M)</p>	<p>The university's mission specifies the target customers and markets.</p> <p>The university's mission identifies principal services.</p> <p>The university's mission includes identification of geographic domain where the university competes.</p> <p>The university's mission encompasses the identification of the university's use of technology.</p> <p>The university's mission includes the expression of commitments to growth, survival, and profitability.</p> <p>The university's mission specifies key elements of the university's philosophy, beliefs, values, inspiration and priorities.</p> <p>The university's mission identifies the university's desired public image.</p> <p>The university's mission identifies the university's self-concept, namely the university's view of itself and its competitive strengths.</p>	<p>Pearce and David, (1987);</p> <p>O'Gorman and Doran (1999);</p> <p>Palmer and Short, (2008);</p> <p>Ganu, (2013)</p>
<p><b>Goals and objectives (SO)</b></p>	<p>The university's objectives desire to set program and policy direction.</p> <p>The university has realistic goals.</p> <p>Goals and objectives are linked to a specific duration of time.</p>	<p>Berry and Wechsler, (1995);Poister and Streib, (2005)</p>
<p><b>Environmental scanning</b></p> <p>(IS)</p>	<p><b>Internal scan:</b></p> <p>Analysis of internal capabilities</p> <p>Analysis of employee issues</p> <p>Analysis of operating processes' efficiency.</p> <p>Analysis of the university's strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p>Analysis of past performance</p> <p>Analysis of reasons for past failures</p> <p>Analysis of shareholder and/or agencies of education issues.</p> <p>Analysis of how to attract and rehabilitation high-quality staff.</p>	<p>Galbreath (2010)</p>
<p><b>Environmental scanning</b></p> <p>(ES)</p>	<p><b>External scan:</b></p> <p>Analysis of community-based issues.</p> <p>Analysis of environmental issues.</p> <p>Analysis of technology issues.</p> <p>Analysis of political/regulatory issues.</p> <p>Analysis of competitive issues.</p> <p>Analysis of general economic and business conditions.</p> <p>Analysis of the requirements of the students and the needs of the community.</p>	<p>Galbreath,</p>

	Analysis of the problems and issues of public education (pre-university).	(2010)
<b>Strategy Formalisation (FSP)</b>	The university utilises formal planning techniques The university has structured strategic planning process The university has instructions and written guidelines to regulate the strategic plan The process and outputs of strategic planning are formally documented.	Segars and Grover, (1999); Segars et al. (1998); Grover and Segars, (2005)
<b>Strategy Implementation (SI)</b>	Establish procedures and activities that can be applied. Define the deadlines for implementing the strategies. Allocate the time in which these strategies are to be implemented. Assign people who are to be responsible for implementing these strategies. Specify the method that will be followed for the implementation of these strategies. Allocate the necessary financial resources to implement these strategies. Allocate the necessary financial resources to implement these strategies. Provide incentives for employees to encourage them to effectively implement strategies. The existence of a permanent monitoring and control to ensure the consistency and coherence of all activities and procedures.	Ogunmokun and Hsin Tang (2012)
<b>Strategy Evaluation (SE)</b>	The appropriateness of the objectives of the plan. The role and impact of strategic planning. Assess the efficiency of the planning process. Measuring the effectiveness of the planning process and the strategic plan. Put indicators and special criteria for performance evaluation. The allocation of the distribution of resources with the objectives of the plan.	Ruhanen, (2004)

### 5.8.2 The Dependant variable/Service Quality

Following the suggestions made by Parasuraman et al. (1994), only the perceptions and not the expectations of the approach were measured, since the measures were used to assess the influence of functional quality on other constructs. According to Cronin and Taylor (1992; 1994), Parasuraman et al. (1994), Teas (1994), and Gounaris et al. (2003), the current literature agrees that an SQ measured by perception-only generates better results than a perception-

versus-expectation measure. Sultan and Wong (2010) suggest that this is because perceived quality is based on experience and is a consequence of attitude.

There are a number of studies which find the five-factor structure of SERVQUAL proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1988) unsatisfactory, and in addition, consider the application of expectation items unnecessary (Carman, 1990; Parasuraman et al., 1991; Babakus and Boller, 1992; Cronin, et al., 1992).

Thus, there has been criticism that evidence is lacking which supports the expectation-performance gap as a predictive measure of SQ. Thus, the 22 SERVQUAL items (only the perception) were modified and used on this study to measure senior managers' and academic staff's perception of five different dimensions of SQ, i.e. reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy, and responsiveness (see Appendices A and B). Parasuraman et al. (1994), as developers of the SERVQUAL tool, support modifying it depending on the service setting.

Furthermore, a study by Churchill and Surprenant (1982) indicates that it is more effective to only use performance perceptions when measuring SQ. Two empirical studies were undertaken to investigate how satisfaction is affected by expectation, performance, and disconfirmation. The results of the empirical study indicate that only performance is a determiner for satisfaction.

Bolton and Drew (1991a) additionally discovered that attitude is heavily influenced by current performance ratings, yet disconfirmation has an insignificant and short-lived effect. Thus, the literature pertaining to attitude appears to conclude that:

(1) perceived service quality is best conceptualised as an attitude;

(2) the 'adequacy-importance' model is the most effective 'attitude-based' operationalisation of SQ; and

(3) current performance adequately captures consumers' perceptions of the SQ offered by a specific service provider.

In addition to the theoretical support for performance-based measures of SQ, it is often the case that the determinant of overall perceived quality is measured simply by having customers evaluate the performance of the organisation's business processes.

The second objective of this study is to examine the perception of effects of SM components, namely strategic planning (vision, mission, objectives, and analysis), formalisation, implementation, and evaluation of SQ from the senior manager and academic staff's perspectives at Saudi universities. Hence, the present measurement of perceived SQ goes back to Parasuraman et al. (1985)'s research. This team initially identified 10 determinants of SQ, obtained from a series of focus group sessions. Consequently, SERVQUAL was developed (1988), an instrument which classifies 10 determinants into the five factors employed by this study; namely tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. A self-report method of measuring SQ is valid since customer-facing staff are best placed to evaluate performance outcomes, and their perceptions tend to coincide with customer perceptions (Bitner et al., 1994; Schneider and Bowen, 1995). Additionally, numerous reviews which compare performance measurement approaches approve the use of self-report measures (e.g. Churchill et al., 1985; Harris and Schaubroeck 1988).

Table 5.2 shows 22 perceived SQ attributes, categorised into five dimensions alongside a display of sources from which they were drawn. Specifically, 22

perception items were taken from the original SERVQUAL scale (Parasuraman et al., 1985) and modified to fit into an HE context used to measure academic staff perception of five different dimensions of SQ; tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

**Table 5-2 Measurement items for Service Quality**

Construct/ Latent Variables	Questions items	Sources
<p><b>Service quality dimensions</b></p> <p><b>SQ</b></p>	<p><b>Tangible:</b></p> <p>The university / faculty has up-to-date teaching tools, equipment and facilities (library, projector etc).</p> <p>The appearance of the physical facilities of the university / faculty is visually appealing.</p> <p>The university's staff are neat-appealing.</p> <p>The university's materials associated with the type of services provided.</p> <p><b>Reliability:</b></p> <p>The university / faculty make a commitment to provide a service at the certain time as promises to do.</p> <p>When students have problems, staff show a sincere interest in solving it.</p> <p>The university is dependable.</p> <p>The university keeps its records accurately.</p> <p>The university performs the service right from the first time.</p> <p><b>Responsiveness:</b></p> <p>Faculty staff is too busy to respond to student requests promptly.</p> <p>Students do not receive prompt service from the university.</p> <p>The university does not tell its students exactly when services will be performed.</p> <p>Faculty staff is not always willing to help students.</p> <p><b>Assurance:</b></p> <p>The university does not provide personal attention to every student.</p> <p>Students can feel safe in their transaction with faculty staff.</p> <p>Faculty staff is courteous all the time with students.</p> <p>Teaching staff have knowledge to answer student's questions.</p> <p><b>Empathy:</b></p> <p>The university does not provide personal attention to every student.</p> <p>The university does not have operating hours convenient to all its students.</p> <p>Faculty staff do not give students individual attention.</p> <p>University does not have students' best interest as a major objective.</p> <p>Faculty do not understands the specific needs of students.</p>	<p>Parasuraman et al., (1988a, 1985);</p> <p>(Cronin and Taylor, 1992);</p> <p>Shpëtim Çerri, (2012); Kang and James, (2004);</p> <p>Abdullah, (2005);</p> <p>Abdullah, (2006)</p>

### 5.8.3 The Mediating variable/Organisational Commitment

This study aimed to find out the mediating role of OC in enhancing the relationship between SM and the delivery of SQ. For the measurement of OC, it intends to use the original OC scale proposed by Allen and Meyer (1990) and Meyer and Allen (1984; 1991). Items of the original measurement include affective, normative, and continuance scales. These scales are most commonly used in substantive research and there were numerous studies that have assessed the construct validity of these scales (Meyer et al., 2002).

Hence, the original scale contains 19 items concerning an individual's attachment to an organisation (affective commitment, for example, items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6), obligations to the organisation (normative commitment, for example, items 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13) and cost-based approach (continuance commitment, such as items 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19). The complete scale is shown in Table 5.3.

**Table 5-3 Measurement Items for Organisational Commitment**

Construct/ Latent Variables	Questions items	Sources
<p><b>Affective Commitment</b>  (AC)</p>	<p>I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this university                      I really feel as if this university's problems are my own.                      I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my university.                      I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this university.                      This university has a great deal of personal meaning for me.                      I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my university.</p>	
<p><b>Continuance Commitment</b>  (CC)</p>	<p>It would be very hard for me to leave my university right now, even if I wanted to.                      Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave my university right now.                      Right now, staying with my university is a matter of necessity more than a desire.                      I believe that I have too few options to consider leaving this university.                      One of the few negative consequences of leaving this university would be the scarcity of available alternatives.                      One of the major reasons I continue to work for this university is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice; another organisation may not match the overall benefits I have here.                      If I had not already put so much of myself into this university, I might consider working elsewhere.</p>	<p>Allen and Meyer, (1990);                      Meyer and Allen, (1984;1991);                      Meyer et al., (2002)</p>
<p><b>Normative Commitment</b>  (NC)</p>	<p>I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer.                      Even if it was beneficial to me, I do not feel it would be right to leave my university now.                      I would feel guilty if I left my university now.                      This university deserves my loyalty.                      I would not leave my university right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.                      I owe a great deal to my university.</p>	

The survey participants were asked to indicate their agreement with each item on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = 'strongly disagree' to 5 = 'strongly agree'. Overall, the measurement indicators (or items) and constructs were used to operationalise the theoretical latent variables. As Table 5.3 illustrates, the conceptual framework was developed using measurement instruments sourced from the literature. Depending on the context of each particular factor, some of the

items were either modified or removed for the present study. Once the questionnaire had been designed for the study, an outline of it was then necessary.

### **5.9 Data collection**

According to Bryman and Bell (2007) and Saunders et al. (2009), there are two categories of data collection - primary and secondary. The study's objectives have been achieved through the application of both mechanisms of the research methodology: a literature review from both primary and secondary sources, and collection of primary data by means of a questionnaire based on employees' perceptions. Concerning the primary data, the questionnaire was designed for the collection and analysis of the required data for the achievement of the aims and objectives of the research. Different techniques were used to conduct the survey in order to determine that the participants had a good knowledge of the study's content. The need for high-quality data meant that the questionnaire was designed to encourage participation from the respondents. Furthermore, the validity of the questionnaire and pilot test, and the procedures employed to verify the validity of these, is set out in this chapter.

Regarding the secondary data, the research is based on existing theories. A detailed review of the literature was carried out to obtain a good understanding of the research phenomena. This secondary data taken from the results of previous research was sourced from diverse publications – journals, books, reports, and various surveys (Saunders et al., 2009).

### 5.10 The Survey's design

In accordance with the positivistic approach adopted in this study, the questions were close-ended (Collis and Hussey, 2009). This self-administered, closed-question questionnaire was then distributed to academic staff employed by public and private universities in KSA. The study used a five-point Likert-scale to measure the three constructs, namely strategic management, organisational commitment, and service quality, and these were operationalised and analysed to test the research model and the hypotheses. Madu (2003) argues that studies using the Likert scale had a more superior reliability than studies using the categorical structure ('yes' or 'no'). Collis and Hussey (2009) and Monette (2013) indicate that this scale allows the researcher to use powerful statistical tools (such as the SEM) as these are of an ordinal level. Last but not least, the Likert system can use five, seven or ten-point scales. Nevertheless, it was claimed that the use of more than five points provides merely a marginal advantage in terms of reliability (Madu, 2003).

Therefore, the respondents in this study were able to indicate their level of agreement using a five-point Likert scale, presented as: 1 - strongly disagree; 2 - somewhat disagree; 3 - neutral; 4 - somewhat agree; and 5 - strongly agree with items phrased. The same design was used for questions used for the conceptual framework. The questionnaire was divided into four sections (see Appendices A and B).

The use of such scaling system was designed to be quick and easy for participants to complete. According to Ghuman (2010), Likert scales are relatively easy for the respondent to complete and simple to construct for the researcher. Hence, the layout of the questionnaire comprises an introduction, followed by four sections.

Bryman (2008) indicates that participants are encouraged to complete a questionnaire when they are presented with an introductory paragraph which details the nature of the study, and assurance of confidentiality is also important. In this case, the study's questionnaire presented a cover page explaining the purpose of the research, and included contact details in the event that the respondents needed any further information (see Appendices A and B). Vice Presidents of Quality and Academic Development, Deans and Vice Deans of colleges, Deans and Vice Deans of the Strategic Planning and Quality Departments, Head of Academic Departments and staff involved in the SM process were targeted as key respondents as they should have their own perspective on strategy, their extensive knowledge of their respective organisations, and because they have access to relevant information. The questionnaire asked the respondents to select their leader's role such as Vice President, Dean, Vice Dean, Head of Department or academic staff, besides rating the statements regarding the SM, OC, and SQ.

The questionnaire survey explores the effects of the SM process on SQ delivery through OC. Hence, the first part was about indicating respondent's level of agreement with the components of SM at their university, not the ideal procedure (vision, mission, and objectives), environmental scanning (internal and external), strategy formalisation, implementation, and evaluation. The scale includes 50 closed questions. This section helps to provide a holistic view of the actual process and experience of SM and answer Question 1.

The second part of the questionnaire asked the respondents about their level of perceptions regarding SQ delivery (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy). 22 items on this section help to assessing answering Question 2.

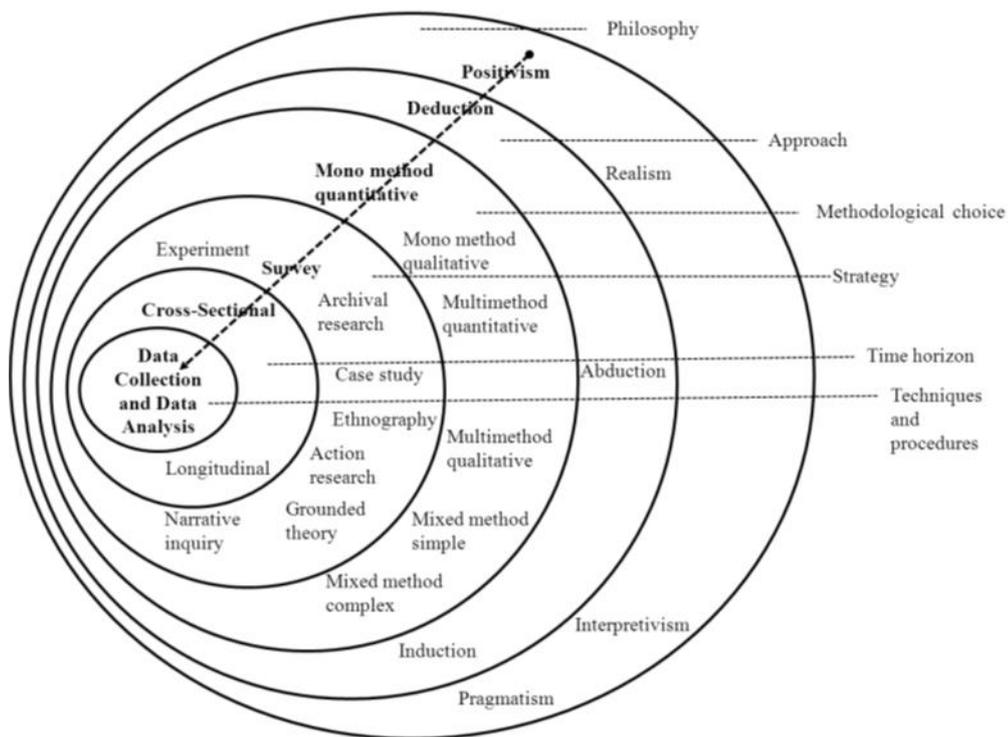
The third section of the questionnaire aimed to ask participants to demonstrate their agreement on the statement of OC. The scale contained 19 items (questions) to answer Question 3.

The fourth section related to the demographics of the staff, including type of university or institute, gender, academic qualifications, and profession. Overall these questions helped the researcher to test the study's conceptual framework (see Figure 4.1).

### **5.11 Time horizons of the collected data**

Once the data collection method and techniques are established, another important issue needs to be addressed, which relates to the time horizons of the collected data. Based on these horizons of the data collected, studies can be divided into cross-sectional or longitudinal studies. A cross-sectional study deals with analysis of a phenomenon at a particular time, called a 'snapshot'. A longitudinal study focuses on investigating a particular phenomenon over a length of time; different data are collected regularly, on a schedule (Hair et al., 2007; Saunders et al., 2012). This research plans on utilising a cross-sectional approach because the idea is to explore particular phenomena at a specific time. Having designed the questionnaire and its time horizons, it was essential to be tested before administration.

Figure 5.3 illustrates how this study employs research procedures connected to philosophy, approach, methodological choice, strategy, time horizon, techniques, and procedures.



**Figure 5.3 The research ‘Onion’ in terms of this study**  
**Source: adapted from Saunders et al. (2012, p.128)**

### 5.12 Validity and reliability of measurement

In business research, a questionnaire is a common tool used to collect data. This questionnaire should be piloted. A pilot test ensures that there are no difficulties for the respondents in terms of the questions. In addition, the pilot test assesses whether the questions are valid and reliable (Saunders et al., 2009). Based on the results of the pilot study, the questionnaire may be edited (Kotharia, 2004). Overall, the last step in development of the measures is carried out with their validation. Therefore, this section illustrates the face and content validity of the questionnaire; translation validity; construct validity and the reliability testing.

### 5.12.1 **Validity**

Validity is concerned with how much an instrument measures what it is supposed to (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Furthermore, validity refers to how the notions are defined by the measure (Hair et al., 2003). A measure's validity is determined by the definitions of the variable from which the measure is designed. The following sections illustrate the various validity types.

#### 5.12.1.1 **Face validity**

Face validity is the degree to which the instrument can be considered appropriate in obtaining the desired information from the perspective of a potential respondent. This means that questions appear to relate directly to the construct. Therefore, they should produce a valid response (Colton and Covert, 2007). Face validity is concerned with whether or not the measure or question appears valid, and reflects what it was assumed to measure (Saunders et al., 2009). Therefore, face validity as an assessment is subjective, as it relies on the judgement of individuals who check the tool for grammar and suitability, and confirm that it appears to flow logically (DeVon et al., 2007).

#### 5.12.1.2 **Content validity / expert validity**

Content validity is the extent to which a test represents the universe of items from which it is drawn and it is particularly valuable when assessing the usefulness of tests that sample a specific area of knowledge (Salkind, 2010). Saunders et al., (2009) describe content validity as being how well a survey's measurement questions provide sufficient coverage of the investigative questions, and according to Bryman and Bell (2011), this mainly applies to quantitative research.

Alternatively, content validity is understood to be how much the various aspects of the concept is measured by the indicators (de Vaus, 2007). In order to accurately measure latent variables, as Dunn et al. (1994) stress, they need to be properly defined according to the literature and the author's understanding of them.

Expert validity means experts in a specific field have made an evaluation of the survey questions (see Appendices A and B). The research subject should be adequately covered. The quality of the literature has a bearing on content validity, as does the theory behind the development of the instrument; some experts should assess the questionnaire, also, in order to determine whether or not the questionnaire measures what it should measure (Ruane, 2005; Vogt, 2007). Specifically, they were asked about the following: whether any questions were unclear or vague; length of time for survey completion; the clarity of the instructions; whether any questions were difficult to answer; and the attractiveness and clarity of the outline of the survey (Saunders et al., 2009).

This study's survey was emailed to 14 professors and senior lecturers from worldwide universities whose specialist areas are in quantitative methodology, service quality, and strategic management research, in order to verify both face and content validity. The aim was to establish whether the survey questions were clear, understandable, and presented in a logical order (face validity), and for them to give their opinions on whether the items/questions were representative of the research constructs (content validity).

Furthermore, following suggestions by Saunders et al. (2009), the researcher requested the evaluation by both Arabic and English speaking colleagues of how representative the questions were in terms of the conceptual definitions. Hence, it was checked by seven doctorate students (Arabic and English speakers) from the

Business School at Plymouth University and Education school at Exeter University specialising in business management and higher education in order to establish their level of understanding. Most of the feedback from the worldwide Arabic universities' staff and the Arabic and English colleagues confirmed that the items did relate to the constructs. Some of the feedback was about the length of the survey and there were overlaps between some questions. Hence, some items were rephrased in order to be clearer, more understandable and logical.

#### 5.12.1.3 **Convergent validity**

Convergent validity is the amount of agreement that exists between different methods when two or more attempts are made at measuring the same construct (Bagozzi et al., 1991). To put it in a different way, convergent validity is the extent to which constructs have parallels with other methods used for measuring the same construct (Churchill, 1979). According to Anderson and Gerbing (1988), convergent validity can be assessed through measurement models by determining the statistical significance of each indicator's estimated coefficient on its assumed underlying construct factors.

#### 5.12.1.4 **Discriminant validity**

Anderson and Gerbing (1988) claim that discriminant validity can be evaluated 'for two estimated constructs by constraining the estimated correlation parameter between them to 1.0 and performing a chi-square difference test on the values obtained for the constrained and unconstrained models' (p.416). Discriminant validity refers to 'the extent to which the measure is indeed novel and not simply a reflection of some other variable' (Churchill, 1979, p.70). It can be evaluated

through a test of the inter-correlations between the constructs that are generated and refined by exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. Discriminant validity is assumed to exist if the chi-squared difference value is associated with a p-value of less than 0.05 (Jöreskog, 1971).

### 5.12.2 Reliability

Bordens and Abbott (2014) showed that reliability relates to the extent to which a test measured consistently, regardless of what it measured or whether or not a test produced the same results on different occasions. The measure was reliable when respondents gave the same answer in different situations. A question might be unreliable because it contained words which could be misunderstood and, consequently, which might cause confusion. Researchers use multiple-item indicators to create reliable indicators. In order to improve the question's reliability, the researcher should select the words of the questions carefully (de Vaus, 2007). Hence, reliability is concerned with repeated question and study's results (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Several methods are used to assess reliability, for example test-retest, split-half, and Cronbach's alpha (Bagozzi, 1984; Mentzer and Flint, 1997). The test-retest approach is costly, however, and can be problematic if participants can remember the answers they gave previously. Split-half also has disadvantages as the way results are split affects the correlation results from two groups. Cronbach's alpha is therefore preferable as a reliability test among many academics conducting survey-based studies. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient is used to assess the degree of internal consistency within specific scales (Hair et al., 2010).

Data collection was accomplished through distribution of a structured questionnaire containing perception items borrowed from the SERVPERF and SERVQUAL scale. The only items adopted were those relating to perception, and were modified to make them relevant to the HE sector. A pilot test was carried out on the first draft of the survey through expert assessment. Therefore questionnaire was confirmed as being valid through evaluation of content validity, structural validity, and face validity, and Cronbach's alpha was used to measure its reliability.

$$\alpha = \frac{n}{n-1} \left( 1 - \frac{\sum_i V_i}{V_t} \right) \quad (\text{Cronbach, 1951, p. 299})$$

**Figure 5.4 Cronbach's basic equation for alpha**

*n = number of questions – Vi = variance of scores on each question – Vtest = total variance of overall scores (not %'s) on the entire test*

Pilot studies are an important step in the measurement of the reliability (internal consistency) and validity of the variable scales (Moser and Kalton, 1971). An internal consistency check was necessary in order to check the reliability of the measurement items of each variable. A pilot test aids the researcher in recognising and addressing as many potential issues as possible before the final questionnaire is administered. There were no significant issues identified in this study following the pilot test. The 40 completed surveys were coded and entered into an IBM SPSS Statistics version 20 database package.

### 5.13 Piloting the survey

The trial run analysis using the pilot test data is carried out to guarantee that the data eventually collected will allow the research questions to be answered (Bell,

2005; Saunders et al., 2009). Pilot tests can assist in evaluation of the questions' validity and whether the collected data is likely to be reliable (Saunders et al., 2009). Zikmund et al. (2012) define the pilot study as a small-scale research that gathers data from a smaller number of respondents with the similar characteristics of those that will be examined in the full study. Such testing, as Saunders et al. (2009) state, is useful to ensure the target participants will have no difficulties in responding to the questions. A sample of ten is adequate for piloting a questionnaire.

The reliability can be evaluated through several methods such as internal consistency which focuses on the relationships between items within a single instrument (Colton and Covert, 2007). Therefore, it investigates the homogeneity of a scale. Internal consistency is assessed through calculating Cronbach's alpha, which is a commonly used measure of scale reliability (Bergh and Ketchen, 2011). Cronbach's alpha is computed by the following statistical formula which gives more accurate results of reliability (De Vellis, 2011).

$$\alpha = \frac{K}{K - 1} \left( 1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^K \sigma_{Y_i}^2}{\sigma_X^2} \right)$$

Where:

-  $K$  is the number of items in the scale.

-  $\sigma_X^2$  the variance of the observed total test scores (total observed),

-  $\sigma_{Y_i}^2$  the variance of component  $i$  for the current sample of persons (true score)

The values of Cronbach's alpha range from 0 (observed items are not consistent) to 1 (they completely correlate). This means that internal consistency will be acceptable if Cronbach's alpha is high (George and Mallery, 2003). Hair et al.

(2010) and Field (2009) report that Cronbach's alpha should be equal to or above 0.70, or 0.60 according to Heung and Chu (2000) and Liu and Arnett (2000).

According to Churchill (2001), it is advisable to conduct a suitable pre-test of the survey prior to collecting the data, as there will be no interviewer present in the event that a respondent encounters any confusion or issues while completing their questionnaire (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Hence, the scale was then pre-tested on 40 of the target respondents who were senior managers and academics.

Consequently, in order to achieve Cronbach's alpha and obtain some assessment related to the questions' reliability and validity, the study was conducted on a smaller sample (Clark-Carter, 2004). Therefore, the initial questionnaire was distributed to and collected from 50 academic staff that have similar characteristics to the target population as suggested by McNabb (2013) (See Appendices C, D, E, F, and G for letters from a variety of universities where the researcher distributed the initial questionnaire) In addition to letter from the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in London to assist this proces at the universities (See appendix H). Hence, Vice Presidents of Quality and Academic Development, Deans and Vice Deans of colleges, Deans and Vice Deans of the Strategic Planning and Quality Departments, Head of Academic Departments and staff involved in the strategic management process were targeted as key respondents, as they should have their own perspective on strategy, because of their extensive knowledge of their respective organisations, and because they have access to relevant information. 40 acceptable questionnaires were returned, with a high response rate of 44.4%. This was an acceptable response rate according to Saunders et al., (2009) who recommended that a 30% response rate was reasonable for questionnaires delivered and collected in person.

This study depended on the criteria of Cronbach's alpha to evaluate its reliability to be above 0.70 (Field, 2009; Hair et al., 2010). Cronbach's alpha of UV, UM, SO, IS, ES, FSP, SI, ESP, SQ and OC constructs is 0.91, 0.91, 0.90, 0.96, 0.93, 0.90, 0.96, 0.95, 0.82, and 0.74 respectively. Therefore, there were no deleted items for all constructs (see Tables 5.4 to 5.13).

**Table 5-4 Corrected item-total correlation and cronbach's Alpha for the UV variable**

	$\alpha = 0.911, No = 4$	
	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
UV1	.859	.862
UV2	.696	.918
UV3	.811	.880
UV4	.828	.874

**Table 5-5 Corrected item-total correlation and cronbach's alpha for the UM variable**

	$\alpha = 0.911 No = 8$	
	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
UM1	.826	.900
UM2	.786	.903
UM3	.455	.929
UM4	.628	.916
UM5	.798	.902
UM6	.831	.899
UM7	.798	.902
UM8	.725	.908

**Table 5-6 Corrected item-total correlation and cronbach's alpha for the SO variable**

	$\alpha = 0.90, No = 3$	
	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SO1	.851	.835
SO2	.799	.878
SO3	.791	.884

**Table 5-7 Corrected item-total correlation and cronbach's alpha for the IS variable**

	$\alpha = 0.96, No = 8$	
	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
IS1	.800	.964
IS2	.884	.959
IS3	.916	.957
IS4	.895	.958
IS5	.870	.960
IS6	.813	.963
IS7	.888	.959
IS8	.846	.961

**Table 5-8 Corrected item-total correlation and cronbach's alpha for the ES variable**

	$\alpha = 0.93, No = 8$	
	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
ES1	.789	.922
ES2	.817	.920
ES3	.704	.928
ES4	.814	.920
ES5	.723	.927
ES6	.859	.916
ES7	.756	.926
ES8	.746	.927

**Table 5-9 Corrected Item-total correlation and cronbach's alpha for FSP**

	$\alpha = 0.90, No = 5$	
	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
FSP1	.101	.878
FSP2	.680	.749
FSP3	.832	.698
FSP4	.591	.780
FSP5	.798	.708

**Table 5-10 Corrected item-total correlation and cronbach's alpha for SI**

	$\alpha = 0.96$ No = 8	
	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SI1	.724	.964
SI2	.862	.958
SI3	.846	.958
SI4	.872	.957
SI5	.902	.956
SI6	.879	.957
SI7	.879	.957
SI8	.774	.962
SI9	.875	.957

**Table 5-11 Corrected item-total correlation and cronbach's alpha for the ESP variable**

	$\alpha = 0.95$ , No = 6	
	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
ESP1	.816	.944
ESP2	.889	.935
ESP3	.873	.937
ESP4	.885	.936
ESP5	.833	.942
ESP6	.779	.948

**Table 5-12 Corrected Item-Total Correlation and Cronbach's Alpha for the SQ variable**

	$\alpha = 0.82$ No = 22	
	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SQ1	.419	.820
SQ2	.479	.817
SQ3	.564	.815
SQ4	.706	.807
SQ5	.617	.812
SQ6	.380	.822
SQ7	.624	.811
SQ8	.115	.834
SQ9	.197	.830
SQ10	.104	.833
SQ11	.511	.816
SQ12	.617	.812
SQ13	.196	.830
SQ14	.513	.816
SQ15	.407	.821
SQ16	.631	.811
SQ17	.633	.811
SQ18	.322	.825
SQ19	.135	.832
SQ20	.285	.827
SQ21	.056	.836
SQ22	.065	.836

**Table 5-13 Corrected item-total correlation and cronbach's alpha for the OC variable**

	$\alpha = 0.74$ No = 19	
	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
OC1	.566	.713
OC2	.486	.721
OC3	.159	.746
OC4	.010	.755
OC5	.501	.717
OC6	.297	.737
OC7	.329	.734
OC8	.327	.734
OC9	.107	.750
OC10	.282	.738
OC11	.305	.736
OC12	.221	.744
OC13	.053	.756
OC14	-.012	.758
OC15	.524	.719
OC16	.497	.720
OC17	.435	.726
OC18	.348	.733
OC19	.442	.725

#### 5.14 Translation of questionnaire

It is necessary for a researcher, who applies their study to a different language context, to translate the original questionnaire into the target language. Several methods are available to the researcher, such as direct translation and back translation. Direct translation means that the source questionnaire is translated directly into the target language. Back-translation is when the source questionnaire is translated into the target language and then back into the original language; this enables comparison with the source survey. However, on one hand, direct translation can lead to disparity between the source and target

questionnaires. On the other hand, the back-translation method can correct any mistakes in the translation (Usunier, 1998; Saunders et al., 2009).

Consequently, the researcher employed back-translation as a method to obtain a target questionnaire. This study translated the English survey into the Arabic language, then back again. The final questionnaire was translated, also, into the original questionnaire (e.g. English questionnaire). The researcher sent the Arabic questionnaire by email to five professors of quality management units, and education and planning departments at King Saud University, Jazan University, King Abdulaziz University, and Alqaseem University in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, two professors (English native speakers) at Plymouth University compared the newly sourced questionnaire. They recommended that some words should be changed to be clearer to Saudi and Arab managers. Then, the researcher compared the two original questionnaires to create a final questionnaire. Lastly, the final instrument was reviewed by two PhD students (one was Arabic and the other was a native English speaker) at Plymouth University to ensure that the English and Arabic wording and content of items were appropriate.

### **5.15 Research ethics**

Ethics are a very important aspect of research conduct (Fouka and Mantzourou, 2011), and researchers need to be considerate of certain ethical issues. These issues include respecting privacy, respecting anonymity and confidentiality, and beneficence, which means being mindful of the participants' welfare. Research ethics outline what is and is not permissible when undertaking research (Kalof et al., 2008). Similarly, Saunders et al. clarify the research ethics as the adoption of an appropriate behaviour in relation to the rights of the individuals or groups being studied.

With this in mind, when the data was collected in 2013 from Plymouth Business School at the University of Plymouth, there was a requirement to gain ethical approval to cover the period of the study. An application for this approval was made and subsequently granted in 2013, ensuring adherence to the requirements of the University of Plymouth's ethical protocol. After approval had been received, the primary participants were contacted and were given full details regarding the research and the nature of the study. During data collection, respondents were told that if there were any contentious issues or comments, or anything was felt to be potentially harmful, they would be referred to anonymously in the text (see Appendix I).

#### **5.16 Population, sampling design and size for questionnaire survey**

Population refers to the entire group of cases and elements that a sample is taken from (Saunders et al., 2009). Choosing the sample to study is a significant factor to all methods of study. Samples are used because of the budget and time constraints and the impracticality of surveying the entire population. Most importantly, selecting a good sample ensures that generalisations can more easily be made about the general population from the sample (external validity); a good sample depends on its size and how representative it is. Representation of the population is the most important factor (Vogt, 2007).

According to Lohr (2009) it is impossible to gather data from the whole population as defined through the research topic because of considerations such as accuracy, time, and money. Furthermore, researchers do not believe that the results, which depend on collecting data from the entire population, would be more valuable than those from a sample (Saunders et al., 2009).

Regarding sampling design, there are two main sampling techniques: probability, which is most often used in survey-based research; this is also known as representative sampling or random sampling, and in this case the probability of being selected is known and usually the same for all cases. The other technique is non-probability or non-random sampling, otherwise known as judgemental sampling; in this instance, the probability of selecting a given case from the entire population is not known (Saunders et al., 2007; Vogt, 2007). Random sampling can be further categorised into four key types: simple, stratified, systematic, and cluster sampling. On the other hand, there are many varieties of non-random sampling which can be classified into three types: quoted sampling, purposive sampling and snowball sampling (Saunders et al., 2009). Random sampling means that the selection of members from the population is performed randomly. Hence, a sample is representative of a population (Mackey and Gass, 2012). In addition, probability sampling or random sampling is always preferred in research as it assists in eliminating bias with regard to case selection process, and increases external validity (Vogt, 2007).

The primary aim of research is to examine how the results obtained from the sample can be applied to its population. A researcher can generalise the sampling results to represent those of the entire population. The generalisation of findings contributes to supporting the external validity of a study. If researchers aim to generalise the sample results to the planned population, a sample study must rely on a sufficient sample size which is actually representative of the population (Vogt, 2007; Bordens and Abbott, 2014).

The questionnaire survey was aimed at universities engaged in SM practices. This study's case selection focuses on Saudi Arabian universities, so non-random

purposive sampling was employed as it fits with the nature of the research questions and chosen approaches. Purposive sampling is an approach to sampling whereby experts use their specialist judgement to decide which characteristics would be best suited to the sample requirements (Zikmund et al., 2013). For the purposes of this study, purposive sampling was chosen for its advantages from the input of experts, as their knowledge and experience means a realistic population sample can be obtained. The study's sample consisted of a number of senior managers and academic staff who are engaged in producing and developing strategic plans at the universities. Potential respondent websites and mailing lists were compiled from the Ministry of Education portal in KSA and other universities websites, in line with the principle that a comprehensive measurement should involve the interests of all various members.

The current thesis is concerned with one a particular stakeholder in HE, namely, the academic staff. This assessment, however, does not consider other points of view to be invalid and insignificant. According to Khodayari and Khodayari (2011), the majority of the studies around the world in HE SQ have focused on quality from the students' perspective, while fewer studies explore the perspective of academic and administration staff. Similarly, few researchers in Arab nations in general and in a Saudi context in particular have conducted empirical testing of measurement instruments of SQ linking to SM processes and OC. Hence, senior managers from various universities at diverse positions and academic staff were invited to participate in this survey.

Nevertheless, to make sure the responses to the questions are accurate, this study attempts to select the respondents in operations, decision making, strategy divisions, and academic staff who are assumed to have ample and particular

knowledge about the issues covered in the research. The targeted respondents include senior positions such as Vice Presidents for Quality and Academic Development, Deans and Vice Deans of colleges, Deans and Vice Deans of the Strategic Planning and Quality Departments, Head of Academic Departments, and staff involved in the strategic management and strategic plans procedure. These were specifically chosen as key participants due to their extensive knowledge about their respective departments, their knowledge about strategy, and their access to relevant information. Consequently, due to objectives of this survey on targeting appropriate knowledge and information, administrative staff and students were excluded.

749 potential participants were sent links to a web-based survey via email. With expectations of increased response rates, respondents were assured of anonymity and promised to be provided with an executive summary of findings. The covariance structure preferred for subsequent analysis assumes no missing values in the data set (Anderson and Gerbing 1988), a condition which the design of a web-based questionnaire guarantees. This study used a population of 25 public universities with 31,918 Saudi staff, 22,755 non Saudi and the total is 54,673 academic staff in addition to nine private universities comprising 986 academic staff (Higher Education Statistics, 2014).

There is no definitive standard with regard to sample size. It can be considered as small (less than 100 samples), medium (between 100 and 200 samples), and large (more than 200 samples). From these classifications, 178 samples can be regarded as the critical size (Hair et al., 2010). Furthermore, statistical power is higher in a sample size of 100 or more, according to SEM. The sample size was therefore regarded as acceptable for this research (Hair et al., 2010). Eventually, 404

questionnaires out of 749 were valid and the response rate was 50.88%. Of these, 345 were usable.

### **5.17 Sampling frame**

The sampling frame is a comprehensive list of all the cases in the population from which your sample can be taken (Saunders et al., 2009). Researchers set up a sampling frame when it is unavailable. This list should be inclusive, correct, reliable, and suitable for research and it should be as representative of the population as possible (Kotharia, 2004). Hence, for the purpose of this study, the sampling frame includes all government and non-governmental universities in Saudi Arabia listed on Ministry of Education databases. The target population in this study comprises senior managers because they have extensive control over the universities and academic staff that are familiar with, and involved in the strategic management process (see Table 5.14) and the criteria used to identify these universities. Academic staff are perceived to be one of the most important assets of HE organisations, on account of their knowledge creation and sharing activities (Kim and Ju, 2008).

In order to contact these universities, a number of emails were sent to the official email addresses of the universities obtained from their official websites. In addition, 'snowball sampling' was adopted, which is an informal method used to reach a population, or sometimes to infer something about a group of individuals, or about the network structure within that group (Snijders, 1992). The idea is that a sample is produced from a base of preliminary contacts of respondents, who then provide introductions to their colleagues, who, in turn, are required to nominate others. The process is continued until a sample has been created (Wright

and Stein, 2005). Hence, online links to a web-based survey were emailed to 244 senior managers including Vice Presidents of Deanship of Quality Assurance and Academic Development, Deans, Vice Deans of colleges in addition to 505 potential academic staff at 34 public and private universities listed on the Ministry of Education website. There are 25 public universities, nine private universities, 524 public colleges, and 68 private colleges. (see Chapter 2, Tables 2.1 and 2.2).

However, this research only targets public and private universities, numbering 34 universities and excluding private colleges. The researcher excluded other type of HE such as vocational training colleges and other colleges due to their lack of experience on such strategic process and insufficient staff members. Public and private universities were selected as the sampling frame for two key reasons: (1) the number of universities and the range of faculties at each one means there is an adequate number of senior managers and academic staff to whom the survey can be distributed and (2) it would keep time to a minimum. Table 5.14 lists the criteria used to identify these universities.

**Table 5-14 Criteria for selection of universities engaged on SM**

1. Universities with an active role in creating SP process.
2. Staff who are involved in direct or indirect role on SM process
3. University which has a strategic planning or quality assurance unit or department
4. University who listed on any world university rankings

*Note: Participation should meet at least one of these criteria*

The questionnaires were given out and collected in over a period of around six months, beginning in September 2013 and lasting until the end of February 2014, followed by one reminder email. As a main survey, the free online survey software called *Qualtrics* offered by Plymouth University included a covering letter detailing the purpose of the study, and requesting participation in the survey.

### 5.18 Response rate, Non-response bias and T-test

In this section, response rate, non-response bias, and common method bias are discussed. Hence, 244 senior managers were sent an online link to a web-based survey including Vice Presidents of Deanship of Quality Assurance and Academic Development, Deans, Vice Deans of colleges in addition to 505 potential academic staff at 34 governments and private universities listed on the Ministry of Education website. One or two follow up emails were sent to those who did not respond during the targeted period.

The researcher checked for missing data to test the accuracy of the data. Indications of missing data are 'information not available for a case (or subject) for which other information is available' (Hair et al., 2006, p38). Missing data is usually a result of participants' failed response to one or more of the survey questions. Hence, the researcher excluded 345 questionnaires with missing data. Consequently, 404 questionnaires out of 749 were valid and free of missing data. Hence, the resulting response rate was 50.88%.

The primary reason for assessment of non-response bias is to explore the extent to which the respondents to the questionnaire differ from the non-respondents (Dillman, 2000). Diverse methods exist to assess the non-response error (Armstrong and Overton, 1977; Groves, 2006). Yet, reviewing the export literature has revealed that the most commonly used method is comparing late and early respondents (Lages and Montgomery, 2005; Wilkinson and Brouters, 2006). Therefore, to check non-response bias (also known as non-response error), a T-test was conducted for comparison of the last quartile respondents and first quartile respondents as suggested by Armstrong and Overton (1977).

Hence, the differences were investigated by means of T-test analysis; the researcher compared the first 50 responses with the last 50 responses. The null

hypothesis of the analysis states that there should be no variation between the mean of the early respondents and the late respondents. Table 5.15 illustrates the fact that for all randomly selected items, the T-test was insignificant with  $P > 0.05$ . This result supports the null hypothesis and therefore the conclusion is that there is no difference between the early respondents and late respondents (see Table 5.15).

**Table 5-15 T-test analysis: The difference between early and late group**

	Group Statistics					Sig. (2-tailed)
	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
UM1	early	50	3.36	1.083	.153	.065
	Late	50	3.76	1.061	.150	.065
UM2	early	50	3.42	1.144	.162	.410
	Late	50	3.60	1.030	.146	.410
UM3	early	50	3.18	1.119	.158	.137
	Late	50	3.52	1.147	.162	.137
UM6	early	50	3.26	1.157	.164	.161
	Late	50	3.58	1.108	.157	.161
UM7	early	50	3.34	1.189	.168	.360
	Late	50	3.54	.973	.138	.360
UM8	early	50	3.14	1.143	.162	.235
	Late	50	3.40	1.030	.146	.235
SO3	early	50	2.76	1.041	.147	.068
	Late	50	3.18	1.224	.173	.068
IS1	early	50	3.20	1.030	.146	.055
	Late	50	3.60	1.030	.146	.055
IS5	early	50	3.06	1.077	.152	.070
	Late	50	3.44	.993	.140	.070
IS6	early	50	2.92	1.158	.164	.062
	Late	50	3.36	1.174	.166	.062
IS7	early	50	2.98	1.220	.173	.084
	Late	50	3.38	1.067	.151	.084
IS8	early	50	3.04	1.177	.167	.166
	Late	50	3.38	1.260	.178	.166
ES4	early	50	2.98	1.040	.147	.202
	Late	50	3.26	1.139	.161	.202
ES6	early	50	3.00	1.069	.151	.106
	Late	50	3.36	1.139	.161	.106
ES8	early	50	2.70	1.313	.186	.506
	Late	50	2.88	1.380	.195	.506

<b>FSP2</b>	early	50	2.78	1.016	.144	.005
	Late	50	3.38	1.048	.148	.005
<b>FSP3</b>	early	50	3.08	1.122	.159	.065
	Late	50	3.50	1.129	.160	.065
<b>SI2</b>	early	50	3.30	1.216	.172	.558
	Late	50	3.44	1.163	.165	.558
<b>SI3</b>	early	50	3.32	1.186	.168	.278
	Late	50	3.58	1.197	.169	.278
<b>SI4</b>	early	50	3.56	1.053	.149	.449
	Late	50	3.72	1.051	.149	.449
<b>SI5</b>	early	50	3.50	1.055	.149	.144
	Late	50	3.82	1.119	.158	.144
<b>SI6</b>	early	50	3.54	1.199	.170	.803
	Late	50	3.60	1.195	.169	.803
<b>SI7</b>	early	50	3.42	1.197	.169	.274
	Late	50	3.68	1.168	.165	.274
<b>SI9</b>	early	50	3.24	1.238	.175	.221
	Late	50	3.54	1.199	.170	.221
<b>ESP1</b>	early	50	3.38	1.105	.156	.157
	Late	50	3.68	.999	.141	.158
<b>ESP2</b>	early	50	3.22	1.112	.157	.279
	Late	50	3.46	1.092	.154	.279
<b>ESP3</b>	early	50	3.26	1.139	.161	.414
	Late	50	3.44	1.053	.149	.414
<b>ESP4</b>	early	50	3.22	1.093	.155	.525
	Late	50	3.36	1.102	.156	.525
<b>ESP5</b>	early	50	3.32	1.168	.165	.107
	Late	50	3.70	1.165	.165	.107
<b>ESP6</b>	early	50	3.28	1.144	.162	.377
	Late	50	3.48	1.111	.157	.377
<b>SQ1</b>	early	50	3.18	1.082	.153	.525
	Late	50	3.32	1.115	.158	.525
<b>SQ2</b>	early	50	3.16	1.076	.152	.126
	Late	50	3.48	.995	.141	.126
<b>SQ3</b>	early	50	3.20	.857	.121	.041
	Late	50	3.56	.884	.125	.041
<b>SQ4</b>	early	50	3.08	1.066	.151	.323
	Late	50	3.30	1.147	.162	.323
<b>SQ6</b>	early	50	3.32	.957	.135	.685
	Late	50	3.40	1.010	.143	.685
<b>SQ8</b>	early	50	2.52	.995	.141	.635
	Late	50	2.62	1.105	.156	.635
<b>SQ10</b>	early	50	2.52	.909	.129	.201

	Late	50	2.26	1.103	.156	.201
SQ11	early	50	3.24	1.001	.142	.181
	Late	50	3.52	1.074	.152	.181
SQ14	early	50	3.00	1.050	.148	.071
	Late	50	3.40	1.143	.162	.071
SQ19	early	50	2.46	.973	.138	.367
	Late	50	2.28	1.011	.143	.367
SQ20	early	50	2.76	1.041	.147	.167
	Late	50	2.46	1.110	.157	.167
SQ21	early	50	2.24	.981	.139	.089
	Late	50	1.92	.877	.124	.089
SQ22	early	50	2.38	1.028	.145	.118
	Late	50	2.06	.998	.141	.118
OC1	early	50	3.24	1.188	.168	.937
	Late	50	3.26	1.322	.187	.937
OC2	early	50	3.18	1.137	.161	.311
	Late	50	2.94	1.219	.172	.311
OC3	early	50	2.22	1.016	.144	.491
	Late	50	2.08	1.007	.142	.491
OC4	early	50	2.12	.982	.139	.843
	Late	50	2.08	1.027	.145	.843
OC5	early	50	3.48	1.328	.188	.743
	Late	50	3.56	1.091	.154	.743
OC6	early	50	2.36	1.191	.168	1.000
	Late	50	2.36	1.274	.180	1.000
OC7	early	50	3.48	1.216	.172	.687
	Late	50	3.38	1.260	.178	.687
OC8	early	50	3.34	1.171	.166	.480
	Late	50	3.18	1.082	.153	.480
OC9	early	50	2.56	.972	.137	.410
	Late	50	2.38	1.193	.169	.410
OC10	early	50	2.58	.971	.137	.491
	Late	50	2.44	1.053	.149	.491
OC11	early	50	2.62	1.141	.161	.131
	Late	50	2.28	1.089	.154	.131
OC12	early	50	2.78	1.250	.177	.009
	Late	50	2.18	1.004	.142	.010
OC13	early	50	2.78	1.075	.152	.184
	Late	50	2.48	1.165	.165	.184
OC14	early	50	2.48	.995	.141	.721
	Late	50	2.40	1.229	.174	.721
OC15	early	50	3.26	1.046	.148	.934
	Late	50	3.28	1.341	.190	.934

OC16	early	50	3.02	1.204	.170	.467
	Late	50	3.22	1.516	.214	
OC17	early	50	3.58	1.052	.149	.573
	Late	50	3.44	1.402	.198	
OC18	early	50	3.22	1.112	.157	.055
	Late	50	3.68	1.253	.177	
OC19	early	50	3.38	1.141	.161	.460
	Late	50	3.56	1.280	.181	

### 5.19 Data analysis technique

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between multiple independent and dependent variables involving SM, OC, and SQ. A suitable sampling frame was chosen and an appropriate sample size was identified, and consequently the most suitable sampling technique needed to be chosen in order to gain a non-probability sample. SEM is greatly recommended by many scholars as the analytical technique with the most efficacy, due to its advantages of flexibility and suitability for analysing simultaneous associations (Hair et al., 2010; Byrne, 2010; Kline, 2011; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2012). It can statistically investigate hypothesised models to approve the consistency between the proposed models and the sample data (Wisner, 2003). Therefore, this thesis employs the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) technique as the core data analysis for empirical tests.

SEM is a confirmatory multivariate approach concerning the measurement errors in a model, and assists in the measurement of the relationships among the latent (i.e. benefits of adoption) and the observed variables (indicators) (Robson, 2002). Wijanto (2008) divided SEM into two variables that incorporate the latent variable and the observed variable. Latent variables cannot be directly measured, and as a construct is abstract, such as satisfaction or collaboration, and the observed variable is used to measure it. Byrne (2010) explains that latent variables

come in two types - exogenous latent variables and endogenous latent variables. Exogenous latent variables only affect other latent variables, whilst endogenous latent variables can be affected by other variables within the model, either directly or indirectly.

### **5.20 Summary**

This chapter reviewed the philosophical stances used in research and focused on positivism; the one that enlightened this study. Furthermore, this chapter has addressed both the content and construct validity of the questionnaire to ensure the tool measured what it was supposed to. The survey was evaluated by academics staff from worldwide and PhD researchers. The study employed back-translation as a technique to obtain a target questionnaire. Furthermore, the scale's reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha. Hence, this study employed a smaller sample to calculate the Cronbach's alpha. The initial questionnaire was delivered to and collected from 50 academic staff at King Abdulaziz University, Jazan University, King Saud University and Princes Nora Bint Abdul Rahman University in Saudi Arabia to measure the reliability of the questions. 40 usable initial questionnaires were returned. (See Appendices C, D, E, F, and G).

## **Chapter 6      Data results and analysis**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter introduces and analyses the findings of the quantitative data collection. Initially it begins by discussing the main research and each latent variable's descriptive statistics. The chapter then moves on to the testing of discriminant and convergent validity and construct reliability of the measurement models. It then concludes by analysing and presenting the results of the structural models. The results are categorised into four sections as follows. First, this section will examine the relationship of strategic management in this study consists of four main variables which are: (1) Strategic Planning, (2) Formalisation, (3) Implementation, and (4) Evaluation on organisational commitment. Secondly, this section will study the relationship of strategic management which consists of four main variables, which are: (1) Strategic Planning, (2) Formalisation, (3) Implementation, and (4) Evaluation on service quality. Third, this section examines the relationship between the Saudi Arabian universities' organisational commitment on service quality. Finally, in this section the study examines the indirect relationship between the independent variables (strategic planning, formalisation, implementation, and evaluation) on Saudi Arabian universities' service quality through organisational commitment.

### **6.2 Descriptive data findings**

The importance of data screening is highlighted by Byrne (2010), who indicates that in order to make sure that no assumptions of the model are violated; the researcher must employ SEM before testing the measurement model as this may cause problems with the estimations.

The current section explores descriptive data for the main questionnaire variables (see Section 5.8), including the strategic management latent variable which includes the following four dimensions: (1) Strategic Planning, (2) Formalisation, (3) Implementation, and (4) Evaluation, the Saudi Arabian universities' organisational commitment latent variable and the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality.

### 6.3 Description of sample

This section illustrates the demographic characteristics of the respondents, as shown in Table 6.1.

**Table 6-1 Description of the sample**

<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	121	29.95%
	Female	283	70.04%
<b>Academic Qualification</b>	PhD	288	71.28%
	Master's	75	18.56%
	Bachelor	41	10.41%
<b>Scientific Degree (Academic Profession)</b>	Professor	33	8.16%
	Associate Professor	54	13.36%
	Associate Lecturer	197	48.76%
	Lecturer	76	18.81%
	Teaching Assistant	44	10.89%
<b>Role/position</b>	Vice President	13	3.21%
	Dean	56	13.86%
	Vice Dean	87	21.53%
	Head of Department	117	28.96%
	Faculty member	131	32.42%
<b>University</b>	Public	269	66.58%
	Private	135	33.41%

As for the percentage of gender, female respondents consisted of 70.04% and 29.95% were male. Professor made up 8.16% of the sample, Associate Professor were 13.36%, Associate Lecturer 48.76%, Lecturer 18.81%, and Teaching Assistant comprised 10.89%. The responses were also grouped according to their academic qualifications; the proportion of respondents with a Doctorate degree was 71.28%, Master's 18.56% and 10.41% held a Bachelor. Thus, the majority of the respondents held either a Doctorate or Master's.

In terms of role, Vice President was only 3.21%, Dean was 13.86%, Vice Dean made up 21.53%, Head of Department 28.96%, and Faculty Member 32.42%. That showed the majority of the participants were faculty members. 66.58% were from public universities and the rest (33.41%) were from private universities.

### **6.3.1 Strategic management constructs**

As has been mentioned above (see Section 5.8.1), the strategic planning construct has five attributes which are: (1) Universities' Vision, (2) Universities' Mission, (3) Universities' Goals and Objectives, (4) Internal Environmental Scanning, and (5) External Environmental Scanning. This section will discuss each attribute.

#### **6.3.1.1 Universities' Vision**

In general, the Saudi Arabian universities academic staff representative's responses average on the Universities' Vision Construct are mostly 'Agree (4.07) on 'UV3' 'Vision provide a sense of direction for organisational members to proceed' to (4.37) on 'UV2' 'Vision is considered as a necessary for leadership, a process of inducting others to act toward a common goal'. These responses signify that the respondents believe in 'UV2' as the Universities' Vision is very important for the Saudi Arabian universities' academic staff to work towards

achieving the university's common goal. Table 6.2 illustrates the descriptive statistics of the Saudi Arabian universities' Vision. This tables gives descriptive statistics of the 4 items (UV1 to UV4) of the Vision by introducing the item's frequencies, strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), Neutral (N), agree (A), strongly agree (SA), and the mean.

**Table 6-2 Descriptive statistics of Saudi Arabian universities' Vision (UV)**

(UV); 4 items	SD		D		N		A		SA		Total		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
UV1= The university vision is always about a desirable future.	9	2.2	18	4.5	54	13.4	124	30.7	199	13.4	404	100	4.20
UV2= The university vision is considered as a necessary for leadership, a process of inducting others to act toward a common goal.	10	2.5	14	3.5	32	7.9	108	26.7	42	59.4	404	100	4.37
UV3= The university vision provides a sense of direction for organisational members to proceed.	12	3.0	22	5.4	67	16.6	130	32.2	173	42.8	404	100	4.07
UV4= Vision stems from its importance for business strategy and planning.	8	2.0	21	5.2	71	17.6	133	32.9	171	42.3	404	100	4.08

### 6.3.1.2 Universities' Mission Statement

In general, the Saudi Arabian universities' academic staff representative's responses average on the universities' Mission Construct are mostly 'Neutral' (3.44) on 'UM3' 'The identification of geographic domain, that is where the university competes' 'to 'Agree' (3.65) on 'UM2' 'The identification of principal services'. These responses signify that the respondents believe on 'UM2' as the identification of principal service is the most important for the Saudi Arabian universities. Table 6.3 shows the descriptive statistics of the Saudi Arabian universities' Mission. This table gives descriptive statistics of the 8 items (UM1 to UM8) of the Mission by introducing the item's frequencies: strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), Neutral (N), agree (A), strongly agree (SA), and the mean.

**Table 6-3 Descriptive statistics of Saudi Arabian universities' Mission Statement (UM)**

(UM); 8 items	SD		D		N		A		SA		Total		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
UM1= The university's mission specifies the target customers and markets	18	4.5	43	10.6	110	27.2	137	33.9	96	23.8	404	100	3.62
UM2=The university's mission identifies principal services	20	5.0	32	7.9	101	25.0	168	41.6	83	20.5	404	100	3.65
UM3=The university's mission includes identification of geographic domain where the university competes	25	6.2	54	13.4	117	29.0	134	33.2	74	18.3	404	100	3.44
UM4=The university's mission encompasses the identification of the university's use of technology	20	5.0	51	12.6	129	31.9	131	32.4	73	18.1	404	100	3.46
UM5=The university's mission includes the expression of commitments to growth, survival, and profitability	14	3.5	24	5.9	114	28.2	152	37.6	100	24.8	404	100	3.74
UM6=The university's mission specifies key elements of the university philosophy, beliefs, values, inspiration and priorities	18	4.5	37	9.2	110	27.2	154	38.1	85	21.0	404	100	3.62
UM7=The university's mission identifies the university's desired public image	21	5.2	4	9.9	111	27.5	153	37.9	79	19.6	404	100	3.57
UM8=The university's mission identifies the university self-concept, namely, the university's view of itself and its competitive strengths	20	5.0	48	11.9	118	29.2	136	33.7	82	20.3	404	100	3.52

### 6.3.1.3 Universities' Goals and Objectives (SO)

In terms of the Saudi Arabian universities' Goals and Objectives, Table 6.4 demonstrates that respondents have opinions range from 'Neutral' (3.12) on 'SO3 'Goals and objectives linked to a specific duration of time' to 'Agree' (3.78) on 'SO1' 'The university's objectives desire to set programs and education policy direction. Table 6.4 shows the descriptive statistics Saudi Arabian universities' Goals and Objectives.

**Table 6-4 Descriptive statistics of Saudi Arabian universities' Goal and Objectives (SO)**

(SO); 3 items	SD		D		N		A		SA		Total		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
SO1= The university's objectives desire to set programs and education policy direction.	14	3.5	30	7.4	94	23.3	157	38.9	109	27.0	404	100	3.78
SO2=The university has realistic goals	19	4.7	34	8.4	105	26.0	147	36.4	99	24.5	404	100	3.68
SO3=Goals and objectives linked to a specific duration of time	27	7.6	105	26.0	121	30.0	950	23.5	56	13.9	404	100	3.12

#### 6.3.1.4 The universities' Internal Environmental Scanning (IS)

In terms of the Saudi Arabian universities' Internal Environmental Scanning, Table 6.5 shows that participants have opinions range from 'Neutral' (3.25) on 'IS6 'Analysis of the causes of failures in the past' to 'Agree' (3.54) on 'IS4 'Analysis of university's strengths and weaknesses'. These responses signify that the respondents believe in 'IS4' as the analysis of strengths and weaknesses of Saudi Arabian universities is the most important point in the internal Environmental Scanning. Table 6.5 shows the descriptive statistics Saudi Arabia universities' Internal Environmental Scanning.

**Table 6-5 Descriptive statistics of Saudi Arabian universities' Internal Environmental Scanning (IS)**

(IS); 8 items (Reflective)	SD		D		N		A		SA		Total		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
IS1=Analysis of internal capabilities	18	4.5	42	10.4	129	31.9	147	36.4	68	16.8	404	100	3.51
IS2=Analysis of employee issues	36	8.9	66	16.3	126	31.2	107	26.5	69	17.1	404	100	3.26
IS3=Analysis of efficiency of operating processes.	17	4.2	60	14.9	137	33.9	131	32.4	59	14.6	404	100	3.38
IS4=Analysis of the university's strengths and weaknesses.	23	5.7	43	10.6	116	28.7	138	34.2	84	20.8	404	100	3.54
IS5=Analysis of past performance	24	5.9	72	17.8	138	34.2	104	25.7	66	16.3	404	100	3.29
IS6= Analysis of the causes of failures in the past.	33	8.2	81	20.0	116	28.7	100	24.8	74	18.3	404	100	3.25
IS7=Analysis of shareholder and/or agencies of education issues.	33	8.2	57	14.1	129	31.9	115	28.5	70	17.3	404	100	3.33
IS8=Analysis of how to attract and rehabilitation high-quality staff.	45	11.1	54	13.4	110	27.2	115	28.5	80	19.8	404	100	3.32

#### 6.3.1.5 The universities' External Environmental Scanning (ES)

In terms of the Saudi Arabian universities' External Environmental Scanning, Table 6.6 shows that participants have opinions range from 'Neutral' (3.05) on 'ES8 'Analysis of supplier issues' to (3.41) on 'ES1 'Analysis of community-based issues'. These responses signify that the respondents believe in 'ES1' as the analysis of community-based issues for Saudi Arabian universities is the most important role in the External Environmental Scanning. Table 6.6 shows the descriptive statistics Saudi Arabian universities' External Environmental Scanning.

**Table 6-6 Descriptive statistics of Saudi Arabian universities' External Environmental Scanning (ES)**

(ES); 8 items (Reflective)	SD		D		N		A		SA		Total		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
ES1=Analysis of community-based issues	26	6.4	47	11.6	126	31.2	144	35.6	61	15.1	404	100	3.41
ES2= Analysis of environmental issues	24	5.9	63	15.6	120	29.7	136	33.7	61	15.1	404	100	3.36
ES3= Analysis of technology issues	30	7.4	65	16.1	120	29.7	130	32.2	59	14.6	404	100	3.30
ES4=Analysis of political/regulatory issues	42	10.4	66	16.3	139	34.4	103	25.5	54	13.4	404	100	3.15
ES5= Analysis of competitive issues.	31	7.7	64	15.8	128	31.7	125	30.9	56	13.9	404	100	3.27
ES6=Analysis of general economic and business conditions.	33	8.2	66	16.3	132	32.7	117	29.0	56	13.9	404	100	3.24
ES7=Analysis of customers and end user preferences													
ES8= Analysis of the problems and issues of public education (pre-university).	36	8.9	53	13.1	125	30.9	103	25.5	87	21.5	404	100	3.38
	56	13.9	83	20.5	119	29.5	78	19.3	68	16.8	404	100	3.05

### 6.3.1.6 The universities' Strategy Formalisation (F)

For the Saudi Arabian universities' Strategy Formalisation latent variable, Table 6.7 shows that respondents have opinions range from 'Neutral (3.27) on 'F2 'The university has structured strategic planning process.' to 'Agree' (3.62) on 'F1 'The university utilises formal planning techniques'. Table 6.7 shows the descriptive statistics of Saudi Arabian universities' Formalisation.

**Table 6-7 Descriptive statistics of universities' Formalisation (F)**

(F); 4 items (Reflective)	SD		D		N		A		SA		Total		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
F1= The university utilises formal planning techniques.	23	5.7	23	5.7	133	32.9	129	31.9	96	23.8	404	100	3.62
F2=The university has structured strategic planning process.	24	5.9	76	18.8	136	33.7	104	25.7	64	15.8	404	100	3.27
F3=University has instructions written guidelines to regulate the strategic plan.	30	7.4	73	18.1	117	29.0	107	26.5	77	19.1	404	100	3.32
F4=The process and outputs of strategic planning are formally documented	24	5.9	60	14.9	127	31.4	119	29.5	74	18.3	404	100	3.39

### 6.3.1.7 The universities' Strategy Implementation (SI)

For the Saudi Arabian universities' Implementation latent variable, Table 6.8 shows that respondents have opinions range from 'Neutral' (3.37) on 'SI8 'provide incentives for employees to carry out the strategies effectively' to

‘Agree’ (3.62) on ‘SI4’ ‘assign people who are to be responsible for implementing these strategies’. Table 6.8 shows the descriptive statistics of Saudi Arabian universities' Implementation.

**Table 6-8 Descriptive statistics of universities' Implementation (SI)**

(SI); 9 items (Reflective)	SD		D		N		A		SA		Total		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
<b>SI1</b> =Establish procedures and activities that can be applied.	13	3.2	29	7.2	138	34.2	143	35.4	81	20.0	404	100	3.62
<b>SI2</b> =Define the deadlines for implementing the strategies	19	4.7	41	10.1	126	31.2	135	33.4	83	20.5	404	100	3.55
<b>SI3</b> =Allocate the time in which these strategies are to be implemented	18	4.5	51	12.6	123	30.4	113	28.0	99	24.5	404	100	3.55
<b>SI4</b> =Assign people who are to be responsible for implementing these strategies	18	4.5	33	8.2	126	31.2	115	28.5	112	27.7	404	100	3.67
<b>SI5</b> =Specify the method that will be followed for the implementation of these strategies.	19	4.7	35	8.7	124	30.7	121	30.0	105	26.0	404	100	3.64
<b>SI6</b> =Allocate financial resources needed to implement these strategies	27	6.7	31	7.7	114	28.2	125	30.9	107	26.5	404	100	3.63
<b>SI7</b> =Communicate to employees when and how the strategies will be carried out	30	7.4	37	9.2	111	27.5	130	32.2	96	23.8	404	100	3.56
<b>SI8</b> = provide incentives for employees to carry out the strategies effectively.	44	10.9	51	12.6	116	28.7	99	24.3	95	23.5	404	100	3.37
<b>SI9</b> = The existence of a permanent monitoring and control to ensure the consistency and coherence of all activities and procedures.	29	7.2	54	13.4	102	25.2	115	28.5	104	25.7	404	100	3.52

### 6.3.1.8 The universities' Strategy Evaluation (EV)

For the Saudi Arabian universities' Strategy Evaluation latent variable, Table 6.9 illustrates that participants have opinions range from ‘Neutral (3.38) on ‘EV6’ ‘the allocation of the distribution of resources with the objectives of the plan’ to ‘Agree’ (3.62) on ‘EV1’ ‘the appropriateness of the objectives of the plan’. Table 6.9 shows the descriptive statistics of Saudi Arabian universities' Evaluation.

**Table 6-9 Descriptive statistics of universities' Evaluation (EV)**

(EV); 6 items (Reflective)	SD		D		N		A		SA		Total		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
EV1=The appropriateness of the objectives of the plan	15	3.7	29	7.2	124	30.7	163	40.3	73	18.1	404	100	3.62
EV2=The role and impact of strategic planning	21	5.2	30	7.4	116	28.7	159	39.4	78	19.3	404	100	3.60
EV3=Assess the efficiency of the planning process	24	5.9	29	7.2	131	32.4	142	35.1	78	19.3	404	100	3.55
EV4=Measuring the effectiveness of the planning process and the Strategic Plan	24	5.9	44	10.9	120	29.7	138	34.2	78	19.3	404	100	3.50
EV5=Put indicators and special criteria for performance evaluation	28	6.9	38	9.4	107	26.5	135	33.4	96	23.8	404	100	3.58
EV6=The allocation of the distribution of resources with the objectives of the plan	28	6.9	37	9.2	128	31.7	137	33.9	74	18.3	404	100	3.48

### 6.3.2 The universities' Service Quality (SQ)

For the Saudi Arabian universities' Service Quality latent variable, Table 6.10 illustrates that participants have opinions range from 'Disagree (2.23) on 'SQ21' 'University does not have students' best interest as a major objective' to 'Agree' (3.62) on 'SQ11' 'Students do not receive prompt service from the university'. Table 6.10 shows the descriptive statistics of Saudi Arabia Universities' Service Quality.

**Table 6-10 Descriptive statistics of universities' Service Quality (SQ)**

(SQ) 22 items (Reflective)	SD		D		N		A		SA		Total		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
<b>SQ1</b> = The university / faculty has up-to-date teaching tools, equipment and facilities (library, projector etc.)	29	7.2	79	19.6	120	29.7	104	25.7	72	17.8	404	100	3.27
	33	8.2	78	19.3	120	29.7	116	28.7	57	14.1	404	100	3.21
<b>SQ2</b> =The appearance of the physical facilities of the university / faculty are visually appealing.	12	3.0	29	7.2	137	33.9	159	39.4	67	16.6	404	100	3.59
	33	8.2	74	18.3	139	34.4	102	25.2	56	13.9	404	100	3.18
<b>SQ3</b> =The university's staff are neat-appealing.	25	6.2	70	17.3	148	36.6	107	26.5	54	13.4	404	100	3.24
<b>SQ4</b> =The university's materials associated with the type of services provided.	20	5.0	27	6.7	116	28.7	161	39.9	80	19.8	404	100	3.63
<b>SQ5</b> =The university / faculty make a commitment to provide a service at the certain time as promises to do.	21	5.2	27	6.7	147	36.4	142	35.1	67	16.6	404	100	3.51
	56	13.9	151	37.4	135	33.4	41	10.1	21	5.2	404	100	2.55
	49	12.1	168	41.6	129	31.9	45	11.1	13	3.2	404	100	2.52
<b>SQ6</b> =When students have problems, staff show a sincere interest in solving it.	59	14.6	175	43.3	116	28.7	46	11.4	8	2.0	404	100	2.43
<b>SQ7</b> =The university is dependable													
<b>SQ8</b> =The university keeps its records accurately	12	3.0	36	8.9	112	27.7	144	35.6	100	24.8	404	100	3.70
<b>SQ9</b> =The university provides its services right from the first time.	36	8.9	112	27.7	163	40.3	72	17.8	21	5.2	404	100	2.83
<b>SQ10</b> =Faculty staff are too busy to respond to student requests promptly.													
<b>SQ11</b> =Students do not receive prompt service from the university.	92	22.8	155	38.4	119	29.5	28	6.9	10	2.5	404	100	2.28
<b>SQ12</b> =The university does not tell its students exactly when services will be performed.	12	3.0	38	9.4	145	35.9	162	40.1	47	11.6	404	100	3.48
	17	4.2	44	10.9	117	29.0	178	44.1	48	11.9	404	100	3.49
<b>SQ13</b> =Faculty staff are not always willing to help students.													
<b>SQ14</b> =The behavior of faculty staff instills confidence in the students	11	2.7	23	5.7	114	28.2	205	50.7	51	12.6	404	100	3.65
<b>SQ15</b> =Students can feel safe in their transaction with faculty staff.													
<b>SQ16</b> =Faculty staff are courteous all the time with students													
<b>SQ17</b> Teaching staff have knowledge to answer student's questions	14	3.5	14	3.5	125	30.9	197	48.8	54	13.4	404	100	3.65
	41	10.1	90	22.3	145	35.9	105	26.0	23	5.7	404	100	2.95
<b>SQ18</b> =The university does not provides personal attention to every student.	76	18.8	143	35.4	139	34.4	37	9.2	9	2.2	404	100	2.41
<b>SQ19</b> =The university does not have operating hours convenient to all its students.	64	15.8	117	29.0	141	34.9	71	17.6	11	2.7	404	100	2.62
<b>SQ20</b> =Faculty staff do not give students individual attention.	100	24.8	158	39.1	108	26.7	28	6.9	10	2.5	404	100	2.23
<b>SQ21</b> =University does not have students' best interest as a major objective.	80	19.8	161	39.9	122	30.2	29	7.2	12	3.0	404	100	2.34
<b>SQ22</b> =Faculty do not understand the specific needs of students.													

### 6.3.3 The universities' Organisational Commitment (OC)

For the Saudi Arabian universities' Organisational Commitment latent variable, Table 6.11 explores that participants have opinions range from 'Disagree (2.43) on 'OC4' 'I do not feel emotionally attached' to this university' to 'Agree' (3.52) on 'OC3' 'I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my university' and 'OC7' 'It would be very hard for me to leave my university right now, even if I wanted to'.

**Table 6-11 Descriptive statistics of universities' Organisational Commitment (OC)**

(OC) 19 items (Reflective)	SD		D		N		A		SA		Total		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
<b>OC1</b> =I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this university	30	7.4	32	7.9	160	39.6	134	33.2	48	11.9	404	100	3.34
<b>OC2</b> =I really feel as if this university's problems are my own	29	7.2	68	16.8	174	43.1	93	23.0	40	9.9	404	100	3.12
<b>OC3</b> =I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my university	83	20.5	104	25.7	155	38.4	47	11.6	15	3.7	404	100	2.52
<b>OC4</b> =I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this university	90	22.3	121	30.0	134	33.2	47	11.6	12	3.0	404	100	2.43
<b>OC5</b> =This university has a great deal of personal meaning for me	19	4.7	36	8.9	150	37.1	131	32.4	68	16.8	404	100	3.48
<b>OC6</b> =I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my university	90	22.3	107	26.5	141	34.9	45	11.1	21	5.2	404	100	2.50
<b>OC7</b> =It would be very hard for me to leave my university right now, even if I wanted to	27	6.7	32	7.9	131	32.4	131	32.4	83	20.5	404	100	3.52
<b>OC8</b> =Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave my university right now	28	6.9	44	10.9	147	36.4	114	28.2	71	17.6	404	100	3.39
<b>OC9</b> =Right now, staying with my university is a matter of necessity more than a desire	53	13.1	107	26.5	141	34.9	65	16.1	38	9.4	404	100	2.82
<b>OC10</b> =I believe that I have too few options to consider leaving this university	57	14.1	80	19.8	155	38.4	75	18.6	37	9.2	404	100	2.89
<b>OC11</b> =One of the few negative consequences of leaving this university would be the scarcity of available alternatives	66	16.3	71	17.6	153	37.9	82	20.3	32	7.9	404	100	2.86
<b>OC12</b> =One of the major reasons I continue to work for this university is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice; another organisation may not match the overall benefits I have here	61	15.1	89	22.0	139	34.4	90	22.3	25	6.2	404	100	2.82
<b>OC13</b> =If I had not already put so much of myself into this university, I might consider working elsewhere	52	12.9	82	20.3	162	40.1	83	20.5	25	6.2	404	100	2.87
<b>OC14</b> =I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer	67	16.6	89	22.0	172	42.6	61	15.1	15	3.7	404	100	2.67
<b>OC15</b> =Even if it was beneficial to me, I do not feel it would be right to leave my university now	36	8.9	28	6.9	156	38.6	124	30.7	60	14.9	404	100	3.36
<b>OC16</b> =I would feel guilty if I left my university now	46	11.4	48	11.9	152	37.6	104	25.7	54	13.4	404	100	3.18
<b>OC17</b> =This university deserves my loyalty	20	5.0	31	7.7	158	39.1	115	28.5	80	19.8	404	100	3.50
<b>OC18</b> =I would not leave my university right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it	18	4.5	44	10.9	169	41.8	105	26.0	68	16.8	404	100	3.40
<b>OC19</b> =I owe a great deal to my university	18	4.5	28	6.9	167	41.3	116	28.7	75	18.6	404	100	3.50

These responses signify that the respondents believe in 'OC7' as Saudi Arabian universities' academic staff are very attached to their universities, and it is very hard to leave their universities right now. Table 6.11 shows the descriptive statistics of Saudi Arabian universities' Organisational Commitment.

#### 6.4 Using PLS-SEM

The questionnaire was analysed through the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) technique to support or reject the relationships hypothesised in the study. Structural equation modelling (SEM) is defined as 'a statistical method that takes a confirmatory (i.e., hypothesis-testing) approach to the analysis of a structural theory bearing on some phenomenon'. This theory represents 'causal' processes which generate observations on multiple variables (Bentler, 1988; Byrne, 2010, p.3). SEM aims to test the relationships between one or more independent and dependent variables by assessing the extent to which the hypothetical constructs are suitable or fit with the obtained data. These variables may be measured (manifest or observed) or latent. The observed variable, such as income, heart rate or weight, is measured directly whilst the latent variable is not measured directly but through two or more observed variables, for instance, buying behaviour or personality (Kline, 2011).

The causal relationship between constructs is measured using the structural model, and these associations between latent variables are hypothesised in the literature review. Hence, SEM cannot work properly without prior knowledge. This means that a conceptual framework or relationships between variables must be built based on an extensive literature review (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001).

According to Hair et al. (2010), using confirmatory methods, SEM presents inclusive tools for evaluating and adapting theoretical models. Therefore, it

proposes a value prospective for furthering theory development. SEM has some advantages. When research has complex relationships with multi-dimensions, SEM can test all these relationships simultaneously. It was also reported that the use of SEM is particularly relevant to models including mediating variables (Hohenthal, 2006). Hult et al. (2009) and Hair et al. (2011) acknowledge that the use of PLS-SEM has been increasing considerably in marketing and business research and especially in research concerning cause-effects interactions between constructs and variables.

PLS is presently being used in Strategic Management, Information Systems, E-Business, Organisational Behaviour, Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, and International Marketing. PLS is a statistical approach for the estimation of complex models which have multivariable relationships, including both observable as well as latent variables. PLS-SEM enables causal theoretical relationships to be estimated, linking latent and often complex concepts often measured by observable indicators (Vinzi et al., 2010).

Henseler et al. (2009) states that if the purpose of the research is of an explanatory nature, then PLS is especially useful. Similarly, Hair et al. (2014) explains that PLS is equally useful when a target construct is being explained by research. Hair et al. (2011) explain that 'PLS-SEM is a causal modelling approach aimed at maximizing the explained variance of the dependent latent constructs' (p.139). It is also stated that concept and theory testing are the main reasons for the use of SEM, within a business research context. Furthermore, wide acceptance is given to the fact that PLS enables simultaneous estimation of models with both reflective and formative indicators (Lee et al., 2006; Henseler et al., 2009; Peng and Lai, 2012) and that the validity of the results is unaffected by model

complexity (high number of constructs and indicators) (Henseler et al., 2009; Peng and Lai, 2012; Hair et al., 2014).

Loehlin (2004) and Henseler et al. (2009) state that SEM is divided into two parts: the measurement model (or the outer model) which identifies the relationship between the observed variables and latent variables, whilst the structural model (or the inner model) describes causal relationships among the latent variables. Hulland (1999) states that a PLS model is generally analysed and interpreted in a sequence of two phases: structural model assessment and measurement model assessment.

#### **6.5 Measurement model in PLS-SEM for the first order model**

The measurement model is an antecedent to structural equation modelling. Measurement model constructs cannot be validated by definition; the confirmation of the validity and reliability of the developed scales is the rationale used to label a measurement model as valid (Abou-Shouk, 2012; Elbaz, 2013). MacKenzie et al. (2011) explain that a measurement model aids in the assessment of newly-developed latent variables in terms of how they correlate, and whether they are adequately linked to their indicators. In other words, the measurement model helps to evaluate certain aspects of latent variables' validity and reliability features (Krumlind-Sundholm et al., 2007). Within the measurement model, this includes discriminant and convergent variable validity, as well as Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability for all latent variables (reflective and formative). In the current research, analysis provided by WarpPLS 5.0 was used (Kock, 2012). The re-sampling method was stable. There were 303 cases (rows) in the model data. There were five latent variables in the model. There were 61 indicators used in the model. These 61 items are considered valid and reliable to

be used in the structural relationship model (other items were removed, due to high VIFs and P-values larger than 0.05).

The descriptive statistics for each construct is described in the following section, and illustrated in Table 6.12. Following this is the research model's reliability/internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability) and construct validity (discriminant validity, convergent validity, and average variance extracted (AVE) for both the reflective and the formative measurement models. Discriminant and convergent validity (construct validity) and construct reliability will be discussed for the measurement model first.

#### **6.6 Descriptive statistics for the main constructs**

Table 6.12 illustrates each construct's descriptive statistics. The statistics consist of the construct's name and abbreviation, the number of items, and the construct's mean and standard deviation.

**Table 6-12 Descriptive statistics for each construct**

Construct	Types of construct	Number of used items	Number of items Deleted	Deleted Item Names	Reason of Deletion
(1) Strategic Planning (SP)	Formative	5	-		
(2) Formalisation (F)	Reflective	4	-		
(3) Implementation (IS)	Reflective	4	-		
(4) Evaluation (EV)	Reflective	6	-		
(5) Organisational Commitment (CO)	Reflective	9	10	OC3,4,6,8,9,10,11,12,13,14	P. Value is $\geq 0.05$
(6) Service Quality (SQ)	Reflective	4		SQ1,2,3,7,8,9,10,12,13,18,19,20,21,22	P. Value is $\geq 0.05$

### 6.7 Discriminant validity of the measurement model

Construct validity determines whether the construct's indicators actually measure what they are intended to, in terms of the relationships between the constructs, and between the constructs and their relative indicators (Andreev et al., 2009). For validity assessment, Henseler et al. (2009) stress that there are two validity subtypes which are regularly tested: convergent validity and discriminant validity. Discriminant validity is assumed when the extracted variance is greater than the squared correlation (Henseler et al., 2009; Kock and Verville, 2012), and it is recommended that the measurement indicators' loadings on their assigned constructs should be an order of magnitude larger than their loadings on the other constructs (Head and Ziolkowski, 2010). Discriminant validity helps to separate latent variables that are expected to measure different phenomena. Achievement of correct discriminant validity in a study means that the latent variables measure different things (Kline, 2009, cited in Garza, 2011).

A number of latent variables were removed from this study, using the process of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), due to these items having a P-value larger than 0.05. The items could not be considered as suitable for the analysis because it

is assumed they would not measure the latent variables as expected (see Table 6.12).

**Table 6-13 Combined loadings and cross-loadings**

	SPlanning	Formalisation	Implementation	Evaluation	OrgCommt	ServQUAL	Types	SE	P. Value
<b>ES Variable</b>	<b>(0.830)</b>	-0.079	-0.032	0.365	-0.079	0.008	Formative	0.044	<0.001
<b>IS Variable</b>	<b>(0.852)</b>	0.017	-0.015	0.132	-0.006	-0.041	Formative	0.044	<0.001
<b>Vision</b>	<b>(0.760)</b>	-0.190	0.020	-0.228	-0.003	-0.073	Formative	0.045	<0.001
<b>Mission</b>	<b>(0.892)</b>	0.039	0.004	-0.193	0.037	-0.032	Formative	0.044	<0.001
<b>SO Variable</b>	<b>(0.846)</b>	0.189	0.024	-0.082	0.047	0.132	Formative	0.044	<0.001
<b>F1</b>	0.341	<b>(0.833)</b>	0.035	-0.020	0.010	-0.072	Reflective	0.044	<0.001
<b>F2</b>	-0.008	<b>(0.934)</b>	-0.047	0.034	-0.085	0.079	Reflective	0.044	<0.001
<b>F3</b>	-0.126	<b>(0.901)</b>	-0.036	0.063	0.017	-0.026	Reflective	0.044	<0.001
<b>F4</b>	-0.175	<b>(0.932)</b>	0.051	-0.077	0.059	0.010	Reflective	0.044	<0.001
<b>SI1</b>	0.026	0.119	<b>(0.903)</b>	-0.033	-0.033	-0.008	Reflective	0.044	<0.001
<b>SI2</b>	-0.058	-0.058	<b>(0.936)</b>	0.076	-0.002	0.024	Reflective	0.044	<0.001
<b>SI3</b>	-0.085	-0.015	<b>(0.946)</b>	0.054	-0.011	0.028	Reflective	0.044	<0.001
<b>SI4</b>	0.121	-0.042	<b>(0.914)</b>	-0.102	0.046	-0.046	Reflective	0.044	<0.001
<b>EV1</b>	0.043	0.091	-0.046	<b>(0.898)</b>	0.045	-0.036	Reflective	0.044	<0.001
<b>EV2</b>	0.141	-0.086	0.017	<b>(0.912)</b>	0.027	0.019	Reflective	0.044	<0.001
<b>EV3</b>	0.006	-0.019	0.003	<b>(0.925)</b>	-0.023	0.009	Reflective	0.044	<0.001
<b>EV4</b>	-0.012	-0.058	0.061	<b>(0.926)</b>	-0.062	-0.008	Reflective	0.044	<0.001
<b>EV5</b>	-0.094	0.052	-0.009	<b>(0.896)</b>	0.023	0.063	Reflective	0.044	<0.001
<b>EV6</b>	-0.086	0.024	-0.027	<b>(0.905)</b>	-0.008	-0.047	Reflective	0.044	<0.001
<b>OC1</b>	-0.185	0.247	-0.139	0.221	<b>(0.791)</b>	0.029	Reflective	0.045	<0.001
<b>OC2</b>	0.053	0.000	-0.035	0.029	<b>(0.605)</b>	-0.049	Reflective	0.046	<0.001
<b>OC5</b>	0.015	-0.091	0.022	0.049	<b>(0.735)</b>	-0.093	Reflective	0.045	<0.001
<b>OC7</b>	-0.044	-0.022	0.256	-0.217	<b>(0.680)</b>	0.093	Reflective	0.045	<0.001
<b>OC15</b>	0.040	-0.160	0.132	-0.032	<b>(0.664)</b>	-0.089	Reflective	0.045	<0.001
<b>OC16</b>	0.264	-0.047	-0.031	-0.197	<b>(0.701)</b>	-0.174	Reflective	0.045	<0.001
<b>OC17</b>	0.038	-0.017	0.057	-0.138	<b>(0.862)</b>	0.077	Reflective	0.044	<0.001
<b>OC18</b>	0.065	-0.054	-0.184	0.128	<b>(0.805)</b>	0.106	Reflective	0.045	<0.001
<b>OC19</b>	-0.192	0.098	-0.031	0.110	<b>(0.856)</b>	0.047	Reflective	0.044	<0.001
<b>SQ4</b>	-0.050	0.198	-0.107	0.179	-0.026	<b>(0.656)</b>	Reflective	0.046	<0.001
<b>SQ5</b>	-0.026	0.126	-0.001	0.166	-0.097	<b>(0.735)</b>	Reflective	0.045	<0.001
<b>SQ6</b>	-0.217	0.138	0.012	0.066	-0.033	<b>(0.816)</b>	Reflective	0.045	<0.001
<b>SQ11</b>	0.280	-0.082	-0.112	0.127	-0.003	<b>(0.765)</b>	Reflective	0.045	<0.001
<b>SQ14</b>	-0.085	-0.014	0.053	-0.072	0.089	<b>(0.838)</b>	Reflective	0.044	<0.001
<b>SQ15</b>	0.014	-0.153	-0.052	0.000	0.016	<b>(0.852)</b>	Reflective	0.044	<0.001
<b>SQ16</b>	0.097	-0.088	0.081	-0.239	0.018	<b>(0.842)</b>	Reflective	0.044	<0.001
<b>SQ17</b>	-0.009	-0.065	0.091	-0.151	0.016	<b>(0.856)</b>	Reflective	0.044	<0.001

Table 6.13 shows that the factor loadings of all of the remaining reflective indicators exceed, to varying extent, the 0.5 threshold; therefore the model can be regarded as having sufficient convergent validity. The indicator loadings between the latent variables are low, which means that this study is regarded as having appropriate discriminant validity. The table indicates the loadings and cross-loadings for the items are greater than 0.5. In addition, their P-values are significant (less than 0.05), indicating a sufficient convergent and discriminant validity for the measurement questions.

Discriminant validity can also be determined by the testing of the square roots of the AVEs, as recommended by Kock and Verville (2012). Table 6.14 shows the square roots of the AVEs of the latent variables. The diagonal shows the correlations. To verify discriminant validity for each latent construct, the square roots of the AVEs should be larger than any of the correlations involving that latent construct (Kock, 2012).

**Table 6-14 Correlations among latent variable**

	<b>SPlanning</b>	<b>Formalisation</b>	<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>OrgCommt</b>	<b>ServQual</b>
<b>SPlanning</b>	<b>(0.837)</b>	0.763	0.697	0.755	0.503	0.672
<b>Formalisation</b>	0.763	<b>(0.901)</b>	0.695	0.730	0.353	0.553
<b>Implementation</b>	0.697	0.695	<b>(0.925)</b>	0.789	0.484	0.545
<b>Evaluation</b>	0.755	0.730	0.789	<b>(0.910)</b>	0.488	0.563
<b>OrgCommt</b>	0.503	0.353	0.484	0.488	<b>(0.749)</b>	0.495
<b>ServQual</b>	0.672	0.553	0.545	0.563	0.495	<b>(0.798)</b>

*Note: Square roots of average variances extracted (AVEs) shown on diagonal.*

Table 6.14 demonstrates that the square roots of the AVEs of each latent variable, whether reflective or formative, are higher than the construct's highest squared correlation with any other latent variable. In other words, the individual square roots of the AVEs are higher than any of the correlations shown below or above them. Thus, it can be concluded that the reflective latent variables have appropriate discriminant validity.

Full collinearity variance inflation factors (VIFs) were also obtained for all of the latent variables, and employed to measure discriminant validity and overall collinearity (see Table 6.15) (Kock, 2012). The VIFs are estimated based on a full collinearity test that enables the detection of collinearity, and help to test collinearity including all of the constructs in a model. It is conservatively recommended that VIFs be less than 5; a more relaxed standard is that they should be less than 10 (Elias, 2011; Kline, 2011; Hair et al., 2011).

**Table 6-15 Full collinearity for all latent variables**

Full Collinearity (VIFs)						
Constructs	SPlanning	Formalisation	Implementatio n	Evaluation	OrgCommt	ServQual
<b>Full VIFs</b>	3.670	2.959	3.029	3.605	1.535	1.967

Table 6.15 demonstrates that the full collinearity for all latent variables is lower than 5. This means that adequate VIFs are achieved for the reflective latent variables, indicating there is sufficient discriminant validity. Kock (2012) recommends testing the block VIFs.

Furthermore, discriminant validity can be tested using the indicators weight for the formative indicators, VIFs and their P-value. Table 6.16 provides the indicators' weights. All of the cross-weights are zero because of the way they are calculated through the PLS regression. Each construct score is calculated as an exact linear combination of its indicators, where the weights are multiple regression coefficients linking the indicators to the construct (Kock, 2012).

**Table 6-16 Indicator weights**

	SPlanning	Formalisation	Implementation	Evaluation	OrgCommt	ServQual	Types	SE	P value	VIF	WLS	ES
<b>ES Variable</b>	<b>(0.237)</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	Formative	0.048	<0.001	3.852	1	0.196
<b>IS Variable</b>	<b>(0.243)</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	Formative	0.048	<0.001	4.242	1	0.207
<b>Vision</b>	<b>(0.217)</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	Formative	0.048	<0.001	2.094	1	0.165
<b>Mission</b>	<b>(0.255)</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	Formative	0.048	<0.001	3.542	1	0.227
<b>SO Variable</b>	<b>(0.241)</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	Formative	0.048	<0.001	2.546	1	0.204
<b>F1</b>	0.000	<b>(0.257)</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	Reflective	0.048	<0.001	2.336	1	0.214
<b>F2</b>	0.000	<b>(0.288)</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	Reflective	0.048	<0.001	4.275	1	0.268
<b>F3</b>	0.000	<b>(0.278)</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	Reflective	0.048	<0.001	3.875	1	0.250
<b>F4</b>	0.000	<b>(0.287)</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	Reflective	0.048	<0.001	4.379	1	0.267
<b>SI1</b>	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.264)</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	Reflective	0.048	<0.001	3.243	1	0.238
<b>SI2</b>	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.274)</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	Reflective	0.048	<0.001	4.881	1	0.256
<b>SI3</b>	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.276)</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	Reflective	0.048	<0.001	5.540	1	0.261
<b>SI4</b>	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.267)</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	Reflective	0.048	<0.001	3.633	1	0.244
<b>EV1</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.181)</b>	0.000	0.000	Reflective	0.049	<0.001	4.249	1	0.162
<b>EV2</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.183)</b>	0.000	0.000	Reflective	0.049	<0.001	4.633	1	0.167
<b>EV3</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.186)</b>	0.000	0.000	Reflective	0.049	<0.001	6.469	1	0.172
<b>EV4</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.186)</b>	0.000	0.000	Reflective	0.049	<0.001	6.514	1	0.172
<b>EV5</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.180)</b>	0.000	0.000	Reflective	0.049	<0.001	4.266	1	0.162
<b>EV6</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.182)</b>	0.000	0.000	Reflective	0.049	<0.001	4.553	1	0.165
<b>OC1</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.157)</b>	0.000	Reflective	0.049	<0.001	2.256	1	0.124
<b>OC2</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.120)</b>	0.000	Reflective	0.049	0.007	1.504	1	0.073
<b>OC5</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.146)</b>	0.000	Reflective	0.049	0.002	1.868	1	0.107
<b>OC7</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.135)</b>	0.000	Reflective	0.049	0.003	1.653	1	0.092
<b>OC15</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.132)</b>	0.000	Reflective	0.049	0.004	1.727	1	0.087
<b>OC16</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.139)</b>	0.000	Reflective	0.049	0.002	1.861	1	0.097
<b>OC17</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.171)</b>	0.000	Reflective	0.049	<0.001	3.219	1	0.147
<b>OC18</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.159)</b>	0.000	Reflective	0.049	<0.001	2.596	1	0.128
<b>OC19</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.169)</b>	0.000	Reflective	0.049	<0.001	3.381	1	0.145
<b>SQ4</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.129)</b>	Reflective	0.049	0.004	2.526	1	0.085
<b>SQ5</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.144)</b>	Reflective	0.049	0.002	3.177	1	0.106
<b>SQ6</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.160)</b>	Reflective	0.049	<0.001	2.381	1	0.131
<b>SQ11</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.150)</b>	Reflective	0.049	0.001	2.017	1	0.115
<b>SQ14</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.164)</b>	Reflective	0.049	<0.001	3.386	1	0.138
<b>SQ15</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.167)</b>	Reflective	0.049	<0.001	3.699	1	0.142
<b>SQ16</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.165)</b>	Reflective	0.049	<0.001	3.652	1	0.139
<b>SQ17</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>(0.168)</b>	Reflective	0.049	<0.001	3.390	1	0.144

*Notes: P values < 0.05 and VIFs < 2.5 are desirable for formative indicators; VIF = indicator variance inflation factor; WLS = indicator weight-loading sign (-1 = Simpson's paradox in l.v.); ES = indicator effect size.*

Table 6.16 shows that all of the formative indicators' P-values for the weights associated with the latent variables are significant (P-values of all indicators are

lower than 0.05). This demonstrates proper construction of the formative latent variables' measurement indicators. The table also provides the VIFs for all of the indicators of all of the latent variables. As previously mentioned in Table 6.12, some indicators were removed as their VIFs were larger than 10. The remaining items were all lower than 10 except ENV3 indicator as a questionable (Hair et al., 2011; Garza, 2011; Kock, 2012). Standard issue errors are also provided for all formative indicators' weights. All of the formative indicators have sufficient discriminant and convergent validity.

#### **6.8 Convergent validity of the reflective measurement model**

Convergent validity signifies that a set of items represents the same underlying latent variable, which is demonstrated by their un-dimensionality (Henseler et al., 2009). It examines the correlation between two indicators under the same construct, and its extent (Hair et al., 2010). In this section, convergent validity is tested by extracting the factor loadings and cross-loadings of all the items on their respective constructs (see Table 6.17).

**Table 6-17 Structural loading and cross loading**

	<b>SPlannin g</b>	<b>Formalisation</b>	<b>Implement ation</b>	<b>Evaluati on</b>	<b>OrgComm t</b>	<b>ServQual</b>
<b>ES Variable</b>	<b>(0.830)</b>	0.648	0.626	0.720	0.396	0.557
<b>IS Variable</b>	<b>(0.852)</b>	0.670	0.613	0.673	0.426	0.554
<b>Vision</b>	<b>(0.760)</b>	0.501	0.460	0.490	0.361	0.466
<b>Mission</b>	<b>(0.892)</b>	0.667	0.589	0.619	0.452	0.585
<b>SO Variable</b>	<b>(0.846)</b>	0.698	0.622	0.652	0.464	0.642
<b>F1</b>	0.723	<b>(0.833)</b>	0.623	0.656	0.355	0.492
<b>F2</b>	0.710	<b>(0.934)</b>	0.628	0.673	0.277	0.541
<b>F3</b>	0.662	<b>(0.901)</b>	0.615	0.654	0.307	0.466
<b>F4</b>	0.662	<b>(0.932)</b>	0.640	0.649	0.338	0.496
<b>SI1</b>	0.655	0.683	<b>(0.903)</b>	0.724	0.412	0.499
<b>SI2</b>	0.634	0.624	<b>(0.936)</b>	0.743	0.456	0.510
<b>SI3</b>	0.635	0.641	<b>(0.946)</b>	0.747	0.448	0.512
<b>SI4</b>	0.657	0.623	<b>(0.914)</b>	0.706	0.476	0.493
<b>EV1</b>	0.701	0.688	0.707	<b>(0.898)</b>	0.462	0.507
<b>EV2</b>	0.728	0.660	0.728	<b>(0.912)</b>	0.486	0.551
<b>EV3</b>	0.691	0.672	0.725	<b>(0.925)</b>	0.437	0.517
<b>EV4</b>	0.682	0.658	0.739	<b>(0.926)</b>	0.412	0.498
<b>EV5</b>	0.670	0.665	0.708	<b>(0.896)</b>	0.453	0.535
<b>EV6</b>	0.654	0.644	0.703	<b>(0.905)</b>	0.419	0.465
<b>OC1</b>	0.475	0.426	0.456	0.514	<b>(0.791)</b>	0.455
<b>OC2</b>	0.318	0.218	0.296	0.300	<b>(0.605)</b>	0.290
<b>OC5</b>	0.327	0.198	0.332	0.335	<b>(0.735)</b>	0.295
<b>OC7</b>	0.337	0.244	0.377	0.316	<b>(0.680)</b>	0.382
<b>OC15</b>	0.275	0.153	0.302	0.280	<b>(0.664)</b>	0.262
<b>OC16</b>	0.317	0.181	0.254	0.241	<b>(0.701)</b>	0.255
<b>OC17</b>	0.443	0.294	0.416	0.387	<b>(0.862)</b>	0.460
<b>OC18</b>	0.444	0.293	0.369	0.421	<b>(0.805)</b>	0.459
<b>OC19</b>	0.418	0.332	0.435	0.456	<b>(0.856)</b>	0.434
<b>SQ4</b>	0.512	0.463	0.418	0.458	0.329	<b>(0.656)</b>
<b>SQ5</b>	0.561	0.511	0.488	0.516	0.333	<b>(0.735)</b>
<b>SQ6</b>	0.519	0.480	0.458	0.476	0.372	<b>(0.816)</b>
<b>SQ11</b>	0.619	0.482	0.459	0.524	0.418	<b>(0.765)</b>
<b>SQ14</b>	0.527	0.436	0.449	0.445	0.458	<b>(0.838)</b>
<b>SQ15</b>	0.512	0.379	0.385	0.409	0.413	<b>(0.852)</b>
<b>SQ16</b>	0.528	0.400	0.406	0.379	0.408	<b>(0.842)</b>
<b>SQ17</b>	0.528	0.413	0.433	0.417	0.419	<b>(0.856)</b>

Therefore, Table 6.17 shows that the validity of the measurement scale was convergent because of the high item loadings (i.e. the all indicators are greater than or equal to 0.5) on their associated latent variables.

Henseler et al., (2009) and Hair et al., (2011) recommend using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) as a criterion for the convergent validity of reflective indicators. An AVE value should be higher than 0.5 to signify adequate convergent validity; this means that a latent construct is able to explain more than half of the variance of its indicators on average (see Table 6.18).

**Table 6-18 Testing convergent validity using average variance extracted (AVE)**

Average Variance Extracted (AVE)					
SPlanning	Formalisation	Implementation	Evaluation	OrgCommt	ServQU al
0.70	0.82	0.86	0.82	0.56	0.64

Table 6.18 shows the AVEs for the study latent variables. All are above the 0.5 threshold, meaning that the measurement constructs show adequate convergent validity.

### 6.9 Construct reliability for the first order measurement model

Construct reliability measures the quality of measurement instruments; the instrument itself is typically a set of question-statements. A measurement instrument has good reliability if the question-statements (or other measures) associated with each latent variable are understood in the same way by different respondents (Kock, 2012, p.41). Construct reliability relates to the internal consistency of the measurement model (Anddreev et al., 2009, p.6). Two measures are used to estimate internal consistency: Cronbach's alpha and the composite reliability should be greater than 0.7 for the reliability to be considered acceptable, 0.80 to be adequate and 0.90 to be excellent (Kock and Verville, 2012).

**Table 6-19 Reliability coefficients for the first order constructs**

Composite Reliability Coefficients					
SPlanning	Formalisation	Implementation	Evaluation	OrgCommt	ServQual
0.921	0.945	0.960	0.967	0.919	0.933
Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients					
SPlanning	Formalisation	Implementation	Evaluation	OrgCommt	ServQual
0.892	0.922	0.944	0.959	0.900	0.917

Table 6.19 gives the composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the reflective latent variables. These composite reliability coefficients are high (ranging from 0.919 to 0.967) and above the 0.7 advocated threshold for each one of the latent variables. As well as this, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.892 to 0.959 (the Cronbach's alpha for the response construct is the only questionable constructs among the others). Thus, it can be concluded that the measurement instruments employed in this study have sufficient reliability.

#### **6.10 Results of the structural model**

The structural model's aim is to examine how well the hypothesised research model fits (Schreiber et al., 2006, cited in Elbaz, 2013). Figure 4.1 shows the hypothesised structural model, demonstrating the latent variables of the current study and their indicators. In this study, (1) the structural model examines the influence of strategic management process (including (Strategic Planning, Formalisation, Implementation, and Evaluation) on organisational commitment of Saudi academic staff at the universities. (2) It examines the impact of strategic management process (including Strategic Planning, Formalisation, Implementation, and Evaluation) on service quality at Saudi universities. (3) Then, the structural model examines the relationships from organisational commitment on service quality. (4) Finally, the study's model examines the

indirect relationship from strategic management process (including Strategic Planning, Formalisation, Implementation, and Evaluation) to service quality throughout the organisational commitment.

Three model fit indices were generated by the WarpPLS software 5.0 used in this study (see Table 6.20). Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that the ten criteria for the model fit indices are met in the current study.

**Table 6-20 Model fit indices**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Supported</b>
<b>(1)Average Path Coefficient (APC)</b>	0.190	Supported
<b>(2)Average R-squared (ARS)</b>	0.476	Supported
<b>(3)Average adjusted R-squared (AARS)</b>	0.471	Supported
<b>(4) Average block VIF (AVIF)</b>	3.059	Supported
<b>(5) Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)</b>	2.794	Supported
<b>(6) Tenenhaus GoF (GoF)</b>	0.591	Supported
<b>(7) Sympson's paradox ratio (SPR)</b>	0.889	Supported
<b>(8) R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR)</b>	0.983	Supported
<b>(9) Statistical suppression ratio (SSR)</b>	1.000	Supported
<b>(10) Nonlinear bivariate causality direction ratio (NLBCDR)</b>	1.000	Supported

*Average path coefficient (APC)=0.190,  $P<0.00$ , Average R-squared (ARS)=0.476,  $P<0.00$ , Average adjusted R-squared (AARS)=0.471,  $P<0.001$ , Average block VIF (AVIF)=3.059, acceptable if  $\leq 5$ , ideally  $\leq 3.3$ , Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)=2.794, acceptable if  $\leq 5$ , ideally  $\leq 3.3$ , Tenenhaus GoF (GoF)=0.591, small  $\geq 0.1$ , medium  $\geq 0.25$ , large  $\geq 0.36$ , Sympson's paradox ratio (SPR)=0.889, acceptable if  $\geq 0.7$ , ideally = 1, R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR)=0.983, acceptable if  $\geq 0.9$ , ideally = 1, Statistical suppression ratio (SSR)=1.000, acceptable if  $\geq 0.7$ , Nonlinear bivariate causality direction ratio (NLBCDR)=1.000, acceptable if  $\geq 0.7$ .*

Figure 6.1 illustrates the results of the path analysis, displaying the hypothesised effects of the structural model and the relationships between the latent variables.

After obtaining an acceptable assessment of the measurement model, the next step is to assess the structural model estimates. Hair et al. (2011) state that the  $R^2$  value and significance of the path coefficients are the most important assessment criteria for a structural model. For example, Roldán and Sanchez-Franco (2012)

recommend that  $R^2$  measures should be at least 0.10, whereas Hair et al., (2011) stressed that  $R^2$  values of 0.75, 0.50 and 0.25 for the independent constructs in a structural model could be described as substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively, and Henseler et al. (2009) recommend labelling  $R^2$  measures of 0.67, 0.33 and 0.19 for independent latent constructs in the inner path model as substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. Consequently, it is also recommended that researchers estimate path coefficients in terms of their importance and their significance, or P-values (Kock, 2012).

Evaluating the  $R^2$  measures further, changes in the  $R^2$ , also known as the effect size test, can be explored to examine the substantive impact of each independent construct on the dependent construct. The power of the substantive effect of an independent construct can be estimated as follows: effect size  $f^2 = (R^2_{\text{included}} - R^2_{\text{excluded}})/(1 - R^2_{\text{included}})$  (Henseler et al., 2009, p.303); values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 can be viewed as indicating that an independent latent variable has a low, moderate or large effect at the structural level (Roldan and Sanchez-Franco, 2012). Values below 0.02 indicate that the effects are too small to be treated as relevant from a practical point of view, even when the corresponding P-values are statistically significant; this situation may occur with large sample sizes.

Assessing explanatory power involves evaluating the R-squared values ( $R^2$ ) and exploring the effect sizes ( $f^2$ ) of a model's latent variables. Thus, the following discussion will address these two issues (Berghman, 2006; Henseler et al., 2009; Chin, 2010; Vinzi et al., 2010; Elias, 2011; Garza, 2011; Hair et al., 2011). To explore the study findings more simply, the following discussion is divided into four main points: (1) In this study, the structural model examines the influence of strategic management process (including Strategic Planning, Formalisation, Implementation, and Evaluation) on organisational commitment of academic staff

at Saudi universities. (2) It also examines the impact of strategic management process (including (Strategic Planning, Formalisation, Implementation, and Evaluation) on service quality at Saudi universities. (3) Then, the structural model examines the relationships from organisational commitment to service quality. (4) Finally, the study's model examines the indirect relationship from strategic management process (including Strategic Planning, Formalisation, Implementation, and Evaluation) to service quality throughout the organisational commitment.

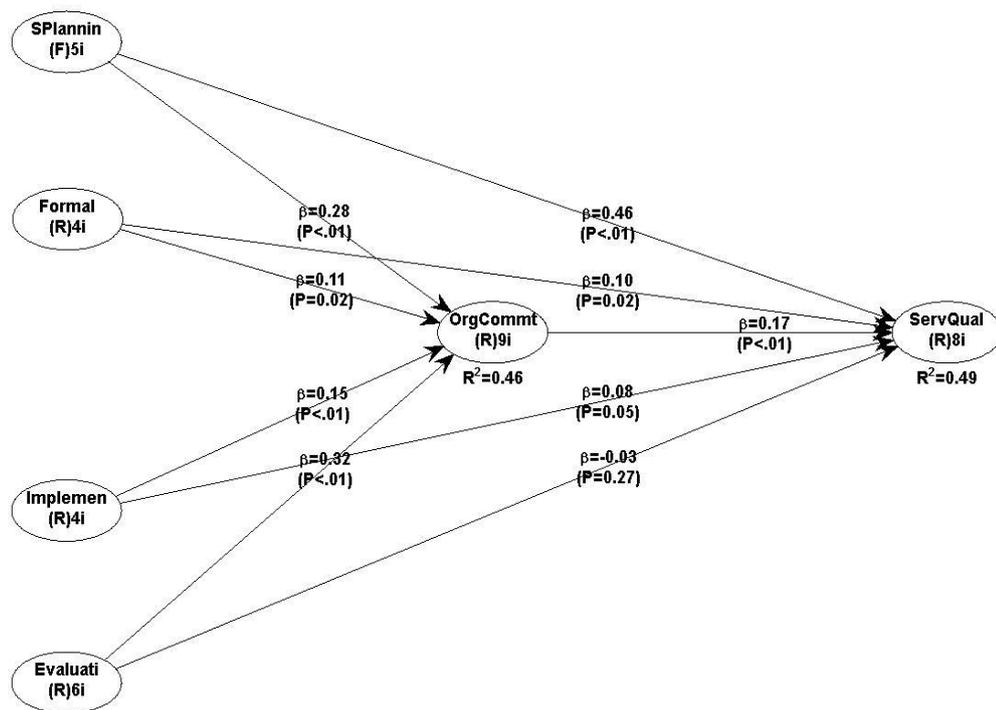


Figure 6.1 The results of the structure model

### 6.10.1 The influence of strategic management on organisational commitment

Strategic management process in this study consists of four main variables which are (1) Strategic Planning, (2) Formalisation, (3) Implementation, and (4) Evaluation. This study is concerned with assessing eight hypothesised direct relationships. The first hypothesis deals with the impact of the Saudi Arabia's strategic planning on the academic staff's organisational commitment at Saudi Arabian universities. The analysis of the data collected shows that all the research variables (Saudi Arabian universities' strategic planning) has a significant positive impact on the academic staff's organisational commitment at Saudi Arabian universities (standardised estimate = 0.28,  $P < 0.01$ ). Moreover, the analysis of the data collected shows that the effect size of the Saudi Arabia's strategic planning on the academic staff's organisational commitment at Saudi Arabian universities is medium ( $f^2=0.153$ ) (see Table 6.21; Figure 6.1).

The second hypothesis deals with the impact of the Saudi Arabian universities' strategy formalisation on the organisational commitment of academic staff in Saudi Arabian universities. The analysis of the data collected demonstrates that the research variable (Saudi Arabian universities' strategy formalisation) has significant positive impact on the academic staff's organisational commitment at Saudi Arabian universities (standardised estimate = 0.11,  $P = 0.02$ ). Moreover, the analysis of the data collected show that the effect size of Saudi Arabia's strategy formalisation on the academic staff's organisational commitment in Saudi Arabian universities is small ( $f^2=0.043$ ) (see Table 6.21; Figure 6.1).

The third hypothesis deals with the impact of Saudi Arabian universities' strategy implementation on the organisational commitment of the academic staff in Saudi Arabian universities. The analysis of the data collected indicates that the research variable (Saudi Arabian universities' strategy implementation) has significant

positive impact on the academic staff's organisational commitment in Saudi Arabian universities (standardised estimate = 0.15,  $P < 0.01$ ). Moreover, the analysis of the data collected show that the effect size of the Saudi Arabian universities' strategy implementation on the academic staff's organisational commitment in Saudi Arabian universities is small to medium ( $f^2=0.083$ ) (see Table 6.21; Figure 6.1).

The fourth hypothesis deals with the impact of the Saudi Arabian universities' strategy evaluation on the academic staff's organisational commitment in Saudi Arabian universities. The analysis of the data collected demonstrates that the research variable (Saudi Arabian universities' strategy evaluation) has significant positive impact on the academic staff's organisational commitment in Saudi Arabian universities (standardised estimate = 0.32,  $P < 0.01$ ). Moreover, the analysis of the data collected show that the effect size of Saudi Arabia's strategy evaluation on the academic staff's organisational commitment in Saudi Arabian universities is medium ( $f^2=0.184$ ) (see Table 6.21; Figure 6.1).

These independent variables, the Saudi Arabian universities' strategic planning, formalisation, implementation, and evaluation, moderately explain the academic staff's organisational commitment in Saudi Arabian universities with an  $R^2=0.46$  (The R-Squared contribution of the independent variables is 0.46) (see Table 6.21; Figure 6.2). Consequently, the first four hypotheses (H1, H2, H3 and H4 = The Saudi Arabia Universities' (1) Strategic Planning, (2) Formalisation, (3) Implementation, and (4) Evaluation have a positive impact on the academic staff's organisational commitment in Saudi Arabian universities) are supported.

### 6.10.2 Impact of strategic management on service quality

As indicated above section, strategic management in this study consists of four main variables which are (1) Strategic Planning, (2) Formalisation, (3) Implementation, and (4) Evaluation. The fifth hypothesis deals with the impact of the Saudi Arabian universities' strategic planning on the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality. The analysis of the data collected indicates that the Saudi Arabian universities' strategic planning has a moderate impact on the universities' service quality (standardised estimate = 0.46,  $P < 0.01$ ). Furthermore, the analysis of the data collected shows that the effect size of the Saudi Arabian universities' strategic planning on the universities' service quality is medium to large ( $f^2=0.31$ ) (see Table 6.21; Figure 6.1).

The sixth hypothesis deals with the impact of the Saudi Arabian universities' strategy formalisation on the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality. The analysis of the data collected indicates that the Saudi Arabian universities' strategy formalisation has a weak impact on the universities' service quality (standardised estimate = 0.10,  $P = 0.02$ ). Furthermore, the analysis of the data collected illustrates that the effect size of the Saudi Arabian universities' strategy formalisation on the universities' service quality is small ( $f^2=0.058$ ) (see Table 6.21; Figure 6.1).

The seventh hypothesis deals with the impact of the Saudi Arabian universities' strategy implementation on the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality. The analysis of the data collected demonstrates that the Saudi Arabian universities' strategy implementation has a nonsignificant effect on the universities' service quality (standardised estimate = 0.08,  $P = 0.05$ ). (see Table 6.21; Figure 6.1).

The eighth hypothesis deals with the impact of the Saudi Arabian universities' strategy evaluation on the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality. The analysis

of the data collected shows that Saudi Arabian universities' evaluation has a nonsignificant impact on the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality (standardised estimate = 0.03,  $P = 0.27$ ). (see Table 6.21; Figure 6.1).

The Saudi Arabian universities' strategic planning, formalisation, implementation, and evaluation variables moderately explain the universities' service quality with an  $R^2=0.49$ . This means that strategic management process that encompasses strategic planning, formalisation, implementation and evaluation positively explains the service quality. Consequently, the fifth and sixth hypotheses (H5 and H6) 'The Saudi Arabian Universities' Strategic Planning and Formalisation have a positive impact on the Saudi Arabian Universities' Service Quality, are supported. However, the seventh and eighth hypotheses (H7 and H8) 'The Saudi Arabian Universities' Strategy Implementation and Evaluation have a positive impact on the Saudi Arabia Universities' Service Quality, are rejected.

### **6.10.3 The relationship from organisational commitment to service quality**

The analysis of the data collected shows that the Saudi Arabian universities' academic staff's organisational commitment has a weak impact on the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality (standardised estimate = 0.17,  $P < 0.01$ ). In addition, the analysis of the data collected demonstrates that the effect size of organisational commitment on the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality is also weak ( $f^2=0.092$ ). (See table 6.21; Figure 6.1).

The organisational commitment variable with the independent variables (Strategic Planning, Formalisation, Implementation, and Evaluation) moderately explains the service quality with an  $R^2=0.49$ . This means that organisational commitment positively and weakly explains the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality. Consequently, the ninth hypothesis (H9) 'The Saudi Arabia universities'

Organisational Commitment has a positive impact on the Saudi Arabia universities' Service Quality, is supported.

Concerning the organisational commitment (OC) construct in particular, the aspects with the most impact were 'this university deserves my loyalty' (OC17) and 'I owe a great deal to my university' (OC19) (the survey questions can be found in Appendices A and B), with factor loading and significance levels of 0.862,  $P < 0.001$  and 0.856,  $P < 0.001$ , respectively. These two highest loading factors (OC17 and OC19) are under the variable 'normative commitment'. However, 'I really feel as if this university's problems are my own' (OC2) 'affective commitment' was found to have the least impact, with a factor loading and significance level of 0.605,  $P < 0.001$ . Overall, hypothesis H9 is supported.

**Table 6-21 Results of the different direct tests**

Independent variables	B	P. Values	f <sup>2</sup>	H	Hypotheses supported/Not supported
Strategic Planning OrgCommt →	0.46	<0.01	0.153	H1	Supported
Formalisation OrgCommt →	0.11	=0.02	0.043	H2	Supported
Implementation OrgCommt →	0.15	<01	0.083	H3	Supported
Evaluation OrgCommt →	0.32	<0.01	0.184	H4	Supported
StrategicPlanning ServQual →	0.46	<0.001	0.311	H5	Supported
Formalisation ServQual →	0.10	=0.02	0.058	H6	Supported
Implementation ServQual →	0.08	=0.05	0.046	H7	Rejected
Evaluation ServQual →	0.03	=0.27	0.017	H8	Rejected
OrgCommt ServQual →	0.17	<0.01	0.092	H9	Supported
<b>R<sup>2</sup> Coefficient for dependent variables</b>					
<b>Dependent latent variables</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup> Coefficient</b>		<b>Assessment</b>		
Organisational Commitment	<b>R<sup>2</sup>= 0.46</b>		Moderate Effect		
Service Quality	<b>R<sup>2</sup>= 0.49</b>		Moderate Effect		

#### **6.10.4 Results of the mediation model: the indirect impacts of strategic management on service quality**

This section discusses in more depth the results for hypotheses H10, H11, H12 and H13. These four hypotheses proposed that the universities' strategic planning, formalisation, implementation, and evaluation have an indirect positive impact on the universities' service quality through the Saudi Arabian academic staff universities' organisational commitment.

Frazier et al. (2004) define mediator as a variable which explains the relation between an independent and a dependent variable. An independent variable influences a dependent variable through a mediator (Elbaz, 2013). In this study, the organisational commitment of academic staff at Saudi Arabian universities is introduced as a mediator of the relation between the Saudi Arabian universities' strategic management, and the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality.

Kock (2011, cited in Elbaz, 2013) stated that the mediating effect is significant if the following criteria are met: (1) the path between an independent and a dependent variable is significant (e.g.  $P < 0.05$ , if this is the significance level used). (2) The path coefficient between a predictor and a mediator variable is significant. (3) The path coefficient between a mediator and a dependent variable is significant. In this case, the researcher examined the model to test whether the organisational commitment of academic staff at Saudi Arabian universities acts as a full mediator, partial mediator, or does not act as a mediator of the relation between the Saudi Arabian Universities' (1) Strategic Planning, (2) Formalisation, (3) Implementation, and (4) Evaluation and the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality.

Firstly, in this section the researcher explains the indirect relationship of the tenth hypothesis (H10) 'The Saudi Arabian universities' Strategic Planning has an

indirect positive impact on the Saudi Arabia Universities' Service Quality through the Saudi Arabia Universities' Organisational Commitment'. Figure 6.1 indicates that the path coefficient of the direct relation from the strategic planning to the service quality is positive and significant ( $\beta=0.46$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). This means that the first criterion for testing mediation is met. The path coefficient of the direct relation from the strategic planning to the organisational commitment is positive and significant ( $\beta=0.28$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). This means that the second criterion is met. The path coefficient of the direct relation from organisational commitment to the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality is positive and significant ( $\beta=0.17$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). This means that the third criterion is met. Consequently, the above three criteria are met (see Table 6.22).

**Table 6-22 Results of the partial mediation tests**

1- Criteria of mediation tests for the relation from Strategic Planning to ServQual through Organisational Commitment				Results of indirect total mediation tests	
Criterion	H10: SP $\rightarrow$ OC $\rightarrow$ SQ	B	P. Values	Indirect Effect Model	
Criterion 1	SP $\rightarrow$ SQ	0.46	p<0.01	B= 0.51 f <sup>2</sup> = 0.34	P<0.01
Criterion 2	SP $\rightarrow$ OC	0.28	p<0.01		
Criterion 3	OC $\rightarrow$ SQ	0.17	p<0.01		

Therefore, the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality is partially mediated by the Saudi Arabian universities' organisational commitment. Thus, one can say that the Saudi Arabian universities' organisational commitment is established as a partial mediator of the relation between the universities' strategic planning and their service quality. The total effect of strategic planning on service quality through organisational commitment is (standardised estimate) = 0.51,  $P < 0.01$ . In addition, the analysis of the data collected shows that the total effect size of the indirect relationship from strategic planning to service quality through

organisational commitment is strong ( $f^2=0.34$ ). It can be concluded that organisational commitment variable acts as a partial mediator between strategic planning and service quality. Moreover, the existence of organisational commitment strengthens the relationship between strategic planning and service quality, and in turn strongly explains the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality.

Secondly, in this section the researcher explains the indirect relationship of the eleventh hypothesis (H11) 'The Universities' Strategy Formalisation has an indirect positive impact on the Universities' Service Quality through the Saudi Arabia academic staff Universities' Organisational Commitment'. Figure 6.2 indicates that the path coefficient of the direct relation from the formalisation to the service quality is positive and significant ( $\beta=0.10$ ,  $P=0.02$ ). This means that the first criterion for testing mediation is met. The path coefficient of the direct relation from the formalisation to the organisational commitment is positive and significant ( $\beta=0.11$ ,  $P=0.02$ ). This means that the second criterion is met. The path coefficient of the direct relation from the organisational commitment to the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality is positive and significant ( $\beta=0.17$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). This means that the third criterion is met. Consequently, the above three criteria are met (see Table 6.23).

**Table 6-23 Results of the partial mediation tests**

2- Criteria of mediation tests for the relation from Formalisation to ServQual through Organisational Commitment				Results of indirect total mediation tests	
Criterion	H10: SP → OC → SQ	B	P. Values	Indirect effect model	
Criterion 1	F → SQ	0.10	P=0.02	B= 0.12	P<0.01
Criterion 2	F → OC	0.11	P=0.02		
Criterion 3	OC → SQ	0.17	p<0.01	f <sup>2</sup> = 0.07	

Therefore, the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality is partially mediated by the Saudi Arabia universities' organisational commitment. Thus, it can be said that the Saudi Arabian universities' organisational commitment is established as a partial mediator of the relation between the universities' formalisation and their service quality. The total effect of formalisation on service quality through organisational commitment is (standardised estimate) = 0.12, P=0.01). In addition, the analysis of the data collected shows that the total effect size of the indirect relationship from formalisation to service quality through organisational commitment is small (f<sup>2</sup>=0.07). It can be concluded that the organisational commitment variable acts as a partial mediator between formalisation and service quality. Moreover, the existence of organisational commitment strengthens the relationships between formalisation and service quality, and in turn, weakly explains the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality.

Thirdly, in this section the researcher explains the indirect relationship of the twelfth hypothesis (H12) 'The Saudi Arabia Universities' Implementation has an indirect positive impact on the Saudi Arabia Universities' Service Quality through the Saudi Arabia Universities' Organisational Commitment.'

Figure 6.24 indicates that the path coefficient of the direct relation from the implementation to the service quality is insignificant ( $\beta=0.08$ ,  $P=0.05$ ). This means that the first criterion for testing mediation is not met. The path coefficient of the direct relation from the implementation to the organisational commitment is positive and significant ( $\beta=0.15$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). This means that the second criterion is met. The path coefficient of the direct relation from the organisational commitment to the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality is positive and significant ( $\beta=0.17$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). This means that the third criterion is met. Consequently, only two criteria are met and one criterion is not met.

**Table 6-24 Results of the complete mediation tests**

<b>3- Criteria of mediation tests for the relation from Implementation to ServQual through Organisational Commitment</b>				<b>Results of indirect total mediation tests</b>	
<b>Criterion</b>	<b>H10: SP <math>\rightarrow</math> OC <math>\rightarrow</math> SQ</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>P. Values</b>	<b>Indirect Effect Model</b>	
Criterion 1	SI $\rightarrow$ SQ	0.08	P=0.05	<b>B= 0.11</b>	<b>P=0.014</b>
Criterion 2	SI $\rightarrow$ OC	0.15	P<0.01		
Criterion 3	OC $\rightarrow$ SQ	0.17	p<0.01	<b>f<sup>2</sup>= 0.06</b>	

Therefore, the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality is fully mediated by the Saudi Arabian universities' organisational commitment. Thus, one can say that the Saudi Arabian universities' organisational commitment is established as a full mediator of the relation between the universities' implementation and their service quality. The total effect of implementation on service quality through organisational commitment is (standardised estimate) = 0.11,  $P= 0.014$ . In addition, the analysis of the data collected show that the total effect size of the indirect relationship from implementation to service quality through organisational commitment is weak ( $f^2=0.06$ ). It can be concluded that organisational commitment variable acts as a full mediator between implementation and service

quality. Moreover, the existence of organisational commitment strengthens the relationships between implementation and service quality, and in turn, strongly and critically explains the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality.

Fourthly, in this section the researcher explains the indirect relationship of the thirteenth hypothesis (H13) 'The Universities' Strategy Evaluation has an indirect positive impact on the Universities' Service Quality through the academic staff's Organisational Commitment at Saudi Arabia Universities'. Figure 6.2 shows that the path coefficient of the direct relation from the evaluation to the service quality is insignificant ( $\beta=0.03$ ,  $P=0.27$ ). This means that the first criterion for testing mediation is not met. The path coefficient of the direct relation from the evaluation to the organisational commitment is positive and significant ( $\beta=0.32$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). This means that the second criterion is met. The path coefficient of the direct relation from the organisational commitment to the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality is positive and significant ( $\beta=0.17$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). This means that the third criterion is met. Consequently, only two criteria are met and one criterion is not met (see Table 6.25).

**Table 6-25 Results of the complete mediation tests**

4- Criteria of mediation Tests for the relation from Evaluation to ServQual through Organisational Commitment				results of indirect total mediation tests	
Criterion	H10: SP → OC → SQ	B	P. Values	Indirect effect model	
Criterion 1	EV → SQ	0.03	P=0.27	B= 0.025	P=0.31
Criterion 2	EV → OC	0.32	P<0.01		
Criterion 3	OC → SQ	0.17	p<0.01	f <sup>2</sup> = 0.014	

Therefore, the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality is fully mediated by the Saudi Arabian universities' organisational commitment. Thus, one can say that the academic staff's organisational commitment is established as a full mediator of the relation between the Saudi Arabian universities' strategy evaluation and their service quality. The total effect of evaluation on service quality through organisational commitment is (standardised estimate) = 0.025, P= 0.31. In addition, the analysis of the data collected shows that the total effect size of the indirect relationship from evaluation to service quality through organisational commitment is very weak ( $f^2=0.014$ ). It can be concluded that, organisational commitment variable acts as a full mediator between evaluation and service quality. Moreover, the existence of organisational commitment strengthens the relationships between evaluation and service quality and in turn strongly explains the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality.

#### 6.11 Predictive validity (Relevance)

In addition to the previous criteria, it is necessary to assess the predictive relevance of the independent latent variables (Stone-Geisser's  $Q^2$  test) (Table 6.26) (Roldan and Sanchez-Franco, 2012). It is claimed that a  $Q^2$  larger than 0 means that the model has predictive relevance, whereas a  $Q^2$  lower than 0 implies that the model is deficient in predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2011; Roldan and Sanchez-Franco, 2012).

**Table 6-26 The predictive relevance of the independent constructs**

<b><math>Q^2</math> Coefficient for independent latent variables</b>		
<b>Dependent Latent Variables</b>	<b><math>Q^2</math> Coefficient</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Organisational Commitment	<b><math>R^2= 0.34</math></b>	Moderate Effect
Service Quality	<b><math>R^2= 0.49</math></b>	Strong Effect

Table 6.26 demonstrates that the  $Q^2$  coefficients for the predictive relevance (validity) associated with each latent variable block in the model, through the dependent latent variables, are all greater than zero, which indicates that the model has predictive relevance. Table 6.27 provides a summary of the results.

**Table 6-27 Summary of the results**

<b>Number of hypotheses</b>	<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>Supported/ Not Supported</b>
<b>H1</b>	The Saudi Arabia universities' Strategic Planning has a positive impact on the academic staff Organisational commitment at Saudi Arabia universities	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H2</b>	The Saudi Arabia Universities' Strategy Formalisation has a positive impact on the academic staff Organisational commitment at Saudi Arabia universities	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H3</b>	The Saudi Arabia Universities' Strategy Implementation has a positive impact on the academic staff Organisational commitment at Saudi Arabia universities	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H4</b>	The Saudi Arabia Universities' Evaluation has a positive impact on the academic staff Organisational commitment at Saudi Arabia universities	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H5</b>	The Saudi Arabia universities' Strategic Planning has a positive impact on the Saudi Arabia universities' Service Quality	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H6</b>	The Saudi Arabia universities' Strategy Formalisation has a positive impact on the Saudi Arabia universities' Service Quality	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H7</b>	The Saudi Arabia universities' Strategy Implementation has a positive impact on the Saudi Arabia universities' Service Quality	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H8</b>	The Saudi Arabia universities' Strategy Evaluation has a positive impact on the Saudi Arabia universities' Service Quality	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H9</b>	The academic staff's Organisational commitment at Saudi Arabia universities has a positive impact on the Saudi Arabia universities' Service Quality	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H10</b>	The Saudi Arabia Universities' Strategic Planning has an indirect positive impact on the Saudi Arabia Universities' Service Quality through the academic staff Organisational commitment at Saudi Arabia universities	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H11</b>	The Saudi Arabia Universities' Strategy Formalisation has an indirect positive impact on the Saudi Arabia Universities' Service Quality through the academic staff Organisational commitment at Saudi Arabia universities	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H12</b>	The Saudi Arabia Universities' Strategy Implementation has indirect positive impact on the Saudi Arabia Universities' Service Quality through the academic staff Organisational commitment at Saudi Arabia universities	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H13</b>	The Saudi Arabia Universities' Strategy Evaluation has an indirect positive impact on the Saudi Arabia Universities' Service Quality through the academic staff Organisational commitment at Saudi Arabia universities	<b>Supported</b>

## 6.12 Summary

This chapter has presented the statistical results from analysing the data gathered in this study, starting with the characteristics of the sample, using SPSS version 20. SEM with PLS was used as an analytical tool to evaluate the model and to test the hypotheses of the model. SEM combines several statistical techniques such as factor analysis, path analysis and multi-group analysis. Construct validity, which consists of c convergent and discriminate validity, was established after deleting some items. Lastly, the summary of the results was illustrated.

## **Chapter 7 Discussion of findings**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the quantitative findings of the study (as presented in Chapter 6) and reviews the associations with the literature review and the context of the study. More importantly, the research results are integrated with related literature and theories in the same field of study. Hence, it begins by revising the research objectives and queries, followed by a discussion of the results of the test of the proposed hypothesised relationships, using PLS-SEM analysis. In doing so, and based on the objectives of the study, it is divided into four sections: sections 7.2 to 7.4 discuss the findings of the direct effects of SM components on organisational commitment (OC), the direct effects of SM components on SQ, and the direct impact of OC on SQ. Section 7.5 discusses the indirect effect of SM components on SQ through OC, via an analysis of simultaneous relationships in an SEM. An exploratory quantitative method was employed in this study to address the research questions and to support the measurement of all observed associations.

### **7.2 Strategic Management (SM) and Organisational Commitment (OC)**

These sections address the first of the study's aims and discuss the direct impact of SM components on the OC construct. Additionally, it answers Q1: What are the direct effects of SM components, namely SP (vision, mission, objectives, and analysis), formalisation, implementation, and evaluation on un-dimensionality construct of OC at Saudi universities?

### 7.2.1 The direct influence of SP on OC, H1

The SM process obtained in this study involves four steps, namely SP, formalisation, implementation, and evaluation. The results of the PLS-SEM support the hypothesised relationships H1, H2, H3 and H4 as discussed below.

A finding from the PLS-SEM supports H1 which is 'SP has a direct and positive influence on OC'. The SP on this study encompasses four items, namely vision, mission, objectives, and analysis. These associations propose that the practice of SP encourages senior managers and academic staff to engage in OC activities. The analysis of the data collected shows that the Saudi Arabian universities' strategic planning has a significant positive impact on the academic staff's organisational commitment (standardised estimate = 0.28,  $P < 0.01$ ). Moreover, analysis of the collected data shows that the effect size of Saudi Arabia's strategic planning on the academic staff's organisational commitment is medium ( $f^2=0.153$ ). These results presented strong direct and positive relationships between the four related factors of SP and OC.

The findings presented expand understanding of the impact of SP on OC. It means that the SP plays an important role in supporting such a relationship. These associations are in line with several studies that reflect the significant relationship between SP and OC (Kohtamaki, 2012), and highlight the assessment of SP to be combined with OC to achieve the desired consequences (Reeves and Hoy 1993; Rogers et al., 1993). Furthermore, this result is consistent with prior studies by Wooldridge and Floyd (1990) who mention the significant role of commitment in a successful strategy. According to van Breda (2000), participation in certain features of a strategic plan could relate to an increase in OC.

Moreover, Kohtamaki et al. (2012) state that organisations need highly skilled employees who will be able to create and improve these strategies in ways that their personnel will commit to implementing them. It is suggested by van Breda (2008) that the employee who is familiar with the organisation's strategy becomes more committed. On one hand, Tonnessen and Gjefsen (1999) state that a better understanding of the organisation's strategy can increase an individual's commitment towards the shared aims. On the other hand, shared understanding without commitment may result negatively on performance (Wooldridge and Floyd 1989, cited in Rapert et al., 1996).

Furthermore, lack of commitment adds a key constraint to the variety of decisions the team's leader can deliberate (Guth and MacMillan, 1986). A leader's implementation of a strategy is affected to a great extent by the level of cooperation shown by team members (Hitt and Tyler 1991). The importance of organisational commitment is that it is linked to other positive outcomes for the organisation. For example, staff with a high commitment level less likely to consider leaving their jobs (Mathieu and Sajac 1990) or to actually leave (Netemeyer, et al., 1995); less likely to feel stressed (Begley and Csajka 1993); more likely to have high performance (Mathieu and Sajac, 1990), and to engage in organisational activities, resulting in better performance and lower turnover which is valuable to the firm (Chen and Francesco, 2003; Lok and Crawford 2003). In the same vein, Mueller et al. (1994) found that OC is a better predictor of intention to stay on the same job.

Newman (2001) states that without the faculty's commitment, the process of SP will not be accomplished. Moreover, the current result also is partly consistent with Ting (1997), who found that employees will have a higher level of commitment to their work if there is greater clarity of their tasks and role.

Although it is very important to create a work environment with clear organisational roles, academic staff at KSA HEIs perform various roles in their institutions. On occasion these roles overlap, and at other times they conflict. Consequently, Karmon and McGilsky (1997) illustrated that to develop an effective strategic plan, it is essential for managers to reduce teaching loads to compensate faculty who are heavily engaged in SP.

Most importantly, Bryson (1988b) indicates that organisations with lacking of commitment should not create or engage in SP, especially at senior manager level. Carols et al. (2011) claim that top management's commitment is a crucial issue in the implementation of a firm's strategic priorities. In the same vein, Cerpa and Verner (1998) and Earl (1993) examined the role of senior management practice in SP, and found that the involvement of senior management is essential to effective SP. On the other hand, the absence of OC has been presented as a key problem affecting SP success. Similarly, Semke (1991) claims that management must have full commitment to service excellence, otherwise any efforts towards development are effectively futile. Hence, these studies represent the importance of engaging senior managers in the current research.

As mentioned in Chapters 3 and 4, part of this thesis focuses on the process of SM that comprises SP (vision, mission, objectives, and analysis), formalisation, implementation, and evaluation, and the direct association between these steps and OC. Therefore, vision as the first component of SP could be described as a picture of what the organisation desires to be and, in broad terms, what it needs ultimately to achieve, whereas mission specifies the organisational activities and functions under the vision (Hitt et al., 2011).

Empirical results from Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2006) show that vision, which aligns the values between an organisation and individuals, is associated with improved commitment to the organisation by the staff. Moreover, findings from Ahiausu and Asawo (2012) show a significant relationship between AC and NC with vision, while the association between CC and vision only contributed minimally to employee commitment within the manufacturing industry in Nigeria. This indicates that organisations that desire to stay in business and remain competitive ought to give particular consideration to their vision statement, and make sure that the vision is clear, and stimulating emotionally and intellectually. Thus, AC will be created. Dvir et al. (2004) assert that vision is a strong tool for generating high levels of emotional attachment between employees and their organisations. The previous studies illustrated the importance and the positive impact of vision statement on creating and enhancing the OC.

According to quantitative findings, the Saudi Arabian universities' academic staff representative's responses average on the Universities' Vision construct are mostly 'Agree' (4.07) on 'UV3' - 'The university's vision provides a sense of direction for organisational members' to (4.37) on 'UV2' - 'The university's vision is considered as a necessary effective leadership tool, a process of inducing others to act toward common goals'. These responses signify that the respondents believe on 'UV2' as the Universities' Vision is very significant for the Saudi Arabian universities' academic staff to inspire them to work toward achieving the universities' common goals. Bennis and Nanus (1985) posit that an important part of the SP process is communication of the vision by senior managers. Furthermore, Hyatt (2011) illustrated that a manager's communication of vision influences many features of the organisation such as commitment and performance. For employees to feel supported by their organisation, the

organisation must have a shared vision among senior managers. According to Tichy and Devanna (1986), Kirkpatrick and Locke (1996), and Nanus (1992), in order for employees to feel a part of the organisation, they need to 'buy into' the vision or help to develop it. If the managers share the vision, their staff feel connected to and supported by the organisation. Hyatt (2011) found that the creation of a shared vision has a considerable effect on employees' organisational performance and POS. Similarly, Weymes (2004) and Zaccaro and Klimoski (2001) assume that when managers are inspiring in their communication of the vision of the company, their behaviours (Grojean et al., 2004) provide powerful communication to employees in order for them to perceive organisational support (Hyatt, 2011). In addition, key stakeholders should be involved in the improvement of a shared vision that will inspire commitment to organisational goals (Marcus and Smith, 1997).

Mission statement is the second dimension of the SP process considered here. From the descriptive statistics the results showed the Saudi Arabian universities' academic staff representative's responses average on the universities' Mission construct are mostly 'Neutral' (3.44) on 'UM3' – 'The university's mission includes identification of geographic domain where the university competes' to 'Agree' (3.65) on 'UM2' 'The identification of principal services'. These responses signify that the respondents believe in 'UM2' as the identification of principal service as the most important for Saudi Arabian universities.

According to Ganu (2013), a university's mission statement is one of the defining factors in achieving success within the HE sector. Lerner (1999) identified mission as a fundamental for setting out the goals and objectives of the organisation. Campbell and Nash (1992) indicate that organisations often use mission statements as a tool to improve organisational employee commitment.

Similarly, Stovel and Bontis (2002) illustrate that the effect of the mission statement on employees is crucial, as the commitment of all staff is a requirement of effective mission statement achievement. According to David and David (2003), a mission statement should be inspiring and employees should feel a part of the organisation after reading it.

The third dimension of the SP process is goals and objectives. OC means that an individual knows about the goals and objectives of the organisation and they will work hard to remain within the firm (Porter et al., 1974). Anderson et al. (1994) state that the tools and techniques used to accomplish organisational goals all depend on individual commitment to achieving the objectives of the firm. Furthermore, OC has a strong effect on the outcomes of the organisation (Naqvi et al., 2011).

Raju and Srivastava (1994) define OC as being a component which develops the attachment of the individual to the organisation. A committed employee will be happy to be associated with the organisation, and put substantial effort into achieving its goals. According to Mowday et al. (1982), the rewards of commitment can increase acceptance of an institution's demands and the meeting of its goals. Hence, Bart et al. (2001) state that only a clear description of an organisation's purpose enables the formulation of realistic goals, and He et al. (2012) state employees will then become more productive.

Tubbs and Dahl (1991) stress that committed employees are more likely to accomplish organisational goals. Ogedegbe (2014) observes that accomplishing a firm's objectives depends essentially on employees' attitude and behaviours. Furthermore, the firm's success could be linked to the amount of commitment brought in by personnel who operate in a highly competitive environment.

According to Eisenberger et al. (2001), 'perceived organisational support theory is an experience-based attribution concerning the benevolent or malevolent intent of the organisation's policies, norms, procedures, and action as they affect employees' (p.42). Hence, when POS is high, the employees feel an obligation to commit and engage in behaviours that assist the organisation in its achievement of goals (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Wayne et al., 1997; Rhodes et al., 2001). Employees are the most important resource for any organisation, therefore top management should relate the human resources function to the objectives of the firm in order to increase its outcomes.

Consequently, Saudi universities should pay attention to caring for their staff. They must attempt to distribute a message to staff that the university is there to assist with their jobs, and they have an opportunity to be rewarded for their exceptional performance.

The fourth dimension of the SP process is the internal and external analysis, which is usually referred to SWOT analysis, or other strategic analysis tools. The current study is in line with Horn et al. (1994), who claim that it is necessary for an organisation's internal analysis to be made up of several arguments, one of which being staff commitment. Pashiardis (1996) mentions that 'environmental scanning is essential for an effective planning'. Janussewska et al. (2009) state that the aim of SWOT analysis is to classify the major attention points.

Major competition and social, political, economic, technological and demographic changes can have an impact on all organisations. Hung (2009) claims that HEIs must assess their internal and external environments for identification of their strengths and weaknesses, as well as to optimise their opportunities and decrease the threats they might face.

### 7.2.2 The direct influence of Formalisation on Organisational Commitment, H2

The second step of SM is Strategy Formalisation. The proposed association from formalisation of strategy to OC was found to be positively significant, since the standardised estimate was statistically significant at a (0.11,  $P= 0.02$ ) level. However, the effect size of the Saudi Arabia's Strategy Formalisation on the academic staff's OC at KSA universities is small ( $f^2=0.043$ ) (see Table 6.21; Figure 6.1). Therefore, the proposed hypothesis was accepted, implying that formalisation of strategy had a small positive influence on OC.

Prior literature has investigated the importance of such associations. Lederer and Sethi (1996), Das et al. (1991), and Dutton and Duncan (1987) state that the importance of formalised planning is to confirm consistent overall strategic goals of the firm in its structure, policies and written procedures. Bai and Lee (2003) and Ranganathan and Sethi (2002) indicate that formalisation promotes better task coordination through integration of planning and frequent communication.

According to Auh and Menguc (2007), formalisation has produced mixed results, ranging from negative to positive effects. However, the current finding is partly in line with the study by Michaels et al. (1996), who found a positive relationship between the formalisation and AC of Korean salespeople. However, the results differ significantly from those gathered from US salespeople, where no such association among the variables was seen. Moreover, the present study is fully consistent with a prior investigation by Stevens et al. (1978), Greene (1978), and Morris and Steers (1980) who suggest that formalisation has a positive association with OC. For instance, formalisation allows people to decide more objectively about whether to internalise the organisation's goals as their own. Michaels et al.

(1988) found a positive association between formalisation and OC for purchasing employees and sales representatives which are in line with this study.

According to Armstrong (1982), plans are usually ignored so it is not sufficient to create a plan without a commitment. Formalisation of the plan calls for clear procedures for gaining a commitment to it from various stakeholders. Brenes et al. (2008) illustrated that amongst successful companies, 98% consider the participation of a large number of top-level employees in strategy formalisation as very important for implementation to be successful, as they are then committed to whatever final result emerges. Furthermore, 93% of the most successful companies consider commitment to the firm's strategy as correlating to issues dealing with staff involvement in its formulation.

On the other hand, the current research contradicts the study by Hartline et al. (2000) who suggests that formalisation has a negative effect on employees' OC with a reduction of their AC. Similarly, Mathieu and Sajak (1990) state that formalisation has been shown to decrease employees' commitment to the organisation. The explanation could be, as Agarwal and Ramaswami (1993) clarified, that if employees feel that they are constantly being watched to make sure they adhere to strict procedures then this may cause them to lose interest in their jobs.

Furthermore, the examination of this study is partly in line with a study by Alghannai and Bin Bon (2015) who investigated the mediating role of one component of OC, namely CC. The outcomes indicate that CC fully mediates the association between strategy formulation and organisational success in Libya's industrial sectors.

To conclude, Michaels et al. (1996) assume that formalisation, by creating firm unambiguous goals, allows an employee to decide objectively about whether to internalise the organisation's goals, thus improving their perception of the firm's dependability.

### **7.2.3 The direct impact of Implementation on organisational commitment, H3**

The quantitative results revealed that strategy implementation has a significant positive impact on OC. Hence, these findings accept H3. The analysis of the data collected indicated that the Saudi Arabian universities' strategy implementation had significant positive impact on the academic staff's organisational commitment within Saudi Arabian universities (standardised estimate = 0.15,  $P < 0.01$ ). Moreover, the effect size staff organisational commitment at Saudi Arabia universities is small ( $f^2=0.083$ ) (see Table 6.21; Figure 6.1).

These results are consistent with those of Mowday et al. (1982), who found that OC has a potential influence on work behaviour and job attitude. Heracleous (2000) stated that efforts to implement a strategy may be unsuccessful if the strategy is not supported by the majority of employees and managers. Alexander (1985) also takes the view that employee commitment assists in the success of strategy implementation. Similarly, Grant (1999) states that a business strategy's implementation depends on several components, including the degree of participation from the organisation's personnel and top management.

Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) maintain that employees feel a strong wish to remain with their company if they perceive a high level of AC. Hence, Saudi's HEIs must respond to these challenges in raising the commitment of all

employees, starting from top level management. Jenkins (1992) clarified that lack of commitment from high level managers is a key factor behind the failure of quality initiatives. A study by Carols et al. (2011) emphasises the role of top management's commitment in the implementation of a firm's strategy. Without management commitment, strategies cannot be achieved. According to Slater et al. (2010), a number of scholars have argued that effective strategy implementation is at least as significant if not more in developing a brilliant strategy. These findings show the importance of the SM implementation step to be linked with commitment. Hence, Saudi universities must consider the implementation part of the strategy as a core component of success. It would be good idea to encourage OC among all employees, and in turn employees will become more willing to accomplish organisational objectives.

#### **7.2.4 The direct impact of the Evaluation on (OC), H4**

From the PLS-SEM, it was seen that effect of Strategy Evaluation had positive, moderate and significant impact on OC. Thus, the strategy evaluation step had been positively played as a tool for the encouragement of the commitment of employees at KSA HEIs. Consequently, these results validate hypothesis H4.

This result is in line with Armstrong (1982) who stresses the importance of developing an evaluation system that provides accurate feedback to maintain commitment to the plans. SM should involve the timely evaluation of strategy in place to achieve the firm's mission (Hastings, 1996), to identify changes (Hung, n.d.) and challenges (Tsiakkiros and Pashiardis, 2002) that affect the organisation. To sum up, these independent variables of SM, the Saudi Arabia Universities' Strategic Planning, Formalisation, Implementation and Evaluation moderately

explain the academic staff OC at Saudi Arabia universities with an  $R^2=0.46$  (The R-Squared Contribution of the independent variables is 0.46 (see Table 6.21; Figure 6.1). Therefore, the first four hypotheses H1, H2, H3, and H4 (Saudi Arabian universities' (1) Strategic Planning, (2) Formalisation, (3) Implementation, and (4) Evaluation have a positive impact on the academic staff's organisational commitment at Saudi Arabian universities) were supported.

Juan and Robert (2010) clarified that the advantage of commitment to the SM process includes the guidance it provides to staff about the goals their company is trying to achieve, and showed the importance of commitment in the accomplishment of a variety of decisions such as the SM process. Therefore, Saudi senior managers and academic staff believe and align themselves to the potential of SM to create OC to their universities. Thus, a strong SM process will raise individual sense of identity and strengthen trust in the social exchange relationship, in addition to the development of the perceived cost of leaving, and so establishing raised OC. Consequently, as mentioned above, all SM process had a positive and significant direct impact on creating academic staff OC at Saudi universities.

### **7.3 Strategic Management and Service Quality, H5, H6, H7 and H8**

The second aim of the study is covered in this section and the direct impact of SM process on SQ in HEIs in Saudi Arabia is discussed. Additionally, it answers Q2: 'What are the direct impact of Strategic Management (SM) components, namely (SP) that include (vision, mission, objectives and analysis), formalisation, implementation and evaluation on SQ at KSA universities?'

The quantitative revealed that Saudi Arabian universities' strategic planning has a moderate impact on the universities' service quality (standardised estimate = 0.46,

$P < 0.01$ ). Furthermore, the analysis of the data collected shows that the effect size of the Saudi Arabian universities' strategic planning on the universities' service quality is medium ( $f^2=0.31$ ) (see Table 6.21; Figure 6.1). Consequently, these results validate hypothesis H5.

These results demonstrate that the relation among SP and SQ is medium. These findings partly support studies by numerous specialists of the quality who argue that SM is vital for effective quality initiatives (Deming, 1986; Juran, 1988; Crosby, 1994). Yarmohammadian et al. (2001) state that SP can enrich organisation's quality. Karmon and McGilsky, (1997) found a quality strategic plan provides the university programme with the basis for continual enhancement and accountability to the program's stakeholders. Furthermore, Bryson (2010) assures that SP produces a multitude of benefits, comprising aspects related to SQ e.g. fulfilling mission.

Furthermore, the study is partly consistent with Kahveci et al. (2012) who stress the importance of SP in HEIs to guide decisions about the development of education quality. Similarly, Latorre-Medina and Blanco-Encomienda (2013) stress the significance of SM as a key to improve the quality of education. Yeni and Herington (2010) found a positive influence of planning and SQ on organisational performance. Arasa and K'Obonyo, (2012) mention that organisations that reveal higher levels of SP achieve better in both financial and non-financial areas (e.g. SQ).

Revankar et al. (n.d.), claim SP will enable the improvement of the quality system of the organisation. It assists to illuminate firm's future direction, create priorities and establish decisions of organisation's functions. Likewise, Khamalah and Lingaraj (2007) stress that the SQ has become important for planning strategy for

NPOs. Hence, there is a requirement for incorporated planning to provide SQ (Stuart and Tax, 1996).

Moreover, the quantitative findings revealed that there was a weak impact from strategy formalisation on the universities' service quality (standardised estimate = 0.10,  $P= 0.02$ ). Furthermore, data analysis illustrates that the effect size of the Saudi Arabian universities' strategy formalisation on the universities' service quality is small ( $f^2=0.058$ ). This means that strategy formalisation at Saudi universities is not enough to enhance SQ. Accordingly, these findings supported H6. These results are in line with the outcomes of a study by Baird et al. (1994) who emphasise that a small business which adopts formalised planning will place a greater emphasis on improving quality. According to the literature, top management should pay special attention to improving the process of strategy formalisation within their organisations which could be emphasised through clear specification of the practices and written policies.

In fact, the posited hypothesis for the direct impact of strategy implementation on Saudi Arabian universities' service quality was revealed to be statistically small, which signifies that SQ is not improved enough by the direct impact of strategy implementation. The analysis of the data collected demonstrates that the universities' strategy implementation has no impact on the universities' service quality (standardised estimate = 0.08,  $P= 0.05$ ). Further, the data analysis illustrates that there is no effect size of the Saudi Arabian universities' strategy implementation on their service quality ( $f^2=0.046$ ). Therefore, the proposed hypothesis H7 was rejected. According to the literature, strategy implementation is one of the most vital stages which could lead to a plan's achievement (Slater et al., 2010). Misankova and Kocisova (2014) have been focused on strategic implementation as a core part of a successful SM.

This result stressed the importance of strategy implementation steps which need improvement at KSA HIEs. According to Plant (2009), implementation is the most important aspect in the achievement of strategic planning. He states that effective implementation depends on the structure of the firm. Thus, concerning and evaluation of the universities' structure would be valuable for accomplishment of strategy implementation to have an expected impact on development of a university's SQ.

According to Rensburg (2008), the issue with implementing a successful strategic plan is people, organisation system, and process, which are social constructs. Furthermore, He et al. (2012) illustrate that the implementation of the SM needs to be linked with employees' own objectives and goals, and in turn employees become more productive for organisational outcomes. Thus, Corboy and O'Corrbui, (1999) found that employees must believe that applying the strategy is a top priority for their organisation. Staff will be looking for evidences for the commitment of top management during strategy implementation, and if they feel that high level managers are less than fully committed, then they will lose their own commitment and enthusiasm for it as well.

Slater et al., (2010), argue that effective strategy implementation is more significant than the creating an excellent strategy. Similarly, as Hrebiniak (2006) states, without effective implementation, business strategy cannot be succeed. Finally, Bhatti (2011) stresses that the most superior strategy would not make the grade as recognised without proper implementation.

Another interesting quantitative finding was the impact of strategy evaluation on SQ, which was revealed to be statistically nonsignificant. The analysis of the data collected shows that the Saudi Arabian universities' evaluation had no significant impact on their service quality (standardised estimate = 0.03, P= 0.27) and it can

say it had no effect size ( $f^2 = 0.017$ ). Consequently, H8 was rejected. This result indicates that there is no relation between the evaluation of strategy and SQ at Saudi universities. Hence, this finding stresses the need for Saudi universities to have a structured evaluation system for maintaining their SP which leads to SQ improvement. The importance of developing an evaluation system is to deliver accurate feedback to maintain the plans (Armstrong, 1982).

To conclude, the Saudi Arabian universities' strategic management process which was divided in this study into four components, namely SP, Formalisation, Implementation, and Evaluation, moderately explains the universities' service quality with an  $R^2=0.49$ . This means that SM process that encompasses SP, Formalisation, Implementation, and Evaluation positively explains the SQ. Consequently, the fifth and sixth hypotheses (H5 and H6) 'Saudi Arabian universities' strategic planning and formalisation have a positive impact on their service quality' is supported. However, the seventh and eighth hypotheses (H7 and H8) 'Saudi Arabian Universities' strategy implementation and evaluation have a positive impact on their service quality' are rejected.

Staff at Saudi universities must recognise the established procedures required for SM. This is particularly the case of those who responsible about the implementation and evaluation stages. Staff training could go some way in providing this knowledge, or likewise, distribution of proper documentation detailing the procedures for SP could assist in developing an understanding of the requirements of those involved in the SM process.

#### **7.4 Organisational Commitment and Service Quality, H9**

In this section, the third objective of the study is covered and discusses the direct impact of OC on SQ in HEIs in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, it answers Q3: 'What

are the direct effects of Organisational Commitment (OC) on Service Quality (SQ) at Saudi universities?’

The results of the PLS-SEM support the hypothesised direct impact (H9) between OC and SQ at KSA HEIs. It showed that the Saudi Arabian universities’ academic staff’s OC had a weak impact on the universities’ service quality (standardised estimate = 0.17,  $P < 0.01$ ). In addition, the analysis of the data collected demonstrates that the effect size of the organisational commitment on the Saudi Arabian universities’ service quality was also weak ( $f^2 = 0.092$ ). Therefore, the direct association between OC and SQ was weak and small which concludes that H9 is accepted.

Therefore, these findings are partly in line with previous studies who specify the direct association between OC and SQ (e.g. Reeves and Hoy 1993; Rogers et al., 1993), suggesting that SQ programs are more likely to succeed if a strong commitment is presented. Dorgan (1994) defines commitment as enhanced functional and operational performance, with quality as the core principal. Tubbs and Dahl (1991) suppose that committed employees are more responsive than the non-committed to achieving organisational goals.

Steers (1977) clarifies that employees who are committed to an organisation are more likely to accept its values and structure, and work toward achieving its goals. In the same vein, Mowday et al. (1982) specify that commitment can increase acceptance of an association’s demands, and the meeting of organisational goals such as high quality. Boshoff and Allen (2000) and Hartline and Ferrell (1996) highlight the fact that good service performance is substantially affected by the level of management commitment to SQ, and neglecting this fact could mean the service fails (Reeves and Hoy, 1993), and quality improvement

initiatives could also fail (Jenkins, 1992). Research on commitment has shown that personnel with higher OC are involved in organisational activities, which results in a higher standard of performance and lower turnover intentions (Benkhoff 1997; Jaros 1997; Chen and Francesco, 2003).

Therefore, this research on one hand found a weak and small association between OC and SQ, and on the other, concerning the OC construct in particular, found that the features impacting the most were 'this university deserves my loyalty' (OC17) and 'I owe a great deal to my university' (OC19) (survey questions can be found in Appendices A and B), with factor loading and significance levels of 0.862,  $P < 0.001$  and 0.856,  $P < 0.001$ , respectively. These two highest loading factors (OC17 and OC19) are under the variable 'normative commitment' (NC). However, 'I really feel as if this university's problems are my own' (OC2) - affective commitment (AC) - was found to have the least impact, with a factor loading and significance level of 0.605,  $P < 0.001$ . This supports hypothesis H9.

Consequently, these results highlight the need for policy makers at Saudi universities to increase AC among senior managers and academic staff. It stresses the concern of results of Mathieu and Sajak (1990) and Meyer et al. (2002)'s studies who concluded that AC is related positively to several work outcomes (e.g. job performance, organisational behaviour, attendance), since SQ is a sort of job performance. AC is related to such important employee attitudinal variables, as well as behavioural factors, such as turnover intention (Addae and Parboteeah, 2006). In fact, it is an attitudinal construct that may be an important antecedent to other constructive employee behaviours (Anvari et al., 2011). According to Adekola (2012), individual characteristics and working practices could influence the AC of employees. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) maintain that employees who are perceived to have high AC feel a positive inclination to remain with their

organisations, whereas employees who perceive high CC remain with their organisations only to avoid the costs connected to leaving.

For enhancing these associations, some factors could have an impact on OC. Employee expectations, behaviour, and performance may differ depending on their culture (Redding, 1990), and these differences are reflected in how organisations are structured and managed (Chen, 2001). Hence, Chen and Francesco (2003) claim that when considering cultural aspects, AC is more specific to an organisation's work experiences, relates to personal identity and emotional involvement with the organisation. Brown (2003) emphasises that OC is more effectively measured by AC. An employee with strong AC will have more motivation for better performance and will contribute more meaningfully than those who express CC or NC. In contrast, employees experiencing low AC have a tendency to miss work and to exhibit ineffectual behaviour such as theft, sabotage, and aggression (Luchak and Gellatly, 2007; Meyer and Allen, 1997). Moreover, low commitment levels are also associated with low morale (DeCottis and Summers 1987).

Mowday et al., (1992) suggest four sets of elements which can affect OC: personal characteristics, work experience, job characteristics, and structural characteristics. Furthermore, numerous studies have examined the relationship between OC and demographic and personal characteristics with different results. Tseng (2010) also states that demographic characteristics could affect OC. Hus (2002) raises the point that older employees could have more commitment than younger ones.

Furthermore, as demonstrated above, the findings showed that factor loading and significance levels of 0.862,  $P < 0.001$  and 0.856,  $P < 0.001$ . These two highest

loading factors (OC17 and OC19) are under the variable 'normative commitment'. This could be due to gender differences: female participation in this study was 70.04% whereas male was 29.95%. Another explanation might be cultural and background differences: women in Saudi Arabia usually prefer to work in the government sector, particularly in educational institutions. These findings illustrated above could be explained by Dennis and Alan (2004)'s study who reported that gender in educational settings was the most significant predictor of OC. Lim (2003) reports significant differences in affective and continuance variables between males and females. Marchiori and Henkin (2004)'s study showed gender differences in a chiropractic department in the US and Canada; NC scores in women were considerably higher than in men. This might be explained by the fact that NC as a variable involves an employee's loyalty to the organisation as a function of moral standards and expected behaviour.

There are at least three sets of theories, according to Meyer and Allen (1997), that are regarded to have solid and consistent associations with OC - the belief that the firm supports its staff (Eisenberger, Fasolo, and Davis-LaMastro, 1990), treats personnel in a fair manner (McFarlin and Sweeny, 1992), and provides feelings of self-worth to the employee (Mathieu and Sajac, 1990; Steers, 1977). Adekola (2012) claims that an individual's commitment to a firm due to feelings of obligation may due to various factors. For example, the company might have facilitated a staff member's training, and they then feel a 'moral' obligation to remain with the firm to 'repay the debt'. Managers could also enrich employees' self-esteem and this may lead to greater commitment (Salim et al., n.d.). Following the POS and SET, organisations must attempt to distribute a message to frontline employees that the firm is there to assist their job and they have an

opportunity to be rewarded for their outstanding performance (Tavitiyaman, 2009).

### **7.5 Mediating effect of SM on SQ**

The last objective of this study is to determine the indirect effect of strategic management (SM) process on service quality (SQ) through organisational commitment (OC). Moreover, it answers Question 4 – ‘Does organisational commitment (OC) positively mediate the relationship between strategic management (SM) and service quality (SQ) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s Higher Education (HEIs)?’ In this study, the four hypotheses H10, H11, H12 and H13 proposed that (1) Strategic Planning, (2) Formalisation, (3) Implementation, and (4) Evaluation have an indirect positive impact on the universities’ service quality through the Saudi Arabian academic staff universities’ organisational commitment. Although there is a lack of empirical studies to support these associations, the present findings have provided such potential indirect relationships, as follows:

#### **7.5.1 Result of the partial mediation model between strategic planning and service quality**

The quantitative results showed that Saudi Arabian universities’ service quality is partially mediated by their organisational commitment. Thus, one can say that the Saudi Arabian universities’ organisational commitment is established as a partial mediator of the relation between the universities’ strategic planning and their service quality. In addition, the analysis of the data shows that the total effect size of the indirect relationship from strategic planning to service quality through organisational commitment is strong ( $f^2=0.34$ ). Consequently, the role of OC in such relation had a partial effect to support these associations.

Therefore, the current study partly consents with studies that found a substantial positive link between OC and SQ. Reeves and Hoy (1993) and Rogers et al. (1993) assert that quality initiatives and SQ had to be combined with OC in order to achieve the required results.

Furthermore, previous studies focused on the direct and significant relationship between SP and OC (Kohtamaki, 2012), and between SQ and OC (Reeves and Hoy, 1993) and highlight the assessment of SP to be combined with OC to achieve the desired consequences (Rogers et al., 1993). Furthermore, this result is partly consistent with prior studies by Wooldridge and Floyd (1990) who mentioned the significant role of commitment in a successful strategy.

Based on the above, OC is a problematic task that deals with the individuals who vary physically, linguistically, culturally, educationally and ethnically (Khan et al., 2013). Employees who show high levels of commitment intend to stay within the organisation and work hard at achieving its goals (Luthans et al., 1985).

According to related empirical studies on the direct link (Reeves and Hoy 1999; Harrison-Walker, 2001; Dean, 2007; Lai, 2015), SQ can be affected and enhanced significantly by achieving commitment. Furthermore, recent studies indicated that achieving commitment has a critical influence on SQ and cannot be ignored (Johnston, 2004; Alexandris et al., 2004; Hur et al., 2010; Hur et al., 2013).

### **7.5.2 Results of the partial mediation model between formalisation and service quality**

Discussed in this section is the indirect positive impact from the universities' strategy formalisation on the universities' service quality through the Saudi Arabian academic staff universities' organisational commitment (H11). The

quantitative results showed that OC acts as a partial mediator between formalisation and SQ. Moreover, the existence of OC strengthens the relationships between formalisation and SQ, and in turn, weakly explains the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality. Hence, such effects were not strong enough to enhance the process of strategy formalisation and SQ. According to Dutton and Duncan (1987), the importance of formalised planning is to confirm consistent overall strategic goals of the firm in its structure, policies and written procedures.

### **7.5.3 Results of the complete mediation model of the impact of implementation on SQ through OC**

The quantitative results of this study demonstrated that OC acts as a full mediator between implementation and SQ (H12). This means that OC is considered to be a critical factor in the relationship between implementation and SQ in Saudi universities.

On other words, without the OC, the strategy implementation will not have an impact on SQ. Previous literature stressed that strategy implementation is one of the most vital stages which could lead to a plan's achievement and successful SM outcomes (Slater et al., 2010; Misankova and Kocisova, 2014).

### **7.5.4 Complete mediation of the impact of strategy evaluation on SQ through OC**

The result of PLS-SEM showed that Saudi Arabian universities' service quality is fully mediated by the academic staff's organisational commitment (H13). Thus, the academic staff's organisational commitment is established as a full mediator of the relation between the Saudi Arabian universities' strategy evaluation and their SQ. Moreover, the existence of OC strengthens the relationship between

evaluation and SQ, and in turn, strongly and critically explains the Saudi Arabian universities' service quality. On other words, without the OC, the strategy evaluation will not have an effect on SQ.

It is acknowledged that while the majority of studies on commitment effectiveness focus on the direct relationship between SM and OC (Kim and Mauborgne, 1998; Andrews, 1987; Beer et al., 2005; Wooldridge and Floyd, 1990; van Breda, 2000), such indirect impact found in the current study is more likely to enrich the literature on SM, SP process, and OC. It is believed that this study is the first study concerning the indirect effect of SM components and its interaction with OC on SQ among faculty staff within HEIs.

Furthermore, a high level of OC is advantageous to an organisation as it positively affects employees' perceptions and performance, and could reduce turnover and absenteeism (Mowday, 1998). For decades, research has theoretically focused on the positive associations of OC for organisations (e.g. Mathieu and Sajac, 1990; Chen and Francesco, 2003; Cheng and Stockdale, 2003; Lavelle et al., 2009). Therefore, this study empirically concluded that without the commitment of the faculty, it is noticeable that the development of the strategic plan will never be accomplished, as Newman (2001) states.

Furthermore, the general findings of the current study are in line with Newman (2001)'s research, who found a close relationship between senior management commitment and SQ from the perspective of employees. On the other hand, Ünal (2012) mentions that low commitment levels are largely counterproductive for both the employee and the organisation. Khan et al. (2013) showed that the success of universities depends upon solid functioning and the academicians' involvement. This means that the university who has a well-written strategy will

accomplish its goals and plans. Many researchers and practitioners have defined OC as a desirable and powerful tool to enhance a firm's productivity and effectiveness.

Employee commitment is significant because higher levels mean more favourable organisational outcomes. Biljan (2004) identified that the commitment of employees is a vital issue because it may predict employee performance, absenteeism and other behaviours.

To sum up, SM is considered to be a set of practices that lead to high level of quality. Moreover, this study suggests that participation in decision making such as the SM process, involvement and communication between all personnel during the creation and implementation of SM may raises the degree of OC, which then supports the outcomes of SM; among which is enhancement of the SQ at the university. According to Porter et al. (1974), a committed employee has been found to be more creative and less likely to leave an organisation than uncommitted one. Similarly, the literature suggests that committed individuals are more likely to work towards improvements for both individual and organisational goals (Meyer and Allen, 1997; Mowday, 1998).

## **7.6 Summary**

This chapter comprised of a discussion of the research findings according to its objectives, and linked the findings to previous studies. Most of the results are in line with those found in previous studies. The results of the present study suggest that OC can indirectly enhance SQ and SM process in Saudi HEIs by encouraging participation from diverse stakeholders in the SM process, creating and enhancing a quality and commitment culture at a university that supports SM outcomes. OC

brings settings for accurate strategies and a standard working attribute for the organisations.

To conclude, the literature proposes that commitment is formed through the management of individuals. Furthermore, Hunger and Wheelen (2003) note that people at all levels, not just higher management, need to participate in the SM process to be more effective and succeed.

## **Chapter 8      Conclusions and future research**

### **8.1    Introduction**

Based on the literature review, this study proposed a conceptual model to examine the direct and indirect relationships between the processes of SM on SQ through the mediating role of OC at universities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The model was analysed and tested quantitatively using PLS-SEM. An investigation of such associations within the HE sector is significant, as it helps enhance the quality outcomes of these educational organisations.

This chapter discusses the contributions of this research, its limitations, and makes suggestions for future areas of research. It begins with the conclusions of the study, and its theoretical and managerial contributions, followed by generic recommendations for the policy makers at HEIs in Saudi Arabia to take action on the important variables studied in this research. Finally, the limitations of the study and ideas for future research and an assessment of, and reflection on, the methodology are presented.

### **8.2    Conclusions**

This study aims to add to the existing knowledge and literature on the association between SM process and SQ by exploring the mediating role of OC at universities in KSA. The study developed a model consisting of six constructs: four on SM process, one on OC, and one on SQ. The study helps to fill the gap identified in the literature review; that there are too few existing empirical studies exploring the impact of SM steps on SQ via OC. Prior literature has acknowledged the need for NPOs to adopt SM approaches in order to increase the quality of its services

(Yarmohammadian et al., 2001). Kettunen (2002) and Poister (2010) stress that the advantage of SM and SP is to take a holistic view of the organisation and its future direction. According to Lombardi (2001), universities as NPOs are struggling to improve their quality and productivity. Nevertheless, universities are more significant than organisations in other industries because they supply those enterprises with qualified workforces. Yet, despite being widely applied in HE to ensure high quality outcomes, SM and quality have been developed independently rather than collectively (Kettunen and Kantola, 2007). The role of SQ has also received increasing attention and has become critical to the accomplishment of the firm (Landrum et al., 2007). According to a number of studies, there are many indicators in the literature which stress the significance of SQ in educational institutions (Harvey and Knight, 1996; Ham and Hayduk, 2003; Angell et al., 2008; Yeo, 2008; Al-alak and Bekhet, 2011). However, when attempting to achieve the desired consequences, quality initiatives should work alongside OC (Reeves and Hoy, 1993; Rogers et al., 1993). For further understanding of the advantages of commitment and its linkage with organisational outcomes, the current study applied related theories that can help to explain the phenomena. Hence, the SET (Blau, 1964), the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), and the concept of Perceived Organisational Support (POS) (Eisenberger, et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2001) were used to describe the psychological processes that determine employee attitudes and behaviours (Setton et al., 1996; Wayne et al., 2002).

Previous studies in the field of strategy and SQ have tested the impact of SM or SP on SQ as a one construct, unlike the current thesis, which tested SM constructs as individual items on the basis that SM contains multifaceted phases (Pearce and Robinson, 2007; Bowman and Faulkner, 1997) of the set of decisions and actions.

Nevertheless, most studies are concerned with the direct relationships between SM and SQ, SP and OC, SP and SQ, and SP and OC. Literature suggests that some features may either moderate or mediate that linkage; yet empirical evidence on these moderating or mediating factors rarely exists. However, scholars have not extensively investigated this potential association, particularly as individual items.

This thesis, which adopts a positivist philosophy, tests the direct and indirect association among SM steps on SQ through un-dimensional constructs of OC. The positivist approach researches causal relationships by using current theory to develop hypotheses, and by gathering observable data (Saunders et al., 2012). Quantitative research is preferred by positivists as it is assumed that social phenomena can be measured by research (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Furthermore, a deduction method adopts existing theories and concepts to justify research relationships (Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009). Accordingly, a deductive approach and a quantitative method were chosen as an appropriate research methodology for this study. Additionally, a questionnaire was distributed to 35 universities, where 404 questionnaires out of 749 were completed with no missing data. The response rate was 50.88%.

Regarding data collection, the study used a self-administered questionnaire comprising of 91 closed questions; 50 on SM process that encompass vision, mission, objectives, environmental analysis, formalisation, implementation, and evaluation; 19 on OC; and 22 on SQ measurement to test the causal relationships between these variables.

The study also evaluated the proposed model using a quantitative method, as discussed in Chapter 5. SEM with PLS was employed in order to test research

hypotheses H1 to H13 that conceptualised the casual associations among SM, SQ, and OC. Therefore, the quantitative analysis allowed the examination of the relationships between the study variables and helped to establish the cause and effect between SM and SQ through OC. Specifically, a quantitative approach was used in order to precisely identify the strongest and weakest influencing factors on the association and development of a SM steps which, in turn, affected their effectiveness in SQ and the development of HEIs. Also, the use of a quantitative approach helped the researcher to accurately identify the complete mediating and the partial mediating effect.

Consequently, it was found that SM process had both positive influences and direct impacts on OC. In other words, senior management and teaching staff's engagement with aspects of SM can generate high levels of OC. Furthermore, the study highlighted the fact that strategy formalisation has a significant positive impact on OC. These findings indicate the importance of the formalisation stage that makes university leaders pay more attention to the significance of creating committed employees. The role of formalised planning is to confirm consistent overall strategic goals of the firm in its structure and policies, via frequent communication between top managers and employees.

Moreover, strategy implementation had a significant positive impact on the academic staff's OC, whereas strategy evaluation had positive, moderate, and significant impact on the academic staff's OC in Saudi Arabian universities. That indicates that a well-planned and appropriate implementation and evaluation methodology is required. Consequently, Saudi senior managers and academic staff should consider the potential of SM to generate OC at Saudi universities. A strong SM process will increase individual sense of identity and strengthen commitment in the social exchange relationship. To sum up, these independent

variables of SM process, the Saudi Arabian universities' strategic planning, formalisation, implementation, and evaluation moderately explain the academic staff's organisational commitment at Saudi Arabian universities with an  $R^2=0.46$ . Furthermore, the four hypotheses H1, H2, H3, and H4 were supported. The previous sections indicated the Q1 was answered.

As mentioned earlier (see Chapter 5), the study's findings showed the Saudi Arabian universities' strategic planning has a moderate impact on the universities' service quality. These findings supported H5. These results should not be surprising, due to the lack of accountability and evaluation system, lack of stakeholder's engagement, lack of staff training and experience (Darandari and Ward, 2011), and lack of staff's awareness of quality concepts at Saudi universities (El-Maghraby, 2011). SQ improvement is the most vital outcome for any organisation. Previous studies argue that SP is significant for the accomplishment of quality initiatives (Deming, 1986; Juran, 1988; Crosby, 1994; Yarmohammadian et al., 2001).

Moreover, the quantitative findings revealed that there was a small and weak impact from strategy formalisation on the universities' service quality (standardised estimate = 0.10,  $P = 0.02$ ) which specified that H6 is supported. It was surprising that the result also shows the direct impact of strategy implementation on the Saudi Arabian universities' SQ was revealed to be statistically small, which indicates that SQ is not improved by the direct impact of strategy implementation. These results indicate that H7 was fully rejected. According to Slater et al. (2010), strategy implementation is one of the vital stages that can lead to the achievement of the plan.

The findings also identified other complications affecting the process of SM and its consequences. The study has argued that the proposed relationship (H8) among strategy evaluation step on SQ was fully rejected. Evaluation also can be considered a significant step in the SM process. To this end, Saudi universities must create elaborate systems comprising formal periodic strategy review sessions. Such findings indicate that Q2 was answered.

The results of the SEM weakly supported the hypothesised direct impact (H9) between OC and SQ at KSA HEIs. It showed that the Saudi Arabian universities' academic staff's OC has a weak impact on the Saudi Arabian universities' SQ (standardised estimate = 0.17,  $P < 0.01$ ). In addition, the effect size of the OC on the Saudi Arabian universities' SQ is also weak ( $f^2 = 0.092$ ). Therefore, the direct association between OC and SQ was a weak and small which presented that H9 is accepted, by revealing that Q3 is answered.

Finally, the result showed a partial mediation between SP and SQ, and between strategy formalisation and SQ. However, the relationship between implementation and SQ, and between evaluation and SQ, is fully completed. These findings answered Q4.

The specific research question and problem which this study addresses are the lack of models developed in order to investigate the direct and indirect links between SM, OC, and SQ within HEIs in developing countries, particularly Saudi Arabia. It is thus proposed that this study can fill some of the research gaps by testing theories (SM, OC, and SQ) as well as by providing an empirical, theoretical, and methodological understanding within an academic perspective from a non-Western country. Furthermore, it is hoped that the study developed strategies concerning the associations among three significant management tools

that have the potential to guide institutions to achieve a desirable educational future and to meet the expectations of the Ministry of Education and the strategic plan (Aafaq) for HE in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

### **8.3 Contributions and Research Implications**

#### **8.3.1 Implications for theory**

The theoretical implications of this research highlight the attempt to supplement the understanding and knowledge of the relationship among three previously unconnected management tools, namely SM, OC, and SQ, from the perspective of senior managers and academic staff within a university setting. These associations have not been previously empirically studied, specifically in universities in developing countries such as Saudi Arabia.

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the literature on SM and organisational behaviour in the sense that it supplies information about the relationship between SM and SQ by using it in a new setting such as HE industry that supports all sectors. Moreover, this thesis, unlike other engagements with the subject of strategy in HE, investigates the impact of different SM steps on un-dimensional constructs of OC, while other literatures or studies focus on SM as a one construct rather than numerous steps. The results of this study thus confirm that the components of SM, namely SP (including vision, mission, objectives, and analysis), formalisation, implementation, and evaluation may affect OC and help to deliver a better understanding of the inter-linkage among them, unlike previous studies (Baird et al., 1994; Rao and Kelkar, 1997; Cronley and Kim, 2014) which do not identify specific SM processes and their effects on OC because they deal with SM as a one construct.

Secondly, the study supports the relation between SM and OC among senior managers and teaching staff, showing that SM can generate a high level of commitment. This is important because it demonstrates that all the steps of SM have an impact on the generation of OC. Furthermore, the study empirically supports the role of OC in enhancing and facilitating the consequences of the SM process. The findings can provide leaders with ideas about which dimensions of OC have strong or weak impacts on SM, and which ones have the potential to convince leaders to put in place more efforts and strategies for improvement within their institutions.

Thirdly, this study has addressed the call of Elbanna (2007) regarding the limited research that examined the practice of SM in the Middle Eastern region, as well as of Al-Shaikh (2001), who criticised the absence of SP in Arab business companies. This is in addition to the call of Ahmed and Parasuraman (1994), Sureshchandar et al. (2002), and Forrester (2000) regarding the need to study OC concepts from the employees' perspective on the basis that the majority of studies measured it from the managers' perspective. These findings could help leaders identify the essential qualities of staff as well as the ways of fulfilling their needs which relate to the accomplishment and accelerating of the organisations' objectives, values and outcomes.

Fourthly, the results of the current study extend on the universal SM theory that can be applied to any culture. This is carried out by providing the example of Saudi Arabia as a case study of a developing country within which to investigate the effect of SM on SQ through the mediating role of OC. These results demonstrate the superiority of SM, that is, regardless of whether Western regions are concerned, SM plays a vital role in promoting a quality, SQ culture and desired consequences for NPOs.

Fifthly, this study provides a significant contribution with regard to the testing of the mediating effect of OC. Nevertheless, such a relation in the education industry context has not been empirically considered before. These results contribute to the literature empirically by testing the relationship between these management approaches and then integrating them with ideas about the effectiveness of an educational environment, to encourage committed employees and to improve SQ at HEIs in KSA. Controlling these integrated management approaches could improve various performance aspects of the institutions.

Furthermore, this study supports the reliability of the constructs used to measure SM, OC, and SQ in a new geographical context. This is to support the accuracy of the methodology employed in this thesis which helps future studies apply it to another setting. Finally, previous studies have looked in isolation at the effects of SM on SQ (Baird et al., 1994, Rao and Kelkar, 1997), SP on OC (Liedtka, 2000b), SP on SQ (Cronley and Kim, 2014), SM on OC (DeMeyer and Van Hooland, 1990; Dooley et al, 2000; Kohtamaki et al, 2012), OC on SQ (Newman, 2001) and the theoretical integration among SM, OC, and SQ (Reeves and Hoy, 1993; Rogers, et al, 1993). These studies have been limited in terms of studying their linkage. This explains the significance of this thesis to extend the scope and knowledge of these previous studies about the aforementioned associations in the context of HEIs in KSA.

### **8.3.2 Implications for practice**

This section discusses the final objective of the study, which provides implications for academic and policy makers in HEIs. Clarifying the process of SM can contribute to enhanced educational aspects which help leaders develop

strategies for creating a well-structured SM process to foster high SQ and to enhance OC.

The present study provides some guidelines for managerial actions. First, SM is widely applied worldwide in HEIs and cannot be ignored in a Saudi Arabian setting. The results of the current study illustrate the importance of each step of the SM process that has a comprehensive picture of the institution. Therefore, universities should foster the presence of SM as a path towards a clear and well-planned future. However, merely developing plans is insufficient because they are often ignored (Armstrong, 1982). Planning requires an explicit procedure to ensure maximum commitment to the plan, for example, arranging meetings. Al-Bazzaz and Grinyer (1980) found that a higher number of meetings and increased communication contributed to higher perceptions of planning. Hence, management should encourage the engagement of employees on all SM phases.

According to Kettunen, (2009), the adequate communication and interaction in the strategy process strengthens the commitment to strategy, where both phases become more significant than the written plan. Similarly, as Collier et al. (2004) illustrate, studies suggest that SP could contribute to organisational achievements, not by providing exact plans, but by engaging employees and securing their acceptance and understanding of the strategy. According to Oldfield et al. (2000), a positive result is likely to be achieved through encouraging staff to participate in decision making. Thus, these studies support the recommendation of this research in the value of participation on the decision making of strategy and the academic staff engagement during the strategic management process.

Furthermore, Henry (2011) asserts that strategies need to be communicated and coordinated with stakeholders inside and outside the firm. Zemke (1991) states

that only the full commitment of management to service excellence will result in positive development. Hence, absence in OC has been presented as a key problem affecting strategic plan success.

Grönroos (1983)'s findings indicate that employees who are treated well by their managers, in turn, treat their customers well. Accordingly, Fuller et al. (2003) state that staff who feel that their organisation is committed to them, they are more likely to commit to the company in return. From a POS perspective, employees with higher perceived organisational support feel indebtedness to respond favourably to the organisation in the form of positive attitudes towards their jobs and organisational behaviours, and also to support organisational goals (Loi et al., 2006). Organisations must strive to distribute a message that the firm is there to assist their job and their exceptional performance would be rewarded. According to Lombardi (2001), college performance can be improved depending on whether good quality and productivity is rewarded. Furthermore, university development comes from promoting and rewarding the best staff. Consequently, Saudi universities should respond to the advantage of this theory for a successful SM process and outcomes.

According to De Feo and Janseen, (2001) a firm's vision should be clear and inspired, and agreement on the overall direction should be achieved and shared by all members of the organisation. Furthermore, Desmidt et al. (2011) state that the mission statement should be a tool through which staff can identify the values of the organisation that will guide and inspire members to achieve its strategic goals. Moreover, De Feo and Janseen (2001) state that strategic goals must be specific and measurable within a certain period, typically one to two years. Furthermore, top management should seriously consider the need to increase the process of strategy formalisation within organisations. Additionally, formalisation could be

enhanced by clarifying or specifying the practices and policies through written policy, group meetings, workshops and training.

Slater et al. (2010) argue that a number of scholars have identified effective strategy implementation is at least as significant as if not more for developing a brilliant strategy. Previous studies demonstrate the importance of SM implementation. Therefore, decision makers and leaders at Saudi universities must consider the implementation part of the strategy as a core of success. It would be a good idea to encourage the OC, and in turn, employees will become more responsive to the accomplishment of organisational objectives.

Grant (1999) states that implementing a strategy successfully depends on several components, among them being the degree of participation from the company staff and top management. Given that the previous studies showed the importance of strategy implementation, DeMeyer and Van Hooland (1990) and Dooley et al. (2000) argue that commitment increases people's motivation and shortens the time needed to implement the strategy. Regarding the evaluation step, Armstrong (1982) explains the significance of developing a monitoring system that delivers accurate feedback to maintain commitment to the plan. Hence, adopting techniques for the monitoring and the evaluation of the plan would be beneficial.

With this in mind, it is essential to encourage managers to deliver a good plan that can motivate employees to be committed, more responsive to accomplish organisational objectives, and who, in turn, will deliver service of high quality in order to satisfy the needs of both students and society. Employees at Saudi universities must recognise and be knowledgeable about the established procedures in place for SM. This is particularly the case of those who responsible about the implementation and evaluation stages. Staff training, or the development

of documents detailing the procedures for SP for employees, could help with their understanding.

OC is important because it is associated with other positive organisational outcomes. For example, personnel who are more committed are less likely to consider leaving their jobs (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990) or to actually leave (Netemeyer, et al., 1995); less likely to feel stressed (Begley and Czajka, 1993); more likely to exhibit high performance (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990); and engage in organisational activities, resulting in good performance and lower turnover which are beneficial to the firm (Chen and Francesco, 2003; Cheng and Stockdale, 2003; Lok and Crawford, 2003).

Moreover, as Armstrong (1982) argues, it is expected that commitment will be higher when stakeholders are involved in the setting process. Miller et al. (2004), Collier et al. (2004), and Kohtamäki, et al. (2012) suggest that participative SP influences strategic success and develops the performance of the company. In addition, it can increase commitment because it reflects the vision and strategy of the firm (Liedtka, 2000a) and helps management reach the desired goals of the strategy (Wooldridge and Floyd, 1990). This lines up with the vision of the Aafaq project which takes into consideration the value of stakeholders' needs. Furthermore, participation is important when the strategies involve great changes.

In order to adopt this culture in an HE environment, managers in HEIs in the KSA need an awareness of how important effective staff participation is, and must place more emphasis on developing their commitment in order to implement certain plans. It is thus essential to inspire staff to engage in the process of SM by motivating them to look for new training programmes, attend courses, and adopt new technologies and strategies to improve the university's outcomes. This means

that the advantage of commitment to SM process includes the guidance it provides to staff about the goals which the company aims to achieve (Juan and Robert, 2010).

Studies on organisational behaviour assert the importance of AC and its influence on a firm's achievements. This suggests that leaders and senior managers at Saudi HEIs should take managerial actions that prioritise the encouragement of employees' AC among its staff. For example, considering the work environment, the well-being, technical support, training, and reward system of employees can strengthen an employee's AC (Babakus et al., 2003). Further, managerial actions should constantly search for ways of improving SQ and encourage employees in order to identify service improvements that can motivate employees to take SQ to the next level.

For improving institutional quality and performance, there are various management approaches that can be integrated in HEIs. According to Kettunen (2015), among the challenges which HEIs face is the simultaneous integration of diverse management methods into a coherent system. HEIs need integrated management approaches which include SM, SQ, and OC, because SM is the basis on which quality is built. However, solid SP is not sufficient for profitable success unless it links effectively with internal and external operations of the firm with emphasis on customer needs (De Feo and Janseen, 2001). This is in line with Saudi HE's SP, the Aafaq Project, that has committed to certain values, among which are commitment to quality and building SP culture in universities, ensuring that they achieve an increase in the participation of stakeholders and their ambitions (Aafaq Project, 2015).

Therefore, this study provides important and valuable information for academic leaders and policy makers at universities and The Ministry of Education in the KSA. This is carried out by considering all the aspects of SM process that impact on the OC of academic staff which leads to improve SQ and hence to shape Saudi HE market niches over other ones, nationally and/or globally in the world ranking.

#### **8.4 Recommendations to the policy makers at HEIs in KSA**

In light of the findings of this study and its conclusions, the following recommendations are presented for policies and practices. They principally relate to strategies that can be implemented by policy makers in order to ensure the success of SM implementation in HEIs.

- The Ministry of Education in KSA should raise awareness of its educational policy in general and SM policy in particular among HEIs. This can be achieved by revising its policy and measuring the performance for each process frequently.
- A clear description of SM process should be developed and measures should be taken to ensure that it is understood by all staff members. This can be carried out by holding a number of meetings and workshops during the process of plan preparation. Hopefully, this will increase the understanding among employees of the mission and objectives of the university and of their OC in turn.
- The previous studies have emphasised the importance of strategy implementation. Application of the strategy may be unsuccessful if the strategy does not have the support and commitment of the majority of employees and managers. Therefore, decision makers and leaders at Saudi

universities must seriously consider the implementation part of the strategy in order to be linked with the employees' personal objectives; consequently, employees become more productive.

- Saudi's top management should further examine the strategy evaluation stage of Saudi universities' SM that needs further concern and enhancement. Hence, adopting some strategic evaluation tools and statistical techniques would be sufficient.
- The fundamental task of strategy process is to create a well-structured and solid SP. Therefore, careful understanding and formalisation are needed, along with specifying the practices and policies through written policy, group meetings and training which all count as valuable practices.
- Saudi HEIs have to seek various methods in order to improve their service quality in such ways that satisfy their students, staff members (as internal customers), employers, and society as a whole (as external customers). In other words, they must maintain their reputation in this highly competitive environment when the quality of service becomes crucial to an institution's achievement nationally and globally.
- The HE sector in KSA should define the stakeholders who benefit from their outcomes and services. Having done so, it should seek the participation of their stakeholders in SM stages in order to improve those outcomes and services and to fulfil their needs in a satisfactory manner.
- The communication and interaction in the strategy process strengthens the commitment to SM to the extent that they, in some cases, become more significant than the written plan itself. Hence, holding regular meetings with staff including administrative staff, students and other stakeholders helps accomplish their strategic plans.

- Commitment will be higher when stakeholders are involved in the process of the plan. This relates to the fundamental aspect of the Aafaq project; that is, to take into consideration the value of stakeholders' needs. Hence, leaders in HEIs in KSA need to be aware of the importance of effective staff and other stakeholder's engagement. Previous literature has suggested that commitment depends on the way employees are managed.
- Unsupported strategic plans are expected to fail. In line with the literature, the process of SP will not be accomplished without the faculty's commitment. Consequently, it is essential for senior managers to reduce teaching loads in faculties heavily engaged in SP procedure. Overall, staff at Saudi universities usually performs various roles and multiple tasks which sometimes overlap with one other. According to previous literature (see chapter 3 and 4), clarity of tasks leads to greater commitment.
- Employees with strong AC are often motivated to reach or accomplish higher stages of performance. Therefore, the attempt to increase AC of the employees requires Saudi HEIs to improve work environment, employees' wellbeing, technical support, and training as well as to adopt a reward scheme which encourages the commitment of the staff, the thing that improves the quality of their performance. For example, Saudi HEIs leaders can provide employees with health care insurance.

## **8.5 Limitations and future research**

Although the current study reached its aim and objectives, nevertheless, as in all such studies, several limitations should be acknowledged.

First, the data was limited to a single country (KSA) and this limits the tendency to apply the results to other HE settings. However, the results might still be widely applicable to other HE settings. Future research may extend the scope.

Second, the study has shown the perception of one group (academic staff), and excluded the administrative staff and other stakeholders such as students, alumni, parents, business, etc. Hence, future study should engage other stakeholders for obtaining different findings as well as for enriching knowledge and generalisation of the results. The data collection process took sixth months and due to time constraints the researcher could not spend more time on this. Moreover, although findings of the current research were obtained from 404 respondents, which proved to be sufficient to conduct a robust statistical analysis, future studies could allocate more time and resources and therefore include different groups and large sample would probably enhance the results.

Third, the questionnaires were self-reports from employees. Although reliability and validity were demonstrated, self-reported data is limited by the fact that it rarely can be independently verified. Moreover, self-reported measures produced common source bias. Furthermore, it is common in survey researches to have cross-sectional and self-report data, that is, they are subject to common method error variance. Common method bias can work in either direction. However, the variables were assessed by means of a questionnaire in this study. Inflated relationships should never be assumed as common method bias can lessen or inflate correlations between variables (Spector, 2006). To avoid this issue, subsequent studies should look into different methods of enquiry such as employing the longitudinal method of data collection design (e.g. experiments, archival data, observations or interviews). Therefore, a comprehensive qualitative study and multiple sources of data should be adopted and it might explore the

reasons behind some of the findings left unexplained. For instance, the reason of weak impact of the implementation and evaluation steps on SQ.

Fourth, this thesis encompasses public and private universities, yet it does not apply a comparative analysis between private and public HEIs. Thus, conducting a comparative analysis in order to broaden the scope of the analysis and to provide a clear picture regarding the policies of the HE system in KSA could be useful. In addition, a survey on a larger geographical scale covering samples from all categories of HEIs in Saudi Arabia such as technical and vocational training colleges may be worthwhile for making generalisations.

Fifth, the current study contributes to the knowledge and provides new insights into the effects of SM on SQ through the mediating roles of OC in a developing country. Thus, future studies can apply the proposed model to other setting or compare two countries or two industries worldwide for obtaining different results.

Sixth, all research variables, SM, OC, SQ were all measured at the same time, thus it was not possible to test for causal effects in this model. Therefore, it is highly recommended that future studies use longitudinal designs to study these effects.

Seventh, although results have provided evidence of the validity of using the perception items rather than the expectation items of the original instrument of SERVQUAL developed by Parasuraman et al. (1991), investigating different SQ instruments in future studies making necessary modifications can provide the institutions with a comprehensive assessment of its individuals' needs. SQ dimension varies according to the research objectives, customers need, environment, time, situation of each institution. Additionally, SQ as the dependent variable in this study was measured as a one dimension. Future studies may

measure it as five dimensions of SERVQUAL scale those are tangible, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and reliability (Parasuraman et al., 1988a). It may also study other alternative instruments that measure the SQ such as SERVPERF scale (Cronin and Taylor, 1994), higher education performance (HEdPERF) (Abdullah, 2004; 2006) in order to provide further knowledge about the performance of SQ in NPOs.

Eighth, the conceptual model developed in this study has the potential to add other managerial constructs, given that the previous studies have shown a strong relationship with other factors. Hence, examining the impact of SM processes on other constructs, such as competitive advantages, quality assurance, TQM, innovation, physical environment, top management support, organisational learning, job satisfaction, and performance, would be an interesting issue for future research.

Ninth, as mentioned in the literature, there are factors that could enrich the indirect association between SM and SQ in addition to OC. Practices relating to HR management, styles of leadership, trust within the firm (Meyer and Allen, 1997), organisational and national culture (Trice and Beyer, 1993; Lok and Crawford, 2003) and job satisfaction (Nguyen et al., 2014) were shown to have a significant impact on, and link to increasing OC, firm outcomes and successful strategy. Hence, university management should understand how the factors associated with OC contribute to development or how they can be managed to encourage involvement in the SM process. This will in turn improve OC leading to enhancement of SQ at university.

Moreover, numerous empirical results have stated the impact of demographic factors that can influence the level of OC. However, this study did not encompass

additional demographic and work-related predictors of OC. Examples of these factors that have a vital impact on OC are employees' age, length of employment, level of education (Luthans et al., 1985; Mthieu and Zajac, 1990; Chen and Francesco, 2000), employees' position, seniority, work schedule (Meyer and Allen, 1991), individual characteristics, and working practices (Adekola, 2012), team work and work condition (Nguyen et al., 2014; Sommer et al., 1996), marital status (John and Taylor, 1999; Hus, 2002), gender differences, supportive and considerate leadership (DeCottis and Summers, 1987; Lim, 2003; Marchiori and Henkin, 2004;). Moreover, Lok and Crawford (2003) comment that the culture of an organisation and its style of leadership are important precursors to commitment. Hence, future research can examine these factors and the linkages between them and research variables. Furthermore, it is interesting to investigate the relationships between gender and management. Given that a large number of academic staff in the HE sector in Saudi Arabia is male-dominated (39,501), as opposed to a lower ratio of female employees (25,188) an analysis of this gender-based issue may produce new findings.

Tenth, this study did not analyse any strategic plans of Saudi universities. Hence, for different results, future studies could analyse strategic plans by applying a strategic analytical tools and techniques such as Benchmarking approach, Balanced Scorecard approach, Porter five forces analysis, etc.

Eleventh, this study has provided valuable information for academic leaders and policy makers at the universities by contributing to the knowledge on the association between SM on OC. Future studies need to consider and measure the degree of top management and staff through their commitment to SQ. This would assist HEIs by enhancing their national and global competitive advantage.

Twelfth, the measure of SM process was rather vague. Therefore the researcher recommends that future studies should elaborate on this construct by developing a more comprehensive measure to include the multiple aspects of SP, such as staff participation in the SP process, communication to employees and other stakeholders, the extent of a strategy's implementation, and timescales. It is hoped that these limitations can offer the opportunity for a further development of the subject through future studies.

Last but not least, Chapter 3's literature review revealed a lack of research into SM and SQ in the field of HE and in Arab nations, therefore there is a need for more research to be carried out in this area.

## **8.6 Reflection and assessment**

During the research process, the researcher obtained practical experience in research methods. At first, the researcher expected to encounter difficulties due to studying in a different environment, both culturally and linguistically. However, the stage of preparing and planning this study have exposed me to a variety of management concepts such as strategy, SM, SQ, and commitment within HE context. These theories have expanded my knowledge, and I look forward to applying this knowledge to my workplace upon return to my home country of the KSA.

Furthermore, further research in other research methodology would be an advantage, namely the use of the exploratory research method, along with an inductive approach in the first stage. This will be based on the views of leaders in the HE sector, upon which the theory is generated. As for the second research stage, a deductive approach will be deployed in order to test the theory. An

alternative strategy, in particular interpretivism, might offer richer insights into research questions, although not necessarily better than the adopted strategy in the current study because each gives rise to a particular way of seeing the world.

Although the current study may pose some inquiries, it allows for an understanding of the correlation between three vital management tools which can assist organisations in their accomplishment. Finally, the research journey is long, hence, this researcher intends to keep working on SM, OC, and SQ dimensions, and believes this journey will never end.

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**Questionnaire**

**Title:**

**Strategic Management and its impact on Service Quality: The  
role of Organisational Commitment**

**By**

**Omaima Munawar Albadry**

**University of Plymouth, Business School**

**The United Kingdom**

**Dear faculty member,**

Thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire by PhD researcher Omailma Albadry; who is in a scholarship from the University of Jazan to obtain a doctorate degree from the University of Plymouth in the United Kingdom.

This study is designed for faculty staff who engaged on strategic management process to explore the process of strategic management at the universities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its impact on the service quality through the mediating role of organisational commitment.

In light of the current practice in your university, and the balance applied, please specify to what extent you agree with the statements on the survey.

All information will be treated in the strictest confidence. No data will be published which can be identified as a specific response from your organisation. There is no right or wrong answers, your opinions/facts are what you already use in your organisations. So, your participation is highly valuable for my research. In order for the survey to be useful, all questions must be answered. All responses are completely confidential and individual responses will not be reported.

As a way of expressing gratitude for your co-operation in completing this survey, I will be happy to send you a copy of the survey results. If you would like to have a copy of the results, please fill in your details at the end of the survey.

Finally, if you have any queries or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at my e-mail address: [omaima.albadry@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:omaima.albadry@plymouth.ac.uk)

Or contact my Supervisor Dr. Atul Mishra at [atul.mishra@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:atul.mishra@plymouth.ac.uk)

Thank you very much for taking the time, co-operation and attention in completing this survey.

**Yours Sincerely,**

Omailma Munawar Albadry

❖ **Part one:**

**1) Components of strategic management:**

*Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement with (1) being strongly disagree and (5) strongly agree.*

**A) Vision, mission and objectives:**

Statements		Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
		1	2	3	4	5
<b>University's Vision Statement</b>						
1	The university's vision is always about a desirable future					
2	The university's vision is considered as a necessary effective leadership tool, a process of inducing others to act toward common goals					
3	The university's vision provides a sense of direction for organisational members					
4	University's vision stems from its importance to business strategy planning					
<b>University's Mission Statement</b>						
1	The university's mission specifies the target customers and markets					
2	The university's mission identifies principal services					
3	The university's mission includes identification of geographic domain where the university competes					
4	The university's mission encompasses the identification of the university's use of technology					

5	The university's mission includes the expression of commitments to growth, survival, and profitability					
6	The university's mission specifies key elements of the university philosophy, beliefs, values, inspiration and priorities					
7	The university's mission identifies the university's desired public image					
8	The university's mission identifies the university self-concept, namely, the university's view of itself and its competitive strengths					
<b>University's goals and objectives</b>						
1	The university's objectives desire to set programs and education policy direction.					
2	The university has realistic goals					
3	Goals and objectives linked to a specific duration of time					

**1.2) Environmental scanning:**

*Environmental Scan is an analysis and evaluation of internal conditions and external data using SWOT analysis. So, environmental scanning in your institution encompasses:*

		<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
	<b>Statements</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Internal scan includes:</b>						
1	Analysis of internal capabilities					
2	Analysis of employee issues					

3	Analysis of operating processes' efficiency					
4	Analysis of the university's strengths and weaknesses					
5	Analysis of past performance					
6	Analysis of the causes of failures in the past					
7	Analysis of shareholder and/or agencies of education issues					
8	Analysis of how to attract and rehabilitation high-quality staff					
<b>External scan include</b>						
1	Analysis of community-based issues					
2	Analysis of environmental issues					
3	Analysis of technology issues					
4	Analysis of political/regulatory issues					
5	Analysis of competitive issues					
6	Analysis of general economic and business conditions					
7	Analysis of the requirements of the students and the needs of the community					
8	Analysis of the problems and issues of public education (pre-university)					

**1.3) Strategy formalisation:**

- *Formalisation is the existence of structures, techniques, written procedures, and policies that guide the planning process.*

Statements		Strongly disagree 1	Somewhat disagree 2	Neutral 3	Somewhat agree 4	Strongly agree 5
1	The university utilises formal planning techniques					
2	The university has structured strategic planning process					
3	University has instructions written guidelines to regulate the strategic plan					
4	The process and outputs of strategic planning are formally documented					

**1.4) Implementation of the plan**

*In the Implement step, the strategies in your strategic plan are put into action as outlined in the strategic plan implementation timeline.*

- *To what extent do you agree with these points to ensure the effectiveness of strategic planning implementation?*

Statements		Strongly disagree 1	Somewhat disagree 2	Neutral 3	Somewhat agree 4	Strongly agree 5
1	Establish procedures and activities that can be applied					
2	Define deadlines for implementing strategies					
3	Allocate the timeline for the implementation of these strategies					
4	Assign people who are responsible for the implementation of these strategies					

5	Specify the method that will be followed for the implementation of these strategies					
6	Allocate the necessary financial resources to implement these strategies					
7	Communicate to employees when and how the strategies will be carried out					
8	Provide incentives for employees to encourage them to effectively implement strategies					
9	The existence of a permanent monitoring and control to ensure the consistency and coherence of all activities and procedures					

**1.5) Evaluation of the university strategic plan:**

<b>Statements</b>		<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1	The appropriateness of the objectives of the plan					
2	The role and impact of strategic planning					
3	Assess the efficiency of the planning process					
4	Measuring the effectiveness of the planning process and the strategic plan					
5	Put indicators and special criteria for performance evaluation					
6	The allocation of the distribution of resources with the objectives of the plan					

**2) Perception of the performance of service quality provided by the university:**

The following statements refer to your opinion about the university. You are expected to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the below mentioned characteristics of the university.

Statements		Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
		1	2	3	4	5
1	The university / faculty has up-to-date teaching tools, equipment and facilities (library, projector ...)					
2	The appearance of the physical facilities of the university / faculty are visually appealing					
3	The university's staff are neat-appealing					
4	The university's materials associated with the type of services provided					
5	The university / faculty make a commitment to provide a service at the certain time as promises to do					
6	When students have problems, staff show a sincere interest in solving it					
7	The university is dependable					
8	The university keeps its records accurately					
9	The university performs the service right from the first time					
10	Faculty staff are too busy to respond to student requests promptly					
11	Students do not receive prompt service from the university					
12	The university does not tell its students exactly when services will be performed					
13	Faculty staff are not always willing to help students					
14	The behaviour of faculty staff instills confidence in the students					

15	Students can feel safe in their transaction with faculty staff					
16	Faculty staff are courteous all the time with students					
17	Teaching staff have knowledge to answer student's questions					
18	The university does not provide personal attention to every student					
19	The university does not have operating hours convenient to all its students					
20	Faculty staff do not give students individual attention					
21	University does not have students' best interest as a major objective					
22	Faculty do not understand the specific needs of students					

2) *Organisational Commitment towards the university:*

Statements		Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
		1	2	3	4	5
1	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this university					
2	I really feel as if this university's problems are my own					
3	I do not feel like "part of the family" at my university					
4	I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this university					
5	This university has a great deal of personal meaning for me					
6	I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my university					
7	It would be very hard for me to leave my university right now, even if I wanted to					
8	Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave my university right now					
9	Right now, staying with my university is a matter of necessity					

	more than a desire					
10	I believe that I have too few options to consider leaving this university					
11	One of the few negative consequences of leaving this university would be the scarcity of available alternatives					
12	One of the major reasons I continue to work for this university is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice; another organisation may not match the overall benefits I have here					
13	If I had not already put so much of myself into this university, I might consider working elsewhere					
14	I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer					
15	Even if it was beneficial to me, I do not feel it would be right to leave my university now					
16	I would feel guilty if I left my university now					
17	This university deserves my loyalty					
18	I would not leave my university right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it					
19	I owe a great deal to my university					

❖ **Part Two: Personal and General Information**

1. Gender:            Male                            Female
2. Academic qualifications:
- PhD        Master's Degree      B. Sc. /B.A.        Other ... ..
3. Your scientific degree:
- Professor            Associate Professor      Assistant Professor
- Lecturer            Teaching Assistant
4. Your role/position:
- Vice President      Dean    Vice Dean    Head of Department
- Faculty member      other, please specify
5. Your university is:
- Public university                    Private university

***Thank you for your time and participation***



## Appendix. B

### Arabic version

سعادة عضو هيئة التدريس / ..... يحفظه الله / يحفظها الله

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد

تقوم الباحثة بدراسة بعنوان (الإدارة الاستراتيجية وأثرها على جودة أداء الخدمة – الالتزام التنظيمي كوسيط) كمتطلب تكميلي لنيل درجة الدكتوراه في الإدارة والأعمال من جامعة بليموث بالمملكة المتحدة.

يتمثل الهدف الرئيس لهذه الدراسة في استكشاف طبيعة ممارسات الإدارة الاستراتيجية في الجامعات بالمملكة العربية السعودية وأثرها على جودة أداء الخدمة.

هذا الاستقصاء موجه فقط لأعضاء هيئة التدريس في الجامعات السعودية، الذين سبق لهم العمل ضمن فرق الإدارة الاستراتيجية والتخطيط الاستراتيجي .

ونظراً لأهمية آرائكم؛ فإن الباحثة تأمل من سعادتكم التكرم بتخصيص جزء من وقتكم الثمين للإجابة على جميع فقرات الاستبانة بوضع إشارة (√) أمام العبارة التي تتفق مع رأيكم، وبكل صدق وموضوعية، علماً أن الإجابات لن تستخدم إلا لغرض البحث العلمي، كما يرجى التكرم بتعبئة القسم الثاني والخاص ببياناتكم الشخصية في نهاية الاستبانة.

كيفية استكمال هذا الاستبيان :

1- ضع إشارة (√) أمام العبارة التي تتفق مع رأيك ، علماً أن مقياس رقم (1) يشير إلى أنك غير موافق بشدة، ومقياس رقم (5) يعني أنك تتفق بشدة مع العبارة.

2- لا تختار الإجابة التي تشعر أنها ما يجب أن يكون وتسير عليه الأمور كوضع مثالي، بل اختر

ما يحدث فعلاً داخل جامعتك (الواقع الفعلي)، علماً أنه ليس هناك إجابة صحيحة أو خاطئة.

شاكرة سلفاً كريم تعاونكم ،،،

الباحثة / أميمة بنت منور البدري

مبتعثة من جامعة جازان

E.mail: [omaima.albadry@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:omaima.albadry@plymouth.ac.uk)

## الاستبانة

- في ضوء الواقع الفعلي القائم في جامعتك، ورصيدك التطبيقي، يرجى تحديد درجة موافقتك على العبارات التالية:

أولاً / عناصر الإدارة الاستراتيجية :

1 - 1 / الرؤية والرسالة والأهداف:

5	4	3	2	1	العبارة	رقم العبارة
أوافق بشدة	أوافق	أوافق إلى حد ما	لا أوافق	لا أوافق بشدة		
<b>رؤية الجامعة</b>						
					تعبّر رؤية الجامعة عن المستقبل المرغوب الوصول إليه	1
					تعتبر الرؤية ضرورية لقيادة الآخرين تجاه تنفيذ الأهداف العامة	2
					تعمل رؤية الجامعة على قيادة وتوجيه التفكير وصناعة القرار	3
					تتنبق رؤية الجامعة من أهميتها لتخطيط وتنظيم إستراتيجية العمل	4
<b>رسالة الجامعة</b>						
					تحدد رسالة الجامعة الطلاب المستهدفين والقطاعات المقصودة بخدماتها	5
					توضح الرسالة الخدمات الأساسية التي تقدمها الجامعة	6
					تحدد رسالة الجامعة نطاقها الجغرافي الذي تنافس فيه	7
					تشير الرسالة للوسائل والآليات التي تستخدمها الجامعة لتحقيق غاياتها	8
					تتضمن الرسالة التعبير عن التزام الجامعة بالنمو والتطوير المستمر	9
					تحدد الرسالة العناصر الرئيسية لفلسفة الجامعة وقيمها وألويات عملها	10
					تعكس الرسالة مفهوم الجامعة عن ذاتها وقدرتها التنافسية	11
					تبرز الرسالة الصورة الجماهيرية المنشودة التي ترغب الجامعة الوصول إليها	12
<b>الأهداف والغايات</b>						
					توجه أهداف الجامعة برامجها وسياساتها التعليمية	13
					الجامعة لديها أهداف واقعية	14
					الأهداف والغايات مرتبطة بمدة زمنية محددة	15

## 1 - 2 المسح البيئي :

المسح البيئي هو تحليل وتقييم للظروف الداخلية والخارجية باستخدام بيانات تحليل SWOT ( نقاط القوة والضعف الداخلية، والفرص والتحديات الخارجية ) لذلك ، يتضمن المسح البيئي:

رقم العبارة	العبارة	1	2	3	4	5
		لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق	أوافق إلى حد ما	أوافق	أوافق بشدة
<b>المسح الداخلي</b>						
1	تحليل الإمكانيات الداخلية للجامعة					
2	تحليل مشكلات الموظفين					
3	تحليل كفاءة عمليات التشغيل والتنفيذ المختلفة					
4	تحليل مواطن القوة والضعف في أداء الجامعة					
5	تحليل الأداء السابق للجامعة					
6	تحليل أسباب حالات الإخفاق في الماضي					
7	تحليل للمعوقات التي تواجه الجهات المستثمرة والمستفيدة من التعليم					
8	تحليل لكيفية استقطاب وتأهيل موظفين ذوي جودة وكفاءة					
<b>المسح الخارجي</b>						
9	تحليل المشكلات والتحديات المجتمعية					
10	تحليل القضايا والتحديات البيئية					
11	معالجة المشكلات والتحديات التكنولوجية					
12	تحليل للقضايا السياسية / التنظيمية					
13	تحليل للظروف والمعوقات التنافسية					
14	تحليل للوضع الاقتصادي العام					
15	تحليل لرغبات الطلاب واحتياجات المجتمع					
16	تحليل لمشكلات وقضايا التعليم العام (ما قبل الجامعي)					

## 1 - 3 صياغة التخطيط الاستراتيجي وإضفاء الطابع الرسمي :

إضفاء الطابع الرسمي هو أن يكون للجامعة هياكل وتقنيات وإجراءات مكتوبة وسياسات توجه عملية التخطيط :

رقم العبارة	العبارة	1	2	3	4	5
		لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق	أوافق إلى حد ما	أوافق	أوافق بشدة
1	الجامعة تستخدم تقنيات وأساليب التخطيط الرسمية					
2	عملية التخطيط الإستراتيجي داخل الجامعة منظمة جداً					
3	الجامعة لديها إرشادات توجيهية وأدلة مكتوبة لإعداد الخطة الاستراتيجية					
4	إجراءات ومخرجات التخطيط الاستراتيجي موثقة رسمياً					

#### 1 - 4 تنفيذ الخطة

في خطوة التطبيق، يتم تحويل استراتيجيات الخطة إلى إجراءات كما وردت في الجدول الزمني لتنفيذ الخطة الاستراتيجية.

- إلى أي مدى تتفق مع هذه النقاط الواردة لضمان تطبيق التخطيط الاستراتيجي بفاعلية؟

رقم العبارة	العبارة	1	2	3	4	5
		لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق	أوافق إلى حد ما	أوافق	أوافق بشدة
1	وضع مشاريع (مبادرات) بإجراءات وأنشطة محددة وقابلة للتطبيق					
2	تحديد المواعيد النهائية لتنفيذ هذه المشاريع (المبادرات)					
3	تخصيص جدول زمني لتنفيذ هذه المشاريع (المبادرات)					
4	تحديد الأشخاص المسؤولين عن تنفيذ هذه المشاريع (المبادرات)					
5	تحديد الآليات التي سيتم إتباعها في تنفيذ هذه المشاريع (المبادرات)					
6	تخصيص الموارد المالية اللازمة لتنفيذ هذه المشاريع (المبادرات)					
7	التواصل مع المنسوبين من أجل تحديد زمن وكيفية تنفيذ هذه المشاريع (المبادرات)					
8	تقديم حوافز للمنسوبين تشجيعاً لهم لتنفيذ هذه المشاريع (المبادرات) بفاعلية					
9	وجود متابعة ورقابة دائمة للتأكد من تناسق وترابط جميع الأنشطة/الإجراءات					

#### 1 - 5 تقييم خطة الجامعة الاستراتيجية :

رقم العبارة	العبارة	1	2	3	4	5
		لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق	أوافق إلى حد ما	أوافق	أوافق بشدة
1	مدى ملاءمة أهداف الخطة					
2	دور وتأثير التخطيط الاستراتيجي					
3	تقييم كفاءة عملية التخطيط					
4	قياس فعالية عملية التخطيط والخطة الاستراتيجية					
5	تضع الجامعة مؤشرات ومعايير خاصة لتقييم الأداء					
6	مدى تناسب توزيع الموارد مع أهداف الخطة					

ثانياً / تصور لأداء جودة الخدمة المقدمة من الجامعة :

- العبارات التالية تشير إلى رأيك في الخدمات التي تقدمها الجامعة. إلى أي درجة تعتقد أن الجامعة لديها المزايا المذكورة أدناه ؟

رقم العبارة	العبارة	1	2	3	4	5
		لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق	أوافق إلى حد ما	أوافق	أوافق بشدة
1	لدى الجامعة/ الكلية مرافق وأجهزة تعليمية متطورة جداً					
2	مظهر المرافق المادية للجامعة / للكلية جذاب بصرياً					
3	المظهر الخارجي لمنسوبي الجامعة جيد وأنيق					
4	يتوافق مظهر المرافق المادية للجامعة / للكلية مع الخدمات المقدمة ( المباني، الفصول وأماكن الاستراحة ... )					
5	تلتزم الجامعة / الكلية بتقديم خدماتها في الوقت المحدد					
6	يُظهر أعضاء التدريس قدرة وتعاطف في حل مشاكل الطلاب					
7	هناك ثقة ومصداقية للجامعة					
8	أعضاء هيئة التدريس مشغولون عن تلبية احتياجات الطلاب					
9	لا تستجيب إدارة الجامعة / الكلية لتلبية احتياجات الطلاب					
10	لا تُعلن الجامعة عن المواعيد المحددة لتقديم خدماتها للطلاب					
11	تحتفظ الجامعة بسجلات خاصة لحفظ بياناتها بدقة					
12	تُقدم الجامعة خدماتها بشكل صحيح ودون أخطاء من المرة الأولى					
13	أعضاء هيئة التدريس ليسوا على استعداد دائم لخدمة الطلاب					
14	يغرس سلوك أعضاء هيئة التدريس الثقة في نفوس الطلاب					
15	يشعر الطلاب بالأمان خلال تعاملهم مع أعضاء هيئة التدريس					
16	يتصرف أعضاء هيئة التدريس باللباقة والأخلاق الحسنة					
17	يتصرف أعضاء هيئة التدريس بالمعرفة والكفاءة العلمية					
18	لا تُظهر الجامعة اهتماماً فردياً بكل طالب					
19	لا توفر الجامعة / الكلية ساعات تدريسية ومكتبية ملائمة للطلاب					
20	لا يُقدم أعضاء هيئة التدريس اهتماماً شخصياً بكل طالب					
21	مصالح الطلاب ليست من أهداف الجامعة الرئيسية					
22	لا يُدرك أعضاء هيئة التدريس الاحتياجات الخاصة للطلاب					

ثالثاً/ الالتزام التنظيمي

العبارات التالية تقيس مدى التزامك تجاه عملك، إلى أي درجة تتفق مع العبارات الواردة أدناه؟

5	4	3	2	1	العبارة	رقم العبارة
أوافق بشدة	أوافق	أوافق إلى حد ما	لا أوافق	لا أوافق بشدة		
					سأشعر بالرضا لقضاء بقية حياتي المهنية في هذه الجامعة	1
					مشاكل الجامعة هي مشاكل الشخصية	2
					ليس لدي شعور بأنني فرد من أفراد هذه الجامعة	3
					لا أشعر بالارتباط العاطفي/ الوجداني تجاه هذه الجامعة	4
					تشكل الجامعة معنى خاص بالنسبة لي	5
					ليس لدي شعور قوي بالانتماء لهذه الجامعة	6
					من الصعوبة أن أترك العمل بالجامعة في الوقت الراهن	7
					قد تتعطل كثير من مصالحي، لو قررت ترك العمل في الجامعة الآن	8
					استمراري في عملي الحالي هو مسألة احتياج أكثر منه رغبة	9
					أعتقد أن لدي خيارات محدودة لترك العمل بالجامعة	10
					أحد النتائج السلبية لترك العمل في هذه الجامعة، هو ندرة البدائل المتاحة	11
					أحد الأسباب الرئيسية لمواصلة العمل في هذه الجامعة، هو أن تركها يتطلب مني تضحية شخصية كبيرة بالمنافع العامة التي أحصل عليها، قد لا توفرها جهة أخرى	12
					قد أفكر بالنقل للعمل في جهة أخرى، لو لم أكن قد وضعت كل جهدي في هذه الجامعة	13
					لا أشعر بأي التزام للبقاء مع المدير الحالي	14
					لا أعتقد أن ترك العمل في الجامعة هو الخيار الصحيح	15
					سوف أشعر بالذنب إذا تركت العمل في الجامعة الآن	16
					هذه الجامعة تستحق ولائي و إخلاصي	17
					لن أتمكن من ترك العمل في الجامعة الآن، لشعوري بالالتزام تجاه	18

					الأشخاص الذين أعمل معهم	
					أدين بالكثير تجاه جامعتي	19

الجزء الثاني : معلومات عامة :

❖ يرجى وضع العلامة المناسبة (√):

1- الجنس

( ) أنثى

( ) ذكر

2- المؤهلات الأكاديمية

( ) أخرى

( ) بكالوريوس

( ) ماجستير

( ) دكتوراه

3- الدرجة العلمية

( ) معيد

( ) محاضر

( ) أستاذ مساعد

( ) أستاذ مشارك

( ) أستاذ

4- العمل الذي تمارسه :

( ) مدير إدارة

( ) رئيس قسم

( ) وكيل كلية

( ) عميد

( ) وكيل جامعة

( ) أخرى

( ) عضو هيئة تدريس

5- تصنيف الجامعة التي تعمل بها :

( ) جامعة خاصة

( ) جامعة حكومية

شكرا لسعادتكم على مشاركتكم القيمة ووقتكم الثمين ،،،

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Ministry of Higher Education

**KING ABDULAZIZ UNIVERSITY**

Faculty Arts And Humanities  
( colleg's Branch )



المملكة العربية السعودية  
وزارة التعليم العالي  
جامعة الملك عبدالعزيز

كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية - فرع البنات

Ref : .....

Date : .....

Encl : .....

( مكتب وكيلة الكلية )

الرقم : .....

التاريخ : .....

المرفقات : .....

(إلى من يهمه الأمر)

حفظه/ الله

المكرم/ة.....

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ،،،

بدايةً أهديكم أطيب التحيات والتقدير، وأفيد سعادتكم بأن الباحثة/ أميمة بنت منور  
البدري قد وزعت استبانات بحثية (خاصة بموضوع دراستها) على بعض من أعضاء هيئة التدريس بجامعة  
الملك عبدالعزيز بكلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية بفرع كليات البنات وذلك في يوم السبت الموافق

٢٠١٣/٥/٤م

للتكرم بالإحاطة.

ولكم كل التحية والتقدير ،،،

وكيلة كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية

بفرع كليات البنات

فاطمة بنت عبد الحميد

د. فاطمة بنت عبد العزيز الحمدان

٧/١٢



شروق البلاحي



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

صاحب المعالي/ مدير جامعة الملك سعود حفظه الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ويعد

أفيد معاليكم علماً أنني طالبة دكتوراة مبتعثة من جامعة جازان إلى المملكة المتحدة . أتقدم لمعاليكم بطلب الحصول على الموافقة لإجراء الجانب التطبيقي لاستكمال دراستي للدكتوراه بجامعة بليموث بالمملكة المتحدة ، حيث إن عنوان بحثي هو ( تطبيق التخطيط الاستراتيجي وأثره على قياس جودة الأداء – دراسة مقارنة بين الجامعات السعودية والبريطانية) ، وسيتم تطبيق البحث على عدد من الجامعات السعودية ومنها جامعتكم الموقرة وكذلك على مسؤولي القرار والإدرات المختصة بالجودة والتخطيط في وزارة التعليم العالي.

أمل تفضل معاليكم بالموافقة على إجراء مقابلة شخصية مع معاليكم – إن سمح وقتكم – وكذلك مع سعادة وكيل الجامعة وسعادة وكيل الجامعة للجودة والتخطيط او وكالة الجامعة للجودة والتخطيط ، حيث سيستغرق زمن كل مقابلة في حدود ٥٠ دقيقة .

كما أمل الحصول على الموافقة على تطبيق الاستبيان على عينة من أعضاء هيئة التدريس بكليات الجامعة المختلفة وكذلك بعض أعضاء الهيئة الإدارية – ذكوراً وإناثاً ، كما أنه ومن ضمن متطلبات البحث سيتم عمل جلسات جماعية مختصرة مع بعض الطالبات كمنتفعين من خدمة التعليم - للسؤال حول مدى معرفتهن وإدراكهن لمفاهيم التخطيط الإستراتيجي.

أمل الحصول على موافقة معاليكم على ذلك، مع تحديد الموعد المناسب لمعاليكم ولسعادة الوكلاء خلال الفترة التي سأواجد فيها بالسعودية لإجراء الرحلة العلمية، ابتداء من شهر فبراير ٢٠١٣ وحتى منتصف شهر مارس الموافق ٢٠ ربيع الأول وحتى ٥ ربيع الثاني ١٤٢٤ ...

أمل في حالة موافقة معاليكم تزويدي بخطاب بذلك، حتى أتمكن من تقديمه للملحقية الثقافية السعودية ببريطانيا للحصول على موافقتهم لي لإجراء الرحلة العلمية، ومرسل لمعاليكم برفقه خطاب موافقة مشرف دراستي على إجراء هذه الدراسة الميدانية.

ولمعاليكم فائق التحايا والتقدير،،

مقدمته/ أميمة بنت منور البديري

جامعة بليموث

كلية الإدارة والأعمال- بريطانيا

هاتف بريطاني ٠٠٤٤٧٤٢٩٠٤٠٠٣٠

هاتف سعودي 00966501235330

E.mail: omaima.albadry@plymouth.ac.uk

مع طرائفة

احمد

دكتوراه

سعادة د. كريمة بنت منور البديري  
العلمي  
دكتوراه

تمت المراجحة  
د. د. صالح بن عبدالمجيد المصباح  
١٠/٢/١٤٢٤ هـ



حفظه الله

سعادة المحق الثقافي السعودي بالمملكة المتحدة

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ،وبعد:

تهديكم جامعة جازان أطيب التحايا ،  
إشارة إلى خطاب المبتعثة / أميمة بنت منور البدري رقم ملفها ( JZU045 ) وسجل مدني رقم  
( ١٠١٨٥٠٩٤١٢ ) بشأن القيام برحلة علمية لجامعة جازان .  
عليه نفيد سعادتكم بأنه لا مانع لدينا من قيام المبتعثة بالرحلة العلمية إلى جامعة جازان .

وافر محباني وتقديرى .

المشرف العام على

إدارة البعثات والعلاقات الثقافية

د. المنذر بن عبدالله هريشان



ص/ لمكتب وكيل الجامعة للدراسات العليا .  
ص/ لمكتب المشرف العام على إدارة البعثات  
والعلاقات الثقافية .  
ص/ الصادر  
ص/ لملف المبتعث .

المرفقات : (١٦)

التاريخ : ١٤ / ٤ / ١٤٣٣ هـ

الرقم : ٧ / ١٩٧٠٤٦٦

## إفادة

تشهد إدارة كلية الطب بجامعة جازان بأن الباحثة / أميمة بنت منور عمر بدري -  
سعودية الجنسية قد قامت بتوزيع إستبياناتها البحثية على منسوبي كلية الطب بجامعة جازان  
بتاريخ ١٤ مايو ٢٠١٣ م.

وقد حررت لها هذه الإفادة بناء على طلبها وذلك لتقديمها إلى من يهمه الأمر .

وتفضلوا بقبول خالص التحية والثناء

مدير إدارة الكلية

أ. أكرم بن يحيى الشريف



JAZAN UNIVERSITY



الرقم: ..... التاريخ: ..... المرفقات: .....

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA  
Ministry Of Higher Education  
Princess Nora Bint Abdul Rahman University



المملكة العربية السعودية  
وزارة التعليم العالي  
جامعة الأميرة نورة بنت عبد الرحمن  
(048)  
إدارة التخطيط

(048)

Planning Department

الرقم ..... التاريخ: .../.../...م

( الى من يهمة الامر )

نفيد سعادتكم علما بان الباحثة / اميمة البدري قد وزعت استباناتها البحثية على اعضاء الهيئة  
الاكاديمية بجامعة الاميرة نورة بنت عبدالرحمن وذلك يوم السبت بتاريخ 4 مايو 2013





رقم الملف: JZU045

إلى من يهمه الأمر

تفيد الملحقية الثقافية بسفارة المملكة العربية السعودية في لندن بأن الطالبة / أميمة بنت منور بن عمر البدرى (رقم الهوية 1018509412) مبتعثة من قبل جامعة جازان لدراسة الدكتوراه في تخصص إدارة الجودة في جامعة Plymouth ولا تزال المبتعثة على رأس بعثتها التي تنتهي بتاريخ 1435/12/08 هـ وتطلب الموافقة على إمكانية تطبيق بحثها في جامعتكم الموقرة.

وعليه نأمل تكرمكم بتسهيل مهمتها والسماح لها بذلك.  
وقد منحت هذا الكتاب بناءً على طلبها لتقديمه إلى من يهمه الأمر.

والله ولي التوفيق،،،

الملحق الثقافى  
سفارة المملكة العربية السعودية في لندن  
فيصل بن محمد المهنا أبا الخيل

2013/01/11 م

البدرى

الرقم : ..... التاريخ : ..... الموافق : ..... المرفقات : .....

Omaima Albadry  
PGR Student  
Plymouth Business School

Ref: PBS.UPC/FREAC/FREAC1213.09/clc  
Date: 15 January, 2013

Dear Omaima

**Ethical Approval Application No: FREAC1213.09**

**Title: Strategic Planning Implementation and It's Impact on Measuring Enterprise  
University Quality Performance**

The Faculty Research Ethical Approval Committee has considered the revised ethical approval form and is now fully satisfied that the project complies with the University of Plymouth's ethical standards for research involving human participants.

Approval is for the duration of the project. However, please resubmit your application to the committee if the information provided in the form alters or is likely to alter significantly.

We would like to wish you good luck with your research project.

Yours sincerely

*(Sent as email attachment)*

Dr Syamantak Bhattacharya  
**Chair**  
**Faculty Research Ethics Approval Committee**  
**Plymouth Business School**