

**“The Impact of Saudi Arabia’s  
Societal Culture on Human  
Resource Management Practices  
within The Public and Private  
Sectors: The Case of Saudi  
Arabian Airlines”**

By

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## **Abstract**

Culture plays an integral role in shaping Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and policies within any organisation. This role is manifested through determining the norms and accepted behaviours in any given society. However, the extent of this societal cultural influence has been deemed to be greatly unexplored among researchers. Societal culture has been defined by Prasad and Babbar (2000) as the compilation of values and ideologies that are shared among an assembly of individuals in a certain country or region. Researchers have been concerned by the relationship between societal culture and HRM practices in developing countries; HRM practices are defined by Armstrong (2006) as all aspects associated with the management of people within the organisation. Therefore, this research represents an investigation of the link between Saudi Arabian societal culture and existing HRM practices within the public and private sectors.

Taking into consideration elements affecting Saudi societal culture, such as changing economy and globalisation, these elements impact organisations in Saudi Arabia on two levels. First, the local level, where public organisations are gradually transforming into private organisations with a focus on profitability. Second, the global level, represented through multinational organisations adapting to societal culture elements in order to achieve success. As a result of both levels, HRM practices are changing in order to be effective. Therefore, the aim of this research is to explore this particular development and discover how Saudi societal culture impacts five specific HRM practices – highlighted following a comprehensive review of literature – and the role they play in shaping those practices. These practices are: job desirability, recruitment sources, performance appraisal, compensation and rewards, and training programmes.

For the purposes of this research, a case study has been conducted in order to provide an in-depth examination. This benefits from a unique opportunity to investigate an ongoing privatisation process within a leading organisation in the Middle East. Saudi Arabian Airlines (SAA) represents an ideal candidate for this study, as the technical services section of the company, SAEI, is going through a privatisation process; this started in 2009 with expected completion in 2015. As the research data collection took place over seven weeks in 2013, this timeline allowed the examination of the transition from public



to private sector within one organisation with the same workplace environment. Furthermore, having both sectors within the same organisation creates the possibility of making comparisons between them, as it would have been impossible to find two organisations from each sector possessing the same organisational structure, financial level and operational levels. Moreover, this study involved adopting a mixed-methods approach to incorporate qualitative and quantitative methods. This approach included semi-structured type interviews with eight senior HR managers as well as non-HR managers, and disseminating questionnaires among 200 engineers within the SAEI department.

The findings and results of this case study have shown the extent to which each HRM practice interacts with Saudi societal culture. There have been HRM themes greatly influenced by the societal element, while other themes remained neutral and did not reflect any cultural influence. Furthermore, the findings produced mixed results when compared to those in the existing literature. As for the HRM practices affected by societal culture, three were affected based on the collected data: compensation and rewards, job desirability, and training programmes. These practices show clear indication they were influenced by Saudi Arabian societal culture. As for the HRM practices that remained neutral – performance appraisal and recruitment sources – they remained independent of any societal influence. However, after concluding the study and its discussion, this research provides several contributions to the field of HRM practices in Saudi Arabia on two main levels. On the theoretical level, the outcomes confirm a link between Saudi Arabian societal culture and compensation and rewards, training programmes, and job desirability practices. On the other hand, recruitment sources and performance appraisal practices are not greatly influenced. A further contribution is the up-to-date investigation of the impact that Saudi Arabian societal culture has on HRM practices, which helps to address well-known and documented gaps in the literature. As for practical contributions, one contribution is providing a first-hand review of the ongoing transition using primary and secondary research methods for SAA. This is considered beneficial for practitioners and multi-national corporations, as this study provides an action guide and insight into preferred HRM practices in Saudi Arabia. Further practical contribution is associated with the developed framework utilised in this research, where this particular framework can be

## *Abstract*

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used in the future to accommodate similar privatisation processes or make comparisons with international organisations.

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## **Abbreviations**

HRM	Human resource management
MNC	Multi-National company
SAA	Saudi Arabian Airlines
SAEI	Saudi Aerospace Engineering Industries
NCCC	National Center of Cultural Competence

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

# Chapter 1 - Introduction

## 1.1 Background

This chapter defines the main players of the research area targeted in the study. As this research aims to investigate the impact of Saudi Arabian societal culture on five specific HRM practices, based on the literature review, key players were identified as the main factors affecting the three overlapping research topics. These three research areas are HRM, Saudi Arabia, and culture (as shown in Figure 1.1). Out of HRM came the five specific HRM practices: recruitment sources, performance appraisal, training programmes, compensation and rewards, and job desirability. In addition, Saudi Arabia contributed the public and private sectors, and culture provided the specific concept of societal culture.

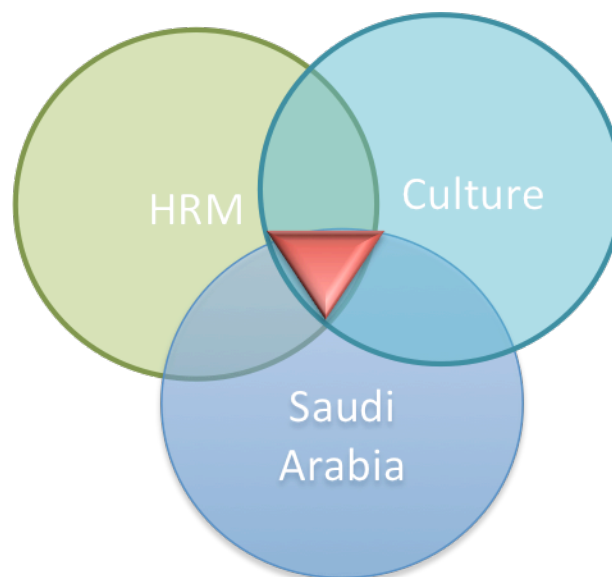


Figure1.1: Research key areas.

The main players are important when resolving the lack of literature available on the link between societal culture and HRM practices – specifically in Saudi Arabia and the Middle East region – as illustrated in the gaps in the literature section. Moreover, the investigation carried out in this research will help to address the gaps identified throughout the concerned literature. Furthermore, this investigation will provide an up-to-date review of current HRM practices implemented in Saudi Arabia, which can

represent an update to the out-dated studies already identified. In addition, this investigation will take into consideration new elements introduced in the country that did not exist during previous studies, such as the introduction of e-business solutions, the influx of a foreign workforce, and an increase in the country's resources and revenues. This investigation and its outcomes should be considered important due to several aspects. One is the investigation over how Saudi Arabian culture interacts with the five HRM practices and whether Saudi societal culture should be taken into consideration when setting up those specific practices. Another aspect involves the implication for practitioners and HR managers identifying the best practices in the country. Also, this investigation's outcomes can assist MNCs to develop a better understanding of effective HRM practices when setting up bases in the region. Moreover, the emergence of Saudi Arabia as a key player in global trading and as a major business destination requires the development of a full understanding of the preferred HRM practices to be deployed. Another specific importance stems from the fact that this investigation targets an organisation in transition from the public to private sector. Therefore, the study can be used as an action guide for other organisations planning to go through the privatisation process. Based on the previously mentioned aspects, it is noted that this investigation carries great significance. This is because developing an appropriate understanding of the best HRM practices for the region could determine the success of an organisation and the effectiveness of its HRM practices. Furthermore, having an accurate understanding of the preferred HRM practices can aid an organisation to obtain acceptance and support from local societies. Something that would make their existence in the region much easier. Thus, the introduction chapter will be dedicated to reviewing keywords related to the research topic, such as the societal culture of Saudi Arabia, HRM, and the public and private sector practices of SAEI. Each aspect will be reviewed through their definition, application and significance. This introductory chapter will facilitate an understanding of the upcoming chapters in the study.

In this thesis, culture can be broadly defined as "...certain collectives' unique set of parameters that distinguish a certain group of collectives, attached through either religious, professional, ethnic, racial or organisational ties, from any other group, while these parameters can be shared attributes or shared values" (Gutterman, 2011). This definition of the broad concept of culture was provided to facilitate the specific definition of societal culture that follows. This broad concept will help to illuminate the

difference between the general concept of culture and the specific definition of societal culture.

## **1.2 Societal Culture**

The broad concept of culture required finding a specific definition for societal culture. The importance of limiting the scope of research on the basis of societal culture is to provide a precise and focus throughout the investigation. Thus, Prasad and Babbar (2000) defined societal culture as a collection of values and principles, which are shared within a particular group of people in a certain country or region. For the purposes of this research, Prasad and Babbar definition will be employed throughout the research. The decision to employ this specific definition was based on the notion that the majority of studies found in the literature adopted this particular view of societal culture (Hofstede 1980; Northouse 2006). In addition, Northouse (2006) stated that societal culture could be defined as the common gained traditions, customs, values and norms among an assembly of individuals. Moreover, the National Centre of Cultural Competence (NCCC) explained the term “culture” as an incorporated set of human behaviours of a social, religious, ethnic group, which is able to convey this set of human behaviours to the upcoming generations. Over the past decade, the link between societal culture and the success of organisations has become increasingly evident (Metters, 2008). According to Metters (2008), the acknowledgment of the cultural element proved to be essential in the mix of any successful organisation. Therefore, any organisation needs to incorporate local culture within its strategies to achieve its targets and aspirations. Furthermore, a full understanding of societal culture can represent the competitive edge of one organisation over another. Hope and Muehlemann (2001) stated that organisations achieve fluctuating levels of success, where the ones with a greater level of understanding of culture sustain a greater degree of success. In addition, it is crucial to grasp the importance of national culture in organisations’ strategies and practices (Burgess, 1995). Thus, in an environment where the competition to achieve success is high, taking the cultural element into consideration can prove to be the determining factor for an organisations success through setting up effective HRM practices and policies based on the full understanding of the cultural aspect (Budhwar and Sparrow, 2002).

### **1.3 Human Resource Management**

Human resource management is linked to the employees of a certain organisation as defined by Armstrong (2006) as every aspect regarding the managing of people within an organisation. Furthermore, Beer et al (1984) stated that HRM represents all the dealings and decisions that shape the relationship between the people and the organisation. Therefore, HRM epitomises all matters associated with people within an organisation. In addition, Stone (2009) recognises HRM as, the prolific utilisation of people within the organisation to reach its strategic targets. Thus, HRM encompasses great significance for the role it plays within the organisation. Originating from 'personnel management', the HRM concept emerged in the 1970's where it started incorporating greater responsibilities and roles within organisations in addition to its basic functions. Lawrence (1992) stated that basic HRM duties include training, development and hiring. Later on, the role of HRM took on another dimension and expanded into its current form.

According to Schuler (2000), the applications of HRM have rapidly evolved from the basic applications including recruitment of employees, improvement of performance, motivation and training the organisation's employees, to more involved applications such as; ensuring the safety and satisfaction of the employees all the way to strategic applications such as; competitive advantage and profitability. Mondy (2010) addressed the applications of HRM to include human resource planning, development, compensation, labour relations and safety. The planning is concerned with the selection of which individuals are to be recruited in the organisation. The development is related to improving staff through training and career planning. The compensation aspect is linked to the financial and morale aspects of employees. Thus, the role of HRM has expanded from focusing on individuals within the organisation to a broader role that is crucial for the organisations success. This involvement granted HRM such significance it became an integral aspect of any organisation aiming to succeed.

HRM is considered one of the key instruments in achieving the organisation's targets. According to Becker and Gerhart (1996), the role of HRM holds massive importance in forming and maintaining the performance of organisations in addition to human



resource duties. Furthermore, HRM applications have surpassed the common concept of being limited to handling the people's aspect of an organisation. These applications are considered to be key elements in attaining better profitability for organisations (Pfeffer, 1998). Therefore, the accurate application of HRM in organisations will help to achieve better performance and financial aspirations. Barney (1991) asserted the importance of HRM through recognising human strengths as one of the most valuable assets to organisations.

### **1.4 Public Sector**

The public sector is a term that describes all goods and services, which are provided by the government for its nationals or governmental organisations. Mansour (2008) defined the public sector as, the body delegated to supplying services and goods on all levels within a nation by its government. Therefore, the public sector resembles any state-owned organisation that serves the public interest and is backed by the government both financially and politically. Therefore, the main task of public organisations is to serve the public. The purpose of organisations within the public sector is to carry out the responsibilities taken by the government in providing the services and working according to the policies set by the government (Matthews and Shulman, 2005). Moreover, Jaaskelainen and Lonnqvist (2011) defined the role of the public sector as providing a group of services while maintaining a limited budget. In addition, Pekkarinen et al (2010) acknowledged the welfare of the public as the key responsibility of public organisations. Furthermore, what differentiates the public sector organisations from any other organization is that public organisations have three unique elements. According to Allison (1979), public organisations are different to other organisations in three aspects. Firstly, the values and principles that public organisations contemplate and take into consideration are wider than the ones used by other organisations, including welfare of the public and legal values. Secondly, public organisations must express an immense degree of transparency, openness, fairness and equality. Finally, public organisations are responsible towards citizens, unlike private organisations that are accountable towards their shareholders. In addition, public organisations can be illustrated through the collection of policies that the public is being served by, as stated by Peters (2006). Moreover, the policies incorporated by organisations highlight the characteristics of which type of organisation it is.

The applications of the public sector organisations vary, as these public organisations serve a wide range of purposes for the public. Examples of the key public sector organisations include: public health-care institutions, public schools and universities, ministries, military organisations and municipalities. These public organisations are non-profit organisations, which are set up and run by the government. Christensen (2007) stated that public sector organisations can be, but are not limited to, companies owned by the state, public museums, courts, public foundations and public retirement homes. However, although these public organisations have different functions and tasks, they have stable procedures and protocol in executing their tasks and a common goal in serving the public interest.

The significance of public sector organisations comes from the fact that they facilitate the basic services for the public such as schools, hospitals and employment as well as maintaining a certain level of welfare for its citizens. In addition, the public is the main focus of the services and goods provided by the public organisations, as the government has no intent to make any profit from these goods and services. However, public sector organisations are facing a number of challenges, especially in developing countries. These challenges range from productivity, level of performance, sustainability and quality of services provided. According to Leslie and Canwell (2010), one of the key issues with public services is enhancing the quality of the services provided. As for the productivity issues, these are related to the size of produced services in comparison to the resources available. Furthermore, The World Bank (1994) stated that incompetence has cost losses that are equal to the investments made in infrastructure. As a result, the investments were trivial and cancelled out by those losses. On the other hand, the level of performance in public sector organisations is concerned with the performance of people working for these public organisations. Thus, the massive tasks required from the public organisation can be overwhelming for the available resources Caiden (2007). Finally, developing countries are underachieving, with an inability to reach the expected growth, due to mismanagement and governmental policies. Bhuiyan and Amagoh (2010) addressed that developing countries cannot accomplish the predictable progress as they are monopolized by public sector organisations.

## **1.5 Private Sector**

By way of contrast to the definition of the public sector provided by Mansour (2008), the private sector can be defined as the goods and services provided by organisations that are owned by shareholders. In addition, organisations in the private sector are managed and run by shareholders, unlike organisations in the public sector, which are managed by governments or representing bodies Allison (1979). Moreover, Matthews and Shulman (2005) mentioned that public organisations would be working according to policies set by the governments, whereas private organisations are working with an interest toward their related market and targeted customers; Arroba and Wedgwood-Oppenheim (1994).

Regarding the purpose of private sector organisations, this aspect can be significantly different from public organisations, as the purpose of private organisations is to generate revenues for their respective owners and the majority of these organisations are financially driven. Whereas in the case of public organisations, the aim is to provide services to the public and generating profit may be of less significance. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that there are organisations within the private sector that are non-profit ones such as charities. Therefore, organisations within the private sector can be described as the vehicles deployed in order to achieve the aims of their owners or shareholders in contrast to the purpose of public organisations, which have the main aim of maintaining the public welfare, as cited by Pekkarinen et al (2010).

As for the applications of the private sector organisations, they are almost the same as the public organisations applications. The examples of public organisations mentioned by Christensen (2007) such as schools, hospitals and universities are applicable in the case of private organisations, with the main difference being that these organisations are private and not free of charge to the public. In addition, private organisations are set up and funded by individuals, whereas governments are responsible for funding public organisations.

As for the significance of the private sector organisations, importance can be pointed out as providing and increasing competition to public organisations and other private organisations, which is bound to improve either the quality of services provided or products being manufactured. For instance, in the case of education quality the

competition between public universities and private universities will keep both parties striving for excellence. On a different aspect, private organisations can be contracted by the public organisations to carry out projects intended for the public, such as infrastructure projects. In addition, private financial organisations can be of huge significance, specifically towards governments, as in the case mentioned by Cline (2002) regarding economic crises. Cline (2002) cited several occasions where private banks were utilized to financially bail out governments and vice versa. Specific cases mentioned, were the financial crises in Brazil, Greece, Korea, Mexico, Russia and Ukraine. Therefore, the significance of private organisations towards the public sector and individuals is immense in so many aspects.

Table.1.1: Main characteristics of public & private sectors.

	Public Sector	Private Sector
Purpose	Public welfare – non-profit & profit organisations	Profit & Non-profit Organisations – Provide services
Run by	Governments	Shareholders - Owners
Example	Public hospitals – Public schools	Private education - Charities

## **1.6 Research Aim and Objectives**

Every country in the world has a way of affecting organisational practices, whether through regional culture, traditions that might bind these practices or unique legislations/religious beliefs that restrict these practices within a certain scope. In addition, the success of an organisational model in one country does not necessarily imply its success elsewhere, as the norms and settings that these practices function within might take a different shape.

This study explores the impact of Saudi Arabian culture on HRM practices within two sectors, and specifically these practices at Saudi Arabian Airlines (SAA). This organisation is going through the process of privatising all departments that exist under its umbrella. The reason behind this investigation stems from several factors. First, the lack of available literature linking Saudi Arabian societal culture with HRM practices, which leaves this topic ambiguous and in need of empirical research. Second, this investigation will provide an updated view of the current HRM practices employed

within a large organisation (Saudi Arabian Airlines) and the reasons behind current HRM practices. Third, the emergence of Saudi Arabia as a main player in the business and trade world with significant investment potential has attracted global corporations and business. However, the lack of relevant information has led many of these corporations to failure even though they have achieved global success. The conclusion of this investigation presents important outcomes. The first involves addressing well-known gaps in the literature highlighted by researchers involved in the field of HRM in the Middle East region. Secondly, this investigation can act as a guide on two levels. The first is associated with local public organisations planning to go through the privatisation process with considerations to differences in organisation size, structure and finances. Level two is associated with global international organisations setting up an office in Saudi Arabia. These organisations can greatly benefit understanding local culture and the best HRM practices. As for the investigation, Saudi Arabian Airlines has been chosen to represent both sectors due to several reasons. These reasons include the transitional phase that the organisation is going through, which provides a unique insight into the differences and changes in the organisation's HRM practices – those implemented both before and after the privatisation process. Investigating this unique environment will enable the research to analyse the impact of applying different HRM practices on departments accomplishing the same tasks. Also, this study will highlight reasoning behind employees' choice in terms of employment agreement; that is, whether they choose to be considered private or public employees.

Furthermore, recognising the issues will assist in laying out solutions for these issues and will improve HRM practices in both sectors. In addition, the government of Saudi Arabia is funding numerous projects to develop the country's infrastructure with several overseas companies being contracted to execute, including a new state-of-the-art airport. Therefore, the outcomes of this study will provide guidelines for the unique aspects of Saudi Arabia's culture that can be of great assistance to those foreign companies. Nevertheless, fulfilling this aim requires answering a set of questions regarding current HRM practices. There will be three questions in this research. The first is considered the main question and corresponds with the research aim. This question asks whether Saudi Arabian societal culture features in the setup of HRM practices at Saudi Arabian Airlines. Moreover, this main question inquires about the extent to which Saudi Arabian societal culture impacts on HRM practices at the airline.

The answer to this question can contribute greatly to the field of HRM in Saudi Arabia, as it would imply that HR managers would be required to involve societal culture as a main ingredient in developing HRM practices. The second question investigates the relation between societal culture values and the five specific HRM practices in the organisation, and whether they are considered to be an integral part of those practices. This question helps to understand which societal culture values exercise great influence on the setup process. The questions that will help achieve the aim are:

- 1- What is the impact of Saudi Arabian societal culture in shaping those HRM practices (recruitment sources, performance appraisal, training programmes, compensation and rewards, and job desirability) within any organisation?
- 2- What is the relationship between Saudi Arabian societal culture values and HRM practices? How do they interact in the organisational context within SAEI, which represents the case study in this research?
- 3- What are the preferred HRM practices within the public and private sectors in Saudi Arabia from the SAEI employees' point of view?

The answers will help to identify the factors that shape the current form of HRM practices in both sectors. Investigating these questions will help to set the objectives of the study, as follows:

- 1- Investigate the impact of Saudi Arabian culture on organisational practices – specifically the impact of Saudi Arabian societal culture on HRM practices in SAEI.
- 2- Analyse HRM practices in Saudi Arabia in an organisation containing public and private sectors (SAEI department).
- 3- Review the HRM practices in the public and private sectors of Saudi Arabian Airlines, comparing those practices against the literature and identifying the current issues.

Develop a constructive discussion to help improve HRM practices within public and private sectors in similar organisations.

## 1.7 Thesis Structure

In order to fulfil the aim of this research, it will be constructed in six chapters. Each chapter will be dedicated to serving the aim of this research through presenting critical data regarding every aspect, as shown in (Figure 1.2).

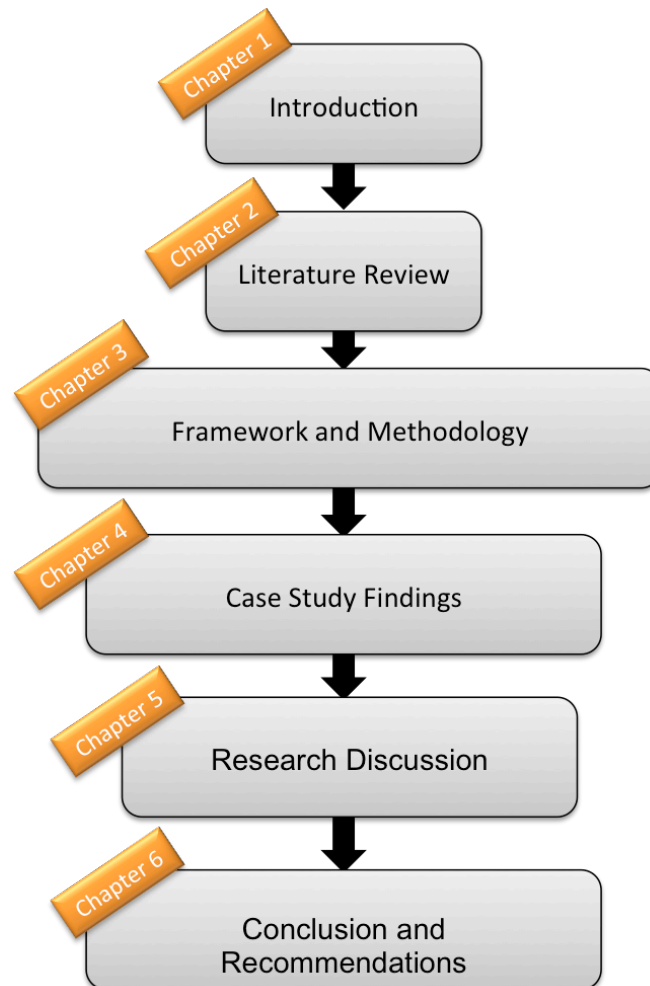


Figure1.2: Thesis Structure.

Firstly, the introductory chapter provides background information regarding the main players involved in this research. It starts with culture and its definition as well as the role it plays in shaping values and principles. Next, Human Resource Management (HRM) has been defined, the numerous applications of HRM and the significance of HRM. This is followed by information regarding the public sector, through defining the public sector, the applications of public sector organisations, the importance of the public sector and its organisations and the common issues with the organisations of the public sector. Then, similar analysis of the private sector will follow the same structure.

Later on, the research aim declares a set of objectives that will help fulfil the aim of the research through answering the research questions. Secondly, the literature review chapter will follow the introduction chapter. The literature review will examine the culture of Saudi Arabia and the drivers affecting the shape of its societal culture including religion and traditions. Then, a scope will be defined in order to investigate the impact of societal cultures on HRM practices. The impact of societal cultures on HRM practices will be investigated within the (Collectivism-Individualism) dimension with five specific HRM practices to be investigated, including recruitment, job desirability, compensation and rewards, performance appraisal and training. The (Collectivism-Individualism) dimension will be defined first, in addition to highlighting the features of each culture. Then, the impact of both types of societal culture will be investigated to showcase the influence of societal cultures over the HRM practices and policies to be implemented. After that, the current gaps in the literature will be identified and presented. The aim of this section is to highlight the gaps in current literature and the need for further research of this kind. Finally, the chapter will be summarized, highlighting the key points. Furthermore, an investigation such as this will add value and enrich an uncharted area within the existing literature. The third chapter will be about the framework of the research as well as the methodology implemented. This framework will define the methods that will be used in tackling the research questions and objectives in order to achieve the aim of the research. Furthermore, the techniques to be used in analysing the outcomes of the data collection process will be defined.

The following chapter (four) will be about the case study utilised to aid the aim of the research. The case study will investigate the HRM practices by engaging the HR managers and employees in the process. The results of the case study will be used in the following chapter (five). This will discuss the findings of all previous chapters and provide a critical analysis of the information presented throughout the research in previous chapters. Furthermore, the discussion will investigate the findings and compare them against the findings from the literature. The final chapter (six) will provide a comprehensive evaluation of the findings and the discussion points within a conclusion that summarises the fundamental aspects of the research. This complete conclusion will aid the next section, which is concerned with proposing key elements that can develop and improve the existing situation of HRM in organisations within the public and private sectors in Saudi Arabia.



## **1.8 Research Scope**

In this section, the scope of the research will be explained as well as the research topic being identified. The study began by reviewing the main areas of interest and then identifying related literature linking the three topics together. Then, further specifications within each topic were highlighted based on this research stage.

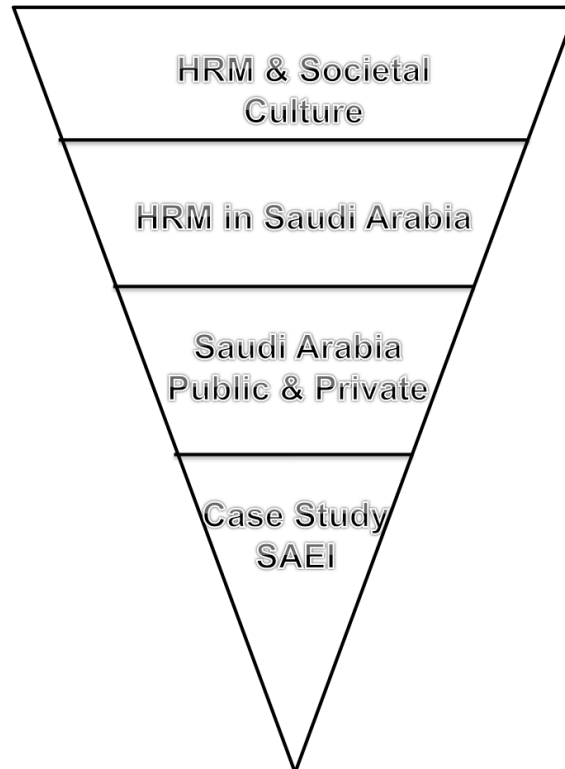


Figure1.3: Research scope.

Based on the literature, five specific HRM practices were identified: recruitment sources, performance appraisal, job desirability, compensation and rewards, and training programmes. These practices were chosen due to the focus placed on them within the literature and for the purposes of making comparisons with the findings of this study. Similarly, the lack of available literature on Saudi Arabian societal culture and HRM practices prompted the researcher to choose public and private sectors rather than electing just one sector. Then, the research proposed implementing a single case study for the investigation. The reasons behind electing such a direction were overwhelming, as this approach would provide the opportunity to conduct in-depth analysis. Secondly, it would deliver practical knowledge of an actual situation. Thirdly, it represents an ideal medium to investigate the unknown phenomenon of Saudi Arabian societal culture. Finally, it would provide the additional sense of a surrounding environment of the case being studied. Upon reviewing the candidates (organisations)

for the case study, one particular organisation was found to be ideal. Saudi Aerospace Engineering Industries (SAEI), a department in Saudi Arabian Airlines (SAA), was seen as the ideal candidate due to several reasons.

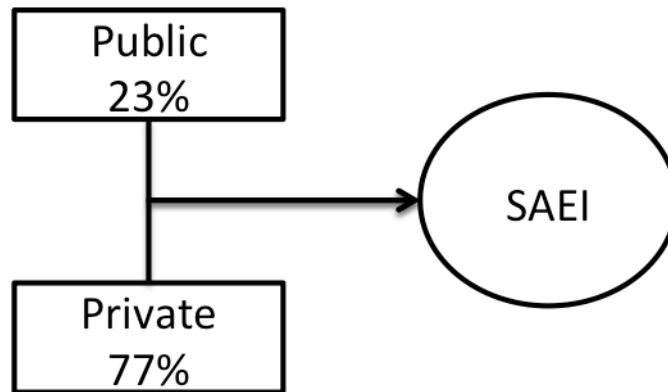


Figure1.4: Employees percentages at SAEI.

Firstly, the SAEI department encompasses both public and private sectors under the same management. This enables the investigation of both sectors within the same organisation. It would have been impossible to find two organisations from each sector possessing the same structure, scale and finances within Saudi Arabia. Moreover, Saudi Arabian Airlines is the only airline company in the country. Secondly, SAEI is in a transitional phase going from a public to a private organisation. This privatisation process started in 2009, where 100 per cent of employees were public with the main aim to transform the entire workforce into private by 2015. At the time of conducting this research in 2013, 23 per cent of employees were public, while 77 per cent were private employees. This allows for the research to examine the transition from public to private first-hand.

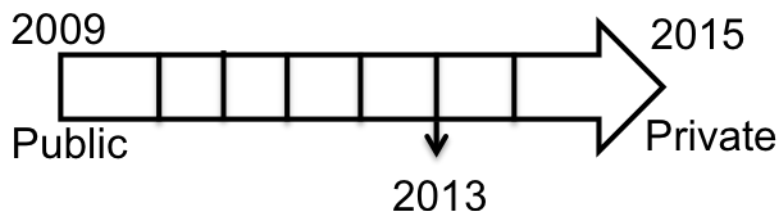


Figure1.5: Privatisation progress at SAEI.

## **1.9 Research Contributions**

In this section the potential main contributions to knowledge will be reviewed. This research started with the main aim of investigating whether there is an impact from Saudi Arabian societal culture on the specific five HRM practices. The outcomes of the

case study will test the influence of Saudi Arabian societal culture on the five HRM practices (see Figure 1.6). Those outcomes will show whether there is indeed an influence being exerted from Saudi Arabian societal culture on those HRM practices. The research will investigate impacting factors that might be in play when it comes to affecting Saudi Arabian societal culture. Throughout the literature three elements were identified (shown in Figure 1.7). Firstly, the influx of a new foreign workforce into Saudi Arabia, as a result of the initiation of large infrastructure projects across the country. This arrival of foreigners introduced a new set of values in the societal fabric of Saudi Arabia, which might have affected accepted behaviours and norms. Secondly, the introduction of e-business solutions and social media outlets revolutionised communications and increased accessibility, especially in HRM practices of recruitment sources and performance appraisal. Thirdly, the introduction of scholarship programmes with the aim to send Saudi nationals to pursue higher education qualifications abroad. These programmes subjected those Saudis to new societal cultures with a different set of values and accepted behaviours.

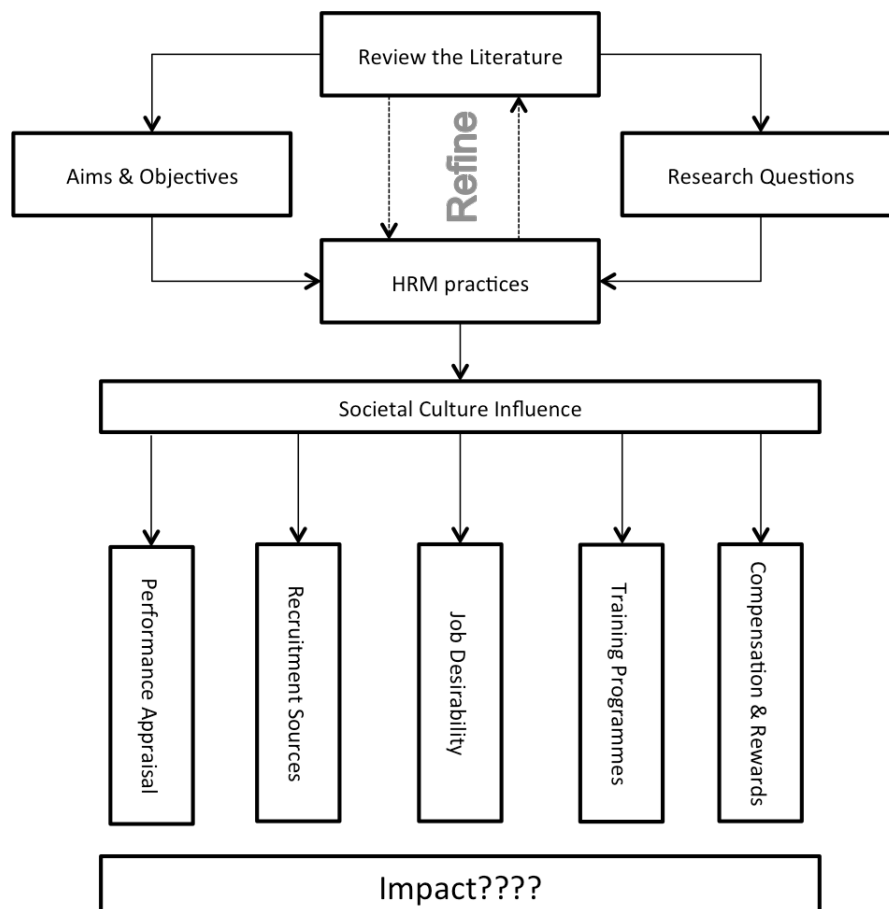


Figure.1.6. Relation between HRM practices and Saudi Arabian societal culture.

As a result, these Saudis may potentially incorporate the new values and introduce them into Saudi Arabian societal culture upon returning. All of these elements could possibly be responsible for any contrast between the views expressed in related literature and the findings of the case study.

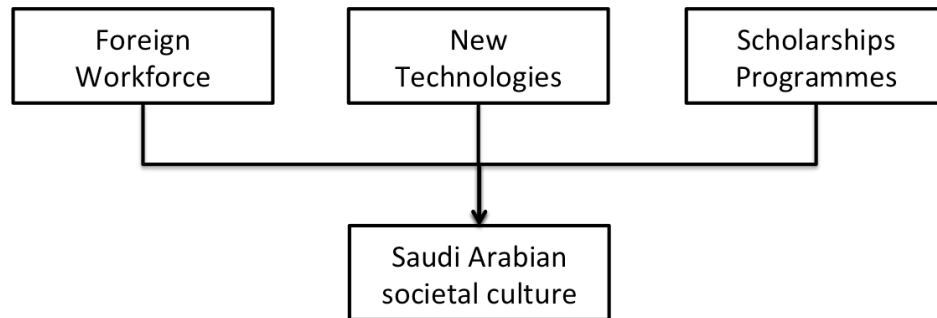


Figure.1.7. Factors affecting Saudi Arabian societal culture.

Further potential contribution to be achieved by this research is supplying current knowledge of the preferred HRM practices (specifically, recruitment sources, performance appraisal, compensation and rewards, training programmes, and job desirability). This should be considered vital due to numerous calls highlighted by researchers to conduct in-depth studies linking societal culture and HRM practices within the Middle East region. These researchers have long complained that the main interests in this region have been directed towards economics and politics, while little effort has been dedicated to its culture and HRM practices. Especially since the region possesses many successful businesses recognised worldwide. Furthermore, many researchers have stated that most existing studies are theoretical and do not provide any depth of investigation. Therefore, among their recommendations was an empirical investigation through the use of a case study. This exact approach has been implemented in this research by using SAEI as the case. Another possible contribution is from the implementation of a mixed-methods approach by utilising both qualitative and quantitative instruments (as shown in Figure 1.8). The incorporation of this unconventional methodology will allow the research to add further depth by conducting semi-structured interviews with HR managers and disseminating questionnaires among engineers. The use of this mixed-methods approach contributed to compiling further data than a single methodology could utilise. This methodology also assisted in creating the possibility of using triangulation, thus increasing the accuracy and generalisability of the data generated, and specifically in the case of investigating an unknown phenomenon such as Saudi Arabian societal culture.

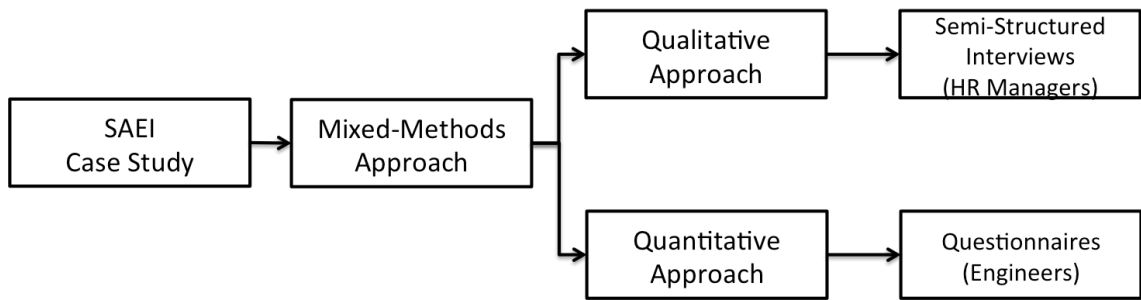


Figure.1.8. Breakdown of the mixed-methods approach implemented.

Additional contribution can potentially be obtained in the novelty of this research through conducting the investigation in an organisation that is going through a transitional phase from public to private. This unique situation provided a unique window of opportunity to examine the ongoing transition and investigate two sectors in one organisation. This would have been impossible to attain otherwise due to the lack of any other airline companies in Saudi Arabia and a high improbability of having two companies with similar organisational structure, financial muscle and operation size. Thus, this aspect increases the potential novelty and strengthens the value of the study's findings. Moreover, this particular contribution will lead to another contribution in the possibility of implementing the developed framework in other organisations planning to go through the privatisation process. However, it should be feasible that the implementation of this developed framework will be subjected to several changes in order to accommodate differences between the case of SAEI and any other company, due to possible differences in size, structure or setup.

### **1.10 Summary**

This chapter began with an introduction to the study's key areas, with each providing a specific aspect to this investigation. Culture provided the societal culture level to be considered. HRM provided five specific practices to be investigated. Saudi Arabia provided the two sectors: public and private to be the medium in which the HRM practices will be investigated. This research investigates the phenomenon of the impact of Saudi Arabian societal culture on five HRM practices within the public and private sectors. After that, the chapter examined the potential valuable outcomes that can be obtained from this investigation and the way it can add value to the research area. The part that followed aimed to define the keywords involved, starting from the broad

concept right to the specifics targeted in the investigation. For instance, the broad concept of culture was defined in order to facilitate for the definition of societal culture. The purpose of defining societal culture was to identify the understanding of societal culture that will be adopted throughout the research. Several definitions of societal culture were provided, however, the definition provided by Prasad and Babbar (2000) was incorporated as the adopted definition. This incorporation was based on the adoption of this particular definition within the majority of studies found linking HRM practices and societal cultures.

The subsequent section examined HRM. The research provided several definitions of what is meant by human resources management. Furthermore, the research identified the definition provided by Armstrong (2006) as the definition to be implemented. Then, examples of HRM practices were given in order to clarify the role of these practices within an organisation. Next, the significance of HRM practices to the organisation and its success and how the effectiveness of HRM practices could reflect on the organisation as a whole was discussed. The two sections that followed targeted the public and private sectors, and each sector was defined and examples of application specified. Moreover, the roles of each sector within society were identified, and at the end of these two sections a table was provided to highlight the characteristics of each sector in terms of purpose, governance and examples. The next section was dedicated to the research aims, questions and objectives. The main aim for this investigation has been stated as investigating the impact of Saudi Arabian societal culture on HRM practices within public and private sectors. This section justified the reasoning behind choosing SAEI as the sole case study. After that, the research questions were listed and how each question will inform and contribute to knowledge. Similarly, the objectives followed the same procedure adopted in the research questions and were explained specifically according to the terms of this research.

The thesis structure then followed a breakdown of each chapter and concluded that this research would consist of six chapters with the aim to answer the research questions and objectives. A brief summary of each chapter was given in order to facilitate for a better understanding of the thesis's flow and progress. The following section was dedicated to explain the research scope and how it developed from broad concepts of culture, all the way down to the specific areas within each of those concepts: Saudi Arabian societal culture, Saudi Arabian public and private sectors, and the five HRM practices. Lastly,

the research's potential contributions were supplied to deliver a sense of the significance the investigation carries. Moreover, this last section illuminated the practical significance for HR managers and practitioners interested in the best practices implemented in the country. Overall, this introduction chapter displayed the potential contributions that could be obtained and explained the rationale behind carrying out the investigation. Furthermore, current issues within the existing literature were identified along with the method to be followed to solve them. In addition, this chapter looked at why this investigation should be considered important and why there is a need for it to be conducted.

Chapter 2:  
**Literature Review**



## **Chapter 2 – Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter will expand on the impact of the societal culture values on the five HRM practices (see Figure 1.6) and explore the available literature. Then, the collectivism-individualism dimension will be introduced to serve as the scope, which will examine how societal cultures impact those five specific HRM practices. The goal of introducing such a dimension is to help define boundaries and limits, while investigating the impact of societal cultures and enabling future comparisons between the literature and the findings of this study. In addition, the investigation of related literature will help to identify any gaps and allow the research to address those gaps while also carrying out the investigation. Finally, this section will review the main concerns of the researchers in this area. The review of the literature gaps will help direct the investigation in the right direction and increase the value and depth of the research outcomes.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, societal culture has been defined as a collection of values and principles that are shared within a particular group of people in a certain country or region (Prasad and Babbar, 2000). As a result, this section looks at one of the most important elements in Saudi Arabian societal culture: the impact of Islamic values on work ethics. The investigation of this particular aspect is believed to aid in the process of understanding why Saudi employees will behave in a certain way in the workplace. Furthermore, why Saudi employees would prefer certain HRM practices and policies to others. HRM practices have been defined previously as every aspect regarding the managing of people within an organisation (Armstrong, 2006).

### **2.2 Impact of Religion on Work Ethics**

A high 80 per cent of people believe that religion is an integral part of dictating how they approach their daily requirements and obligations, yet most of the research within the management field seems to neglect religion as an influencing factor to management (Sedikides 2010). Mellahi and Budhwar (2010) believe that the reason behind this absence of religion in research is that most researchers assume that organisations have a

neutral view on religious beliefs and employees leave those beliefs at home before attending to their jobs. However, this assumption has been proved to be inaccurate, especially by the literature associated with Middle Eastern countries. The inaccuracy of that assumption stems from the fact that employees who follow the religion of Islam are obliged to act in accordance with the teachings of the Islamic faith concerning their behaviour and manners in the workplace (King and Williamson, 2005), who claimed that values and beliefs of a religion affect behaviours in the workplace directly and indirectly. Ali et al (2000) supported this argument by stating that religion interacts with all levels of human resources with its code of ethics and teachings with regard to compensation, penalties, acceptable behaviours, prohibited behaviours and relations among employees. Furthermore, researchers within the field of management started involving the employees' religious beliefs as a significant part of management research, which can be clearly seen in the following paragraph. Religion began to gather the deserved recognition due to its undeniable influence upon workplace manners and behaviours such as ethics and moral codes (Weaver and Agle 2002), management styles and their level of success (Reave 2005), practices related to staff (Budhwar and Fadzil 2000), employees' degree of job satisfaction (King and Williamson 2005) and workplace religious diversity (Morgan 2005).

This study aims to explore if Islamic work ethics really exist in the workplace or whether they are just a cliché. The study included more than 400 employees who follow the religion of Islam. The results concluded from this study suggest that the Islamic work ethics have a visible direct impact on the employees' loyalty and commitment as well as their job satisfaction levels. Yousef (2001) justified his study's findings by illuminating that the Islamic faith places the sense of fulfilment through hard work as one of the significant drivers in life. Ali (1992) added that Muslims are encouraged to attain economic development through the sturdy base provided by the Islamic work ethics, which will help them achieve this economic development. Throughout a study on workplace ethics conducted by Rokhman (2010), three main themes were understood to be taking place. Those three themes start with the fact that the Islamic work ethics relate negatively to employees' intention to leave their jobs. The second theme associates the Islamic work ethics positively with the level of job satisfaction of employees and the third theme is concerned with the positive impact of Islamic work ethics of organisational commitment on the employees' behalf. In this study, which

ethics can be defined as a direction in dealing with tasks and considering accomplishing those tasks as an act of virtue (Rizk 2008).

Table.2.1: Impact of Islamic work ethics on certain HRM themes

HRM Theme	Impact of Islamic work ethics
Resignation from position	Correlates undesirably and recommend to avoid this situation
Job satisfaction levels	The extents of reflecting those work ethics determine job satisfaction levels
Exercising commitment to the organisation	Encouraged and supported by Islamic work ethics

Moreover, another definition for the Islamic work ethics is describing those ethics as the defined set of ideologies that assist a person's judgment of what is accepted and what is prohibited (Beekun 1997). Therefore, Muslim employees should be more committed to their careers than employees who are driven by personal goals and achievements, which could mean less rate of turnover, and more employees being satisfied with their jobs.

The significance of understanding the impact of Islamic principles and values on organisations cannot be underestimated, as most Islamic countries started going back to basics, which involves practicing the Islamic ethics and teachings. In the workplace, according to Tayeb (1997), a 'comeback' has been taking place within Muslim countries, as a response to the growing challenges of the modern world in order to restore their image and garner the public acceptance. This 'comeback' was triggered by the increasing sense of materialism and capitalism among these Islamic countries. One of those countries is Malaysia. According to Hashim (2010), Malaysia stepped up their efforts in order to install the Islamic law back into action, to replace the British law which was a result of British colonization. Chong (2006) described the new installed Islamic law as a progressive Islamic civilization school of thought. The most important aspiration of this approach is to include all parts of society under the umbrella of Islamic ethics and values.

According to (Malaysian Prime Minister Office, n.d.), the principles of this Islamic law will be signalling several defined notions. Those notions include mastery and constant

seeking of knowledge, a government that guarantees fairness and justice, fine degree of livelihood, economic development that is reasonable and sustainable, insurance of women and minorities rights, protection of environment and public resources, people's freedom and independence, faith and obedience to God.

### **2.3 Impact of Societal Culture on HRM Practices**

Societal culture has been defined by Prasad and Babbar (2000) as the collection of values and principles, which are shared within a particular group of people in a certain country or region. Based on that definition there are certain elements within the Saudi Arabian societal culture that are considered important. One of those elements falls under the values and principles is the Islamic work ethics. The literature associated with Islam and its effect on management suggest that Islamic principles and values overwhelmingly affect Muslim managers' leadership styles (Randeree and El-Faramawy 2010; Abuznaid, 2006; Ali and Al-Owaihian, 2008), which opposes the general common theory within the mainstream management research that avoid including religion within the workplace and consider the workplace as a religion neutral environment (Matiaske and Grozinger 2010, p.5). Mellahi and Budhwar (2010) listed the essential values within the Islamic faith and connected each one of them with the targeted aspect within management and specifically HRM practices and behaviours. Those essential values include (Unity) cooperation and team spirit among employees, (Trust) relating to financial dealings, (Honesty) in code of behaviour among employees, (Commitment) through accomplishing tasks fully with the best of attitudes and (Justice) that is associated with treating all employees fairly.

Researchers interested in HRM practices and policies within the Islamic context extended their efforts in order to provide a better view of the situation. Branine and Pollard (2010) drew some attention toward the fact that in reality, there are going to be some glitches in adapting the Islamic core values in the workplace, even though the majority of Arab countries practice the Islamic faith. This is due to the fact that those Arab countries are driven by Islamic beliefs and values and cultural values, which are not related to Islam and have been ingrained in Islamic societies by Western influence (Branine and Pollard 2010). Branine and Pollard (2010) went on to explain that the dilemma facing the complete implementation of Islamic core values in the workplace will be generated by the conflict between those values and the non-Islamic values

founded by the Western organisational philosophies. The solution proposed by Branine and Pollard urges organisations willing to implement the core Islamic values in the workplace to analyse the Multi-National Companies (MNC) experiences and the latest development in that field to highlight the positives and steer clear of the negatives. Also, they are of the belief that engaging deeply into the Islamic belief and the culture deploying it will help gain a better vision on how those Islamic core values can be utilized within a Western organisational context; especially that those multi-national companies arrived at a crossroad in deciding upon what the best practices are to be deployed whenever they have decided to establish one of their foreign branches within a different cultural setting (Taylor et al 1996). Therefore, the decision concerning which practices to be implemented can be decided by looking at the previous experiences of multi-national companies as well as joint ventures on an international scale.

According to Cyr (1995), interest has increased since companies and organisations started to chart unexplored territories. Furthermore, Easterby-Smith et al (1995) singled out this exploration as the reason behind the increase of interest in local Human Resource Management and its practices and policies. Bae et al (1998) claimed that this growing interest is due to the fact that many international organisations and multi-national companies are looking for ways to structure the ideal HRM practices and policies for their subsidized offices located in foreign settings. Hannon et al. (1995) highlighted the significance of developing global HRM practices, as they are transferred across the globe. Quintanilla and Ferner (2003) added that there is a clear lack of knowledge in the detailed HRM processes, as previous studies directed their focus on superficial and overall levels. As a result, this transfer of effective global HRM practices cannot be attained (Hetrick, 2002). Moreover, this absence of effective global HRM practices led to new obstacles for MNC's, thus increasing the demand for efficient global HRM practices to be presented (Evans et al., 2002).

Myloni et al (2004) proposed a similar theory to reinforce Bae et al (1998) by stating that multi-national companies and international joint ventures showed an increased interest in developing HRM practices for whenever they move out of their local culture. All of this growing interest is caused by the situation that multi-national companies and international joint ventures face, which draws out this important question: should those companies adapt to the local culture or follow an international approach and transfer the practices of the parent company?

The significance of this dilemma is crucial to the success and destiny of those companies and organisations. This is where some of the researchers engaged in this dilemma saw that HRM can be the key that will help organisations develop an accurate and full understanding of other cultures, which will help them achieve the success they seek from establishing an international joint venture (Roberts et al 1998).

Tayeb (1998) is of the belief that when it comes to human resource practices, some of those practices have to be based on the local culture, while other practices can be transferred entirely from the Western HRM model. It is a vision shared by Rosenzweig and Nohria (1994) who stated that several HRM practices can be copied to the letter, while other HRM practices need to be tweaked and altered in order to effectively function within the new local culture. The determining factors in whether HRM practices are transferrable or not have been put under the spotlight by many researchers. The most known researchers were Beechler and Yang (1994), who hypothesized that there are three main elements that sanction whether a HRM practice is transferrable or not.

First, is the degree of similarity between local culture and origin culture, and how far the gap is between their cultural values? Second, is the level of influence that the local culture imposes upon the organisation and whether the local culture has a strong presence within the organisation and its practices? The final element is the subsidiary organisation itself, in the case of a multi-national company and its significance to the parent company. Therefore, the direct implementation of HRM practices in a new culture will result in a conflict and those practices will not be functioning in the way they are meant to be functioning.

Thus, it is logical to propose that HRM practices need to be aligned with local culture for them to be effective. Schuler et al (1993) believed that local culture should have the upper hand in tailoring the HRM practices that will fit best within the culture as long as the differences in cultural values are of great contrast. Throughout the literature on HRM practices and societal culture, researchers (Harrison et al., 1994; Schneider, 1989; Sethi and Elango, 1999) managed to identify which practices within HRM are most likely to be adapted to local cultures and which practices can stay as before.

The HRM practices that had to be altered and adapted to local cultures related specifically to rewards and compensation systems, sources of recruitment and

performance appraisal Hofstede (1984). Meanwhile, the HRM practices that maintained the same structures were development, training and recruitment (Lu and Bjorkman 1998). All of these observations were taken from the study conducted by Lu and Bjorkman (1998), which involved analysing more than 60 joint ventures, each with different settings and unique environments.

Another researcher involved in the exploration of Islamic influence on HRM is Ali (2010), who focused on the impact of practicing the core values of Islam in the workplace that can affect HRM practices and policies and what the best settings are to deploy those core values within an organisation. Moreover, Ali was intrigued by the implementation of Islamic core values and the positive feedback they would generate if they were fully utilized within the workplace; especially with values such as justice, honesty and trust. These variables are bound to create a great aftermath on the organisation's environment and the employees' morale.

Islamic teachings have a substantial influence on work ethics and the behaviour of Muslims in the work place (Ali and Al-Owaihan 2008). Firstly, it's important to explore the significance of work in Islam. Ali (1988) stated that Islam views work as an obligation, which assists Muslims in the aim of sustaining a sense of balance in their social and personal life. Therefore, work is an essential part of any Muslim's life. However, work alone is not sufficient, as it must be accomplished with the highest level of competency. According to Ahmad (1976), Islam considers performing competently at work as a means of reaching spiritual fulfilment and every Muslim is instructed by the Islamic teachings to conduct their work at the highest levels. Also, the contractual agreement between an organisation and its employees is an obligation for all who are involved and Islamic teachings oblige Muslims to honour all of their agreements. In this case, honouring the agreement can mainly be accomplished through the competent performance of the employees, while the organisation can honour the agreement by carrying out the reward and compensation system stated in the agreement. Furthermore, performing at the highest levels at work is considered a sign of religious observance in Islam as Muslims are deservingly earning their living through accomplishing their work in a competent manner. Moreover, conducting work in a competent manner is regarded as a virtue and a quality that every Muslim must possess (Nasr 1984).

Ali (2008) stated that all Muslim's societies are suffering from the "Unity of Contradictions" phenomena. This phenomenon implies that the selection and the opportunities offered by organisations are not based on the Islamic teachings. Abdalla (2006) further explained this phenomenon as managers hiring relatives and those recommended by friends without any regard to their qualifications, while those same managers declare their adoption of Islamic work ethic principles including prohibiting nepotism and inequality in the work place, yet those same managers contradict their adopted policies. According to Branin and Pollard (2010), most countries in the Middle East tend to bring in existing Western-based management and economics models instead of developing models based on Islamic principles and teachings, which are only applied in the limited scope of the law and social life. However, this creates a dilemma within those countries, as the imported models do not offer the perfect environment for the organisations HRM practices, as those Western models were imported without utilising the cultural element of the Middle East (Pollard and Tayeb, 1997). According to Rahwar and Al-Bureay (1992), one of the main reasons behind the ineffectiveness of the Western models is that those models ignore the spiritual needs of Middle Eastern employees, while they tend to focus on individualism and economic-based aspects, which are opposed by the Islamic principles that put emphasis on the importance of collectiveness and unity of the group. Ali (2010) supports this argument by stating that the Islamic principles command that organisational and individual conduct needs to be based on spiritual guidelines, while the Western models are based on purely scientific management practices that are completely separated from the spiritual context. This proved that there are critical differences between the adopted models and the required needs of organisations employees (Bjork and Al-Meer, 1993).

Bouma et al (2003) highlighted that religion in general, imposes great influence on HRM practices, which surprisingly is overlooked for the sake of other economic and political bearings. This crucial negligence is clearly visible within the HRM literature for the area around the Asia-Pacific (Rees and Johari, 2010). It is granted that placing the right emphasis on the religious aspect, especially in countries where religion is a dominant force, will help to introduce a harmonious medium between HRM practices and the individuals of those cultures. In addition, incorporating religious beliefs, values and ethics (since ethics are complementary and included in the religion package) within the HRM practices and policies, will surely aid in eliminating the ethical issues that



might hinder the success of any organisation (Koys, 2001). This argument has been proven to be accurate through the example showcased with organisations in Malaysia and Indonesia among others, as Budhwar and Fadzil (2000, p. 173) noted that even in the midst of the Asian crisis, the organisations that fully utilised the Islamic ethics and values were able to operate with a great level of success and stay ahead of the competition.

This goes to show that engaging the cultural element within organisations can prove to be one of the main ingredients for success and immunity against the difficult climates that organisations may come up against. Bjorkman and Budhwar (2007) contributed to the argument that matching the organisation practices and policies to the local environment can aid the cause of the organisation on several main aspects. Firstly, gaining the trust and loyalty of local employees is bound to improve performance and increase productivity. Secondly, organisations will have a better perception of the local expectations and accepted behaviours. Thirdly, having practices and policies that go along with societal norms will help organisations gain acceptance and support for the local societies. Schuler and Rogovsky (1998) added that the correct management of an organisation's human resources could produce a competitive edge that will assist the organisation's pursuit of success. As a result of all those factors, it is almost certain that the performance of these organisations will improve and the productivity of their personnel will increase. Therefore, Teagarden and Von Glinow (1997) conclude that the role of HRM within organisations has grown to a strategic one compared to the supportive role it was previously associated with in organisations. The significance of HRM has reached the extent of sustaining a competitive advantage for the organisation. Moreover, whenever there is a change in the environment around the organisation, it is the employees who can adapt to challenge the change, not the organization (Rundle, 1997). Therefore, the role of HRM within organisations will never be marginal, as it may determine whether the organisation survives the change or collapses.

Statistically, a survey conducted in 1992 marked the evolving role of HRM (Chew and Sharma, 2005). This survey exhibited that within the majority of top companies according to (Forbes 500), the higher ranks of HRM departments are actually heavily involved in setting up their organisation's strategies and planning as well as being integral to the decision-making process and they are members of the board. A further study conducted by Roberts (1995) found out that 15 percent of an average

organisation's profit performance is the outcome of HRM strategy. The previous study highlighted the importance and significance of setting up effective HRM practices and strategies. Moreover, the study showcased the impact of HRM practices and strategies to go beyond employees' relations and those practices and strategies are integral to the financial outcomes of organisations; therefore, supporting the argument that HRM practices could represent a competitive advantage.

So, before going any further in exploring the impact of societal culture on HRM practices and policies, what are the main components of this societal culture? Derr and Laurent (1989) argued that societal culture is the outcome of the common national tendencies resulting from formative encounters, childhood, language, education and religion. Adler (1991) extensively described the national culture as the set of values that form the individual opinion and attitude regarding all aspects of their lives, while this set is shared among the whole group within one society and inherited by the older generations to the following generations. Newman and Nollen (1996), agreed with the argument of matching the local cultural values with organisations' values by declaring that whenever organisations' management practices were paralleled with the values of the societal cultures surrounding them, there will always be a positive outcome to be drawn.

On the contrary, Zaheer (1995) conducted a study which exhibited that whenever an organisation sets up its practices and policies solely from within the organisation or from importing the practices of the parent organisation, in the case of multinational organisations, without involving the local element in the process, it is almost a fact that local employees will show signs of a disapproving response to what will be considered as 'Corporate Colonization'. Therefore, the involvement of the cultural element proved to be of high significance to the performance levels and efficiency of organisations specifically in Middle Eastern countries, as Tayeb (1996) stated that the cultural traditions and values of the employees of any organisation tend to have a substantial influence on the way they accomplish their duties and the manner they approach their tasks within the organisation.

Moreover, Ayca et al (2000) declared that the importance of understanding and implementing the societal culture within any organisation is never trivial, as societal culture places a crucial effect on the policies and practices of HRM. This significance of

understanding the societal culture can be seen in the fact that individuals are ingrained with culture, which dictates their response toward relationships, norms, behaviours, goals and methods (Noordin and Jusoff, 2010). Some academics recognize the importance of the integration of culture within organisations, specifically in HRM, and of turning this cultural integration into a competitive advantage by summarising three essential steps, which need to be taken by the managers of HRM (Granell, 2000).

These three steps include the integration of the cultural element are not always natural, as there has to be some sort of planning or structuring in order to ensure that the integration gets completed swiftly and effectively. The second step concerns the identification and recognition of culture and its values, as overlooking it may turn it from a potential advantage into a massive obstacle that will hinder the progress of the organisation. Finally, matching the behaviours inside the organisation with the culture, as it is the only way to breed success, represented in sustaining cultural integration, as a competitive advantage (Granell, 2000).

Granell et al (1997) concluded their observations and study on the effective integration of culture into organisations by highlighting two main criteria. Firstly, any cultural differences need to be dealt with the utmost respect, intelligence, and patience and should utilize as much knowledge as possible regarding the diversity within the concerned culture. Secondly, the analysis of culture regarding its strengths and the unique aspects that make this culture stand out from other cultures, and the review of possible tactics that utilize those aspects the best and turn the culture into a competitive advantage for the organisation. Also, Nyambegera et al (2000) added that the societal culture mainly sets up the preferred policies and practices within HRM. In addition, organisations are under constant pressure by the societies containing them, as this pressure can be in the form of influences or expectations as well as pressure that can be visible through legislations and regulations and that can be indirect. Also, this pressure can come from economic, social, political and human institutions, each with their own agendas (Hofstede, 1980). In each country, HRM practices and policies are outlined by a number of elements on the societal level, which create the differences in HRM practices and policies from one country to another (Bjorkman and Budhwar, 2007). The key elements that affect the HRM practices and policies include the business environment, societal culture and the local institutions (Paauwe and Boselie, 2007).

Brunstein (1992) showcased the relation between culture and HRM in the case of France and how its culture affected HRM practices and policies. Brunstein stated that HRM practices are the most affected part of any organisation by cultural influence and that all aspects involved with the French culture have an impact on how these HRM practices are shaped. Brunstein explained how three historic elements affected the French culture, which led to affecting the HRM practices within French organisations. Those three elements start with philosopher René Descartes and his ideologies and approach in solving problems, which are still adopted through the evident use of Descartes's analytical selection methods, especially his logic in geometry and mathematics that are commonly used within management in France to sort out issues through classification. Moreover, French managers adopted Descartes logic of 'hierarchical distance' in order to assure apparent integration. Also, they have the tendency to isolate information to give them the ability to manage and understand individuals. The second element concerns Napoleon who aimed toward creating order and finding a uniting legislative presence in a bid to eliminate any disorder or disarray. Furthermore, he encouraged the centralisation of administration, which is one of the main contributors to the bureaucratic trait associated with French culture. The third element is the French Revolution and its visible print on the typical French attitude in perusing the goal of establishing personal freedom and standing against any form of authority as well as contravening and infringing any societal constraints. The result of those three elements is a conflict in views and values that is reflected clearly in HRM practices and specifically in French employees' behaviour in the workplace. The main observations that could be cited include the employees' tendencies regarding pondering upon personal gains and achievement, while they tend to resist any form of obedience to superiors, which implies building a form of unity among the employees that are required to overlook personal aspects (Brunstein, 1992). Furthermore, Tayeb (1988) explained how societal culture could affect organisations heavily, which happens due to the fact that employees arrive to work with "cultural baggage". This baggage consists of many cultural elements including behaviour, attitude, belief and traditions, which all weigh in when it comes to the employees work ethics, habits, standards and professional aspirations. Moreover, this cultural baggage is expected to be following the main consensus within the society that the employee live in, that contribute greatly to the cultural identity of nations. Thus, if the society shared individualistic values, this cultural baggage would contain individualistic traits and the same principle could be

applied for societies sharing collectivistic values. Tayeb (1997) continued to explain the significance of this cultural baggage through the effect of religion. In countries with dominant numbers of Muslims, the religion of Islam seems to be the main player in shaping the accepted behaviours and values that affect HRM practices and the cultural baggage of employees.

Therefore, incorporating the cultural aspects within the HRM practices and policies is essential to any organisation with regards to its employees' level of performance and efficiency, as the cultural element of the region in which an organisation operates needs to be integrated within HRM policies determined by the senior management (Yeganeh and Su, 2008). When organisations integrate the societal culture values shared by the individuals working in those organisations, higher levels of performance, great self-efficacy and job satisfaction can be achieved (Farley, 1994). Most research concerned with competitive performance (Cho and Pucik, 2005; Koufteros et al., 2002) highlighted the importance of quality and innovation, which can be enhanced by nurturing a culture embracing these two elements (Prajogo and McDermott, 2010).

Furthermore, it has been suggested that organisations based in developing countries must create the right balance between their cultures and the societal cultures surrounding them (Joiner, 2000). Individuals within developing countries tend to appreciate their values more than individuals in already developed countries, which provide societal culture with such significance within HRM practices and policies (Mendonca and Kanungo, 1990). Integrating and reinforcing the societal culture values within organisations can reap further great rewards, including gaining a competitive advantage, whether in individualistic culture or a collectivistic culture. Dunning (1997) illustrated examples of gaining competitive advantage in both cultures. Firstly, Japan (collectivistic culture) gained a competitive advantage through quality assurance and good relations within the work network consisting of contractors, clients and suppliers. Alternatively, the United States (individualistic culture) accomplished great strides in advanced technologies. As for the specific field of HRM, Becker and Huselid (1998) recognised that great value and unique gains can be reaped from investing internally towards the HRM practices and policies through attracting, encouraging and developing employees who can act as a competitive advantage for the organisation, directing this internal investment toward HRM practices and policies.

In addition, not including the essential characteristics of societal culture can be of great risk to the success of any organisation (Joiner, 2000). One of the most famous examples of failure, resulting from ignoring societal culture within the organisational context, is the downfall of the Sri Lankan private and public organisations due to the conflict in values regarding the implemented HRM practices and policies between management and individuals (Chandrakumara and Sparrow, 2004), which resulted in low levels of loyalty, trust and a breakdown in communication between the management and the employees (Nanayakkara, 2004).

Moreover, Dastmalchian et al (2000) suggested that societal culture should be one of the main influences in building the culture of any organisation. Naturally, negative outcomes can be speculated in the case of neglecting the national culture element, which may lead to creating a dysfunctional culture within organisations (Doney and Cannon, 1997). In fact, organisations in the United States are expected to conduct their business in a manner which echoes the societal culture attributes within the country, while the same goes for organisations within the eastern cultures that can be represented by South Korea, where all of their dealings tend to reflect the characteristics of its societal culture (Kim, 2003). Katou et al (2010) sheds more light on the importance of linking the societal culture elements with HRM by illuminating the fact that HRM practices and policies adopted by any organisation should be the reflection of the cultural elements (beliefs, traditions and ethics). Brewster (1995) highlights this importance, as the effectiveness of HRM practices and policies can be reliant on cultural elements such as; religion, level of education, values, principles and level of skills within the workforce. In addition, those cultural elements may dictate how various HRM practices and policies, including recruitment process, compensations, communication lines and delegation of control among the employees should be structured.

As a result of the significant role that cultural aspects may play in shaping HRM practices and policies, it must be considered an integral ingredient of any effective HRM practice (Heijltjes et al, 1996). Moreover, any organisation's culture, responsibilities and current and potential employees are influenced by the societal culture (traditions, beliefs and prospects) surrounding the organisations (Stone-Romero & Stone, 2007). Recognising that the degree of harmony between the organisation's culture, and the values of the individuals working in this organisation can determine the

level of effectiveness and success the HRM practices and policies can achieve (Schuler and Jackson, 1987). In fact, the societal culture imposes great effect on every HRM practice and policy, which will be showcased more elaborately within the dimension of collectivism-individualism.

### **2.3.1 Collectivism-Individualism Dimension**

This dimension has been implemented and made to be the focus of this investigation. This particular dimension was incorporated instead of Maslow's hierarchy of needs due to the focus being on societal level rather than individual basis. However, the principles defined by Maslow have been included and taken into consideration while conducting this research. In 1954, Abraham Maslow proposed five sequential elements representing the human needs. Those needs were arranged based on importance as shown in figure (2.1).

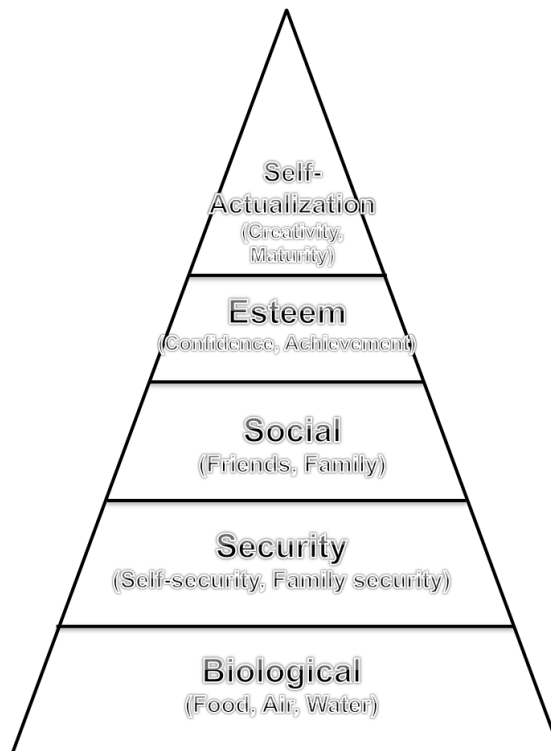


Figure.2.1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

This arrangement started with the most important element, which was concerned with the biological needs covering food, air etc.,. Security needs followed with aspects such as safety of self, family and job. The next need represented the social and love needs such as friends and family. The fourth element covered esteem needs where confidence

and achievements figure greatly. The final element encompasses self-actualization with aspects such as creativity and morality. El Kahal (2002) explained how the differences in cultural values can affect the design and structure of organisations through the following example: Chinese organisations, who share collectivistic values, are usually run by their founders and owners who exercise their values, which contain collectivism and bureaucracy; while the promotion of employees depends on their connections and relations within the organisations hierarchy, with little employee-empowerment taking place. As for the Western organisations represented by Australia, they share individualistic values, and those organisations are usually run by a board of directors owned by a group of shareholders. They exercise less bureaucracy, show more employees empowerment, promote staff according to performances and competencies where decisions are made after democratic discussions among the parties involved.

Table.2.2: Difference between collectivistic & individualistic cultures (1).

	Collectivistic Cultures (China)	Individualistic Cultures (Australia)
Directed By	Founders - owners	Board of directors – Shareholders
Career Development	Based on connections and relations with hierarchy	Based on performances and competencies

This dimension revolves around how individuals view the affiliation between themselves and the group, which they are members of (Noordin and Jusoff, 2010). The aim of introducing this dimension is to set up a parameter in order to provide a focused and on-the-point argument, which can lead to concise and clear outcomes for this research. Farh et al (1997) claims this dimension arose as one of the main cultural elements that gained a reputation for showcasing the differences between cultures. Also, Oyserman, Coon and Kimmelmeier (2002) agreed that when it comes to developing a better understanding of the norms, behaviours and ethics of people in different parts of the worlds, the collectivism-individualism dimension can be a tool of great power in developing a full understanding. Williams (2003) explained what makes this dimension of such great significance is that this dimension examines the nucleus values of each culture that act as the code of behaviours, which dictate the interaction between



individuals. Thus, this collectivism-individualism dimension has been utilized as a trustworthy manuscript. Voronov (2002) accordingly agrees with the evolving role of collectivism-individualism dimension. This dimension is still used as a reference for explaining the distinctions of conflict solution, people mechanisms, compensations and rewards and management styles. Many studies, including Moorman and Blakely (1995) found out that using this collectivism-individualism dimension is useful in underlining the similarities or differences between different cultures. Therefore, it is only right for this dimension to be incorporated in this section of the research, in order to offer an objective perspective for both arguments and to assist in sustaining a consistent approach to the argument throughout the investigation. Collectivistic individuals can be described as loyal team players, who are always looking for the good of the organisation whilst aiming to achieve its goals. In addition, they are interdependent with regards to communication among themselves. As for individualistic individuals, they exhibit a self-interested approach to their careers at the expense of the whole group interest. Furthermore, they prefer to maintain their independence while accomplishing their tasks (Hofstede, 1980). Chatman and Barsade (1995) highlighted a major difference between individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Individuals who share collectivistic values tend to be more cooperative than individuals who share individualistic values.

Both Triandis (1995) and Wagner (1995) provided their observations on how individuals belonging to each culture view themselves. While individuals within individualistic cultures tend to see themselves as independent and singular articles, individuals from collectivistic cultures are always linking themselves to the group and refuse to be seen as separate beings. Moreover, individuals from individualistic cultures may show indications of interest in others, but it is mainly to protect and ensure the longevity of their benefits and survival, while individuals with shared collectivistic values show genuine care for other involved parties through generalizing their fate and sharing the responsibilities for the outcome of their work (Kumar et al, 1995). However, it is worth noting that the self-centred tendencies shown within individualistic cultures have their own benefits. This tendency can be exhibited through those individuals that will only seek partners who can ensure their success; therefore, yielding the best possible outcomes. This might not always be the case with the collectivistic cultures. Whereas a team may be formed with a less competent member than the rest of the team

members, and the reason being that collectivistic individuals view a confrontational approach as a forbidden approach that might harm the team’s harmony and solidarity (Ryu et al, 2011).

Table.2.3: Difference between collectivistic & individualistic cultures (2).

	Collectivistic Cultures	Individualistic Cultures
Role within organisation	View themselves as part of the group	View themselves as independent and single articles
Views on teamwork	Essential for solidarity and preserving group’s harmony	Considered to increase chances of one’s success

Kim et al (1994) offered an extended view on the main attributes of a collectivistic culture by referring to the placing of the interest of the group or the team. That is above the interest of the individual, which is highly noted within eastern cultures. Wagner (1995) viewed the concept of collectivism as the promotion of team spirit and eliminating selfishness among the group. This concept can be considered as a positive trait that encouragingly affects group performance, career satisfaction, swift cooperation and the elimination of any differences (Van der Vegt and Van de Vliert, 2002). Moreover, Miles (2008) study on South Korea’s societal culture follows the collectivistic approach, which is based on the Confucian school of thought, encouraging the employees to establish bridges of communication among them and creating an atmosphere of unity. Cho and Yoon (2001, pp. 75, 79) added that the utmost respect must be shown to individuals with higher ranking and of the oldest age. Also, loyalty is of high importance even at the expense of laws and rules.

Johnson and Johnson (1989) study proved the benefits reaped from the collectivistic environment to be better in an understanding of tasks, enhanced performance and greater outcomes. Furthermore, among the main attributes of collectivistic individuals, they exhibit high levels of loyalty, a sense of belonging and belief in the organisation, high job satisfaction and an equal rewards scheme (Kirkman and Shapiro, 2000; Dorfman and Howell, 1988). Moreover, Erdogan and Liden (2006) singled out the fact that individuals with shared collectivistic values are ready to sacrifice their personal gains for the sake of a better quality of relationships among the group.

Fijneman et al (1996) determined that one of the main concepts of collectivism is establishing a harmonized medium between individuals, where those individuals are dedicated and fully committed to the cause of the group, which indicates a very high level of commitment on the group's behalf towards the organisation's aspirations and goals. On the other hand, Bacharach and Lawler (1981) summed up the individualistic cultures main attributes as the promotion of personal gain even at the expense of the group's benefit; those individuals are always looking to capitalize on opportunities for their own interest. Furthermore, Kim et al (1994) believes that when it comes to their colleagues, individualistic employees do not bother making an effort to establish a personal rapport within their work environment nor do they show any interest in benefitting others. Kim (1994) summed up the attributes associated with employees who share individualistic values as; self-determined competence, by an 'any means necessary' attitude, competition, independence, freedom and the pursuit of personal elation, while excluding oneself from aspects such as religion, family and community (Bellah et al, 1985).

Table.2.4: Differences between collectivistic & individualistic cultures (3).

	Collectivistic Cultures	Individualistic Cultures
Driven By	Commitment to the group's cause	Maximising personal gains
Relation to others	Important to establish communications with others	Not essential
Workplace beliefs	Collectiveness – Maintain family & social ties – Team spirit	Competitiveness – Independence – Personal achievement

However, some negative attributes can be associated to the collectivistic approach, such as those highlighted by Peterson et al (1995), who identified a significant issue within organisations employing individuals with collectivistic values. This main issue is represented in the situation where collectivistic individuals are often obedient to their upper management and very compliant with the organisations' policies, which leaves them lacking any sense of freedom whilst accomplishing their tasks. This may result in

piling up the workload due to the strict frame of freedom given to them by the higher management.

Furthermore, the presence of a powerful hierarchy usually indicates far less creativity on the employees' behalf, which could prevent the organisation from improving and developing a competitive edge. Another issue related to organisations with individuals who share collectivistic values, is the probability of injustice among a group's members in relation to rewards and compensation, as the input of each member may vary, which means that some members within the group end up executing most of the tasks assigned to the group. Furthermore, Hui et al (1995) brought to attention the fact that collectivistic individuals may have to accept dictatorial management styles and unwarranted policies imposed by the organisation, putting up with any bizarre behaviour from their colleagues for the sake of sustaining the solidarity and harmony of the group.

Table.2.5: negative traits of collectivistic cultures.

Collectivism Negative Impact
Very compliant with managers leads to possible heavy workload
Cannot illustrate any creativity in their work due to aim to preserve group's harmony
May not be compensated deservingly based on their performances even they work the hardest within the group
Very obedient and have to accepting of dictatorial leaderships styles

As for the downbeat attributes associated with individuals who share individualistic values, Waterman (1984) managed to draw out two obstacles regarding the individualistic approach. The first obstacle is concerned with the fact that employees with individualistic values easily submit to being alienated from the group and work with a sense of isolation. This excessive level of independence could lead to harmful outcomes such as higher levels of stress that could transpire into poor performance, less productivity, even an increase in costs in order to cover health concerns and the absence of any form of cooperation between an organisation's employees (Murphy, 1995).

Table.2.6: negative traits of individualistic cultures.

Individualism Negative Impact
Easily resort to isolation and alienation from the group
Illustrating high levels of independence that lead to harmful consequences on personal level
Illustrating high levels of independence that lead to possible harmful consequences on team and colleagues
Eliminating any possibility of establishing cooperation with colleagues

Researchers used every opportunity to highlight the significance of cooperation to an organisation's success. Jones and George (1998) stated that the success of any organisation would always be dependent on the level of cooperation within its organisation. Within an organisation, great levels of performance can be achieved through establishing an immense cooperative culture (Smith et al, 1995). Moreover, great outcomes can be expected when employees of an organisation work together and cooperate (Longenecker, 2001; p.22). The second obstacle is the social side of employees with individualistic values, where they usually utilize the same individualistic approach, which prevents them from achieving higher levels of success compared to the collectivistic individuals. In addition, employees sharing individualistic values may develop an unhealthy competitiveness within an organisation for the sake of their own personal gain, at the risk of endangering the unity within the organisation. Moreover, many studies (Hui et al., 1995; Hui, 1996) proved that organisations that share individualistic values are more likely to score lower levels of job satisfaction than the organisations that share collectivistic values.

## **2.4 Collectivism-Individualism Dimension Impact on Five Key HRM practices**

After explaining the collectivism-individualism dimension, the next step is to examine the impact of the societal culture in both situations; collectivistic cultures and individualistic cultures, over HRM practices and policies. The five HRM practices

selected in this study were chosen based on the focus placed by the existing literature on those particular five HRM practices. As a result, they were chosen on the basis that findings of this study would be able to draw out comparisons against those views found in the literature. Those five HRM practices are recruitment sources, job desirability, performance appraisal, compensation and rewards and training programmes. Each section will present the theories found in the literature on the impact of each type of societal culture (collectivistic & individualistic) on those specific HRM practices. The effect of societal culture can be visible in the recruitment process, selection process and its effectiveness, recruiting sources and its success, job desirability and the ideal candidates for any position within the organisation. In fact, Schuler et al (1993) suggested that aspects such as public holidays, ideal behaviours, norms, working hours and compensation are usually based on the national culture of the region where organisations are situated and those aspects would be integrated into the HRM practices and policies formed by the parent organisation.

#### **2.4.1 Job Desirability**

The impact of societal culture on job desirability can be exhibited through the role that the values of individuals play in showing their preference of one certain job to that of another (Cable and Judge, 1996). Furthermore, Katz & Kahn (1978) defined job desirability by stating that the most preferred jobs are the ones that allow individuals to convey their values to a greater extent.

For example, societies with an Islamic majority have shared values revolving around collectivism and collectiveness in the workplace. Therefore, individuals of Islamic societies tend to find organisations' cultures that promote collectiveness and the possibility of accomplishing their tasks and responsibilities through team work more desirable to work for than organisations' cultures that promote personal achievements and self-based goals, whereas other societies with individuals who share personal achievement values tend to be more keen to work for organisations that provide them with the opportunity to accomplish their personal goals (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Moreover, Joshi & Martocchio (in press) highlighted this tendency by stating that societies with individuals who greatly value collectiveness find individual-based rewarding systems less appealing, while societies with individuals who are driven by achievements find these systems highly attractive. Okun, Fried and Okun (1999)

justified these tendencies through the fact that individuals who are achievement-driven value the prominence of maximizing personal gains, which is the basis of these individual-based rewarding systems, while individuals who share collectivistic values tend to steer clear of such rewarding systems. Judge and Bretz (1992) supported this theory by stating that jobs in achievement-oriented organisations tend to attract individuals who share personal gains and individualistic values. According to Bretz et al (1989) organisations that provide chances of reaching personal achievements possess a greater appeal for individuals who acquire similar characteristics.

#### **2.4.2 Recruitment Sources**

Another aspect of HRM practices that is greatly affected by societal culture is sources of recruitment and their level of effectiveness. Recruitment sources assist organisations in finding potential employees and candidates for any vacancies within the organisation. According to Stone, Stone-Romero and Lukaszewski (2007), societal culture and values play a substantial part in the selection of the recruitment source by organisations and applicants as well, for instance, individuals from societies that share collectiveness values lean further towards recruitment sources that utilise a personal approach, such as networking and job recommendation rather than recruitment sources which employ an impersonal and distant approach, such as newspaper advertisements and online recruitments.

Furthermore, McManus and Ferguson (2003) stressed the fact that individuals in countries with high distance power and collectivistic values, including Saudi Arabia, tend to avoid recruitment sources that apply impersonal methods like online recruitment. However, on the organisations behalf, Stone, Stone-Romero and Lukaszewski (2007) continued to propose the same hypothesis that societal cultures influence organisations' selection of the recruitment sources as well, by declaring that the recruitment sources strategies of any organisation will be greatly dependent on the nature of the societal culture. In addition, the recruitment of outside hire rarely happens in societal cultures with collectivistic shared values, as an outside hire would face difficulties breaking into the group of employees, especially if there were any internal potential candidates for the vacancy (Bjorkman and Lu, 1999). Moreover, the degree of success and effectiveness of recruitment sources will rely on the extent to which they deploy shared values that are in their favour. A great example that can be exhibited for

this situation is matching potential individuals with collectivistic attributes with an organisation that endorses collectiveness and teamwork, as both share the same values and aim to achieve the same goals. Furthermore, the more values that are shared between an organisation and potential applicants, the more desirable and accepted the job can be for the applicants.

Moreover, successful matching between potential applicants and organisations can contribute positively on two fronts: employee turnover and employee productivity (Ryan and Schmit, 1996). A Silverthorne (2004) claims to tackle two main present concerns represented in increasing the productivity of staff and minimizing the numbers of employees' turnover. In addition, similarities between individuals with regards to behaviour and attitudes can determine the degree of attraction according to the interpersonal attraction theory discussed by Byrne (1971).

Hofstede (1991) exhibited a specific example of the importance of shared values between organisations and individuals. This example showcased that the more individuals appreciate the values of high distance power, the more flexible would be towards compliance and observance of their recruiters' authorities. Also, similarities in race between individuals and recruiters can influence the recruitment process and the choices of applicants as well as recruiters (Rynes, 1991).

On a different note, as a result of establishing an understanding of the magnitude of the impact of societal culture on an organisation's culture, it can only be easily predicted that societal culture have a great sway over the HRM practices and policies within the organisation. Since societal culture has a substantial effect on any organisation's culture, the culture of the organisation weighs in when it comes to identifying the ideal candidate for any vacancies within the organisation (Stone-Romero, Stone and Salas, 2003). According to Stone & Stone-Romero (2004), an integral part of this pivotal role that societal culture plays in identifying the ideal candidate, is that the societal culture itself represents a heavy influence when designing the shapes of the jobs and setting their dimensions and boundaries within the organisations. Therefore, the ideal candidates need to reflect the essential elements of an organisations' culture that is mainly influenced by the societal culture. Tanova and Nadiri (2005) confirmed the previous statement through the fact that formal recruitment strategies are difficult to



implement in collectivistic cultures, as managers fall under the pressure of the societal culture values shared by the people.

Naturally, the decision-making process of recruiting new employees for an organisation will be relying primarily on the level of harmony between the applicant's cultural values and the culture of the organisation and its values as well as acquiring a certain level of the required set of skills for the job, which surprisingly might not be the determining factor for the recruitment decision (Kristof-Brown, 2007). Moreover, Budhwar and Khatri (2001) argued that criteria such as capabilities and skills might not be the main criteria for the recruitment process, as socio-political ties and social status are highly regarded within collectivistic cultures. Furthermore, Wasti (1998) elaborated on this focal point of recruitment by explaining that Western managers (individualistic) tend to utilize capabilities and competence as the main criteria for the recruitment process, while Eastern managers (collectivistic) choose a different set of criteria for the recruitment process such as loyalty, well-matching with current staff and trustworthiness. As a result, recruitment sources that focus on a set of standards involving a scientific approach, including skills, capabilities and abilities, might not be used very often by the organisations within collectivistic cultures.

Steiner and Gilliland (1996) justified this situation through the logical assumption that applicants might find implementing such a scientific approach in the recruitment process insulting and a breach of their privacy. A clear example of this situation is mentioned by Tanova and Nadiri (2005) in the case of small firms in Turkey, where many individuals are hired due to their family ties with the firms owners, although they might not be professionally qualified to fill in their positions and also by the fact that firms' owners have a sense of obligation to hire their less fortunate relatives in order to help them sustain a livelihood. The previous example provided legitimate grounds for the Westwood and Posner (1997) theory that managers and their leadership styles are vastly affected by the societal culture. Furthermore, Chatman (1989) explained that the more similar the candidate's values are to the organisation's values, the better opportunity the candidate has, to be hired by the organisation. Stone et al (2007) further explained that this relation can be exemplified simply in the situation where a candidate with collectivistic values would have a better chance to be hired in an organisation that endorses similar values surrounding collectivism and team-work than a candidate with performance-driven and individualistic values, regardless of the skills possessed by

each candidate, for the simple fact that the candidate with the collectivistic values reflects and shares the same values as the organisation. Thus, the integral impact of societal culture on an organisations' culture can be clearly visible.

Furthermore, Weyland (2011) showcases the benefits of having a match in values, ethics, beliefs and behaviour between organisations and individuals, which leads to creating harmony that generating success for organisations with enhanced productivity for individuals. Weyland (2011) further elaborates the importance of matching values between organisations and individuals through the fact that individuals who share the same values of the organisation tend to promote their organisation, exhibit more commitment toward the organisation and its goals, provide higher performance levels and aim to maintain their position in the organisation for a long time.

Thus, matching the values and principles of organisations with individuals could prove to be as important, if not more so, than matching the individuals' skills with the required skills for vacancies within the organisation. Also, Weyland (2011) went on to explain the possible dangerous consequences of having a mismatch of values between organisations and individuals through the fact that individuals who do not share the same values and principles as the organisation are unlikely to be loyal and tend to be less productive than individuals who are in agreement with an organisation's values. In addition, a great amount of time and money will be wasted on training and administrative work.

In the case of losing the loyalty of individuals, Holden (1999) highlighted the significance of maintaining an employee's set of loyalty and skills, as they are not only important for the organisation's success and performance, but also severely important for the organisation's survival in the case of recession. Ali (1992) added to the list of what organisations will miss out on, by mentioning the positives of having a loyal employee. These positives include lower numbers regarding non-attendance than less loyal employees, demonstrate more positive attitudes toward colleagues, voluntarily accomplish further tasks in order to aid the organisation's cause, are generally in agreement with any scheduled changes within the organisation and exhibit further commitment towards the organisation, even in turbulent periods.

As for the selection process, the values of an applicant dictate the manner in which an applicant responds to the selection process incorporated by the organisation, as each

applicant, whether with collectivistic or individualistic values, tends to be more in favour of a certain selection process, for instance, candidates with collectivistic values would prefer selections processes that are based on respect and equality (McFarlin and Sweeney, 2001), whereas candidates with individualistic values tend to prefer selection systems that provide them with the opportunity to express their qualities and characteristics (Dipboye and Halverson; in press). Furthermore, candidates with collectivistic values appear to be more in favour of conducting face-to-face interviews rather than taking ability measurement tests, as they prefer a more personal approach (Steiner and Gilliland, 2001), while in contrast candidates with individualistic values appear to be more likely in favour of taking ability measurement tests that allow them to showcase their abilities and skills. Therefore, the importance of the societal culture to any organisation's HRM practices can be illuminated and its worth should be taken into consideration within each step of the recruitment process.

### **2.4.3 Performance Appraisal**

Another aspect within any organisation's HRM practices and policies that falls under the overwhelming influence of societal culture is performance appraisal and management. Performance appraisal can be explained as the process of analysing, monitoring, scrutinizing, evaluating and developing HRM practices and policies within the organisation (Cardy and Dobbins, 1994). According to Borman (1991), the organisational performance can be improved through performance management and one of the main aims of any organisation is the management of its workers performance. A definition of performance management can be drawn out from Dowling et al (1999) in their definition of multinational companies' performance management as "a calculated HRM practice that provides organisations with the opportunity to evaluate and improve their employees and departments according to the organisation's goals and aims". Whenever a performance appraisal criterion is accurately set, the impact it will reflect on the organisation will always be of positive nature (Sparrow et al, 1994).

Shen (2004), states that the process of performance appraisal helps with harnessing individuals' personal and collective enthusiasm, as performance appraisal helps employees maintain full awareness of the requirements of their tasks, which will contribute to their job satisfaction. Ferris and Treadway (in press) stressed that performance management and appraisal systems can be influenced by the cultural

values and the way individuals react and accept those systems. Moreover, Stone-Romero and Stone (2002) further shed more light on the relation between cultural values and performance management and appraisal systems by identifying the aspects that are affected by cultural values, including the appraisal systems effectiveness levels, how workers perceive these appraisal and management systems, the techniques employed to evaluate workers performance, the approach in which feedbacks are conveyed to workers and the development of job success criteria.

With regards to workers' response to their feedback results, Stone-Romero and Stone (2002) showcased the different responses in relation to negative feedback between individuals with collectivistic values and individuals with individualistic values in terms of: emotion, behaviour and consequence. The results were as follows: collectivistic individuals tend to face negative feedback with shame, they tend to seek further improvement regarding their performance as a response to the negative feedback and the consequence of this negative feedback can be seen through rectifying their performance. For individuals with individualistic values, they tend to face negative feedback with anger, they tend to conceive this negative feedback as a result of a personal feud on the feedback agent's behalf and they respond negatively to the feedback, without any rectification to their current behaviour.

To a similar degree, performance appraisal methods are affected by societal culture values shared by the employees of an organisation. Arvey, Bhagat and Salas (1991) highlighted the effect of shared values on performance appraisal methods in cases where individualistic cultures tend to prefer objective methods that stress achievements and accomplishments. Furthermore, formal and standardized methods of performance appraisal are favoured. However, collectivistic cultures tend to find these methods revolting and upsetting as they promote competitiveness among and endanger the sense of harmony and unity between the organisation's employees (Erez, 1994). Therefore, the level of alignment with societal culture values can be the deciding factor for the incorporated methods of performance appraisal (Stone et al, 2007).

#### **2.4.4 Training Programmes**

Similarly, the training process within every organisation is affected by societal culture. Goldstein (1991) highlighted the fact that almost all organisations have training programmes in order to improve their workers' skills abilities to execute their tasks

perfectly. However, in modern times diversity in the workplace has become a common theme as well as in cross-cultural organisations. Therefore, workers might possess different personal qualities to one another. Stone-Romero et al (2003) elaborated on this situation in the case of individuals sharing different values having contrasting understandings of what is expected on their behalf. Thus, in order for both different sets of individuals to perform their tasks as expected, training programmes are required to take place. In addition, these programmes would assist workers to maintain the same vision towards achieving the aims of the organisation. Understanding the complications that might result from this case can be developed through the following situation. Individuals with individualistic values tend to accomplish their tasks separately without the need to be given any commands from their superiors, while individuals with collectivistic values tend to be under the impression of accomplishing their tasks in groups or teams after receiving commands and instructions from their superiors (Stone and Stone-Romero, 2004). Aycan (2003) suggested that the type of culture could determine the training implemented within an organisation. Aycan provided an example where training programmes could be based on performance. That can be the case in individualistic cultures, where individuals are concerned with performing at the highest level. A study by Papalexandris and Panayotopoulou (2004) found a great connection between organisations' perceptions on training and cultural dimensions. This study exhibited the importance in which organisations view those training programmes.

In addition, training programmes can be imposed upon organisations, as in the case of Saudi Arabia, in order to minimize the amount of foreign labour (Kayed and Hassan, 2011). This was one of the main requirements of the Saudization initiative started by the Saudi government. Black and Mendenhall (1990) highlighted the positive consequences of installing training programmes within aspects of limiting the excessive costs spent on attracting foreign workers as well as maintaining a low employee turnover. As for the impact of societal culture on the effectiveness of these training programmes, a significant impact surely exists, as Dunn et al (1989) declared when values of individuals are aligned with the methods implemented in the training programmes, the outcomes of these programmes are usually satisfactory, which is a logic shared by McIntyre (1996). McIntyre suggested that in order for training programmes to be fully effective, organisations need to set up their training programmes with great

consideration to the trainees' cultural features. Societal culture represents a crucial element that significantly affects human resource practices and policies.

#### **2.4.5 Compensation and Rewards**

Another HR practice that is influenced by societal culture is rewarding and a financial system of any organisation can influence the morale of the organisation's employees and inspire their performances as claimed by Kanfer (1990). Stone et al (2007) recognised compensation and rewarding systems as a tool used by organisations to acquire potential personnel by increasing the desirability of the organisation's vacancies, inspiring existing personnel in achieving certain goals (such as; achieving a desired standard of customer satisfaction, team work performance, improving the organisation's financial status) and attracting new personnel into the organisation.

As for the relation between societal culture and rewarding and compensation systems' effectiveness, Joshi and Martocchio (in press) explained how the values of the employees culture can affect the rewarding and compensation system of an organisation and the level of success this system can achieve, as the rewarding and compensation system needs to involve the values shared by the employees of an organisation in order to be fully effective.

Erez (1994) illuminated how the financial aspect of compensation and rewarding systems can be of such high importance through explaining that employees within an organisation use rewarding systems as a tool to appraise their own performances. Furthermore, these rewarding systems can be an invisible element in providing employees with the required motivation in order to reach the aspired work rate preferred by the organisation (Erez, 1994). However, Erez (1994) stated that each type of societal culture (collectivistic and individualistic) emphasizes focus on different aspects within the financial rewarding and compensation system accordingly to the values shared by the employees. Tornblom et al (1985) shed more light on the focus of both individualistic and collectivistic cultures by stating the differences in rewarding systems between those two cultures. Within cultures that share individualistic values, the rewarding and compensation systems are almost constantly based on equity, as they meet the individualistic aim of achievement and autonomy. Whereas, Bond et al (1982) cited that the compensation and rewarding systems in collectivistic cultures are usually

based on equality, and this culture encourages group spirit and unity among its individuals.

Fadil et al (2005) supports the previous argument by stating that when it comes to rewards and compensation, Western societies (individualistic) appear to be in favour of equity, whereas, Eastern societies (collectivistic) appear to be in favour of equality. For example, the Korean culture adapts a collectivistic culture. The individuals within an organisation aim towards creating harmony within their group and are willing to compromise their personal interests for the sake of the group, in terms of rewards and compensation (Change and Hahn, 2004).

In addition, Eastern societies view the fair distribution of rewards to include all participating individuals and to be compensated equally. In support of equality, Chen (1995) clarified the gains of adopting equality in the rewards system, including unity, harmony and solidarity within the group, as well as putting aside inter-personal disagreements for the sake of the collective group. Interestingly, participating members within the individualistic culture find the rewarding and compensation systems of collectivistic cultures to be inappropriate and unfair (Deutsch, 1975). Furthermore, Western societies take the view that fair distribution of rewards should be based on the relation between the input and the output as well as the amount of the contribution made by the individual (Deutsch, 1985). As for the non-financial aspect of rewarding and compensation systems, there are several benefits that represent this non-financial aspect, including: flexible working hours, compensated vacations, health coverage, retirement pensions and access to organisation facilities. These feature heavily among individualistic cultures and to a lesser extent by collectivistic cultures, excluding flexible work hours (Joshi and Martocchio; in press). Stone et al (2006) further explained how this specific aspect would affect individuals from both cultures (individualistic and collectivistic) by arguing that employees with individualistic values are more likely to appreciate the benefits that correspond with futuristic elements such as retirement pension plans, as well as compensation and rewarding systems, that provide them with the opportunity to manufacture the structure of their benefit packages. On the other hand, individuals with collectivistic shared values often tend to appreciate the benefits that provide them with the opportunity to be more involved with their families, including flexible working hours and compensated vacations. Thus, Joshi and Martocchio (in press) came to the conclusion that these individuals with

collectivistic values are consistently leaning towards the benefits that ensure their families well-being and livelihoods. Therefore, Stone et al (2007) suggest that the societal culture values shared by individuals of any culture, heavily influence the degree of success in these compensation and rewarding systems and how they are perceived by the employees as well as influencing the way these compensation and rewarding systems are structured in order to be embraced by the employees within any organisation.

Moreover, adopting the most convenient reward system within organisations greatly contributes to job satisfaction among employees, whereas job dissatisfaction within organisations could end up resulting in high levels of stress on the employees behalf, which leads to several negative consequences such as decline in performance, increase in absenteeism and losing the commitment and loyalty of the employees that will eventually reflect badly on staff turnover (Miller et al, 1990). Furthermore, Benkhoff's (1997) study showed very strong ties linking employees' turnover with levels of job satisfaction and commitment. Lok and Crawford (2003) offered an explanation for the scenario when employees are dissatisfied with their jobs. This scenario starts with employees looking for other career alternatives while exhibiting lack of commitment to their current jobs and if their pursuit of alternative careers do not materialize, they lose interest in their current jobs even if they decide to stay in their current positions. Riketta (2002) reflected on the importance of maintaining high levels of employee commitment and loyalty due to the fact that those two aspects are crucial to the whole performance of the organisation.

## **2.5 Gaps in the Literature**

After exploring the existing literature associated with HRM and societal culture, it is clear that there is a gap in literature. Moreover, the majority of the research on societal culture and HRM practices was conducted three decades ago. In addition, much of this research does not take into account recent developments in HRM within the region of Saudi Arabia in the last decade. As a result, this section will discuss the shortcomings of the existing literature and aim to provide scientific rationale for this research to be conducted.



Smale (2007) commented on the limited amount of literature available on HRM practices specifically for multinational corporations that have adopted HRM practices in foreign countries. Smale cited Sparrow (2006) in support of the idea that the existing literature currently lacks in both scope and volume. Furthermore, there is a need for researches linking HRM practices and knowledge of the complex elements within the culture surrounding organisations. Smale (2007) also stated, that although interest has grown in HRM within MNCs during the past twenty years, the existing literature is being critiqued and faulted for its single-mindedness in drawing out general tendencies and overall themes without exploring the multiple layers of details underneath these themes and trends. The HR policies adopted by organisations and their societal impacts were missing elements that these studies overlooked, according to Edwards and Kuruvilla (2005).

The issue of religion was illuminated as another gap in the literature. This was the focus of Mellahi and Budhwar's research. Their main argument addressed the role being given to religion within the existing literature and how religion figured as an ineffective element in the workplace. This research dismissed the impact of religion in the workplace, suggesting that it does not command an integral part in organisations. This argument was supported by Matiaske and Grozinger (2010), who stated that employees' behaviour in the workplace is not affected by any religious influence. However, recent interest in the religious impact on behaviour in the workplace proved that religion has emerged as a significant element in the workplace, specifically regarding HRM practices. The emerging significance of religion in employment practices was highlighted by Budhwar and Fadzil (2000), management styles by Reave (2005), workplace ethics by Weaver and Agle (2002) and job satisfaction by King and Williamson (2005).

Brannine and Pollard (2009) addressed the shortage of literature in linking HRM with societal culture from several angles. Specifically, the religious aspect of culture which has been established in the literature review chapter; Islamic teachings are a strong element in the societal culture of Saudi Arabia. Firstly, although interest in management within Arab countries has been renewed and has drawn much attention after the financial crisis of 2008, this interest mostly focused on the banking and economics principles from an Islamic view without any consideration of the cultural context. Secondly, efforts to explain the cultural context were purely based on opinions and

theories without any supporting factual studies. Thirdly, even though management practices in Arab countries implement both western and Islamic philosophies, the focus has been mostly on western philosophies. Finally, Brannine and Pollard (2009) found that the HR principles which are being taught based upon the studies conducted by Hofstede (1980), which included Saudi Arabia, cannot be applied in real life and often clash with reality. They suggested that there is a genuine need to address the cultural context within this topic in order to fill the existing gap in the literature.

Another study that highlighted the lack of existing literature was conducted by Syed and Ali (2010). They have stated that there is a massive area within HRM practices involving the Islamic societal culture that remains uncharted. Many studies, such as Flynn and Ghanmi (2008), cover the western and global aspects, but Saudi Arabia and its surrounding region were not covered in these studies. Furthermore, Syed and Ali (2010) suggested that a need exists to explore this uncharted territory with comprehensive studies that will help examine the current situation, which can help western businesses develop a better understanding of the societal culture existing in the region. Also, one of their main recommendations involves conducting a study on a single country, which is one of the objectives of this research.

Also, Mellahi et al. (2011) suggested that, although Middle Eastern countries (including Saudi Arabia) had reached great heights in the business world recently, knowledge of its management practices is still limited. Mellahi et al. added that, to date, little knowledge has been produced regarding the area's HR management practices, and—considering the growing importance of the region—there is a need to expand this knowledge. Mellahi et al. cited Godley and Shechter's (2008) research on organisations and their practices in support of their argument, which stated that, although Middle Eastern countries carry great political and economical value around the world, they remain surprisingly detached and unapproachable. Furthermore, the research went on to discuss how much interest in the Middle East centers on its politics and ongoing turbulence. Consequently, the majority of the literature generated about the region addresses political issues rather than organisation issues (Kamalipour 1997). Moreover, it is assumed that, since the region is in contentious disorder, it must be barren of any successful organisations. However, Kavoussi (2000) pointed out numerous organisations based in the region are successful and profitable. The conclusion is that

the Middle East warrants more exposure within the management literature (Mellahi et al., 2011).

Another research project highlighting the shortcomings in the existing literature was conducted by Ryu et al. (2010). This study addressed the gaps in the literature from the angle of collectivistic cultures and the studies conducted previously. Its argument stems from the basis that the majority of studies conducted on collectivistic cultures focused on a superficial level without in-depth analysis of collectivistic tendencies. Moreover, the majority of these studies did not take into account the significant impact of national cultures. Also, Ryu et al. addressed that the majority of such studies (Hofstede 1991) were in fact conducted in western countries, where individualistic culture is the prevailing culture. Ryu et al. added that these studies ignored the element of national culture, which instills most values in individuals belonging to a collectivistic culture. Instead, they focused on relationships within organisations. Finally, Ryu et al. highlighted the importance of expanding on the knowledge of the national culture element, as the global economy is increasing. Therefore, developing an accurate understanding of collectivistic cultures is crucial.

Rokhman (2010) addressed another gap in the management literature: the work ethic practiced in Islam. Rokhman's study showed that, even though interest has amplified regarding the topic of work ethic, most of this interest involves the West, such as the United States and Europe, where a minority embraces the Islamic work ethic. Therefore, these studies do not represent the true picture of an Islamic work ethic. As a result, the topic remains mostly unexplored. Rokhman concluded that there is a need to expand on the Islamic work ethic in the literature, due to the sizable numbers of individuals who adopt this work ethic and to counter some of the misconceptions issued about the Islamic work ethic.

Furthermore, Weber (1982) argued that no economy could be sustained in an Islamic environment because most of the requirements of capitalism are in contradiction with Islamic teachings. Rokhman countered this misconception by citing Abeng (1997), noting that one of the most fundamental elements of human life and faith in Islam is work. Also, Rokhman cited Arslan's (2000) empirical study to counter Weber's misconception concerning the effectiveness of Islamic work ethics. Arslan's study involved Turkish and British managers measuring their performances in terms of

effectiveness in management. In this study, Turkish managers received higher points in effectiveness tests than British managers even though the study was conducted within a Protestant Work Ethic context. Therefore, Rokhman considered Weber's argument regarding work in Islam as invalid and not representative of the actual situation. This increases the need to explore and research the management practices in Islamic countries.

Finally, given the lack of development in the area of research investigating societal culture and HRM practices, and in light of Saudi Arabia emerging as an increasingly global key player in world economics, the importance of societal culture on HRM cannot be side-lined. This research seeks to build on this area and the rise of the global organization and global HRM. On a different note, Mellahi and Budhwar (2010) addressed another gap in the existing literature. Mellahi and Budhwar (2010) argued that, although Islam has generated immense interest, the majority of this interest has overlooked the link between Islam and HRM practices. For example, (Tayeb, 1997) and has addressed leadership in Islam (Weir 2008), management and gender Metcalfe (2007), marketing (Hashim and Mizerski 2010), and accounting and finance (Cong and Liu 2009). All of those researchers share the view that an empirical research related to HRM in Saudi Arabia is yet to be covered in a comprehensive sense.

## **2.6 Summary**

In summary, this chapter introduced the key concepts that would represent the core of the targeted literature, which were Saudi Arabian societal culture and the link between societal culture and HRM practices. The literature on Islamic work ethics was discussed, as those ethics are responsible for the makeup of shared values. This view was found to be the case among the entirety of the literature on Saudi Arabian societal culture and its shared values. After that, the literature was investigated further in the context of how religion manifests in the workplace, and the views confirming its existence and the views in opposition. As a result of this investigation, Islamic culture employees were found to be exercising their religious values in the workplace and those values proved to be essential in the way those collectivistic individuals conduct themselves. The following section then implored the significance of societal culture in the context of HRM practices. More importantly is how the level of success of HRM

practices is dependent on the degree of implementation of societal cultural values. This significance was shown through example cases from Sri Lanka and Malaysia. Moreover, for the purpose of maintaining an accurate focus throughout the investigation, the collectivism-individualism dimension was introduced in order to investigate the impact of societal culture on HRM practices within this particular scope. The use of dimension was considered beneficial as it provides the perfect fit for the aim of the research, as it examines Saudi Arabian individuals from the basis of their societal culture. This element proved key in the process of implementing this dimension rather than other tools such as the Maslow paradigm, which look at individuals as singular entities rather than collectively. Furthermore, this dimension would be used later on to create comparisons with the findings of the case study implemented in this research. The next step after adopting this dimension was to examine the impact of each societal culture (collectivistic and individualistic) on the five HRM practices. Each type of societal culture appeared to have preferred HRM practices and policies based on their shared values. All of those preferred HRM practices were highlighted for the purposes of being used in comparison against the findings of the SAEI case study. After investigating the literature, several critiques and remarks were observed and resulted in the final section of this chapter. This section highlighted the gaps concerned with Saudi Arabian societal culture and the link between societal culture and HRM practices. Among those gaps, the existing literature was found to be in dire need of further empirical study, as cited by the majority of researchers involved in this particular area of research. There were many complaints citing that the majority of attention has been directed towards the relationship between politics and economics with HRM practices and policies. While other researchers bemoaned the lack of literature available on Saudi Arabia and the Middle Eastern region. Some of those researchers argued that even several of the available studies were anecdotal and theoretical, and could not be considered sufficient for a region with such growing significance in the world of trade and business. On the other hand, the majority of research concerned with the region predated many significant events, which ushered the introduction of new variables and factors such as the Internet and the emergence of new immeasurable wealth of resources. Based on those remarks made by the researchers and findings of the existing literature, this study was able to develop an idea of an appropriate methodology and framework to answer its questions and assist in addressing the gaps identified.

Chapter 3:  
Methodology & Framework

## **Chapter 3 – Methodology and Framework**

### **3.1 Introduction**

After reviewing the existing literature, an appropriate methodology was found to be most suitable for the aims and objectives of the research. The main aim of this chapter is to explain the methodology adopted in this research in an effort to answer the research questions and satisfy the aims. The adopted methodology and framework were developed with the help of the existing literature. This section will begin with the use of a single case study approach implemented in the investigation. Moreover, this section will provide support as to why it is thought that this approach is beneficial and appropriate for the aims of the research. The next step involves the philosophical stance implemented throughout the investigation and how a particular stance was found to be appropriate. Furthermore, other philosophical stances that were not adopted were mentioned as well as the justification for not choosing them. The following steps will review the most common methods and techniques of data collection, highlighting the differences between the two methods, while naming the most commonly used instruments within both. After that, the research will announce the chosen methodology adopted for the data collection process along with the reasoning behind its choice of methodology instruments. The following section will explain the framework developed for the research and starts from the origins of this investigation to discuss its aims, objectives and questions. Then, there will be the development of the research methodology, including a diagram highlighting the steps involved in the data collection process. Following the data collection framework, a description of each step involved in the process will be carried out in order to provide a full understanding of each stage of the framework. This will continue all the way to the latter stages after the data collection, including the findings of the data collection process and the analysis of those findings, to developing conclusions and future recommendations. The next element involves the analysis techniques that will be incorporated for both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. Next, this section will exhibit the steps followed in order to determine the sample size required. In addition, a brief background of the participants will be provided to give a clear idea of the individuals involved in the process. Furthermore, the parameters used to identify the sample size will be explained and defined. The following section reviews the design of each research (qualitative &

quantitative) instrument adopted in the data collection process. This section breaks down how each of the five HRM practices will be constructed in the interviews and questionnaires with the exclusion of training programmes practice. Finally, a conclusion of the data collection process will close the chapter, describing every detail and occurrence before, during and after the data collection process.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, this research aims to investigate the impact of Saudi Arabian societal culture on five specific HRM practices within the public and private sectors. As a consequence of this aim, the research needs to address several points. One point is to investigate the presence of Saudi Arabian societal culture within the organisational context. Another point is to review the five specific HRM practices and determine if societal culture exercises any influence. This review will examine those five specific HRM practices within the public and private sectors. Finally, a logical theoretical chain resulting from connecting the points examined in the investigation will be developed.

### **3.1.1 Use of a Case Study**

Tellis (1997) defined case study methodology as the study where the views of the involved parties under study being incorporated. According to Zonabend (1992), cases that are being given dedicated consideration through analysis, reconstruction and monitoring are called case studies. The use of case of studies could be beneficial, as they represent the ideal medium to investigate an unknown phenomenon (Yin, 1994). Moreover, adopting a case study could provide a sense of the surrounding environment within a case, which may not have been detected otherwise. Flyvbjerg (2006) added that a case study does not deliver a theoretical knowledge, which many researchers frown upon. However, a case study delivers practical knowledge based on the topic at hand. A case study is usually defined by several parameters. According to Yin (1994), the first of those parameters is the focus on a particular existing phenomenon, as in the case of this research where Saudi societal culture is considered the focus. The second parameter is procedural traits including variables, data generating sources, designs for collecting this data and their analysis. The third parameter is defining the type of case study descriptive, explanatory or exploratory. In the case of this research, the choice would be an exploratory case study, as the phenomenon in question is underexplored, which has been established in the previous chapter. The fourth parameter is the number of cases to be involved in the research, a single case or various cases. For this research a



single-case has been chosen to provide an in-depth focused analysis. Moreover, Saudi Airlines has warranted a single-case status due to the unique situation of privatization occurring at the time of conducting this research. In addition, Tellis (1997) described the single-case design as appropriate for exploratory studies where a phenomenon was unreachable before. The final parameter is the methodology of choice, quantitative, qualitative or both. A mixed-methods approach has been adopted for this research, which will be explained in detail later in this chapter. Based on Yin (2014) blueprint for case studies another aspect needs to be defined. This aspect is called “Unit of Analysis”. Yin (2014) defined the unit of analysis as the case’s sources of information. Examples for these sources could range from people within an organization to annual reports whether they are financial or performance related. In this research, the unit of analysis is Saudi Arabian Airlines, which include HR managers and engineers working at SAEI. The managers and engineers are included due to their involvement in the semi-structured interviews and the questionnaires. As a result, they are considered sources of information. This multiplicity in units of analysis leads the case study to fall under the embedded design category, where a case has more than one unit of analysis (Yin, 2014).

### **3.2 Philosophical Stance**

As with all research, a philosophical stance must be adopted by the researchers. The adoption of a certain stance would incorporate how researchers go about their design and the manner they obtain data. Furthermore, the choice of a specific stance is dependent on the research’s aims and questions. Guba and Lincoln (2005) simply stated that a philosophical stance encompasses the set of assumptions and attitudes that dictate the approach needed to answer the research questions. As for the philosophical stance, Crotty (1998) identified several stances that can be deployed in research (i.e. the positivist stance, the post positivist stance, constructivist stance, pragmatist stance, phenomenological stance and participatory stance).

However, the stance that most relates to the aspects of this research is constructivist with a great degree of realism. Realism has been defined as the belief that the human interpretation of an entity’s existence does not represent the only explanation of that existence (Philips 1987). Bhaskar (1978) defined realism through addressing that there exists an external actuality despite what researchers believe to be the reality. Gummesson (2002) described realism stance as the medium where interconnected entities interact within makeups that form external reality. Furthermore, the realistic

stance could be dependent on place and time to determine which realities are considered, whilst it is a given that the real world has its own views regardless of researchers' views (Riege, 2003). Pawson and Tilley (1997) highlighted the main aim realists by stating that a phenomenon could be explained through a host of explanations, not only one, while those explanations are constructed by different components for different contexts.

So, how does the realism stance impact the research? One of the chief impacts is constructing prior theory. Miles and Huberman (1994) have always advocated the importance of developing initial theoretical framework based on the literature associated with the phenomenon prior to the data collection phase. Perry et al. (1999) explained prior theory as the process preceding the data collection, where researchers investigate the external reality researched in the existing literature. Moreover, researchers share the belief that all views expressed are merely perspectives on this particular external reality. Another impact on realism research design is the use of two phases (Sobh and Perry, 2005). The first phase involves embarking upon exploring the existing literature before conducting any interviews. This exploration assists researchers in identifying the key topics when they arise during the interviews. Furthermore, this exploration helps honing the interview questions that would lead to effective and well-organized interview (Hyde, 2000). The second phase is conducting convergent interviews. In those interviews, the researcher could determine the aspects that require emphasis. Sometimes reading the literature alone does not provide researchers with the sense of where critical issues could be addressed (Sobh and Perry, 2005). Thus, Perry (1998) suggested that prior theory could help in providing an understanding of an external reality of a phenomenon, while this prior theory is considered as supporting confirmation of this understanding. Another chief impact within realism research is triangulation. As mentioned in the definitions of realism approach, a realist approach aims to provide a host of answers for a particular phenomenon (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). In this aspect, the same question could be asked of different interviewees in order to obtain every possible angle on the matter in question. Thus, aiming to achieve all possible understandings from the interviewees.

On the other hand, a constructivist stance can describe the investigation undertaken to understand a phenomenon, with the research being constructed from the ground up. However, both philosophies can coexist within a single piece of research, as was

highlighted by Maxwell (2012), who stated that it can be acceptable to adopt an approach that possesses constructivist views while retaining an ontological realism. This approach can be described as critical realism, where individuals consider their understanding of the world a product of their own opinions and judgments while believing that this world's existence is independent of their perceptions and constructions. This view was shared by Shadis et al. (2002), who addressed this coexistence through their declaration that all scientists share the view that the world's ideologies and ontology command a chief role in expanding the knowledge of science, making these scientists epistemological constructivists and relativists.

Creswell and Clark (2011) explained the constructivist stance as the approach aiming to understand the meaning of a phenomenon by gaining subjective opinions from individuals participating in the research. These subjective opinions will be used to shape general themes and all-encompassing understandings. Creswell (2009) added that a constructivist paradigm is usually associated with four characteristics: generation of a theory, several participants' understandings, investigation for the purpose of understanding and paying attention to the participants' past experiences and social interaction. As a result, this philosophical stance fit this research best. Moreover, this specific stance shares similar elements with this research, stemming from the fact that this research is investigating a phenomenon involving the impact of Saudi Arabia's culture on HRM practices through obtaining subjective views of the participants shaped in the employees of Saudi Arabian Airlines. This will be followed by drawing conclusions based on the obtained knowledge to help construct patterns and themes. Then, these patterns and themes can be generalised, thereby generating a theory from the ground up, as described by Creswell and Clark (2011).

So, what does constructivist stance imply? To explore the matter further, more light will be shed on the research ontology, epistemology and methodology. Following Guba's (1990) approach, a paradigm should contain three major bases ontology, epistemology and methodology. In this research, ontology is concerned with the nature of reality, the constructivist approach aims to present the different understandings of reality from the point of view of the participants, which is represented by the views of the HR managers and engineers throughout the case study resulting in potential multiple realities. As for the research epistemology, this aspect is concerned with the relationship between the target of the research and the researcher. Within the constructivist stance, data is

collected on-site where participants are located; this conveys a degree of closeness between the researcher and the participants. Epistemology is shown in this research through arranged structure of a data collection process spread out over seven weeks at SAEI's facility and HR department. Finally, as for the methodology aspect of the stance, as mentioned above, the opinions of the participants are utilised and gathered in order to generate generalisations and theories. This will be accomplished through incorporating a mixed-methods approach utilising qualitative and quantitative research instruments and adopting a case study approach. Therefore, this stance can be described as inductive.

### **3.3 Introduction to the Methodology**

There are essentially two types of techniques with regards to data collection in management research: qualitative techniques and quantitative techniques. Throughout the literature, each technique fits certain types of research, meaning that the selection of which technique to implement is essentially dependent on the research itself, specifically, the research aim, objectives, questions and argument. Furthermore, the size of the sample involved in the data collection process can dictate which technique is more convenient to the researcher and more capable of providing satisfactory outcomes for the research. The qualitative technique has been defined as an instrument of investigation within an academic frame (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). Moreover, qualitative research has been defined as an understanding of the meaning of a specific social experience with the use of a set of qualitative technique tools (Van Maanen 1983). Qualitative techniques usually incorporate in-depth interviews involving small numbers of individuals participating.

Easterby-Smith et al. (2002) describe qualitative methods as the instruments to be used in a situation where an individual gains further access into an organisation. On the other end of the scale, quantitative technique has been defined as a statistical investigation using computer-based and mathematical procedures to study a social experience Given (2008). Moreover, the quantitative technique has been defined as the systematic procedure of obtaining knowledge regarding a social phenomenon via the use of numerical data (Burns and Grove 2005). The quantitative technique is often associated with questionnaires, involving a larger sample than the sample used in qualitative research in order to provide hard scientific facts. Both techniques are legitimate, as the use of each technique depends on the philosophical stance adopted by the researcher

and on which technique can yield the best outcomes for the research. Accordingly, the decision of which methodology technique to be deployed is a decision of great importance to the whole research, as the accurate choice of methodology fosters valid and precise outcomes that will add value to the research. As for this research, the qualitative technique has been chosen to be implemented with regard to the data collection. The selection of the qualitative approach is based on number of elements recognized while studying both techniques throughout the literature and exploring other research incorporating both techniques.

This research investigates the impact of Saudi Arabia's culture on HRM practices and policies within one of the renowned organisations in the country, Saudi Arabian Airlines, specifically, the Saudi Aerospace Engineering Industries department (SAEI). This investigation involves a small sample of individuals, specifically senior HR managers, who are responsible for legislating HRM policies and practices. Therefore, this part of the investigation will involve conducting one-on-one in-depth semi-structured interviews in order to gain insights into their perceptions of the processes implemented by the organisation and their personal opinions on the work proceedings. Also, this interview process will help capture any specific inclinations shown by the managers that cannot be captured through filling out a survey. Moreover, these semi-structured interviews will allow the research to address any questions that may surface throughout the interviewing procedure. Furthermore, qualitative techniques, including in-depth semi-structured interviews, provide further access, as highlighted by Wright (1996), who commented on the advantage of deploying a qualitative technique such as conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews with senior managers. The deployment of in-depth semi-structured interviews gave the interviewees space to explain the context of their work accurately, convey their personal insights, provide their own understanding of their organisations' policies and further demonstrate their expertise within the market (Wright, 1996). Furthermore, conducting semi-structured interviews enabled inquiry into the interviewees' responses, something that could not be accomplished with mass questionnaires. The reason for choosing the semi-structured interviews is that this type of interviews allows the research to address any issues that might rise during interviews. Moreover, the topics or themes of the interview are identified. These aspects highlight the suitability of this type of interviews over the other two, structured and unstructured interviews. On the other hand, in the case of unstructured interviews, researchers rely on observations to define their participants

(DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). The same could be said about structured interviews, as they are more focused towards obtaining quantitative data. Furthermore, as this research focuses on culture, there is a need to capture and explore the impact of culture on HRM practices, opinions, views etc. This impact can only be captured not measured.

Moreover, a quantitative approach will be used by distributing questionnaires targeting the employees of SAEI. The purpose of this additional data gathering is to understand the employees' point of views regarding the practices and policies implemented by the organisation. Conducting this questionnaire will add a further dimension to the research questions and provide a 2-sided view into HRM practices. Also, the outcomes of the questionnaires will complement the outcomes of the in-depth interviews and help cover the majority of aims and objectives targeted. Conducting in-depth interviews will enable the researcher to grasp understandings, perceptions and attitudes of individuals. Questionnaires, on the other hand, will enable the researcher to depict the unique patterns that found among certain groups of individuals (Kendall, 2008).

### **3.3.1 Adoption of a Mixed-Methods Approach**

The implementation of a mixed-methods approach is not the conventional methodological approach used by researchers. However, before delving into the justification for adopting a mixed-methods approach in this research, this approach needs to be defined. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) defined it as the inclusion of both quantitative and qualitative instruments within a single research methodology. Moreover, Creswell and Clark (2011) defined it as an approach that combines one method to collect words (qualitative) and another method to collect numbers (quantitative). Another definition used by Johnson et al. (2007) is that the mixed-methods approach is an effort to foster an in-depth and wide-ranging understanding by combining aspects of quantitative and qualitative research approaches. A further definition include the one by Greene et al. (1989) stating adopting a design incorporating a qualitative approach along with a quantitative approach without following any research paradigm. Another definition by Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) highlighted that a mixed-methods approach where data are analysed, findings are produced and conclusions are drawn, as a result of utilising a quantitative and a qualitative instruments within a study.

Each study looks for the best methodology to address its research questions. To implement a mixed-methods approach, there needs to be strong conviction for the researcher to follow that path. Why is there a need to utilise quantitative and qualitative approaches in one research? Creswell and Clark (2011) highlighted several points that call for implementing this approach. Firstly, each of the quantitative and qualitative approaches draws focus to certain perspectives. Therefore, both approaches do not provide an overall outcome. Secondly, each approach has its own limitations. For instance, the quantitative approach is designed to gather information on a large scale without providing an in-depth understanding, while the qualitative approach can draw out an in-depth analysis that cannot be applied on a large population, leading the research to lose its ability to generalise any outcomes. Thirdly, in certain situations, studies are required to collect data across different levels within an organisation, as is the case in this research. Therefore, in order for these studies to develop a complete understanding, a mixed-methods approach should be implemented to gather the required data from the different levels. Finally, the implementation of a single approach might not provide answers to all of the research questions. For example, Knodel and Saentienchai (2005) stated that their study on HIV required both qualitative and quantitative approaches and that their research would have been inadequate if they had been restricted to a quantitative approach.

So, what merits the implementation of a mixed-methods approach? According to Creswell and Clark (2011), mixed-methods can be used when exploratory findings are needed to be generalised for two reasons. First, the region intended to be studied is uncharted or the research topic has not been explored properly before. This is the case with Saudi Arabia, which remains underexplored based on the gaps in the literature discussed previously. Second, the research is targeting a topic that contains vague variables and unknown elements, such as Saudi Arabian culture and participants' individual characteristics, as in this research. Furthermore, implementing a mixed-methods approach provides the researcher with the ability to incorporate a triangulation approach within the methodology. Triangulation can be defined as investigating research questions by implementing several research methods (Arnold, 2006). Also, triangulation has been defined by Bryman (2006) as combining a quantitative and qualitative approach in order draw out findings. So, how does triangulation benefit the research? According to Hageman (2008), implementing a mixed-methods approach to triangulate findings helps the research on two fronts. The first front is that triangulation

represents a fuller picture of a particular phenomenon. The second front involves increasing the accuracy in generalising any findings. These two fronts have summed up many researchers pleas for a research method that utilises the wide reach of surveys while maintaining in-depth analysis Arnold (2006). Moreover, Kerlinger and Lee (2000) supported the use of triangulation, stating that the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods benefits the research in overcoming any hurdles that may develop from adopting just one single method. Finally, Hageman (2008) concluded that, to understand a certain phenomenon, triangulation is a valuable instrument. Furthermore, the implementation of a triangulated approach can sustain a better, all-around assessment of the investigated topic. Another advantage related to triangulation is that this approach helps draw out further data through the implementation of various research methods that would have been overlooked had the research employed a single method Jick (1983). In addition, Breitmayer (1989) stated that using several sources in gathering data for the research could provide the triangulation approach with completeness, due to the application of several techniques of data collection. Furthermore, this completeness provides a holistic quality to the research in the matter that all efforts have been spent to draw out the best findings possible. The next question that can be asked is: what possible advantages can be gleaned from implementing a mixed-methods approach? For a start, implementing a mixed-methods approach can eliminate the shortcomings of qualitative or quantitative approaches when implemented alone, as stated by Jick (1979).

Also, this implementation provides researchers with the freedom to use any instrument that may assist them in their research. Furthermore, researchers are given the opportunity to produce more comprehensive studies that include numbers and words, as well as an in-depth analysis and larger population. As a result, researchers are able to draw out wide-ranging conclusions and outcomes when implementing the combined approach (Creswell and Clark 2011). In conclusion, the adoption of a mixed-methods approach for this research is desirable, as this research is interested in studying a phenomenon represented in Saudi Arabia's culture via employing both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data. Finally, this generated data will help draw out conclusions that can be generalised. Thus, the research components can now be illustrated in the following figure (3.1). This diagram consists of all aspects involved in the data generation and the methodology followed.



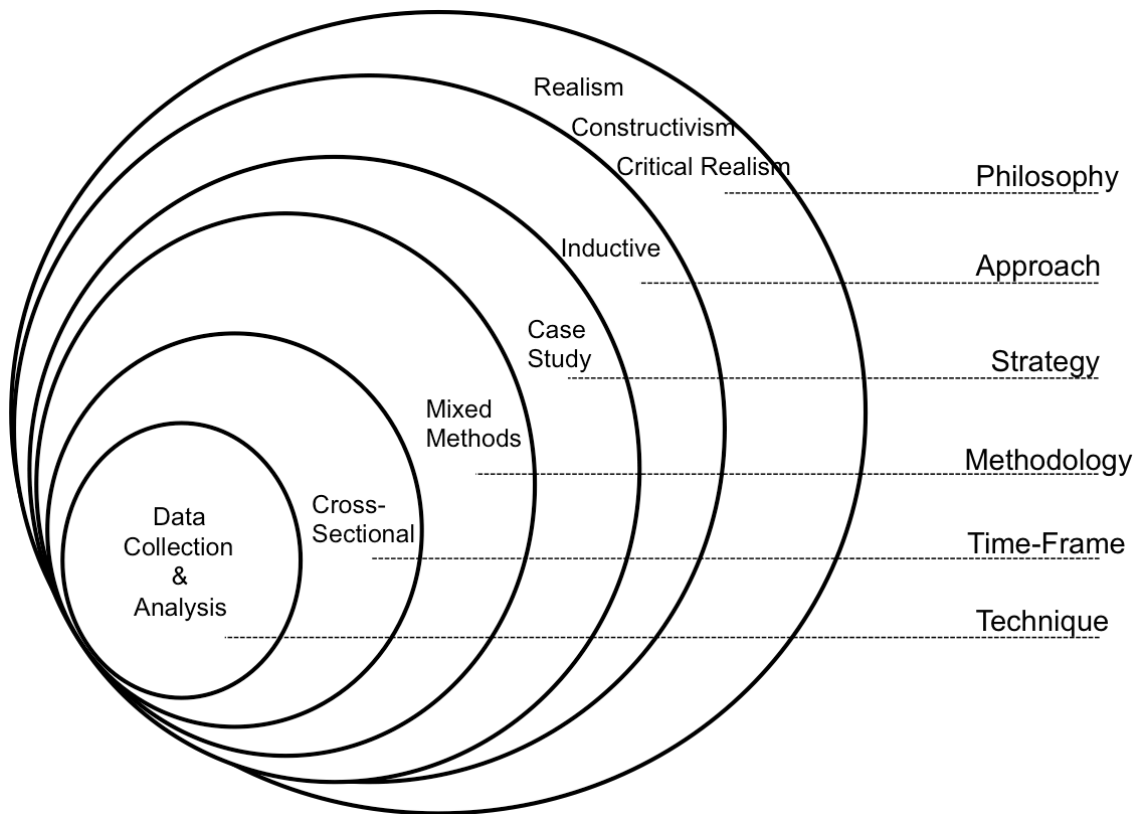


Figure.3.1: Research components.

### **3.4 Framework**

Upon exploring the literature related to societal culture and its impact on HRM practices and policies within organisations, a framework for the research can now be developed. The development of a conceptual framework can help the research maintain a focused vision on its aim and objectives, saving time and providing an opportunity for a better contribution to the research field. The exploration of the existing literature on the relation between HRM practices and societal culture helped identify the gaps within the literature. Moreover, exploring the existing literature highlighted the current shortcomings within the field, which provided this research with the opportunity to investigate specific questions. The following section will offer a developed framework for the research. This developed framework will be followed by a detailed description of each stage in the framework. The design of this framework was inspired by similar studies in the research area. Those studies were encountered during investigation of the

existing literature, where the utilisation of such framework could assist the effort of delivering a better understanding of the process followed in this research.

### **3.4.1 Stage One**

Stage one is the initiation stage of the research, which sets the aims and objectives for the research. This initial step is followed by an exploration of the literature related to the research topic on the impact of societal culture on HRM practices within organisations, specifically in the public sector. This step of the research mainly contributed to the development of a full understanding of the research topic and the issues surrounding it (helping in writing the literature review) and to the review of the existing literature (identifying where the gaps in the literature are to be found). Also, exploring the literature assisted in the following step, which is a further enhancement of the aims, objectives and outcomes from the research so that the research could provide a worthy added value to the scientific field.

The third step involves establishing communication lines with senior management at the targeted organizations, which is Saudi Arabian Airlines. The point of contacting senior management at this stage is to determine the level at which this research can be investigated, thereby recognising the level of accessibility to be granted. The fourth step is related to getting the required authorizations and permissions for the research data collection process to be executed in a later stage of the research. The fifth step is choosing the methodology to be utilized. In this research, a qualitative method will be adopted, specifically for the in-depth semi-structured interviews. The reason behind choosing this qualitative approach is the small size of the sample involved and the opportunity to conduct interviews with senior management, which will provide the data collection process with flexibility while conducting the interviews to address any emerging issues related to the research topic on the spot and obtaining valuable opinions and views that can be significant to the research and its aims. Moreover, conducting these interviews will give the interviewees the opportunity to express their opinions, enabling the researcher to obtain first hand experiences from the HR managers who deal with the HRM practices on daily basis.

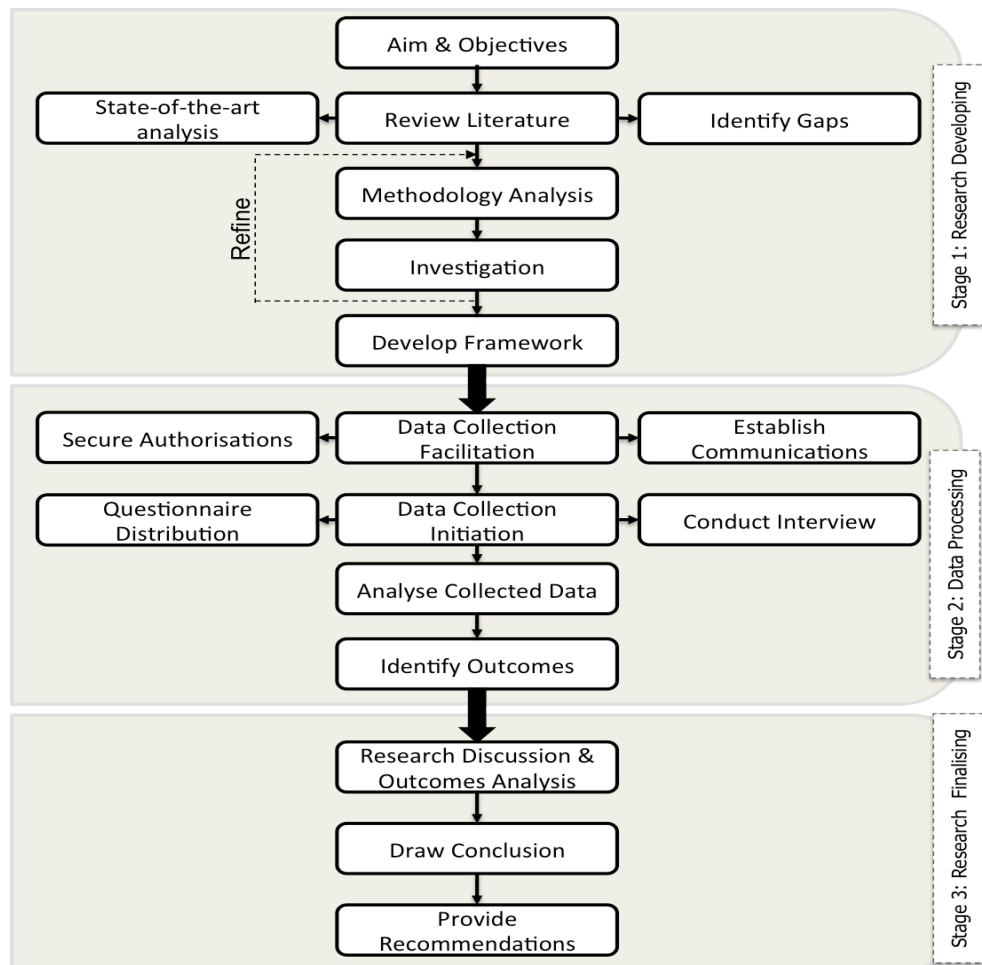


Figure.3.2: Research framework.

The sixth step is concerned with the structure of methodology, which is compiling a list of themes to ask the selected sample. Those themes will be based on the research topic and will contribute to the research questions. The seventh step is validating the proposed list of questions. Those questions will need to be validated by experts in the field of management. The point of validating the questions is to make sure that they address the points of interest in this research and that they are not trivial. At this step in the framework, there are two possibilities: firstly, approving the list of questions proposed via conducting a pilot, which will enable the research to move forward towards the next stage of the framework; secondly, rejecting the list of questions proposed, which will require going back to the methodology step and compiling a new list of questions for the data collection process.

### 3.4.2 Stage Two

Upon approving the compiled list of questions, the research will move into the next stage. Stage two will start with setting up the appointments and dates for the data

collection process (semi-structured interviews) to take place. This first step acts as a follow up and confirmation of the third step in the first stage. The second step is conducting the interviews with the senior management individuals using the approved list of compiled questions. These interviews will be transcribed and recorded for further access when needed, and the logs of these interviews will be documented. Then, the quantitative aspect of the data collection (questionnaires) process will take place. These questionnaires will be disseminated among the employees to fulfil the research aim of understanding the employees' points of view regarding the HRM practices and policies implemented by the organisation. The following step will entail analysing the acquired data from the interviews in order to extract the information that will contribute to the research topic and questions. The final step in stage two is a filtering process of the acquired data. This filtering process will be executed with respect to the research topic.

### **3.4.3 Stage Three**

#### **3.4.3.1 Qualitative Data Analysis**

The final stage of this research begins with an analysis of the findings of the data collection process. This analysis will be based on themes found within the literature. Blumer (1969) highlighted the significance of these themes by identifying their role in categorising and grouping data. This categorisation facilitates the investigation of the relations between the data. Also, the analysis will highlight any themes found throughout the data collection process. As for the analysis of the findings regarding the qualitative aspect of the data collection process, the research will adopt the approach used by Corbin and Strauss (2008), who believe that making comparisons and asking questions are two of the most important analytic tools for data analysis. Furthermore, the data display form developed by Miles and Huberman (1994) for a single case study will be adopted in order to provide a concise and clear display of the data obtained in the interviews. Miles and Huberman believe that the normal situation in displaying qualitative research analysis can be summed up as a case report with bulky, disorganised writings, which represents a great obstacle for individuals aiming to analyse any data. Thus, this research will adopt a matrix display format to illustrate the findings and outcomes of the interview process. Schatzman (1991) highlighted that researchers need to tell the story within the research findings and that the implementation of a matrix provides them with a platform to frame their story. In addition, the research will produce another data display in the shape of a contact

summery form of the interview process, which, in combination with the matrix, will provide an organized, summarized and focused presentation of the obtained data on a single page, as mentioned by Miles and Huberman (1994).

The process that has been adopted by Miles and Huberman (1994) include techniques and tactics, which help any qualitative research obtaining conclusions and validate them. These techniques were divided into two great categories; Tactics for creating meaning and Tactics for confirming findings. Miles and Huberman (1994) indicated that the use of these tactics could enhance and ensure that a study would make great sense. Nevertheless, in the case of this research, only applicable tactics were implemented, as other tactics were not appropriate for implementation. In the following section, the tactics used in both categories will be listed and explained and they are as follow:

#### **A - Meaning-Making tactics**

##### **I - Detecting Themes**

This tactics describes the situation where recurring concepts or themes are being distinguished within textual contents. Those concepts can also be identified throughout various parts within a study. Goldman (1992) stated that these themes could be easily found by the human mind, which starts creating scenarios out of those themes. However, in detecting themes, there two chief points to be considered greatly. Ross and Lepper (1980) describe the first one as the importance of remaining open to new findings and not become unwilling to accept any new possible findings. Guba (1978) addressed the second point. He stated that it is important to confirm the recurrence of themes. He used the phrase “recurring regularities” to describe the process main criteria in identifying themes. Thus, it is vital to ensure the existence of those two elements when looking for themes.

##### **II - Sensing Plausibility**

Miles and Huberman (1994) defined plausibility as the preliminary impression that requires the use of other tactics to confirm its validity. Sensing plausibility within a study context refers to detecting inkling towards a particular conclusion. This conclusion would be convenient for the researcher to reach based on the preliminary impression. However, Miles and Huberman (1994) warn researchers not to hold those

impressions as truths and they should always be subjected to further validation techniques.

### **III - Clustering**

Le Compte and Goetz (1983) described the tactic of clustering through the following questions “What things go together? What things are similar?” Miles and Huberman (1994) explained it as the consistent effort of categorizing and classifying objects into groups. Moreover, this consistent categorization of objects is a mean for researchers to develop a superior understanding of a particular phenomenon. This classification can be based on similar traits or regularities between the objects. Bulmer (1979) suggested that the basis of this clustering process is a result of the interaction between data and theory.

### **IV- Making Comparisons**

Noting contrasts and making comparisons are one of the tactics that helps the efforts of honing the understanding of the researchers. This tactic has been defined by Miles and Huberman (1994) as the natural process when examining qualitative data and proposing the question “what is the difference between Y and X?” however, comparisons need to be aligned with certain criteria to be valid. Firstly, there needs to be other entities for the comparison results to be compared against. Secondly, there is a need to ensure that there is a significant value out of making a comparison. Thirdly, there needs to be a purpose for the comparison, where comparisons are made between relevant aspects.

### **V - Factoring**

The factoring tactics is better explained as the process of identifying repeated patterns or themes through examining variables that share joint characteristics (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The main targets of factoring, and some of the previously mentioned tactics, are to identify common themes and shrink texts in the process. Furthermore, the factoring tactic assists researchers in grasping a better perception and sensitivity of the study’s dynamics.

### **VI - Building a Logical Chain of Evidence**

A logical chain of evidence can be achieved through implementing the previous tactics, which would result in a wholesome comprehension. This is considered to be more valuable than looking at each tactic conclusion separately. Nevertheless, Miles and

Huberman (1994) stressed the importance of two elements when producing a logical chain of evidence. First element is to ensure that each step is inspected and validated. Second element is to emphasize the logical aspect of each step.

## **VII - Making Theoretical Coherence**

The last tactic in making meanings is producing theoretical understanding. This tactic has been defined as the effort of explaining a behavior through connecting isolated facts mentally (Miles and Huberman, 1994). They have described this tactic as the stage where a study moves from being empirical and transforms into a conceptual study. Moreover, at this stage, researchers attempt to connect the findings of their studies in an effort to explain the phenomenon in question. Miles and Huberman (1994) identified four sequential steps in order to attain theoretical coherence. Firstly, obtaining the unconnected findings. Secondly, linking those unconnected findings together, which will result in the third step of identifying the recurring themes. Finally, researcher can pinpoint the related constructs based on the identified themes.

### **B - Validating Findings**

#### **I - Representatives' Inspection**

Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that the norm among individuals is to assume an incident or two being a representative of a certain phenomenon. This leads to a generalization that mistakenly is not proven or validated. Taversky and Kahneman (1971) add further proof by stating that, without any verification, people assume dozens of incidents based on few vague incidents. Thus, Miles and Huberman (1994) provided the most common flaws and their sources. First flaw is concerned with developing a generalization based on a unique event, which is not commonly recurring. The source of this flaw is attributed to the researcher's absence from the site. The second flaw is the researcher becoming reliant on non-representatives tactics. In this case, the researcher exhibits full dependence on plausibility alone in producing conclusions and interpretations. The third flaw is choosing an inaccurate sample of informants. For example, the researcher would choose informants based on accessibility and trivial traits.

## **II - Researcher Effects**

Those effects are explained in the manner that a researcher could be considered as an outsider according to the group (Insiders) targeted for a study. Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that the presence of an outsider would provoke unnatural occurrences among the insiders, which would lead to alteration in the normal behavior. Thus, this situation leads to creating two kinds of possible biases. The first bias might cause the study to affect the researcher's judgment, where the researcher becomes accustomed to the case accepted behaviours and norms. The second bias is the researcher affecting the case with their norms and mentality. In both cases the researcher risk marginalizing their studies credibility.

## **III - Triangulation**

Triangulation has been defined by Webb et al (1965) as utilizing numerous research techniques in an effort to authenticate a finding. Campbell and Fiske (1959) defined triangulation as implementing various validated measurements methods to test any findings that result from a study. The purpose of this triangulation process is to ensure that findings are not controverting the independent instruments. Moreover, an agreement between the two should corroborate the findings or, at the least, confirm reliability (Mathison, 1988).

## **IV - Weighting the Evidence**

This tactic involves the strength of the data being collected. Maxwell (1992) viewed this tactic through two aspects of validity, descriptive and interpretive. There are several aspects that might contribute to the strength of data. First aspect involves the informants used within the study. Miles and Huberman (1994) believed that firsthand experience of informants could add great value to the data due to their knowledge, understanding, involvement and proximity to the case. Second aspect has been concluded in a list developed by Sieber (1976). This list compromised of situations during the data collection, which would add strength to the findings. Furthermore, whatever the opposite of those situations would produce weaker data. This list consisted of the following:

- a - Researcher collecting data personally.
- b - Researcher present in-site.



c - Data collected in an informal environment.

d - Preliminary meetings took place before the data collection.

e - Researcher meeting informants separately.

f - Trust levels are high between the researcher and field-worker, if applicable.

Third aspect involved utilizing the validation tactics mentioned previously. Those tactics are researcher effects, representatives' inspection, triangulation and obtaining informants feedback. The last tactic will be explained later in this section.

### **V - Meaning of Outliers**

Miles and Huberman (1994) claimed that this tactic help research eliminates biases and develop a comprehensive perception. Those two elements could contribute greatly to strengthening findings. Furthermore, they have stressed that most findings have exceptions, which are important to be considered and not neglected. Those exceptions could be found through chosen sample for a case, which might not provide an accurate finding of the actual case being studied.

### **VI - Following up Surprises**

This approach illuminates the situation where the researcher witnesses a surprise contradicting initial beliefs prior to the data collection (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Three steps have been suggested in the effort of discovering a new theory. Firstly, investigate the elements of the surprise encountered by the researcher. Secondly, assess all dimensions of this surprise in order to understand it. Finally, searching for supporting factors that strengthen the assessment.

### **VII - Negative Evidence**

Ely et al. (1991) said that negative evidence is similar to the tactic of looking for outliers, as researchers look for evidence contradicting a certain theory or interpretation. Miller (n.d.) warned that the process of searching for negative evidence is a delicate one, as the acceptance of any evidence is considered unfavorable. Moreover, in the case of finding negative evidence, there should be an evaluation regarding the extent of positive to negative. In addition, any work could be proven wrong easily no matter how marginal the negative evidence (Miles and Huberman citing Einstein).

### **VIII - Informants Feedback**

Findings of any study could be evaluated by informants involved in the case (Denzin, 1978). This means that due to the informants experience in the field of the study, informants acquire better knowledge than researchers (Blumer, 1969). Furthermore, seeking feedback from informants regarding studies' findings is called by Bronfenbrenner (1976) "Phenomenological Validity". This feedback process could take place either during the data collection or after the completion of the study. In addition, there are two possible methods in conducting this approach. The first method is to provide informants with predictions of the findings developed by the researcher. The second approach is ask informants to examine a brief summary containing the findings and rates the level of accuracy within this summary.

#### **3.4.3.2 Quantitative Data Analysis**

As for the quantitative aspect of the data collection process, the researcher will adopt a similar approach to the one designated in accordance with the qualitative aspect. That will be done through constant evaluation and refinements of the findings and outcomes of the quantitative data upon finishing the compiling of the obtained data in Microsoft Excel. This can be done using Excel, which easily produces charts and specific data when needed. Furthermore, data can be handled straightforwardly to make comparisons between the different data sets. As for the statistical analysis of the data, the one-sample T test approach will be incorporated. This particular statistical analysis aims to identify the degree of similarities between the two sets of engineers involved in the questionnaires. The one-sample T test function by targeting a smaller sample out of a well-defined population and compare them together statistically for similarities or differences. Finally, the research will attempt to meet the criteria set out by Miles and Huberman (1994), who identified several aspects for an important display of data. The first of those several aspects is displaying the analysis and data in one environment. The second is providing the reader with the ability to make comparisons between the different sets of data. The third is facilitating the findings so that they can be directly used within a report. The last is providing the researchers with the ability to identify any area that requires further analysis. The second step of the quantitative data analysis will entail discussing the findings of the data collection process and comparing them to the existing literature while highlighting any specific circumstances that are exclusive to the interviewees' worlds that might justify the difference between them and the common

knowledge. A third step will comprise a complete summary of the research findings. This summary will provide highlights of the main points associated with the research questions, aims and objectives. Moreover, the summary will attempt to identify and describe the main themes. Finally, recommendations will be drawn out, if possible, in order to develop a medium that will enable societal cultures and HRM practices to function without any compromises. The following diagram will illustrate the procedures involved in dealing with the quantitative data generated from the data collection.

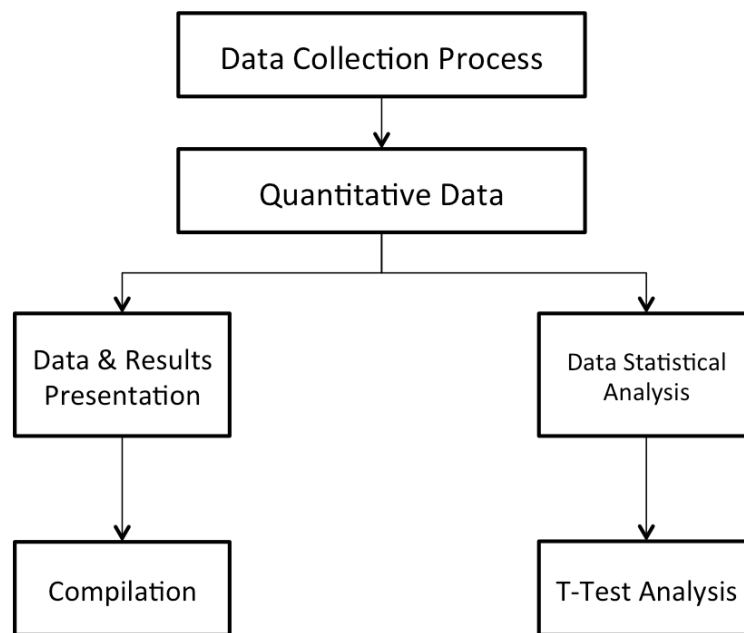


Figure.3.3: Quantitative data handling.

#### 3.4.3.2.1 Validating quantitative data

All research containing obtained data require implementing methods that would validate and substantiate the data obtained. This validation process can determine whether the research can be considered excellent or weak. However, not all validating methods have to come after obtaining the data. There are several approaches that can be utilized before the data collection to ensure the authenticity and validity of the data. While reviewing methods of validating quantitative data, there were several approaches that matched the research characteristics. There are many other validation techniques dedicated for quantitative data. However, they were not applicable in the case of this research. Thus, the applicable and suitable approaches were implemented and they are as follow:

### **I - Face validity**

This approach compromises of producing a questionnaire form based on the researcher's personal view only. The following step is to seek assistance from other individuals to evaluate the quality of the questionnaire. Those individuals are not required to be involved with the research in any way. They express their opinions whether they believe the questionnaire is sound or not. However, this approach cannot be implemented on its own, as it does not hold great scientific value. Thus, the research needs to incorporate further methods to prove the data reliability. Still, this approach is useful in the sense of developing the questionnaire and honing it gradually (Active Campaign, 2009).

### **II - Content validity**

According to Fonseca et al., 2013, this step involves defining the aspects covered in the questionnaires based on the related literature. In the case of this research, the literature placed great focus on the impact of societal culture on five particular HRM practices. Those HRM practices have been defined through examining the work of (Stone et al., 2007; Tanova and Nadiri, 2005; Sparrow et al., 1994) and other notable research in the field of culture and HRM. The exploration of existing literature determines where further investigation is needed. This investigation formulates the platform where the questionnaires can be based upon.

### **III - Expert review**

This step is the last before achieving the questionnaire form intended for the pilot study. The inclusion of experts review provides the validating process with the opportunity to enhance the quality of the questionnaire (Fonseca et al., 2013). This enhancement is achieved through getting feedback from supervisors and scholars who are highly skilled in conducting quantitative research. Based on this feedback, the questionnaire form would be altered and be ready to conduct a pilot study.

### **IV - Pilot studies**

Pilot studies can be defined in numerous ways. Baker (1994) defined them as the tool that examines and assess a research instrument. Polit et al. (2001) defined a pilot study as the procedures leading to a key research through conducting trial tests and miniature version of the study. Implementing a pilot study approach can benefit research greatly.

One of those benefits is that the pilot study can act as a warning device in case there were any flaws or inapplicability's with the research instruments (Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). Other benefits include ensuring that research protocols are suitable and applicable, develop an understanding of the effort required in the major study and improving research quality by assessing its questions and plan. For the purposes of this research, a pilot study has been conducted involving 12 engineers working in Saudi Arabian Airlines. However, none of those engineers is involved with SAEI where the main research will be conducted. This approach agrees with Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) stated that the inclusion of participants, involved in the main study, in the pilot study represents great risk, which may cause the failure of the pilot study. Thus, the engineers involved in the pilot study were sought from other departments within Saudi Arabian Airlines. The progression within the pilot study has shown that the participants were understanding of the questions and what was asked of them and did not appear to struggle with any aspects in the process. However, there were minimal layout adjustments that were implemented in the final questionnaire form.

#### **V - Convergent Design (Triangulation)**

An additional validating method is the convergent design data analysis. Denzin (1978) defined this process as the inclusion of qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to investigate a certain phenomenon. This method can be utilized since the research is adopting a mixed-methods approach. This specific validating technique has been implemented on several data sets within this research, as they were appropriate to use such technique. Also, several questions within the questionnaires were designed in order to be compared with the data from the interviews. Creswell and Clark (2011) have provided a description of this process. They stated that it starts with both sets of data (quantitative and qualitative) being collected simultaneously or within the same period of time during the data collection. Next step is to analyse both sets on their own while using suitable analysis techniques. This is followed by making comparisons between both sets of data based on the identified parameters by the researcher. Last step is finalizing the needed comparisons and producing the results. These were the three stages any convergent design data analysis contains (Creswell and Clark, 2011). According to (Lobe, 2008), this validation technique is applicable in the case of attempting to try answering a research question, where this technique could provide mutual validation for both sets of data.

### **3.4.3.3 Conclusions' Quality Standards**

As with the construction of conclusions, Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that there are several practices to determine the quality of conclusions, yet Schwandt (1990) argues that it is impossible to specify an absolute truth to a study. However, due to the sensitiveness of social studies and the possible consequences of participants involved in those studies, there needs to be a set of shared acceptable standards (Howe and Eisenhart, 1990). For the sake of these shared standards, Miles and Huberman (1994) teamed with the knowledge provided by Lincoln (1991) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) in identifying five criteria to examine the trustworthiness of research. Each of these five criteria of authenticity will be reviewed along with their queries.

#### I – Objectivity

This could be sometimes referred to as external validity, which is determined through shifting emphasis from the investigators and their biases to the issue of investigation (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). There are several queries that correlate with this specific criteria and the achievement of external validity. The first query targets the methods and procedures description level and whether it provided a complete depiction of the study. In this research, the methods and procedures will be explained extensively and lengthily in the coming sections in order to meet with this specific query. In addition, this extensive description will attribute towards the second query, which targets the actual process of collecting the data, analysis, abridged and displayed to make meaning. The third query turns attention towards the adoption of data display tactics, which was implemented in this research through the use of matrices for the qualitative data, and tables and graphs for the quantitative data. The following query targets the keeping of detailed records of the research methods and processes in a way that enables recreation of the process for auditing purposes (Schwandt and Halpern, 1988). Another query questions the consideration of opposing theories and conclusions. This was considered greatly in this body of work through the investigation of the existing literature and those theories will be used for comparisons against the research findings. The final query asks about the availability of the data generated from the study and whether a reanalysis could be accomplished. This query was also accomplished as the data generated are preserved and are ready for any further analysis or reanalysis.

#### II – Reliability

This criterion, according to Goetz and LeCompte (1984), places great emphasis on the study remaining reliable and steady during the period of research. This element is concerned with the following queries. First, to endure the clarity of the research questions being asked and that the rest of the research design complies with those questions. In this research, the research questions determined the methodology adopted in the data collection process and procedures to be followed in the investigation. The second query is concerned with the function of the researcher while conducting the investigation. The role of the researcher in this study was identified throughout the data collection process description in conducting the introductory meetings, the interviews, and all the other tasks described in the detailed report. The following query is concerned with the meanings and findings, and whether those findings were common across the different information sources. This can be clearly seen throughout the findings of the study within the discussion chapter. The next query targets the terms in which the data were collected and whether those terms corresponded and reflected the research questions. This query was reflected in this research as the case study was determined according to the aspects identified in the research questions, which required a Saudi organisation in the public and private sectors with different organisational levels from engineers to HRM managers. A further query examined the use of field workers and their procedures in collecting the data. This query was considered irrelevant to this study as the data generated were collected by the researcher in person without the use of any field workers. A different query investigated the coding process and whether there were any systematic checks to the codes. The research accomplished this query in details within the appendices, which explains the codes, their meanings and where they are found in the transcription of the data generated. The query before the final one addresses the same point before concerning the parallels within various accounts where similar views were common. This query was clearly observed throughout this research where SAEI engineers echoed similar views to HR managers. The final query is concerned with peer or associate review taking place while conducting the study. This particular query was ensured to be met, as the study implemented in this research was the subject of at least eight peer blind reviews as a result of publications, as well as a supervision review. In conclusion, the study can be considered to be compliant with the queries associated with the reliability tests.

### III- Credibility

According to Miles and Huberman (1994) this aspect is concerned with the internal validity of a study and whether this study provides an accurate depiction of the research topic. Miles and Huberman also discussed that when it comes to determining the validity of a study, many validity elements could be considered. However, they referred to Warner (1991) who identified that there should be validity resulting from conducting a study without any impact on the researcher that would alter events or environments. This is what is known as natural validity. As with the previous criteria, this aspect puts forward several queries associated with the internal validity of work. The first query tackles the descriptions and how much content they hold, and then how much those descriptions make meaning and plausible ideas. In terms of this research, in-depth descriptions of each stage and process were followed throughout the investigation in order to ensure that this query was met. The second query targets plausibility of the information provided in the investigation as read by outsiders. Furthermore, are readers able to make sense of what is presented in the work? This query was addressed in the manner that this particular study was designed and illustrated in the research framework. The third query is concerned with the state of the local environments where the investigation is being conducted. This element was highly implemented in this research, where interviews and questionnaires were collected in the natural settings and environments of participants. This step was crucial in order to obtain unaltered and sound data, which could have been compromised had there been a change in settings. The fourth query focuses on the case where triangulation is implemented and whether data sources provided converging findings. In this research, converging findings were encountered throughout the entire triangulated methods and data sources, which satisfy this particular query. The following query tackles the connection between prior theory and a study's findings. This was achieved in this research, as the same categories that emerged within the prior theory were considered in the data produced by the study. The next query aims to establish whether the findings can be considered coherent and related. This research achieved that query as the findings of the investigation were linked by the five HRM practices, which are all related through their connections with the human resources practices and policies. Moreover, the findings should be considered coherent as they are based on specific queries found in the literature. The seventh query investigates the rules for confirming prior hypotheses. This query cannot be applied in this research, as this research is exploratory and follows the grounded theory discipline. Thus, no prior propositions were put forward. The next query looks at



the area of uncertainties surrounding the investigation. This research identified Saudi Arabian societal culture as the unknown phenomenon to be investigated. So, the research identified specific boundaries where the findings of this research can be considered applicable. The following query raises the issue of whether negative evidence was sought. In this research, negative evidence was investigated, but none were found that would invalidate the conclusions. The query after that asks the question of considering rival explanations, where opposing theories were contemplated. Within this investigation, opposing theories were greatly considered and featured in the literature review, as this particular research is of an exploratory nature. This aimed to investigate all views and theories proposed relating to the topic in question. The eleventh query addresses whether findings were reoccurring from different parts of the research. This was found to be the case in this investigation, where findings were being replicated in the existing literature and the case study as well. The twelfth query looks at the conclusions provided by the research and whether the informants involved in the data collection process confirmed them. This query was achieved when the data sources involved within the SAEI case study (HR managers) confirmed the outcomes proposed after the investigation. The final query in this criterion inquires about predictions developed in the research. Within this particular research, no predictions were considered as they do not fall in line with the design of the study.

#### IV – Transferability & Generalisability

This aspect correlates with the level in which conclusions of a study could be generalised and the extent that those conclusions could be used in other settings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Maxwell (1992) described this aspect as similar to internal validity with the addition of theoretical constructions, which link more than just the specific case and extend to the theory. In addition, this aspect determines the generalisability of a study. Answering the following queries can set the levels on which a study could be generalised. The first query is associated with the level of description and how extensively the original environments, participants and procedures are described and detailed. This deep description shall determine whether a case can be used in comparison with other cases or not. In terms of this research, the elements involved in the case study have all been given comprehensive descriptions including the participants, settings, procedures and surrounding environments. The second query addresses the threats, which might contribute to restraining the extent of generalisability

generated from the study. In this study, several threats were identified such as the educational backgrounds of participating individuals and the technical nature of services provided by the SAEI department. The third query illuminates the diversity of the sample involved and whether the lack of diversity could hinder the generalisability of the conclusions. In this research, the samples involved in the qualitative and quantitative aspects were different enough to be considered diverse. This diversity is due to the various qualifications of the participants involved and the variety found in specialities, especially among the managers involved in the interviews. The fourth query focuses on the researchers and their own identification of a limited generalisability based on a well-defined scope for their research. This particular research clearly identified the investigation scope and boundaries in which specific generalisability could be achieved. The following query relates to the readers and whether they find the descriptions provided in the research extensive enough to judge the probability of generalisation of the study. As mentioned previously, this study incorporated great levels of detail regarding the investigation and the entire data collection process to provide as much information as possible for the reader. Thus, enabling readers to conduct their assessments on the transferability of the study. The sixth query targets the experiences of other readers and whether they consider the research to be as dependable as their work. This query was covered in confirmation provided by HR managers affirming their agreement with the findings of the case study. The seventh query tackles prior theory developed before the case study. This query asks whether the findings of the study were endorsing and linked with prior theory. In the case of this research, some findings were found to be exactly aligned with prior theory, while other findings were found to be different. The following query investigates the broadness of the investigation and whether it is broad enough to be considered applicable in other cases. This research has identified the scope and boundaries in which its findings could be generalised. Therefore, restricted generalisability could be achieved within the scope defined by the research. The ninth query highlights the articulation of the theory aimed to be generalised and whether the research pronounces it clearly. This research follows the grounded theory design with a conclusive theory to be achieved by the end of the investigation. Moreover, this research states the developed theory explicitly after the conclusion. The tenth query focuses on the sequences and whether they have remained unaltered by the research. Furthermore, this query asks if the study could be used in the future for comparisons with other cases. This research preserved the entire

arrangements involved in the investigation and defined the opportunities for conducting future research that could be used in comparison against the case in this study. The eleventh query investigates whether the research has identified particular conditions where outcomes could be examined further. In this research, several future work recommendations are provided. These recommendations provide further grounds to be used in testing the findings and theory developed. The final query targets the robustness of the findings and whether these findings could be easily replicated in the future. This study's findings have not been replicated as yet. However, the extensive descriptions of its processes, procedures, participants and data collection should facilitate for a comfortable replication.

#### V – Application & Utilisation

This aspect targets the pragmatic validity of the work. Moreover, it is concerned with the consequences of the work's findings on researchers, practitioners involved in the particular field, and participants. Patton (1990) described this aspect best through explaining that practitioners and users are considered the ultimate credibility test for any body of work. This aspect draws out several queries, which are considered essential in achieving optimum application and utilization for the research. The first query investigates the accessibility of the findings and whether targeted users can easily reach those findings. The research meets this query through providing its findings to the participants involved in the data collection process and being accessible for potential users through several mediums. The second query questions whether the work accomplished has the effect to inspire readers towards certain activities and actions. This research accomplishes this particular query as it can be considered an action guide for HRM practices discussed throughout the investigation. The third query examines the extent of knowledge offered in the research and whether it constitutes specific reactions. This study offers knowledge impacting the following extents and developing insights into HRM practices in Saudi Arabia, which will act as an action guide for upcoming organisations entering the region. The fourth query investigates whether the research has caused certain trends, however, this study has not yet led to any reaction or consequence. The following query targets the impact of the research on the local environment. This study has the potential to deliver several solutions to local settings based on the conclusions and recommendations developed from the case study. The sixth query enquires about the effect of the research on users. In this study, this query

has not been tested and so no observation can be provided. The seventh query investigates whether the knowledge of users has increased and if they have acquired new knowledge. In this particular study, users were found to have indeed increased their knowledge by providing the knowledge found in other societal cultures. Thus, the users have acquired new knowledge from this research. The final query addresses ethical considerations and whether they were highlighted throughout the research. In this research, ethical considerations were put forward extensively as they were integral to the flow and credibility of the data collection process.

### **3.5 Selection of Participants**

It is important to justify the choice of selecting Saudi Arabian Airlines as the case study to this research. Saudi Airlines is one of the biggest airline companies and is the market leader in the country, which implies that the organisation encompasses a large-scale operation. Also, Saudi Airlines started as a state-owned company and decided to implement a privatization initiative that included every department that falls underneath its umbrella. One department was privatised each year. It was selected, as the organisation will be going through a transitional period, transforming from a public organisation into a private one. Moreover, while going through this transformation, the existing employees were given the option to sign contracts that would make them private employees.

However, existing employees could remain employed under the public side of the company. This state of affairs enables the research to investigate the public and private sectors' HRM practices within one organisation. This particular situation contains two sets of employees accomplishing the same task but each set follows separate regulations. Prime examples are visible in the context of annual leaves, where each set are entitled to two different periods of vacations. Also, public employees would follow the list of regulation adopted by the government before the privatisation, whereas private employees fall under the umbrella of the privatised quarters of the organisation. Importantly, each of the existing departments appeared to adopt its own HRM practices and policies to complement their tasks and requirements, creating unique HRM practices that separate the departments from each other. This diversity in HRM practices and policies within Saudi Airlines required a further in-depth look into the company, selecting a specific department to provide an in-depth investigation that would add value to the topic's area of research. There are four main departments: Saudi

Cargo, Saudi Catering, Saudi Private Aviation and Saudi Aerospace Engineering Industries. Any of these departments would suffice as a case study for this research. However, the Saudi Aerospace Engineering Industries department stands out for several reasons. The nature of tasks carried out by this department; for instance, reflect the core operations of Saudi Airlines.

These tasks include the procurement of spare parts for airplanes, the facilitation of the maintenance procedures of Saudi Airlines' fleet, the inspection of Saudi Airlines fleet and the design and manufacture of the parts that can be made in-house. So, as stated above, this department reflects the core operations of the Airlines. In addition, this department is going through the privatization process during the research period. Furthermore, this department has employees representing both sectors within the same workspace. In addition, the hierarchy within this department enables the investigation of the situation to an extent not granted in similar organisations, enabling the researcher to investigate all the aspects desired through conducting the semi-structured interviews with the HR managers. Also, it is worth noting that all HR managers involved in the semi-structured interviews are Saudi nationals. Furthermore, this department has a formidable number of engineers, making this department more appealing as a case study. Finally, the large size of operations carried out by the department is reflected in the department's allocated budget, which is estimated in billions. Therefore, this department represented the ideal case study to be investigated for this research, as it has the potential of answering the questions and aims targeted in this research. In conclusion, the sum of factors mentioned above helped in deciding that this case study will have satisfactory outcomes.

### **3.5.1 Sample Size**

As with any research implementing the use of the questionnaires, a sample size needed to be determined. This research is interested in the Saudi Aerospace Engineering Industries department of Saudi Arabian airlines; this department employs around 200 engineers along with supporting staff. However, as this research focuses on the engineering aspect of the department and its core tasks, the population of this organisation will be focused on the engineers. Therefore, the 200 engineers will represent the population. SAEI department offered the cooperation of the entirety of its workforce, including the 200 engineers. All the engineers hold a degree in engineering with different specializations ranging from mechanical engineering, electrical

engineering, aerospace engineering and civil engineering. In addition, all engineers are Saudi nationals. Also, this number of employees can be approached within the time limit of the data collection process. As for the ethical considerations regarding the questionnaire part of the data collection, it is worth mentioning that the questionnaires were filled out anonymously (relaxed time-frame). Moreover, no specific personnel information was gathered except the ones mentioned previously regarding their degrees. Most importantly, the engineers had the freedom to withdraw from the process if they elect not to take part in the survey. Furthermore, engineers were assured of the confidentiality of the entire process, which will not affect them in anyway as a consequence for their participation. After explaining those ethical conditions, the entirety of engineers expressed their genuine agreement to be involved in the questionnaires. As for the gender considerations, within SAEI, there could not be any gender concerns. This could be credited to the technical environment of SAEI responsibilities and activities. Moreover, education in Saudi Arabia excludes engineering sciences of technical kind within female education programmes across all universities and collages. This is due to the traditions in Saudi Arabian culture and teachings of the Islamic faith. However, female employees can be found in great numbers within other departments such as marketing and catering, where the nature of their jobs fulfill and satisfy the Islamic teachings and Saudi Arabian culture. Therefore, the research will take advantage of surveying the entire number of engineers without settling on a sample. This step will greatly help the research by providing even more accurate outcomes for the surveying aspect of the data collection process.

### **3.5.2 Participants**

#### **3.5.2.1 Human Resource Employees**

The interview part of the data collection process targeted senior HR managers within Saudi Arabian Airlines. The interview process included a number of employees who did not work in the HR department. They were included in process because they were responsible for executing HR practices within their respective departments. The breakdown of senior HR managers who participated in the interviews is shown in the following diagram (Figure 3.4).

The diagram shows that each of the listed managers is specifically responsible for one of the five HR practices that this research is investigating. The manager of employees'

relations and compensation, for instance, was responsible for setting up the compensation systems and packages for the entire SAEI department. While conducting this research, this manager was responsible for overseeing the whole of the HR department and was considered the link between the HR department and the other departments. This manager was approached in order to provide answers for the questions concerning the compensations and rewards systems implemented in SAEI. Also, due to this manager's involvement at the time of this research, he was asked to participate in the training programmes aspect of the interview process.



Figure.3.4: HR employees who were involved in the interviews.

The next senior manager involved in the interview process was the manager of human resource strategies and planning. This HR manager set out the future plans involved in enhancing and the optimising the performance of the department and its employees. Furthermore, this manager focuses on maintaining the link between the employees and the aims of the organisation and ensures that those two elements are paralleled. Therefore, due to the nature of this manager's responsibility within the department, he was asked to provide answers to the set of questions concerning performance appraisal. Moreover, he was asked about the training programmes, due to the strong correlation between HR strategic planning and the development of the employees.

The next participant involved in the interview process was concerned with recruitment and administrative support. This HR manager is mainly tasked with hiring new employees and recruitment. In addition, this manager coordinates with all the other departments under the Saudi Arabian Airlines umbrella when it comes to advertising any vacancies across the organisation and hiring the best possible candidates for those vacancies. Also, this manager works hand in hand with other departments for internal hiring and has coordinates between departments to make this possible. As a result, he

was asked about the recruitment sources and the questions associated with job desirability, due to his involvement and first-hand knowledge of the recruitment process before and after hiring.

The next participant involved in the interview process was the strategic planning specialist. This employee's line of work extends across the before-mentioned senior HR managers. He provides support and synchronises the communication lines between the fields where each of the senior HR managers work. The research sought the participation of this employee due to the belief that he could provide an interesting insight into the different aspects of HR practices and how they interconnect. Therefore, this employee's participation was included in the interview process.

Like the previously mentioned strategic planning specialist, this next employee is responsible for the technical services within the HR department. His tasks range from providing information technology within the department to organising and coordinating communication with other departments in SAEI. The research pursued the participation of this employee due to his involvement in the recruitment and hiring of employees and for his knowledge of online advertising and electronic HR services on the Internet. Therefore, the HR technical services supervisor was included in the interview process in the data collection.

### **3.5.2.2 Non-Human Resource Employees**

As was mentioned previously, the interview process also involved employees who were not based in the HR department, as they could provide valuable insights into HR practices as they applied to their respective departments. Furthermore, these employees could offer up their own observations regarding the HR practices implemented by the organisation, providing additional insights into HRM practices implemented throughout the organisation. Therefore, their participation was pursued, and the employees involved are shown in (Figure 3.5)

The first non-HR employee was the senior director of plants and equipment maintenance. The participation of this director was considered a coup for this research due to the responsibility this director holds within Saudi Arabian Airlines. This director's role is overseeing the aircrafts' equipment maintenance operations. Also, the responsibilities of the spaces where this equipment are maintained fall under his authority. The research sought the insight of this director to obtain his knowledge and



experience in handling the HR issues that pertain his department and to understand how his department handles HR practices and policies. Furthermore, the researcher was intrigued as to how this director's department interacted with the HR department and hoped to determine whether there were any themes or topics that stood out as noteworthy. Therefore, the inclusion of this director in the interview process seemed logical.

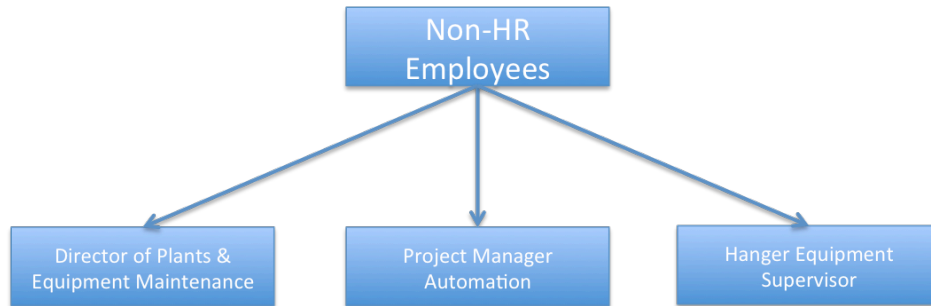


Figure.3.5 Non-HR employees involved in the interviews.

A second non-HR employee included was the automation project manager. This manager oversees the automated systems placed within SAEI and provides technological and technical support for other departments. His participation was sought because his position allows him to observe how HR practices and policies are implemented. In addition, he was selected for his first-hand involvement in performance appraisal, which could be of great value for the research and its investigation. Finally, the automation project manager was responsible for facilitating the questionnaires to be disseminated among the majority of the employees involved in the quantitative section of the data collection process. A third non-HR employee involved in the interview process was the hanger equipment supervisor. This supervisor administers the flow of operations regarding the aircrafts' maintenance and equipment. His duties extend to filling in for the senior manager to oversee the operations of the entire department. His participation in the interviews was integral, due to his involvement with many managerial aspects, including HR aspects. For instance, he assists in determining the needs of the department in terms of the manpower and skills required. Also, he sets up the advertisements for the vacancies within the department and determines the aspects that would make the vacancies desirable, which is essential to the data collection process.

### 3.6 Data Collection Process

While designing the interviews and the questionnaire to be implemented as part of the data collection process, the explored literature helped inform how the interviews and questionnaires should be structured for the data collection process. Moreover, the existing literature focused on certain HR practices. Therefore, the research will have the opportunity to compare any findings and results against the findings and results drawn out in the existing literature. Therefore, the design of the interviews and questionnaires involved five main topics, the five specific HR practices investigated throughout the research, which are: job desirability, recruitment sources, performance appraisal, compensation and rewards systems and training.

#### 3.6.1 Design

##### 3.6.1.1 Interviews

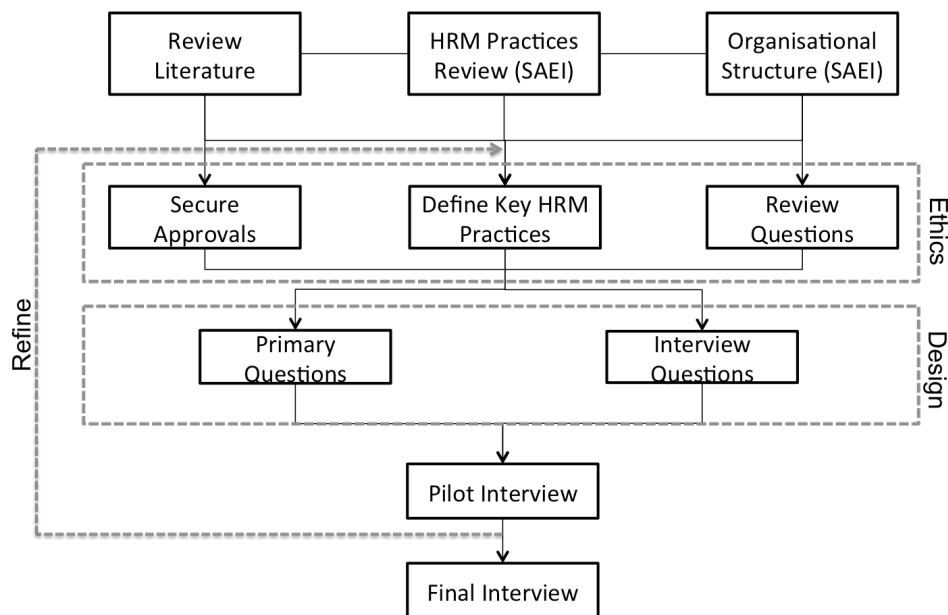


Figure.3.6 Design process of the interviews.

The interviews were conducted by asking questions that were developed from reviewing the existing literature within this research area. The process of manufacturing the interviews question is shown in (Figure 3.6) Each HRM practices section in the interviews was allocated to the HRM managers associated and responsible for it. The questions that were asked in the interviews are shown in (Figure 3.7) with elaborate breakdown of these questions to follow.

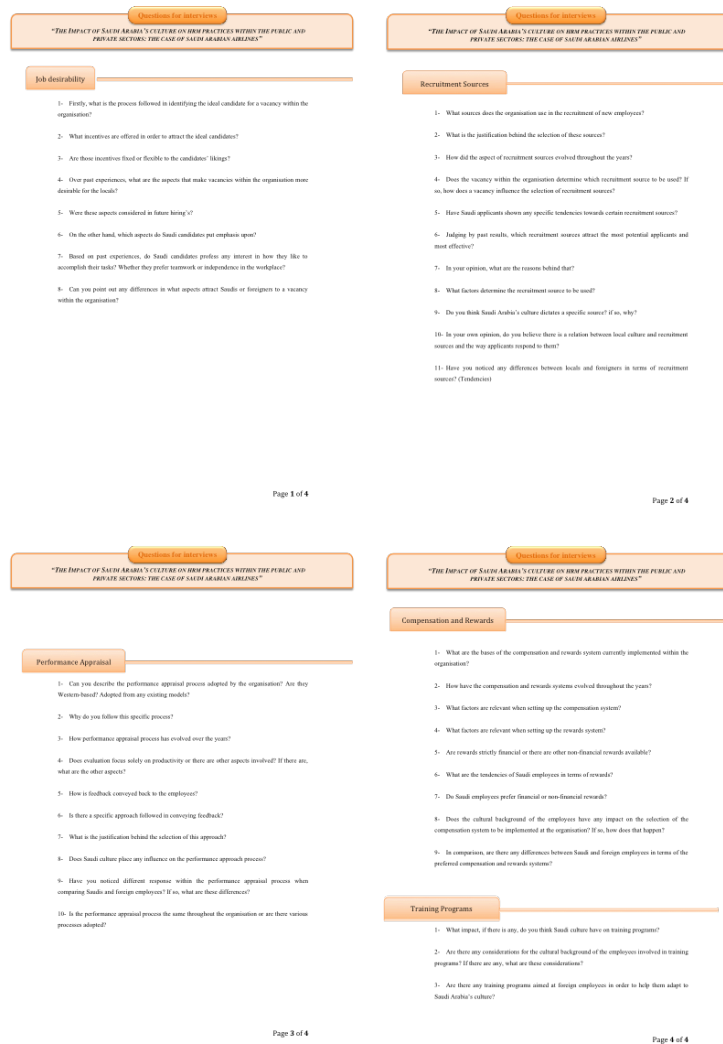


Figure.3.7 Questions in the final interviews form.

### 3.6.1.1.1 Job Desirability

In terms of the aspects covered within the interviews, the interviewing questions comprise five main themes. Each of the themes aims to fully investigate the associated

HR practices (Figure 3.8). For instance, regarding the job desirability aspect, the questions evolve around identifying the ideal candidate for any vacancy within the organisation. Another aspect is concerned with what the organisation offers as incentives in order to secure the desired candidate services. Furthermore, this aspect investigates the lengths that the organisation is willing to go to ensure that they appeal to the ideal candidate. Also, the questions concerned with this topic address and engage the HR managers' own experiences over previous recruitments and their own understanding of what attracts the ideal candidates and whether their own insights were implemented within the recruitment process. Furthermore, the questions delve into the recruitment of Saudi candidates and whether there were any tendencies that occur which could be highlighted. Moreover, the HR managers were asked to address whether they have noticed any differences in the recruitment of Saudi candidates and foreign candidates. Also, the HR managers were asked if any of the Saudi candidates prefer a certain method in accomplishing their tasks and whether they prefer to work individually or within a team. The main themes within job desirability are shown in (Figure.3.9).

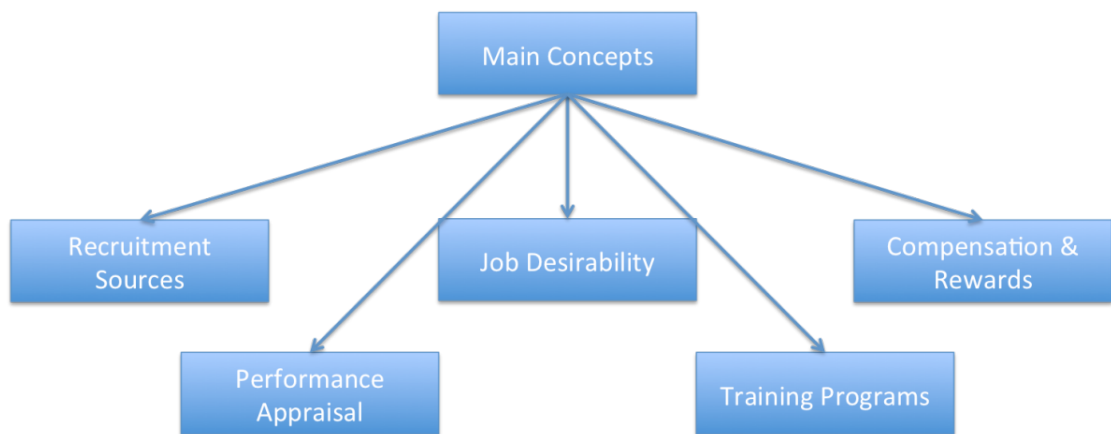


Figure.3.8: Data collection main concepts.

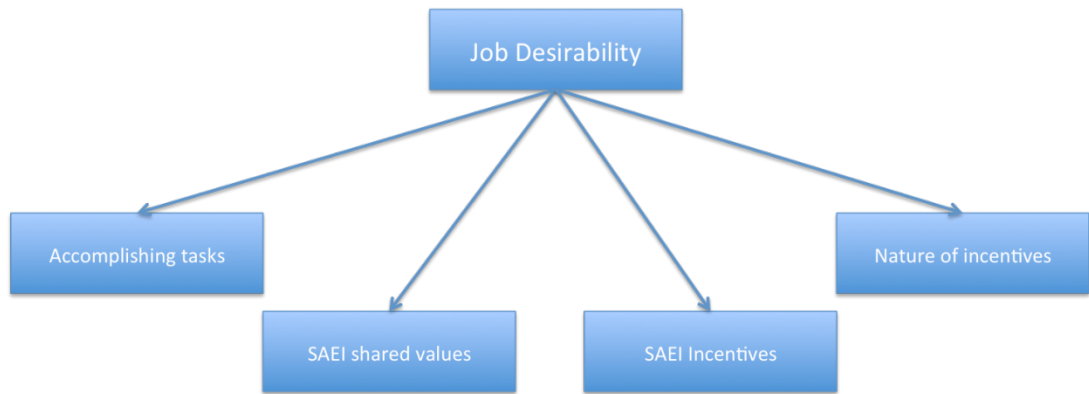


Figure.3.9: Job desirability main themes.

### 3.6.1.1.2 Recruitment Sources

The second concept addressed is the recruitment sources used by the organisation and the surrounding themes. The first theme is concerned with the existing recruitment sources deployed by the organisation and why these sources have been chosen. The following theme addresses the development of the recruitment sources used by the organisation and how the recruitment sources evolved to their current state. The interview then moves towards whether the vacancy within the organisation determines the recruitment sources to be used or whether the same procedure is used regardless of the vacancy. After that, the interview moves to address the tendencies of the Saudi candidates in relation with the recruitment sources according to the perception of the HR managers and their own personal view. HR managers were asked if there were any tendencies shown by Saudi candidates compared to foreign workers and, if so, what these tendencies were. Furthermore, HR managers were asked for their own personal opinions on which recruitment sources proved to be most effective and desirable for the ideal candidates.

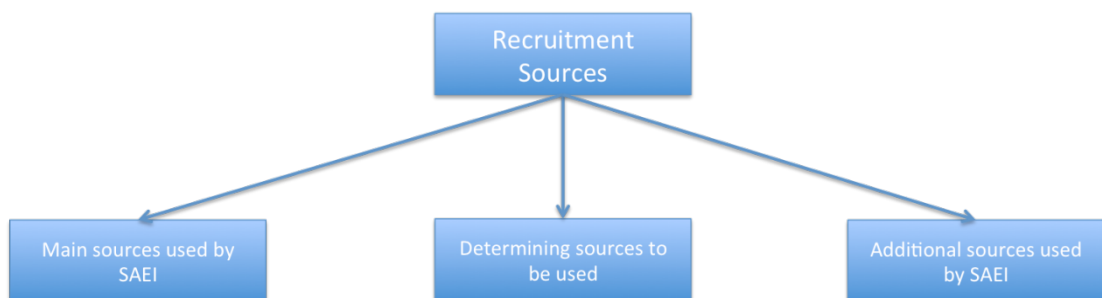


Figure.3.10: Recruitment sources main themes.

Moreover, the HR managers were asked for their own take on why these preferred sources are most effective. The following area to be investigated involved the factors that determined the recruitment sources to be adopted. Then, the HR managers were asked if the culture of Saudi Arabia influences the adopted recruitment sources and the justification for this influence to carry any weight while selecting a recruitment source. Furthermore, the HR managers were asked to provide their own opinion on whether they think that there is a strong correlation between the candidates' cultural backgrounds and their responses to the recruitment sources. The last question regarding the recruitment sources investigates whether there were any differences concerning the local candidates and foreign candidates and their response to recruitment sources. The main themes within the recruitment sources are shown in (Figure.3.10).

#### **3.6.1.1.3 Performance Appraisal**

The third concept relates to performance appraisal methods and conveying feedback to employees. The interview questions begin with the HR managers being asked to provide a description of the current performance appraisal methods implemented. Also, HR managers were asked whether those methods were transferred from another existing model, designed specifically for this organisation or imported completely from western culture. Then, the HR managers were questioned about why they think those performance methods are best for the organisation. A further question addresses the evolution of performance appraisal methods. This targets whether the organisation has integrated any aspects that would make their performance appraisal process unique to the organisation. The following question focuses on the evaluation itself, whether it was solely interested in the employees' productivity or on other aspects as well, such as behavior in the workplace, teamwork or non-productivity based attributes. The questions then moved toward how feedback is conveyed to the employees and whether the HR managers have installed a fixed procedure to convey feedback. The following question is a follow-up of the previous one and is concerned with identifying the approach adopted by the HR managers in delivering feedback and with how the HR managers reached the conclusion that the adopted approach is best for the performance appraisal process. The next set of questions investigates the impact and influence of Saudi Arabia's culture on performance appraisal. The first question in this set investigates whether the performance appraisal methods are influenced by Saudi Arabia's culture. Furthermore, HR managers were asked to provide examples of Saudi

Arabia's cultural influence if there was any influence to be noted. In the next step, the investigation of the performance appraisal procedure focuses on the responses of both Saudi employees and foreign employees and the differences in how each set of employees responds to the performance appraisal process. Moreover, HR managers were asked to list the differences if there were any worth of note. The last question within the performance appraisal process section investigates whether the performance appraisal process is identical throughout the organisation or whether it differs from department to department. The main concept of the performance appraisal and its two main themes are illustrated in (Figure.3.11).

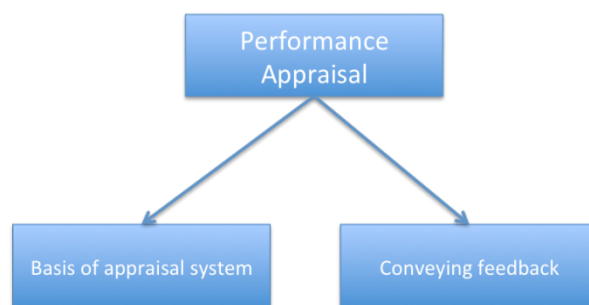


Figure.3.11: Performance appraisal main themes.

#### **3.6.1.1.4 Compensation and Rewards**

The next HR practice investigated is the compensation and rewards systems. Initially, attention is paid to the current compensation and rewards system implemented in the organisation and the reason for installing this specific compensations system. HR managers were then asked how the compensation and rewards system evolved over time and motives drove the changes, if there were any. Subsequently, the following question pertains to the factors that influence and have a visible impact on the process of setting up a compensation system and a rewards system. Finally, HR managers were asked whether the organisation deploys a specific rewards system that is based on financial or non-financial rewards, or a mixture of the two. The following set of questions investigated the employees' preference of rewards. The first question in this set investigated whether Saudi employees have shown any tendencies when it comes to rewards systems. The next question concentrated on whether Saudi employees have shown a concrete preference for either financial rewards or non-financial rewards. After that, the HR managers were given the opportunity to express their personal views on the

matter. First, HR managers were asked whether they believe that the societal culture had any impact on the rewards systems and, if that was the case, how. Second, HR managers were asked to highlight any differences they might have noticed between Saudi employees and foreign employees in terms of their preferred rewards systems. The compensation and rewards concept and its main themes are shown in (Figure.3.12).

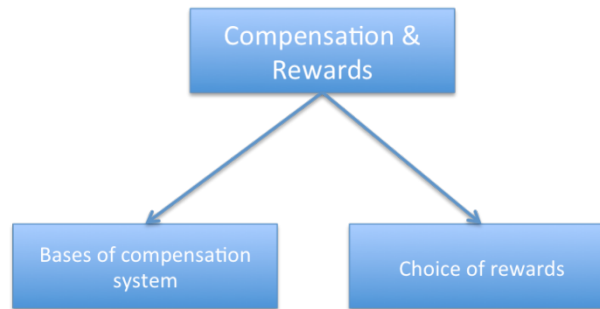


Figure.3.12: Compensation and rewards main themes.

#### 3.6.1.1.5 Training Programme

The final concept is concerned with the training process, which is one of the most important HR practices within any organisation. The investigation begins with a question regarding whether Saudi Arabia's culture places any influence on the training programmes adopted by the organisation. Also, HR managers were asked to highlight this cultural influence and its impact on the training programmes, if it had an impact. Then, HR managers were asked how these training programmes were conducted and whether the cultural background of the employees played any integral part in setting up these training programmes. Also, HR managers were asked if they take into consideration the cultural background of the employees, and, if they do, how does it impact the training programmes and their setup? The last question in this section aims to investigate whether HR managers within the organisation initiate special training programmes for foreign employees in order for those foreign employees to adapt to the Saudi Arabian culture and to ensure a smooth transition from the foreign employees' native culture. The main themes of the training programmes can be seen in (Figure.3.13).



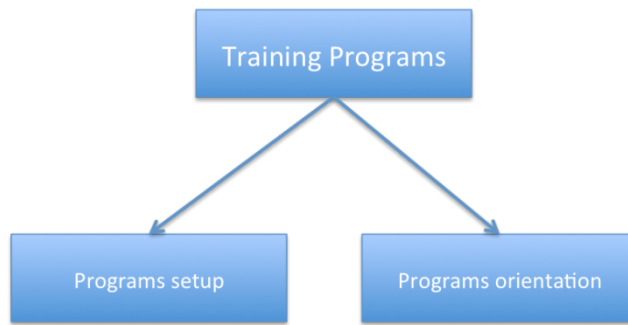


Figure.3.13: Training programmes main themes.

### 3.6.1.2 Questionnaires

Similarly to the interviews, the questions in the questionnaires were developed based on the literature and its findings as shown in (Figure 3.14). This specific approach in designing the questionnaire was aiming to create a feasible medium to compare the findings of the existing literature against the findings of this case study. The questions that were asked in the questionnaires were as shown in (Figure 3.15)

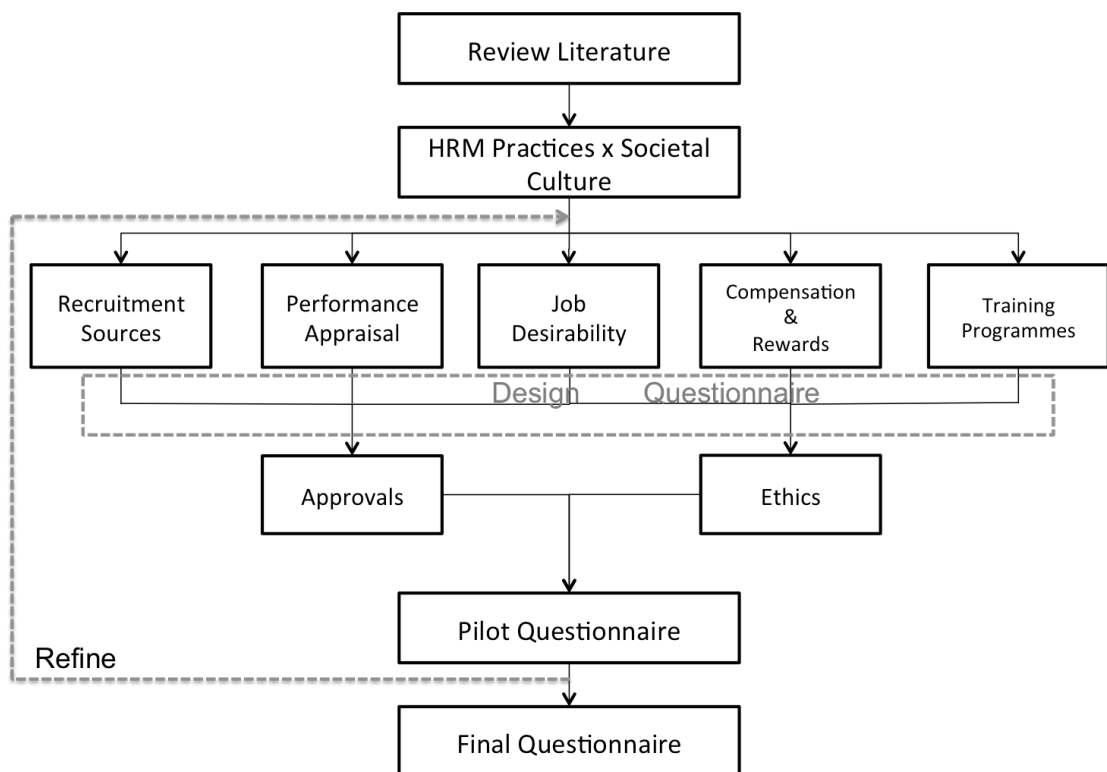


Figure.3.14: Design process of the questionnaire.

*"THE IMPACT OF SAUDI ARABIA'S CULTURE ON HRM PRACTICES WITHIN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS: THE CASE OF SAUDI ARABIAN AIRLINES"*

Private Sector      Public Sector

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**Job desirability**

- When searching for a job, what aspects do you focus on and consider important?
 

Job title	Function
Culture match	Size
Industry	Travel
Desired employer	Compensation
- Why do you consider these aspects important?
- When it comes to accomplishing tasks, do you prefer to work:
  - Within a team
  - Independently

---

**Recruitment Sources**

- Which recruitment sources do you find more appealing:
 

Job Ads	Social networks
Colleagues	Direct application
Employment Agencies	Job fairs
Volunteer vacancies	Friends & Family

  - Personal (Networking and recommendation)
  - Impersonal (Advertisements and Online recruitment)
- When searching for a job, what are the first sources you look for?

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**Performance Appraisal**

- Which method of performance appraisal do you find more favorable:
  - Achievement-based and goals
  - Informal and overall performance
- Do you prefer to be appraised as:
  - Individual
  - Within a group

Justification

---

**Compensation and Rewards**

- When implementing a compensation system, do you prefer a system based on:
  - Equality where employees are equally compensated
  - Equity where employees are separately compensated
- As for rewards, do you prefer:
  - Financial rewards (Bonus)
  - Non-financial rewards (Holiday – perks)
- What would be your rewards of choice?

Justification

Figure.3.15: Questions in the questionnaire.

### 3.6.1.2.1 Job Desirability

As in the interviews, the questionnaires were designed to cover the same themes, job desirability, recruitment sources, performance appraisal and compensation and rewards systems. Although they did not cover the fifth practice: the training programmes. Each of the questions aims to measure the employees' opinions and reflections on the practices adopted by the organisation, as these opinions will help provide the research with accountable data. Amaratunga et al. (2002) stated that the quantitative approach produces data that can be generalized and tested. As for the first aspect, job desirability, employees were asked for their input regarding what they look at when searching for a new job. Also, the employees were asked about the factors that attract them to any vacancy in the market. The following question investigates what employees consider important while looking for a job and why. Then employees were asked whether they

prefer to work within a team or accomplish tasks individually. Lastly, the employees were given the opportunity to explain why they chose one method over the other.

#### **3.6.1.2.2 Recruitment Sources**

The following section focuses on the recruitment sources and how employees view them. The first question in this section investigates the employees' preference of the recruitment sources; the two options given are personal recruitment sources (which rely on networking and job recommendations on behalf of the employees) and impersonal recruitment sources (which rely on looking at advertisements and online vacancies through hiring websites). Then, employees were asked to justify their choices. The last question in this section investigates the recruitment sources employees look at for an effective result regardless of their preference. The point of this last question is to understand the actual situation while seeking new jobs and in the case of not having the luxury of choosing their preferred job recruitment sources.

#### **3.6.1.2.3 Performance Appraisal**

Job performance appraisal and the employees' understanding of the process starts with an investigation of the employees preferred method of performance appraisal. Employees were given two options to choose from. The first option is performance appraisal based on achievements and goals; it focuses on the employees' accomplishments and on what they have achieved in terms of goals and targets set by the organisation. The second option is performance appraisal based on general attributes and an overall evaluation that does not consider the targets and goals set by the organisation. Then, upon choosing their preferred method of performance appraisal, employees were asked to justify their choice. The next question in this section delves further into the performance appraisal methods, asking employees about the manner in which they would like to be appraised. Employees were given two options to choose from. The first performance appraisal option is for employees to be appraised individually, being evaluated and appraised for their own individual work and performance. The second performance appraisal option is for employees to be appraised as a group or a team, where all members are held accountable for the performance of the group, regardless of the individual efforts within the group. The last question in this section offers the employees the opportunity to provide their justifications for the performance appraisal method they chose.

#### **3.6.1.2.4 Compensation and Rewards**

The last section of the questionnaire addresses the compensation and rewards systems. The first question in this section investigates the compensation approach that employees prefer. Employees were given two options. The first option is equal compensation, where employees who are on the same level are compensated similarly. The second option given is for employees to be compensated separately, where they are compensated based on the amount of work they have accomplished and the objectives they have met. The following part asks the employees to provide their take on the compensation system they have chosen and to justify their choice. The second question is concerned with the employees' preferred rewards. Employees were given two choices: financial rewards, which encompass monetary bonuses and pay-rises, and non-financial rewards, which encompass holidays, extra days off work or perks such as parking spaces and better office spaces. Employees are then asked to express their reasoning for choosing their preferred rewards package.

The final part of this section gives employees the opportunity to come up with suitable rewards that were not included in the choices. Also, this last question aims to extract additional information that can be used to draw out extra useful data. It should be noted that those data collection tools used in the interview and questionnaire design were kept streamlined and focused in order to draw out the best outcomes possible out of the process. Moreover, any data that will be extracted from the data collection process will be valuable to the research topic aims and objectives.

#### **3.6.2 Data Collection Stages**

After designing the data collection tools, the data collection process was divided into several stages as shown in table 3.1. The breakdown of these stages is as follows:

##### **3.6.2.1 Week One**

During the first week of the data collection process it was important to conduct introductory meetings. Those introductory meetings aimed to establish a rapport and communication lines with the relevant personnel within the organisation. Also, these introductory meetings were significant insofar as they would help explain the research aims and objectives to the HR managers taking part in the data collection process. Also, these meetings were utilized to make sure that the HR managers shared the same exact

understanding of the research terminology in an effort to ensure that both managers and engineers were on the same wavelength. Furthermore, these introductory meetings provided the opportunity to discuss how the data collection process would be carried out in terms of timelines, procedures to be followed and means of contacting the targeted employees taking part in answering the disseminated questionnaires.

These introductory meetings provided an opportunity for the researcher to experience the actual work environment first-hand and observe the surrounding elements that would aid and help explain the outcomes of the data collection process. By the end of the first week, a date was set to meet the employees taking part in answering the questionnaires for the following week.

Table 3.1 Summary of the data collection process at SAEI

Week	Activity
Week 1	Introductory meetings with HR manager – Set out plans for collecting the data over the upcoming period
Week 2	Briefing employees about research – Explain the process of the questionnaires
Week 3	Conducting 1 <sup>st</sup> batch of interviews with HR managers based on week 1
Week 4	Disseminating 1 <sup>st</sup> batch of questionnaires among group 1 of the engineers involved
Week 5	Conducting 2 <sup>nd</sup> batch of interviews with HR managers based on week 1
Week 6	Distributing 2 <sup>nd</sup> batch of questionnaires among group 2 of the engineers involved
Week 7	Conducting additional interviews with non-HR managers

### 3.6.2.2 Week Two

During this second week, employees were divided into groups in order to explain to them the aims and objectives of this research. Also, employees were given a brief background on the research and how they will contribute to the scientific field through their participation in the data collection process and the questionnaires. Furthermore, the participating employees were ensured that their input within the questionnaires would in no way affect their employment or positions within the organisation. Moreover, the participating employees were given the opportunity to ask about anything

related to the research prior to the actual data collection process in order to ensure that they are on the same wavelength as the research and that they understand its aims and objectives.

Finally, the participating employees were shown an example of the questionnaires they would be required to answer during the data collection process and were given a briefing on each section within the questionnaire. The aim of this briefing was to familiarize the employees with the data collection process, as most had never taken part in a questionnaire before. Accordingly, it was crucially important to make sure they established an understanding of what was required from them regarding this questionnaire. Furthermore, the questionnaires were printed in English. However, there were translated copies of the questionnaire, if any of the engineers required one.

### **3.6.2.3 Week Three**

According to the schedule set in week one, the first batch of interviews with the HR managers were supposed to be conducted in the third week. So, at the beginning of the third week, several HR managers were contacted in order to confirm that the meetings would be taking place during that week. These meetings were confirmed and scheduled within a timeline based on the HR managers' availability to conduct those interviews and at the time of their convenience. Each HR manager offered to answer the interview questions that addressed their area of expertise. In other words, the compensation manager would be answering the compensation and rewards systems questions in the interview and so forth. The reason for this arrangement is to ensure that questions in the interview section of the data collection process would be fully answered and covered without any element of uncertainty or assumptions.

The interviews conducted during the third week were conducted and benefitted from the additional insights offered by the HR managers, as the interviews were semi structured and the HR managers offered full cooperation with the improvised questions, each in their area of expertise. Upon the completion of the third week, the interviews were completed and the managers offered to attend follow-up meetings if additional information was needed. Also, the HR managers were given written copies of the interviews questions in case an additional interview could not be arranged. This further

enabled the HR managers to write down any additional information that was not mentioned in the interviews.

#### **3.6.2.4 Week Four**

As per the initial agreement, the fourth week of the data collection process would involve disseminating the first batch of questionnaires among the targeted participating employees. Prior to the distribution of the questionnaires, the participating employees were given a short briefing on the requirements and aims of the questionnaire. Also, this short briefing ensured that the participating employees had the same vision as the researcher and understood how beneficial their contributions were. The participating employees were given the whole of the fourth week to fill out the questionnaires. The allocated time given to fill out the questionnaires was prolonged in order to ensure that the participating employees approached the questionnaires candidly and without any pressure that might affect their contribution.

By the end of the week, the majority of the questionnaires were collected. A few questionnaires were collected the following week, due to work-related responsibilities that required the full attention of the participating employees who submitted their questionnaires later. This delay in the submission of the questionnaires was justified by the fact that the period in which the questionnaires were disseminated represented one of the busiest seasons in the year. Upon the completion and collection of the questionnaires, the submitted questionnaires were sorted and examined in order to ensure that there was not any missing information and everything was in order.

#### **3.6.2.5 Week Five**

The scheduled task for the fifth week involved interviewing the second batch of HR managers, representing a follow-up of the task carried out in the third week. As in the third week, the HR managers involved were contacted at the start of the week to confirm and set the time for the meetings. Upon confirming the meetings, the interviews took place throughout the week. The HR managers offered their cooperation and any additional assistance that could help the research and its aims. For instance, one of the HR managers suggested interviewing one of the technical supervisors in order to shine a light on day-to-day work. Therefore, a meeting with one of the technical supervisors was set up to take place over the upcoming weeks. Then, the rest of the interviews

scheduled for the fifth week were conducted. Furthermore, an agreement has been reached to conduct a follow up interview if any additional information was needed.

Also, the participating HR managers were provided with copies of the questions they were asked during the interviews to give them the opportunity to add additional information after the interviews. At the end of the fifth week, the information gathered from the interviews conducted was evaluated in order to ensure that all the required data were obtained and that the data satisfied the research aims and objectives.

### **3.6.2.6 Week Six**

Week six involved disseminating the rest of the questionnaires among the second batch of participating employees. The distribution of those questionnaires was not based on which sector employees belonged to; they were rather distributed based on their availability. As before, the sixth week began with briefing the participating employees on the aim of the questionnaire and how their contributions would benefit the research. Also, the participating employees were given the opportunity to enquire about the questionnaires. Then, after briefing the participating employees and ensuring that they had the same vision as the research, the questionnaires were handed out. The employees were given until the end of the sixth week to submit the completed questionnaires.

The collection of the completed questionnaires was spread over two weeks because several participating employees were away on work responsibilities. However, by the end of the seventh week, all the questionnaires were completed and collected. The questionnaires were evaluated to ensure that they satisfactorily met the aims and objectives of the research. This evaluation consisted of compiling and reviewing the collected questionnaires to ensure that they were filled out in a satisfactory manner according to the approach mentioned (4.4.3 Stage three). After the evaluation of the questionnaires, the participating employees were thanked for their cooperation and informed that their participation was appreciated. Finally, the second batch of the questionnaires was added to the first batch collected during the fourth week in order to prepare them for analysis so that they could be used as findings of the data collection process.

### **3.6.2.7 Week Seven**



As mentioned previously, one of the HR managers offered suggested interviewing one of the non-HR-related technical managers in order to investigate the day-to-day work routine involving the HRM aspects that this technical manager dealt with. This investigation would provide the data collection process with additional depth. At the start of the seventh week, the technical manager was contacted in order to set up a meeting to conduct this additional interview. The meeting was confirmed and the manager was given a briefing of the research and its aims and objectives. Also, the manager was briefed on the progress of the data collection process in order for him to develop a full understanding of the whole process.

After the technical manager was briefed, an interview was prepared. The questions in this interview covered what was mentioned in the original interviews conducted with the HR managers. Furthermore, the technical manager was asked questions that were relevant to his area of responsibilities and expertise. Then, the interview was conducted to the best of the technical manager's knowledge, and the answers provided added further depth and knowledge to the data collection process.

#### **3.6.2.8 Data Collection Process Conclusion**

The whole process went according to the plans set prior to the research schedule, with some expected delays that did not affect the process greatly. These delays stemmed mainly from the busy work schedules of employees during the month of May 2013.

There were several tendencies noted during the questionnaire phase of the data collection process. One of those tendencies was that the participating employees needed to be given a briefing of the research and what it aimed to achieve. Furthermore, some of the participating employees required an Arabic translated version of the questionnaire, since they had difficulties grasping the questions in the questionnaire otherwise. In addition, prior to the dissemination of the questionnaires, employees were ensured that their answers would not affect their positions within the organisation in any way. During the process of answering the questionnaires, the participating employees were cooperative and appeared relaxed, as well as engaged with the questions; this showed that they were not under any pressure. Finally, the participating employees did not appear to struggle with any of the questions and understood them right away, whether in English or Arabic.

As for the HR managers' interviews, the managers were welcoming of the data collection process, and some of the managers expressed that their interest in taking part in the interview process stemmed from the fact that the organisation is going through a privatization process. Therefore, the managers themselves were going through a learning process and the questions asked in the interviews addressed aspects that interested them. Furthermore, all the managers who took part in the interview process were interested in the outcome of the data collection process and were eager to address any issues that might appear in the aftermath of the data collection process. Moreover, during the interviews, some of the managers showed interest in the work done with in the literature review, as they were curious about how other cultures function in their areas of expertise and responsibilities.

Other observations noted during the interview process were that the managers did not take part in the questionnaires that were disseminated among the employees in order to ensure that there was no pressure placed upon the participating employees that might affect their answers and opinions. Furthermore, the organization and distribution of the questionnaires was the responsibility of coordinators assigned by the vice president of Saudi Aerospace Engineering Industries department. This specific arrangement was made to ensure that the employees would not experience any pressure from their superiors. On a different note, HR managers provided the researcher with a complete tour of the department and its supporting units in order to show the different tasks carried out by the department. They also offered to share any additional information that might be of assistance to the researcher. Ultimately, all the goals set prior to the start of the data collection process were met and the targets were achieved within the timeline proposed, allowing the research to move ahead with the next targets on the agenda.

### **3.7 Summary**

This chapter began with the main aim of explaining the methodology best adopted for this research: to investigate the impact of Saudi Arabian societal culture in the public and private sectors. The decision behind implementing the chosen methodology was aided through investigation of the existing literature. The research sought the use of a single case study for this investigation due to several benefits resulting from this approach. One of those benefits is that a case study represents the ideal medium for investigating unknown phenomena, such as the case of Saudi Arabian societal culture. Moreover, a case study delivers a sense of the surrounding environment of the

investigation, which may not be possible with other approaches. In addition, utilising a case study offers practical knowledge of existing situations rather than theoretical knowledge, which was considered one of the main issues with the current literature within this research area. Then, the type of case study was chosen as an exploratory one. This fits the research since it is investigating and exploring the impact of Saudi Arabian societal culture on HRM practices. The following step involved identifying the unit of analysis of this investigation. The unit of analysis was determined to be HR managers and engineers at SAEI, as they are considered to be the source of information provided in this research. The following step discussed the philosophical stance of the investigation. This study reached the conclusion that a realism stance combined with a constructivist approach would suit the aims and questions. This was due to the combination of those two stances resulting in what is known as critical realism, which is chiefly concerned with investigation phenomena through gathering subjective opinions from individuals involved in the investigation. In addition, the research believes in the notion that there are other possible explanations and multiple realities, which describes the realism and constructivist stances.

After that, the chapter introduces a brief background on methodology and the different approaches that could be utilised. However, based on the research questions, aims and objectives, the research found the adoption of a mixed-methods approach to be most appropriate. This was evident as the research aims could not be satisfied, or the research questions answered, through the use of a single approach. Moreover, each approach has its own limitations that could be avoided through the use of the mixed-methods approach. In addition, the data collection process involves personnel across different levels within SAEI, which requires the implementation of different approaches for different levels. Also, the diverged design of the methodology would help provide the in-depth analysis of the qualitative approach with large-scale access of a quantitative approach. After appointing the mixed-methods methodology, the research implemented the techniques developed by Miles and Huberman (1994) to make meaning out of the gathered findings of the data collection process, validating those findings according to systematic and logical procedures and testing the quality and generalisability. Then, the chapter examined the participants of the data collection process and the sample size incorporated for the quantitative aspect of the process. This step aimed to provide additional knowledge of the participants along with aiding the accuracy of generalisability. As for the sample size, there was no need to determine one as the

research was given the green light from the management and engineers at SAEI to include the entire engineering population in the investigation. This followed detailed descriptions of the design of interviews and questionnaires involved in the data collection process. These designs were entirely based on the findings of the literature – as this is considered an exploratory research – as well as some questions added to the interviews. These descriptions were followed by a week-by-week transcript of the data collection process that covered seven weeks. The aim of this transcript was to provide a sense of the surrounding environment to the process and provide a better awareness of the case being investigated. Finally, this chapter was concluded with a conclusion of the data collection process summarising the seven-week period.

Those gathered findings would be used explicitly in the following section (Findings chapter) to highlight all of the findings collected during the case study. Consequently, those findings would be compared against the findings of the existing literature in the discussion chapter.

Chapter 4:  
Findings & Analysis

## **Chapter 4 – Findings and Analysis**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Once the research has developed the appropriate framework and adopted a suitable methodology, the data collection process can commence and start producing findings. This section will compile the findings that were generated by the data collection process explained in the previous chapter. This compiling aims to facilitate for easier comparisons between data collection findings and the findings of the existing literature (to be carried out in the next chapter). According to the research framework, this chapter takes place in Stage 2 and is concerned with data processing. As such, it is initiated upon completion of the data collection, which entailed conducting interviews and distributing questionnaires. Furthermore, this chapter is crucial to the progress of this research as it provides the tools required for the research to move to the next and final stage of the research: drawing conclusions and outcomes. Finally, this research retains its aim of investigating and exploring the current state of the five HRM practices in the public and private sectors, rather than comparing the two sectors against each other. As highlighted in the introduction chapter, this research has the main aim of investigating the impact of Saudi Arabian societal culture on five specific HRM practices within the public and private sectors. These five HRM practices are recruitment sources, performance appraisal, compensation and rewards, job desirability, and training programmes. This investigation would be carried out within public and private sectors through a case study of the SAEI department at Saudi Arabian Airlines. This particular department provided both sectors due to the ongoing privatisation process taking place at the organisation. This particular design of the investigation assists the efforts of answering the research questions and accomplishing its objectives. As the first question targets the main aim of this research, the two other questions compliment the investigation through identifying the relation between Saudi Arabian societal culture and the HRM practices in question. Moreover, the second question explores the preferred policies and practices within the five HRM practices. As for the research objectives, this case study helps to achieve all four objectives. Those four objectives included investigating the impact of societal culture on the five HRM practices within Saudi Arabia, understanding the deployed HRM practices in public and private sectors through the single case of SAEI, developing an understanding of the

currently in-place HRM practices and comparing them against the existing literature. This would then enable the research to develop constructive discussion, conclusions and recommendations.

## **4.2 Aim**

This chapter is carried out with the main aim of providing the outcomes of the data collected from Saudi Arabian Airlines, mainly the outcomes of the interviews and questionnaires accompanied with observations during the data collection process. Also, this part of the research aims to use the findings of the case study to highlight and outline any outcomes that can be of use in fulfilling the research aims and answering its questions. Furthermore, the outcomes found in this chapter will be studied to identify any limitations, recommendations or conclusions that could be of assistance to any possible future work.

### **4.2.1 Development of the Matrices**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, this research will adopt the data display designed for a single case study approach (developed by Miles and Huberman, 1994). The purpose of this data display is to offer a clear and succinct illustration of the findings collected during the data collection process. Miles and Huberman consider that the standard conditions of displaying qualitative research analysis can be summed up as a case report with cumbersome, disordered writings that is considered a hindrance for readers intending to evaluate any data. Therefore, this research will adopt a matrix display format to demonstrate the findings and outcomes of the interview process. Schatzman (1991) highlighted that researchers need to tell the story within the research findings and that the implementation of a matrix provides them with a platform to frame their story. In addition, the research will produce another data display in the shape of a contact summary form of the interview process, which, in combination with the matrix, will provide an organised, summarised and focused presentation of the obtained data on a single page (as mentioned by Miles and Huberman, 1994). Thus, after the conclusion of each HRM practice finding, a matrix will follow with the main themes found in those practices. These matrices should place all the vital findings in a nutshell for them to be used in the comparisons in the following discussion chapter. Furthermore, the development of these matrices will be expanded further in the appendices (Appendix IV), where the development of the matrices from the coding process is followed in the

analysis of the findings collected in the data collection process. This specific appendix will show how each matrix was developed based on the findings of the data collection process.

### **4.3 Data Collection Findings and Results**

This particular section in the chapter aims to answer two of the research questions and two of the research objectives. As for the two research questions, this section addresses a significant part of the second and third questions. The second question aims to understand the relations between Saudi Arabian societal culture and the five HRM practices. Thus, the insights of HR managers in the interviews will provide an understanding of those relations in real life situations. As for the third question, this question targets the preferred practices within the five targeted HRM practices in the investigation. This will be accomplished through the questionnaires, which will ask SAEI engineers about their preferred practices within each HRM practice involved in the investigation. In regards to the two objectives, this section will address one objective concerned with an analysis of the current practices deployed and implemented within the five targeted HRM practices in the public and private sectors. The second objective is partially answered in this chapter through a review of the five HRM practices currently in place within the public and private sectors, and it will prepare those findings to be used in the next chapter in comparisons against related literature.

#### **4.3.1 Interviews' Findings Introduction**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the interview process involved senior managers within the human resource department of SAEI, as well as senior managers from other departments. The involvement of non-HR managers was included to explore HR-related issues within the workplace from the point of view of a senior figure within the organisation. However, each of the HR managers was designated a set of questions that corresponded with his or her respective HR specialty. For instance, the compensation and rewards manager was responsible for answering the set of questions addressing the compensation and rewards systems within the interviews. Moreover, a general interview encompassing the entirety of the questions was conducted with the head of HR to fill any gaps that might have been found post the interviews and to provide a different perspective. Moreover, conducting this general interview allowed a glimpse into the viewpoint of the head of operations within the Saudi Airlines HR department, which



was valuable to the research. Also, to reiterate, interviews focused on five aspects within HRM. These aspects are job desirability, performance appraisal, recruitment sources, compensation and rewards systems and training programmes. Each of these practices was designated to an HR manager with the associated area of expertise. Upon the completion of each interview, the HR managers were provided with a digital copy of the questions and contact details in case they wanted to provide further input and data that were not mentioned in the interviews. Furthermore, the original interviews were recorded as a transcript to be used later on for verification and as a reference log. Also, it should be noted that a detailed description of the analysis and coding process of the interviews would be included in the appendices.

#### **4.3.1.1. Interviews Findings**

##### **4.3.1.1.1 Job Desirability**

The first question in the job desirability theme was an introductory question regarding the process implemented in finding the ideal candidate for a certain vacancy within the organisation. The managers answered that, in the case of a vacancy within a certain department, the search of potential employees is internal. It starts in this department with a vacant position will need to register their current requirements with the HR department. After that, the HR department would examine the applicants' database in order to find an applicant with skills matching those required for the vacant position. Then the HR department would forward any suitable potential applicants to the department with the vacancy to arrange for a résumé check. If potential applicants resumes were accepted, the department would arrange an interview. The following question concerned the type of incentives offered by the organisation to ensure that a vacancy within the organisation would be appealing to potential applicants. A statement from the HR manager *“stating that Saudi Arabian Airlines is one of the biggest and most desired companies in Saudi Arabia to work for. In addition to enjoying this prominent status in the employment world, Saudi Arabian Airlines offers high salaries, medical insurance, ticket allowance and work-scheme discounts with major goods and service providers all over the world, including hotels, restaurants and car companies”*. The HR manager added that, with the inclusion of these incentives and with the Saudi Arabian Airlines reputation, employees and potential applicants would be attracted to the organisation. The last question read *“Are those incentives fixed or flexible to the candidates' likings?”* The manager responded *“once a potential applicant secures a*

permanent position within the organisation, he or she doesn't have to settle for either flexible or fixed incentives but can enjoy both sets of incentives; this satisfies most applicants". Then, the HR manager was asked "Over past experiences, what are the aspects that make vacancies within the organisation more desirable for the locals?" his response included "*free ticket allowances, high salary packages and job security*". According to the HR manager, these incentives were the standout incentives among the Saudi employees. Then, the HR manager was asked whether his department attempted to detect any common themes regarding the incentives being offered to shape future hiring incentives offered. The manager's response was that his department deploys this approach to use in future hiring, as it increases job desirability and provides the organisation with a focal point of interest when offering incentives to potential employees.

After that, the interview sought further details regarding the incentives preferred among Saudi employees and which incentives were emphasized. The HR manager stated "*there are generally two types of Saudi personnel with two different preferred sets of incentives. The first type is represented in young Saudi employees, who tend to want more experience higher wages at the beginning of their careers. The second type is represented in Saudi executives, who focus on development strategies and plans with the long-term target of securing a key position within the organisation*". The following question asked about the HR manager's past experiences during the recruitment process and about whether potential Saudi employees voice their opinions on how they like to accomplish their tasks. The HR manager agreed that potential Saudi employees do showcase their interest in working within teams while accomplishing tasks. Also, he added that this interest entirely complements the hierarchy's vision when it comes to accomplishing tasks and achieving goals. Furthermore, the HR manager noted that, specifically within the technical line of work within Saudi Arabian Airlines, teamwork is highly encouraged and is crucial for efficient performance.

The last question provided the HR manager with the opportunity to highlight what attracts potential employees. The HR manager responded that, as a whole, Saudi Airlines is the leading Airline company in the country and one of the leading companies in the region. However, when it comes to SAEI, a position within the department always involves technical and engineering challenges, as SAEI is responsible for maintenance for a leading aerospace company. Also, these challenges are bound to

provide employees with much-needed experience and know-how. Moreover, working for SAEI provides employees with numerous opportunities to improve by being trained professionally internationally and nationally through the training programmes set out by the organisation. At the end of this section of the interview process, the participating HR managers were thanked for their insight, time and input. Also, the HR managers gave their permission to conduct further interviews if further information was required.

#### **4.3.1.1.1.1 Job Desirability Analysis**

Based on the answer provided by the HR managers regarding identifying ideal candidates, the given scenario indicates that departments define the required skills for the vacancy. This definition would work as a parameter for the HR department while examining the applicants' database. Thus, highlighting that departments within SAEI identify the ideal candidates through the set of skills required for the vacancy. This defined set of skills would filter out the unqualified applicants. Applicants with matching skills would then be invited to conduct interviews for the vacancy.

As for the incentives offered to attract those ideal candidates, the HR managers' answers indicate that incentives have been honed according to the applicants' preferences to ensure that vacancies within SAEI remain attractive. This can be clearly seen through the incentives offered by SAEI, which are high wages, free airline tickets and career security. Those three incentives were the focus of Saudi employees. The HR managers confirmed that this focus prompted the HR department to consider those incentives in future hiring. Also, the HR managers indicated employing two separate strategies in attracting two different sets of employees. One strategy was specifically designated for new graduates, whom the HR managers explained are mostly interested in acquiring high salaries and building their experiences. Another strategy was for established executives, who are more interested in affecting change through setting up strategies and development plans for the organisation. According to the HR managers, the previously mentioned strategies ensure attracting the two different sets of employees. Another aspect within the job desirability theme is the manner of accomplishing tasks. The HR managers' answers indicated that, due to the nature of most technical tasks within SAEI, working within teams is common. This complements the preferences of Saudi employees, who typically enjoy working within groups while accomplishing tasks. Thus, the organisation's management lent its support towards teamwork. As a result, the three parties involved are in unison regarding teamwork.

Table.1 shows the relation between societal culture and the different themes within job desirability. In link with the Islamic culture, this particular HRM practice has been depicted accurately in the literature discussing Islamic values and preferred practices within the job desirability aspect. This was clearly shown in three main elements within the job desirability aspect. Firstly, the manner of accomplishing tasks, where employees view working within teams to be ideal for them. Moreover, the hierarchy within Saudi Arabian Airlines and SAEI support the spirit of teamwork and solidarity within the group. Secondly, the types of incentives being offered by SAEI have been influenced by the suggestions made by applicants over past experiences. Thus, SAEI does not offer fixed incentives, but flexible ones depending on the employees' preferred choice of incentives. Third aspect can be linked with the second one, where SAEI offer employees the opportunity to choose their incentives, which reflects positively on vacancies within SAEI. However, one aspect did not follow the theme suggested in the literature. This aspect was Saudi employees electing for some non-collectivistic incentives such as wages and free tickets allowance. However, in general, the job desirability aspect can be noted to be influenced by Saudi Arabian societal culture, as suggested by the literature with the exception of one aspect.

Table.4.1: Relation between societal culture and job desirability themes

<b>HRM Practice</b>	<b>Societal Influence</b>	<b>Societal Culture Impact</b>	<b>Consequence on Practice</b>
<b>Accomplishing Tasks</b>	Existent	Being part of the team is key	Management encouraging teamwork
<b>Incentives offered by SAEI</b>	Existent	Employees focus on specific aspects	Consideration for future hiring
<b>SAEI shared values</b>	Non-existent	Saudis focus on job security, wages and free tickets	No consequence
<b>Nature of incentives offered</b>	Existent	Increase desirability by offering wide range of incentives	Employees can choose their incentives

#### 4.3.1.1.2 Recruitment Sources

The recruitment and administrative support manager handles the channels that the department utilises to hire new employees in collaboration with the manager of technical services, who provides the technical support needed for the recruitment process. The manager of employees' relations and compensation held the position of acting HR manager at the time this research was conducted. As such, he was in charge of communicating with the different departments looking to hire new employees to fill current vacant positions. Therefore, the involvement of those three managers was needed to maximise the chance of producing the most valuable and satisfactory outcomes possible.

This theme of the interview process started with a question regarding the recruitment sources currently being used by the organisation in the shape of this question: "What sources does the organisation use in the recruitment of new employees?" The HR manager responsible for the recruitment process stated that the organisation encourages direct online hiring through the organisation's website. The reasoning behind this encouragement for online application is that the organisation believes that, when potential applicants upload their resumes to the company's database, the database will expand and provide a reference center to departments within the organisation whenever they need new hires in the future. Moreover, the utilisation of a potential applicants database speeds up the recruitment process, as departments only need to pick and choose from the potential applicants database. The first question was followed up with a question asking about the justification behind the organisation's preference for online direct hiring. This follow up question read as "What is the justification behind the selection of these sources?" The HR manager reiterated the organisation's aim to build and expand a potential applicants database to create greater efficiency within the recruitment process. Then, the interview turned its focus to the aspect of how the recruitment sources utilised by the organisation developed over the years with a question that read "How did the aspect of recruitment sources evolved throughout the years?" The HR manager responded by stating that the introduction of the Internet allowed for the development of e-business solutions. These e-business solutions sped up the process of hiring new employees and increased its efficiency. Furthermore, these e-business solutions shortened the distance between the organisation and potential employees.

The following question discussed the significance of the vacancy itself within the organisation and whether the vacancy dictates the recruitment source to be used by the organisation and, if so, how. This question read as “Does the vacancy within the organisation determine which recruitment source to be used? If so, how does a vacancy influence the selection of recruitment sources?” The HR manager responded “*Indeed, some vacancies within the organisation influence the recruitment source to be used. This occurs, for example, when the organisation is looking to fill an executive position or a similarly critical position. In these circumstances, the organisation seriously considers a headhunting approach if the targeted individual is highly regarded for his work and has demonstrated his competence in his respective field*”. Then, the HR manager was asked whether Saudi employees prefer specific recruitment sources. The HR manager stated, “*Potential Saudi employees did show a preference towards the word-of-mouth approach and toward being considered for a position within the organisation based on recommendation from a relative or a close friend*”. After that, the HR manager was asked to name the recruitment source that were most effective and yielded the best outcomes. This question read as “Judging by past results, which recruitment sources attract the most potential applicants and most effective?” The answer provided suggested that applying for vacancies directly through the organisation’s website proved to be the standout choice. After that, the HR manager was asked to explain why, in his opinion; direct online recruitment enjoys superiority over the other recruitment sources.

The HR manager professed that the convenience of online application, along with its accessibility and ease of use, attracted many job seekers and employees working for other companies interested in finding a better organisational position with a better salary, incentives and career development. Also, the utilisation of an online recruitment approach eliminates unnecessary paperwork, saving time for those employees responsible for the recruitment process and facilitating easier communication between the organisation and potential applicants. The interview then focused on the aspects of the recruitment process that dictate the implementation of specific recruitment sources over others. The answer from the HR manager was that the recruitment source to be used by the organisation actually depended on the vacancy itself. In other words, the criteria of the job determine the recruitment source to be used. For instance, filling a technical position is entirely unlike filling an executive position, as specific sets of skills are required. Moreover, when filling an executive position, as was stated previously, the

desired individual may be approached or headhunted due to his or her knowledge and experience. Then, the interview turned towards Saudi Arabia's culture and whether it imposes any influences on recruitment sources. The HR manager indicated that Saudi Arabian culture clearly influences the selection of recruitment sources, explaining that the most noted influence comes in the shape of potential employees being recommended by relatives. As for the reason behind this situation, the HR manager explained, "*recommendations facilitate what is required for the recommended position and the process of recruitment*". The question that followed was "In your own opinion, do you believe there is a relation between local culture and recruitment sources and the way applicants respond to them?" The HR manager responded that there is indeed a strong relation between Saudi Arabian culture and recruitment sources. He explained this relation through an example. He stated that, when the online application process was first initiated, the responses from potential applicants were underwhelming, due to their unfamiliarity with this new process, lack of trust for this unknown recruitment source and their preference to apply in person.

The last question in this section of the interview involved the difference between Saudi and foreign potential employees and whether each type had preferred recruitment sources. The HR manager responded that, as was stated previously, potential Saudi employees tend to prefer the online application process and personal recommendation, while potential foreign employees rely mostly on the online application process and on being headhunted by the organisation. However, the HR manager insisted that the organisation places great emphasis on maintaining transparency and equality throughout its recruitment process. In addition, the organisation is taking part in the Saudisation program initiated by the Saudi Arabian government, which aims to increase the numbers of working Saudi nationals and decrease the unemployment rate within the country.

#### **4.3.1.1.2.1 Recruitment Sources Analysis:**

The HR managers involved in the recruitment sources section of the interview process specified that they consider direct online application to be the prime recruitment source. They justified this choice by stating that it builds a comprehensive database of applicants for future hiring and accelerates the recruitment process by eliminating unnecessary paperwork, leading to an efficient recruitment process. However, the use of direct online application as the prime recruitment source only came to prominence after

the emergence of e-business solutions. This notion suggests that prior to the introduction of e-business solutions, recruitment sources were rather primitive and mundane. This observation was noted after the HR managers stressed the huge impact the Internet and e-business solutions had on the recruitment process.

On a different note, a vacancy can influence the recruitment source to be used. This understanding was developed after the HR managers denoted that some positions might require adopting a headhunting approach. This can be the case when a well-known professional has been identified as the ideal individual for a vacancy. Then, there is no need to follow the regular recruitment process. The HR managers have mentioned another exception in the recruitment process (although they still consider direct online application to be the main source), suggesting that many Saudi have shown their preference towards being recommended by friends and family.

The HR managers provided this source as an example of Saudi societal culture influence on recruitment sources. When the interview process approached the connection between societal culture and recruitment sources, the HR managers believed that there is a strong correlation between the two. They indicated that the gap between the new emerging recruitment sources and societal culture was so great that it did not become the most popular recruitment source for quite some time. Table.2 illustrates how the themes within recruitment sources react to societal culture influence. In link with the Islamic core values discussed in the literature, the recruitment sources practice has clearly shown that it was not influenced by Saudi Arabia societal culture. This conclusion was based on the two main aspects within this HRM practices. Where the first aspect concerned with the primary source of recruitment was not found to be a source reflecting collectivistic values. Online direct application was the prime and most popular source according to HR managers at SAEI. This impersonal and distant source was considered undesirable and unattractive by collectivistic individuals according to the literature. The second main aspect was determining recruitment sources to be used. The HR managers stated that recruitment sources are dependant on vacancies and mentioned an individualistic approach in the headhunting approach that might be used in some cases. The literature emphasised that approaches such headhunting should be considered a rarity within collectivistic cultures, which clashed with the views provided by the HR managers at SAEI. However, one aspect appeared to be in agreement with the literature. This aspect was that one of the main recruitment sources in collectivistic



culture is the friends and family recommendations, which proved to be one of the main sources to be considered at SAEI.

Table.4.2: Relation between societal culture and recruitment sources themes

HRM Practice	Societal Influence	Societal Culture Impact	Consequence on Practice
Primary source used by SAEI	Non-existent	Online application attracts most applicants	No consequence
Other sources used by SAEI	Existent	Consider working for SAEI	Using recommendation and word-of-mouth as sources
Determining which Sources to be used	Non-existent	Recruitment source to be used depends on the vacancy	No consequence

#### 4.3.1.1.3 Performance Appraisal

As an introduction to this section of the interview, the HR manager was asked to provide a description of the current performance appraisal approach implemented by SAEI and whether it is a specific approach developed by the department or an imported approach developed from existing models. The HR manager explained, “*The majority of the current performance appraisal methods implemented in SAEI are standardised and are adopted from the Saudi Arabian Airlines headquarters. They have the aim of achieving the best possible evaluation. However, the performance appraisal methods implemented within SAEI are not imported, nor are they based on western models*”. Then, this question was followed up with “Why do you follow this specific process?” The HR manager stated that the current performance appraisal process adopted by the department and the entire organisation provided results that departments within Saudi Arabian Airlines found satisfactory and suitable for their purposes.

After that, the interview turned to whether the performance appraisal methods have evolved over the years or have maintained the same formula since the organisation’s inception. The HR manager stated, “*There were no major changes within the*

*performance appraisal methods used by SAEI. However, the performance appraisal methods are severely scrutinised every three years in order to improve upon any shortcomings within the evaluation process that might be found*". The HR manager added that the three-year evaluation period does not allow for major changes within the performance appraisal methods. Rather, it allows for only slight changes to improve the process and refine it. The following question shifts the focus towards the general themes within the evaluation process and whether it places greater emphasis on specific work aspects. The HR manager answered, "The performance appraisal process seeks a comprehensive and all-encompassing evaluation that includes the employees' productivity, their work ethic, their discipline and the possibility of future development within the organisation".

The next part of this section investigated feedback and the manner in which feedback was conveyed to the employees. The first question discussed the technique deployed in giving the feedback to the employees. The HR manager indicated that, upon the HR department's completion of processing the evaluation of an employee, the employee would be provided with a copy of his or her evaluation to show how it was conducted. Then, the HR manager was countered with a follow-up question regarding feedback whether specific communication tools were used to inform the employees of the completion of their evaluation process. The HR manager stated that, "*upon processing an employee's evaluation, the employee in question would receive an email notification informing him or her of the performance appraisal and updates on the annual appraisal*". Afterwards, the HR manager was asked to provide a justification for implementing this particular technique in conveying feedback to employees. The HR manager stated that emails are used to convey feedback simply because they are more efficient and they more quickly deliver feedback to employees, especially in the case of the SAEI department, where everyone has demanding schedules and working hours. Furthermore, the use of other unimplemented methods of conveying feedback could compromise some of the productivity of the SAEI department. Therefore, the current method provides the department with convenience and higher efficiency.

After that, the interview examined culture and its relation to performance appraisal methods. This focus started with a question investigating whether Saudi Arabian influences the implementation of a specific performance appraisal method that might be preferred within this particular culture. The HR manager indicated that, "*Saudi Arabian*

*culture influences performance appraisal methods only minimally and does not command any priority when it comes to choosing a performance appraisal method*". Then the interview focused on the employees' cultural backgrounds (Saudi and foreign) and whether employees of different backgrounds prefer different performance appraisal methods. The answer provided by the HR manager was "No". He added, *"There were not any patterns or themes to be detected during the performance appraisal process from either Saudi employees or foreign employees"*.

The final question in this section of the interview discussed whether the same performance appraisal methods were implemented throughout the entirety of Saudi Arabian Airlines. The HR manager said that the current performance appraisal methods adopted by SAEI are standardised and are adopted throughout the organisation. However, certain parts of the evaluation process are edited and customised to the specific requirements of the department carrying out the evaluation.

#### **4.3.1.1.3.1 Performance Appraisal Analysis**

The performance appraisal system adopted at SAEI is standardised throughout the organisation, with some exceptions and modifications that depend on the department conducting the appraisal. The HR managers pointed out that this system provides accurate and satisfactory evaluations, which is why it is adopted throughout the organisation. Furthermore, the HR managers mentioned that the performance appraisal process is evaluated every three years, which explains why there were no major overhauls occurring to the process. The three-year-evaluation period allows for small changes to take place as needed. On the other hand, the bases of the appraisal process encompass a wide variety of criterion not focusing on performance and objectives only. Other aspects considered are work ethic, discipline and future development. Accordingly, the bases of the appraisal process can be described as rather comprehensive. As for conveying feedback, this process can be described as pragmatic as it solely involves the use of email. The HR managers justified the use of e-mail by stating that it is swift and effectual.

However, the HR managers denied any impacting correlation between Saudi societal culture and the performance appraisal process. This non-existent relation has been supported by the HR manager's claim that the appraisal process is standardised throughout the organisation and, if there were any changes, they would be based on the

departments' needs and not on societal culture. Thus, societal culture does not figure greatly in the performance appraisal equation. Table.3 shows the interaction between performance appraisal and societal culture. In link with the Islamic core values, the performance appraisal practice appeared not to be influenced by Saudi Arabian societal culture. This was proved within the two main aspects within this practice. First aspect addressed the bases of the performance appraisal system implemented within SAEI, where the adopted system was not based on societal values but on a standardised procedure followed throughout Saudi Arabian Airlines. Furthermore, Saudi Arabian societal culture did not exercise any major impact on the appraisal system and its impact was minimal at best. The second main aspect involved the conveying of feedback to employees. Existing literature suggested that collectivistic cultures tend to follow a clear philosophy in this matter, where personal and delicate methods would be implemented. However, within SAEI, conveying feedback to employees is done through impersonal procedure via e-mail, which contradicts the hypothesis found in the literature regarding conveying feedback methods.

Table.4.3: Relation between societal culture and performance appraisal themes

HRM Practice	Societal Influence	Societal Culture Impact	Consequence on Practice
<b>Bases of appraisal system used by SAEI</b>	Non-Existent	Minimal influence	The inclusion of work ethics and discipline criteria
<b>Conveying feedback</b>	Non-existent	Impersonal approach - use of e-mail	No consequence

#### 4.3.1.1.4 Compensation and Rewards

The first question of this section in the interview process discussed the currently implemented compensation and rewards systems within SAEI and the bases that those systems are built upon. The HR manager explained, *“the bases for the current compensation and rewards systems are based on employees achieving satisfactory performances that result in annual increases in Step and Grade levels. Therefore, employees maintain high levels of motivation because they know they will be rewarded*

*for excelling*”. After that, the following question focused on whether the compensation and rewards systems have witnessed major scale changes and overhauls throughout the years. The HR manager indicated that the compensation and rewards systems have indeed changed. But to say that these changes were major would be an exaggeration. Rather, the HR manager used the word ‘incremental’ to describe them. Then, the HR manager was asked about the factors and elements that the HR department consider important in setting up the compensation system. The HR manager stated, *“There are three specific elements that must be maintained within the department. These elements are the organisation’s reputation, image and desirability, which enable the organisation to remain competitive”*. The next question in this theme of the interview investigated the same aspects as the previous question, but in terms of rewards. The HR manager reiterated, *“Rewards and bonuses are correlated with the performance appraisal process. This means that bonuses and rewards are dependent on employees’ performances. Nonetheless, employees can redeem bonuses and rewards on a quicker return basis by conducting overtime work that would yield financial rewarding or a type of time-compensating rewarding”*. Then, the following question investigated the nature of rewards and bonuses awarded at SAEI and whether they were financial or non-financial.

The HR manager responded that employees could choose the form of rewards they prefer and that the organisation offers its employees both types of rewards and bonuses. After that, the interview turned its attention towards Saudi Arabian culture and whether it impacts Saudi employees’ preference in terms of selecting one rewards system over the other. The HR manager stated, *“if there were a major theme to be detected among Saudi employees when it comes to choosing a preferred rewards system, it would be that Saudi employees tend to favour a combination of both rewards systems: the financial and the non-financial”*. A similar question came next, investigating whether one rewards system commands more importance than other available rewarding systems among Saudi employees. This question read “Do Saudi employees prefer financial or non-financial rewards?” The HR manager responded that Saudi employees prefer financial rewards on the long term. However, for the short term, Saudi employees prefer a mix of financial and non-financial rewards, as was stated while answering the previous question. After that, this section of the interview continued its investigation regarding Saudi Arabian culture and its impact on compensation and rewards systems by enquiring as to whether the organisation’s setup of the compensation and rewards

systems was affected by the cultural background of the employees. The HR manager explained, *“the cultural backgrounds of the employees did have an impact on the setup of some aspects of the compensation and rewards systems”*. The most notable example would be the introduction of a time-compensation reward. The last question of this section of the interview deals with whether there are any comparisons to be made between Saudi employees and foreign employees based on their preferences for compensation and rewards systems. The HR manager replied, *“no comparison could be made between Saudi employees and foreign employees when it comes to their preferences regarding compensation and rewards systems. Both sets of employees share numerous similarities when it comes to the compensation and rewards systems implemented within the organisation”*.

#### **4.3.1.1.4.1 Compensation and Rewards Analysis**

The HR managers identified a Step and Grade level system as the compensation system implemented at SAEI. This system is mainly dependent on the six aspects of the performance appraisal process. The use of such a system inspires employees to increase their productivity and efficiency. In addition, the HR managers mentioned several other perks concerning the employment of such a system. Those perks include maintaining a great reputation among other leading companies, reflecting a pristine image and increasing the desirability for potential applicants. Those factors help the organisation remain a major competitor and maintain a competitive edge over other companies. As for the rewards system, the HR managers stated that SAEI allows its employees to choose their preferred rewards. This freedom enables the organisation to meet all of the employees' preferences. Moreover, the HR managers cited this flexibility as the reason behind the creation of the most favoured type of reward among employees. This reward is a mixture of financial and non-financial rewards known as a “Compensatory-Time” reward. On the long term, the majority of employees tend to opt for financial rewards. Nevertheless, this choice does not imply that societal culture can be considered as an effective factor within the rewards aspect. Further evidence of this weak relation between societal culture and the rewards system is provided by the HR managers concerning the preferred system among Saudi and foreign employees. The HR managers failed to signal any differences between the two sets of employees, which indicates that societal culture does not impact the preferred choice of compensation or rewards greatly. Table.4 illustrates the relation between societal culture and the main

themes found in compensation and rewards systems. In link with the Islamic core values mentioned in the literature, the compensation and rewards practice was influenced by Saudi Arabian societal culture. This was based on two aspects within this particular practice. First aspect was the basis of the compensation system installed within SAEI, where this system was clearly influenced by the collectivistic values. SAEI management uses this system as a motivational tool for employees to spur them towards excelling performances, which is a feature that is considered to be desirable by Saudi employees. The second aspect involved the choice of rewards offered by SAEI. SAEI has left the choice of rewards to be decided by the employees rather than setting a fixed system to be followed. This aspect agrees with the literature that stated that collectivistic employees tend to prefer a mixture of both rewards rather than just one. As a result, this HRM practice of compensation and rewards was considered in agreement with the literature.

Table.4.4: Relation between societal culture and compensation and rewards themes

HRM Practice	Societal Influence	Societal Culture Impact	Consequence on Practice
<b>Bases of compensation system used by SAEI</b>	Existent	Employees are inspired by reward for excelling performances	The implementation of Step-Grade system
<b>Choice of rewards</b>	Existent	Financial and a combination of financial and non-financial	Both types of rewards are available with the introduction of compensatory-time reward

#### 4.3.1.1.5 Training Programmes

The first question addressed the main point of this section of the interview by investigating whether Saudi Arabian culture had any impact on the training programmes implemented within the organisation. The HR manager stated, *“Saudi Arabian culture definitely has an impact on training programmes. The best example to showcase this impact is the necessity of learning the English language. This example stands out*

*because the majority of new graduates from Saudi Arabian schools and colleges do not have an ideal grasp of the English language or an understanding of the relevant work terminology*". The HR manager added that this focus within training programmes is not apparent only within Saudi Arabian Airlines but within the majority of large companies in Saudi Arabia. The next question addressed whether the organisation considers the trainees' cultural backgrounds. Also, the HR managers were asked to provide an example of these considerations, if they existed. The HR manager answered that the organisation considers the trainees' cultural backgrounds. However, most training was geared towards supporting linguistic skills. The final question of this section of the interview addressed whether the organisation set up specific training programmes to help foreign employees adjust to the Saudi Arabian culture and lifestyle. The HR manager responded, *"The organisation does indeed place great emphasis on helping foreign employees adjust to Saudi culture. Furthermore, there are seminars explaining common cultural, social and religious themes within the Saudi Arabian culture. Moreover, the HR department provides support for foreign employees outside those training programmes"*.

#### **4.3.1.1.5.1 Training programmes analysis**

The interview theme of the training programmes presented a great correlation between societal culture and training programmes. This connection was noted from the first question, where the HR managers emphasized the importance of learning the English language. They cited English as a required skill across all major companies in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the HR managers stressed that employees' cultural backgrounds are greatly considered when setting up their training programmes and that they determine the programmes necessary. The most notable programmes mentioned by the HR managers taught linguistic skills. Another justification for this great focus on linguistic skills is that the Arabic language is the native language in Saudi Arabia, and it might require major companies—including Saudi airlines—to initiate linguistic skills programmes to improve their employees' linguistic levels and enable them to perform their jobs without any hindrances. In link with the Islamic values, this practice of training programmes was found to be influenced by the Saudi Arabian societal culture. That notion was based on two main aspects. Firstly, the setup of training programmes at SAEI was heavily based on the product of local education, which required a dedicated focus on linguistic skills as a prime example. Secondly, this aspect showcased the



influence of Saudi Arabian societal culture in the case of initiating training programmes mainly focusing on familiarising foreign workers with the culture. As a consequence, training programmes are considered to be heavily influenced by the Saudi Arabian societal.

Table.4.5: Relation between societal culture and training programmes themes

HRM Practice	Societal Influence	Societal Culture Impact	Consequence on Practice
<b>Programmes setup</b>	Existent	Focus on linguistic skills	Initiating English language courses to improve trainees' linguistic skills
<b>Programmes orientation</b>	Existent	Foreign workers adapting to Saudi Arabia's culture	Initiating training programmes to inform about Saudi societal culture

#### 4.3.2 Questionnaires' findings introduction

The methodology employed in this research involved 200 employees with an engineering qualification working under the SAEI umbrella. The questionnaires encompassed four main topics: job desirability, recruitment sources, performance appraisal and compensation and rewards systems. Each of these four topics investigates the employees' understanding and preferences regarding elements within these four main aspects. Furthermore, employees were asked to justify their preferences in order to provide additional depth to the data collection process and demonstrate the reasoning behind their selections. The 200 employees were divided into two groups depending on their contracts with Saudi Arabian Airlines. Those two groups were private sector employees and public sector employees. These two groups exist because Saudi Arabian Airlines is going through a privatizing phase, transforming from a state-owned company into a private company. Moreover, this transformation is occurring gradually, which justifies Saudi Arabian Airlines employing private and public employees at the same time and within the same department. Therefore, a percentage of the employees participating in this part of the data collection process belong to the public sector, while the remaining percentage belongs to the private sector, as shown in Figure 4.1. This

figure illustrates that, of the two hundred engineers working for SAEI, the majority belong to the private sector. The exact number of employees who are privately contracted is 154, which amounts to 77% of the engineers in SAEI. The employees who are associated with the public sector represent 23% of the total number of engineers, or exactly 46 employees. Nevertheless, although the number of private employees is eclipsing the number of public employees, public employees still represent an important section of engineers employed by SAEI, which makes their insights and inputs as valuable as those belonging to the private sector.

Both sets of employees were given the same sets of questions but were divided on the basis of their contracts in order to allow the researcher to analyse the data separately before eventually combining the results. Also, this separation provides an opportunity for the researcher to develop an understanding of the different employees' outlooks and insights into the human resource practices being investigated. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the questionnaires were provided in English, with the exception of the translated Arabic language version, which were ready to be handed out upon request. Also, this process took place during the seven-week period of the data collection described in-depth in the previous chapter. Moreover, it should be noted that tables produced in EXCEL of the questionnaires' results would be found in the appendices. Finally, this research reiterates that its aim does not target comparing the two sets of engineers against each other, but to explore and investigate the current situation of HRM practices at the time of conducting this research. On the contrary, the outcome of the data collection generated from the 200 engineers sample agrees with the privatisation progress within SAEI, as the sample size shows a ratio of 30 public/70 private, which compares to 22 per cent public to 77 per cent private.

On the other hand, based on the results obtained from the survey, one-sample test analysis was performed. The statistical results regarding representatives from the private sector are provided in the tables below:

Table.4.6: One-Sample test statistics of the private sector.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
job desirability	8	42.5000	36.83554	13.02333
accomplishing tasks	2	77.0000	45.25483	32.00000
recruitment sources	2	77.0000	87.68124	62.00000
first source when looking for a job	8	25.8750	22.52895	7.96519
performance appraisal method	2	77.0000	31.11270	22.00000
preference for appraisal	2	77.0000	5.65685	4.00000
compensation system	2	77.0000	73.53911	52.00000
preference for rewards	2	97.5000	72.83200	51.50000

*N* represents the number of values given to each variable presented in the sample. For instance, in the variable of ‘job desirability’, there are 8 values, such as job title, function, culture match, size, industry, travel, desired employer and compensation. The estimated standard deviation is quite substantial in this sample, which means that the data is spread out over a significant range of values.

Table.4.7: One-Sample test of the private sector.

	Test Value = 0					
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
job desirability	3.263	7	.014	42.50000	11.7047	73.2953
accomplishing tasks	2.406	1	.251	77.00000	-329.5986	483.5986
recruitment sources	1.242	1	.432	77.00000	-710.7847	864.7847
first source when looking for a job	3.249	7	.014	25.87500	7.0403	44.7097
performance appraisal method	3.500	1	.177	77.00000	-202.5365	356.5365
preference for appraisal	19.250	1	.033	77.00000	26.1752	127.8248
compensation system	1.481	1	.378	77.00000	-583.7226	737.7226
preference for rewards	1.893	1	.309	97.50000	-556.8695	751.8695

*T* represents the test statistics, indicating the precise degree of preference ensured by each sample in both the private and public sector. The degree of preference for particular HRM aspects ranges from low to average in most variables to relatively high in the preference for appraisal expressed by the sample. *df* stands for degrees of

freedom ranging from the values of 1 to 7. The aspect of *df* determines the lack of restrictions in the calculations provided in the tables below.

For representatives from the private sector, it has been concluded that compensation, job title and desired employer were the three most important values associated with job desirability. Group work style has been the preferred work style within the private sector. Personal recruitment sources were more appealing than impersonal sources. First sources to look for when looking for a job included direct application, friends & family and job fairs. In terms of performance appraisal, representatives of the private sector preferred the option of achievement-based appraisal and goals. There were not significant statistical differences between types of appraisal style; both individual and group styles were almost equally preferred. The indicated favourable method of compensation and rewards is equality, and the preferred reward is financial. The statistical results regarding representatives from the public sector are provided in the tables below:

Table.4.8: One-Sample test statistics of the public sector.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
job desirability	8	14.1250	10.68293	3.77699
accomplishing tasks	2	23.0000	1.41421	1.00000
recruitment sources	2	23.0000	21.21320	15.00000
first source when looking for a job	7	9.2857	8.13868	3.07613
performance appraisal method	2	23.0000	14.14214	10.00000
preference for appraisal	2	23.0000	16.97056	12.00000
compensation system	2	23.0000	14.14214	10.00000
preference for rewards	2	33.0000	16.97056	12.00000

For representatives from the public sector, it has been concluded that compensation, job title and desired employer were the three most important values associated with job desirability, as exactly the same results were generated for the private sector group. Both work styles, individual and group, were equally preferred by representatives of the public sector. Personal recruitment sources were more appealing than impersonal sources, as this was the same finding as in the private sector group.

Table.4.9: One-Sample test of the public sector.

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
job desirability	3.740	7	.007	14.12500	5.1938	23.0562
accomplishing tasks	23.000	1	.028	23.00000	10.2938	35.7062
recruitment sources	1.533	1	.368	23.00000	-167.5931	213.5931
first source	3.019	6	.023	9.28571	1.7587	16.8127
performance appraisal method	2.300	1	.261	23.00000	-104.0620	150.0620
preference for appraisal	1.917	1	.306	23.00000	-129.4745	175.4745
compensation system	2.300	1	.261	23.00000	-104.0620	150.0620
preference for rewards	2.750	1	.222	33.00000	-119.4745	185.4745

First sources to look for when looking for a job included direct application, friends & family and job ads. The results are similar to the ones indicated by the private sector group with the exception that representatives from the public sector preferred job ads. In terms of performance appraisal, representatives of the private sector preferred the option of achievement-based appraisal and goals. The preferred appraisal style is individual. The indicated favourable method of compensation and rewards is equality, and the preferred reward is financial.

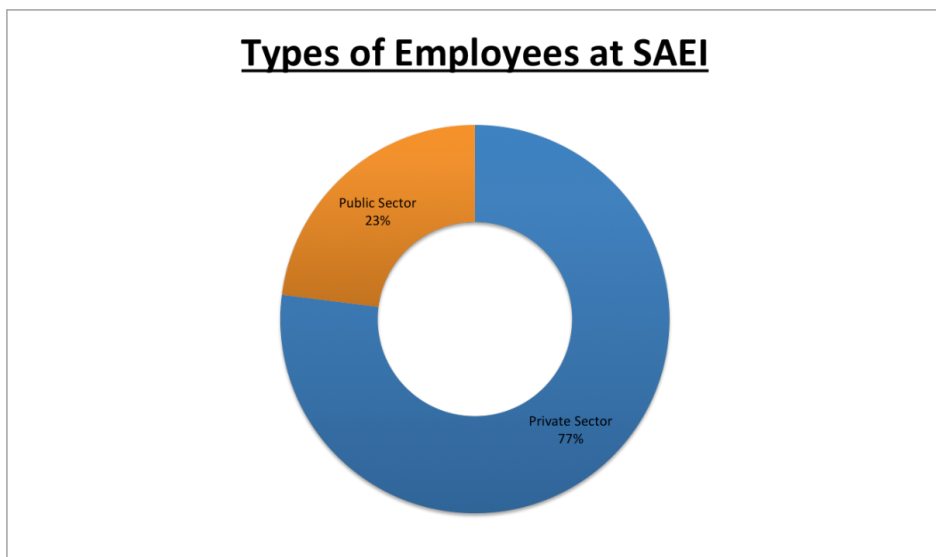


Figure.4.1: percentages of employees belonging to each sector.

### 4.3.2.1 Questionnaires' findings – Private Sector

#### 4.3.2.1.1 Job Desirability

154 of the 200 engineers at SAEI are private sector employees. The questionnaire given to those privately contracted employees started with the job desirability aspect of HR. the first question was concerned with the elements that can be described as essential for those on the hunt for a new job. This question read “When searching for a job, what aspects do you focus on and consider important?” This question came with several possible choices for the employees to choose from in order to enable the research to extract specific outcomes. These choices included: job title, function, culture match, size, industry, travel, desired employer and compensation.

The results of this first question showed the majority of engineers choosing compensation as the main attraction for a vacant position, with a percentage of 36%, as shown in Figure 4.2. The second most popular aspect was the job title, with a percentage of 18%. The third aspect that employees considered important was the desired employer, with a percentage of 13%. The aspect that ranked fourth was industry, which obtained a percentage of 10%. The travelling aspect followed closely, with one percent less than the industry aspect at 9%. As for the sixth rank, it belonged to function, with 7% of the engineers' votes. The seventh most considered aspect was the size of the organisation, with 5%. The least voted upon aspect was culture match, which scored only 2% of the engineers' votes.

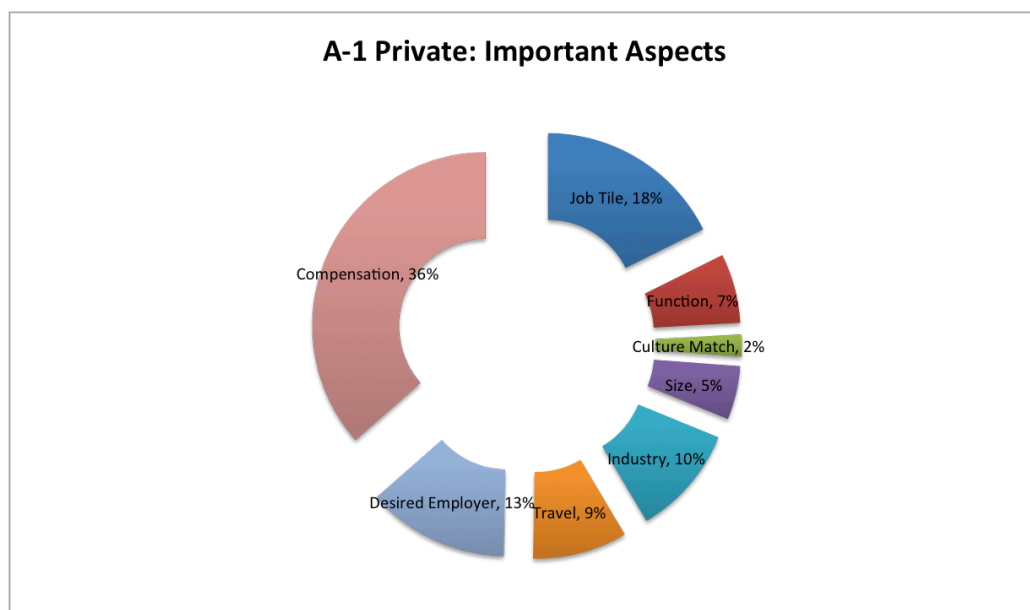


Figure 4.2: Important aspects to private engineers.

The second question in this section of the questionnaires is an optional question, which offered the engineers the space and the opportunity to express their opinions on why they made their specific choices regarding the first question. The majority of engineers who chose compensation as their most important aspect stated that salaries represent the most important factor for them. Moreover, some of the engineers stated that compensation would have a positive impact on their lifestyle. As for the job title, which came as the second favourite choice, several engineers expressed that having an excellent job title would provide them with recognition and a better image socially. Furthermore, several engineers indicated that a good job title would reflect positively on perks and bonuses given them by the organisation. As for the fourth ranked aspect, which was industry, engineers expressed their preference towards working for an aerospace company and noted that the industry was crucially important in applying for a job. The final question in this section of the questionnaires investigated job desirability in terms of accomplishing tasks within an organisation and in terms of which method most appealed to the engineers. In this question, engineers were presented with two choices. The first choice implied that they would like to accomplish tasks independently, while the other choice suggested that they would prefer to accomplish tasks within a team. The answer to this question showcased that engineers overwhelmingly favour working within a team when it comes to accomplishing tasks for the organization, with a percentage of 71%. Only 29% of engineers favoured accomplishing tasks individually.

#### **4.3.2.1.2 Recruitment Sources**

The first of two questions in this section asked the engineers about what they would find more appealing; then the engineers were presented with two choices to choose from: recruitment sources that utilises an approachable stance that would make them feel at ease and relaxed or recruitment sources that utilise a distant and reserved approach that creates a barrier between them and applicants. The response from the participants was definite, with 109 engineers out of the 154 voting for the recruitment sources that utilised the personal approach. This represents 90% of the total number of engineers within the private sector, with only 10% of the participants opting for the recruitment sources with the impersonal approach. The second question in this section aimed to highlight the specific recruitment sources favoured by the participants. Thus,

this second question queried the engineers about their preferred recruitment sources among the following options. The first option was job ads, where jobs are advertised in newspapers and other media outlets. The second option was social networks, where individuals look for job opportunities through social networking mediums such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. The third option was colleagues, where individuals are informed of vacancies through a colleague. The following option was direct application, where individuals apply directly on the organisation's website or through the HR department without using any of the other methods. The fifth option was employment agencies, where an employment agency handles the applicants' recruitment. The sixth option was job fairs, where individuals attend recruitment events. For instance, one of the biggest recruitment events in Saudi Arabia is "Career Day", where individuals attend this event and bring copies of their résumé to hand out to interested organisations. The seventh option is volunteer vacancies, where individuals are hired on a temporary basis through an agency with the chance of securing a permanent position afterwards. Finally, the last option was a friend or family connection, where individuals secure job opportunities and interviews via connections to either a friend or a family member; this is socially accepted in Saudi Arabian culture. The participants drew a clear picture of their preference regarding their favourite recruitment sources. The prime choice was direct application, with a percentage of 32%. The friends and family choice was the second most voted upon option, with a percentage of 23%. The third favourite option was job fairs, with a percentage of 18%. The fourth choice was colleagues, with the percentage of 11%. Job ads followed closely in fifth place, with a percentage of 8%. The sixth place saw a tie between two choices: social networks and employment agencies (both at an exact percentage of 3%). The least voted upon choice belonged to volunteer agencies, which secured only 2% of the votes.

#### **4.3.2.1.3 Performance Appraisal**

The first question in this section enquired about the personal preferences of the engineers on the basis of how the performance appraisal process should be conducted. Moreover, they were presented with two options to choose from. The first option was conducting the performance process based on achievements and goals set by the organisation. The second option proposed a performance appraisal approach based on informality and overall performance without any focus directed at specific goals or targets. The response from the private engineers for this question showed significance



differences between the two approaches, with the majority electing the performance appraisal approach based on achievement and goals, with a percentage of 64%. The remaining 36% of the private engineers elected an informal and overall performance basis for the approach. The second question in this section investigated the manner in which private engineers prefer to be appraised. This question provided two choices to choose from. The first choice is to be appraised as an individual where the employee is responsible and accountable for his performance only. The second choice is to be appraised within a group, where a group of employees are responsible for the performance of the entire group regardless of the individual efforts given within the group. The difference in responses was significantly marginal, at 6%. The majority of the 154 private engineers chose to be appraised within a group, with a percentage of 53% represented by 81 engineers, while 73 private engineers represented the remaining 47% percentage that preferred to be appraised individually based on their performances.

#### **4.3.2.1.4 Compensation and Rewards**

The first question in this section targeted what the compensation systems should be based on from the point of view of the private engineers (i.e. whether they think that employees should all be compensated equally based on an equality basis or individually based on a financial basis that reflects performance). The majority of engineers stated that they prefer a compensation system that is based on equality, where all employees are fairly compensated (with 129 engineers out of the 154 representing a dominating percentage of 84%). The remaining 16%, represented by 25 engineers, voted for a compensation system based on equity. After investigating the compensation systems, the second question in this section investigated the rewards systems. This question investigated the preferred rewards system from the point of view of the private engineers, asking whether they preferred a rewards system that rewards them financially (i.e. with bonuses) or one that rewards them in a non-financial way (i.e. with additional days for holidays, extra perks such as parking spaces or flexible working hours). It is worth noting that the engineers were permitted to choose either or both types of rewards. The greater percentage chose the financial rewards, with a percentage of 76% of engineers stating that they prefer to be rewarded financially.

The remaining 24% chose non-financially based rewards. However, as stated previously, many engineers chose a combination of financial and non-financial rewards to create their preferred rewards systems. The last question in this section provided the

engineers belonging to the private sector with the space to express their personal opinions regarding what rewards systems they would like to see implemented in the organisation. The majority of the participating engineers confessed that they would like a system that reflects recognition and appreciation for their work. Other engineers provided specific criteria in their answers by stating that promotions should cover both financial and non-financial rewards. However, the majority of engineers unambiguously expressed a preference for increased pay. Another group highlighted that they would like to be rewarded with extra days off. A third group stressed that they would accept any rewards systems, as long as they were provided financial and non-financial rewards. On the other hand, some engineers expressed their desire to be given the chance to improve by being given training opportunities.

#### **4.3.2.2 Questionnaires' Findings – Public Sector**

##### **4.3.2.2.1 Job Desirability**

The first question of the job desirability aspect sought the public engineers' views on what they look for when on the hunt for a new job. The response from the public engineers highlighted compensation as the most important aspect, with a resounding 29%. The second most popular aspect was job title, which secured 24% of the public engineers' votes. The third most popular aspect was working for a desired employer (which secured the same rank in popularity with private engineers), with 16% of public engineers viewing it essential when looking for a job. Then, the percentages of the other aspects dropped significantly, with three aspects having the same percentage of 7%. Those aspects are function, industry and travel. The smallest percentage in this question witnessed a tie between two aspects at 5%. These two aspects were organisation size and culture match.

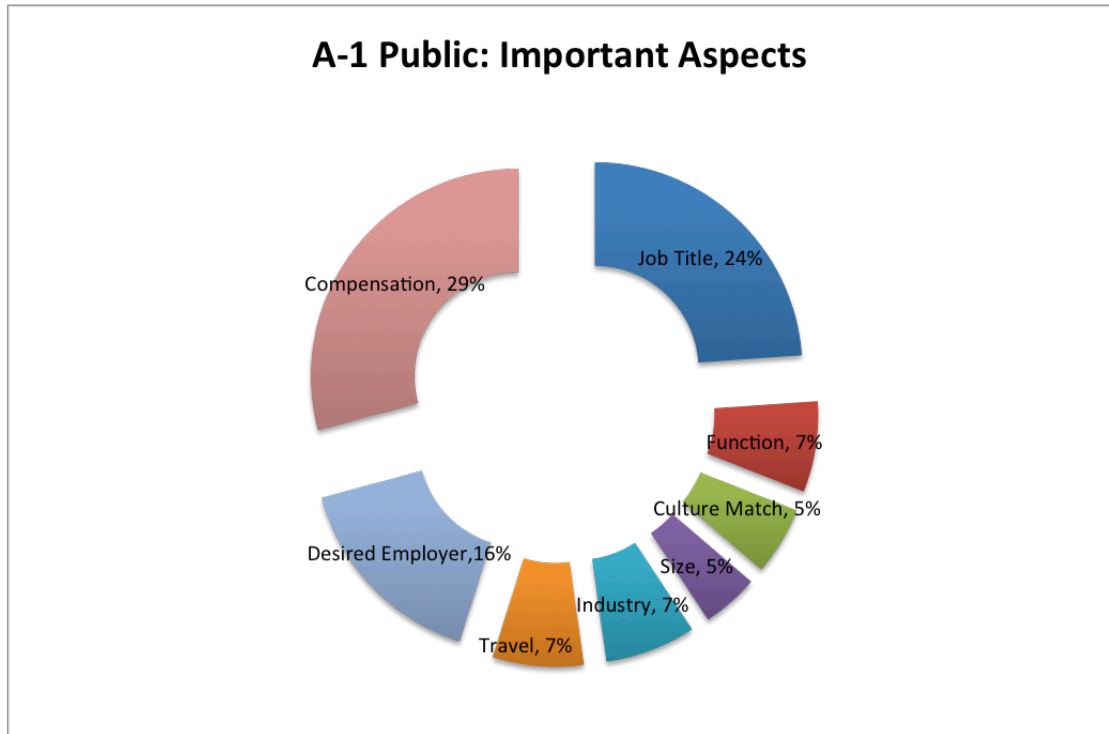


Figure 4.3: Important aspects to public engineers.

Figure 4.3 showcases the results of the first question. The second question provided the public engineers with the opportunity to express their reasoning behind their answers. Almost all of the engineers who chose the compensation choice as the most important aspect justified their answers by stating that salary packages can be the decisive factor in choosing a job, as they would impact their lives positively in terms of improving their lifestyles and living conditions. As for the second most popular choice, job title, the public engineers who chose this aspect stated that a great job title allows employees to develop and improve themselves, which reflects greatly on their image. Also, some engineers suggested that having a great job title would somehow positively impact their working experience. For the third most popular choice, desired employer, public engineers justified their decision by stating that working for a desired employer can go a long way toward having flexible working hours, a relaxed work environment and an improved working experience. The last questions in this section revolved around how job desirability can be affected by the tasks to be accomplished within an organisation. Furthermore, the public engineers were asked whether accomplishing tasks individually or within a group would make a job desirable to them. The response from the public engineers was not as decisive as from the private engineers. However, a few

percentages tipped the majority in favour of accomplishing tasks individually, at 52%. The remaining 48% would prefer accomplishing tasks while working within a team.

#### **4.3.2.2.2 Recruitment Sources**

The first question in this section inquired about the engineer's preferred approach to be deployed by the recruitment source. The public engineers' response was a decisive one. The majority of the engineers chose the personal approach as their favourite approach, with a percentage of 83%, while the remainder of the public engineers (17%) chose the impersonal approach. Therefore, the recruitment sources adopting a personal approach dominated the votes in both the private and public sectors. The second question in this section quizzed the public engineers on the first recruitment sources they look at when they are looking for a new job. Furthermore, the participating engineers were provided with several options to choose from and all of those sources were explained in the same section within the private engineers' findings and results. The response from the public engineers resulted similar rankings for the top two sources among the private engineers. Public engineers chose direct application as their favoured source, with a commanding percentage of 37%. The second most favoured source was friends and family, with 25%. The following source, in third place, was job ads, which proved to be more popular among public engineers than private engineers, with a percentage of 15%. In fourth place was job fairs, with a percentage of 9%. One percentage higher than sixth place was employment agencies, which stood at 5%. The least voted upon sources, which were colleagues and volunteer agencies, shared the same percentage of public engineers: 3%. However, social networks did not secure any votes among the public engineers. Therefore, the social network source was the least favoured among the options available.

#### **4.3.2.2.3 Performance Appraisal**

The first question in this section interviewed the public engineers about their preferred performance appraisal approach and whether they would like to have a performance appraisal system based on achievement goals alone or based on overall performance. As with the private engineers, the majority of public engineers voted in favour of a performance appraisal system based on achievement and goals, with a superior percentage of 72%. The remaining 28% chose the casual and informal approach. Furthermore, the public engineers appeared to be in agreement with the private

engineers regarding the ideal performance appraisal system to be adopted. The second question in this section delved deeper into the performance appraisal process. The public engineers were asked about how they would like to be appraised and whether they would prefer to be appraised separately as individuals or as part of a group. The public engineers preferred being appraised as individuals, with a concluding percentage of 76%. The remaining 24% favoured being appraised within a group. This was a departure from the similarities between the private engineers and public engineers, as the majority of the private engineers voted in favour of being appraised as part of a group rather than as individuals. Therefore, this section signals the first contrast between the private and public engineers within the questionnaires.

#### **4.3.2.2.4 Compensation and Rewards**

The first question in this section revolved around the engineers' preferred compensation systems, and whether they prefer a compensation system that is based on equality, where the group is equally compensated, or one that is based on individuality, depending on their personal efforts and work. The majority of public engineers favoured compensation systems based on equality, with a percentage of 72% (represented by 33 engineers out of the total 46 of public engineers working at SAEI). However, the remaining 13 public engineers voted for a compensation system that is based on equity, where employees are compensated for their individual work and efforts (representing the remaining 28%). The second question in this section investigated the types of rewards that public engineers would like to be awarded. In this second question, public engineers were given two options in terms of rewards. The first option was to be rewarded financially (for example, with bonuses and pay raises). The second option was to be rewarded in a non-financial nature (for example, with extra days for holidays or additional perks such as gym memberships or parking spaces). However, as was stated in the exact parallel section in the private engineers' questionnaires, the public engineers were given the freedom to choose both options or combine their preferred rewards. The public engineers showed overwhelming support in favour of financial rewards, with a commanding percentage of 68%. The remaining 32% voted for a non-financial rewards system. However, it is important to mention that there were a considerable number of public engineers in support of a hybrid rewards system. The outcome of this question is quite like the outcome of the private engineers' questionnaire. The last question in this section and questionnaire provided the public

engineers with the space to express their views on what they think would make the best rewards. The answers from the public engineers varied greatly, as they expressed their own personal opinions on what would make the perfect rewards. Some highlighted general outlines for the perfect rewards systems by stating that any sort of financial and moral rewards combined would be ideal. Others went into detail, mentioning specific rewards, such as extra days off and free airline tickets. Another group came up with a reward encompassing both financial and non-financial elements, stating that promotion should be enough reward, as it could combine a pay raise and grade ladder improvement within the organisation. Other engineers highlighted that they would like to be rewarded by being given the opportunity to do overtime and travel. A different group confessed that all rewards are welcome, as long as they are recognised and appreciated for their work and efforts.

#### **4.3.2.3 Questionnaires' Findings – Overall**

##### **4.3.2.3.1 Job Desirability**

As mentioned in the introduction of the questionnaires section, this last part will involve combining the results and findings of questionnaires collected from both the public and private sector engineers along with accompanying charts and graphs to illustrate the outcomes of each section. This section starts with the job desirability aspect of HR. the first question in this section asked the engineers at SAEI to determine which factors they think would be important while on the hunt for a new job.

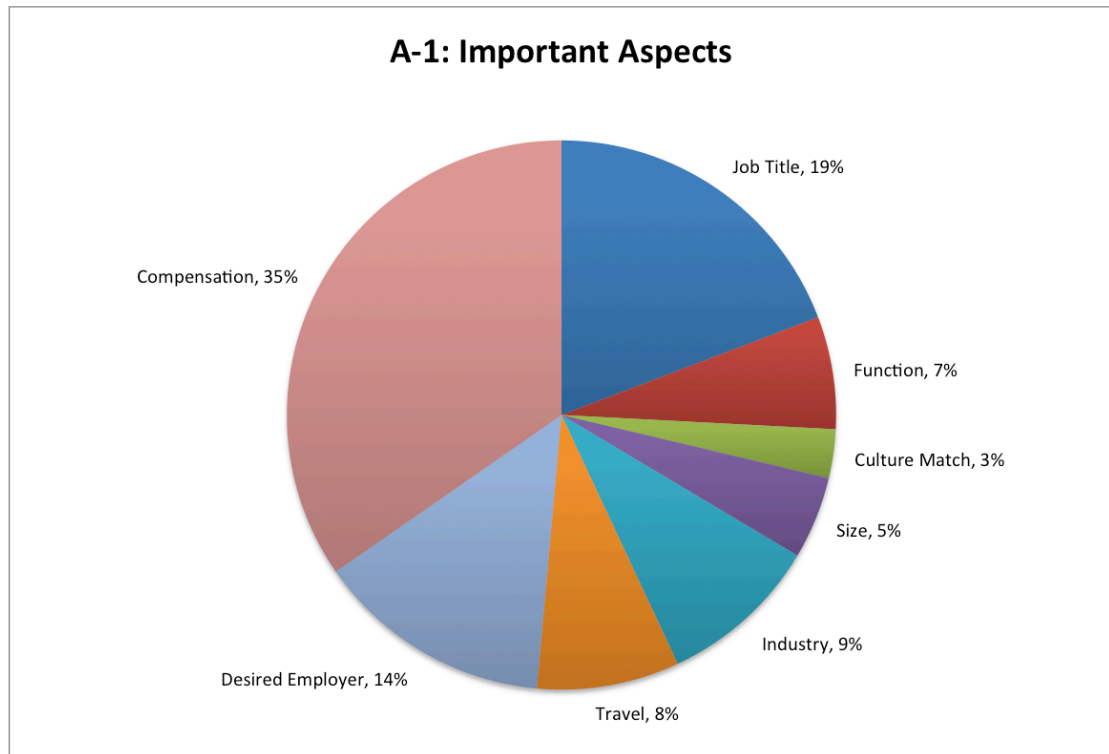


Figure.4.4: Important aspects to engineers overall.

The overall response of the engineers showcased that compensation maintained the same level of popularity among engineers, retaining the highest percentage: 35%. The second most popular choice remained the same as well, with job title earning 19%. The third most popular aspect was working for a desired employer, as 14% of the engineers voted for that aspect as their prime concern when searching for a job. The next most popular aspect was industry, which appealed to 9% of the engineers at SAEI. Following close behind was travelling as part of the job, with a percentage of 8%. Function came below travel, with 7% of the engineers voting for it as their most important aspect. The size of the organisation did not show relevant importance among the engineers at SAEI, attaining only 5%. The least voted upon aspect was the culture match aspect, which obtained 3%. Figure 4.4 illustrates the outcomes of the first question in this theme. The second question in this section involved whether the engineers like to accomplish tasks independently or in a group. There was a slight contrast between the public and private engineers, with the majority of public engineers preferring to accomplish tasks independently and most private engineers preferring to accomplish tasks within a group. However, the overall result favoured accomplishing tasks within a team, with a commanding percentage of 65%. The remaining 35% chose to accomplish tasks independently. Figure 4.5 showcases the results of this question.

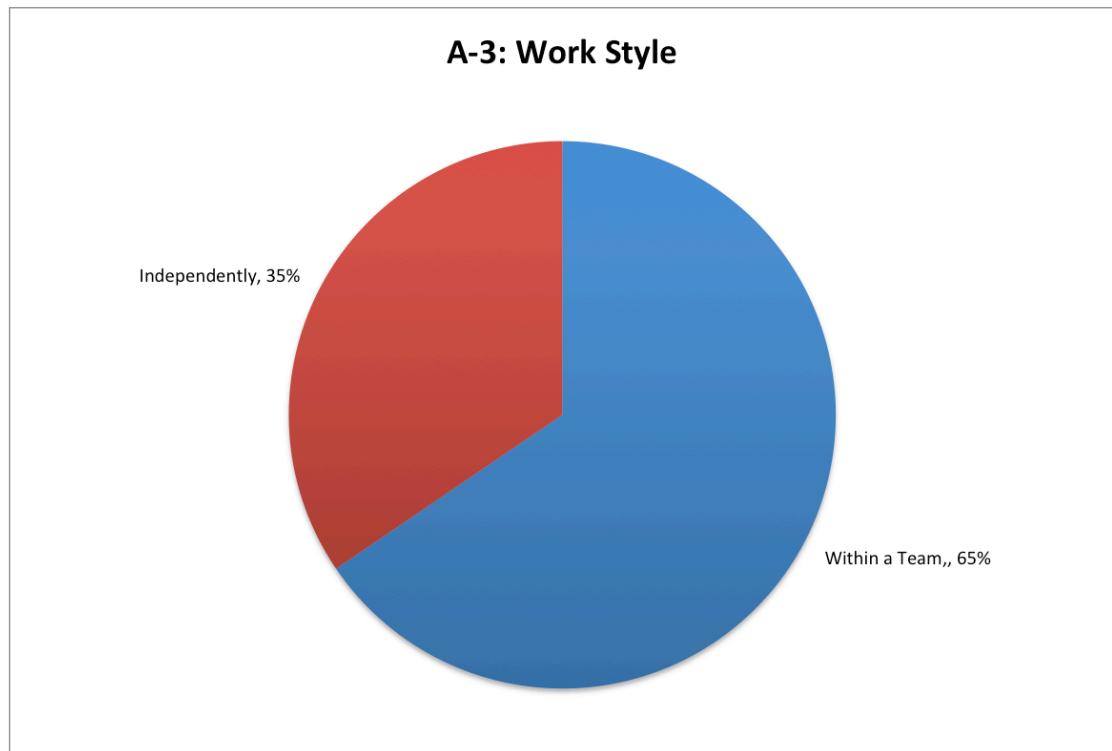


Figure.4.5: Preferred work styles of engineers overall.

#### 4.3.2.3.2 Recruitment Sources:

The first question in this section investigated which recruitment sources the engineers at SAEI found more approachable and engaging. The engineers were provided with two options. These two options were personal recruitment sources and impersonal recruitment sources. The overall response to this question remained consistent with the outcomes of both the public and private questionnaires. The most voted upon recruitment sources were the personal sources, with 88% of all engineers at SAEI favouring them over the impersonal sources, which secured only 12% of the votes, as Figure 4.6 explicitly shows.



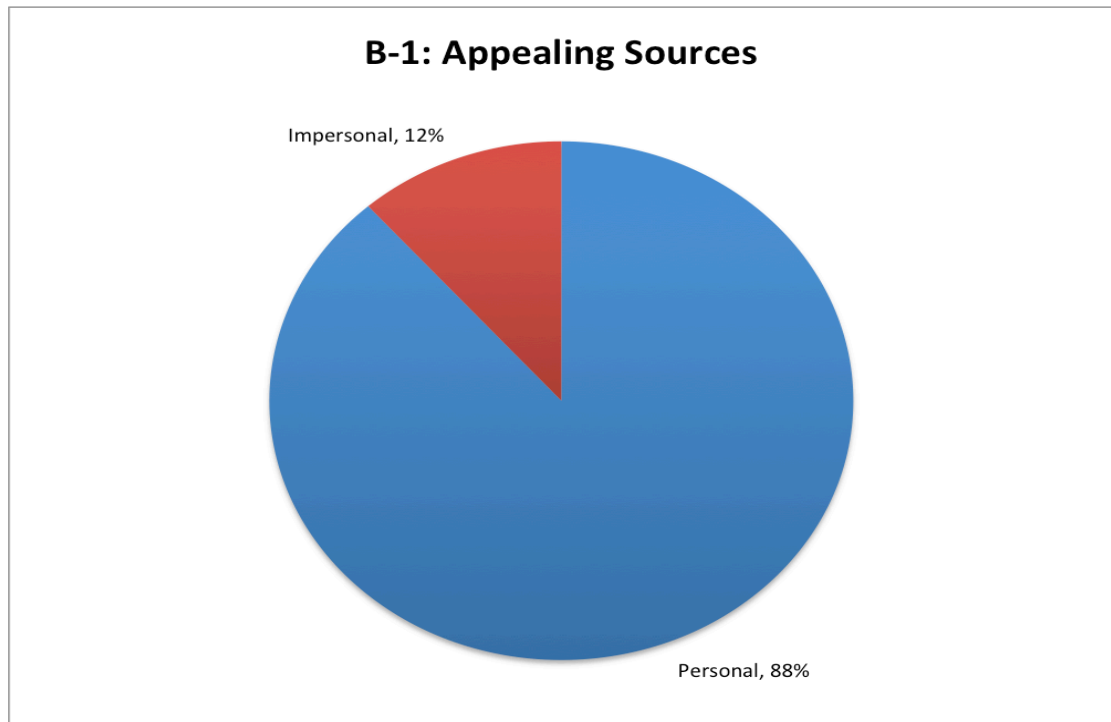


Figure.4.6: Preferred recruitment sources according to engineers overall.

The second question in this section reviewed the immediate sources that employees consider when on the hunt for a new job. The response in this question remained consistent, as the most favoured recruitment source was direct application, which secured 33% of the overall votes. With the same consistency, friends and family were the second most favoured source, with a percentage of 23%. The third most favoured source was job fairs, which secured 16% of the engineers' votes. Then, the popularity of the remaining sources dropped dramatically, with the closest source, job ads, securing only 10%. Following closely was the colleagues' source, at 9%. The percentages dropped even further after that, with employment agencies securing only 4% of the votes. Social networks only managed 3%. The least favoured source was volunteer vacancies, which managed only five votes overall, producing a percentage of 2%. Figure 4.7 illustrates these results.

#### 4.3.2.3.3 Performance Appraisal

The first question in this section addressed the performance appraisal methods that the engineers at SAEI prefer and whether they want performance appraisals to be based on goals and targets or on overall performance in a relaxed manner. The overall response from the engineers showcased great support for performance appraisal methods based on achievements and goals set, securing the majority of votes at a percentage of 66%.

However, 34% of the engineers favoured the informal and overall performance approach, as illustrated in Figure 4.8.

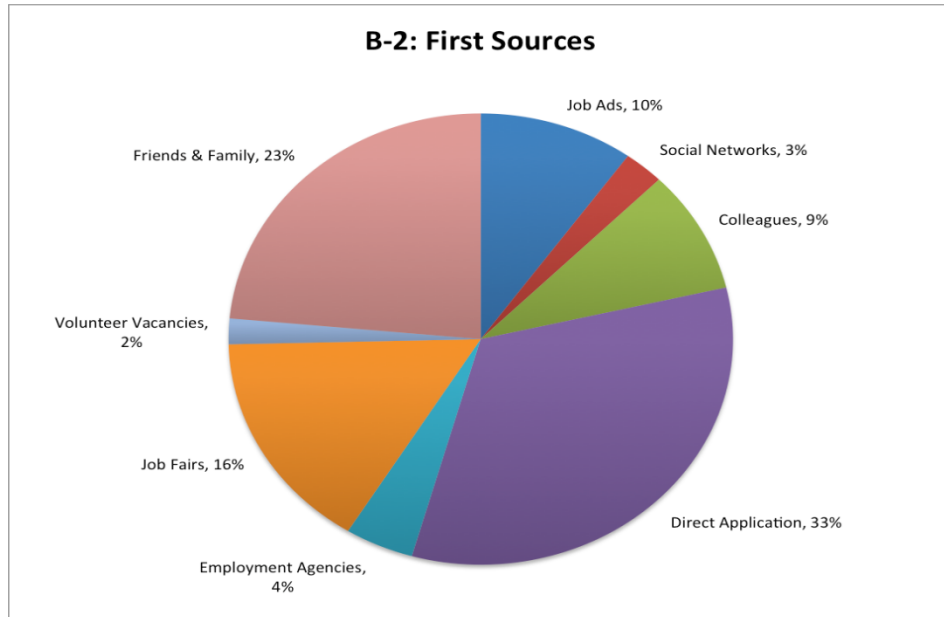


Figure.4.7: First recruitment sources engineers look at.

The second question in this section tackled the manner in which the engineers at SAEI would like to be appraised and whether they would like to be appraised as part of the group or individually. This section saw contrasting results between the engineers in the public and private sectors. The public engineers preferred to be appraised individually, while the private engineers preferred to be appraised within a group. However, the overall result showed a marginal preference for the performance appraisal to be conducted in groups, with a percentage of 54%. The remaining 46% maintained their preference to be appraised individually, as shown in Figure 4.9.

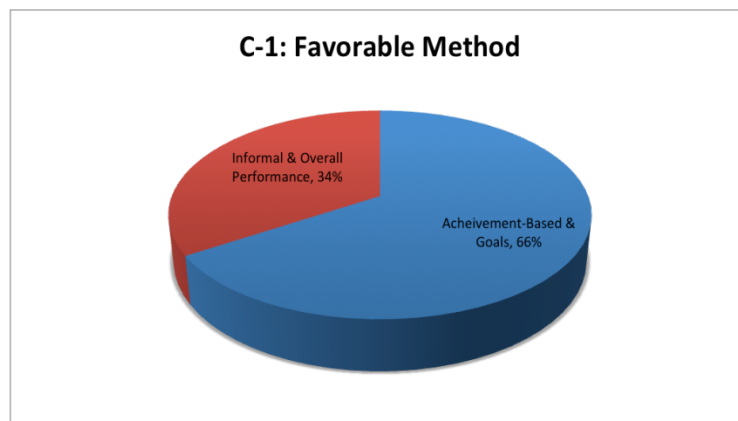


Figure.4.8: Favorable performance appraisal methods.

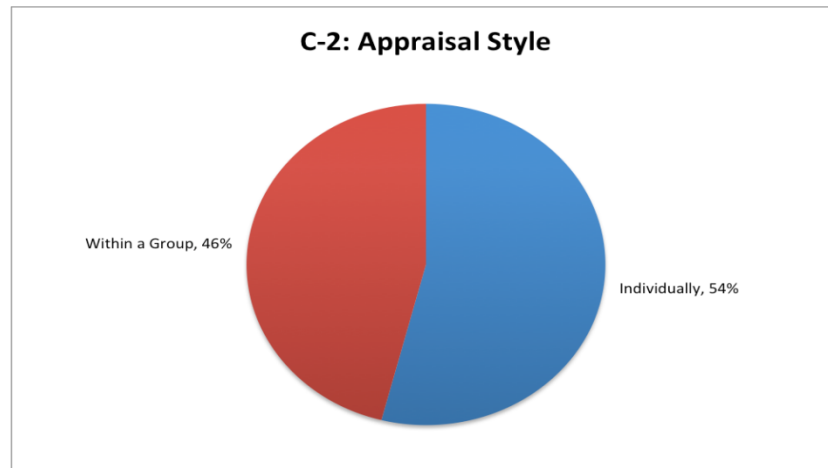


Figure.4.9: Favorable performance appraisal style.

#### 4.3.2.3.4 Compensation and Rewards

In this last part of the questionnaires, the engineers at SAEI were given the opportunity to express their opinions and preference in terms of compensations and rewards. The first question in this section concentrated on whether engineers preferred a compensation system based on equality or on equity. The response maintained an agreement between the public and private engineers, with both sets voting for a compensation system based on equality, with a dominating percentage of 81%. The remaining 19% opted for a compensation system based on equity, as shown in Figure 5.10.

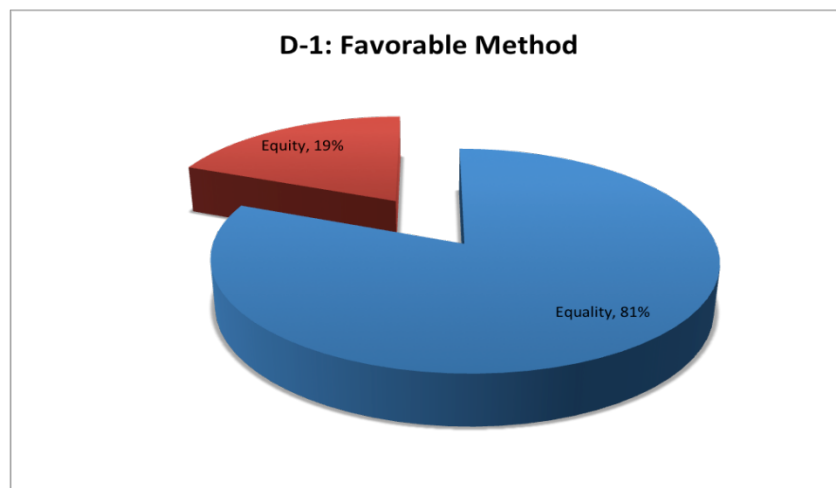


Figure.4.10: Favorable compensation system.

The second question in this final section discussed the nature of rewards to be given. The engineers were asked if they prefer a rewards system that provides strictly financial rewards or non-financial rewards. Furthermore, the engineers were given the chance to combine both systems. Although many engineers chose to combine both types of rewards, the majority showed great support for financial rewards, with a commanding percentage of 74%. 26% supported a non-financial rewards system, as shown in Figure 5.11.

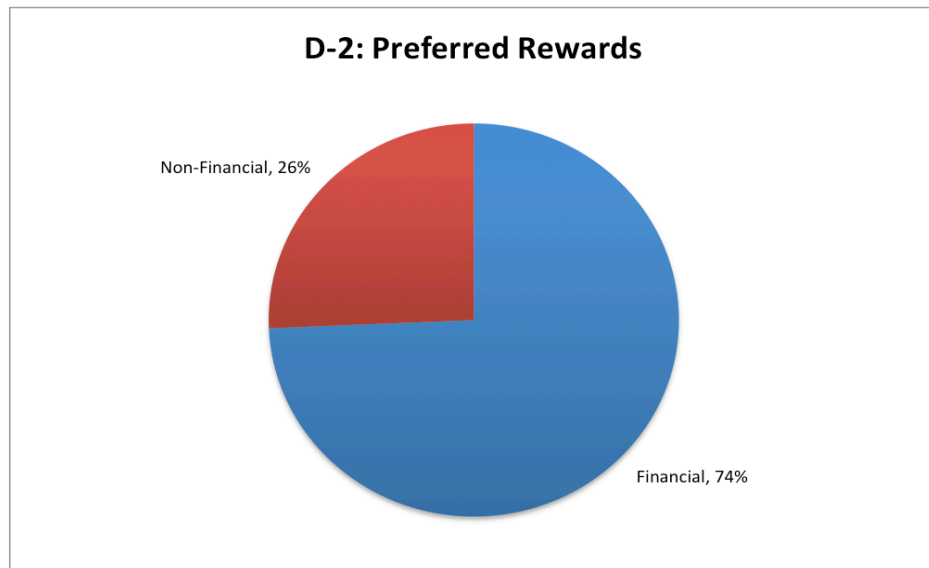


Figure.4.11. Favorable rewards systems.

Overall, the responses from both the public and private sectors can be summarised in the following table;

4.10. Summary of the responses from public and private sectors.

HRM Practice	Private X Public	Comments
Important aspects	Similar	Both sectors agreed within their prioritised aspects, with the first three aspects identical
Accomplishing tasks	Different	Clashed in terms of accomplishing tasks (Public preferred independence – Private preferred within teams)
Sources approach	Similar	Both sectors appeared in favour of sources with personal approach
First sources to be considered	Similar with slight difference	Both sectors conjured up the same first two sources but clashed on the third (Public chose job ads – Private chose Job fairs)
Appraisal basis	Similar	The majority within both private and public sectors elected the achievements and goals basis
Appraisal manner	Different	The majority of private engineers elected for appraisal as a group, while public ones elected the individual appraisal
Compensation basis	Similar	Both sectors elected an equality-based system rather than the equity-based one
Preferred rewards	Similar	Both sets of engineers elected for financial rewards with a preference towards a combination of financial and non-financial rewards

#### 4.4 Summary

After drawing out the findings of the data collection and interview process and the questionnaires, several observations can be highlighted. This chapter started with identifying the participants involved in the interview process and how those participants were qualified to take part. Then, the interview process began with the investigation of

job desirability and its main themes. Based on the findings, the ideal candidate for a vacancy within SAEI was determined by the department advertising the vacancy, which set out the required skills. Based on these skills, the HR department searched the existing applicants database for candidates with the required skills. Moreover, among the findings, the HR managers identified three aspects that increase job desirability: high salaries, free ticket allowances and career security. Furthermore, the findings revealed that working within teams could increase the desirability of a vacancy, as expressed by Saudi applicants. This aspect matches the policy of higher management at SAEI, which aims to promote teamwork and unity among its employees. As for the findings of the recruitment sources, the interview process revealed that the most popular source is direct online application. The HR managers hailed this source as an efficient and quick solution. However, Saudi employees have shown their preference towards recommendations by friends and family members as recruitment sources. This preference exemplified the strong relation between societal culture and recruitment sources. The HR managers stated that a headhunting approach could be adopted by the organisation if they identified a suitable professional candidate for a vacancy.

The performance appraisal theme did not appear to be affected by societal culture based on the findings. The HR manager maintained the stance that the appraisal process throughout the organisation is standardized, with minor modifications depending on the department conducting the appraisal. Another theme that was not influenced by societal culture was conveying feedback. The HR managers stated that the HR department employs e-mail in conveying feedback due to its swiftness and practicality, thus providing further confirmation of the weak relation between societal culture and performance appraisal. The compensation and rewards theme showed a strong connection with societal culture. This strong connection was stressed by the HR managers in terms of the choice of rewards available to employees. Employees are given the freedom to construct their preferred type of rewards. The HR managers have given a clear example of compensatory-time rewards. In this case, employees combine financial and non-financial rewards in one package. However, the HR managers noted that, on the long term, employees do express their preference for financial rewards over non-financial ones. Training programmes themes exhibited similar connections with societal culture. The HR managers emphasized that societal culture plays a part in almost every aspect of training programmes, starting with the setup of those programmes where the trainees' backgrounds are considered in order to determine the

required programmes. One of the most common programmes mentioned by the HR managers was the linguistic skills programme. This was common, due to Arabic being the native tongue in Saudi Arabia, which may require some employees to hone their English language to improve their performances.

As for the questionnaires involving the 200 engineers, the overall results showed some interesting outcomes. The first theme involved job desirability and its main themes. The first of those themes was the most important aspect employees consider when looking for a job. Compensation was considered the most important aspect by a great margin, with job title coming in second. The second theme was how employees preferred to accomplish their tasks. The results showed that 65% chose teams as their preferred work style. The second aspect in the questionnaires involved recruitment sources. The first theme to be discussed was whether personal sources or impersonal sources were most appealing to employees. 88% of the engineers responded that they would choose personal sources over impersonal sources, which scored 12% of the votes. The second theme within recruitment sources targeted the first sources engineers look for when looking for a new job. The results mirrored the response from the HR managers, with the majority (33%) of engineers choosing direct online application. The second most favorable source was recommendation by friends and family, represented by 23%.

The third aspect in the questionnaires focused on performance appraisal and its main themes. The first theme was concerned with the favorable appraisal method. The majority of engineers chose their favorable method based on performance and objectives, with a percentage of 66%. 34% chose an informal approach. The second theme involved whether engineers preferred to be appraised as a group or as individuals. The results showed that 54% prefer to be appraised individually, while 46% prefer to be appraised as a group. The fourth aspect of the questionnaires was concerned with compensation and rewards. The first theme focused on the compensation system to be implemented. The results showed a preference towards a compensation system based on equality (81%), while 19% preferred equity. The second theme evolved around the preferred type of rewards. 74% of the engineers chose financial rewards over the long term, while 26% chose non-financial rewards. It is worth noting that engineers were given the freedom to choose both and combine the two types, which was the case with many of the engineers, as mentioned in the interview with the HR managers.

In conclusion, this chapter has met the targets set in the introduction to achieve the following. First, answering the second and third research questions in an effort to answer the main research question of the investigation. In terms of those two research questions, this chapter completed the investigation of the relation between Saudi Arabian societal culture and the five HRM practices, which started in the literature review chapter and is now considered complete. As for the third research question, this chapter has achieved its completion through identifying the preferred policies and practices within the five HRM practices in this particular research. Moreover, several of those findings were triangulated in an effort to consistently confirm them. As for the research objectives, this chapter covered an essential core of the investigation process carried out through accomplishing some objectives and facilitating for other objectives to be accomplished in later stages. Importantly, this chapter provided insights into the impact of Saudi Arabian societal culture on the five HRM practices through the semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. In addition, this chapter achieves the second objective of analysing the five HRM practices within public and private sectors in a single organisation through the SAEI case study. As for the third objective, this chapter reviewed the currently deployed policies and practices within the five HRM targeted aspects in order to carry out the comparison process in the next chapter. The final objective, concerning the development of constructive discussions to improve those five HRM practices, can now be achieved as the case study findings can be utilised in comparisons with the views found in the existing literature. Therefore, this chapter has provided significant contribution towards the efforts of completing the investigation carried out in this study. The next step is to conduct a discussion between the findings of the data collection process and the findings of the existing literature.



Chapter 5:  
**Discussion**

## **Chapter 5 – Discussion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

After rounding the results and listing the findings of the data collection process, the next step is to compare these findings to the related existing literature. The purpose of this comparison is to conclude whether the existing literature provides an accurate view of the impact of Saudi Arabian societal culture on HRM. The discussion in this chapter will involve the five main targeted human resource practices throughout the research. Each of the findings of those HRM practices will be compared with the equivalent literature found in the literature review chapter of this research. Also, it is significant to maintain the knowledge that this research implements an exploratory approach throughout its investigation. Moreover, this research is not being conducted in order to verify or eliminate a particular hypothesis. One of the main aims of this research is to provide valuable knowledge of a field that is lacking input, which was given great consideration and space throughout chapter three involving the gaps found in the literature. Many researchers highlighted the lack of literature connecting societal culture and HRM practices specifically within Islamic and Middle Eastern countries. Moreover, they have highlighted that even the existing literature linking those elements together was written within a period that has long been gone and can be considered outdated due to the many economic, social and financial changes that have occurred in the region since the conclusion of this previous literature. In the previous chapter, the second and third research questions were investigated in order to provide an answer to the first and main question in this research. The second question targeted the interaction between Saudi Arabian societal culture and the five HRM practices in the organisational context, while the third question aimed to identify the preferred practices and policies within the five HRM practices according to the HR managers and engineers at SAEI. Upon the completion of the previous chapter, where the second and third research questions were answered, the investigation could address the first and main question. Based on the findings developed from the SAEI case study, comparisons between the literature review findings and this research case study findings can be initiated. Furthermore, the developed knowledge and investigation at this point in the research will allow addressing the last two of the four objectives set for this research. The first of those two objectives aimed to initiate comparisons between the public and private sectors

practices at SAEI with the related literature. This will be the main target of this chapter. As for the fourth objective, at this stage in the research, a constructive discussion can be developed targeting future recommendations and specific contributions to knowledge. Thus, the main research questions, the third and fourth objectives will be addressed in this chapter.

To recap the research questions, this research started with the question “What is the impact of Saudi Arabian culture on human resource practices within the public and private sectors?” This main question incorporated many questions that required answers. For instance, in order to answer the main question, the research needs to explore the logic behind what makes societal culture in Saudi Arabia provide such a considerable impact on HRM. Moreover, it is necessary to understand why societal culture attains such influential power over management and HRM practices. Furthermore, the research needs to develop an understanding of the situation where organisations develop their management and HRM practices in order to coexist with the societal culture values and norms.

This unique situation involves a privatisation process that is taking place during the time of conducting this research; this process allowed the possibility of having two sets of employees belonging to either the public or private sector within the same department. The third factor involves the size of Saudi Arabian Airlines, as it is one of the biggest organisations in the country, to the extent of rivalling the oil companies. The fourth factor involves the level of contribution where the researcher was given the opportunity to investigate management figures as well as engineers. This enabled the researcher to obtain the points of views of senior managers and employees.

## **5.2 Recruitment Sources**

The first HRM theme to be discussed will be the recruitment sources and how accurate is the description of the existing literature and whether it reflects a realistic image of the actual situation. Throughout the literature investigating the impact of societal culture on recruitment sources, there was a consensus that societal culture does play an influential role in determining the recruitment sources to be used by organisations, especially in countries like Saudi Arabia. For instance, Stone et al. (2007) proposed that organisations as well as individuals belonging to collective culture, such as Saudi Arabia's, tend to prefer recruitment sources that implement a personal touch and a

friendly approach such as recommendations and networking rather than a distant approach exemplified through online recruitment and newspaper advertisement. Further support to this argument had been provided by McManus and Ferguson (2003) when they stated that in countries nurturing a collectivistic culture, where there is a high distance power, collectivistic individuals have a habit of avoiding recruitment sources deploying an impersonal approach.

However, this was not the case during the interviewing process of senior management, when the HR manager stated that one of the major changes that occurred to the recruitment process at Saudi Arabian Airlines during the past decade was the introduction of online recruitment. The introduction of e-business solutions has revolutionised the recruitment process in terms of increasing its efficiency and assisting the organisation in building up an expansive database of potential applicants that the organisation can utilise when new recruitments are required. Furthermore, the HR manager added that, as an additional advantage of this e-business solution, the organisation has shortened the distance between applicants and the organisation in terms of applying for vacancies.

As for the employees' points of view regarding recruitment sources, the results of the section in the questionnaires distributed to the employees investigating their most favorable approach to recruitment sources appeared to overwhelmingly agree with the existing literature. This agreement was clear, with 88 per cent of the engineers working at SAEI preferring a recruitment source deploying a personal approach, while the remaining 12 per cent chose an impersonal approach as their preferred choice. However, when those engineers were asked to choose the first recruitment sources they would consider when looking for a new job, the results established a rather mixed conclusion. Although engineers overwhelmingly chose recruitment sources deploying a personal approach as their preferred type of recruitment sources, the dominant preferred source was direct application through an organisation's website, with a percentage of 33 per cent. That is ten percentages higher than the closest recruitment source deploying a personal approach, which was recruitment through friends and family, scoring a percentage of 23 per cent.

After considering the stance of the existing literature against the views of senior management within Saudi Arabian Airlines and the input of the engineers working under the SAEI umbrella, there emerged a certain contrast in views between those of

the literature and the parties involved in the data collection process. The existing literature claims that collectivistic cultures, including Saudi Arabia, will always elect for recruitment sources with a personal approach. This was supported by the engineers' responses on the questionnaires. However, the declaration made by the HR manager that the introduction of the new e-business solution, represented by the online application through the organisation's website, represented an evolution to the recruitment process within the organisation contradicts the common belief proposed by the existing literature that organisations tend to avoid installing impersonal recruitment sources within a collectivistic culture.

Furthermore, the decision of the majority of engineers to choose direct online application as their first recruitment source provides further support to the senior HRM managers' claim that direct online application attains overwhelming popularity amongst the other available recruitment sources. This particular situation reflected preferred HRM practices that can be found within individualistic societal cultures. Those specific cultures would mainly prefer the efficient and objective recruitment sources. However, the response from HR managers and engineers reflected tendencies that could be expected in individualistic culture rather than the collectivistic ones.

The HR manager provided his own reasoning for the superiority of the Internet-based application with elements involving the ease of submitting an application for a vacancy and the convenience it provides applicants in terms of logistics. However, it is worth noting that the second most favourable source was recruitment through friends and family connections. This choice was verified by the HR manager during the interviewing process when he was asked whether Saudi employees showed any preference towards a specific recruitment source based on his own experience. The HR manager responded that Saudi employees have shown a clear liking towards word of mouth and networking utilising connections to friends or family. In addition, it is important to understand that Saudi Arabia is a developing country. Consequently, the theory proposed by the existing literature might have been completely accurate at the time of conduction. However, as with all the developments taking place in Saudi Arabia, including the changes in its cultural fabric, a development might have changed the mindset of its individuals and organisations, which is represented by the response of the HR manager and the engineers.

Another important theme concerning recruitment sources is the fact that throughout the existing literature, the utilisation of a headhunting approach within the recruitment process has been considered a rarity and happens very infrequently within a collectivistic culture such as Saudi Arabia. This concept was put forward by Bjorkman and Lu (1999), who stated that in cultures where collectivistic values are greatly shared, external hiring should be considered a distant possibility. This is due to the nature of a collectivistic culture where an outsider would face an upheaval and an uphill battle in trying to break into the already close-knit group of employees. However, this concept was downplayed by the HR manager through his response to the question that asked whether the vacancy dictates which recruitment sources are to be utilised when looking for potential candidates. The HR manager responded that there are cases where certain vacancies dictate the manner in which a position should be filled. One of the possible scenarios involves utilising a headhunting approach. The HR manager explained that in the case of an executive vacancy occurring that is considered critical and significant to the organisation, a headhunting approach is mainly considered. In particular, the headhunted potential individual needs to have a proven record of competence that matches the required criteria for the vacancy. The response of the HR manager differed greatly from the concept provided by Bjorkman and Lu (1999). This headhunting approach could be considered more common and associated with individualistic societal cultures more than the collectivistic ones. However, the HR manager provided support for another concept proposed by Stone et al. (2007), which stated that societal culture exercises significant influence on the recruitment sources to be used within the organisation. The HR manager affirmed that hypothesis and shed further light on that by using the example of recruitment through friends and family.

He explained that in this situation, the recommending party assists with facilitating and conveying the job requirements and importance to the potential candidate. This helps the candidate to develop a better understanding of the vacancy. In another example revealing the impact of Saudi Arabian culture on recruitment sources, the HR managers reiterated that when Saudi Arabian Airlines first initiated the online direct application programme it did not attract the same attention as it currently attracts. Moreover, the HR managers added that Saudi individuals were not very keen on accepting the online direct application as a recruitment source for several reasons. One of the reasons cited was that Saudi individuals were not familiar with this newly incorporated technology. In addition, Saudi individuals expressed their preference for personal interaction when

applying for a job, as they lack faith in this new initiative. Thus, the HR managers described the period of introducing the online direct application as underwhelming and uninspiring.

After illuminating the views of the existing literature and those of the parties involved in the data collection process, the existing literature does not appear to agree the findings of the data collection process. However, strong common themes can be detected between both sides. One of the main common themes between the findings and the literature was the impact exercised by Saudi culture on the HRM practice of recruitment sources. It should also be highlighted that some of the themes and concepts proposed by the existing literature are still applicable within Saudi Arabian culture. However, those shared themes are not overly common amongst Saudi individuals. Moreover, individualistic shared values can be easily detected within the specific HRM practice of recruitment sources. In these societal cultures, impersonal and objective recruitment sources are considered favourable based on the findings of literature.

Furthermore, the interview with the HR manager clearly revealed that societal culture in Saudi Arabia is developing and evolving, as is the case with its individuals. This remark can be clearly seen through the initiation of the online direct application programme; Saudi individuals initially responded apathetically to online application. This confirmed the statement put forward by Steiner and Gilliland (2001), who suggested that individuals with collectivistic shared values tend to avoid being involved in ability measurement tests and are more likely to favour conducting a face-to-face interview. Nonetheless, as the years passed, the influence of the Internet became prominent. This growing influence has led to this particular recruitment source becoming the most favoured of Saudi individuals. This example represents the change in attitudes, mentality and mind-sets of Saudi employees who form the societal culture fabric of Saudi Arabia. Another example was found during the oil boom of the 1970s. The cultural values and social behaviours were affected by the sudden oil wealth, even on the daily aspects of the population of [Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Qatar], as those countries were unprepared to handle the new immeasurable wealth (Kayed and Hassan, 2011).

### **5.3 Performance Appraisal**

The first theme to be discussed involves the bases of the performance appraisal systems utilised within organisations and how those bases differ from one culture to another. Within the related literature, several researchers highlighted that performance appraisal systems can be easily affected by the surrounding societal cultures. For instance, societal culture values have been proposed to exert an influencing power over many aspects of the performance appraisal systems; these include the methods deployed in assessing the employees' performance, the effectiveness of performance appraisal systems, the way in which employees respond to performance appraisal systems and how those employees react to feedback and the way feedback is conveyed to them (Stone-Romero and Stone, 2002). Ferris and Treadway (in press) lent further support to this hypothesis by stating that the aspects of performance appraisal systems and performance management can be understandably influenced by the surrounding societal culture and its values.

When the previous finding is compared to the related findings of the data collection process, the outcome provides an interesting difference between the existing literature and the actual situation within Saudi Arabian Airlines. The HR managers involved in the interviewing section involving the performance appraisal systems indicated that the organisation does not implement any imported or Western-based performance systems. Rather, all of the performance appraisal systems implemented within SAEI have been developed by the executive hierarchy at Saudi Arabian Airlines. However, when the HR managers were asked the direct question of whether they believe that the societal culture of Saudi Arabia represents a commanding factor in setting up these performance systems, the HR managers resoundingly declined that this might be the case. Furthermore, they stated that if any influence was being exercised by Saudi Arabia's societal culture, this influence can be described as inconsequential and trivial. Therefore, although there appears to be a vague agreement between the existing literature and the findings of the interviews concerning the basis of the performance appraisal systems and those systems not being imported or based on Western models, there is a large contrast in opinions regarding the notion that societal culture plays a substantial role in setting up the performance appraisal systems. This was suggested throughout the literature and downplayed by the HR managers responsible for the performance appraisal systems at SAEI. As a result of this situation, it can be noted that individualistic societal culture values exist within the performance appraisal system implemented within SAEI. Those individualistic values can be best



exhibited within the structuring of the appraisal system installed at SAEI where minimal consideration of the societal culture was given during the setup of the system. Thus, it would be fair to say that the appraisal system installed demonstrated individualistic nature rather than collectivistic.

Throughout the existing literature researchers expressed a common belief regarding societal culture impact on the basis of the performance appraisal systems. For instance, Erez (1994) suggested that individuals respond to performance appraisal systems according to their cultural background, which can be clearly seen in the case of employees belonging to a collectivistic culture. Erez elaborated that employees with collectivistic shared values find performance appraisal systems that are based on achievements, goals and follow a formal nature to be dreadful and disconcerting. The reason is that they promote competitiveness, which may harm the harmonious environment of the workplace. Arvey et al. (1991) provided further support to Erez's argument, highlighting that individuals belonging to certain societal cultures approach performance appraisal systems with preferences and expectations. Arvey et al. illustrated these preferences via the preference of individuals sharing individualistic values to have performance appraisal systems based on the same elements that collectivistic individuals find unacceptable.

Therefore, when this aspect was intended to be used in comparison against the findings of the data collection process, the most befitting aspect from this process was the employees' views on the bases of the performance appraisal systems. The engineers at SAEI were asked about the performance appraisal method that they considered favourable. They had two choices: a performance appraisal based on an informal approach and overall performance, or a performance appraisal based on achievement and goals. However, upon examining the outcomes of the engineers' opinions on their favourable performance appraisal basis, a resounding contrast was found between the findings proposed in the related literature and the engineers' opinions. The majority of engineers voted for a performance system that is based on achievement and goals, with a percentage of 66 per cent. This contradicted the concept that individuals with collectivistic shared values tend to prefer an informal and overall performance basis for the performance appraisal system, which only secured 34 per cent of the votes. Therefore, it can be concluded that a change in attitude and mentality has occurred in the Saudi employees who share collectivistic values (Hofstede, 1980). Nonetheless,

they prefer that their organisation implement a performance appraisal system that is based on the goals set by the organisation and the employees' level of achievement. This situation leads the researcher to believe that there is a degree of separation in the employees' behaviour occurring between work and life outside the office. Moreover, Saudi employees are considered to be possessing values that are associated with individualistic values. In these societal cultures, individuals tend to favour the achievements-based appraisal, where they can maximise personal gains. Therefore, a contrast in how collectivistic individuals' behaviour is depicted can be noted between the literature and the findings of the case study.

It is also worth mentioning that there were areas where the existing literature paralleled some of the findings of the data collection process. This match occurred between how the literature viewed the collectivistic cultures preferred style of appraisal and the answers from the HR managers participating in the interviewing process regarding the appraisal style implemented at SAEI. Erez (1994) suggested that in cultures where collectivistic values are shared, the favourable style of appraisal involves overall performance, as stated previously. This suggestion concurred with the answer provided by the HR managers when they were prompted with the question about whether the evaluation process focused on productivity alone or whether other factors were also taken into consideration. The HR managers responded that the organisation has implemented a comprehensive approach that encompasses other elements, including work ethics, productivity, professional discipline, and future developments. Furthermore, this performance appraisal process is revisited every three years for the purpose of assessment and evaluation in order to improve and enhance the process. Therefore, the input of the HR managers provides support to the existing literature's suggestions, although the response from the engineers stated otherwise. As a result, it should be acknowledged that the existing literature painted an accurate picture of the organisation's stance towards implementing a performance appraisal style. However, the outcome of the engineers' responses significantly clashed with that view. Thus, it can be proposed that the hypothesis introduced in the existing literature represents great value even though it did not take into account the development and growth in the employees' mentality and personality.

Another theme examined within the performance appraisal process is the manner in which performance appraisal is conducted. Stone and Stone-Romero (2004) touched on

that when discussing the differences between individuals belonging to individualistic cultures and those belonging to collectivistic cultures. The discussion involved the manner in which each set of individuals preferred to accomplish tasks and communicate with their superiors. They stated that individuals from cultures that share individualistic values prefer separation in accomplishing tasks, which promotes autonomy amongst them. On the other hand, individuals sharing collectivistic values preferred to be included in a group, which promotes team spirit and harmony in the workplace. As was the case in the favourable performance appraisal systems, the opinions of the engineers at SAEI appeared to diverge with those of the existing literature. However, this time the difference between the two opinions was not as pronounced as it was in the favourable performance appraisal systems. When the engineers were asked whether they would prefer to be appraised within a group or separately as individuals, the response from the engineers did not provide a clear-cut difference between the two performance appraisal methods. Although the difference was not as overwhelming, a slight majority of engineers voted in favour of a performance appraisal style that appraised them individually, with 54 per cent of the votes, while the remaining 46 per cent of engineers appeared to favour a performance appraisal style that is carried out on the basis of groups. This outcome reflects individualistic traits within the Saudi employees, although the difference was not resounding, but based on the literature the majority should have followed the collectivistic mind-set and chose to be appraised within groups. However, that was not the case.

Thus, it should be highlighted that although the existing literature appeared to agree with the organisation's performance appraisal systems practice, the existing literature differed greatly concerning the individuals' perspectives of the performance appraisal systems. That was specifically the case concerning the favourable performance appraisal methods and styles. However, those misconceptions of individuals' portrayal of performance appraisal systems practices may be caused by the ever-changing dynamics of Saudi Arabia's culture. This is easy to understand since Saudi Arabia is still considered a developing country, with rapid transformation taking place economically and financially, and major infrastructure projects taking place. These may be effective factors in reshaping the individuals' attitudes and priorities, even if these changes contradict the common understandings and norms.

Another important theme within the performance appraisal systems is conveying feedback results to employees. This theme is considered significant due to the emphasis that had been clearly noted throughout the literature on the importance of the methods used to convey feedback and how it is essential to the success of any performance appraisal system. Throughout the existing literature, most research appeared to have agreed on a particular description of the behaviours of individuals sharing collectivistic values around feedback and the manner in which it is conveyed. The description that seemed to have yielded the most all-around concept was produced by Stone-Romero and Stone (2002). They suggested that individuals sharing collectivistic values respond to negative feedback through a process containing three elements: emotion, behaviour, and consequence. Thus, when a collectivistic individual encounters negative feedback, they face this feedback with a noticeable degree of embarrassment, which covers the emotional element. Then, collectivistic individuals seek to improve whatever aspects have triggered the negative feedback, which covers the behaviour element. Finally, the consequence of this negative feedback is ideally rectifying the performance in order to eliminate what was considered a drawback that prompted the negative feedback. In addition, the manner in which collectivistic individuals prefer to be communicated remained consistent throughout the existing literature. Researchers emphasised that collectivistic individuals tend to prefer an informal and friendly approach rather than a distant and aloof one.

However, when this finding was tested against the views of the HR managers at SAEI, substantial differences emerged between the literature and the findings of the interview section in the data collection process. For instance, when the HR managers were prompted with a question on how the organisation conveyed feedback to the engineers, the HR managers stated that upon completion of an employee evaluation by the HR department, employees were given a copy of their evaluation form stating how they had performed during the evaluation process. However, the interesting part is that after completion of the entire performance appraisal process, an employee would receive an email containing the full results of their performance appraisal during the evaluation process and the annual appraisal process. This means that the organisation deploys a rather distant approach in conveying feedback through the use of emails, which eliminates the personal touch from the process of conveying performance appraisal feedback. This approach contradicts the hypothesis proposed by the researchers involved in the existing literature that collectivistic individuals tend to favour a personal

approach. As a result, it can be concluded that SAEI follows the approach favoured by individualistic cultures in conveying feedback, where informal and friendly traits are not required while conveying feedback.

However, when the HR managers were asked to justify their decision to implement this approach to employees, they stated that the use of emails in conveying feedback is simply based on increasing efficiency and eliminating unnecessary and time-consuming paperwork. Furthermore, they added that the use of emails complements the tasks performed throughout the organisation. The HR managers then went on to further explain that statement by highlighting the fact that all individuals employed under the SAEI umbrella work with demanding schedules and crucial deadlines that require the utmost dedication of effort and time to be accomplished. Therefore, the use of emails accelerates the feedback conveying process and accomplishes the task quickly without hindering the actual work that requires the attention of the SAEI employees. Moreover, the implementation of other feedback conveying approaches could jeopardize the productivity and workflow of the SAEI department, which would affect the entire department. As a result, the HR managers have deemed that the current use of emails in conveying feedback to employees at SAEI fits the purposes of the organisation and helps to maintain high levels of efficiency.

The reasoning for the implementation of the use of emails in conveying feedback can be understood due to the nature of the work executed at SAEI. In addition, during the research visit to the department, it was noted how employees are working on tight schedules that required their complete attention, with the majority of tasks carried out at SAEI being reliant on each other to be conducted. Therefore, any delay in a task will lead to other tasks being delayed. Therefore, it is critical to maintain high levels of efficiency throughout the organisation. However, the hypothesis proposed by the existing literature may still be applicable in a more relaxed work environment with different conditions than the ones found at SAEI.

#### **5.4 Compensation and Rewards Systems**

The next HRM practice to be used in the comparison between the existing literature and the findings of the data collection process is the compensation and rewards systems. Upon examining both sides of the comparison, this specific HRM aspect of compensation and rewards appeared to more closely match between the existing

literature and the findings of the data collection process than the previous two HRM aspects discussed in this chapter. The theme revolved around the use of compensation and rewards systems as motivational tools to increase employees' productivity, morale, and job satisfaction, which leads to their commitment and loyalty towards the organisation. For instance, Kanfer (1990) suggested that installing an effective compensation and rewards system can assist the organisation in sustaining high morale levels amongst employees and inspire them to achieve great performances. Moreover, organisations can benefit from setting up an effective compensation and rewards system that employees utilise as tools to motivate them and inspire the desired work rate that organisations hope to achieve (Erez, 1994).

Stone et al. (2007) highlighted another benefit of installing a successful compensation and rewards system. They suggested that an effectual system can positively impact another HRM aspect—job desirability—by increasing the profile of the vacancies within the organisation. This will make the organisation more appealing to individuals outside the company. However, this aspect will be further discussed later in this chapter. Furthermore, other potential rewards that could be achieved from an effectual compensation and rewards system include improving team-based performance, improving the organisation's financial projections, and increasing the probability of the employees' contentment on customer satisfaction. Concerning the link between the compatibility of installing the best fitting rewards systems and employee contentment, Miller et al. (1990) explained that the lack of job satisfaction caused by an inappropriate reward system can spark several problems for the organisation and may lead to its demise. For instance, if an employee does not like the installed reward system, this employee may experience high stress levels. This can trigger multiple negative consequences represented by employees losing their commitment and loyalty towards the organisation, an increasing absenteeism rate amongst employees, and producing below par performances, which can easily lead to the organisation's downfall.

Upon examining the findings of the interviewing section involving the HR managers, there was a high degree of agreement with the findings proposed by the researchers throughout the existing literature. This agreement was clearly shown when the HR managers were asked about the bases used for setting up the compensation and rewards systems at SAEI and their reasoning behind it. Their response stated that the compensation and rewards system at SAEI is based on Step and Grade basis, which

depends on the employees' delivering pleasing performances. This link between putting in suitable performances and achieving annual increases in Step and Grade acts as a motivational tool for the employees to maintain high work rates, knowing that the organisation will reward them for their excellent performance. This is where collectivistic societal cultures differ from the individualistic ones, where achieving personal glory and autonomy drives individuals, rather than using compensation as a motivation for better performances for the organisation. Another related point of discussion that should be highlighted is the aspects that the organisation aims to achieve from those systems. Those aspects were mentioned when the HR managers were asked about the goals they hoped to achieve from the compensation and rewards system. They responded that they would like to promote three elements: reputation, desirability, and image. As a result of maintaining these three elements, the HR managers argued that this would sustain the organisation's competitiveness in the market by attracting new employees and eliminating employee turnover as much as possible.

Overall, the existing literature appears to agree with the results gathered during the data collection process in terms of the goals of the compensation and rewards systems installed within organisations, at least with SAEI. Therefore, it can be stated that the accurate implementation of an effective compensation and rewards systems should provide employees within organisations with the required motivation and inspiration to produce a high work rate and productivity.

Another theme to be discussed is the role of societal culture in setting up the compensation and rewards systems and whether societal culture exercises significant influence on the setup of both of those aspects. The concept concluded from the existing literature strongly argues that societal cultures do represent a significant element when setting up the compensation and rewards systems; some researchers have implied that the importance of involving societal culture as an essential part of the compensation and rewards systems can be critical to the extent of affecting the entire organisation. One example from the existing literature has been represented by Joshi and Martocchio (in press). They stated that a compensation and rewards systems needs to incorporate the employees' societal cultural values, as this is one of the crucial cornerstones in setting up an effectual compensation and rewards systems. Stone et al. (2007) lent further support to the argument, stating that the societal culture values shared by employees exercise significant influence on the initial set-up of the compensation and rewards

systems. These values also play an integral role in determining the degree of success those implemented systems will achieve.

When the HR managers were approached with the question on whether they believed that the societal culture background of the employees had a significant effect on their preference concerning the compensation and rewards systems, the answer they provided was very clear and concise. The HR managers believed that there is a strong correlation between the societal culture background of the employees and the compensation and rewards systems. They also provided an example of the extent of this impact in the case where SAEI introduced a new type of compensation. This was called time-compensation, where employees are compensated by being given days off work or vacations. This example clearly showcases the significance that societal culture maintains within the implemented compensation and rewards systems. On the other hand, in individualistic societal cultures, compensation systems are expected to be paralleled with the individualistic values of personal glory and excellence to satisfy their individuals' mentality.

Thus, based on the matching responses from the existing literature and the findings of the associated section from the data collection process, it can be stated that societal culture does possess great importance within setting up the compensation and rewards systems as well as dictating what would be suitable for employees; societal culture provides key points in understanding the mentality of employees and what would be appealing to them. As a result, it should be highlighted that inclusion of the employees' cultural backgrounds in the process of setting up compensation and rewards systems is beneficial to an organisation and a major contributor to its success.

Another theme investigated in this research involved the preferred choice of compensation and rewards. Throughout the existing literature, many researchers aimed to distinguish between the different preferences of individuals belonging to different cultural backgrounds. Most researchers came to the conclusion that a "different cultural background dictates different preference of compensation and rewards system". The first example from the related literature reiterated that both sets of societal culture, whether collectivistic or individualistic, place certain emphases on specific elements within the compensation and rewards systems. These emphases are controlled by the employees' shared values (Erez, 1994).



This finding was further explained by Bond et al. (1982), who suggested that collectivistic cultures generally base their compensation and rewards systems on equality amongst employees. The justification is that utilising equality-based systems increases the spirit of the group and increases a sense of unity amongst employees. Conversely, in individualistic cultures, compensation and rewards systems are usually based on equity. The reason is that this type of system matches the employees' societal culture values, which encourages autonomy and independence through achievement (Tornblom et al., 1985).

Fadil et al. (2005) provided further support to the previous finding that different societal cultures dictate different preferences in compensation and rewards systems. They stated that when these systems are the focus of discussion, Eastern societies (represent collectivistic cultures) generally choose equality as the basis of their systems. However, Western societies (represent individualistic cultures) are more likely to elect equity as the basis of their systems. Chen (1995) shed further light on the reasoning behind the choices made by each set of societal culture for certain compensation and rewards systems. He explained that when implementing a compensation and rewards system that supports the equal distribution of compensation between employees and rewards being given fairly, organisations can nurture an environment that embraces unity and harmony amongst employees; they all aim for the best outcome for the sake of the group, which is suitable to the individuals sharing collectivistic values.

Conversely, Deutsch (1985) described that ideally, Western societies would implement compensation and rewards systems based on the rewards of the individuals' input and output. In that ideal scenario, organisations can achieve fairness and justice in the workplace. Meanwhile, employees within individualistic cultures find the thought of adopting the preferred compensation and rewards systems of collectivistic cultures, which embrace equality, to be unfair, inappropriate and rather harsh on hard-working employees. Therefore, there is a solid belief within the existing literature that each type of societal culture has a specific and well-defined compensation and rewards system that matches its shared values and accepted behaviours.

Both the HR managers and employees at SAEI were asked to provide their opinions on this matter, as the former can outline the actual situation occurring within the organisation based on their experience, while the SAEI employees can help the researcher to either confirm or reject the finding proposed in the existing literature.

Firstly, the researcher will examine the responses attained from the HR managers as part of the interviewing process that took place. The first of three questions involving this specific theme investigated the types of rewards being given to employees at SAEI and whether those rewards were of a financial or non-financial nature. This question was asked to establish whether the engineers at SAEI were able to choose their preferred type of rewards or were obligated to only one type. The HR managers stated that the organisation provides employees with the opportunity to choose their rewards, and they have the freedom to select a financial or non-financial form of reward.

The HR managers were then asked the specific question of whether any tendencies were detected in terms of Saudi employees and their preferred types of rewards, which can be seen as a favoured choice amongst the majority of employees working at SAEI. The HR managers responded that a major theme has occurred amongst Saudi employees when choosing rewards. The HR managers explained that the most noticeable tendency was the decision made by the majority of Saudi employees electing to create a combination of each type of rewards (financial and non-financial). An example was provided through the mixture of a bonus in addition to several days off work. However, the final question involving this subject aimed to provide a concise separation between financial and non-financial rewards and whether one type appeared to be tipping the scale in its favour. This direct question asked of the HR managers could conclude the supremacy of one of the reward types. While answering this question, the HR managers conceded that their previous answer regarding combining both types of rewards was still valid. That may be the case in the short term. However, on a long-term basis, Saudi employees prefer financial rewards. Hence, it is fair to conclude that financial rewards are the favoured choice amongst the majority of Saudi employees.

After establishing an understanding of the preferred choice of rewards based on the HR managers' experiences, the researcher examined the response of the engineers working at SAEI and their standings on the preferred compensation and rewards systems implemented within the organisation. The engineers were asked two specific and direct questions concerned with the issue at hand through the questionnaires, which were part of the data collection process. The first question the engineers were asked about concerned the basis upon which they would like the compensation system at the organisation structured and whether they preferred the system to be based on equality or equity. The outcome of this question provided astounding support for a compensation

system based on equality; 81 per cent of the engineers elected equality as the preferred basis, while 19 per cent chose a compensation system based on equity. The second question on the questionnaire asked the engineers to choose their preferred type of reward. The engineers were asked to choose between two options: financial rewards, and non-financial rewards. The response from the questionnaires matched exactly the answers provided by the HR managers regarding the engineers' preferred type of reward. Many engineers elected to combine both types of reward. However, upon concluding the counting of the answers provided by the engineers, a clear gap emerged between each type of reward. The majority of the engineers voted for financial rewards, with 74 per cent of the votes, while only 24 per cent elected for a non-financial rewards system.

All in all, there seems to be an agreement between the findings proposed by the existing literature and the responses provided by the HR managers and the engineers at SAEI who participated in the data collection process. However, this agreement has only occurred on the basis of the compensation systems preferred by each type of societal culture. The societal culture reflected wholeheartedly on the compensation systems implemented, specifically when stressing the importance of basing the compensation systems on equality amongst employees. This agreement was pinpointed upon the engineers' response through the questionnaire when they were asked to choose between a compensation system based on equity or one based on equality. The end result revealed a resounding victory for the equality-based compensation system, receiving the majority of votes amongst the engineers.

However, this is where the similarity between the existing literature and the findings of the data collection process stops. As the discussion shifted towards the rewards systems, the contrast in opinions between the literature and the response from the questionnaires started to clearly develop. The critical point highlighting this contrast occurred when the existing literature suggested that the employees' choice of preferred rewards would be affected by the values commonly shared within their own societal culture. Most researchers stated that employees belonging to collectivistic cultures would opt for non-financial rewards as their preferred type. However, the engineers' responses generated from the data collection process suggested otherwise; the majority of the engineers favoured a financial type of reward in the long term rather than non-financial rewards. Although many engineers chose to combine both types of reward, that only occurred on

a short-term basis. Thus, a reflection of individualistic values can be noticed within this particular aspect of the rewards system. This resulted from the collectivistic employees preference of financial rewards on the long term. The HR managers confirmed the latter point during the interviewing process based on their experiences, stating that in the long term, employees will opt for the financial type of reward. Therefore, these responses counter the notion established in the existing literature, stating that collectivistic individuals prefer non-financial rewards over financial ones.

### **5.5 Job Desirability**

The next HRM aspect involves the job desirability theme and how the existing literature compared to the views of the HR managers and engineers involved in the data collection process. It should be noted that two important themes emerged concerning the job desirability aspect of HRM. The first theme involved in this discussion concerned the most prominent element in increasing the desirability of any vacancy or position within an organisation. Upon investigating the existing literature, there appeared to be continuous support for the importance of incorporating shared values of societal culture in the workplace. In an effort to ultimately increase job desirability, the most desirable positions are the ones that permit individuals to behave accordingly to their values and accepted behaviours the most (Katz and Kahn, 1978). Furthermore, in the specific case of individuals sharing collectivistic values, Joshi and Martocchio (in press) stated that those individuals tend to avoid working in organisations that promote an environment supporting the notion of individualistic excellence. The reason is that this environment represents a conflict with their shared values, which promote collectiveness in the workplace. Therefore, individuals would rather look for another job that supports their values and allows them to reflect those to a greater extent.

However, when the view of the existing literature is compared against the responses gathered from the data collection process, a definite contrast in opinions emerged. Throughout the entire section dedicated to job desirability in the interviewing process, not once did the HR managers mention cultural values in an effort to increase job desirability, certainly not to the extent projected throughout the existing literature. The most important aspects mentioned by the HR managers involved the opportunity to increase the experience of individuals working for Saudi Arabian Airlines, the positive impact of working for the organisation as a positive reflection on the social status of the individuals, and the numerous incentives offered by the organisation, including free

tickets, medical insurance, training opportunities, and competitive salary packages. Moreover, when the HR managers were asked, based on their past experience, about the elements upon which Saudi employees tend to focus when interviewing for a vacancy within the organisation, their response did not include values as an integral aspect. They explained that two types of focuses could be highlighted. The first one involves young applicants who seek to increase their experience and obtain improved salary packages. The second focus was placed by executive-level applicants who stress being involved in setting up the organisation's strategies and who want to play a crucial role in the company's development in the long term. This contrast highlighted that SAEI utilise a standardised and objective approach, which does not reflect what has been proposed in the existing literature. In the related literature, within collectivistic societal cultures where collectiveness is considered as a major player in attracting applicants, this particular aspect was viewed as a make-or-break factor to the applicants. While it is very clear that a large organisation such as Saudi Arabian Airlines does not factor such element within its recruitment process.

The contrast in opinions not only occurred between the views of the existing literature and those of the HR managers, but also extended to the preferences of the employees themselves. This contrast was based on the findings of the job desirability section within the questionnaires process. The response obtained from the engineers did not reflect the notion suggested by the existing literature that collectivistic individuals would always find vacancies reflecting their collectivistic values more desirable than the ones reflecting individualistic values. This contrast between the existing literature and the engineers' views became apparent when the engineers were asked during the job desirability theme about the aspects they thought represent great importance to them when they are searching for a new job. The engineers were given eight choices to choose from as their main attraction point. The response from the engineers could not have been any clearer, as the overwhelming majority of engineers elected compensation to be the most important point to them while searching for a new job, with a percentage of 35 per cent. This percentage secured 16 per cent more than the closest choice, which was represented in the aspect of job title. Interestingly, one of the aspects that scored the lowest percentage of votes was the culture match element, which secured a low percentage of 3 per cent of the votes. Based on this outcome, one cannot even suggest that the culture match between the employees and the organisation stood a chance of being considered amongst the top priorities of the employees. The findings of this

section clearly show the gulf in difference regarding how engineers perceive the importance of the compensation element and how they view the culture match element. These results are telling that Saudi (collectivistic) employees have acquired individualistic traits, where compensation and job title are considered to be held in higher esteem and culture match is the least aspect to be considered within the job desirability context. Moreover, this particular theme proposes the idea that a change in the mentality of Saudi Arabian societal culture (collectivistic), where individualistic values are being embraced and utilised.

Thus, based on the findings of the HR managers' interviews within the job desirability theme and the results of the engineers' response regarding the job desirability theme within the questionnaires, the existing literature does not accurately reflect the current situation, at least within one collectivistic organisation. This statement can be supported with the outcomes of the data collection process involving both the interviews and questionnaires. Neither produced findings that have confirmed the finding proposed throughout the literature, that culture match between individuals and organisations is the paramount element in increasing the desirability of a vacancy. On the contrary, the element proved to be the most critical in increasing the desirability of a vacancy was compensation. Furthermore, compensation was at the top of the provided choices with an unequivocal margin. Even the second most voted choice, job title, did not reflect a value shared within collectivistic cultures. Moreover, the existing literature attributed the importance of the compensation element to the cultures sharing individualistic values. However, the outcomes of the questionnaires have proven that this was not the case in collectivistic cultures, at least for the engineers at SAEI.

The second theme within the job desirability aspect involves the manner in which individuals from collectivistic cultures prefer to accomplish their tasks. Contrary to the first theme, this second theme appeared to have achieved a greater degree of agreement between the views of the existing literature and those of the HR managers and engineers. The existing literature clearly acknowledged that individuals belonging to collectivistic cultures find organisations promoting teamwork and collectiveness in the workplace to be more desirable than organisations promoting personal achievement and autonomy in accomplishing tasks (Katz and Kahn, 1978). Conversely, Bretz et al. (1989) highlighted that individualistic employees would always lean towards organisations promoting the chance of individualistic rather than group excellence. This

statement can be used to distance individuals sharing collectivistic values from the notion that they would find individualistically driven organisations appealing. Furthermore, those collectivistic individuals would be more attracted towards organisations providing the opportunity to accomplish tasks through teamwork and as a group rather than independently. Therefore, the main theme noted within the existing literature appears to classify collectivistic employees as individuals who prefer to accomplish tasks within groups and teamwork.

This finding proposed by the existing literature struck an identical resemblance to the views the HR managers had provided during the interviewing section of the data collection process. During the section targeting the job desirability aspect, the HR managers were asked a significant question about how they viewed the engineers' tendencies within the manner of accomplishing tasks for the company or whether the employees have confessed their fondness towards the way they like to work. This question aimed to conclude whether the employees had a preference in accomplishing their tasks within a group or independently. The response from the HR managers matched those views of the existing literature in the fact that the majority of employees express their interest in accomplishing tasks in groups and work within teams rather than accomplishing those tasks on their own. Furthermore, the HR managers reiterated that this interest on the employees' behalf corresponds with the organisation's upper management support for individuals within its umbrella to execute their tasks through teamwork and by working as a group. According to the HR managers, the organisation's support for adopting a teamwork environment is based on their belief that in a company like Saudi Arabian Airlines, where numerous technical services are provided, teamwork and harmony within the group of employees can help the organisation maintain efficient performance, which is crucial for the company's operations. Based on this answer, it can be noted that the manner of accomplishing tasks within groups is favourable due to the nature of work being carried out by SAEI and the importance of maintaining a harmonious atmosphere among employees. These qualities truly represent collectivistic societal cultures and do not reflect any individualistic qualities such as independence and singularities.

Moving to the engineers' perspective on this discussion point, the findings of the questionnaires that were utilised as part of the data collection process produced a clear picture of the engineers' viewpoint concerning the manner in which they prefer to

accomplish tasks for the organisation. One of the main questions in the job desirability aspect of the questionnaires asked the engineers how they prefer to work during projects and tasks. They were provided with two options: either to work independently by themselves, or work with other engineers as a team and part of a group. The outcomes of this question matched what has been proposed by the existing literature and the answers previously provided by the HR managers. This match was epitomised in the convincing numbers of respondents who voted for their preference to work within a team, with a percentage of 65 per cent. However, a considerable percentage of engineers voted in favour of accomplishing tasks independently, with a remaining percentage of 35 per cent. It should be noted that based on the hypothesis proposed by the existing literature, the difference between the two percentages should have been higher. This is due to the emphasis throughout the literature that collectivistic individuals, represented by the engineers in this case, would always prefer to accomplish tasks in groups through teamwork. Moreover, 35 per cent of the engineers voting for accomplishing tasks independently should not be underestimated. This percentage is still considered to be fairly substantial, as it represents 70 engineers out of the 200 working at SAEI. Those 70 engineers believe in independence while accomplishing tasks, which is a trait that is held dearly within individualistic societal culture according to the findings of the existing literature.

Nevertheless, the finding proposed by the existing literature that collectivistic individuals prefer to work within a group appeared to match the views of HR managers who are dealing with this aspect on a daily basis. Furthermore, this finding was supported by the majority of the engineers at SAEI who choose to work within teams in an ideal situation. Therefore, the literature theory regarding the manner of accomplishing tasks reflected an accurate image of the real situation, specifically the situation taking place at SAEI. However, due to the undeniable number of engineers voting that they would prefer to accomplish their tasks independently, this theory should be viewed as acceptable but with some reservation. The reasoning behind this reservation is that this percentage deserves to be included in consideration and still represents an overwhelming majority of the total number of engineers. Another conclusion that can be produced from the job desirability aspect findings is that the number of engineers who prefer to work independently was higher than expected, especially within a culture that shares collectivistic values. This surprising result could signal a change in distance separating the culture values of collectivistic and



individualistic cultures. Independence can be considered one of the main attributes associated with the individualistic culture values. Also, it is important to return to the point that Saudi Arabia is a developing country going through economic and financial changes that could lead to changes in the social fabric of the country and its societal culture.

## **5.6 Training Programmes**

The last HRM theme that will be part of the discussion chapter is the training programmes. In this section, the research will look at the viewpoints proposed in the existing literature and compare them against the responses obtained from the HR managers at SAEI as part of the interviewing aspect in the data collection process. This discussion will focus on whether training programmes within organisations are affected by the societal cultures and employees' shared values. The related literature often expressed a high level of interaction between the societal cultures of the employees and the set-up of the training programmes within organisations. Furthermore, the degree of harmony between the values shared by employees and the methods involved in the training programmes could determine the effectiveness and success of the programmes. Dunn et al. (1989) stated that in order for organisations to operate effective training programmes, they need to create a matching alignment between the employees' cultural backgrounds and the outcomes of the training programmes. This matching is possible through understanding the employees' shared values while setting up the training programmes. This was also proposed by McIntyre (1996), who described that any organisations seeking to establish training programmes with satisfactory outcomes have to include the employees' cultural mind-sets when initially setting up the programmes. Therefore, the existing literature states that understanding the societal culture and incorporating it within the set-up of the training programmes should be considered one of the essential cornerstones.

However, upon examining the findings of the training programmes section within the interviewing process, the HR managers appeared to support the arguments proposed by the existing literature that highlights the significance of societal culture and its important role in their effectiveness. During the training programmes section of the interviewing process, the HR managers were asked three major questions regarding the relation between the training programmes and the societal culture. The first question investigated whether the Saudi culture plays a significant role in shaping the training

programmes initiated at Saudi Airlines and SAEI. The HR managers were quick to respond that Saudi Arabian societal culture did play an integral role within the training programmes, and they even cited a relevant example. The HR managers explained that one of the essential training programmes at Saudi Arabian Airlines focuses on improving the linguistic skills of newly hired individuals. The HR managers elaborated that the reasoning is that new Saudi graduates often do not acquire necessary fluency in the English language due to limited focus on that aspect at universities and schools. However, it is considered necessary to have an optimum understanding of the language and technical terminology within Saudi Arabian Airlines. The HR managers even stated that this situation commonly occurs throughout renowned organisations in Saudi Arabia.

The second question proposed to the HR managers maintained the same focus on the cultural backgrounds of the employees and whether they were one of the elements considered while setting up the training programmes. The HR managers affirmatively responded to the question, adding that they place great consideration towards the employees' societal culture values. They went on to mention that the most relevant example is represented through the linguistic skills issue mentioned in the previous question.

The third question evolved around the foreign employees at Saudi Arabian Airlines and whether they were given any consideration while setting up the training programmes due to the probability that may share a different set of values to those shared by Saudi individuals. Also, the HR managers were asked to provide some examples if this situation actually occurs. The response from the HR managers indicated that Saudi Arabian Airlines places great consideration of foreign employees and their adaptation to the Saudi Arabian culture. Moreover, some of the foreign employees share a strikingly different set of values to those embraced within Saudi Arabia. Therefore, Saudi Arabian Airlines has established numerous training programmes that address major themes involving religion, socially accepted behaviours, and cultural norms in order to ensure a smoother transition for foreign employees from their native culture to Saudi Arabian culture.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the existing literature and the HR managers share the same concept regarding the relation between training programmes and societal culture based on the findings of the data collection process. Furthermore, the hypothesis

found in the existing literature matches the actual situation within Saudi Arabian Airlines and other large companies within Saudi Arabia, as cited by the HR managers during the interview. As a result, it can be stated that the correlation between the effectiveness and success of the training programmes is largely dependent on the incorporation of the societal culture element represented through the employees' cultural backgrounds. Moreover, training programmes are not only affected by the local employees' societal culture values, but also by those of foreign employees, which is the case at Saudi Arabian Airlines.

### **5.7 Conclusions**

All in all, several conclusions can be produced after reviewing all the discussion points involving the existing literature and the findings of the data collection process. First, the aspect of recruitment sources was discussed across a number of levels, starting with the existing literature hypothesis involving collectivistic individuals preferring recruitment sources deploying a personal approach in their methods. This was opposed by the HR managers, who stated that through their experience, applicants have been favouring the online application feature since its initiation. Meanwhile, the engineers exhibited support for the literature's claim. However, they later chose online direct application as their preferred method of applying for a vacancy amongst other recruitment sources that did not obtain the same popularity during the questionnaires. Another point of discussion involved the use of a headhunting approach. The existing literature proposed that this approach is rarely if at all used within a collectivistic culture, as it conflicts with several themes within the collectivistic cultures. However, that theory was refuted by the HR managers, who stated that a headhunting approach is mainly considered, especially when recruiting for an executive position. The final point of discussion regarding the recruitment sources involved the existing literature's claim that societal cultures exercise great influence on recruitment sources and how they are perceived. The HR managers who confirmed that recruitment sources are heavily affected by the societal cultures supported this claim. Moreover, they cited a telling example through the online direct application approach evolving from untrusted to becoming the most favoured approach, with minimal competition from other recruitment sources.

The second aspect of discussion involved performance appraisal and comparing the existing literature to the findings of the data collection process. The point of discussion involved the existing literature's support for the argument that performance appraisal is

greatly affected by the surrounding societal culture. The HR managers who stated that the impact of societal culture on performance appraisal can be described as trivial at best and does not carry any consequences throughout the performance dismissed this argument. They also revealed that societal culture does not affect the performance appraisal process.

Another point of discussion came from the existing literature claiming that individuals from collectivistic cultures will always seek performance appraisal systems that are based on overall performance and appraise the entire group. However, the response from the engineers countered that argument when the slight majority appeared to be in favour of a performance appraisal based on achievement. Nevertheless, the response from the HR managers appeared to support both claims; the HR managers stated that the organisation deploys a comprehensive performance appraisal process that encompasses overall performance and achievements on a personal level.

An additional point of discussion focused on the conveying of feedback to employees. The existing literature proposed that within collectivistic cultures, employees tend to prefer a long personal process when receiving feedback. However, this claim was not confirmed by the HR managers, who stated that the organisation conveys feedback through emails, thus eliminating the personal touch throughout the process. The HR managers justified this approach due to the hectic work schedule of the employees and the ease of concluding the entire process without risking the core tasks of the organisation.

Another aspect of the discussion concerned the compensation and rewards systems. The first point involved the importance of incorporating the societal culture values in the set-up of those systems in order to achieve an effective and successful system. The existing literature placed great emphasis on the incorporation of cultural values within the compensation and rewards systems in order to use them as motivational instruments for employees. The response from the HR managers supported this finding, in the manner that the organisation uses the compensation system as a tool to inspire employees to deliver the desired performance.

Another point of discussion similar to the previous one involved an example of implementing the societal culture values as part of the compensation and rewards systems in order to make them effectual. The HR managers who stated that when the

organisation aimed to incorporate the societal culture values to motivate the employees to maintain their great performances, the organisation recognised that providing systems combining time-pay compensation would suit the employees’ ambition. Therefore, it can be noted that incorporating the societal culture element into the compensation and rewards system can be beneficial. Another conclusion can be drawn on the basis of the preferred rewards systems. Throughout the literature there has been a shared belief that individuals belonging to collectivistic cultures will always choose a rewards system based on equality, as it enhances the team spirit and harmony amongst the group. This belief was confirmed by the findings of the questionnaires when the majority of engineers revealed their preference for rewards systems that are based on equality. Therefore, the findings verify the hypothesis shared throughout the related literature.

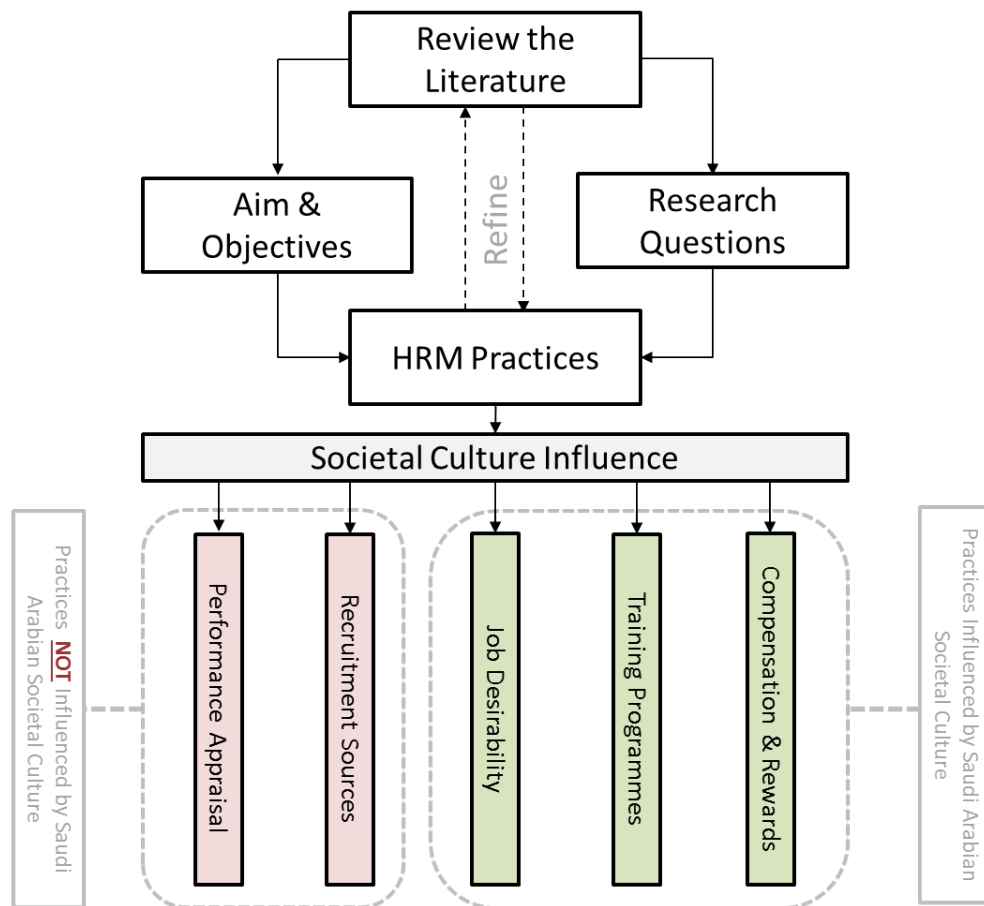


Figure.5.1. Relation between HRM practices and Saudi Arabian societal culture.

Diagram (5.1) demonstrates which HRM practices are influenced by Saudi Arabian societal culture and which HRM practices were not when including this influence as a

filtration layer of the HRM practices that driven by the previously developed and mentioned aim, objectives and research questions in this research.

All in all, the extent of agreement between the existing literature and data collection findings varied greatly. In the case of some HRM practices, the existing literature provided findings that were true to the actual reality. Those findings were confirmed by the findings provided by the HR managers and engineers at SAEI. On the other hand, several other findings proposed by the existing literature were unsuitable to describe the current state of some HRM practices, as the findings of the data collection process differed. However, this inaccuracy concerning the existing literature can be expected, as Saudi Arabia is in a continuous and swift state of change that is impacting the cultural values and norms amongst its individuals. Thus, incurring those differences in preferences and behaviours that were found while comparing the findings to the existing literature, those differences can be seen as the latest development in Saudi cultural values and mentality. As a result, it can be suggested that there are several factors in accelerating this societal culture change in Saudi Arabia. Those factors affected the differences between the studies involved in the existing literature and this research. Firstly, the rise in numbers of foreign workforce within Saudi organisations. This element contributed in bringing new addition to the societal culture fabric. Secondly, the introduction of new technologies in media and Internet that transformed Saudi societal culture significantly. Finally, the initiation of scholarship programmes played an integral role in this transformation of Saudi societal culture. These programmes aim to send Saudi nationals abroad for the purposes of study and gaining work experience. Thus, subjecting Saudis to new environments embracing different values and accepted behaviours, which might affect their own values that they would practice once they return to Saudi Arabia. So, the major difference between this research and the existing literature could be epitomized in time. The period where the existing literature was conducted had different factors than the ones found while conducting this research. Additional contribution is providing an up-to-date, pragmatic study on the current state of the relation between Saudi Arabian culture and HRM practices. Saudi Arabia can represent collectivistic cultures, which has been ignored in the literature according to the majority of researchers in this field. Another contribution worth mentioning is the focus on culture and HRM in Saudi Arabia, rather than economics and politics of the region. A further contribution that can be considered is the in-depth analysis provided by this study through the implementation of a mixed methods approach that

incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to provide as much knowledge as possible. Many researchers lamented that most of the existing literature within this research topic remains superficial and does not include any in-depth analysis. However, this study incorporated both the public and private sectors as well as conducted interviews with the senior HR managers and disseminated questionnaires amongst the engineers working at SAEI. At this stage in the research, the conclusion of the discussion paves the way to provide conclusions. Furthermore, it allows the research to draw out possible recommendations for future work. Most importantly, at this stage, the research is able to identify the key contributions to be made to the research area investigated in this research. As a result, the research can move forward toward the next section.

Chapter 6:  
Conclusions &  
Recommendations



## **Chapter 6 – Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Work**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This research began with the main aim of investigating the impact of Saudi Arabian societal culture on five HRM practices (recruitment sources, performance appraisal, compensation and rewards, job desirability, and training programmes) within the public and private sectors. In order to achieve this goal, several research questions were put forward along with several objectives. The research questions started with investigating the impact of Saudi Arabian societal culture on the five HRM practices within the public and private sectors, which were highlighted following a comprehensive review of the literature. The following two research questions were presented as sub-questions to facilitate answering the main question. The second question asked about the relation in which Saudi Arabian societal culture and the five HRM practices interact within an organisational context. As for the third research question, it enquired about the preferred practices within the five HRM practices targeted from the point of view of Saudi employees belonging to both sectors. Answering both sub-questions (2nd and 3rd) would provide a clear answer to the first and main question, which represents the main aim of this research.

In regards to the research objectives, several objectives were established in order to answer the research questions. These objectives consisted of four main points. First, investigate the impact of Saudi Arabian societal culture on the five HRM practices by utilising the case study of SAA's SAEI department. Second, conduct an analysis of the five HRM practices in both the public and private sectors, which was made possible and achievable within one organisation through the privatisation of SAEI. This resulted in SAEI being in a transitional phase – from public to private – due to the privatisation process being implemented throughout the organisation.

Third, based on the conducted analysis in the second objective, those HRM practices would be reviewed and used in comparison against the findings of the existing literature. Fourth, based on the comparisons and findings generated from the case study, discussions could be developed in a bid to improve and draw out recommendations for better HRM practices within the public and private sectors.

The research questions were answered throughout the course of this research. Starting with satisfying the aims and objectives in Chapter One, this chapter highlighted the background and key aspects – societal culture, HRM, and public and private sectors – as well as the main aim of the study. Following the research questions and objectives, key areas within the existing literature were marked for investigation in Chapter Two after highlighting and identifying the research boundaries. Those areas include the impact of religion on work ethics and the impact of societal culture on HRM practices based on the collectivism-individualism dimension. This investigation resulted in the five specific HRM practices in this study being decided: job desirability, recruitment sources, performance appraisal, compensation and rewards, and training programmes.

In the third chapter a methodology was to investigate the topic. This methodology involved the use of a single case study and the implementation of a mixed-methods approach. Moreover, the choice of Saudi Arabian Airlines as a case study was a result of the company going through a transition from the public to private sector. The aim of this transition is to transform government organisations into sustainable profit centres while embracing the Saudization concept. Therefore, SAA represented a suitable candidate as a single case study covering the public and private sectors. As for the mixed-methods approach, the data collection process was covered in three main aspects: semi-structured interviews, distributing employee questionnaires, and visiting the organisation's facilities in Saudi Arabia. Thus, a mixed-methods approach was appropriate and complementary to the research aims. As a result, a framework was developed and consisted of three main stages. The first stage was research development, which concentrated on defining the research aims, adopting a suitable methodology, and developing the actual framework. This step led to stage two, data processing, which included data collection facilitation, gathering data and analyses. Stage three was research finalisation, which involved a discussion of the findings, drawing conclusions and providing recommendations, and future work. The final section in this chapter discussed the participants and stages of the data collection process.

Moreover, several ethical aspects involved in the data collection process were covered and assured that all necessary considerations had been incorporated and taken into

consideration: to ensure the validity of the questionnaire from an ethical point of view, including gender, education and religion.

In Chapter Five, following the completion of the data collection process, the findings were described in detail and analysed to generate contributions. These findings were prepared to be used in comparison with the findings of those in existing literature. Chapter Six saw the comparisons produce mixed results, as some HRM practices, including compensation and rewards, training programmes and several themes within performance appraisal, matched the theories proposed in the existing literature. On the other hand, the findings of recruitment sources and performance appraisal practices significantly contradicted the existing literature. After the completion of the discussion of two sets of findings, the research was able to produce several practical and theoretical contributions mentioned in the previous chapter.

In conclusion, developments in behaviours are responsible for invalidating the findings of previous studies and the theories they produced in this research area. Some of those developments generated noticeable contradictions between current reality and existing literature. Thus, it can be said that there is a strong link between Saudi Arabia societal culture and HRM practices with different degrees of impact. However, this link might have lost some of its strength with the introduction of e-Business solutions such as the Internet. Moreover, rapid economic growth within the country has affected shared values and behaviours, as was established in the literature review chapter. Where Saudi Arabia, among other Gulf Council Countries, was ill prepared to deal with sudden immeasurable wealth. In addition, the introduction of a foreign workforce contributed to weakening the link between societal culture and HRM practices. As Saudi Arabia embarked on numerous infrastructure projects, great numbers of foreign workers were brought to the country to help with those projects. This introduction added further dimension to Saudi Arabia's societal culture with the incoming foreign workforce bringing their own values and behaviours. Lastly, the enforcement of the Saudization initiative by the Saudi government has placed restrictions on some HRM practices in order for organisations (including Saudi Arabian Airlines) to comply with rules of this initiative. Thus, it is acceptable to understand that Saudi Arabia's societal culture has a

great impact on HRM practices in the public and private sectors. However, this impact fluctuates from one HRM practice to another as mentioned during the course of this research.

## **6.2 Contributions to Knowledge**

This research has resulted in a number of contributions to knowledge related to HRM practices in Saudi Arabia – both theoretical and practical – based on satisfying the aim and objectives of the research, as well as previously identified gaps in the literature. These contributions include:

### **6.2.1 Theoretical Contributions**

- The study's findings have confirmed a strong correlation between societal culture and some HRM practices. However, this societal culture influence did not extend to all of the five targeted HRM practices in this study and varied between those practices. Compensation and rewards, training programmes, job desirability practices, and several aspects of performance appraisal practices were heavily influenced by Saudi Arabian societal culture. On the other hand, recruitment sources and performance appraisal practices were not. Thus, Saudi Arabian societal culture could be considered as a key player in HRM.
- Delivering an up-to-date investigation on the impact of culture in Saudi Arabia on HRM practices by highlighting five specific aspects: recruitment sources, job desirability, compensation and rewards, and performance appraisal and training. This investigation addressed a well-known gap in the literature highlighted and identified by the majority of researchers.
- This research provides a performance analysis and review of HRM and practices in Saudi Arabia using a comparative approach by linking societal culture to HRM practices in the private and public sectors. This comparative approach in both sectors is considered a key stage, since it focuses on studying the transition from the public sector to private sector (as described in the case study of Saudi Arabian Airlines).

- In the developed framework and research methodology, a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches have been conducted simultaneously with the aim of benefiting from these approach advantages, findings and outcomes. This methodology resulted in developing a rich database that can be used by other scholars within the same field in order to further investigate this issue or even collaborate the gathered information with any cross-field studies, i.e. social studies, finance or economic.

### **6.2.2 Practical Contributions**

- This research provides the opportunity to critically analyse and examine an ongoing transition from public to private sector within a leading organisation in Saudi Arabia and the Middle East. This in-depth process highlights the impact of such a transition on HRM practices within the organisation by conducting direct data collection using primary and secondary research methods.
- The developed framework and findings from this research can be implemented as a reference for future studies concerned with linking societal cultures with HRM practices and for future privatisation processes in Saudi Arabia. Also, it can be used to benchmark HRM practices between local (Saudi Arabia) organisations and foreign (international) ones.

### **6.3 Recommendations for Future Work**

While conducting this study, several levels represented opportunities to conduct future research as an extension to this body of work. The first level involves conducting a study comparing the framework developed in this research against another regional organisation. This would contribute greatly towards a region that remains largely underexplored and uncharted. The second level targets using this framework against local organisations beginning with the privatization process of many government organisations. The third level aims to compare this framework against international organisations with a western mind set. Exploring the possible findings of this third level could contribute to the collectivism-individualism dimension.

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# Appendices

# Appendix 1

## Academic Publications

**Publications**

1. Alsharif, H, Grant, S. 2013. “The Impact of Saudi Arabia’s Culture on HRM Practices within the Public Sector”, The 14th Conference of the International Academy of Management and Business, San Antonio, Texas, USA, January 21-23, 2013.
  
2. Alsharif, H. 2014. “Motivational rewards for knowledge sharing within the public and private sectors: the case of Saudi Arabian Airlines”, International Conference on Sustainable Design and Manufacturing Cardiff, Wales, UK, 28, 29 & 30 April 2014.
  
3. Alsharif, H. 2014. “The Relation Between Saudi Arabian Societal Culture and the Public Sector Human Resource Practices: The Specific Case of Saudia Airlines”, *Asian Journal of Business and Management*, 8 (1), 1-12. (Accepted)

# **The Impact of Saudi Arabia's Culture on HRM Practices within the Public Sector**

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## **Abstract**

Human resource management practices and policies of any organization are significantly influenced by the sets of norms and values that are common within the surrounding societal cultures. This research will investigate the extent to which societal cultures and employees' values contribute in shaping the practices and policies of human resource management in any organization within the public sector, specifically municipalities in Saudi Arabia.

Also, in order to provide further details regarding the influence of societal cultures, interviews will be conducted along the different levels of management within three main municipalities in Saudi Arabia. These interviews will provide assistance in highlighting the essential elements of societal culture that mainly affect the human resource management practices and policies. Finally, based on the findings and outcomes of this research and interviews, conclusions and recommendations can be drawn out to provide explanations for this significance of societal cultures over HRM practices and policies.

## **Introduction**

Every country in the world has a way in affecting organisational practices, whether through its local culture of the region, the traditions that might bind these practices, unique legislations or religious beliefs that restrict these practices within a certain scope. In addition, the success of an organisational model in a country does not necessarily imply its success elsewhere, as the norms and settings that these practices would function within its environment might take a different shape.

## **Research Aims and Questions**

This research aims to explore the impact of the culture of Saudi Arabia on Human Resource Management (HRM) practices within the public sector, specifically HRM practices within three major municipalities in Saudi Arabia. The fulfilment of this aim requires answering a set of questions regarding the current situation of HRM practices and the public sector in Saudi Arabia. Also, investigating the current issues within HRM practices in public sector in Saudi Arabia. The questions that will help achieve the aim of this research are:

- 1- How does the Saudi Arabian culture affect the organisational practices?
- 2- What are the main features of HRM practices in Saudi Arabia?
- 3- What are the issues in HRM practices within the public sector in Saudi Arabia?
- 4- How can HRM practices within the public sector improve?

The answers to these questions will help achieving the aim of this research through identifying the factors that shape the current form of HRM practices within the public sector. In addition, investigating these questions help setting the objectives of this research, which are as follow:

- 1- Investigate the impact of Saudi Arabian culture on organisational practices.
- 2- Analyse HRM practices in Saudi Arabia.
- 3- Review the HRM practices within the public sector and identify the current issues.
- 4- Develop a constructive discussion to help improve the current situation of HRM practices within the public sector.

## **Literature Review**

In order to provide the research with a thorough exploration regarding its questions and aims, the literature associated with the related topics within the research have been investigated and reviewed. These topics were represented through three main aspects including societal culture, types of cultures and the specific culture instilled within Saudi Arabia. These aspects will be explored in the following paragraphs.

### **Societal Culture**

Developing a complete understanding of the term culture holds a great significance in tackling the research questions. Therefore, it is important to define and explain the meaning of culture that will be used within the context. So, before moving on to define societal culture, the broad definition of culture can be a specific group unique set of parameters that distinguish this certain group of collectives from any other, attached through either religious, professional, ethnic, racial or organizational ties, from any other group, while these parameters can be shared attributes or shared values Gutterman (2011). This broad concept of culture led to the specific definition of societal culture that is culture can be defined as the common gained traditions, customs, values and norms among an assembly of individuals Northhouse (2006). More specifically, Derr and Laurent (1989) proposed that societal culture is the outcome of the common national tendencies resulting from formative encounters, childhood, language, education and religion.



Upon establishing this understanding of the term “Societal Culture”, the link between societal culture and organizations that happen to operate within a certain societal culture can be conveniently explored throughout the related literature. Past researchers, who were interested in the impact of societal culture on organizations’, highlighted the importance of organizations understanding the local culture in order to achieve success. According to Metters (2008), the cultural impact upon the success of organizations increasingly began to appear evident, as the acknowledgment of the cultural element proved to be essential in the mix of any successful organization. Moreover, organizations achieve fluctuating levels of success, where the ones with a greater level of understanding of culture sustaining greater degree of success Hope and Muehleman (2001).

Furthermore, this significance of societal culture directly affects HRM practices within any organization as Aycan et al (2000) declared that the importance of understanding and implementing the societal culture within any organisation is never trivial, as societal culture places a crucial effect on the policies and practices of HRM. This crucial effect takes place due to organizations employing individuals who are ingrained with culture, which dictates their response toward relationships, norms, behaviours, goals and methods Noordin and Jusoff (2010). Therefore, cultural traditions and values of the employees of any organisation tend to have a substantial influence on the way they accomplish their duties and the manner they approach their tasks within the organisation Tayeb (1996).

### **Types of Culture (Collectivism-Individualism)**

It is highly important to establish boundaries and parameters for the research in order to maintain a focused vision throughout the research as well as reaching satisfactory conclusions. Throughout the literature, many researchers applied a similar approach in investigating their arguments in order to provide the best outcomes out of their research. The approach involved comparing two types of cultures and how each type uniquely affects HRM practices. The two types of culture being involved are collectivistic culture and individualistic culture. This approach evolves around how individuals view the affiliation between themselves and the team, which they are members of Noordin and Jusoff (2010). The aim of introducing this approach is to set up a parameter in order to provide a focused and on-the-point argument that can lead to concise and clear outcomes for this research upon determining which type of culture represents Saudi Arabia’s culture.

Also, this collectivism-individualism approach has been utilized as a trustworthy manuscript as Voronov (2002) accordingly agree with the evolving role of collectivism-individualism dimension, which was and still used as a reference in explaining the distinctions in conflict solution, people mechanisms, compensations and rewards and management styles. Furthermore, Oyserman, Coon and Kimmelmeier (2002) agreed that when it comes to develop a better understanding of the norms, behaviours and ethics of people in different parts of the worlds, the collectivism-individualism approach can be a tool of great power in the development of a

full understanding. Therefore, using this dimension can only be of great benefit to this research.

Hofstede (1980) described collectivistic individuals as loyal team players, who are always looking for the good of the organization and aiming to achieve its goals and are interdependent with regard to communication among themselves, while individualistic individuals exhibit self-interested approach to their careers at the expense of the whole group interest and prefer to maintain their independence while accomplishing their tasks. Moreover, individuals within individualistic cultures tend to see themselves as independent and singular articles, at the same time, individuals from collectivistic cultures are always linking themselves to the group and refuse to be seen as separate beings Wagner (1995).

### **Saudi Arabia's Culture**

Determining the type that Saudi Arabia's culture belongs to can be accomplished through illuminating the main drivers and themes within the Saudi culture. Saudi Arabia is a country where its entire population follows the Islamic faith, which is considered the main influence in shaping the existing culture. As a result, this religious influence affects HRM practices within organizations, as individuals who follow the religion of Islam are obliged to act in accordance with the teachings of the Islamic faith concerning their behavior and manners in the workplace King and Williamson (2005) who implied that values and beliefs of a religion affect behaviors in the workplace directly and indirectly.

Furthermore, Ali et al (2000) supported this argument by stating that religion interacts with all levels of human resources with its code of ethics and teachings with regard to compensation, penalties, acceptable behaviors, prohibited behaviors and relations among employees. Moreover, in the specific case of Islamic countries, Islamic teachings have a substantial influence on work ethics and the behaviour of Muslims in the work place Ali and Al-Owaihah (2008).

Throughout the related literature, the common themes found within Saudi Arabia's culture, which is heavily influenced by religion, matched themes found in collectivistic cultures including teamwork and show genuine care for other involved parties through generalizing their fate and sharing the responsibilities for the outcome of their work Kumar et al (1995). Also, there are tendencies can be found in the workplace within Developing countries, such as Saudi Arabia, as Individuals within Developing countries tend to appreciate their values more than individuals in already Developed countries Mendonca and Kanungo (1990). Further common traits include promotion of team spirit and abolishing selfishness, which positively affects group performance, career satisfaction, swift cooperation and the elimination of any differences Van der Vegt and Van de Vliert (2002).

### **Impact of Culture on HRM Practices**

In the limited literature concerned with the impact of culture on HRM practices, researchers justified the vital connection between HRM practices and the cultural values shared by individuals. The majority of researchers

even suggesting that the success of any organization is dependent on how much societal culture values are incorporated in the organization. Weyland (2011) showcases the benefits of having a match in values, ethics, beliefs and behavior between organizations and individuals, which leads to creating harmony that generate success for organizations and enhanced productivity for individuals.

Furthermore, each type of culture (collectivism-individualism) tends to impose its own unique effect on HRM practices. As an example observed in the job desirability aspect, the impact of societal culture can be exhibited through the role that the values of individuals play in showing their preference of a certain job more than another Cable and Judge (1996). Furthermore, Katz & Kahn (1978) explained the degree of job desirability by stating that the most preferred jobs are the ones that allow individuals to convey their values to a greater extent. Moreover, Schuler et al (1993) suggested that aspects such as public holidays, ideal behaviors, norms, working hours and compensations are usually based on the national culture of the region where organizations will be situated and those aspects would be integrated into the HRM practices.

The impact of culture on HRM practices can be noted also within the recruitment process. Societal culture and values play a substantial part in the selection of the recruitment source by organizations and applicants as well, for instance, individuals from societies that share collectiveness values are lean further towards recruitment sources that utilize a personal approach such as networking and job recommendation rather than recruitment sources which employ an impersonal and distant approach such as newspaper advertisements and online recruitments Stone, Stone-Romero and Lukaszewski (2007). Moreover, the selection process is another part of the recruitment process affected by societal culture, as the values of the applicants dictate the manner in which an applicant response to the selection process incorporated by the organization, as each applicant, whether with collectivistic or individualistic values, tend to be more in favor with a certain selection process, for instance, candidates with collectivistic values would prefer selections processes that are based on respect and equality McFarlin and Sweeney (2001), whereas candidates with individualistic values tend to prefer selection systems that provide them with the opportunity to express their qualities and characteristics Dipboye and Halverson (in press).

## **Methodology**

In order to provide further details regarding the influence of societal cultures, interviews will be conducted along the different levels of management within three main municipalities in Saudi Arabia. These interviews will provide assistance in highlighting the essential elements of societal culture that mainly affect the human resource management practices and policies. Furthermore, questionnaires will be distributed during the data collection process in order to extract as much information as possible.

## Findings & Conclusion

So far, findings and conclusions cannot be drawn out until the data collection process is complete. The research is heading towards the data collection stage, which aims to develop an understanding of the actual present situation and define the main elements of societal culture that affect HRM practices. After that, conclusions will be made based on the findings of the data collection process.

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## **“Motivational rewards for knowledge sharing within the public and private sectors: the case of Saudi Arabian Airlines”**

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### **Abstract**

Human resource management practices and policies of any organization are significantly influenced by the sets of norms and values that are common within the surrounding societal cultures. This research will investigate the extent to which societal cultures and employees' values contribute in shaping the practices and policies of human resource management, compensation and rewards systems in particular in relation to motivating knowledge sharing across employees, in organizations within the public and private sectors, specifically the case of Saudi Aerospace Engineering Industries department (SAEI) in Saudi Arabian Airlines. Also, in order to provide further details regarding the influence of societal cultures on a range of HR practices and in particular in relation to a range of reward systems to motivate knowledge sharing, interviews will be conducted along the different levels of management within Saudi Arabian Airlines. Furthermore, the research will pursue the employees' opinions on the compensation and rewards systems and how they view them and which compensation and rewards systems motivate and appeal to them. Finally, based on the findings and outcomes of this research and interviews, conclusions and recommendations can be drawn out to provide explanations for this significance of societal cultures over HRM practices and policies.

### **1. Introduction**

Every country in the world has a way in affecting organisational practices, whether through its local culture of the region, the traditions that might bind these practices, unique legislations or religious beliefs that restrict these practices within a certain scope. In addition, the success of an organisational model in a country does not necessarily imply its success elsewhere, as the norms and settings that these practices would function within its environment might take a different shape. This research aims to explore the impact of the culture of Saudi Arabia on Human Resource Management (HRM) practice of compensation and rewards systems and their impact on sharing knowledge within existing sectors, the public sector and the private sector. Specifically HRM practices within Saudi Arabian Airlines, which is going through the process of privatising all departments that exist under its umbrella. Saudi Arabian Airlines has been chosen in this research to represent both sectors due to several reasons. These reasons

include the transitional phase that the organisation is going through which allows a unique insight into the differences and changes in the organisation's HRM practices implemented before and after the privatisation process. In addition, investigating this unique environment will enable the research to analyse the impact of applying different HRM practices on departments accomplishing the same tasks. Also, this investigation will have the opportunity to highlight the reasoning behind employees' choice in terms of employment agreement i.e. whether they choose to be considered private or public employees.

This investigation will help identifying the issues with the current practices implemented in the HRM practice of compensation and rewards systems in the public and private sector through the Saudi Arabian Airlines as well as aiding in understanding of the current situation. Furthermore, recognising the issues will assist to layout solutions for these issues and improve compensation and rewards systems within both sectors. In addition, the research will look at how compensation and rewards systems impact knowledge sharing among employees within the organisation. Finally, the government of Saudi Arabia is funding numerous projects for setting up the infrastructures, which several overseas companies are contracted to execute including a new state of the art airport. Therefore, the outcomes of this research will provide guidelines for the unique aspects of Saudi Arabia's culture that can be of great assistance to those foreign companies

## **2. Literature Review**

Several authors throughout the relative literature acknowledged the great impact of societal culture on HRM practices with compensation and rewards systems being one of the main HRM practices. The reasoning behind this importance is that the compensation and rewards systems of any organisation, is that they can influence the morale of the organisation's employees and inspire their performances [1]. Stone et al recognised the compensation and rewarding systems as a tool used by organisations to acquire potential personnel by increasing the desirability of the organisation's vacancies, inspire existing personnel in achieving certain goals (such as; achieving a desired standard of customer satisfaction, team work performance, improving the organisation's financial status) and attract new personnel into the organisation [2]. Furthermore, rewards systems can help the organisation in nurturing a trusting, cooperative environment, which indirectly facilitate for an enhanced knowledge sharing environment among employees and the organisation [3]. Collins and Smith provided support to this argument through their study, which summarized that commitment-based HRM practices such as compensation and rewards systems can affect the level of success achieved by organisations through influencing an organisational climate of sharing, trust and togetherness that lead to sharing and merging knowledge that develop organisations' practices [4]. Yahya and Goh weighed into this topic by stating how organisations should structure their compensation and rewards systems in order to create this environment of trust and cooperation that increases



sharing knowledge [5]. They stated that organisations should create a pro-collaborative climate by assessing the employees' work on three bases; sharing their knowledge with the group, work attitude and the input of the individual for the team functioning. Yahya and Goh added that organisation with rewards systems based on individual efforts create a hostile environment towards collaborations and knowledge sharing among employees [5].

As for the relation between the societal culture and the rewarding and compensation systems effectiveness, Joshi and Martocchio detailed how the values of the employees culture can affect the rewarding and compensation system of an organisation and the level of success this system can achieve, as the rewarding and compensation system needs to be involving the values shared by the employees of an organisation in order to be fully effective [6]. Erez illuminated how the financial aspect of these compensation and rewarding systems can be of such high importance through explaining that employees within an organisation use these rewarding systems as a method of appraising their own performances [7]. Furthermore, these rewarding systems can be an invisible element in providing employees with the required motivation in order to reach the aspired work rate preferred by the organisation [7].

Stone et al suggest that the societal culture values shared by the individuals of any culture, heavily influence the degree of success of these compensation and rewarding systems benefits and how they are perceived by the employees as well as influencing the way these compensation and rewarding systems are structured in order to be embraced the employees within any organisation [1]. Moreover, adopting the most convenient rewards system within organisations contribute greatly to job satisfaction among the employees, as in the case of job dissatisfaction, organisations could end up facing high levels of stress on the employees behalf, which lead to several negative consequences such as decline in performance, increase in absenteeism and losing the commitment and loyalty of the employees that will eventually reflect badly in staff turnover [8]. In addition, the absence of an effective rewards system in an organisation could lead to employees losing interest and motivation in sharing their knowledge, which is crucial for any organisation aiming to develop its best possible practice [9]. Furthermore, Benkhoff study showed very strong ties linking employee turnover with the levels of job satisfaction and commitment [10]. Lok and Crawford offered an explanation for the scenario when employees are dissatisfied with their jobs, this scenario starting with employees looking for other career alternatives while exhibiting lack of commitment to their current jobs and if the their pursuit of alternate careers do not materialize, they lose interest in their current jobs even if they decide to stay in their current positions [11]. Riketta reflected on the importance of maintaining high employees commitment and loyalty due to the fact that those two aspects are crucial to the whole performance of the organisation [12].

### **3. Gaps in the Literature**

After exploring the existing literature associated with HRM and societal culture, the lack of the literature discussing HRM practices within the cultural context has been highlighted by several researchers. Moreover, the majority of the research conducted was accomplished three decades ago. Therefore, this majority does not take into account the recent development in the region targeted in this research, namely Saudi Arabia. As a result, this section of the research will discuss the shortcomings of the existing literature and aim to provide scientific values for this research to be conducted. Brannine and Pollard addressed the shortage of literature in linking HRM with societal culture from several angles. Specifically, the religious aspect of culture and as was established in the literature review chapter, Islamic teachings are a strong element in the societal culture of Saudi Arabia. Firstly, although interest in management within Arab countries has been renewed and drawn much attention after the financial crisis. This interest mostly focused on the banking and economics principles from an Islamic view without any consideration for the cultural context [13].

Secondly, most efforts spent on explaining the cultural context were purely based on opinions and theories without any factual studies to significantly support these opinions and theories. Thirdly, even though management practices in Arab countries implement both western and Islamic philosophies, the focus has been much put on the Western part [13]. Finally, Brannine and Pollard found even that the principles being taught based on the studies conducted by Hofstede [14], which included Saudi Arabia, couldn't be applied in real life and often clashed with reality. By the end of Brannine and Pollard study, they suggested that there is a genuine need to address the cultural context within this topic in order to fill the existing gap in the literature [13]. Another study that highlighted the lack in the existing literature was conducted by Sayed and Ali [15]. They have stated that there is a massive area within HRM practices involving the Islamic societal culture that remains uncharted. Although there is a considerably great amount of studies covering the Western and global aspect. However, the region including Saudi Arabia was not covered in these studies. Furthermore, Sayed and Ali suggested that a need exists to explore this uncharted territory with comprehensive studies that will help examine the current situation, which can help Western businesses develop a better understanding of the societal culture existing in the region [15]. Also, one of their main recommendations involves conducting a study focusing on a single country, which is one of the objectives of this research. More research addressed the shortage in the existing literature. One of these researches was the one conducted by Mellahi et al.

In that research, Mellahi et al suggested that although Middle Eastern countries (including Saudi Arabia) had reached great heights in the business world recently, there are still scarce and limited knowledge of its management practices. Mellahi et al added that to this current time, little knowledge has been produced regarding the area's management practices and there is a need to expand this knowledge due to the growing importance

of the region [16]. Mellahi et al cited Godley and Shechter [17] research on organisations and their practices in support of their argument, which stated that although Middle Eastern countries carry great political and economical value around the world, they surprisingly remain detached and unapproachable. Furthermore, the research went on to discuss how most interest in the Middle East evolved around its politics and ongoing turbulence. Consequently, the majority of the literature generated about the region discussed those issues and were the main focal points [18].

Moreover, the general belief on the region assumed that since the region is in contentious disorder, therefore it is barren of any successful organisations. However, Kavoossi stated that numerous organisations that are based in the region experience successful and profitable state [19]. Mellahi et al then concluded that all of these justifications warrant the Middle East more exposure within the management literature. Another research highlighting the shortcomings in the existing literature is the research done by Ryu et al [20]. This study addressed the gaps in the literature from the angle of collectivistic cultures and the studies conducted previously. Their argument stems from the basis that the majority of studies conducted on collectivistic cultures tendencies focused on a superficial level without in-depth analysis on these collectivistic tendencies. Moreover, the majority of these studies did not take into account the significant impact of national cultures. Also, Ryu et al addressed that the majority of studies such as conducted on collectivistic cultures Hofstede [21] were in fact conducted in Western countries where individualistic culture is the prevailing culture. Ryu et al added further that these studies ignored the element of national culture, which instill most values in individuals belonging to a collectivistic culture and instead focused on relationships within organisations. Finally, Ryu et al highlighted the importance of expanding on the knowledge of the national culture element, as global economy is increasing [20]. Therefore, developing an accurate understanding of collectivistic cultures is crucial. Rokhman addressed another gap in the management literature. In his study, Rokhman discussed the work ethics practiced in Islam [22]. This study stated that even though interest has amplified regarding the topic of work ethics, most of this interest was involving Western countries such as the United States and Europe where Islamic work ethics are embraced by the minority. Therefore, these studies do not represent the true picture of Islamic work ethics. As a result, Islamic work ethics remain mostly unexplored [22].

Then, Rokhman concluded that there is a need to expand on the Islamic work ethics in the literature due to the sizable numbers of individuals who adopt these work ethics and in the same time encounter some of the misconceptions about the Islamic work ethics. For instance, Weber argued that no economy could be sustained in an Islamic environment because he believed that most of capitalism requirements are in contradiction with the Islamic teachings [23]. Rokhman countered this misconception by citing Abeng that one of the most fundamental elements of human life and faith in Islam is work [24]. Also, Rokhman cited Arslan empirical study to encounter

Weber's misconception concerning the effectiveness of Islamic work ethics [25].

Arslan conducted a study involving Turkish and British managers to measure their performance. In this study Turkish managers managed higher points than British managers even though the study was conducted within a Protestant Work Ethic context. Therefore, Rokhman considered Weber's argument regarding work in Islam as invalid and does not represent the actual situation. Thus increasing the need to explore and research the management practices in Islamic countries. Smale commented on the limited amount of literature available of HRM practices specifically for multinational corporations adopted HRM practices in foreign countries [26]. Smale cited Sparrow in support that the existing literature is currently lacking in scope and amounts. Moreover, there is a need for research linking HRM practices and knowledge of the complex elements within the culture surrounding organisations [27]. Furthermore, Smale stated that although interest has grown in HRM within multinational companies (MNC) during the past twenty years, the existing literature is being critiqued and faulted for its single-mindedness over drawing out general tendencies and overall themes without exploring the multiple layers of details underneath these themes and trends. Also, the policies adopted by organisations and the national impacts were among the missing elements that these studies overlooked [28].

## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1 Sample size**

As with with any research implementing the use of the questionnaires, a sample size needed to be determined. As this research is interested in Saudi Arabian airlines, its Saudi Aerospace Engineering Industries department to be specific, this department employs around 200 engineers along with supporting staff. However, as this research focuses on the engineering aspect of the department and its main core tasks, the population of this organisation will be focused on the engineers. Therefore, the 200 engineers will represent the population. However, SAEI department offered the cooperation of the entirety of its workforce including the 200 engineers. Also, this number of employees can be approached within the time limit of the data collection process. Therefore, the research will take advantage of surveying the entire population of engineers without settling on a sample. This step will greatly help the research by providing even more accurate outcomes for the surveying aspect of the data collection process.

### **4.2 Interviews**

#### **4.2.1 Question one:**

This segment of the interview starts with the current compensation and rewards system implemented in the organisation and the reason for installing this specific compensations system. Then, the HR managers were asked how the compensation and rewards system have evolved throughout

the years and what were the motives behind the changes if there were any changes to the existing compensation system.

#### **4.2.2 Question two:**

After that, the following question evolved around the factors that influence and have a visible impact when in the process of setting up a compensation system and the other set of factors that carry weight when setting up a rewards system. Then, HR managers were asked whether the organisation deploy a specific rewards system that is based on financial or non-financial basis or the organisation is implementing a mixture of the two.

#### **4.2.3 Question three:**

The following set of questions investigates the employees' preference and choice when it comes to rewards. The first question in this set investigates whether Saudi employees have shown any tendencies when it comes to rewards systems. Moreover, the next question concentrated on whether Saudi employees have shown a concrete preference in either financial rewards or non-financial rewards. After that, the HR managers were given the opportunity to express their personal views on two aspects.

#### **4.2.4 Question four**

After that, HR managers were asked whether they believe that the cultural background of the employees had any impact on the employees selection of the rewards systems and if that was the case, HR managers were asked how does that impact occur. As for the second aspect, HR managers were asked if they could highlight any differences they might have noticed between Saudi employees and foreign employees in terms of the preferred rewards systems.

### **4.3 Questionnaires**

#### **4.3.1 Question one:**

The last segment of the questionnaire addresses the compensation and rewards systems. The first question in this segment investigates the approach that employees prefer to be compensated with. Employees were given two options. The first option is for employees to be compensated equally, where employees who are on the same level are compensated similarly. The second option given is for employees to be compensated separately, where they are compensated on the amount of work they have accomplished and the objectives they have met. The following part asks the employees to provide their take on the compensation system they have chosen in the previous question and asks for their justification on what makes their choice more desirable than the other option.

#### **4.3.2 Question two:**

Then, the segment moves toward the rewards aspect of the compensation and rewards systems. The first question in this part is concerned with the employees' preferred rewards. Employees were given two options of rewards. The first option is financial rewards, which encompasses monetary bonuses and pay-rises. While the other option non-financial rewards, which

encompass holidays, extra days off work or perks such as parking spaces and better office space.

#### **4.3.3 Question three:**

The question after that gives the employees the opportunity to express their reasoning for choosing their preferred rewards packages and why they represent better value to them. The last part of this segment gives employees a blank space to come up with rewards they feel are better that were not included. Also, this last question aims to extract any additional information that can be used in this research to draw out any extra useful data. As a conclusion for the design of the data collection process tools (interviews and questionnaires), it should be noted that those data collection tools were kept streamlined and focused in order to draw out the best outcomes possible out of the process. Moreover, any data that will be extracted from the data collection process will be valuable to the research topic aims and objectives.

## **5. Findings and results**

### **5.1 Interviews findings**

#### **5.1.1 Question one:**

The first question of this segment in the interviewing process discussed the currently implemented compensation and rewards systems within SAEI and the bases that those systems are built upon. This first question read, "What are the bases of the compensation and rewards system currently implemented within the organisation?" the HR manager explained that the bases for the current compensation and rewards systems are based on employees' achieving satisfactory performances resulting in annual increase in Step and Grade level. Therefore, employees maintain high levels of motivation by knowing they will be rewarded for excelling performances. After that, the following question focused on whether the compensation and rewards systems have witnessed major scale changes and overhauls throughout the years. This question came in the shape of "How have the compensation and rewards systems evolved throughout the years?" the HR manager indicated that the compensation and rewards systems have indeed changed. But to say that these changes were major would be an exaggeration. However, the HR manager used the word 'incremental' to describe the changes in compensation and rewards systems over the years.

#### **5.1.2 Question two:**

Then, the HR manager was asked about the factors and elements that the HR department consider important and critical while setting up the compensation system. This question read, "What factors are relevant when setting up the compensation system?" the HR manager stated that there are three specific elements that are greatly considered to be maintained within the department. These elements to be maintained are organisation's reputation, image and desirability, which according to the HR manager perception would lead to the organisation staying competitive. The next question in this segment of the interview investigated the same aspects that

were asked in the previous question, but in terms of rewards. It was investigating the factors that were considered relevant and integral while setting up the rewards systems. This question read, "What factors are relevant when setting up the rewards system?" the HR manager reiterated that rewards and bonuses are much more correlated with the performance appraisal process. Meaning that bonuses and rewards are dependent on employees' performances. Nonetheless, employees can redeem bonuses and rewards on a quicker return basis, which can be achieved by conducting overtime work that would yield financial rewarding or time-compensating kind of rewarding. Then, the following question investigated the nature of rewards and bonuses awarded at SAEI. Whether these rewards implemented by the department are strictly financial or non-financial. This question asked, "Are rewards strictly financial or there are other non-financial rewards available?" the HR manager responded that employees have the leisure to choose the form of rewards they prefer and that the organisation offers its employees both types of rewards and bonuses.

### **5.1.3 Question three:**

After that, the interview turned its attention towards Saudi Arabian culture and its relation with rewards systems and whether it impacts Saudi employees preference to select a rewarding system rather than the other. This question came in the shape of "What are the tendencies of Saudi employees in terms of rewards? The HR manager stated that if there were a major theme to be detected among Saudi employees when it comes to choosing a preferred rewarding system, Saudi employees tend to favour a combination of both rewards systems the financial and non-financial. The previous question was tailed with a similar question investigating whether there can be a rewarding system that commanded more importance than other available rewarding systems among Saudi employees. This question read, "Do Saudi employees prefer financial or non-financial rewards?" the HR manager responded that Saudi employees do indeed have a preference of financial rewards on the long term. However, for the short term, Saudi employees mix the financial and non-financial rewards as stated in while answering the previous question.

### **5.1.4 Question four:**

After that, this segment of the interview continued its investigation regarding Saudi Arabian culture and its impact on compensation and rewards systems by enquiring whether the organisation setup of the compensation and rewards systems was affected by cultural background of the employees and if that was the case, how does that take place. This question read as follows "Does the cultural background of the employees have any impact on the selection of the compensation system to be implemented at the organisation? If so, how does that happen?" the HR manager explained that cultural backgrounds of the employees did have an impact on the setup of some aspects of the compensation and rewards systems. The most noted observation that provides an example of the effect of employees' cultural backgrounds would be the introduction of time-compensation reward. The last question of this segment of the interview

deals with whether there are any comparisons to be made between Saudi employees and foreign employees based on their preference for the compensation and rewards systems. This final question read, "In comparison, are there any differences between Saudi and foreign employees in terms of the preferred compensation and rewards systems?" the HR manager replied that no comparison could be made between Saudi employees and foreign employees when it comes to their preference with regards to compensation and rewards systems. The HR manager added that both set of employees share numerous similarities when it comes to the compensation and rewards systems implemented within the organisation.

## **5.2 Questionnaires findings**

### **5.2.1 Private sector employees**

#### **5.2.1.1 Question one:**

The first question in this segment targeted the basis which compensation systems should be based on from the point of view of the private engineers whether they think that employees should all be compensated equally based on equality basis or they believe employees should be compensated individually based on financial basis that reflects their performances. This question read, "When implementing a compensation system, do you prefer a system based on: Equality where employees are equally compensated or it should be based on equity where employees are separately compensated?" the response of the private engineers left no room for second thoughts with the majority of engineers stating that they prefer a compensation system that is based on equality where all employees are fairly compensated with 129 engineers out of the 154 representing a dominating percentage of 84%, while the remaining percentage of 16% represented by 25 engineers voting for a compensation system based on equity.

#### **5.2.1.2 Question two**

After investigating the compensation systems, the second question in this segment investigates the rewards systems. This question investigated the preferred rewards system from the point of view of the private engineers, whether they prefer a rewards system that rewards them financially i.e. bonuses or they would prefer a rewards system that rewards them in a non-financial way such as additional days for holidays, extra perks such as parking spaces or flexible working hours. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the engineers were given the permission to choose either or both types of rewards depending on their preference. This question read, "As for rewards, do you prefer: Financial rewards (Bonus) or non-financial rewards (Holiday – perks)?" the response of the private engineers to this question was as clear as the response in the first question. The greater percentage chose the financial rewards with a percentage of 76% of engineers stating that they prefer to be rewarded financially, while the remaining percentage of 24% chose the non-financially based rewards. However, as stated previously, many engineers chose a combination consisting of the financial and non-financial rewards to create their preferred rewarding systems.



### **5.2.1.3 Question three:**

The last question in this segment and questionnaire provided the engineers belonging to the private sector with the space to express their personal opinions on what rewarding systems they would like to see implemented in the organisation. This question read, "What would be your rewards of choice?" the majority of the participating engineers confessed that they would like a rewarding system that reflects recognition and appreciation for their work. Other engineers provided specific criteria in their answers by stating that being rewarded with a promotion should cover both basis of rewarding financial and non-financial. However, the majority of engineers unambiguously expressed their preference towards pay rise without the promotion mentioned previously. Another group highlighted that they would like to be rewarded with extra days off. Other group stressed that they are acceptable of any rewards systems as long as they provide financial and non-financial rewards. On the other hand, some engineers expressed their desire to be given the chance to improve by being given training opportunities.

## **5.2.2 Public sector employees**

### **5.2.2.1 Question one:**

The first question in this segment revolved around the basis of compensation systems and what would be the basis of the engineers' preferred compensation systems, whether they prefer a compensation system that is based on equality where the group is equally compensated or they think engineers should be compensated individually depending their personal efforts and work. This question read, "When implementing a compensation system, do you prefer a system based on: equality where employees are equally compensated or based on equity where employees are separately compensated?" the response from the public engineers exhibited a decisive result with the majority of public engineers favouring the compensation systems based on equality with a percentage of 72% represented by 33 engineers out of the total 46 of public engineers working at SAEI. However, the remaining 13 public engineers voted for a compensation system that is based on equity where employees are compensated on their individual work and efforts representing the remaining 28%.

### **5.2.2.2 Question two:**

The second question in this segment investigated the types of rewards that public engineers would like to be awarded with by the organisation. In this second question, public engineers were given two options in terms of rewards. The first option is to be rewarded financially for example to be rewarded with bonuses and pay rise. The second option is to be rewarded in a non-financial nature, for example extra days for holiday or to be given additional perks such as gym memberships or parking spaces. However, as stated in the exact parallel segment in the private engineers' questionnaires, the public engineers were given the freedom to choose both options or make a combination of their preferred rewards that they would like to have.

This question read, “As for rewards, do you prefer: financial rewards (Bonuses) or non-financial rewards (Holiday – Perks)?” the response of the public engineers showed an overwhelming support in favour of financial rewards with a commanding percentage of 68%. While the remaining 32% voted for a non-financial rewards system. However, it is important to mention that there were a considerable number of public engineers in support of a hybrid rewards system benefitting from both the financial and non-financial systems. The outcomes of this question greatly matches the outcomes from the private engineers’ questionnaire where the majority of the private engineers chose a rewards system based on financial rewards.

### **5.2.2.3 Question three:**

The last question in this segment and questionnaire provided the public engineers with the space to express their views on what they think would make the best rewards. This question read, “What would be your rewards of choice?” the answers from the public engineers varied greatly, as engineers expressed their own personal opinions on what would make the perfect rewards. Some of them highlighted general outlines for the perfect rewarding systems by stating that any sort of financial and moral rewards combined will be great. Others went into details mentioning specific rewards that they see as befitting rewards such as extra days off and free tickets allowance since they are working for an Airlines company. Another group came up with a reward encompassing both financial and non-financial elements by stating that promotion should be enough reward, as it could combine a pay rise and moving up the grade ladder within the organisation. Other engineers highlighted that they would like to be rewarded by being given the opportunity to do overtime and travel. A different group confessed that any types of rewards are welcome, as long as they are showing recognition and appreciation to their work and efforts.

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# The Relation Between Saudi Arabian Societal Culture and the Public Sector Human Resource Practices: The Specific Case of Saudia Airlines

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**ABSTRACT—** *This paper aims to investigate the impact of Saudi Arabia's culture on HRM practices within the public sector. This paper addresses a major gap in the literature highlighted by the majority of researchers involved in the area of HRM practices and culture. Those researchers bemoaned the lack of studies involving societal culture and HRM practices, which is the focus of this paper. A single-case study approach was adopted. This case incorporated a mixed-methods approach targeting HR managers and engineers working at Saudi Arabian Airlines. The HR managers were involved in semi-structured interviews, while engineers participated through answering questionnaires. Findings were analysed through the use of several techniques including triangulation, making constant comparisons, detecting themes and sensing plausibility. In general, results suggest strong connections to be found between Saudi Arabia's societal culture and HRM practices implemented in Saudi Arabia Airlines. However, some HRM practices did not appear to be influenced by societal culture.*

**Keywords—** Human Resource Management; Societal Culture; Saudi Arabia; Public Sector.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

A societal culture of a country engulfs sets of accepted behaviours and shared values. These common values and behaviours are bound to affect the human resource management practices (HRM) through the individuals who share those values [45]. Throughout the literature there have been numerous calls to conduct empirical studies connecting societal cultures with HRM practices [7][43]. Several of these calls signaled the Middle Eastern region due to the lack of investigations involving its culture and focus being mostly directed towards its economic prowess. However, the underlying variables within societal cultures of this particular region remain unknown and vague at best [33]. The importance of this concern, increased with several researchers basing the effectiveness of HRM practices on the degree of their alignment with the shared values of the local culture [27]. Moreover, other researchers argued the impact of incorporating the societal culture could affect an entire organisation success [9]. Thus, this paper set out to investigate the variables within Saudi Arabia's societal culture that might influence any noted changes to organisations' HRM practices. Furthermore, this paper aims to explore the

extent to which the values of Saudi Arabian's societal culture altered HRM practices and made them unique to this particular societal culture.

## **2. Impact of societal culture on HRM practices**

The pursuit of establishing effective HRM practices by several multinational companies (MNC) at their offices in the Middle East triggered the interest in exploring societal cultures [3]. This interest was further highlighted as MNC's attempted to expand into regions where there are viable opportunities. However, [25] stated that HRM practices couldn't always be transferred successfully into another region. Thus, [19] led the call for effective global practices to be developed. The development of effective global HRM practices requires deep understanding of all aspects within HRM processes involved [38]. All of this attention on the MNC's behalves indicates the significance of effective HRM practices and the role of societal culture in identifying the ideal HRM practices for organisations within a particular region.

This aspect highlights the importance of societal culture greatly. [39] Stated that, in order for an organisation to have effective HRM practices, it needs to incorporate the societal culture values within some of those practices. They also stressed that there are some HRM practices that can be transferred successfully without the need to incorporate societal culture. Moreover, certain HRM practices have to be aligned with the societal culture in order for them to work effectively [46]. [4] Lent support to both statements by suggesting that organisations can achieve success when engaging the societal culture [4]. Bojrkman and Budhwar stated that this success could be a product of three main elements. First element, organisations would develop an accurate understanding of the shared values and norms of societal culture. Second element, local employees would develop feelings of loyalty and trust toward the organisation, as it incorporates local values. Finally, organisations would obtain the support of the local society, as they implement the shared values and behaviours of the local societal culture. Further statement within the literature crystalizes the importance of including societal culture within the mix of HRM practicing and its impact on an organisation's success. Other researchers went on to highlight the possibility of using societal culture as a competitive advantage. [24] Stated that organisations could develop a competitive advantage in the way of utilising the societal culture values within their HRM practices.

In an effort to explain the connection between societal culture values and HRM practices, [45] explained that employees come to work along with their values, behaviours and norms. Those values are determined by the common values shared within their local society. Tayeb added that those values and behaviours determine the employees' conduct in the workplace and the manner in which they execute their tasks for the organisation. [34] Supported this view by explaining that employees utilise societal culture shared values as a guidebook on how an individual would interact within an organisation. Thus, it is of paramount importance to understand societal culture values and include them within HRM practices context [1]. Further support on the significance of involving societal culture values in the HRM practices context was found in a study conducted by [52]. In this study, organisations that import their practices and policies from a foreign model that do not incorporate the local values were considered a form of "Corporate Colonization". Moreover, the likely reaction from the employees will show signs of criticism and discontentment. On the other hand, in the case of incorporating societal culture values, [14] Highlighted many positive outcomes including increased employees contentment, improved productivity levels and overall performance. The relation between societal culture and HRM practices was viewed within a different scenario. This scenario was based on the case of developing countries; where societal culture values represent greater importance to them than individuals within already developed countries would normally feel about their societal culture values. On that basis, [53] argued that the right balance must be struck between societal culture values and organisations' values based in developing countries.

## **3. Collectivism-Individualism Dimension in HRM Practices**

This dimension has been introduced to act as a parameter defining the boundaries of this research. When exploring the impact of societal culture on behaviour, it is important to examine cultural dimensions such as collectivism and individualism. These dimensions are traditionally used in studies where eastern and western societies are compared. [34] Defined this dimension as the way people associate themselves with the cluster they are considered to be part of. This dimension facilitates an easy understanding of values, ethics and behaviours of individuals around the world [36]. Moreover, this dimension detects the interaction between individuals within a particular culture through scrutinising the core values and ethics of this culture [49]. Many studies have identified Saudi Arabia to be a collectivistic culture including [26]. Collectivistic culture can be defined as the culture where individuals aim to preserve the spirit of the collective and achieve their targets as a group rather than individually [26]. Thus, this paper will look into how each HRM practice could be influenced by collectivistic values based on the existing literature. Then, compare them to the findings of the data collection process.

### ***3.1 Recruitment Sources***

Recruitment sources practice is one of the main HRM practices targeted in this paper. [32] Argue that collectivistic individuals are affected by their shared values. These shared collectivistic values encourage them to look for organisations employing recruitment sources with a personal approach. Moreover, collectivistic individuals have the tendency to steer clear from impersonal sources such as online recruitment and similar distant sources. [40] Explain this behaviour by claiming that shared values of societal culture dictate individuals' preferred recruitment sources and the sources utilised by organisations. [5] Provided an example in the situation of collectivistic culture where it is very unlikely that an organisation would look to fill a position with an outsider, especially when internal candidates are to be found [5]. This unlikelihood is a result of the already existing environment of close-knit group of employees and team spirit, which would represent a struggle for newcomers. As a result, outside hire is not amongst the preferred recruitment sources within collectivistic cultures. [48] Explained the key difference between collectivistic and individualistic cultures in relation to recruitment sources. Wasti identified the bases used for recruitment in each culture. In collectivistic cultures, the focus would be on loyalty, reliability and compatibility with current employees, while skills and abilities might not hold greater value as thought. This was proved through [54] study conducted in several small firms in Turkey, where the majority of employees were hired due to their connections to the managers and owners of these firms rather than their abilities. On the other hand, in individualistic cultures, the majority of focus is dedicated towards criteria such as competence, capabilities and required skills for the vacancy. Thus, this explanation highlights the key differences between collectivistic and individualistic cultures in the aspect of recruitment sources.

### ***3.2 Job Desirability***

Job desirability is another main HRM practice targeted in this paper. This practice is concerned with what makes a vacancy within an organisation appealing to individuals [10]. [29] Stressed that the desirability of a certain job depends on the extent in which it allows the individual to exercise their values. Furthermore, [35] explained that collectivistic individuals tend to find vacancies promoting maximising personal gains off-putting and undesired, while jobs promoting group spirit and teamwork appear to appease them. The reason for this dislike for individual-focused incentives on collectivistic individuals behalf is caused by the selfish and self-centred nature of those incentives. These bases are seen as threats towards the group's harmony and spirit. Thus, those bases profoundly clash with fundamental values shared within collectivistic cultures. Moreover, this claim was supported by [28] who stated that collectivistic individuals do not view individual-based incentives in a positive light. Also, collectivistic individuals would rather feel attracted to group-based incentives. [8] Provided a general rule when it comes to job desirability, this rule indicates that a position becomes more desirable the more it reflects the values shared

by the candidates applying for the position [8]. Further support to this claim was provided by [55]. They state that individual-based incentives only appeal to candidates with individualistic shared values and leave collectivistic candidates looking for other options matching their collectivistic values.

### ***3.3 Compensation and Rewards***

[18] Highlighted that based on an individual's shared values (collectivistic or individualistic) there will be a preferred compensation and rewards system of choice. This means that societal culture values have to be included in the process of setting up compensation and rewards systems. [28] Stated that societal culture values impact compensation and rewards systems on two levels. First level is the setting up process of these systems and the second level is the degree of effectiveness of those compensation and rewards systems. [6] Provided specific explanation of the collectivistic culture desired compensation and rewards system. They stated that, in the spirit of promoting unity and harmony among the group of collectivistic employees, equality-based compensation and rewards systems are most likely to be adopted within the organisation [6]. [11] Supported this view by stating that collectivistic individuals are prepared to sacrifice their personal gains for the sake of the group. Further support was lent based on a study conducted by [20], which recognised; in general, eastern societies seem to always implement practices and policies that enhance the group spirit. While western societies would always opt for the individualistic choice to match the characteristics of their individuals. Furthermore, in the case of implementing a collectivistic compensation and rewards systems within an organisation where employees are of individualistic nature, those employees would view those systems as unjust and unfitting [15]. In a later piece of research, [16] shed further light on this matter by explaining that individualistic employees presume that compensation and rewards systems should be based on the ratio between output and input given by the employees. Moreover, this should be the basis used in determining the structure of those systems. Thus, equality among employees without the consideration of employees' output would represent substantial case of unfairness. However, those systems would provide all of the collectivistic employees' requirements, as they increase solidarity, preserve the harmony and strengthen the bond [12]. As a result, collectivistic employees will embrace those systems and ensure their effectiveness, which more likely will not be the case among individualistic employees. Also, this implementation of the wrong systems will most likely create a nature of dissatisfaction and reflect negatively on productivity.

### ***3.4 Performance Appraisal***

[21] Emphasised the importance of societal culture values in determining the success of performance appraisal systems. They stated that individuals' shared values could determine whether they accept certain systems or not. Stone et al. (2007) looked at this connection between societal culture and performance appraisal systems from a different angle. They reached the conclusion that the degree of coordination between the values shared within societal culture and those systems can determine how effective those systems would be. This implies that the more societal culture values are included in the process of performance appraisal, the better the chances these systems have to succeed and be considered effective. Moreover, those shared values determine how individuals react to those appraisal systems. [41] Study has established that employees from both types of societal cultures have their own unique way to respond to the techniques adopted for the appraisal process. Thus, it is of paramount importance to implement the suitable performance appraisal systems for each societal culture to provide those systems with the opportunity to succeed. In addition, [41] highlighted four aspects in which societal culture connects with performance appraisal. These aspects included the effectiveness of those appraisal systems, the measures and practices used to evaluate employees, delivering feedback to employees after the evaluation process and the perceptions of employees of these appraisal systems. Each of those four aspects are treated differently within the two types of societal cultures. Thus, societal culture values should be considered as cornerstone in the setup of these performance appraisal systems. [18] Described the performance appraisal systems preferred by collectivistic individuals. Erez stressed that those systems



need to be based on the collective performance and follow an informal nature, as objective approaches might endanger and the sense of unity among the employees and induce a competitive atmosphere within the organisation. This would not bode well with the shared values of collectivistic cultures, as it would oppose the core values known to be shared among collectivistic individuals. As a result, performance appraisal systems need to be devoid of any achievement-driven or accomplishments-based criteria in order to maintain the collectivistic employees content and satisfied and ensure the success of the appraisal systems installed. On the other hand, [2] described these objective and formal approaches as the most preferred techniques by individualistic employees [2]. The reason for that being that those approaches would judge those individualistic employees on their personal performances and yield them any possible rewards on a personal level. Thus, fulfilling their desire of achieving personal gains and autonomous excellence.

### ***3.5 Training Programmes***

[23] Illuminated that every organisation is carrying out training programmes in light of the expansion of their operations, thus directing attention towards societal cultures. [1] Added that societal culture values of individuals determine the type of training programmes to be initiated in order to create an effective programme [1]. This can be better explained as each individual has an already formed understanding of how to conduct himself or herself within the organisation's environment based on the shared values of their societal culture. As a result organisations are required to initiate training programmes in order to alter individuals' organisational behaviour to match with that of the organisations themselves [42]. Furthermore, the cultural element is to be an essential part of setting up training programmes [37]. Therefore, it is of paramount importance for societal culture values to be considered in the setup of training programmes in order to ensure their success. [31] Supported this view while pointing out that the effectiveness of training programmes can be crucially dependant on the degree of incorporating the societal culture values within those programmes. Further evidence on this significance was provided by [17] who claimed that a training programme success could be predicted through the level in which societal culture values are integrated within those programmes.

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative instruments into a single research instrument [44]. The use of this approach is prompted by the limitations found when utilizing each of these two approaches alone. [13] Stated that qualitative approach is beneficial for producing in depth analysis, while quantitative is best for conducting large-scale studies. However, each approach has its own deficiencies where in the case of qualitative approach, the ability to generalize any findings is limited, as the number of participants is small. As for the quantitative approach, the opportunity to produce in depth analysis is lost. Thus, certain studies require both approaches to complement each other and enhance their findings. Furthermore, [30] cited that their study on health issues would have been impossible to conduct had they stuck to the quantitative approach only.

Since this study is investigating Saudi Arabian societal culture phenomenon, a single-case study approach was adopted. The use of a case study approach provides the perfect environment to explore an unknown phenomenon [51]. Furthermore, the utilisation of a case study approach provides much needed practical knowledge rather than theoretical knowledge [22]. Also, conducting a case study delivers an awareness of elements surrounding the phenomenon in question. As for the decision to conduct a single case rather than multiple cases, [47] termed the single case approach as the most suitable for cases where a phenomenon has been mysterious and intended to be explored. Thus, this single case study represents a befitting assistance to this study and its aims. The organisation selected as the single case study is the Saudi Aerospace Engineering Industries (SAEI) department part of Saudi Arabian Airlines. This particular department is responsible for procurements of spare parts and tools. Also, it is responsible for aircrafts inspection and maintenance. This department has its own HRM department and its own

practices. It employs around 200 engineers along with supporting staff in clerical and administrative roles.

#### ***4.1 Qualitative Approach***

The qualitative aspect of the mixed-methods methodology adopted for this study involved conducting semi-structured interviews with HR managers responsible for the targeted five HRM practices. Choosing the semi-structured approach, rather than the structured or non-structured approaches, was based on that semi-structured interviews allow the study to address any issues that might surface during the interviews [50]. Moreover, Wright added that semi-structured interviews provide the opportunity for accurate depiction of the context while including personal insight into the process. These semi-structured interviews consisted of five main themes based on the five-targeted HRM practices. Each theme involved the participation of HR managers with responsibilities related to that practice. The five main themes of the interviews were as follow

##### ***4.1.1 Recruitment Sources***

This theme was based on the recruitment sources that SAEI employ. The question in this theme varied between the currently used sources by the department and changes that might have occurred to the process throughout the years. Moreover, the interview looks into whether a vacancy exercises any influence on sources to be used. Also, the interview examines any tendencies shown by Saudi candidates, if any were to be found. Finally, HR managers were asked to provide their view on the most efficient and popular recruitment source used by SAEI.

##### ***4.1.2 Job Desirability***

This theme targeted the aspects that increase the appeal of a vacancy from the HR managers' point of views. Also, the theme investigates the efforts spent by the department to increase the desirability of a vacancy. Moreover, HR managers were asked about their personal input regarding this issue and whether they had made amendments based on these experiences. Finally, HR managers were asked if there were any notes to be made about Saudi candidates in terms of job desirability.

##### ***4.1.3 Compensation and Rewards***

Within this theme, the line of questioning involved the current compensation and rewards system installed within the department. Another question was concerned with the evolution of the system throughout the years. Also, HR managers were asked to specify the rewards system details in order to judge the impact of societal culture. Furthermore, other questions investigated the preference of Saudi employees when it comes to choosing rewards. Finally, HR managers were asked to provide their insight on this particular theme.

##### ***4.1.4 Performance Appraisal***

This theme concentrated on the performance appraisal procedure followed within SAEI department. The questions ranged from the origins of the currently adopted model to development of the procedure over the years. Moreover, other questions delved further into the basis of the evaluation process and how feedback is conveyed to employees. Finally, HR managers were asked if there was any connection between societal culture and performance appraisal systems.

##### ***4.1.5 Training Programmes***

Finally, the research examined the relation between Saudi societal culture and the nature of training programmes. HR managers were asked to provide their insight regarding initiating programmes and whether societal culture factors in this process. In addition, there question investigating how cultural values of trainees affect training programmes.

#### ***4.2 Quantitative Approach***

The quantitative aspect of the mixed-methods approach involves the distribution of questionnaires among the public engineers working at SAEI. The questionnaires were comprised of 4 main themes. The same as the five main HRM practices minus the training programme theme, as it best suited to be directed towards the HR managers. The number of engineers working at SAEI is 200. However this number includes both public and private engineers, therefore, this study will focus on the public engineers only. The total number of public engineers

is 46 out the 200 in total. Upon meetings with the hierarchy at SAEI, permissions were given to include the entirety of the public engineers in the questionnaires. As a result there was no need to determine a sample size. The four main themes in the questionnaires were as follow.

#### **4.2.1 Recruitment sources**

This theme investigated the public engineers on three levels. First question examined the preferred nature of recruitment sources on the bases of engineering preferring personal sources or impersonal sources. Secondly, engineers were asked to justify their preference and why they would choose those recruitment sources. Finally, engineers were questioned about the most efficient recruitment sources they would go for regardless of their preference.

#### **4.2.2 Job Desirability**

With regards to job desirability, engineers were asked to name the critical elements, which they look for when they are job hunting. This question focused on the aspects that public engineers consider to be attractive in a vacancy. Lastly, engineers were asked if they would consider a job desirable, if they had the opportunity to accomplish tasks as individuals or working within a team.

#### **4.2.3 Compensation and Rewards**

The questions in this theme targeted the engineers' preferences when it comes to the basis of rewards and compensation. The first question queried about the preferred nature of compensation. Whether they would want to be compensated equally or individually based on performances. Secondly, engineers were asked to choose their preferred rewards between two choices financial rewards or non-financial rewards. Then, engineers were asked to submit their justification for their choice. The final question asked the engineers to write down their ideal rewards that they would consider to be the perfect reward.

#### **4.2.4 Performance Appraisal**

This theme focused on two main questions. The first one explored the basis on which the engineers prefer to be appraised on. Whether appraised on achievement and targets or appraised on overall performances. The second question investigated the manner in which engineers prefer to be appraised. They were provided with two situations, appraised individually or be appraised within a group.

## **5. RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

### **5.1 Interviews**

#### **5.1.1 Recruitment Sources**

The findings of this particular theme represented contrasting image to the theories found in the existing literature. This contrast can be noted as the HR managers cited online direct application as the current most efficient recruitment source used by the department. HR managers mentioned several reasons including quicker processing, building extensive database of candidates and less handling of paper. As for the vacancy dictating recruitment sources, HR managers agreed that some position might require utilising a headhunting approach for hiring. Especially, if the desired candidate is well known. However, in normal cases, regular approach is adopted. On the subject of Saudi societal culture and recruitment sources, HR managers believe there is a strong relation between the two. Prime example is the slow response from Saudi applicants to the e-business solutions when they were first introduced. However, they are now considered the most preferred sources.

#### **5.1.2 Job Desirability**

Within this particular theme, HR managers have shown that the department relied on previous experiences in efforts to increase desirability of any future vacancies. Those incentives offered are based on the applicants' preferences themselves. HR managers namely mentioned three particular aspects free tickets allowance, competitive salaries and career security. HR managers implied flexibility in terms of incentives offered to candidates depending on their preferences. As

for the job desirability from the point of accomplishing tasks, HR managers stressed that SAEI holds a firm stance on promoting teamwork that concurs with the mentality of Saudi employees and the nature of the work carried out at SAEI.

### ***5.1.3 Compensation and Rewards***

This theme started with currently utilised compensation system at SAEI. HR managers explained that SAEI implements a compensation system based on performance, behaviour and conduct criteria. This system acts as a motivational tool to inspire employees performances and behaviour in the workplace knowing that they are going to be rewarded for their shining executions. As for the rewards system, HR managers indicated that there is indeed a strong correlation between Saudi Arabian societal culture and rewards systems through the introduction of “Compensatory-Time” reward. This particular reward was introduced to provide for the much desired rewards combining financial plus holiday into a single reward package. Also, this partly answers the last question concerning Saudis preferred reward. HR managers explained that Saudis like to combine both financial and non-financial rewards to form their preferred choice of rewards. However, over the long term, Saudis would choose the financial rewards.

### ***5.1.4 Performance Appraisal***

HR managers stated that the current appraisal system is the same across Saudi Arabian Airlines with some modifications to supplement the department’s needs. However, there are no major changes to be noticed, as this system is evaluated every three years. As for the criteria of performance evaluation, HR managers stated that they count various elements including performance, behaviour, potential development and discipline. With regards to communicating feedback, HR managers highlighted the use of E-mail as the adopted technique. They justified it due to E-mail being quick and efficient. This contradicts the notion found in the existing literature stating that collectivistic cultures tend to adopt personal approach with performance appraisal and conveying feedback. Finally, HR managers denied any connection between Saudi Arabian societal culture and performance appraisal system. While the only factors affecting performance appraisal systems are the departments’ needs. Otherwise, the performance appraisal system is identical across Saudi Arabian Airlines.

### ***5.1.5 Training Programmes***

HR managers highly stressed the impact of Saudi Arabia’s societal culture on training within SAEI. This is consistent with the literature [1][38] that shows the strong link between societal culture and training programmes. One of the examples is represented through the initiation of English language training. This programme reflects the lack of linguistic skills within Saudi culture, which make this programme one of the essential programmes within any organisation. Furthermore, HR managers addressed the fact that Saudi Arabia considers Arabic language as the native tongue, thus forcing almost all companies within the country to initiate linguistic skills training programmes to tackle this issue.

## ***5.2 Questionnaires***

### ***5.2.1 Recruitment Sources***

As this theme concentrated on three aspects, the results of those three aspects were as follow. The results of the first aspect concerning the nature of the approach were 83 per cent of the employees chose recruitment sources of a personal nature over the impersonal sources, which only accumulated 17 per cent of the engineers working at SAEI. This aspect showed great alignment with theories proposed in the existing literature indicating that collectivistic cultures would always prefer recruitment sources of personal nature rather than impersonal sources. As for the follow up question asking the engineers to justify their choices, the majority of engineers implied that personal sources provide them with comfort and ease of dealing during the recruiting procedure. Moreover, they would not feel put-off the vacancy by any distant or detached behaviour on the recruiters’ behalves. The third aspect concerned with the first sources the engineers would consider when they are on the hunt for a new position resulted in a great contrast with the existing literature. This contrast was caused by the majority of engineers choosing direct online application as their primary recruitment source with 37 per cent of the votes. This contrasts with the existing literature in the fact that it had been suggested that collectivistic individuals would always avoid sources which are impersonal and do not involve personal contact. However, the second most preferred source was matching with the existing literature

represented by friends and family recommendations. This source scored 25 per cent of the votes. The third preferred choice contrasted the views shared in the literature, which was job ads with a percentage of 15 per cent.

### ***5.2.2 Job Desirability***

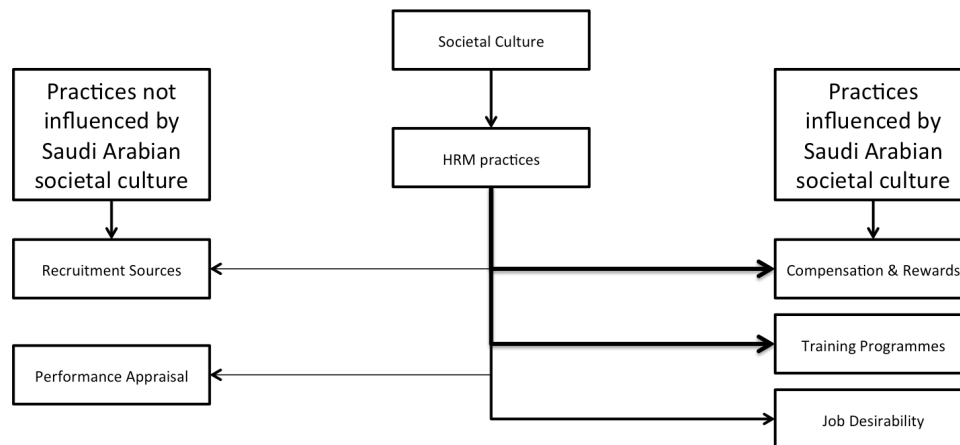
This theme of the questionnaires targeted two main elements. The first element asked the engineers about the aspects that they would consider as important while looking for their next job. The outcome within this element maintained opposing views to those of the literature with the three most considered aspects not matching any of the theories proposed by the literature. Compensation was considered as the most important aspect with 29 per cent of the votes, while the title of the job came in second with 24 per cent. Thirdly, 16 per cent of the engineers voted for working for certain employers as their most important criteria. The surprise in these results appeared in culture match scoring the lowest percentage among the engineers. Although it was touted to be among the frontrunners by the existing literature to be one of the important aspects. The second element focused on the nature of accomplishing tasks for the organisation in the sense that which approach would appeal to the engineers. The outcome conflicted with the existing literature again with 52 per cent expressing their preference to accomplish their tasks individually, while 48 per cent elected to be working within a team. Although the difference is not substantial, it still represents a clash with the literature, which proposed that collectivistic individuals would always be attracted to positions where they get to work within groups.

### ***5.2.3 Compensation and Rewards***

The compensation and rewards theme centered around three aspects in the questionnaires. The first aspect questioned the engineers' preference on the basis of the compensation system. The outcome of this aspect matched the views proposed in the literature where the majority of engineers, represented by 72 per cent chose equality as the preferred basis for the compensation system. On the other hand remaining 28 per cent chose equity to be the preferred basis. Nevertheless, this showed great alignment between the existing literature and the findings of the questionnaires in this theme. The second aspect moved towards the preferred nature of the rewards systems and whether the engineers preferred either financial or non-financial rewards. The outcome of this aspect greatly differed from the views shared within the literature with 68 per cent of the engineers choosing financial rewards as their preferred type of rewards, while 32 per cent opted for the non-financial rewards. However, the final aspect showed a case of compromise between the literature and the findings of this questionnaire. When the engineers were asked to come up with their ideal rewards, the majority of the engineers managed to suggest the same choice of rewards, which involved a combination of financial and non-financial rewards. This suggests that engineers do not view financial rewards as the unsurpassed type, but a combination with non-financial rewards would construct their ultimate rewards.

### ***5.2.4 Performance Appraisal***

Two main elements were targeted within the performance appraisal theme. The first element questioned the engineers on the preferred basis that they would like to be appraised. Whether they prefer to be appraised based on achievements and accomplishments or they would like to be appraised on overall performance without any focus on specific targets or goals. The outcomes conjured a glaring contrast with the existing literature with 72 per cent of the engineers electing an appraisal system based on achievements and targets, while the remaining 28 per cent chose an overall basis for their preferred appraisal approach. This contrast greatly with what had been proposed by the literature in the fact that it was strongly suggested throughout the literature that collectivistic cultures tend to choose informal appraisal systems with an informal vibe. The great contrast between the literature and the findings did not stop with the first question but extend into the second element investigating the manner in which engineers prefer to be appraised. With similar percentage of 76 per cent, the engineers at SAEI expressed their preference for their performances to be appraised individually, while 24 per cent opted for a group appraisal approach. These findings explicitly demonstrate great difference between the existing literature and the reality at SAEI.



**Figure 1:** Relation between societal culture and HRM practices

All in all, it can be said that there is a strong connection between Saudi Arabian societal culture and HRM practices in the public sector based on the findings of the data collection process involving SAEI (Figure.1). However, the strength of this connection fluctuated between one HRM practice and the other. Based on the findings, it can be noted that Saudi Arabian societal culture impacts compensation and rewards, job desirability and training programmes. On the other hand, recruitment sources and performance appraisal systems were not under great deal of influence. However, that does not conclude that the existing literature did not provide accurate findings about the regions. But there are many factors at play that could be causing this contrast between this study's findings and the existing literature. One of those factors is the influx of great foreign workforce into the country hired to execute the numerous infrastructure projects started by the government. This new addition to Saudi Arabia's social fabric brought in new behaviours and values. Another factor involves the initiation of scholarships programmes by the government, which aimed to send Saudi nationals abroad for education, which may have introduced Saudis to new behaviours and values that were brought back into the country. Final factor involves the introduction of new technologies such as the Internet and social media, which revolutionized the mentality of Saudis and how they conduct their businesses.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the agreement between the findings of this study and the existing literature varied greatly. Some HRM themes concurred with theories found in the literature, while other themes proved the opposite. However, this difference between the findings of the case study and literature could be the product of the rapid changes developing in Saudi Arabia over the years. One of these major developments was the introduction of the Internet, which propelled online direct recruitment to the prime of recruitment sources. This revelation was proved by the views of SAEI hierarchy and the public engineers. Moreover, several studies used in the literature dates back to the 1980's where Saudi Arabia's societal culture was not as developed as in the modern time. Thus, the existing literature was dealing with different sets of variables.

As a result to all of these advancements and progress in Saudi Arabia, the theories presented in the existing literature contrasting to the findings of this study could be seen and viewed as skewed and inaccurate. However, this does not mean that they were not accurate and reflective of the times those studies were conducted. Finally, several theoretical and practical contributions can be illuminated in this study. These contributions are;

### 6.1 Theoretical Contributions

- The findings of this study have contributed that societal culture does impact HRM practices. Nevertheless, this societal culture impact does not carry the same influence across the five HRM practices investigated in this study. There were some practices that were greatly affected by societal culture such as training programmes, job desirability and compensation and rewards. While the other practices did not show any sign of being under societal culture influence such as performance appraisal systems and recruitment sources.

- This study has utilised a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative research instruments into a single research. This particular use aimed to take advantage of the benefits of each approach to create a rich database of information about a relatively unknown region.

- This study addresses a well-documented gap in the existing literature concerned with the link between societal culture and HRM. This gap has been highlighted by the majority of researchers involved in this area of research. Moreover, it has been identified as an area in need of further studies and research.

### **6.2 Practical Contributions**

- Future studies interested in the link between societal culture and HRM practices within the region can incorporate the framework developed in this study. Furthermore, the same framework can be utilised in order to conduct comparisons Saudi Arabian organisations or similar international organisations.

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List and number all bibliographical references in 10-point Times New Roman, single-spaced, at the end of your paper. For example, [1] is for a journal paper, [2] is for a book and [3] is for a conference (symposium) paper.

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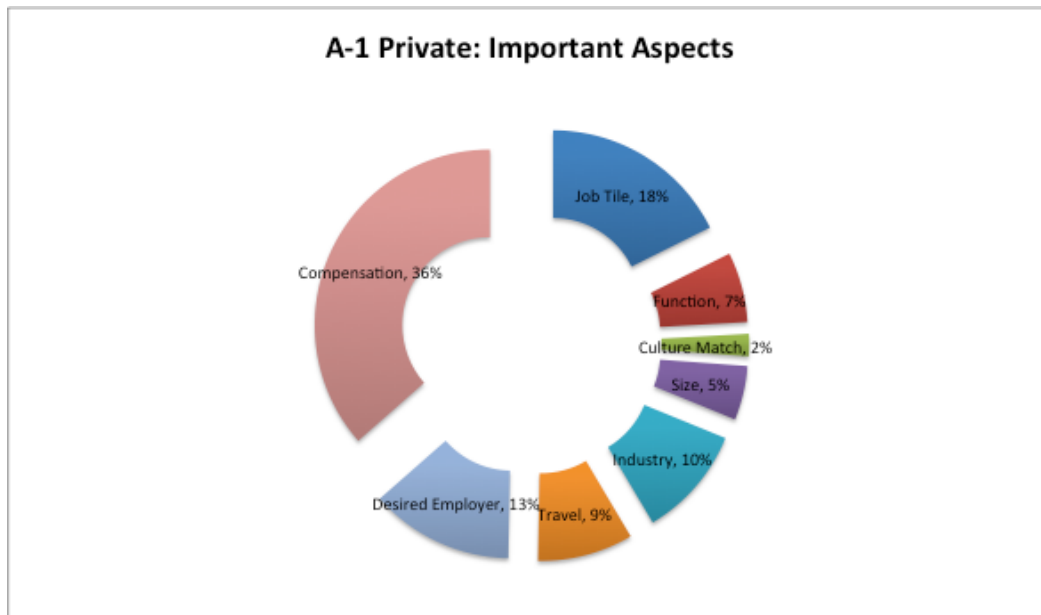
# Appendix II: Questionnaires

**Questionnaires' Breakdown:**

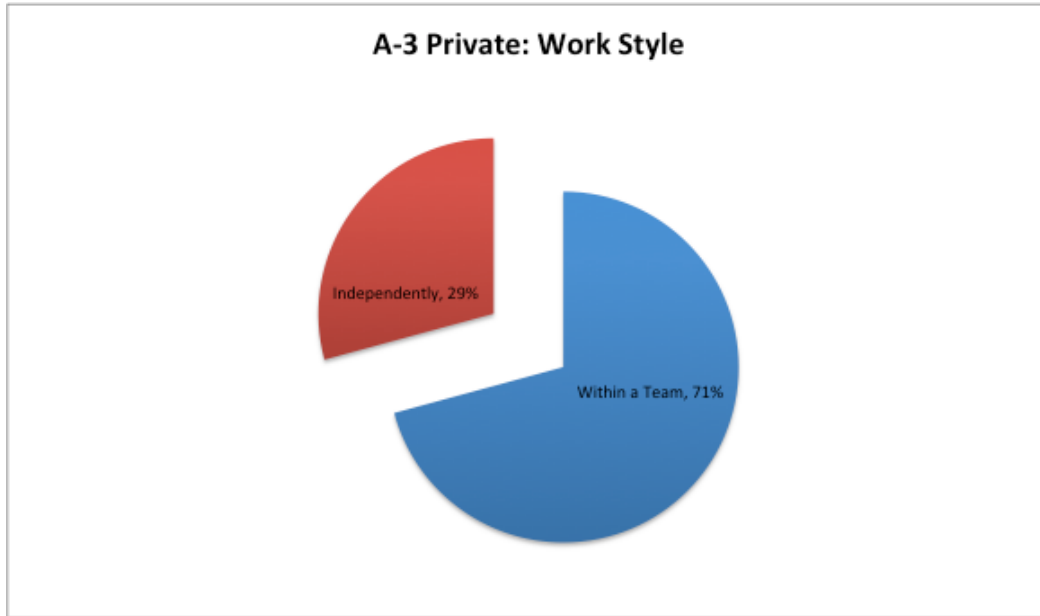
**1. Private Sector:**

**1.1 Job Desirability:**

<b>A. Job Desirability</b>	
<b>Q1. Important Aspects</b>	
<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Total No.</b>
Job Title	60
Function	22
Culture Match	7
Size	17
Industry	35
Travel	30
Desired Employer	45
Compensation	124
	<b>340</b>

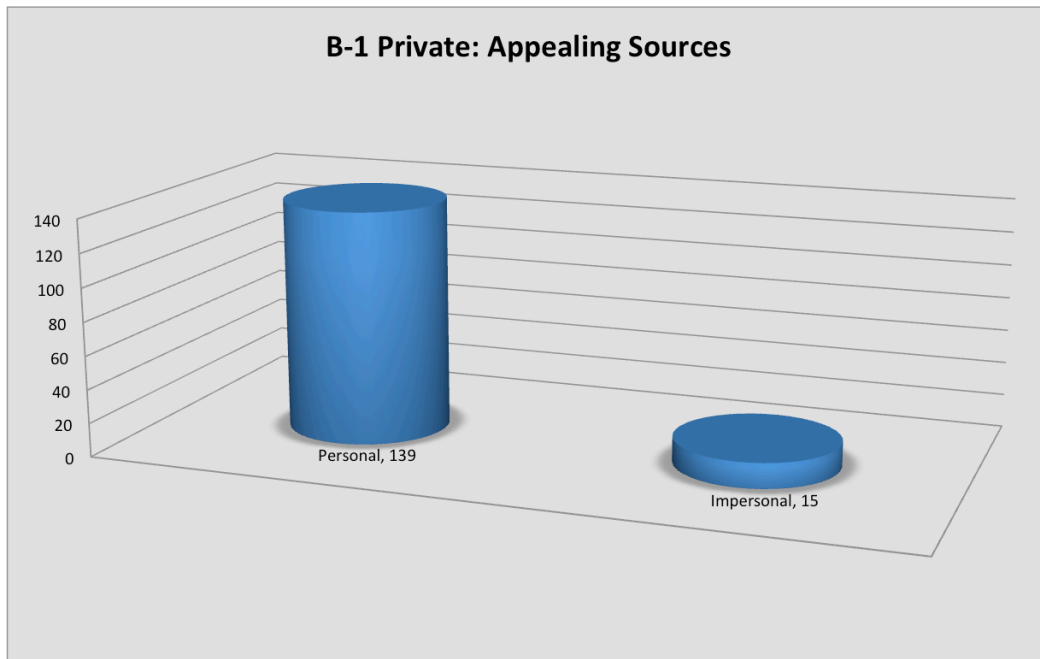


<b>Q3. Work Style</b>	
Within a Team	109
Independently	45

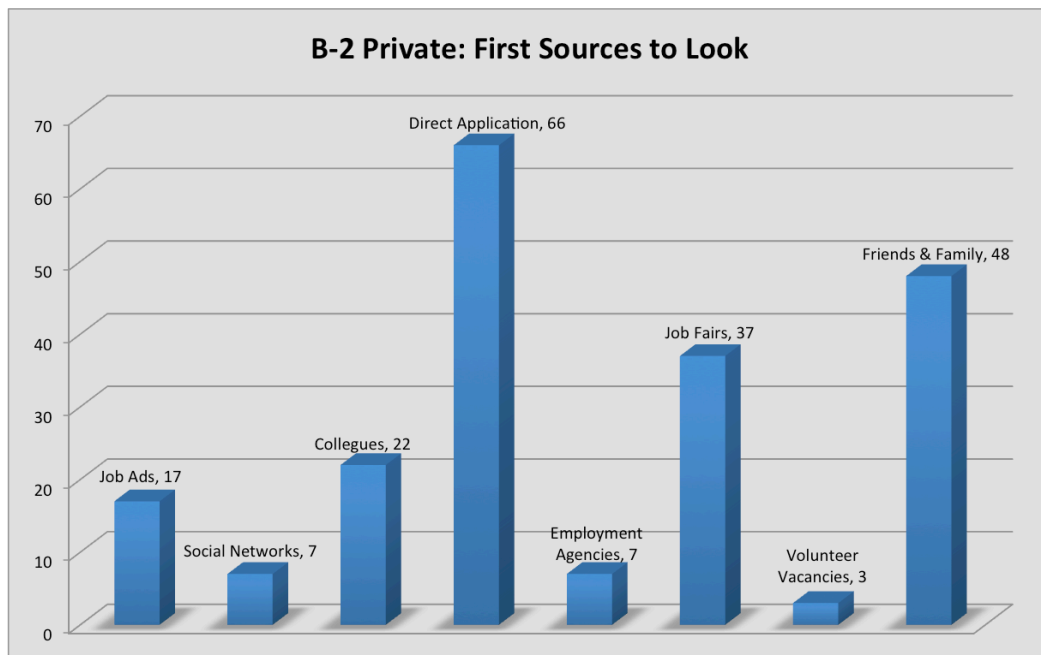


### 1.2 Recruitment Sources:

B. Recruitment Sources		
Q1. More Appealing Sources		
A.	Personal	139
B.	Impersonal	15

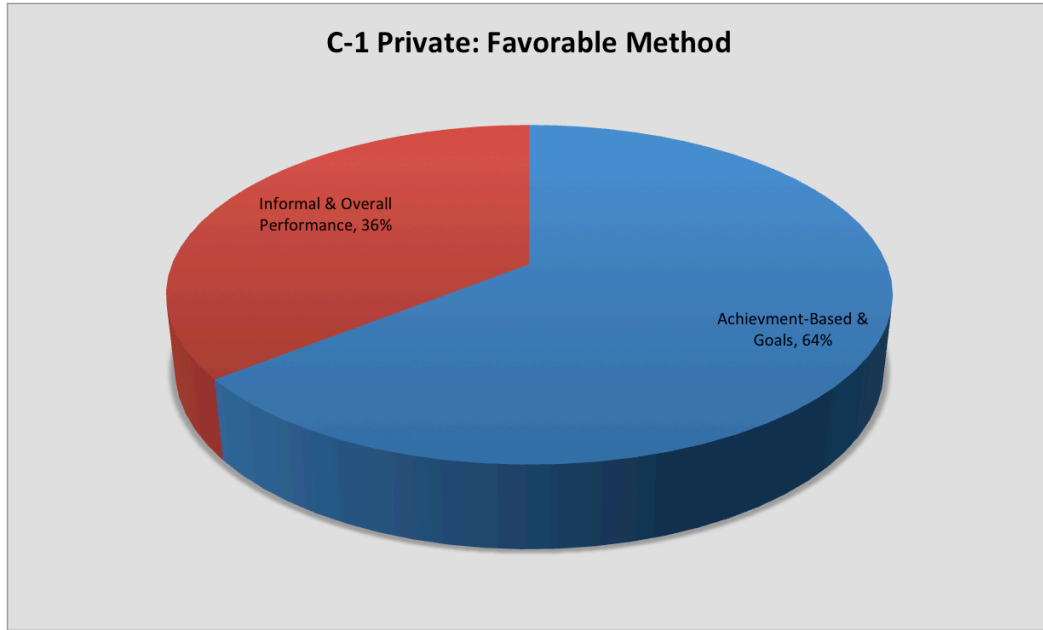


Q2. First sources to look for	
Source	Total No.
Job ads	17
Social Networks	7
Colleagues	22
Direct Application	66
Employment Agencies	7
Job Fairs	37
Volunteer Vacancies	3
Friends & Family	48
	<b>207</b>



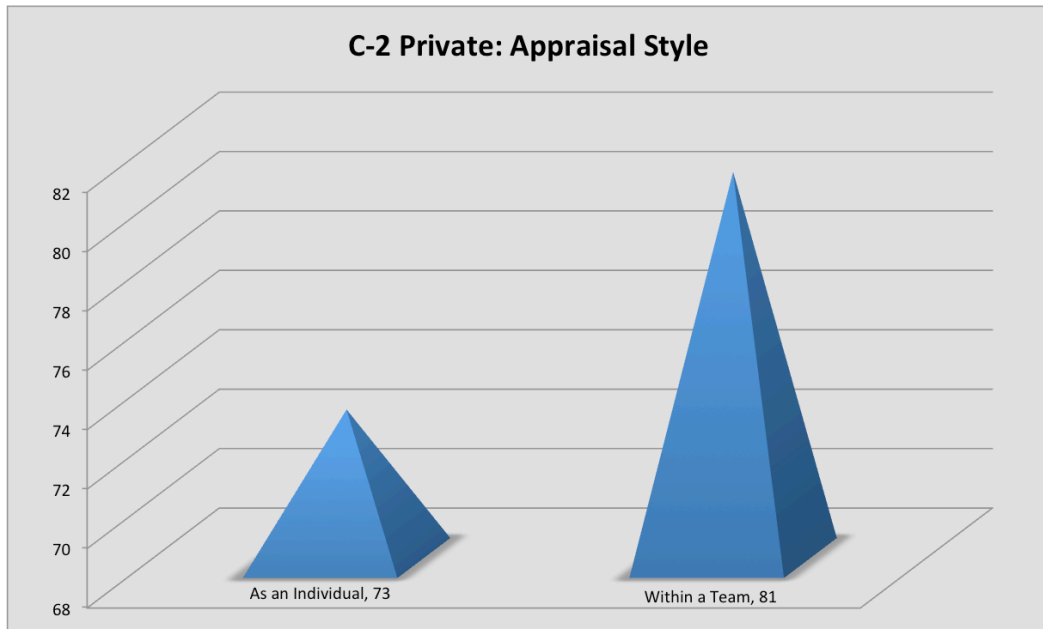
**1.3 Performance Appraisal:**

C. Performance Appraisal		
Q1. Favorable Method		
<b>A.</b>	Acheivement-Based & Goals	99
<b>B.</b>	Informal & Overall Performance	55



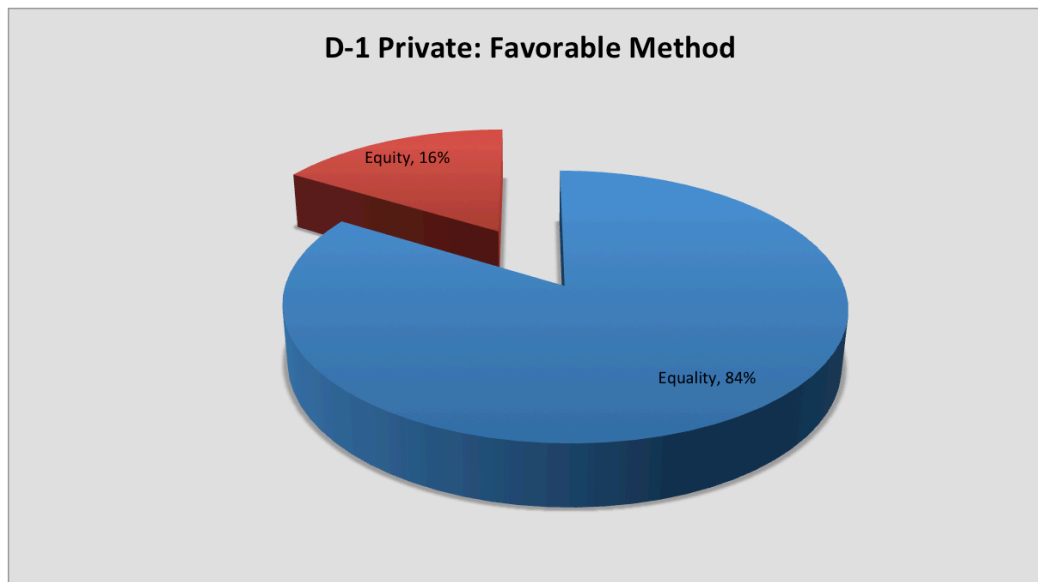
### Q2. Appraisal Style

<b>A.</b>	As an individual	73
<b>B.</b>	Within a group	81

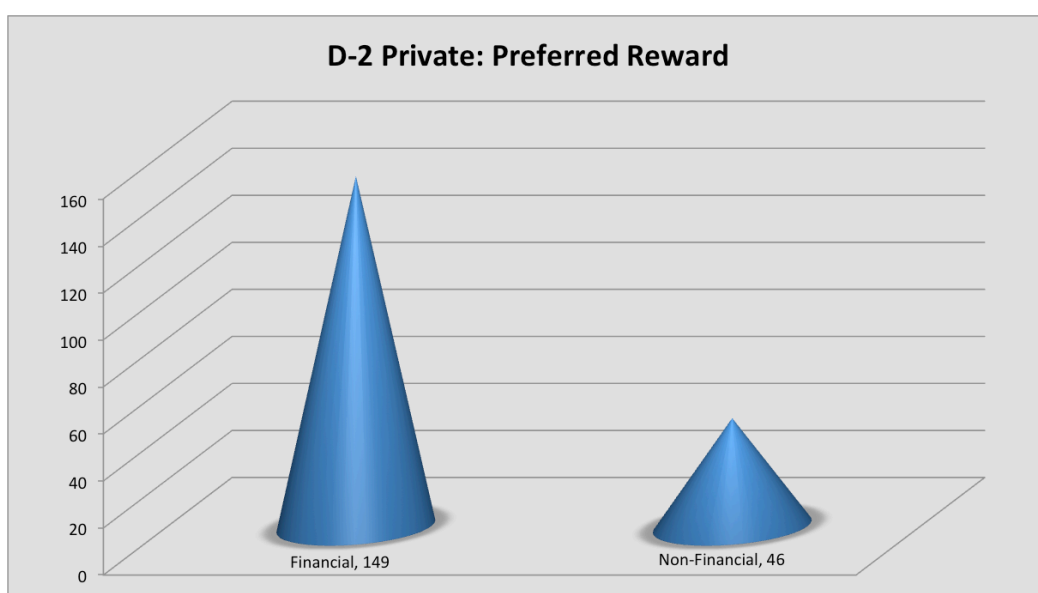


1.4 Compensation and Rewards:

D. Compensation & Rewards		
Q1. Favorable Method		
A.	Equality	129
B.	Equity	25



Q2. Preferred Reward		
A.	Financial	149
B.	Non-Financial	46

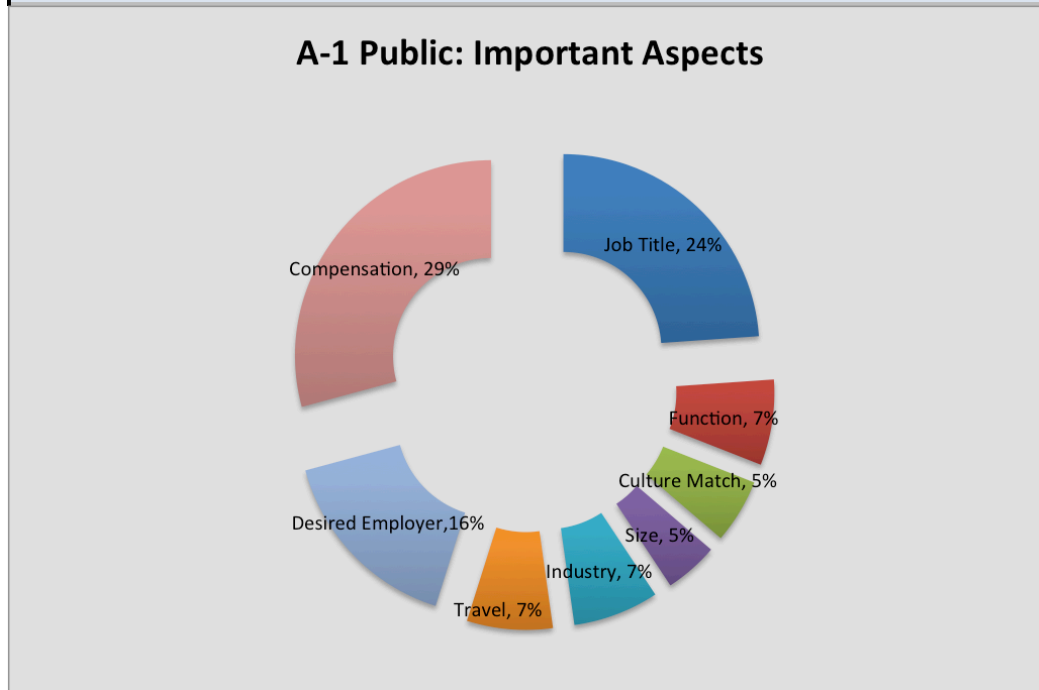




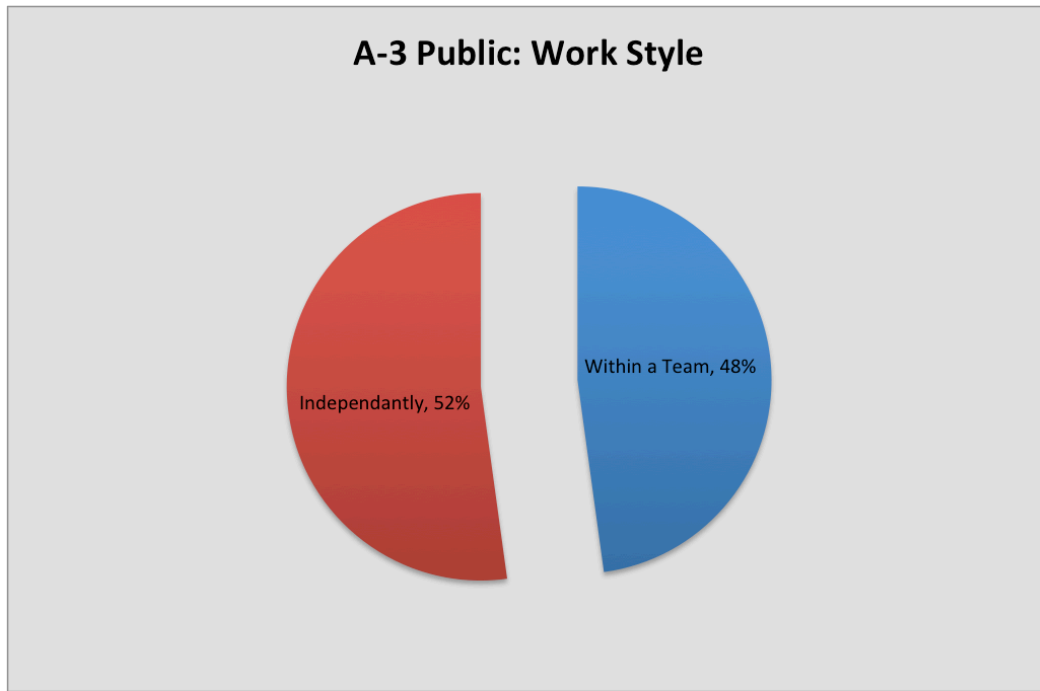
**2. Public Sector:**

**2.1 Job Desirability:**

<b>A. Job Desirability</b>	
<b>Q1. Important Aspects</b>	
<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Total No.</b>
Job Title	27
Function	8
Culture Match	6
Size	5
Industry	8
Travel	8
Desired Employer	18
Compensation	33
	<b>113</b>

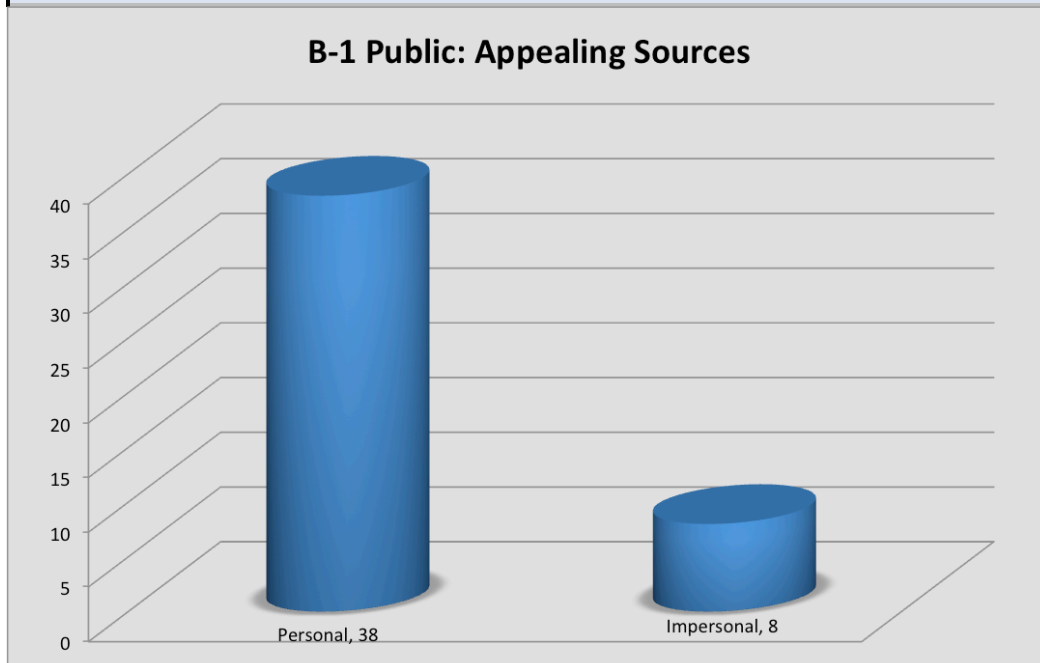


<b>Q3. Work Style</b>	
Within a Team	22
Independently	24

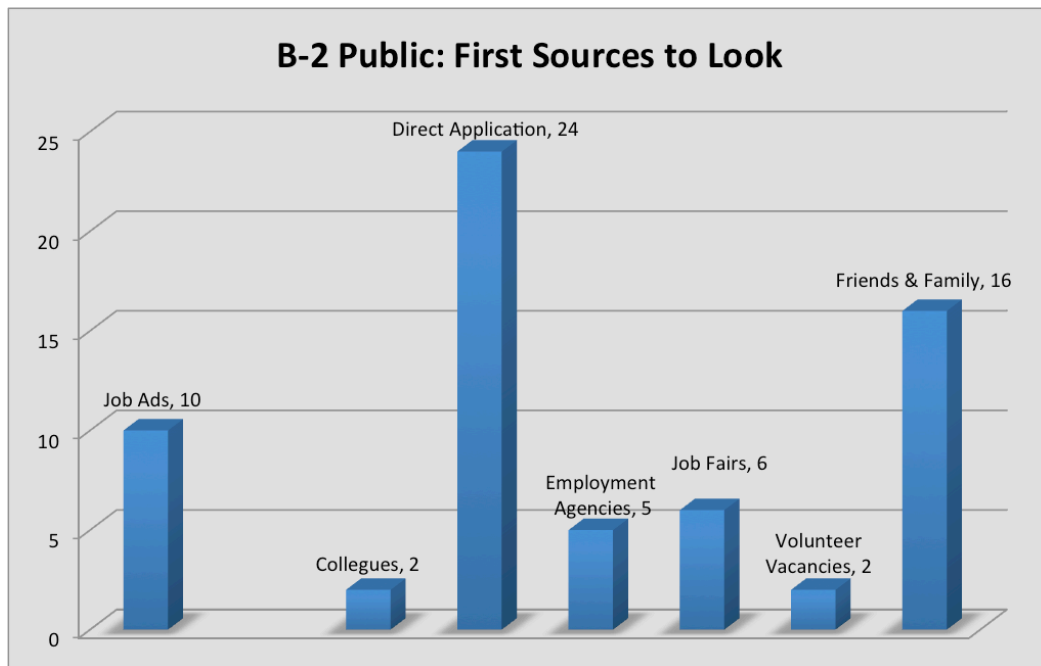


## 2.2 Recruitment Sources:

B. Recruitment Sources		
Q1. More Appealing Sources		
A.	Personal	38
B.	Impersonal	8



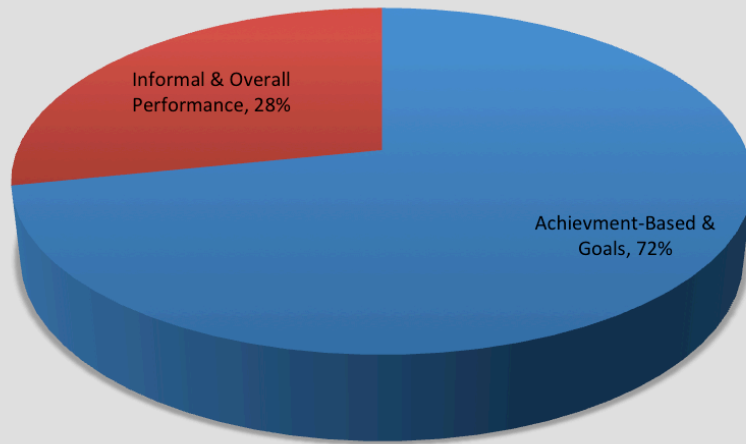
Q2. First sources to look for	
Source	Total No.
Job ads	10
Social Networks	
Colleagues	2
Direct Application	24
Employment Agencies	5
Job Fairs	6
Volunteer Vacancies	2
Friends & Family	16
	<b>65</b>



**2.3 Performance Appraisal:**

C. Performance Appraisal		
Q1. Favorable Method		
<b>A.</b>	Acheivment-Based & Goals	33
<b>B.</b>	Informal & Overall Performa	13

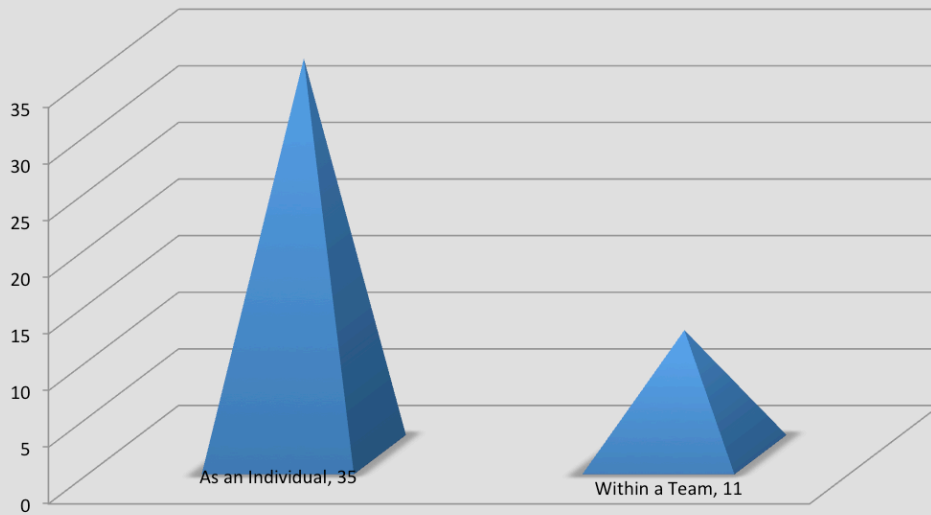
### C-1 Public: Favorable Method



### Q2. Appraisal Style

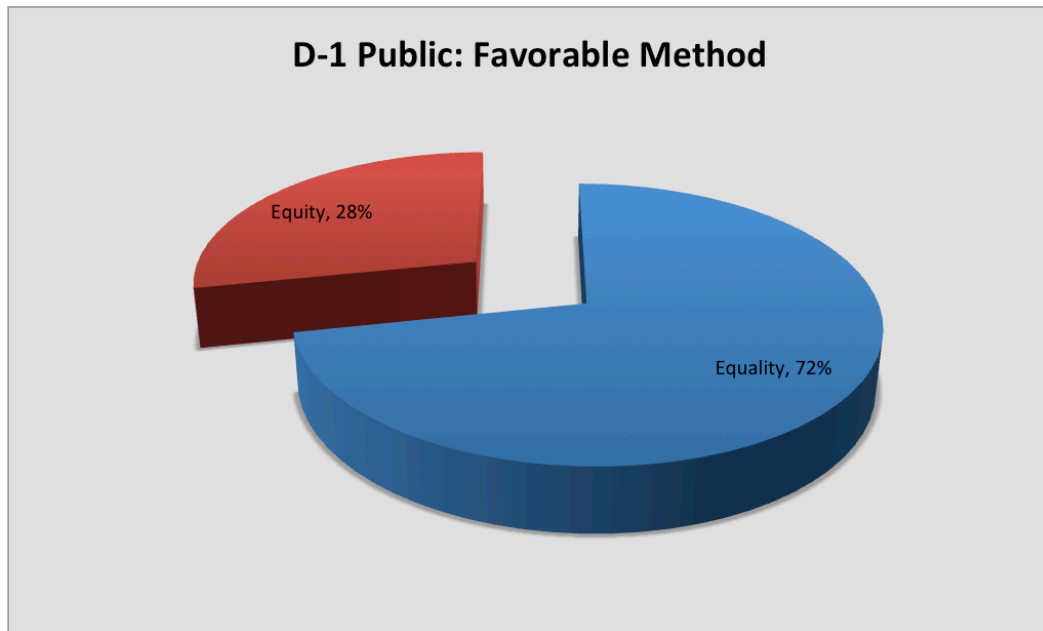
<b>A.</b>	As an individual	35
<b>B.</b>	Within a group	11

### C-2 Public: Appraisal Style

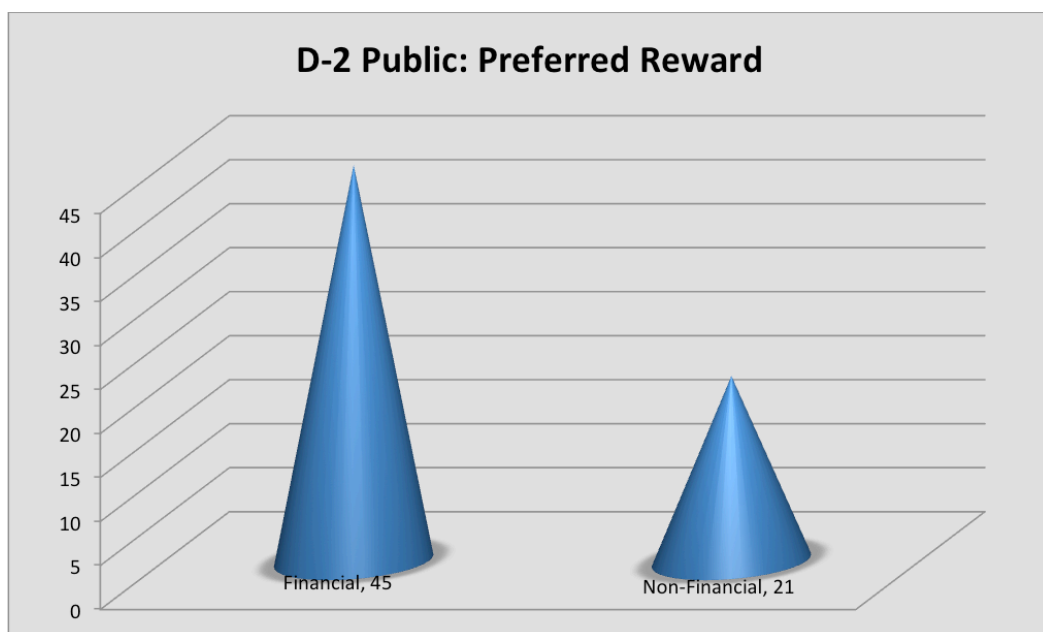


2.4 Compensation and Rewards:

D. Compensation & Rewards		
Q1. Favorable Method		
A.	Equality	33
B.	Equity	13



Q2. Preferred Reward		
A.	Financial	45
B.	Non-Financial	21

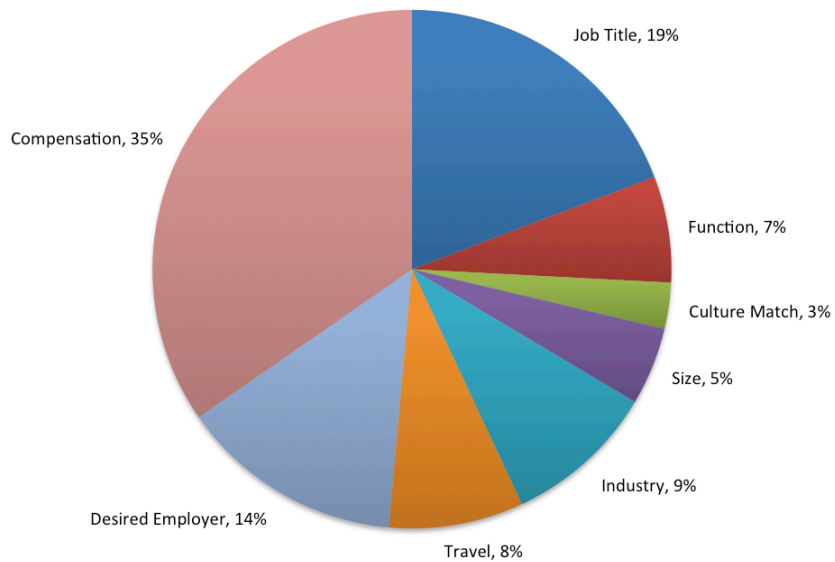


**3. Overall:**

**3.1 Recruitment Sources:**

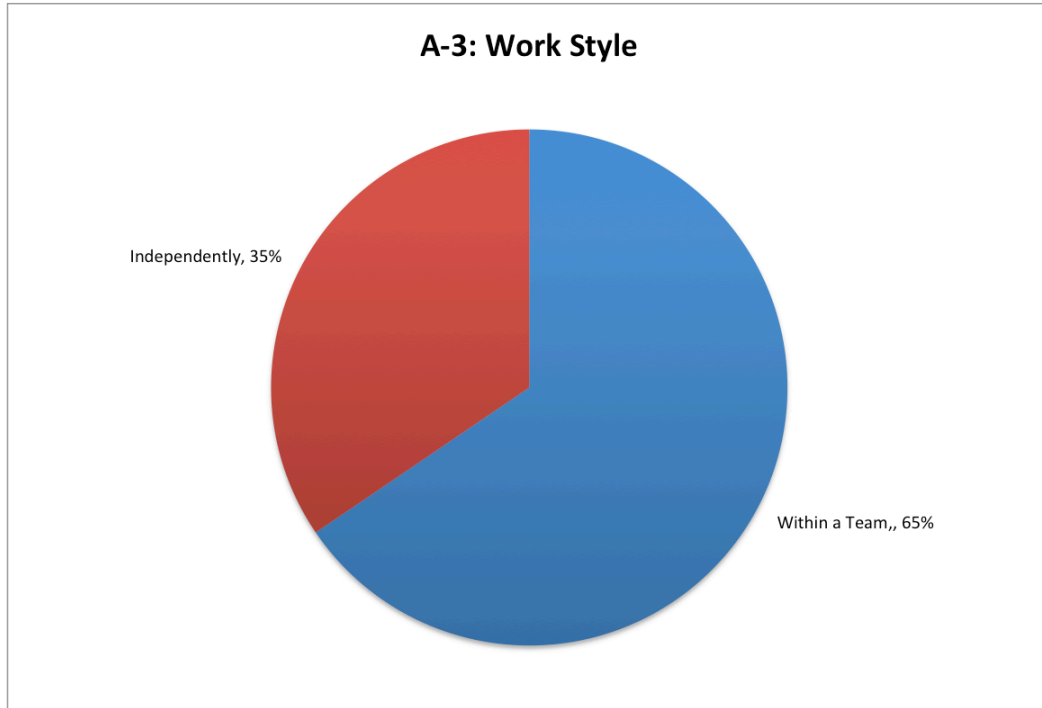
<b>A. Job Desirability</b>	
<b>Q1. Important Aspects</b>	
<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Total No.</b>
Job Title	87
Function	30
Culture Match	13
Size	22
Industry	43
Travel	38
Desired Employer	63
Compensation	157
	<b>453</b>

**A-1: Important Aspects**



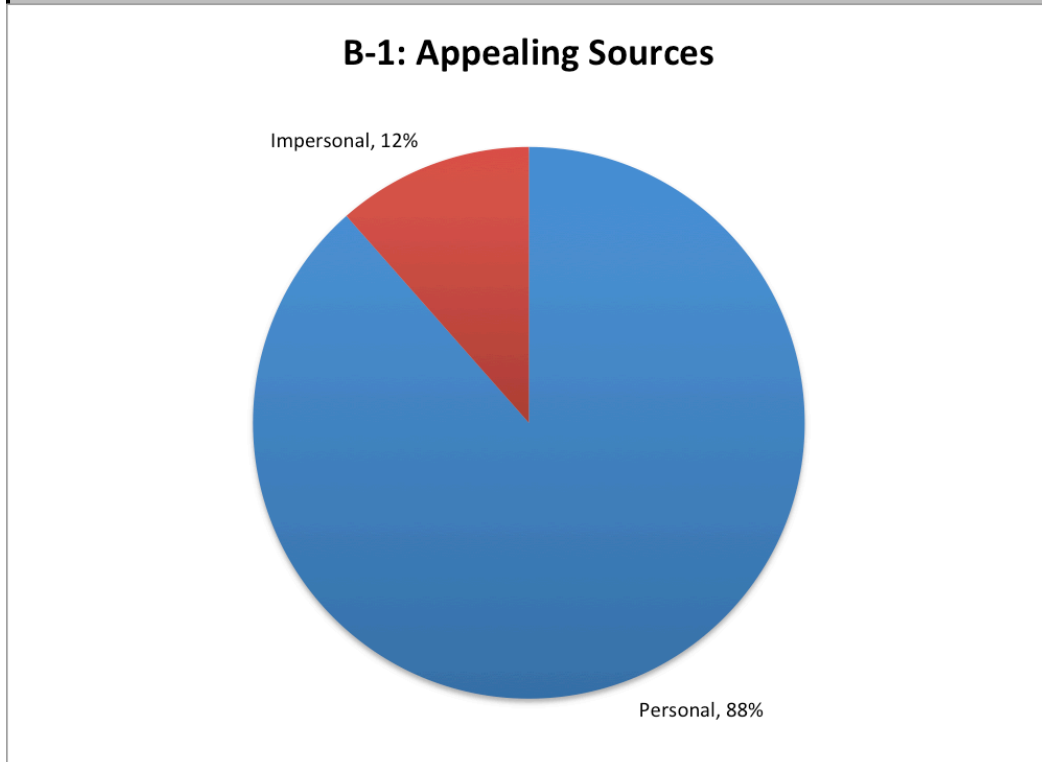
**Q3. Work Style**

Within a Team	131
Independently	69

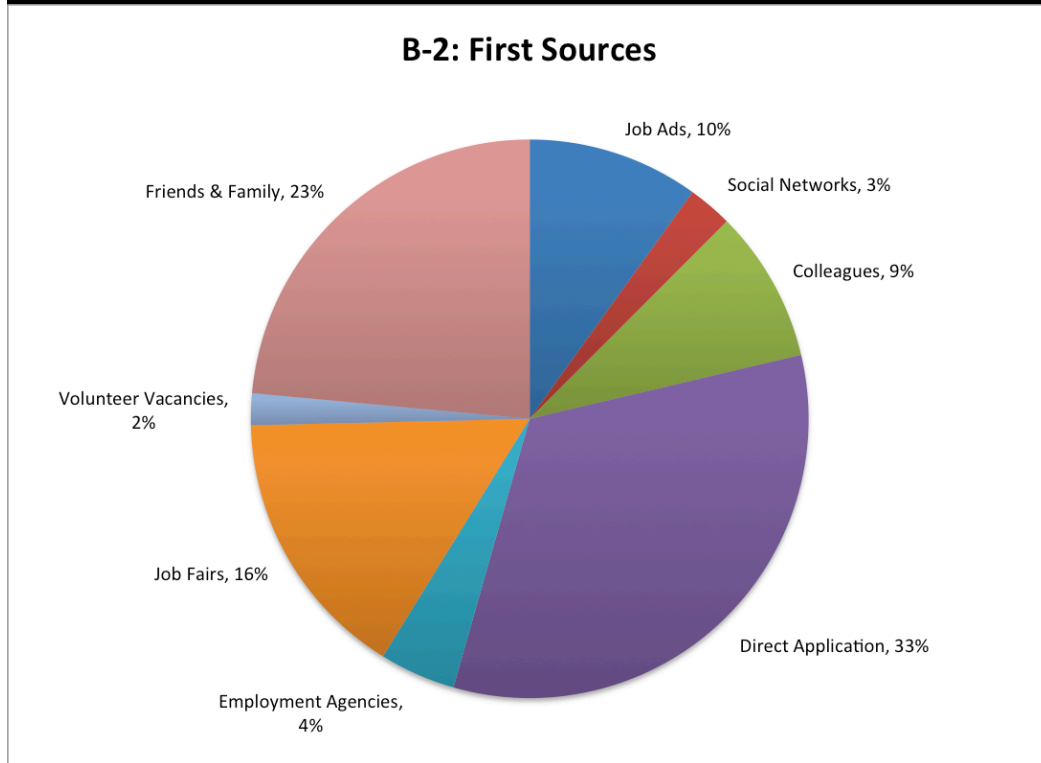


**3.2 Recruitment Sources:**

<b>B. Recruitment Sources</b>		
<b>Q1. More Appealing Sources</b>		
<b>A.</b>	<b>Personal</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>Impersonal</b>	<b>23</b>



Q2. First sources to look for	
Source	Total No.
Job ads	27
Social Networks	7
Colleagues	24
Direct Application	90
Employment Agencies	12
Job Fairs	43
Volunteer Vacancies	5
Friends & Family	64
	<b>272</b>

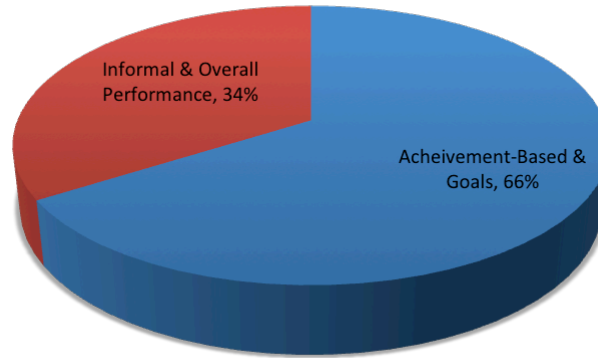


**3.3 Performance Appraisal:**

C. Performance Appraisal		
Q1. Favorable Method		
<b>A.</b>	Acheivement-Based & Goals	132
<b>B.</b>	Informal & Overall Performa	68



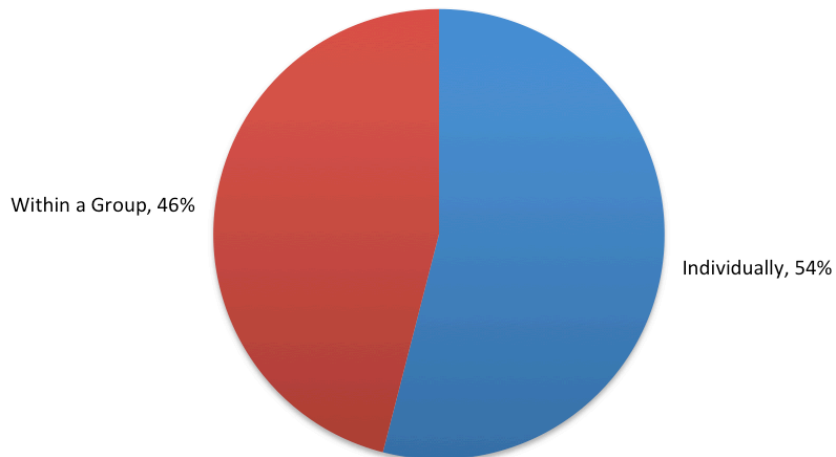
### C-1: Favorable Method



### Q2. Appraisal Style

<b>A.</b>	As an individual	108
<b>B.</b>	Within a group	92

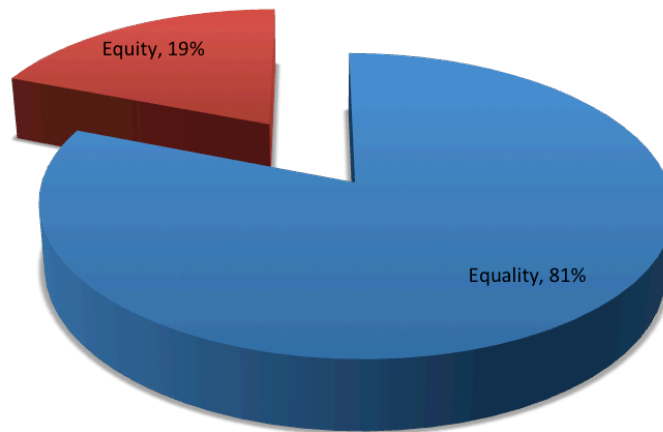
### C-2: Appraisal Style



3.4 Compensation and Rewards:

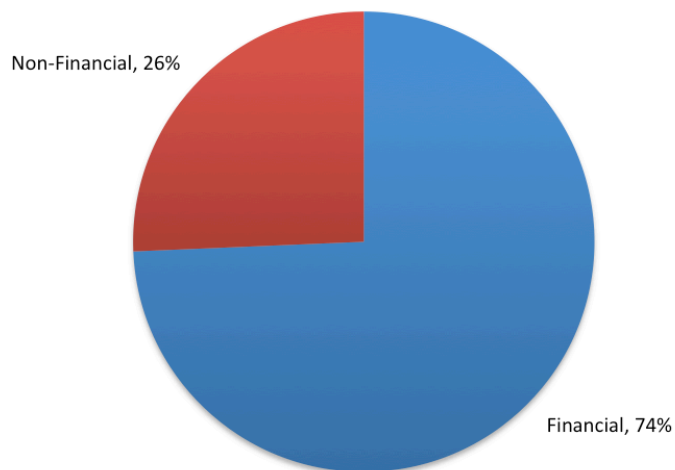
D. Compensation & Rewards		
Q1. Favorable Method		
A.	Equality	162
B.	Equity	38

D-1: Favorable Method



Q2. Preferred Reward		
A.	Financial	194
B.	Non-Financial	67

D-2: Preferred Rewards



**- Questionnaire Template:**

“THE IMPACT OF SAUDI ARABIA’S CULTURE ON HRM PRACTICES WITHIN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS: THE CASE OF SAUDI ARABIAN AIRLINES”

Private Sector

Public Sector

**Job desirability**

1. When searching for a job, what aspects do you focus on and consider important?
2. Why do you consider these aspects important?
3. When it comes to accomplishing tasks, do you prefer to work:
  - A. Within a team
  - B. Independently

Job title	Function
Culture match	Size
Industry	Travel
Desired employer	Compensation

**Recruitment Sources**

1. Which recruitment sources do you find more appealing:
  - A. Personal (Networking and recommendation).
  - B. Impersonal (Advertisements and Online recruitment).
2. When searching for a job, what are the first sources you look for?

Job Ads	Social networks
Colleagues	Direct application
Employment Agencies	Job fairs
Volunteer vacancies	Friends & Family

**Performance Appraisal**

1. Which method of performance appraisal do you find more favorable:
  - A. Achievement-based and goals
  - B. Informal and overall performance
2. Do you prefer to be appraised as:
  - A. Individual
  - B. Within a group

*Justification*

**Compensation and Rewards**

1. When implementing a compensation system, do you prefer a system based on:
  - A. Equality where employees are equally compensated
  - B. Equity where employees are separately compensated
2. As for rewards, do you prefer:
  - A. Financial rewards (Bonus)
  - B. Non-financial rewards (Holiday – perks)
3. What would be your rewards of choice?

*Justification*

- Questionnaires' examples:

*"THE IMPACT OF SAUDI ARABIA'S CULTURE ON HRM PRACTICES WITHIN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS: THE CASE OF SAUDI ARABIAN AIRLINES"*

Private Sector

Public Sector

**Job desirability**

1. When searching for a job, what aspects do you focus on and consider important?

Job title	Function
Culture match	Size
Industry	Travel <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Desired employer	Compensation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2. Why do you consider these aspects important?  
*To enjoy my job.*

3. When it comes to accomplishing tasks, do you prefer to work:  
 A. Within a team       B. Independently

**Recruitment Sources**

1. Which recruitment sources do you find more appealing:  
 A. Personal (Networking and recommendation)   
 B. Impersonal (Advertisements and Online recruitment)

Job Ads	Social networks
Colleagues	Direct application
Employment Agencies	Job fairs
Volunteer vacancies	Friends & Family

2. When searching for a job, what are the first sources you look for?

**Performance Appraisal**

1. Which method of performance appraisal do you find more favorable:  
 A. Achievement-based and goals       B. Informal and overall performance

2. Do you prefer to be appraised as:  
 A. Individual       B. Within a group

*Justification*

**Compensation and Rewards**

1. When implementing a compensation system, do you prefer a system based on:  
 A. Equality where employees are equally compensated   
 B. Equity where employees are separately compensated

2. As for rewards, do you prefer:  
 A. Financial rewards (Bonus)       B. Non-financial rewards (Holiday – perks)

3. What would be your rewards of choice?

*Justification*

*new money!*



"THE IMPACT OF SAUDI ARABIA'S CULTURE ON HRM PRACTICES WITHIN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS: THE CASE OF SAUDI ARABIAN AIRLINES"

Private Sector

Public Sector

Job desirability

- When searching for a job, what aspects do you focus on and consider important?
- Why do you consider these aspects important?  
*good position in a big company*
- When it comes to accomplishing tasks, do you prefer to work:
  - Within a team
  - Independently

Job title	Function
Culture match	Size
Industry	Travel
Desired employer	Compensation

Recruitment Sources

- Which recruitment sources do you find more appealing:
  - Personal (Networking and recommendation).
  - Impersonal (Advertisements and Online recruitment).
- When searching for a job, what are the first sources you look for?

Job Ads	Social networks
Colleagues	Direct application
Employment Agencies	Job fairs
Volunteer vacancies	Friends & Family

Performance Appraisal

- Which method of performance appraisal do you find more favorable:
  - Achievement-based and goals
  - Informal and overall performance
- Do you prefer to be appraised as:
  - Individual
  - Within a group

Justification

Compensation and Rewards

- When implementing a compensation system, do you prefer a system based on:
  - Equality where employees are equally compensated
  - Equity where employees are separately compensated
- As for rewards, do you prefer:
  - Financial rewards (Bonuses)
  - Non-financial rewards (Holiday – perks)
- What would be your rewards of choice?

Justification

All Rewards

"THE IMPACT OF SAUDI ARABIA'S CULTURE ON HRM PRACTICES WITHIN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS: THE CASE OF SAUDI ARABIAN AIRLINES"

Private Sector

Public Sector

Job desirability

1. When searching for a job, what aspects do you focus on and consider important?

Job title	Function
Culture match	Size
Industry	Travel
Desired employer	Compensation

2. Why do you consider these aspects important?  
*Big company and good salary*

3. When it comes to accomplishing tasks, do you prefer to work:

- A. Within a team  B. Independently

Recruitment Sources

1. Which recruitment sources do you find more appealing:

- A. Personal (Networking and recommendation).   
 B. Impersonal (Advertisements and Online recruitment).

Job Ads	Social networks
Colleagues	Direct application
Employment Agencies	Job fairs
Volunteer vacancies	Friends & Family

2. When searching for a job, what are the first sources you look for?

Performance Appraisal

1. Which method of performance appraisal do you find more favorable:

- A. Achievement-based and goals  B. Informal and overall performance

2. Do you prefer to be appraised as:

- A. Individual  B. Within a group

Justification

Compensation and Rewards

1. When implementing a compensation system, do you prefer a system based on:

- A. Equality where employees are equally compensated   
 B. Equity where employees are separately compensated

2. As for rewards, do you prefer:

- A. Financial rewards (Bonus)  B. Non-financial rewards (Holiday - perks)

3. What would be your rewards of choice?

Justification

*Confusion in  
 it  
 many and  
 various*



"THE IMPACT OF SAUDI ARABIA'S CULTURE ON HRM PRACTICES WITHIN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS: THE CASE OF SAUDI ARABIAN AIRLINES"

Private Sector  Public Sector

Job desirability

1. When searching for a job, what aspects do you focus on and consider important?
2. Why do you consider these aspects important?
3. When it comes to accomplishing tasks, do you prefer to work:
  - A. Within a team
  - B. Independently

- Job title
- Function
- Culture match
- Size
- Industry
- Travel
- Desired employer
- Compensation

Better lifestyle

Recruitment Sources

1. Which recruitment sources do you find more appealing:
  - A. Personal (Networking and recommendation).
  - B. Impersonal (Advertisements and Online recruitment).
2. When searching for a job, what are the first sources you look for?

- Job Ads
- Colleagues
- Employment Agencies
- Volunteer vacancies
- Social networks
- Direct application
- Job fairs
- Friends & Family

Performance Appraisal

1. Which method of performance appraisal do you find more favorable:
  - A. Achievement-based and goals
  - B. Informal and overall performance
2. Do you prefer to be appraised as:
  - A. Individual
  - B. Within a group

Justification

Compensation and Rewards

1. When implementing a compensation system, do you prefer a system based on:
  - A. Equality where employees are equally compensated
  - B. Equity where employees are separately compensated
2. As for rewards, do you prefer:
  - A. Financial rewards (Bonus)
  - B. Non-financial rewards (Holiday perks)
3. What would be your rewards of choice?
 

Promotion

Justification

Promotion = money + perks

"THE IMPACT OF SAUDI ARABIA'S CULTURE ON HRM PRACTICES WITHIN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS: THE CASE OF SAUDI ARABIAN AIRLINES"

Private Sector

Public sector

Job desirability

1. When searching for a job, what aspects do you focus on and consider important?
2. Why do you consider these aspects important?
3. When it comes to accomplishing tasks, do you prefer to work:
  - A. Within a team
  - B. Independently

Job title	Function
Culture match	Size
Industry	Travel
Desired employer	Compensation

Recruitment Sources

1. Which recruitment sources do you find more appealing:
  - A. Personal (Networking and recommendation).
  - B. Impersonal (Advertisements and Online recruitment).
2. When searching for a job, what are the first sources you look for?

Job Ads	Social networks
Colleagues	Direct application
Employment Agencies	Job fairs
Volunteer vacancies	Friends & Family

online application.

Performance Appraisal

1. Which method of performance appraisal do you find more favorable:
  - A. Achievement-based and goals
  - B. Informal and overall performance
2. Do you prefer to be appraised as:
  - A. Individual
  - B. Within a group

Justification

Compensation and Rewards

1. When implementing a compensation system, do you prefer a system based on:
  - A. Equality where employees are equally compensated
  - B. Equity where employees are separately compensated
2. As for rewards, do you prefer:
  - A. Financial rewards (Bonus)
  - B. Non-financial rewards (Holiday – perks)
3. What would be your rewards of choice?

Justification

Free tickets to travel



# Appendix III

## Interviews

SAUDI ARABIAN AIRLINES  
SAUDIA AEROSPACE ENGINEERING INDUSTRIES



الخطوط الجوية العربية السعودية  
السعودية لهندسة وصناعة الطيران

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

DATE 25.09.2013 G

TO:

BRUNEL UNIVERSITY  
UXBRIDGE, UB8 3PH  
UNITED KINGDOM

DEAR SIR/ MADAM,

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE ATTACHED DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN PROVIDED TO MR. HATTAN TALAL AL-SHARIF UPON HIS REQUEST AS PART OF HIS PHD RESEARCH AT BRUNEL UNIVERSITY. HE IS RESPONSIBLE TO SECURE ANY REQUIRED ASSURANCES TO THE CONCERNED PARTY WITH NO CONSEQUENT ACCOUNTABILITY ON "SAEI".

MGR.EMPLOYEE RELATION SERVICES & COMPOSTION

MR. MOHAMMED ALHASSAN S ALBARAKATI



Questions for interviews

**“THE IMPACT OF SAUDI ARABIA’S CULTURE ON HRM PRACTICES WITHIN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS: THE CASE OF SAUDI ARABIAN AIRLINES”**

Job desirability

- 1- Firstly, what is the process followed in identifying the ideal candidate for a vacancy within the organisation?
  - *Basically, each department provides his current needs in desired positions to the HR department and based on the HR applicants data base matched applicants passed to the department in order to arrange for CV check and an interview.*
- 2- What incentives are offered in order to attract the ideal candidates?
  - *Saudi Airlines is one of the most desired companies in the country and offers a wide range of facilities and bonuses to its employees including high salaries, ticket allowance, medical cover and major discounts with key partnerships in the countries.*
- 3- Are those incentives fixed or flexible to the candidates’ likings?
  - *Once a candidate becomes an employee he/she will enjoy both ranges of fixed and flexible incentives.*
- 4- Over past experiences, what are the aspects that make vacancies within the organisation more desirable for the locals?
  - *Job security, high wages and free airline tickets.*
- 5- Were these aspects considered in future hiring’s?
  - *Yes.*
- 6- On the other hand, which aspects do Saudi candidates put emphasis upon?
  - *This depends on the category of the candidate. New graduates tend to gain more experience and benefit from high wages as they start their careers. On the other hand, executives are more likely to focus on a key role within the company by implementing development plans and strategies.*
- 7- Based on past experiences, do Saudi candidates profess any interest in how they like to accomplish their tasks? Whether they prefer teamwork or independence in the workplace?
  - *Indeed, being part of a team is a key in technical work in Saudi Airlines and is highly encouraged to be implemented by higher management.*
- 8- Can you point out any differences in what aspects attract Saudis or foreigners to a vacancy within the organisation?
  - *As an Aerospace company, listed jobs always offer challenges on technical and engineering level which can help increasing the level of experience for employees. Also, the chance to improve through many rich training programs inside and outside the company.*

Questions for interviews

**“THE IMPACT OF SAUDI ARABIA’S CULTURE ON HRM PRACTICES WITHIN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS: THE CASE OF SAUDI ARABIAN AIRLINES”**

Recruitment Sources

- 1- What sources does the organisation use in the recruitment of new employees?
  - *The company encourages direct application on-line to expand its data base and speed up the hiring process.*
- 2- What is the justification behind the selection of these sources?
  - *Increase the efficiency of the hiring process.*
- 3- How did the aspect of recruitment sources evolved throughout the years?
  - *Emerging e-business solutions and the internet helped the development of this process immensely.*
- 4- Does the vacancy within the organisation determine which recruitment source to be used? If so, how does a vacancy influence the selection of recruitment sources?
  - *Beside the main source mentioned above, some vacancies can be filled by offering the job to a well-known capable professional which can be considered as a form of head-hunting approach.*
- 5- Have Saudi applicants shown any specific tendencies towards certain recruitment sources?
  - *A word-of-mouth or a recommendation from a relative can drive some applicants to consider a job in the company.*
- 6- Judging by past results, which recruitment sources attract the most potential applicants and most effective?
  - *Direct on-line application.*
- 7- In your opinion, what are the reasons behind that?
  - *This sort of source attracts all kinds of job seekers in the country, even those who are working for other companies and try to check their desirability by other companies or looking for career change. The made possible due to the ease of this process and its accessibility.*
- 8- What factors determine the recruitment source to be used?
  - *More specialised and specific the job requires more assessment and evaluation process.*
- 9- Do you think Saudi Arabia’s culture dictates a specific source? if so, why?
  - *Yes, especially recommendations by relatives as it provide a comprehensive knowledge of the recruitment process and job itself.*
- 10- In your own opinion, do you believe there is a relation between local culture and recruitment sources and the way applicants respond to them?
  - *On-line applications process started slowly as it was unfamiliar with most of the applicants and the general concept was applying in person is a more reliable way.*
- 11- Have you noticed any differences between locals and foreigners in terms of recruitment sources? (Tendencies)

Questions for interviews

***“THE IMPACT OF SAUDI ARABIA’S CULTURE ON HRM PRACTICES WITHIN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS: THE CASE OF SAUDI ARABIAN AIRLINES”***

- *The current recruitment process tends to achieve transparency and equality between all candidates. However, the current trend of Saudi government encourages hiring more Saudi staff to minimize the unemployment rate in the country.*

Performance Appraisal

- 1- Can you describe the performance appraisal process adopted by the organisation? Are they Western-based? Adopted from any existing models?
  - *Most performance appraisals are standardised and aims at the same goal which is to reach as accurate evaluation as possible.*
- 2- Why do you follow this specific process?
  - *The current model is approved by most departments and provides satisfactory results.*
- 3- How performance appraisal process has evolved over the years?
  - *A detailed evaluation of the process is conducted on a 3-year interval to update and improve the process.*
- 4- Does evaluation focus solely on productivity or there are other aspects involved? If there are, what are the other aspects?
  - *The process targets a comprehensive evaluation including, work ethics, productivity, discipline and future development.*
- 5- How is feedback conveyed back to the employees?
  - *A copy of the evaluation will be provided to the employee once it is processed by the HR.*
- 6- Is there a specific approach followed in conveying feedback?
  - *A notification email will be sent to the employee to provide updates on his annual appraisal.*
- 7- What is the justification behind the selection of this approach?
  - *More efficient and fast.*
- 8- Does Saudi culture place any influence on the performance approach process?
  - *The influence is minimal in this case.*
- 9- Have you noticed different response within the performance appraisal process when comparing Saudis and foreign employees? If so, what are these differences?
  - *No.*
- 10- Is the performance appraisal process the same throughout the organisation or are there various processes adopted?
  - *Current appraisal forms are standardised, however some sections do not apply for some employees but apply to others.*

Questions for interviews

**“THE IMPACT OF SAUDI ARABIA’S CULTURE ON HRM PRACTICES WITHIN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS: THE CASE OF SAUDI ARABIAN AIRLINES”**

Compensation and Rewards

- 1- What are the bases of the compensation and rewards system currently implemented within the organisation?
  - *Annual increase in Step and Grade level based on a satisfactory performance.*
- 2- How have the compensation and rewards systems evolved throughout the years?
  - *The evolvement has been incremental as the system is being reviewed annually.*
- 3- What factors are relevant when setting up the compensation system?
  - *To maintain the level, image and disability of the company to stay competitive as a company.*
- 4- What factors are relevant when setting up the rewards system?
  - *It is considered to be part of the appraisal process. However, a quick form of reward can be provided as Over-Time pay or Compensatory-Time balance.*
- 5- Are rewards strictly financial or there are other non-financial rewards available?
  - *Both forms of rewards are available.*
- 6- What are the tendencies of Saudi employees in terms of rewards?
  - *A combination of both.*
- 7- Do Saudi employees prefer financial or non-financial rewards?
  - *Financial rewards.*
- 8- Does the cultural background of the employees have any impact on the selection of the compensation system to be implemented at the organisation? If so, how does that happen?
  - *In some cases, employees prefer having Compensatory-Time reward.*
- 9- In comparison, are there any differences between Saudi and foreign employees in terms of the preferred compensation and rewards systems?
  - *No.*

Training Programs

- 1- What impact, if there is any, do you think Saudi culture have on training programs?
  - *The use of English language in training is highly emphasised in all Saudi companies.*
- 2- Are there any considerations for the cultural background of the employees involved in training programs? If there are any, what are these considerations?
  - *Mainly, linguistic skills.*
- 3- Are there any training programs aimed at foreign employees in order to help them adapt to Saudi Arabia’s culture?
  - *Yes.*



SAUDI ARABIAN AIRLINES  
SAUDIA AEROSPACE ENGINEERING INDUSTRIES



الخطوط الجوية العربية السعودية  
السعودية لهندسة وصناعة الطيران

TO DR. SUSAN GRANT  
Brunel University  
Uxbridge  
UB8 3PH  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 (0)1895 265384  
Email: Susan.Grant@brunel.ac.uk

Dear Dr. Grant,

Refereeing to your letter dated 15<sup>th</sup> March 2013 regarding Mr. Hattan Talal Al-Sharif research and data collection in Saudi Arabia, I can confirm that Mr. Al-Sharif has completed the data collection process at Saudia Aerospace Engineering Industries (SAEI). As a result of his work during the period between April 2013 and June 2013, a survey form was distributed around the technical staff of the company with a minimum number of one hundred and twenty five (125) copies. Also, interviews with a number of company's directors and managers were conducted during that period in order to fulfill his research and data collection requirements.

Once he completed his research degree (PhD), we expect Mr. Al-Sharif to provide the Engineering Department with a copy of his research and data collection outcomes.

This letter has been provided to Mr. Al-Sharif upon his request and we at SAEI wish him a good luck with his research ...

03. OCTOBER. 2013

ENG. MUHAMMED N. AL-NABHANY



MANAGER AIRCRAFT & TOOL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT  
SAUDIA AEROSPACE ENGINEERING INDUSTRIES  
KING ABDULAZIZ INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT  
JEDDAH, SAUDI ARABIA  
PHONE: (+)966-2-6864000



# Appendix IV: Coding & Matrices



**- Coding legends and explanation:**

★ = Confirmation for a relationship in existence between societal culture and HRM practices.

- Relates to the relationship between societal culture and the HRM practice and indicates whether there is an interaction between them or not. Sometimes, this aspect can be embedded within a sentence without being clearly stated.

◆ = Societal Culture Impact

- Relates to how societal culture dictates behavior towards the targeted HRM practice, if an interaction is taking place between the societal culture and the HRM practice.

○ = Consequence on HRM practice

- Relates to the aftermath and result of the influence of societal culture on HRM practices, if there was any societal culture impact to be found.

**1. Job Desirability**

- Based on past experiences, do Saudi candidates profess any interest in how they like to accomplish their tasks? Whether they prefer teamwork or independence in the workplace?

- *Indeed ★, being part of a team is a key in technical work in Saudi Airlines ◆ and is highly encouraged to be implemented by higher management. ○*

HRM Practice	Societal Influence★	Societal Culture Impact◆	Consequence on Practice○
Accomplishing Tasks	Existent	Being part of the team is key	Management encouraging teamwork

- Over past experiences, what are the aspects that make vacancies within the organisation more desirable for the locals?

- *“Saudi employees place focus on job security, high wages and free airline tickets ◆”*

- Were these aspects considered in future hiring's?

- *“Yes ★, they are considered ○”*

HRM Practice	Societal Influence★	Societal Culture Impact◆	Consequence on Practice○
Incentives offered by SAEI	Existent	Employees focus on specific aspects	Consideration for future hiring
SAEI shared values	Non-existent	Saudis focus on job security, wages and free tickets	No consequence

What incentives are offered in order to attract the ideal candidates?

- *“Saudi Airlines is one of the most desired companies in the country and offers a wide range of facilities and bonuses ◆ to its employees including high salaries, ticket allowance, medical cover and major discounts with key partnerships in the country with popular retailers and services providers (Health clubs)”*

- Are those incentives fixed or flexible to the candidates’ likings?

- *“Once a candidate becomes an employee he/she will enjoy both ranges of fixed and flexible incentives ○”*

HRM Practice	Societal Influence★	Societal Culture Impact◆	Consequence on Practice○
Basis of incentives	Existent	Increase desirability by offering wide range of incentives	Employees can choose their incentives

## 2. Recruitment Sources

- What sources does the organisation use in the recruitment of new employees?

- *“The company encourages direct application on-line to expand its database and speed up the hiring process ★”*

- What is the justification behind the selection of these sources?

- *“Increase the efficiency of the hiring process”*

Judging by past results, which recruitment sources attract the most potential applicants and most effective?

- *“Direct on-line application attracts most applicants ◆”*

HRM Practice	Societal Influence★	Societal Culture Impact◆	Consequence on Practice○
Main source used by SAEI	Non-existent	Online application attracts most applicants	No consequence

- Have Saudi applicants shown any specific tendencies towards certain recruitment sources?

- *“A word-of-mouth or a recommendation ○ from a relative can drive some applicants to consider a job in the company ◆”*

HRM Practice	Societal Influence★	Societal Culture Impact◆	Consequence on Practice○
Secondary sources used by SAEI	Existent	Consider working for SAEI	Using recommendation and word-of-mouth as sources

- What factors determine the recruitment source to be used?

- *“The more specialised and specific the job, it requires more assessment and evaluation process ◆”*

HRM Practice	Societal Influence★	Societal Culture Impact◆	Consequence on Practice○
Choice of source	Non-existent	Recruitment source to be used depends on the vacancy	No consequence

### 3. Performance Appraisal

- Does Saudi culture place any influence on the performance approach process?

- *“The influence is minimal ◆ in this case”*

- Does evaluation focus solely on productivity or there are other aspects involved? If there are, what are the other aspects?

- *“The process targets a comprehensive evaluation ○ including, work ethics ○, productivity, discipline ○ and future development”*

HRM Practice	Societal Influence★	Societal Culture Impact◆	Consequence on Practice○
Bases of appraisal system used by SAEI	Existent	Minimal influence	The inclusion of work ethics and discipline criteria

- How is feedback conveyed back to the employees?
- *“A copy of the evaluation will be provided to the employee once it is processed by the HR department”*
- Is there a specific approach followed in conveying feedback?
- *“A notification email will be sent to the employee ◆ to provide updates on his annual appraisal”*

HRM Practice	Societal Influence★	Societal Culture Impact◆	Consequence on Practice○
Conveying feedback	Non-existent	Impersonal approach - use of e-mail	No consequence

#### 4. Compensation and Rewards

- What are the bases of the compensation and rewards system currently implemented within the organisation?
- *“Annual increase in Step and Grade level ○ based on a satisfactory performance ◆”*
- What factors are relevant when setting up the compensation system?
- *“To maintain the level, image and desirability ◆ of the company to stay competitive as a company”*

HRM Practice	Societal Influence★	Societal Culture Impact◆	Consequence on Practice○
Bases of compensation system used by SAEI	Existent	Employees are inspired by reward for excelling performances	The implementation of Step-Grade system

- Are rewards strictly financial or there are other non-financial rewards available?
- *“Both forms of rewards are available ○”*

- What are the tendencies of Saudi employees in terms of rewards?
- *“A combination of both ♦”*
- Do Saudi employees prefer financial or non-financial rewards?
- *“Financial rewards ♦”*
- Does the cultural background of the employees have any impact on the selection of the compensation system to be implemented at the organisation? If so, how does that happen?
- *“In some cases, employees prefer having Compensatory-Time reward ○”*

HRM Practice	Societal Influence★	Societal Culture Impact◆	Consequence on Practice○
Choice of rewards	Existent	Financial and a combination of financial and non-financial	Both types of rewards are available with the introduction of compensatory-time reward

## 5. Training Programs

What impact, if there is any, do you think Saudi culture have on training programs?

- *“The use of English language in training is highly emphasised ♦ in all Saudi companies”*
- Are there any considerations for the cultural background of the employees involved in training programs? If there are any, what are these considerations?
- *“Mainly, linguistic skills ○”*
- Are there any training programs aimed at foreign employees in order to help them adapt to Saudi Arabia’s culture?
- *“Yes ★”*

HRM Practice	Societal Influence★	Societal Culture Impact◆	Consequence on Practice○
Programs setup	Existent	Focus on linguistic skills	Initiating English language courses to improve trainees’ linguistic

			skills
<b>Programs orientation</b>	Existent	Foreign workers adapting to Saudi Arabia's culture	Initiating training programs to inform about Saudi societal culture

<b>Element</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>HRM Practices</b>	This element is concerned with the HRM practice aspect in question that will be investigated if affected by societal culture
<b>Societal Influence</b>	This element is concerned with the relationship between the HRM aspect questioned and the societal culture and whether there is an interaction between the two
<b>Societal culture impact</b>	This element is concerned with how individuals behave and react towards the HRM practice based on their societal culture values
<b>Consequence on HRM practices</b>	This element is concerned with the consequences caused by societal culture values on the HRM practice and the aftermath of this influence on the HRM practice implemented within the organisation

HRM Practice	Societal Influence	Societal Culture Impact	Consequence on Practice
Accomplishing Tasks	Existent	Being part of the team is key	Management encouraging teamwork
Incentives offered by SAEI	Existent	Employees focus on specific aspects	Consideration for future hiring
SAEI shared values	Non-existent	Saudis focus on job security, wages and free tickets	No consequence
Nature of incentives offered	Existent	Increase desirability by offering wide range of incentives	Employees can choose their incentives
Main source used by SAEI	Non-existent	Online application attracts most applicants	No consequence
Other sources used by SAEI	Existent	Consider working for SAEI	Using recommendation and word-of-mouth as sources
Determining Sources to be used	Non-existent	Recruitment source to be used depends on the vacancy	No consequence
Bases of appraisal system used by SAEI	Existent	Minimal influence	The inclusion of work ethics and discipline criteria
Conveying feedback	Non-existent	Impersonal approach - use of e-mail	No consequence

HRM Practice	Societal Influence	Societal Culture Impact	Consequence on Practice
Bases of compensation system used by SAEI	Existent	Employees are inspired by reward for excelling performances	The implementation of Step-Grade system
Choice of rewards	Existent	Financial and a combination of financial and non-financial	Both types of rewards are available with the introduction of compensatory-time reward
Programs setup	Existent	Focus on linguistic skills	Initiating English language courses to improve trainees' linguistic skills
Programs orientation	Existent	Foreign workers adapting to Saudi Arabia's culture	Initiating training programs to inform about Saudi societal culture