The Strategic Value of Learning: a Comparative Study between Multinational Private and Public Sectors Organisations in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

Although there is consensus that national Human Resource Development policy is important, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) the ways in which strategic human resources development (SHRD) is undertaken by employing organisations remains under-researched.

The study investigated the value attached to learning in multinational private and also public organisations in Saudi Arabia. The three research objectives were to: examine the strategic value of learning from CEO managers’ and HRD practitioners’ perceptions in multinational private and public organisations in Saudi Arabia; establish the extent to which the value attached to learning in the public sector is different from that in the multinational private sector in Saudi Arabia and, to examine any differences in the value attached to learning by HRD specialists and senior managers of organisations in KSA.

Making use of a constructionist ontology the thesis explores how these senior staff value and evaluate strategic learning and its contribution to their organisations. An inductive approach is taken with elements of both comparative and cross sectional design. This thesis builds on O’Driscoll et al. (2005) in the USA and Anderson (2007) in the UK. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken in twenty organisations, with thirty-seven senior participants. Findings were analysed through thematic analysis.

The data suggest that respondents in many KSA organisations evaluate learning through individual performance measured by trainees’ satisfaction and changes in employee capability, focusing more on short term operational issues rather than organisation strategy. Although the context for HRD in Saudi Arabia is different to that of Western developed economies there are similarities between the finding from this thesis and O’Driscoll et al, (2005) and Anderson (2007) which suggest that there is a range of challenges associated with putting strategic HRD into practice in employing organisation.
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<tr>
<td>ADD</td>
<td>Administrative Development Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADDIE</td>
<td>Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASTD</td>
<td>American Society for Training and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFO</td>
<td>Chief Financial Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIPD</td>
<td>The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIPP</td>
<td>Context, Input, Process, and Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIRO</td>
<td>Context, Input, Reaction, and Outcome</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>H.C.</td>
<td>Human Capital</td>
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<td>HPI</td>
<td>Human Performance Improvement</td>
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<td>HPT</td>
<td>Human Performance Technology</td>
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<td>HPWS</td>
<td>High Performance Work System</td>
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<td>HR</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
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<td>HRD</td>
<td>Human Resource Development</td>
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<td>HRM</td>
<td>Human Resource Management</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
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<td>IPA</td>
<td>Institute of Public Administration</td>
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<td>KM</td>
<td>Knowledge Management</td>
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<td>KSA</td>
<td>Kingdom of Saudi Arabia</td>
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<td>LMD</td>
<td>Leadership and Management Development</td>
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<td>LO</td>
<td>Learning Organisation</td>
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<td>LTD</td>
<td>Learning, Training and Development</td>
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<td>LTD</td>
<td>Learning, training and development</td>
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<td>Mb</td>
<td>Million Barrels</td>
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<td>OA</td>
<td>Organisational Alignment</td>
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<td>OL</td>
<td>Organisational Learning</td>
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<td>ROI</td>
<td>Return on Investment</td>
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<td>SAT</td>
<td>Systematic Agreement Theory</td>
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<td>SHRD</td>
<td>Strategic Human Resource Development</td>
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<td>SMD</td>
<td>Strategic Management Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>SR</td>
<td>Saudi Riyal Currency</td>
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<td>SRP</td>
<td>Strategic Reference Points</td>
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<td>SRPT</td>
<td>Strategic Reference Points Theory</td>
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<td>T&amp;D</td>
<td>Training and Development</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organisation</td>
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Declaration

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.
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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my wife Hanadi Alshuraim who have supported me throughout the years of my study, especially in the years that I was working on this thesis.
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with Strategic Human Resources Development (SHRD) specifically how senior executives in public and multinational private sector organisations in Saudi Arabia value and evaluate strategic learning. Contemporary literature about Human Resources Development (HRD) highlights that organisations should focus on the strategic value of learning to the organisation rather than taking an individual approach because human capital at the corporate level is considered to be an important issue for organisational growth and productivity (see for example Anderson, 2007; Garavan 2007; Goss, 1997). Many stakeholders have an interest in the value of the learning to the organisation and the strategic Human Resources Development (SHRD) literature indicates the advantages of a strategic level of assessment of HRD in order to provide development to achieve the required strategies at all levels. This approach can be achieved when Human Resources (HR) professionals and Chief Executive Officers (CEO) both participate in the formulation of the organisation’s strategy and translate it to the other levels (tactical and operational) so that HRD strategy, policy and practice are formulated and implemented to meet stakeholder expectations and achieve organisational strategy.

This chapter sets out to explain the rationale for the research and will contain five sections; statement of the problem, research aim, research objectives, contribution of the study and the thesis structure.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Human resources are considered one of the most important assets of any organisation (Lawler, 2008; Goss, 1997). The quality of service and the success of the organisation rely heavily on the quality of contacts between its employees and its clients, suppliers, investors, local committee, etc.

Over the last two decades the focus of the HRD role in organisations has shifted from a focus on the provision of training programmes to a focus on learning as a broad issue (for example individual learning, on the job, off the job, direct, indirect, training and development (T&D), organisational development (OD) and career development), to improve individual and organisational performance. The focus of HRD is now on organisational change and not only
individual change, the HRD investment process is linked with organisational strategy as much as with the operational level and there is attention on measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of HRD in relation to organisational strategy. Much of this development has occurred through considering the relationship between HRD practice and theories such as learning theory, systems theory and economic theory. In addition HRD models have been developed based on alignment and evaluation fields.

Research in the USA and UK indicates the strategic importance of developing the human capital resources of organisations (Elias & Scarborough, 2004; Crawford & Cabanis-Brewin, 2005). Continuous learning processes throughout the organisation (rather than training programmes delivered for some people from time to time) are an important part of this (Rowden & Conine, 2005; Rothwell, 2002). As this change from training to learning has occurred, traditional approaches to training evaluation have been increasingly criticised. Spitzer (2005) for example argues that there is no data to show any positive impact of training on business results, despite more than $300 billion being spent on training every year which may be because training is not adequate to meet modern accountability needs or to drive the strategic value of learning functions (O’Driscoll, 2005) and the new approaches have been advocated in order to measure the strategic value of learning to the organisation from the perspective of senior decision makers (Anderson, 2009).

Many evaluation models have been proposed to measure the effectiveness of training, including the Kirkpatrick (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2005), Return On Investment (ROI) (Phillips, 2005), context, input, process, and product (CIPP) (Conway & FitzGerald, 2004), context, input, reaction, and outcome (CIRO) (Cooper, 1994). In practice, the Kirkpatrick model is one of the most used frameworks by organisations (Vukovic, Zavrsnik, Rodic and Miglic, 2008; Al-Athari & Zairi, 2002). This model contains four levels reaction, learning, behaviour and result, and the most used in organisations today is reaction level (Al-Athari & Zairi, 2002; Twitchell et al., 2000; Vukovic et al., 2008).

However, these models were established to measure the effectiveness of the training programmes and in practice research suggests that in most cases organisations assess the reaction level or learning level which measures the merit of the training programmes and do not measure the effectiveness of the training programmes at an organisational level. In addition, as the development of SHRD has increasingly focused on the strategic required role
of HRD these models are limited as they do not assess the contribution to organisational strategy.

In summary although the literature over the last 20 years focuses on strategic human resources development (SHRD), the most used model of evaluation in practice still focuses on the training programmes rather than learning as a broad issue, focusing on the merit of the training programmes rather than its value or worth to the organisational strategy.

This thesis considers these issues in the context of HRD in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is a wealthy country (Cooper & Yue, 2008) and in the last twenty years a huge amount of money has been invested on the infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, universities and factories and this expanding has increased the need to use a high number of expatriates in the workforce leading to an increase in the number of unemployed Saudi citizens. Government attempts to replace expatriate workers with qualified Saudi workers has been the focus of the Saudi government’s long term development plans over many years. These plans were set by five-year term plans and have evolved through the past three decades. The eighth socio-economic development plan focuses on the long term perspectives, looking to the year 2024 and much of it is concerned with human resources development and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector organisations.

At a national level the Saudi government has supported human resources development in a generous way for example, they spent 45.600 billion Saudi riyal (SR) on training and education in 1998 and increased this figure to SR 54.300 billion in 2002 (Alzalabani, 2002) and to SR 137.6 billion (about £22 billion in UK pound; 36.7 billion in US Dollars) in 2009 (Ministry of Finance, 2009).

The Saudi development plans show that HRD is a strategic priority in achieving Saudization. However, these plans have been criticised for lacking evidence of positive contribution of HRD on the ‘Saudization’ process and on the level of unemployment among Saudis (Achoui, 2009). In part this may result from a focus on localization based on the education and development of individuals rather than a focus on strategy and policy relating to the labour market structure and human capital development (Wadeea, 2000). In addition alignment between strategic human resource management planning, the government and the private sector were not strong and clear (Al-Lamki, 2000).
In the context of strong national strategy combined with HRD, this thesis examines how strategic HRD is undertaken in achieving organisational strategies. The research undertaken in this thesis explores how HR professionals and CEOs in both public and multinational private sectors in Saudi Arabia value and evaluate strategic learning in their organisations through the following aim and objectives.

1.2 Research Aim

The research aims to investigate the strategic value attached to learning in multinational private and public organisations in Saudi Arabia.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To examine the strategic value of learning from senior managers’ perceptions.
2. To establish the extent to which the value attached to learning in the public sector is different from that in the multinational private sector in Saudi Arabia.
3. To examine any differences in the value attached to learning by HRD specialists and by senior (general) managers of organisations in Saudi Arabia.

1.3 Importance and Contribution of the Research

The study contributes to both academic and practitioner-level knowledge for many reasons. Although research into the strategic value of learning has been undertaken in the UK and USA (see for example O'Driscoll, 2005 and Anderson, 2007), this thesis contributes to knowledge concerning the evolution of strategic HRD in the specific context of Saudi Arabia. Methodologically it contributes a qualitative understanding of SHRD in Saudi Arabia to enable assessment of the gap between the required aspiration of strategic HRD and the challenges that face HRD in Saudi Arabia to achieve the Saudization strategy and development plans. It is the first of its kind to use and apply the approach of O'Driscoll (2005) and Anderson (2007) to the Saudi Arabian context to establish whether these studies can be described as transferable to Saudi Arabia and it contributes to knowledge concerning
the expectation of a strategic role for HRD with an empirical assessment of practice in Saudi Arabia. In addition it contributes to knowledge about the strategic value of learning in the workplace from the perception of senior managers in public and private sector organisations rather than from the perspective of those who deliver training. It also contributes to knowledge and understanding of the challenges of strategic alignment and the strategic value of learning in both public and private sectors in Saudi Arabia and finally it offers a comparison of ideas about the value of learning from different perspectives (head of learning and senior managers) and from different organisational cultures (multinational private sector and public sector). This comparison will help to identify how organisations in developing countries organize and perceive the strategic value of learning to their organisations.

1.4 The Structure and Organisation of the thesis

Chapter 2, the literature review, presents the development of HRD as a concept. It concerns HRD and its related theories particularly exploring the relationship between HRD and alignment models and HRD and evaluation.

Chapter 3 introduces Saudi Arabia and HRD. It provides a general background about Saudi Arabia, the main issues in the development plan for the government that is linked with human resources management and development and finally discusses the business culture in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 4, the methodology chapter, contains 13 parts and outlines: the research philosophy, research approach, research design and sample strategy, as well as the process for collecting and analysis the semi-structure interviews.

Chapter 5 integrates the presentation and the analysis of the data in relation to the aims and objectives of the thesis.

Chapter 6 the discussion and conclusion introduces the main finding and the gap in the literature between the theory and the practice in Saudi Arabia.
CHAPTER 2: HRD, STRATEGIC HRD AND EVALUATION

Human Resources Development (HRD) is a broad and complex topic that is difficult to define but most HRD definitions (see for example McCracken and Wallace, 2000a; Swanson, 2001; Sadler-Smith, 2006) accept that training and development form a central part. However, the literature shows that an increasing feature of HRD in Western economies is to pay attention not just to training programmes but to all learning processes as a broader issue, from individual to organisational learning and from traditional Training and Development (T&D) to some strategically aligned HRD that links its processes and activities with organisation strategies (Anderson, 2007; Garavan, 2007; Sadler-Smith, 2006).

To explain the focus on SHRD this chapter will be divided into four main parts: the development of HRD as a concept; HRD and its related theories; HRD and alignment models, and HRD and evaluating its contribution. The literature review in this thesis shows that, although the focus of HRD over the last 20 years is on the organisation strategy, there is little consensus about how to evaluate the HRD contribution to the organisation strategy. It also indicates that HRD draws on a wide range of theories which underpin a diversity of practice. Finally the argument of this chapter is that research into HRD in organisational settings suggests that there may be a ‘mismatch’ between Strategic Human Resources Development (SHRD) in theory and SHRD in practice in organisations.

2.1 The Development of HRD as a Concept

This section will highlight the evolution of HRD and the main areas of theory that HRD practitioners have made use of. Over the last two decades HRD definitions have focused on three main issues: learning processes and activities (such as on the job, off the job, direct, indirect, Training and Development, Organisational Development (OD), career development etc...), to improving organisational and individual performance and aligning learning processes and activities with organisational strategies to provide value to organisation strategy and stakeholders. Moreover, the evolution of the literature about HRD shows a use of a range of theories related to different fields that include: learning theory, performance
improvement theory, economic theory, systems theory, alignment theory, and value and evaluation theory.

Those who have written about HRD over the years identify different areas of theory as most important. Swanson (2001, p.304), for example, argues that the discipline of HRD relies on three core theories: psychological theory, economic theory and systems theory, while Weinberger (1998) highlights five theories; individual learning: systems theory (organisational learning - learning organisations), performance improvement, economic theory, psychological theory.

Prior to the mid-1980s the literature about HRD tended to make most use of psychology and adult theory since it focused on individual levels of change and learning (Weinberger, 1998). For example, Nadler in 1970 focused on people behaviour change in organisations when he defined HRD as “series of organized activities conducted within a specific time and designed to produce behavioural change” (Nadler, 1970, p.3). Similarly in 1983 Chalofsky and Lincoln focused on organisational change for individuals and groups when they identified the HRD role of “how individuals and groups in organisations change through learning” (Chalfonsky and Lincoln, 1983, p.20).

Over time HRD theorists made more use of ideas from other fields such as systems theory, performance improvement theory and economic theory, focusing attention on the learning investment process required to improve organisation performance (Weinberger, 1998). Nadler and Wiggs (1986) for example, focused on formal learning such as classrooms when they identified HRD as “a comprehensive learning system for the release of the organisation's human potentials, a system that includes both vicarious (classroom, mediated, simulated) learning experiences and experiential, on-the-job experiences that are keyed to the organisation's reasons for survival” (Nadler & Wiggs, 1986, p. 5). Smith (1988) also focused on training and development in order to improve organisational performance and profit suggesting that it involves: “programs and activities, direct and indirect, training and instructional and/or individual that positively affect the development of the individual and the productivity and profit of the organisation” (Smith,1988, p.1). Additionally McLagan (1998) focused on the importance of HRD for individual and organisational performance through the “integrated use of training and development, career development, and organisation development to improve individual and organisational performance” (McLagan ,1989, p.7).
Nadler and Nadler (1989, p.47) also identified HRD’s role as involving an “organised set of learning experiences provided by employees within a specified period of time to bring about the possibility of performance improvement and/or personal growth”.

In summary, the focus of HRD in the 1970s and 1980s gradually expanded to incorporate a focus on learning investment processes and activities to achieve performance improvement drawing on different theoretical fields such as learning theory, systems theory, performance improvement theory and economic theory.

Since that time thinking about HRD has incorporated the concept of corporate strategy as important to improve individual and organisational performance (Wognum, 2001; Toth, 2003; Sims, 2006; Harrison, 1992; Garavan, 1991; Garavan et al., 1998; McLean and McLean, 2001; McCracken and Wallace, 2000a). In 1990, Garavan linked employees’ development with organisation strategy when he identified SHRD as being "concerned with the management of employee learning for the long term keeping in mind the explicit corporate and business strategy" (1991, p.17). Stewart and McGoldrick (1996, p.2) also focus on organisation outcomes when they identify HRD as "activities and process that are intended to have an impact on organisational and individual learning” and Walton (1999) again links learning with organisational strategies to improve performance by defining SHRD as a process that assures learning is facilitated, controlled and linked with organisation strategy to enhance its competences through learning (Walton, 1999).

In 2000 McCracken and Wallace developed the concept of SHRD by focusing on the ‘learning culture’ that focuses on corporate strategy “within which a range of training, development and learning strategies both respond to corporate strategy and also help to shape and influence it” (McCracken and Wallace, 2000a, p.288) and Swanson (2001, p. 304) defines SHRD as the “process of developing and/or unleashing human expertise through organisational development (OD) and personnel training and development (T&D) for the purpose of improving performance”.

McLean and McLean (2001) go further, suggesting that HRD’s role is to provide value not just for the organisation but to the whole of humanity. They argue that HRD involves:

“any process or activity that, either initially or over the long term, has the potential to develop adults’ work-based knowledge, expertise, productivity, and satisfaction,
whether for personal or group/team gain, or for the benefit of an organisation, community, nation, or, ultimately, the whole of humanity” (McLean and McLean, 2001, p.167).

Since the 1990s, therefore HRD’s focus has been on corporate, organisation and possible social strategy, learning process as throughout organisation in addition to individual performance improvement to contribute to organisational performance. Theory from different fields such as learning theory, performance improvement theory, economic theory remain central but there has also been an increased interest in systems theory, strategy theory and value theory.

In addition more recent definitions of HRD have added the concept of alignment as an important issue to link organisation strategy with HRD’s role of contributing to organisations (Sadler-Smith, 2006; Garavan, 2007; Anderson, 2007).

In 2006 Sadler-Smith focused on the alignment between HRD interventions, organisation strategy and stakeholders need when he identifies its role as:

“A coherent, vertically aligned and horizontally integrated set of learning and development activities which are the outcomes of proactive planning process, which address the overall goals of the organisation, acknowledges the needs of stakeholders, are future-oriented and which help to differentiate an organisation from its competitors in a unique and non-imitable way” (Sadler-Smith, 2006, p.45).

In 2007 Garavan modifies his 1991 definition and provides a slightly similar definition to Sadler-Smith’s definition when he defines strategic HRD and a “coherent, vertically aligned and horizontally integrated set of learning and development activities which contribute to the achievement of strategic goals” (Garavan, 2007, p.25).

In summary, the development of thinking about HRD that the role of strategic HRD has focused on the following four main issues in order to improve organisational capability:

- The focus of strategic HRD concept is on the learning and development processes that include different activities (such as individual learning, group learning on the job off the job, direct, indirect, training and development T&D, organisational development
(OD), career development), to improve individual and organisational performance and should not focus on the training programmes only.

- Strategic HRD involves an investment in learning and development processes in order to provide value to organisation strategy (see for example Smith, 1988).

- The importance of aligning strategic HRD investment processes and activities with corporate strategies and stakeholders’ needs and expectations to provide value to organisational outcomes (see for example Garavan, 2007; Sadler-Smith, 2006; Anderson, 2009).

- The strategic HRD outcomes and process need to be agreed and measured to know if the HRD role provides value to organisation strategy and stakeholders needs and expectations from financial and nonfinancial perspectives (see for example Garavan (2007) and Anderson (2007)).

The following figure illustrates the role of alignment in SHRD.

![Figure 2.1 The Role of Alignment in SHRD](image)

However, despite the importance of HRD in achieving organisation strategy, Holton and Yamkovenko argue that it is difficult for HR role to be strategic because HR professionals find difficulty to change their self-image and the views of the top management from traditional role to be more focused on strategic contribution (Holton and Yamkovenko, 2008).

Based on the development of ideas about SHRD, HRD will be defined in this thesis as proactive learning and development investment process that is align with organisation strategy, internal stakeholders expectation at all levels, external stakeholders expectation and
that is maintains ongoing alignment to provide value to organisation strategy and to stakeholders’ expectation based on financial or non financial outcomes.

If HRD is to be understood as a strategic function then it is important to examine its context in the wider area of strategic management. Strategic management can be defined as

“an ongoing process that evaluates and controls the business and the industries in which the company is involved; assesses its competitors and sets goals and strategies to meet all existing and potential competitors; and then reassesses each strategy annually or quarterly [i.e. regularly] to determine how it has been implemented and whether it has succeeded or needs replacement by a new strategy to meet changed circumstances, new technology, new competitors, a new economic environment., or a new social, financial, or political environment”. (Lamb, 1984, p. ix).

In this definition “Strategic management” focuses on the alignment between internal environment (strengths, weaknesses) and external environment (opportunities and threats) (SWOT) for the organisation (Andrews, 1987; Wirtenberg et al., 2008). Therefore for organisations to achieve value they need to develop sustainable competitive advantages (Ramachandran, Mukherji and Sud, 2006). The strategic management process involves four elements of environmental analysis: strategy formulation, strategy implementation and strategy evaluation and control (Alkhafaji & Alan, 2003; Rabin, Miller, Hildreth, 2000; Deb, 2006).

In order to explore the strategic role of HRD in organisations the following part of this chapter will highlight HRD process related to achieving individual needs, organisation change, stakeholders’ need and organisation strategy. In the light of the theories on which HRD practices are based.
2.2 HRD and its Related Theories

This part will discuss the main theories that underpin HRD practice: individual learning theory, performance theory, systems theory and economic theory. This discussion is important to explore how HR professionals might contribute to achieving individual needs, stakeholders needs and organisation strategy. This part will discuss these theories and will classify them into three area; individual learning theory, systems theory and economic and performance improvement theory.

2.2.1 The Individuals and Learning Theories

In this section the individual learning theories most relevant to the HRD field will be discussed to show how learning principles are used within the HRD concept to develop individuals’ capability. These theories involve; behaviourism, cognitivism, humanism, social learning, instructional theories and adult learning theory.

Many of the theoretical explanations of learning have developed from psychological theory (Weinberger, 1998, p.82) and in particular behaviourism, cognitivism and humanism are the three approaches that have been found relevant to issues of learning and HRD (Huberty and Kramlinger, 1990; Passmore, 1997) and these are briefly outlined here.

The first approach is Behaviourist Theory which concentrates on behaviour that can be observed and measured. According to Huberty and Kramlinger (1990), “this approach is based on the premise that learning occurs primarily through the reinforcement of desired responses”. Laird (1985) and Burns (1995) affirm that the desired behaviour will be repeated by the learner if positive reinforcement follows the behaviour. In this case learning is seen as a sequence of associations between stimuli and responses (Weinberger, 1998, p.82). This theory views the mind as a "black box" in the sense that response to a stimulus can be observed, overlooking the possibility of thought processes occurring.

According to Gredler (2001), behaviourism makes three assumptions about learning; observable behaviour is more important than understanding internal activities, behaviour
should be focused on simple elements, specific stimuli and responses, and learning is about behaviour change. Many well known theorists have been involved with the development of this theory, for example Pavlov, Watson, Thorndike and Skinner (Good and Brophy, 1990).

This theory therefore suggests that to change any individuals behaviour, the learning process needs to be designed based on identifying the gap in the employee performance and how to close it by fostering the change to the required behaviour. However, Swanson & Holton (2009, p.107) see that based on this theory HRD “must develop the knowledge and expertise of individual contribution, work process owners, and organisation leaders”.

The second approach that has been found relevant to issues of learning and HRD is cognitive theory. During the last three decades this theory focused on acquisition of knowledge structure rather than behaviour (Uljens, 1997). This theory suggests that “before we accept and learn new ideas we test it against things we already know” (Anderson & Garrison, 1995). This means that it focuses “on the learner and the learning process, particularly on the way in which the learner receives, organises and retains information” (Steed, 1999, p.43). According to Malone (2003) this theory provides many key principles to learning; prior knowledge, relationships, organisation, feedback, individuals’ differences and task perception. Burns (1995) argues that this theory informs the HRD concern to take into account that individuals have different needs and concerns at different times, and that they have subjective interpretations in different contexts.

According to Dreeben (2009), in the cognitive model the instructor is transferring information to produce learning and helping learners to organize this information in a way they are able to recall it later without the requirement for a stimulus (as in behaviour).

This theory suggests that HRD professionals is not only concerned with behaviour change to make learning happen but that learning processes also involve mental stimulation and intellectual development. Swanson & Holton (2009, p.107) argue that based on this theory HRD needs to “harmonize the goal and behaviours among individual contribution, work groups, work process owners, and organisation leaders”.

In addition to behavioural and cognitive theories the Humanist approach is also relevant to HRD and has been linked with a facilitative approach to learning. This theory argues that human beings are naturally eager and ready to learn (EL Hakim, Elsayed, Satti and Yagoub, 2007). The main purpose of this theory is that learning will occur by the trainer acting as a
facilitator, in order to produce a more comfortable atmosphere in which learners or trainees do not feel threatened by external factors (Laird, 1985). There are several factors which distinguish the humanistic approach from other approaches within psychology, including the emphasis on “subjective meaning, a rejection of determinism, and a concern for positive growth” (Sharma, 2009, p.243). According to Richard (2009, p.375) “If humans are not viewed as motivated to develop and improve, then some of the core premises of HRD disappears”. Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers are well-known names in this approach (Coon & Mitterer, 2007).

Humanist theory focuses on learning processes that focus on three assumptions: the employees have a natural eagerness and willingness to learn and can be viewed as motivated to develop and improve (EL Hakim et al., 2007), HRD should act as a facilitator to encourage the learning to happen and the learning atmosphere and culture should support learners to learn (Laird, 1985).

Another important theory that has been found relevant to issues of learning and HRD is social learning theory which was developed by Bandura and Walters through the principles of observational learning (Andersen & Taylor, 2005).

This theory suggests that the development of behaviours and attitudes occurs in response to reinforcement and encouragement from those people around the learner (Andersen & Taylor, 2005). It examines the way that people learn from each other and includes concepts such as imitation, observational learning, and modelling and it also realises that learning can occur without a change in behaviour (EL Hakim et al., 2007). The use of feedback in this theory is important to provide learners with information that allows a comparison of current and desired behaviour (Russ-Eft, 2002).

The literature emphasises that this theory is commonly held to be an effective learning process of great significance which improves learning and adds learning in a way that is not usually possible in the classroom environment (Swanson & Holton, 2001).

Swanson and Holton (2009) recommended to model new behaviours and guide learners to learn from others and this need to be done by a facilitator. Werner & DeSimone (2008) argue that when using social learning theory the person’s self-efficacy expectation will determine;
whether the behaviour will be performed, the expected effort that will be spent and will determine the length of time that someone will go on carrying out a particular behaviour.

Social learning suggests, therefore, that employees can and will learn from others (EL Hakim et al., 2007), the development in employee behaviour is expected to happen if individuals meet a variety of models and if they believe that these models will help them to achieve their works (Andersen & Taylor, 2005) and the importance of feedback for the employee to make comparison between desired and required behaviour (Russ-Eft, 2002). Learning can be in or out of the classroom (Swanson & Holton, 2001).

The last theory relevant to individual learning and HRD is adult learning theory. Malcolm Knowles is considered the founder of this theory (Greeno, 2006). Adult learning theory refers to a collection of several concepts and theories that explain how adults rather than children learn focusing on adult learning is the process that engages adults in a long-term change in the domains of attitude, knowledge, and behaviour (Yang, 2004).

Knowles (1980) identified four characteristics of adult learners: they are more self-directed, their life experiences and knowledge become a rich resource for learning, adults want information that is practical, and adults want to be able to use that information immediately. This theory “provides a unique foundation for HRD theory and practice” (Yang, 2004, p.142).

The previous overview indicated a range of contributions to HRD that are used to develop effective learning processes and activities that improve individual’s performance. They focus attention on the following features of HRD practice: learning processes involve different stimulus and motivation (mental and behaviour), a focus on the workplace need to increase individual learning (Gredler, 2001; Swanson, & Holton, 2009), effective HRD involves identifying individual performance gaps based on the employees’ participation and involving them in identifying the expected outcomes from learning to encourage learning (Yang, 2004). HRD also involves building culture and atmosphere that support continuous learning based on formal and informal learning to link learning goals with the required individual performance outcomes (Richard, 2009; Laird, 1985) and HRD focuses on formal and informal communications that facilitate individual learning in the organisation (Swanson & Holton, 2001). These points are summarised in figure 2.2.
Although individual learning theories and practice provide a useful contribution to the HRD field to achieve individual’s performance improvement their weaknesses can be summarised as: 1) they focus on individual level of learning to increase individual capability and not organisation level of learning that focuses on organisational change (such as organisational learning or knowledge management), 2) they focus on the actual process of learning, not with the value of what is being learned (Schoenholtz-Read & Rudestam, 2009) and 3) the learning process does not take account of organisation strategy.

Some of these issues are addressed in systems approaches and the following section will focus on the second area that informs HRD practice.

2.2.2 HRD and Systems Theory

This part will highlight three theories that form part of systems theory in relation to HRD: HRD as a sub-system, organisational learning, and knowledge management all of which have implications for HR practice and its focus on achieving organisational change.

Systems theory is one of the main theories that are seen to constitute HRD (see, for example, Jacobs, 1987 and Stolovitch & Keeps, 1999); indeed learning (organisational learning and learning organisation and knowledge management), performance improvement and economic theories can all be viewed from a systems theory perspective (Weinberger, 1998).

Systems theory is “concerned with systems, wholes, and organisations” (Swanson & Holton, 2001, p.114). According to Weinberger (1998) many researchers highlighted the importance
of a systems view to HRD’s role and its processes. For example Jacobs (1987) links this theory with performance theory when he argues that human performance technology involves using systems approaches to guarantee that individuals possess, the correct skills, motivation, knowledge, as well as the environmental support necessary to be able to carry out their jobs in an effective and efficient way. It is argued that this theory involves “input, process and output of a system as well as feedback loop” (Swanson & Holton, 2009, p. 538) and HRD is considered as a subsystem within a larger organisational system (Swanson & Holton, 2009).

An important component of HRD as a subsystem is Strategic Management Development (SMD). Most of the theoretical models of management development focus on the linkage between management development and strategic management (D’Netto, Bakas and Bordia, 2008) to improve or sustain organisation performance and achieve competitive advantage (Gold, Thorpe and Mumford, 2010). Strategic Management Development is defined as “Management development interventions which are intended to enhance the strategic capability and corporate performance of the organisation”(Brown, 2005, p.210). Pilbeam & Corbridge (2010) argue that having strategic management development is important to achieve alignment between HRD process and activities with organisation strategy and in this case SDM should focus on all level of management (top, middle and line managers).

Gold et al., (2010) highlighted two purposes of strategic leadership and management development (LMD); developing managers to improve the current business and developing managers to improve future business. They argue that preparing managers to improve the current business is more dominant in practice. Martin (2002) argues that the managers need to have skills to manage people such as: analysis of self and others, motivating individuals and teams to complete tasks, decision making. These skills can be acquired through effective management development programmes.

The outcomes of effective management development programmes should focus to increase job satisfaction, lower turnover and increase the opportunities to fill executive vacancies (Jensen Van Der Velde and Mul, 2001). Collingwood (2001) suggest that HR professionals develop a return on investment (ROI) model that focuses on comparing the investment in the management development programme against the returns from these programmes.
The literature suggests many HRD models to achieve strategic LMD which incorporate many elements such as; aligning leadership development planning with organisation strategy, aligning leadership development with key people management processes, evaluating learning and behaviour change and evaluating the effect on services and objectives (Gold, et al., 2010; Harrison, 2009).

In addition to HRD and Strategic Management Development as a subsystem, the literature also suggests that HRD is central to organisational learning and learning organisation. The concept of the Organisational Learning system (OL) was described by Argyris and Schon (1978, p.29) when they asserted that, “there is no organisational learning without individual learning and that individual learning is necessary but an insufficient condition for organisational learning”.

The importance of the relationship between change and knowledge was also highlighted and the OL system was developed as the process which is followed to improve actions using enhanced knowledge and understanding (Fiol and Lyles, 1985), so that the organisation can enhance its performance through sharing knowledge between employees to provide value to their strategy (Stewart, McGoldrick and Watson, 2001). According to Woodall, Lee and Stewart (2004), the concept of OL affirms that learning must be strongly linked to the organisation change. In this case, the focus must be on learning at the organisational level rather than the individual level (Dixon, 1992).

A particular feature of the literature about OL is the distinction between single loop learning and double loop learning (Argyris and Schon, 1978; Clegg, Kornberger and Pitsis, 2005). Single loop learning focuses on the process of detecting and correcting errors. Argyris and Schon (1978, p. 2-3) argue that single loop learning occurs when error detection “… permits the organisation to carry on its present policies or achieve its present objectives”, while double loop learning is achieved if “… error is detected and corrected in ways that involve the modification of an organisation’s underlying norms, policies and objectives”.

The concept of OL is often associated with learning organisations (LO). The learning organisation (LO) can be defined as “one in which everyone is engaged in identifying and solving problems, enabling the organisation to continuously experiments, change, and
improve, thus increasing its capacity to grow, learn, and achieve its purpose” (Daft, 2009, p. 50).

There is very little consensus about the definition of a LO. Jones and Hendry (1994) argue that the role of a LO is to “concentrate on change, worker participation and development, adaption, management system and constructors, and process of delegation, power and control”. However, Senge (1990) characterises LO as an organisation which should be constantly developing its capability to create its own future. These different definitions focus on a range of principles to foster participation of all employees and concentration on organisational change; Watkins and Marsick (1992, p.117) believe that LOs are created when HR developers focus on increasing the learning capacity of an organisation.

In spite of a lack of clear agreement about the scope of a LO three key components may be identified; first, the use of continuous learning which needs to be formulated so as to produce and control knowledge outcomes, second, the organisation’s performance should be improved as a result of these outcomes and third, this would increase its value in terms of financial assets as well as non-financial intellectual capital in the long-run (Watkins and Marsick, 1999).

Although ‘Organisational Learning’ and ‘Learning Organisation’ are not the same things, they are both important ideas underpinning systems approach to HRD. Schwandt and Marquardt (2000) argue that OL is to identify the required outcomes while LO is the required process to increase the cognitive capacity of the organisation as a whole both of which are important if learning at the organisational level is to be achieved.

A further set of ideas about the organisational level of learning is Knowledge Management (KM). The definition of KM was classified by three criteria; formal aspect, process aspect and organisational aspect (Leondes, 2005). O’Dell & Grayson (1998, p.6), define KM as “a conscious strategy of getting the right knowledge to the right people at the right time and helping people share and put information into action in ways that strive to improve organisational performance” while Wiig (1993, p.564) focuses on systematic and formal aspect when they define it as “the systematic, explicit, and deliberate building, renewal, and application of knowledge to maximize an enterprise’s knowledge-related effectiveness and
returns from its knowledge assets”. This definition requires the organisation to build effective systems of knowledge and support continuous improvement to the system to provide value to the organisation’s performance.

Most KM definitions try to affirm that knowledge is essential to improve organisational performance. According to Price (2000), KM theories argue that there are two forms of knowledge: explicit (which can be documented in a manual) and tacit (which is not so easy to transfer to someone else).

Love, Li and Irani (2000) suggest that, in order to make learning happen in the organisation, processes and structure need to be set up to help employees to create new knowledge and to encourage them to continuously improve themselves and the organisation.

Organisational learning and knowledge management have much in common as they address the phenomenon of increasing the organisation’s capacity to innovate and change (Grover & Davenport, 2001). However, OL is based on humanist learning theory and KM is based on an economic learning theory (Boud, Cressey and Docherty, 2006). None-the-less the key feature of developing thinking about knowledge management and practice of the HRD is a focus on continuous learning processes with participation from all employees to establish and manage knowledge outcomes that provide value to an organisation’s performance and knowledge assets. The implication of these theories to this thesis is the issue of involvement and the extent to which senior management continuous learning is encouraged to improve organisation performance and not individuals’ performance only. The required features of HRD are illustrated in figure 2.3.

**Figure 2.3 HRD based on KM, OL and LO theories and practice**
2.2.3 HRD and Economic and Performance Theories

Another important strand in HRD thinking and practice is the focus on economic and performance theories (see for example Nadler and Nadler, 1989; Smith, 1988; McLagan, 1998). To understand the implication for SHRD relating to organisational performance and human capital (H.C.) two theories will be discussed; economic theory and performance improvement theory.

Economic Theory is considered as an important feature of HRD (Swanson & Holton, 2001). It is argued that HRD should focus on the value added to companies through training, development and organisation development (Smith, 2003). In addition HRD sets out to ensure performance improvement involving consideration of direct analysis, action, and the measurement of the economic outcomes of an organisation (Swanson, 1999).

Within economic theory Swanson and Holton (2001) and Dobbs, Sun Roberts (2008) argue that human capital is an important concept with particular relevance to the discipline of HRD. Human Capital is defined as the knowledge, skills and abilities residing with and utilised by individuals (Schultz, 1961). Human capital involves the skills and abilities that have been acquired within the organisation by individuals (Lynn, 2002; Becker, 1964). Chen and Lin (2003) suggest that human capital is the investment of the company in talent and technology which provide competitive advantage. According to Fitz-enz (2000), human capital theory enables the organisation to achieve its vision and mission by focusing on achieving economic outcomes. Ideas about human capital management highlight the potential economic benefits of human resource development in terms of Return-On-Investment (ROI) (Cho, 1998; Torraco, 1998).

Many researchers describe the relationship between human capital and human resource development that it “stems from their focus on the use of the labour force in the process of economic productivity, in the broader sense of the term” (Zidan, 2001). Barney (1991) identifies human resources as the workforce potential to contribute to sustainable competitive advantage while human capital is the organisation’s human resources inclusive of skills experience and innovation.
Human capital theories are important for HRD, therefore, particularly the focus on linking learning investment with organisational strategy. Toth (2003, p.151) argues that HR professionals should ensure all learning investment focuses on:

accomplishing the organisation’s mission, strategy, and goals; provides a single point of accountability for those investments; develops the corporate learning strategy; creates a culture of continuous learning; fosters communities of practice; integrates training function; drives cultural transformation; and measures the impact on organisational performance.

The importance of human capital theory is illustrated in figure 2.4.

The previous discussion highlights the importance of HRD investment processes based on economic and human capital theories, something that will be examined in this thesis to know how the CEO managers and HR professionals in Saudi organisations understand these issues and to explore the process in the investment of HRD. The following section will discuss the third theory (performance improvement theory) that has influenced the development of thinking about HRD (see for example McLagan, 1998).

In addition to economic theory, many definitions of HRD highlight the importance of improving performance for the employees and the organisation (McLagan, 1989; Smith, 1988). The literature highlights many theories and models associated with Human Performance Improvement (HPI). Weinberger (1998) affirms that human competence is a function of performance.
According to Rothwell, Sanders and Soper (2000), the more common theories in HPI include; Performance Engineering (Gilbert, 1978), Human Performance Technology (Stolovitch & Keeps, 1992) and High Performance Work System (HPWS) (Nadler and Gerstein, 1992). These theories will be discussed to identify the implication for HRD in relation to providing value to organisational and individual performance.

Performance Engineering was developed in 1978 by Gilbert to enable HR professionals to organise and monitor key human resource attributes in the global organisation (Gilbert, 1978; Gilbert, 2007). According to Gilbert (2007) performance can be defined as an accomplishment that is valued and the purpose of performance engineering is to increase human capital. Gilbert (2007) argues that the costs of improving human performance can be seen as investments in human capital. Weinberger (1998) argued that returns in term of the performance potential of both organisations and individuals would result from investments in human capital (economic theory).

Gilbert identified two required factors to improve performance: the workplace environment factors (information, resources and incentives), second factors that correspond to employee performance (knowledge, capacity and motives) (Gilbert; 2007; Gilbert, 1978). In common with systems theories this model suggests that most of the changes are likely be found in the environment before the person. He affirms that it is important to identify and measure accomplishment at all levels. Gilbert (2007, pp.45-46) identifies three kinds of measurements which can be used individually or in combinations to measure the accomplishment: quality, quantity (or productivity) and cost. Gilbert’s model focuses on human competence at an individual level rather than at an organisational level and it has also been criticised in that each part of his model does not identify a comprehensive list of factors such that “it does not explicitly direct the analyst toward specific solution” (Rothwell, Hohne & King, 2007, p.65). However, this model and its principles are used today by performance specialists and consultant (LaBonte, 2001) as a way of identifying broad areas for potential improvement.

Human Performance Technology (HPT) is the second framework of performance improvement of relevance to the HRD field which is grounded in systems theory. According to Stolovitch & Keeps (1999, p. 4), HPT is the application of what is known about human and organisational behaviour to enhance accomplishments, economically and effectively, in ways...
that are valued within the work setting. Thus HPT is a field of endeavour that seeks to bring about changes to a system, in such a way that the system is improved in terms of the achievement it values. The main purpose of HPT is “to engineer systems that allow people and organisations to perform in ways that they and all stakeholders value” (Stolovitch et al., 2006, p. 1364). To achieve this, most practices related to HPT follow a common approach of analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation (ADDIE) model (Wang & King, 2009).

High Performance Work System (HPWS) is a further area of performance improvement which can be applied in the HRD field (Weinberger, 1998). Nadler and Gerstein argue that it is important to combine four components to create HPWS: work, people, technology and information to provide value to their stakeholders (Nadler and Gerstein, 1992).

The main idea of HPWS is to produce an organisation which is rooted in encouraging employees to be involved and committed and to be empowered and which does not resort to trying to control employees (Tomer, 200; Altman, 2006). According to Lawler (1992) in these high involvement organisations, employees consider themselves to be responsible for the organisation’s success and a part of it and they feel that they know more, do more and contribute more to the organisation.

Performance improvement frameworks are relevant to HRD in their focus on managing the organisation system to bring together work, employees, technology and information to generate high performance based on organisation strategy and external and internal stakeholders’ performance improvement.

According to Rothwell, (1999, p. 101) HPI requires “HRD practitioners, line managers, and others managers to identify past, present, or possible future performance gaps, consider possible interventions to close performance gap, identify appropriate and optimal interventions and evaluate how well interventions are closing human performance gaps and realising human performance improvement potential”. According to Combs and Falletta, (2000, p.8), evaluating the quality, value, and effectiveness of the process and activities is important to know if the intervention was successful.
Rothwell (1999, p.v) recommended that “as individuals engage in human performance improvement work, they are accountable for what they have done. As a result, they must also demonstrate returns on investments in human performance improvement interventions”.

Many researchers discuss who should be involved in the evaluation process. LaBonte (2001) focus on the stakeholders when he argues that they might be a product line manager, the executive of a business unit, the senior vice president of the sales division, or the executive vice president of line of business. In this case he describes the HPI practitioners’ role as they “must develop close working relationships or partnerships with key client and focus on their business needs” and the HPI department operate at its highest potential if “its goal, products, and services are aligned with the organisation’s strategy and HPI process. This alignment occurs when the HPI leader and senior managers share a common vision and strategy for performance improvement” (LaBonte, 2001. p. 20).

Swanson (1994) affirms that it is important for HRD to identify ways of measuring performance when he mentions that it is unwise to discuss change, development, and performance improvement without reference to a specific performance measure. These issues highlights the case for HRD practitioners to focus on performance at the strategic, systematic and individual levels and especially focus on the importance of performance measurement processes. In this case literature indicates that there is a need to assess the role of HRD performance in the organisational framework and in the internal processes and practices within its own function (Phillips & Holton, 1997). This role can be underpinned from the concern of HRD professionals and senior managers to improve individual and organisational performance.

Economic and performance theories are very relevant to HRD, therefore as they highlight:

- The importance of linking HRD and learning investment processes with organisation strategy, mission and vision. In particular analyzing the gap in performance, providing investment in learning and development processes to provide value to organisation strategy and then the requirement to measure its value to organisation strategy.
- The role of HRD encouraging continuous learning that can foster cultural transformation.
A requirement for HRD investment learning processes to meet all internal stakeholder expectations at all levels to get their support and commitment to provide best potential of achieving learning value.

The benefits where HRD investment learning processes meet external stakeholder expectations to provide value to the organisational performance.

**Conclusion:**

This brief review of different areas of theory (individual, systems and economic theory), indicates the importance for HRD of developing learning systems that provide value to organisations through the following phases.

- In the input phase, the importance of linking HRD with the learning investment process and with organisation strategy and stakeholders’ expectations.
- In the process phase the HRD focus on providing value to organisation strategy and stakeholders’ expectations through continuously reviewing the value of these processes.
- In the output phase, the value of the HRD processes and outcomes should be measured to know its contribution to organisational strategy and stakeholders’ expectations based on financial and non financial outcomes.
- In the feedback phase it is suggested that the learning and development should be continuous and provide value to the next input phase.

These points are illustrated in figure 2.5.
As indicated already, alignment of HRD with organisational strategy is important and the following section will focus on this issue.

2.3 HRD and Alignment Models

A significant development in HRD over the past 20 years has been the argument that it should be strategic. The word ‘strategic’ normally is used to refer to a development which is based on the company’s objectives, not an individual’s (Luoma, 2000) and those who advocate strategic HRD argue that it is important for the learning function to be strategic by linking its priorities, policies, goals, processes and activities with business strategies. Johnson and Scholes (1993) and Wilson (2005) emphasise that strategy should focus on stakeholder expectations when they described it as the course of an organisation and its scope, if possible over a longer period of time, which used to adjust its resources to the changing environment, especially its markets, customers, and clients, in order that stakeholder expectations will be fulfilled.

Many concepts (such as link, fit, partnership) are used to explain the required relationship between HRD and stakeholders (see for example Semler, 1997; Tjepkema, 2002; Goss, 1994; Goss, 1997) and necessary attention has been given to the alignment concept (see for example Anderson 2009; Sadler-Smith, 2006; Garavan, 2007). Gratton & Truss (2003 p.75) identify the difference between the concept of fit and alignment as follows: “fit implies a
relationship between two discrete entities while alignment suggests a much more fluid dynamic that allows for variation and flexibility”.

This concept of “alignment” was used by Harrison (1997) and Sims (2006, pp.6-7) to affirm that HRD practices need to be designed to be aligned with business strategy. Sims (2006, pp.6-7) describes learning, training and development LTD professionals as strategic partners who “participate in the process of defining organisational strategy” and when they and the strategic managers ask questions “that move strategy to action ... design HRD practices that align with the business strategy”.

Many researchers relate the HRD role to what is called organisational alignment (Garavan, 2007; Sadler-Smith, 2006; Anderson, 2009). According to Semler (1997), “organisational alignment (OA) is a term which describes the degree that an organisation’s strategy, culture and structure work together to produce a synergistic whole which allows the organisation to reach its strategic goals. In this case the HRD role should focus on developing appropriate HRD goals and objectives, and interventions, keeping in mind the company’s strategy, problems and developments in all levels of the company (Wognum, 2001). McCracken and Carroll (1998) state that it is only feasible to take full advantage of competencies by an integrated alignment process. These processes are required to achieve alignment between many managers’ and employees’ needs with the current and future needs of organisations which can be successfully achieved when the HR policies are aligned with organisation strategy (Goss, 1997).

However, to understand the concept of organisational alignment it is important to understand what is in the literature about organisational alignment theories. Two main theories are discussed which describe the required OA in organisations; systematic agreement theory and strategic reference points theory.

According to Way & Johnson (2005, p.6) and Semler (1997) ‘organisational alignment’ can be understood through Systematic Agreement Theory (SAT). This theory provides a framework showing to what extent the culture, design and strategies of an organisation are working together to reach the same desired goals. However, this alignment should be focused
on providing organisational effectiveness which means that it should achieve the organisational goals and objectives and create competitive advantage (Semler, 1997).

According to Semler (1997), this theory contains four aspects of organisational alignment:

1) Structural alignment which is related to the harmony between the goals of various activities and the method used to allow SHRM to behave in the way necessary to reach those goals.

2) Cultural alignment which is related to the way that the leadership of an organisation along with SHRM brings into being an organisational culture which promotes organisational strategies and helps achieve organisational targets and objectives.

3) Performance alignment which is related to the degree that an organisation’s actual outcomes are in agreement with the outcomes which are needed for an organisation to achieve its goals and objectives.

4) Environmental alignment which mirrors the way that the demands of the external environment and the goals, vision, and tactics which the organisation is striving for correspond strategically.

According to Semler (1997) some HRD models consider that it is possible to arrive at positive alignment by associating processes and activities to organisational strategy. These models consider performance can be improved by making sure that the output of every process in the organisation works towards reaching the organisation’s strategic goals.

Way & Johnson (2005, p.9) argue that while this theory provides “a broad framework for understanding the importance of alignment in explicating organisational effectiveness, it does not explain how an organisation’s leaders should approach these decisions”.

The second theory is the strategic reference points theory (SRPT); this incorporates three critical dimensions related to how best to achieve alignment between the internal organisation and its external environment (present and future) which are: conditions internal to the organisation; conditions external to the organisation; and time (Fiegenbaum, Hart & Schendel, 1996). According to Verburg, Ortt and Dicke (2005, p.210) to get positive
alignment, organisations need to identify the following three strategic reference points theory (SRP).

1) Internal SRP: in this case the organisations should formulate goals for such strategic inputs as quality improvements, cost reduction, and new product development. They should then assess their performance on the basis of these targets. To characterise this dimension the organisation needs to identify its strategic input which can be defined in relation to activities which add value and which make up the main thrust of the firm or are the primary focus of management’s concern, and strategic output which can be defined as sales and profitability and hold managers responsible for performance against these targets.

2) Strategic external reference points, or external benchmarks, for example competitors (industrial organisation), suppliers and customers (resources dependence) or society in general (institutional theory) (Verburg et al., 2005). In this dimension alignment is used to deal with any lacks or to gradually build new capabilities (Fiegenbaum et al., 1996).

3) Time for SRP present and future which is to be considered a critical dimension (Verburg et al., 2005)

In addition to HRD the alignment models suggest that for HRD to be strategic in its role its goal and policy must be aligned with organisation strategy and stakeholders expectation through assuring the following processes and outcomes; undertaken jointly by those responsible for HRD and other internal stakeholders:

1- Identify the organisational strategies (present and future) and make sure they meet the external stakeholders’ expectation, and then formulate proactive learning and development to provide value to the organisation based on financial or non financial outcomes such as quality improvement or increased sales.

2- Agree how to maintain ongoing alignment with the agreed strategies and how to measure the value of HRD investment process using internal or external benchmarks.

3- Focus on measurement from managerial perspective taking account both financial and non-financial outcomes.
In addition, the discussion of alignment theories reveals two types of alignment: vertical strategic alignment (vertical integration) and horizontal alignment (Wognum, 2001; Anderson, 2009; Garavan, 2007), which are considered in the next section.

### 2.3.1 HRD and Vertical Strategic Alignment

This alignment refers to the way that objectives, strategies, action plans, and decisions are distributed over the organisation’s different levels (Kathuria et al., 2007). In this case HRD policies and practices should meet the expectation of all levels of stakeholders to achieve the organisation’s goals and objectives. According to Schuler and Jackson (2007, p.392), to achieve this alignment it is necessary to have a strong connection between the overall vision of the organisation, as seen by the senior executives, and the organisation’s aims, objectives, and its fundamental philosophy regarding how people should be managed.

Many authors argue that HRD policies and practices should be built on three different vertical levels. Wognum (2001) classified them as strategic, tactical and operational levels, while Kathuria, Joshi, and Porth (2007) classified them as corporate, business and function levels. These levels can be considered when formulating strategy.

In this case, the alignment of HRD processes and activities can be built based on the participation of many of the stakeholders relevant to these three levels. Moreover, commitment and support from those levels of the stakeholders is needed in order to take full advantage of the organisational alignment.

According to Wognum (2001, p.409), there are three stages in the alignment process that HR professionals and stakeholders need to be aware of:

- Identifying organisational strategies, problems, and developments at all company levels; examining these in relation to possible HRD implications; making strategic choices about the way in which strategies, problems, and developments can be supported by HRD programs and other learning activities.
2.3.2 HRD and Horizontal Alignment

This type of alignment refers to the way that efforts across the organisation are coordinated. It is related to the amount of internal coherence and consistency the firm’s official HR policies have (Schuler and Jackson, 2007).

According to Schuler and Jackson (2007) firms that have high levels of vertical alignment may not have the same high levels horizontally and Kathuria et al. (2007) note that studies of horizontal are less common than vertical. They note that in such cases the researchers usually seem to look at relationships between two particular areas, for example manufacturing and HR, or marketing and operations or in the context of the horizontal alignment regarding HR function, the focus of the research is on the relationship between HRD practice and HRM practice.

Sims (2006) argues that alignment can provide three advantages if HRD professionals translate organisational strategies into HRD priorities. First, the organisation can adapt to change because the time from the conception to the action of a strategy is shortened, second, it can meet customer demand because they translate their customer service strategies into specific policies and practices, third, the organisation can effectively execute its strategy that focuses on achieving financial performance.

Sims (2006, p.339) described three aspects of the role of HRD to be strategic in that:

HRD executives should contribute information, ideas, and recommendation during strategy formulation and ensure the organisation’s HRD strategy is consistent with the overall strategy, provide education and training programmes that support effective strategic management and they must continue to improve their ability to demonstrate that all their HRD efforts are clearly linked to the goals and strategies of the organisation.

However, if HRD is to be aligned with organisation strategy and is to focus on stakeholders’ expectations then top management support and commitment is required. Many researchers argue that stakeholder support is required from chief executives, senior management and line managers (Lee, 1996; Garavan, 1991; Torraco and Swanson, 1995; Noel & Dennehy, 1991).
However, Garavan (2007) affirms that HRD must have the ability to identify what various stakeholder groups expect and combine these expectations to arrive at the organisation’s comprehensive HRD goals.

Garavan (1991) and Wognum (2000) argue that top management support and participation is vital for alignment of HRD with organisation strategy. Lee (1996) suggested that the support of top managers needs to be from the point of view of their operational roles and their own personal development. Torraco and Swanson (1995) argue that to obtain top management support, HRD professionals must identify their strategic capability to develop individuals to do their jobs competently. McCracken and Wallace (2000b) argue that top management support should become top management leadership and if the senior managers do not support the HRD role the alignment between strategy and HRD will be difficult to achieve.

Many researchers (Garavan, 1991; Wognum, 2000) affirm the importance of line managers as stakeholders. According to Garavan (1991), line managers are to be considered key stakeholders. Their commitment and involvement is critical for alignment. Wognum (2000) stresses the importance of fully involving the line manager in any HRD decision-making to keep HRD activity at the tactical and operational level aligned. McCracken and Wallace (2000a) added that it is important to involve line managers in HRD policies and planning to enable them to value the importance of training and development (T&D) in improving the work. Harrison (1997) affirms the need for shared ownership of HRD, where line managers and HRD staff work in partnership on HRD issues.

It can be seen from examination of the alignment concept that there may be four main features of alignment; 1) analysis of organisational strategies and identify the organisation past, current and future weaknesses and current and future development at all company levels 2) making strategic choices of how HRD investment process and activities can support organisation strategies, vision and mission, problems, and developments (such as profit, productivities, quality, cost reduction) 3) agree with stakeholders on how they will maintain ongoing alignment with previous stage 4) agree with stakeholders of how they will measure
their strategic value of their learning (such as profit, productivities, quality, cost reduction). These points are illustrated in figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6 HRD learning and development process and activities based on alignment theory

2.3.3 HRD Alignment in Practice

Studies to identify the relation between HRD role and business strategies in a number of organisations in Western economies suggest that there is a gap between practice and theory relating to alignment between HRD and business strategy.

1- In 1997, Harrison found in her research that there is no significant connection between HRD and business strategy in organisations across the UK (Harrison, 1997).

2- In 2000, McCracken and Wallace found that although nearly 75 percent of organisations in the Lothians and central Scotland reported an “intrinsic” or “very close” link between HRD strategy and business strategy they could find no empirical evidence for these claims (McCracken and Wallace, 2000b).

3- In 2001, Wognum focused on vertical integration of HRD policy at different organisational levels. The quantitative survey reported findings from 44 large Dutch companies. She found a lack of alignment between HRD policy or strategic HRD in all aspects and at all levels of the companies (Wognum, 2001).
4- In 2007, a survey undertaken by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) found that only one-third of UK learning and training managers feel that learning and development implications are taken into account when overall organisational strategy is formulated (CIPD, 2007).

5- Anderson focused on strategic HRD alignment in UK organisations and found that experiences of HRD alignment are complex, ambiguous and contextually orientated; she suggested that, whilst organisation are trying to achieve SHRD alignment it may be neither achievable nor even desirable (Anderson, 2009).

In summary, the published evidence suggests a difference between theory and practice about HRD and alignment. Another important feature of HRD which is linked with alignment is the value and contribution of HRD to organisation strategy (as highlighted in economic theory). The following section will discuss evaluation definitions and their main concepts as well as the most used evaluation models to further explore the issue of HRD and the strategic contribution of learning to organisations.

2.4 HRD and Evaluation

The development of strategic HRD affirms the importance of alignment between HRD professionals’ roles and other organisational stakeholders to achieve learning interventions that focus on achieving organisational goals. Economic and performance theories suggest that these interventions need to be valued and evaluated to know to what extent learning helps achieve the organisational goals. This feature of HRD will be discussed next and this chapter will divided into three parts: 1) the most common evaluation definitions in HRD and their focus 2) most frequently used evaluation models and their weaknesses and the gap between these models and their practice 3) evaluation of the strategic value of learning.

2.4.1 Evaluation Definitions

During the last forty years, there has been an increase in interest in the use of formal and systematic evaluation of HRD in order to provide more effective use of human resources in organisations (Holton and Naquin, 2005) and many definitions of evaluation have been

The evaluation process normally involves some identification of relevant strands of merit, worth or value; some investigation of the performance of evaluation on these strands; and some integration or synthesis of the results to achieve an overall evaluation or set of associated evaluations.

In this definition, evaluation focuses on the process of determining the merit, worth or value of training programmes. Patton’s definition (1997, p.23) is slightly different:

Programme evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities and outcomes of programmes to make judgments about the programme to improve its effectiveness and/or inform decisions about future programming.

Here, evaluation focuses on a systematic collection of information to improve the effectiveness of the training programme.

However, these definitions have many weaknesses in relation to strategic HRD which are as follows: 1) they focus on the training programmes only and not the wider concept of learning 2) they do not link HRD activities or processes to the organisational strategy 3) they do not indicate who is going to measure the value (receiver or the trainer) 4) they focus on the individual performance and not the organisational performance.

These weaknesses do not mean that these definitions do not have any strength. Many important concepts can be seen in these definitions: merit, worth, value, added value, measurement, evaluation, formative, summative evaluation, effectiveness and efficiency. It is important for HRD to be aware of these concepts and of how to use them to achieve competitive advantage to the organisation. The following section will investigate the differences between these concepts to characterise types of evaluation and to improve understanding of them.
The first of these distinctions is that between the concepts of merit and inherent worth. Scriven (1995, p.111) states that merit “is measured against professional standards, and worth is measured against institutional and social need”. He presents an example to show the difference between the two concepts: a teacher can be said to have ‘high merit’ if his standard of teaching is very high; a teacher can be said to have ‘high worth’ if he teaches a subject which no-one else is willing or qualifies to teach. Taylor (1986) adds that individuals are considered to have an intrinsic worth based on the type of person they are but can gain merit on the basis of personal accomplishment.

In general, it can be said that there can be some worth in training even when there is little merit, but it cannot have worth unless it has some merit. Moreover, frequently there will be merit in training without worth (Scriven, 1995). This is an important issue for HRD professionals, because if they do not measure the worth of their training or learning, then it may be that there is some merit to the employee but this merit does not provide any worth to their organisation.

In addition to ideas about ‘worth’ and ‘merit’, the concepts of ‘value’ and ‘value added’ can be considered as one of the most popular trends within HRD and HRM (Ravald and Grönnroos, 1996). Many researchers focus in their definitions on the customer-perceived value (Monroe, 1991; Jansson, 2007; McIvor, 2005). Butterfield (1997) defines it from the consumer perspective, as what the consumer gets out but not what the producer puts in. Jansson (2007) argues that the customer will have subjective perceptions of value. This means that different groups in the buying organisation may differ in how they rate the value of what the supplier offers. If a company can give its customers superior value, this is considered to be a successful competitive strategy (McIvor, 2005). Zeithaml (1988) identified four different meanings consumers associate with value: value is low price; value is what the consumer wants in a product; value is what you get for what you give, and value is a trade-off between benefits and cost. Monroe (1991) focuses on the ratio when he defines value from the price perspective as the ratio of the benefits perceived as opposed to the ratio of the perceived sacrifice.
This focus shows that the value of learning should be identified from the receiver of HR work; customers, suppliers, line managers, employees, senior managers, owners more than by the giver (Wunderer, 2001; Garavan, 2007; Ulrich & Brockbank, 2005) and based on achieving many issues; low cost, the requirement and need of the receiver and ROI.

The literature shows also the difference between present value and future value when Langston (2005, p.100) identifies the former is “the worth of goods and services today”, while the latter is “the worth of goods and services at some subsequent point in time and is determined by the consideration of escalation and affordability”. In this case of future value, the worth will focus on the change in the services and goods over time.

Therefore, it is difficult to find a comprehensive definition of value because it has many aspects, including the subjectivity of value, variation between or within customers, cultures or situations and distinctions between tangible and intangible value (Chernatony, Harris & Riley, 2000) and different stakeholders and firms will have different criteria to measure how effective SHRD is (Garavan, 2007).

The second important issue is the difference between measurement and evaluation. Morisio, Stamelos and Tsoukias (2003) affirm that the basic problem of evaluation arises between measurement and evaluation. According to Nickols (2005, pp.123-124), measurement “refers to the process of presenting information as a result of comparing a given against a standard”, while evaluation “deals with the judgments of the value or worth that were based on the measurement”. Morisio et al. (2003) stress that in the case of evaluation, it is necessary to model the preferences of the parties making the decisions. To clarify the differences between evaluation and measurement, Contento (2007) presents the example of expressing the temperature in the room as so many degrees, which is measurement, while evaluation is saying that it feels cold.

Morisio et al. (2003) present many useful questions that are required to construct a measurement or an evaluation. The construction of a measurement requires us to ask “what we are measuring?, what scale is being used? and how is the measurement being performed?”, while evaluation questions are: “Who evaluates? Why is it necessary to evaluate? For what purpose is the evaluation? How has the evaluation to be done? Who is responsible for the consequences? What resources are available for the evaluation? and is there any uncertainty?".
The third important distinction is that between effectiveness and efficiency. According to Love (1991) they are both measures of output such as products and services and are crucial measures of performance. Among the many definitions of effectiveness is that of Prakken (2000), who argues that it shows if the target has been reached but does not have anything to do with the method used. Love (1991) states that this concept considers any links between the desired output of a system and what the output actually is, while MacMamin (1999) concentrates on the results, the goals and objectives which need to be reached, that is to say what is actually being done or needs to be done.

On the other hand, efficiency “means the ratio of actual outputs to actual inputs (money, staff, skills…)” (Love, 1991, p.158). MacMamin (1999) argues that efficiency concentrates on the methods used to get something done, and on making sure that it is carried out in a very productive way but in a way that is as inexpensive as possible. Prakken (2000) explains that being efficient means striving to bring costs down as much as can be done but still meeting the target and MacMamin (1999) adds that improving efficiency usually means to increase output from a certain a given amount of resources, or input, or producing the same output using less resources. The literature suggests that HRD practice is to focus on both effective and efficient. HRD can be effective when HRD processes and activities are shown to provide value to organisational strategy and outcomes; while HRD can be efficient when HRD processes and activities provide value to organisational strategy in the least costly way.

The fourth distinction necessary to make evaluation well understood is that between the formative and summative evaluation approaches, which are typically used in providing evaluative information on system effectiveness. Scriven (1991, pp.168-169) distinguishes between formative and summative evaluation as follows:

formative evaluation is conducted during the development or improvement of a program or product (or person, and so on) and its conducted, often more than once, for in-house staff of the program with the intent to improve while summative evaluation approaches provide information on the system outcomes, or ends, to support decisions to continue, adapt or terminate the system.
Harlen and James (1997) suggest some characteristics which distinguish formative from summative assessment; these are summarised in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formative assessment</th>
<th>Summative assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 focus on promoting learning;</td>
<td>focuses on achievement;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 takes into account the progress of each individual;</td>
<td>assesses progress against public criteria;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 presents diagnostic information;</td>
<td>requires methods which are as reliable as possible without endangering validity;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 takes validity and usefulness as paramount and gives them precedence over concerns of reliability;</td>
<td>involves some quality assurance procedures;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 5 Focuses on encouraging trainees to be active in their own learning.                 | It is based on evidence from the full range of performance relevant to the criteria being used.

This table suggests the importance of using formative evaluation because it enables the stakeholders to identify to what extent the learning interventions provides value to the organisation (input) and modify these interventions when necessary, whereas summative evaluation is important to measure to what extent the learning interventions achieved worth and value to the organisational strategy.

The argument promoted in this chapter is that alignment of HRD measurement or process with HRD value or outcomes requires a link with organisational strategy so that evaluation of the HRD contribution can be undertaken from the point of view of stakeholders more than the point of view of the trainer. This requires agreement on what formative information, measurement and process will be used to assess the value of HRD to organisational strategy and stakeholders’ expectations. Such evaluation helps decision makers and HRD professionals to modify the learning interventions before implementation to be suitable for the organisational strategy. On the other side (after implementation) HRD profession and stakeholders’ expectation should agree on what summative information, measurement and process will be used to measure the learning value to organisational strategy and identify to what extent this information, measurement and process provides value to organisational strategy and stakeholders expectations. This assessment helps decision makers and HRD professionals to know to what extent the HRD role provides a contribution to organisational strategy after implementation. These points are illustrated as figure 2.7
With the benefit of these underlying concepts it is possible to evaluate existing models of evaluation that are frequently advocated. The following section will discuss these evaluation models and their weaknesses and strengths in relation to these evaluation concepts.

### 2.4.2 Models of Evaluation and their Practice

A number of evaluation models have been developed for measuring the effectiveness of training programmes, (see for example Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2005; Megginson, Joy-Matthews and Surtees, 2004; Phillips, 2003; Stufflebeam, 2003; Tennant, Boonkrong & Roberts, 2002). Some of these models specify the areas of measurement in depth, whilst others indicate only broad areas of measurement (Tennant et al., 2002). This part will review the most widely used models which focus on programme level evaluation and looks at their weaknesses and advantages in theory and in practice.

According to the distinction discussed in the previous part, some of these models can be considered as summative in nature (The Kirkpatrick and ROI models) and others as formative (the CIPP and CIRO models). The following review will consider all four of these common models.
2.4.2.1 Summative evaluation models

This section will review the most commonly used summative evaluation models: Kirkpatrick and ROI. According to Donovan, Hannigan & Crowe (2001), traditional HRD evaluation models, which focus on the individual training programme, are limited and have been dominated by the Kirkpatrick four-level model for the past 40 years.

The Kirkpatrick model

During the late 1950s, Kirkpatrick wrote a series of articles for an American Training and Development Journal (Kirkpatrick, 1994) which were mainly concerned with measuring the change in skill levels achieved as a result of training (Tennent et al., 2002). Kirkpatrick (1976) and Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick (2007) define four levels of evaluation in his conceptual framework: trainees’ reaction; learning of knowledge, skills and attitude; behaviour; and evaluation of results.

Level 1 Evaluation of Reaction

Reaction evaluation involves establishing how well the trainees ‘liked’ a particular training programme (Warren, 1969; Stewart, 1999). Although Kirkpatrick (1967) and Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick (2007) concur that it is important to know the opinions of the trainees about the programme they have attended, using only the reaction level has some weaknesses; for example, the answers will sometimes be based on how much the trainees liked the trainer, or whether they had a productive time (Al-Athari & Zairi, 2002).

Level 2 Evaluation of Learning

According to Kirkpatrick (1967) and Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick (2007), the term ‘learning’ denotes that the principles, facts and techniques were understood and absorbed by the trainees. Therefore, this level involves measuring the knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSA) learned during the programme (Truelove, 1992). According to Kirkpatrick (1967) and Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick (2007), a favourable reaction to the programme does not assure learning. Truelove (1997) proposes two further advantages in using the learning level:
demonstrating participant learning should help in promoting the training programme; and the evaluation of the learning level can help in interpreting the results of level three evaluations.

**Level 3 Evaluation of Behaviour**

Evaluation of behaviour means assessing whether job performance changes as a result of training (Truelove, 1992, p.133). The advantage of this level is that it provides measurement of actual behaviour on the job, rather than only measuring or demonstrating positive reaction and/or learning. Moreover, for many trainers this level represents the most accurate assessment of a programme’s effectiveness. However, measuring at this level is difficult, since it is often impossible to predict when the change in behaviour will occur; thus, important decisions are required in terms of when, how often and what to evaluate (Truelove, 1992; James & Roffe, 2000).

**Level 4 Evaluation of Results**

Evaluation of results focuses on measuring the effect on the organisation of the changes in behaviour, such as cost savings, quality improvements and increases in output (Truelove, 1992). This is a problem that makes it very difficult to measure what proportion of results can be attributed directly to a specific training programme.

The main strength of Kirkpatrick’s model is that it focuses on the change in behavioural outcomes of the trainees (Al-Athari & Zairi 2002). However, this framework has a number of weaknesses when considering issues of measurement associated with HRD, including:

- This model focuses on the training programmes rather than on the wider concept of learning (see, for example, learning theory in chapter 2).

- The model does not take account of causality or the relationship between the four levels (Preskill & Russ-Eft, 2005; Müller-Hofvenschiöld, 2001; Bernthal, 1995; Mumford, 1994).

- Kirkpatrick (1967) mentions that it is not easy to measure behaviour. Moreover, he affirms that it is difficult to measure results. In this case it measures the merit and not the value or worth of the learning (see for example Scriven, 1995).

- The Kirkpatrick model is considered summative in nature but it does not consider the measurement of other critical areas before training (formative approach), such as
objectives, contents and equipment needed for training (Tennent et al, 2002). Formative evaluation is useful to help decision maker about the learning in human capital (O’Driscoll, 2005).

- The Kirkpatrick framework does not include financial assessment of the level 4 results.
- This framework does not focus on the alignment of learning processes with organisational strategies.

In practice, the Kirkpatrick framework is broadly applied to the evaluation of training programmes. According to Al-Athari & Zairi (2002), it is now considered an industry standard across the HR and training communities for the evaluation of training programmes (Dyer, 1994; James & Roffe, 2000). Many studies have been conducted in the private and public sectors to establish how widely this model is used and at what levels. Hilbert et al (1991) reviewed 57 journal articles in the field of training and performance, finding that 45 of the 57 included reference to the Kirkpatrick framework. Moreover, the ASTD (1998) found that 67% of the organisations surveyed which conducted training evaluations used the Kirkpatrick model.

In 1990 Dixon’s study found that of 45 large companies, only 30 percent used measures of learning and only 15 percent used measures of behaviour, although all of them used the reaction level (Dixon, 1990). Gordon (1991) found that in the United States most training programmes were evaluated only at level 1 and the majority were measured only at level 2. In 2000 Twitchell, Holton, and Trott reviewed a number of such studies that have been conducted over the past 40 years as part of their own investigation of the level of evaluation of technical training. They concluded that most organisations use Levels 1 and 2 evaluations and a small percentage of programmes receive Levels 3 and 4 evaluations (Twitchell, Holton and Trott, 2000). Later, Al-Athari and Zairi (2002) found that trainee reaction was the most common evaluation for both government and private organisations in Kuwait.

These studies indicate that despite the recognised importance of the Kirkpatrick model, HRD practitioners have found that is difficult to use the advanced levels (behaviour and results) in practice. According to Bernthal (1995), many organisations do not use these levels (summative evaluation), because the complexities increase with the level of evaluation. Thus,
it can be said that the most used levels in practice are reaction and learning, which can be used to assess the merit of the training but not its effectiveness, worth, or value to the organisation. In other words, training programmes have been evaluated to establish whether the trainer did it in the right way, rather than to ensure that it was done for the right reasons. Scriven (1995) affirms that the evaluation of worth questions the degree to which the programme is essential for the mission of the organisation.

**Return on investment (ROI)**

In 1997, Jack Phillips extended Kirkpatrick’s framework by the addition of learning measurement (level 5) over and above the business results level. The significant addition in this framework is the explicit consideration of return on investment. The justification for this is that if too much money is spent on a specific L & D project, then, although performance may increase, the ROI will be negative (Sadler-Smith, 2005).

The main point of implementing the ROI methodology may appear obvious, as several distinct and important benefits can be realised (Phillips, 2005). ROI seeks to measure cost and time savings as well as quality and output improvements, but it also includes subjective data, such as employee and customer satisfaction and retention. It examines the return on investment of the training. Moreover, it provides a cost benefit ratio that compares the costs of the training with the monetary value of the business impact that occurs due to the training.

Phillips and Stone (2002) suggest that intangible benefits should also be examined. These are benefits that either cannot or should not be expressed numerically. Common intangible benefits may include increased organisational commitment, improved work climate, reduction of employee stress, reduced turnover, improved teamwork and improved communication. Although, it may be easier to identify ROI measures the private sector (such as an increase in net profits), non-profit organisations may be able to measure HRD effectiveness against, for example, increased workforce efficiency and flexibility, and reduced staff absenteeism and increased client satisfaction (Smith, 2004).

ROI model is considered as a summative in nature; however, although the ROI approach has been widely promoted and has achieved a high degree of acceptance by HRD practitioners (Phillips, 2002), many studies do not bear out this reputation in practice. Esque and Patterson (1998) reviewed 22 case studies of performance improvement projects of which only two
reported impacts on the organisation in terms of ROI. Another study, by Drimmer (2002), shows that although 78 percent of participants had evaluating ROI on their ‘wish-list’, only 11 percent actually evaluated programmes using ROI. Moreover, an annual learning and development survey in the UK showed that while nearly all organisations evaluated their training and development activities in some way, only 36 percent sought to capture the effect on the organisation’s bottom line, with only half that percentage undertaking an ROI evaluation (CIPD, 2007).

The ROI model is important in that it assesses HRD interventions based on financial outcomes. However, HRD studies show that this model is not used in practice by most HRD practitioners. This may be an indicator that HRD professionals and stakeholders do not concern themselves with questioning the worth or value of HRD and learning. However, alternative explanations are possible. First, the model focuses on training programmes rather than learning as a broad issue (see for example learning theory) and second the model measures the merit of the training programme rather than the strategic value of learning from financial and non financial perspective.

This section discussed summative evaluation models and their weaknesses and the following section will discuss the formative evaluation models and their weaknesses.
2.4.2.2 Formative evaluation models

This part will review the most commonly used formative evaluation models: the CIPP and the CIRO models.

The CIPP model

The CIPP model, so called because it evaluates Context, Inputs, Processes and Products, is a systems-oriented model devised by Daniel L. Stufflebeam around 1985. It is intended for the use of service providers, such as school principals, college and university administrators and project staff (Stufflebeam et al. & Kellaghan 2001). Although it was designed for educational applications it is also used by the training community. The first two levels deal with needs analysis and instructional design.

CIPP is a comprehensive framework for guiding the formative and summative evaluations of projects, programmes, personnel, products, institutions and systems (Alkin, 2004). Using this model provides a broad range of activities that occur during training: development, design and implementation. It also provides information on making decisions about improving future programme offerings. Moreover, it focuses on the environment in which change is to occur, it requires determination of discrepancies between desired and achievable goals, and it assists in judgments about the problems to be addressed (Conway & FitzGerald, 2004; Guba & Stufflebeam, 1970). This model can be described in terms of each of its core concepts (context, input, process and product).

Level 1 Context evaluation

This level is used before the programme or activity to be evaluated starts. It assesses needs, problems, assets and opportunities to help decision-makers define goals and priorities and to help the broader group of users judge goals, priorities and outcomes. The evaluator needs to answer the following questions: What are the needs and opportunities? What can be done about it? How can this be done? (Medina, 1978, p. 48; Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007).
Level 2 Input evaluation
According to Stufflebeam & Shinkfield (2007), this level is used to assess alternative approaches, competing action plans, staffing plans and budgets for their feasibility and potential cost-effectiveness to meet targeted needs and achieve goals. Decision-makers use input evaluations in choosing among competing plans, writing funding proposals, allocating resources, assigning staff, scheduling work and ultimately in helping others to judge plans and budgets (Stufflebeam, 2003). Levels 1 and 2 in the CIPP model deal with needs analysis and instructional design, these levels can be considered as formative evaluation.

Level 3 Process evaluation
This level is similar to the reaction processes involved in the Kirkpatrick and ROI models. It is used to assess the implementation of plans to help staff carry out activities and later to help the broad group of users judge programme performance and interpret outcomes (Stufflebeam, 2003).

Level 4 Product evaluation
This level is similar to the learning processes involved in the Kirkpatrick and ROI models. It can be said that the CIPP model is in nature a formative approach. In addition, it does not consider the measurement of other critical areas after training (summative approach), such as organisational change. Thus; it provides no information on the worth, value, effectiveness and efficiency of training to the organisation.

However, this model has some advantages in that: it involves all levels of stakeholders; it is considered ethically responsible, because it can be used to help define the appropriate evaluation questions and criteria; it provides evaluative input; and it receives and uses evaluation findings (Mathison, 2004; Stufflebeam, 2003). Another advantage is that it aims to ensure that its findings are used by decision-makers and that the results of the training are not used just to prove that the training is worthwhile, but also actively to improve the organisation as a whole (Robinson, 2002).
In 1993 Dubois found that the contribution of the Kirkpatrick model was more valuable than that of the CIPP, since it suggests useful ways for examining the outcomes of training or education systems at four levels of specificity and importance within an organisational context (Dubois, 1993). However, the CIPP framework is criticised in that it does not measure the worth or the value of HRD intervention to the organisational outcomes (financial and non financial) and HRD does not link this model with organisational strategy (see, for example, Anderson, 2007 and Garavan, 2007).

The Warr, Bird and Rackham Model (CIRO)

The CIRO model, which also takes a formative approach, was developed by Warr, Bird and Rackham in 1970 and has a slightly broader scope than the others (Truelove, 1992; Cooper, 1994). The four levels of evaluation which give the CIRO approach its acronym are Context, Input, Reaction and Outcomes.

**Level 1 Context Evaluation**
This level is similar to level 1 involved in the CIPP model. At this level the evaluator needs to be aware of situations where change is required, either through their own investigation or by arranging that they are brought to their attention when they are discovered by others. During this process evaluator can begin to consider the objectives he/she will set himself (Warr, Bird & Rackham, 1970).

**Level 2 Input evaluation**
This level is similar to level 2 involved in the CIPP model. This evaluation consists of analysing the training resources available. What procedures are most likely to bring about this change? Basically, this method of evaluation decides on the best method of delivery, taking into account factors such as mode, training and style of delivery, level and type of involvement of staff, and financial factors (Warr et al., 1970). The input level is concerned with issues of learning design, such as what methods should be used, who should provide the L & D and how it should be organized (Sadler-Smith, 2006).
Level 3 Reaction evaluation
This level is similar to the reaction processes involved in Kirkpatrick’s model and level 3 in the CIPP model. It is used to determine the participants’ reactions based on individuals reports or interviews (Sloman, 1999). One of the features of this type of evaluation is its reliance on the subjectivity of trainees’ reports. There is nonetheless no doubt that trainees’ views can prove extremely helpful and that this is especially so if care is taken to collect them systematically (Warr et al., 1970).

Level 4 Outcomes evaluation
This level is similar to the learning processes involved in Kirkpatrick’s model and level 4 in the CIPP model. It is used to determine the extent to which training objectives have been achieved (Warr et al, 1970). Results are used to inform future planning, notably with regard to the formulation of general and specific objectives and the setting of criteria by which success will be measured (Sloman, 1999).

There are three levels of outcomes evaluation, corresponding to the three levels of training objectives. These levels may conveniently be referred to in terms of immediate outcomes, intermediate outcomes and ultimate outcomes (Warr et al., 1970).

One of the advantages of using the CIRO framework is the clear emphasis given to the objectives (context) and the training equipment (inputs) (Sadler-Smith, 2006), which make it formative in nature. Another advantage is the hierarchy of training outcomes, which is not made so explicit in the other models (Burden & Proctor, 2000). However, the main weakness is that it does not measure behavioural change (Tennent et al., 2002) and in common with the other approaches this framework does not measure the value of the HRD role to the organisational strategy.

In conclusion, the most frequently used evaluation models are Kirkpatrick and the ROI (as summative models) and CIPP and CIRO models (as formative models). These models fail to address many features of strategic HRD in practice when they focus on: 1) training programmes only rather than the learning and development investment process 2) the ‘merit’ of training programmes only rather than the ‘worth’ and ‘value’ of learning processes 3) formative or summative assessment rather than the opportunity for stakeholders to identify the value of the learning interventions to the organisational objectives 4) evaluating the training from the trainers perspective rather than from stakeholder perspectives based on
financial and non financial outcomes. This conclusion increases the need to know more about the research that has been undertaken on the strategic value of learning.

2.5 Research into the Strategic Value of Learning

The following part will discuss the findings of two studies on the strategic value of learning which can be summarised as follows:

In 2005, O’Driscoll et al. explored senior managers perceptions (such as chief executive officer (CEO) and Chief Financial Officer (CFOs)) of the strategic value of learning using six questions covering the learning function’s response to the three strategic business needs of growth, transformation, and productivity. They used semi-structured telephone interviews with 52 executives in 26 USA organisations, representing 11 private industry sectors. The interviewees highlighted the following features to strategic HRD (O’Driscoll, et al. 2005):

1) Contributions to enterprise strategy, business unit productivity and individual capability were the main features by which respondents indicated that the learning function provides strategic value to their organisations.

2) Operational outcomes, human capital development, learning operations (such as learning innovation and performance improvement) and learning value measurements (such as value linkage challenges, return on investment and learning value perceptions) are key features of the way they feel that the learning function’s strategic activity translates into business results.

3) Business unit requirement, business priority allocation and organisation requirements were key features of decisions about the learning investment process.

4) Integration indicators (such as goal integration and business unit integration), learning operations (such as learning innovation and performance improvement) and perceptions of stakeholders are key features of their assessment of whether a learning function is maintaining ongoing alignment with strategic business needs.

5) Organisation outcomes, human capital and perceptions measurement are key features of their assessment of learning function’s value contribution to the organisation.
6) Learning operations (such as goal integration and business unit integration), financial measurements of what the main ways of assessing the efficiency of the learning function in these organisations.

Anderson (2007) investigated how organisations are measuring and reporting on the strategic value contribution of learning in UK organisations. The semi-structured interview that was used in O’Driscoll et al. (2005) was replicated in this study but through face-to-face interviews. Data were gathered from learning, training and development (LTD) practitioners and senior operational managers in 12 UK based organisations including public sector, private sector and not profit organisations. The research shows how key organisational stakeholders expect learning to add value and the main findings relating to the UK were:

1 Strategic readiness, performance improvement and career/talent management are key features of the HRD contribution.
2 Key performance indicators and long term value benefit are key features of the HRD process.
3 Business planning process, additional investment and special budgets are the main features of HRD investment decisions.
4 Dialogue between LTD and managers, as well as internal and external measures or metrics are also features of HRD investment processes.
5 Learning function efficiency measures, key performance indicators and benchmarks, return on expectation (ROE) and return on investment (ROI) are different features of the way the HRD value to an organisation is assessed.
6 Annual spending on learning and training, the cost of training per participant, rate of internal promotions, accident rates, achievements against learning and growth scorecards, targets and learning function efficiency metrics are all used to try to address the efficiency of the HRD processes.
Table 2.2 the main themes in O’Driscoll et al. (2005) and Anderson (2007)

|---|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | How does the learning function provide strategic value to your organisation? | 1) Enterprise strategy  
2) Business unit productivity  
3) Individual capability | 1) Strategic readiness  
2) Performance improvement  
3) Career/talent management |
| 2 | How does the learning function’s strategic activity translate into business results? | 1) Operation outcomes  
2) Human capital  
3) Learning operation  
4) Learning value | 1) KPIs  
2) Long term value benefit |
| 3 | What is the learning investment process and your involvement in it? | 1) business unit requirement,  
2) business priority allocation  
3) organisation requirement | 1) business planning process,  
2) additional investment  
3) special budgets |
| 4 | How do you know the learning function is maintaining ongoing alignment with your strategic business needs? | 1) integration indicator  
2) learning operations  
3) perceptions of stakeholders | 1) dialogue between LTD  
2) internal and external measures or metrics |
| 5 | How do you measure the learning function’s value contribution to your organisation | 1) Organisation outcomes  
2) Human capital  
3) Perceptions  
4) Measurement | 1) learning function efficiency measures  
2) Key performance indicators and benchmark  
3) Return on expectation (ROE)  
4) Return on investment (ROI) |
| 6 | How do you know the learning function is performing as efficiently as possible? | 1) Learning operations  
2) Financial measurements | 1) Work is in progress  
2) Annual spend on learning and training  
3) Cost of training per participant  
4) Rate of internal promotions  
5) Accident rates  
6) Achievements against learning and growth scorecards targets  
7) Learning function efficiency metrics |

The findings of these two pieces of research is shown in table 2.2 and show that there are similarities between the expectations of the senior managers in all of these studies about the role of SHRD, the SHRD alignment and HRD measurement. Their findings also suggest a gap between theory and practice related to the SHRD role. This thesis will focus on the perception of CEO managers and HR professional in the public sector and multinational private sector about strategic evaluation of HRD and the challenges that may face to assess the extent of any gap between the theory and the practice in Saud Arabia and to compare between the practice in Saudi Arabia with the finding of these two studies.
Conclusion:

This chapter found that HRD practice draws from a wide range of theories:

1) Learning theory contributes to an awareness of the importance of individuals and the organisation rather than individualized training programmes and individual skill acquisition. The implication of learning theory will be examined in HRD in a Saudi Arabia context.

2) Performance improvement theory, economic theory and systems theories are also important influences on HRD and suggest that learning investment systems provide a contribution to both financial and non-financial outcomes. This thesis will examine how HRD investment processes and activities are perceived to provide a contribution to organisational strategy and stakeholders’ expectations based on financial and non-financial outcomes.

3) Alignment theory also contributes to the aspiration that learning investment processes should be aligned with organisational strategy to meet stakeholders’ expectations of value based on financial and non-financial outcomes. This thesis will examine learning investment processes and the extent to which HRD investment processes maintain alignment with organisational strategy and stakeholders’ expectations in the Saudi context.

4) Different models of evaluation show that HRD outcomes and input can be measured and evaluated based on formative and summative assessments, key concepts being effectiveness and efficiency, and measurement and evaluation. This thesis will examine how HRD interventions are perceived to provide value to organisational strategy and stakeholders’ expectations and how stakeholders in Saudi Arabia know whether the HRD role is working as efficiently and effectively as possible.

5) According to the research aim, HRD professionals and CEO managers will be participating in this study as internal stakeholders. Their inclusion is very important as they are responsible to formulate organisation strategies. In addition, if they do not understand the required role of SHRD and the alignment, they will not be able to understand how the learning intervention can be valuable to the organisation strategy.
This review of the literature has shown that SHRD involves a proactive learning and development investment process that is aligned with organisational strategy, internal stakeholders’ expectations at all levels of the organisation and external stakeholders’ expectations. Ongoing alignment is required to provide value to organisational strategy to achieve those stakeholders’ expectations based on financial or non-financial outcomes. The context for the study is public and multi-national private sector organisations in Saudi Arabia and so the context for the research is explained more fully in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3 - SAUDI ARABIA

The main aim of this thesis is to examine how senior decision makers in public and multinational private sectors in Saudi Arabia value and measure strategic learning in their organisations. This chapter explains the context for the research and is divided into four parts: 1) general background about Saudi Arabia, 2) the business culture in Saudi Arabia, 3) an evaluation of the main issues in the eighth development plan that is linked with human resources management and development in Saudi Arabia and 4) studies of the HRD role in the context of Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries.

3.1 Background to Saudi Arabia

The kingdom of Saudi Arabia is geographically located in the south west of the Asian Continent. It is located on the Arabia Peninsula and comprises around 80 percent of it. Saudi Arabia is bordered to the north by Jordan and Iraq, by Kuwait to the north east, the Arabian Gulf, UAE and Qatar to the east, the Sultanate of Oman to the southeast, Yemen to the south, and the Red Sea to the west (Ministry of Planning, 2001; Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Annual Report 2009).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the centre of Islam, since the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is derived from and based on the Islamic Religion. The legislation of all laws is subject to the principles and teachings of Islam. The Saudi population and the majority of the resident expatriates are Muslims (Cavendish, 2006).

Based on the Saudi Arabia Market Information Resource and Directory (SAMIRAD) site the official language in Saudi Arabia is Arabic which is the language of the Holy Quran. The Saudi government urges the use of Arabic as the only language in government and private correspondence. The second language in Saudi Arabia is English which is taught in the schools and the universities (SAMIRAD, 2010).

Saudi Arabia is a major oil-producing country. Oil was discovered in 1939 and this changed Saudi Arabia into a wealthy country and helped it to focus on planning in five-year periods.
The Saudi Government has invested huge amounts of money on the infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, universities and factories (Ministry of Information, 2002). Over time the expansion in the Saudi infrastructure has increased the need to use a high number of expatriates in the workforce and the government now wishes to replace them with qualified Saudi workers (Bjerke & Al-Meer, 1993).

### 3.2 Business Culture in Saudi Arabia

Hofstede (2009) points out that culture plays a very important role in achieving success in a business relationship. Cultural considerations may impact positively by facilitating communication between employees and business partners but they may also be more a source of conflict than of synergy (Rivera-Vazquez, Ortiz-Fournier & Flores, 2009).

French (2010) argues that the majority of researchers examine culture through a range of dimensions that reflect the individual’s values as well as institutional influences. Many cultural dimensions were highlighted by French (2010) but the most frequently used cultural dimensions are those that were developed by Hofstede.

Most studies that discuss business culture in Saudi Arabia build on Hofstede’s (1984; Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede, 2009) work and focus on his original four dimensions which represent elements of common structure in the cultural system of countries and are based on the differences between small and large power distance countries, small and large uncertainty avoidance countries, small and large individualism and collectivism countries, and small and large masculinity and femininity countries. In 2001, he added a fifth dimension: focus on short- and long-term orientation (Hofstede, 2001). These small and large dimension scores are based on a scale of 0 to 100 with 100 representing high levels of the dimension and 0 representing low levels (Hofstede, 2009).

Although Hofstede’s model provides greater understanding of national cultures (Bono, Heijden & Jones, 2008), this model has been criticised for the following reasons:

- It may not be generalisable to other organisations or countries because the original research was based on a single organisation (IBM) (McSweeney, 2002).
- The dimensions used in the framework may not be sufficient to study and understand all aspects of cultural differences (Myers and Tan, 2002);
- Hofstede’s model assumes values are homogeneous within specific geographic counties (Myers and Tan, 2002).
- There is concern about the reliability and validity of Hofstede’s model given that he developed the value of different indices and cultural constructs over the last two decades although these value may have changed (Sivakumar and Nakata, 2001).

However, although these are weaknesses in Hofstede’s model, it is widely recognised and used in the management literature (Erumban & de Jong, 2006; Kankanhalli, Tan, Wei, & Holmes, 2004).

Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and model were applied in 72 countries across the world (Hofstede, 2009). The following table represents the highest and lowest scores from his research and focuses specifically on the data relating to the USA, UK and Saudi Arabia because the SHRD theory was developed in the West and will be examined in Saudi Arabia (an Eastern country).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural dimension</th>
<th>KSA</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>Highest countries</th>
<th>Lowest countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power distance</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Malaysia and Slovakia (104)</td>
<td>Austria and Australia (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty avoidance</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Greece (112)</td>
<td>Singapore (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualism</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>USA (91)</td>
<td>Guatemala(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Slovakia(110)</td>
<td>Sweden (5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Hofstede found that among the 72 countries the highest value in power distance is 104 (in Malaysia and Slovakia) and the lowest 11 (in Austria and Australia); the highest value in uncertainty avoidance is 112 (in Greece) and the lowest is 8 (in Singapore); while in the individualism dimension the highest value is 91 (in the USA) and the lowest is 6 (in...
Guatemala); and in the masculinity dimension the highest value is 110 (in Slovakia) and the lowest is 5 (in Sweden) (Hofstede, 2009).

Hofstede argues that there are differences between the Middle East countries (such as Saudi Arabia) and the Western countries (such as the USA and UK) and provides as an example that in the case of Western countries the objective “is to work towards a target of mutual understanding and agreement” and to “shake-hands” when that agreement is reached – a cultural signal of the end of negotiations and the start of ‘working together’; while in Middle Eastern countries he argues that much negotiation takes place in these societies “leading into the ‘agreement’”, which is signified by shaking hands. However the deal is not yet completed but in this case, he argues that it is a cultural sign that serious negotiations are just beginning (Hofstede, 2009).

There are very few English language studies that examine business culture in Saudi Arabia. Budhwar and Debrah (2001) claim that values and Islamic laws in Saudi Arabia have an important influence on management practices. This was affirmed by Bjerke and Al-Meer (1993) when they stated that in the Saudi culture, Islam is combined with Arab traditions to produce a distinctive mixture which is seen in the Saudi mentality and behaviour.

The following sections discuss the Hofstede dimensions in Saudi Arabia and compare them in Western countries (UK and USA) to highlight the outlined differences and consider the effect of these differences on SHRD in Saudi Arabia.

3.2.1 Power Distance

The power distance dimension reflects “the extent to which the less powerful members of organisations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. This represents inequality (more versus less), but defined from below, not from above” (Hofstede, 2009).

Hofstede’s (2009) analysis suggests that among 72 countries, the USA (40) and UK (35) have lower power distances than other societies including Saudi Arabia. In this case he expects that the organisations in these countries are characterised by a small gap between the superior
and the employees which has a positive effect on the knowledge-sharing process and production in the organisation; the low level of formal distance enables information and communications to flow in both directions (top-down and bottom-up) (Rivera-Vazquez et al., 2009). People in these cultures for example are more likely to be addressed by their first names (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2006) and they are more likely to believe that they should have a voice in the decision processes (Alves, Lovelace, Manz, Matsypura, Toyasaki & Ke, 2006). In cultures with low power distance it is expected that the leadership styles will support flexibility, innovation, and general skills (Dickson et al., 2003).

Baruch and Hall (2004) found low power distance cultures tend to be associated with employees’ empowerment which leads to positive effects on the performance of employees.

Hofstede’s (2009) power distance analysis suggests that the average value for Saudi Arabia is 80, which is high compared to the USA and UK. In this case Hofstede’s analysis would suggest that Saudi culture is characterised by a higher level of inequality of power within the society; the individuals in the organisation tend to expect and accept that superiors will separate themselves from the group, and the subordinates tend to expect superiors to act autocratically and paternalistically (Al-Gahtani, Hubona & Wang, 2007). Moreover, he argues that a high power distance culture tends to be more accepted by the society as their traditional culture (Hofstede, 2009).

Baker and Abou-Ismail (1993) argue that these characteristics are influenced by Islamic and Arab traditions. Such traditions do not support empowerment and participation of all the employees at all organisation levels which is something that is likely to affect approaches to HRD and to SHRD in particular.

3.2.2 Uncertainty Avoidance

The uncertainty avoidance dimension is an indicator of how members of a society tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty (Hofstede, 2009). This dimension indicates the extent managers feel comfortable or uncomfortable in unstructured situations and how they may deal with uncomfortable situations by minimising the possibility of these situations occurring by adopting and implementing strict rules, laws, policies, and regulations to control everything in order to overcome and avoid unexpected outcomes (Hofstede, 2009).
Hofstede’s research suggests a low average in the USA (35) and UK (40) compared to the world average of 64. According to Hofstede, this ranking indicates that organisations in these countries tend to have less rules and be less likely to attempt to control all outcomes, regulations and rules. The amount of tolerance of a diversity of beliefs and ideas in societies that have low uncertainty avoidance tends to be greater than in a culture which has a higher uncertainty avoidance level (Hofstede, 2009; Rivera-Vazquez et al., 2009).

Both the power distance and uncertainty avoidance dimensions were found to be strongly evident in Saudi Arabia (68) (Al-Gahtani et al., 2007; Hofstede, 2009) and this is associated with the tendency for organisations to be somewhat more rule-oriented with the expectation that leaders will develop memos, reports, rules, regulations, and controls in order to decrease the amount of uncertainty in power to reinforce their own control. Moreover, this kind of society and organisations have a greater tendency to accept and allow for inequalities of power and wealth to grow within the society (Hofstede, 2009).

These characteristics of the Saudi culture or management systems may be less supportive of SHRD as it is understood as a means to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency because there may be less support for participation and for communication at all organisation levels in organisation strategy formulation. Moreover, Hofstede argues that it is not easy for individuals in these cultures to accept change but instead they value tradition (Hofstede, 2009).

3.2.3 Individualism versus Collectivism

Hofstede (2009) describes the individualism dimension as one where relations between individuals are looser and where it is expected that an individual will take care of himself and his immediate family. In contrast, in collectivism, as Hofstede found, there is a tendency for individuals from birth onward to be integrated into strong groups, often extended to family members such as grandparents, which focus on protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty (Hofstede, 2009).

Hofstede’s measurement shows a high average for individualism in the USA (91) and UK (89) while Saudi Arabia has a lower measure on the individualism dimension (38) which
ranks it toward the collectivism side compared to the world average ranking of 64. In this case Hofstede suggests that organisation culture in Saudi Arabia may tend to focus more on strong relationships and commitment to smaller groups, factions and families (Hofstede, 2009; Al-Gahtani et al., 2007) rather than focusing explicitly on the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation as a whole.

This analysis suggests that the role of Saudi managers may be to focus more on certain groups but not on the participation of all individuals in the organisation to achieve organisational strategy as an assumption that underpins SHRD practice and framework.

3.2.4 Masculinity versus Femininity

This dimension refers “to the distribution of roles between the genders which is another fundamental issue for any society for which a range of solutions are found”. Hofstede’s study suggested that: a) “women’s values differ less among societies than men’s values; b) men’s values from one country to another, contain a dimension from very assertive and competitive and maximally different from women’s values on the one side, to modest and caring and similar to women’s values on the other.” The assertive pole has been called “masculine” and the modest, caring values as the women’s have been called feminine; in the ‘masculine’ countries women are somewhat assertive and competitive, but not as much as the men, so that these countries still show a gap between men’s values and women’s values (Hofstede, 2009).

Hofstede’s analysis suggests that the USA (62) and UK (66) and Saudi Arabia (52) have a higher average than the average of all countries (50.2) on the masculinity side. Based on his analysis Hofstede argues that these countries may experience a high degree of gender differentiation of roles and that masculinity plays a significant part in the society and the power structure. The female population in this society becomes more assertive and competitive, moving towards the male role model and away from the female one (Hofstede, 2009). Such analysis suggests that women in the Arab World are somewhat limited in their social rights; this may be due more to the prevailing religious beliefs rather than the societal culture (Hofstede, 2009).
3.2.5 Short and long-term orientation

This is the fifth dimension in Hofstede. He added this new dimension based on the study made by Michael Bond in Hong Kong which had noted that Hofstede’s previous four cultural dimensions did not adequately reflect Asian perspectives on culture (Hofstede, 2001) but this dimension is not examined yet in the Saudi culture. Hofstede stated that:

Long Term Orientation stands for the fostering of virtues oriented towards future rewards, in particular perseverance and thrift. Its opposite pole, Short Term Orientation, stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and present, in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of ‘face’ and fulfilling social obligations (Hofstede, 2001, p. 359).

The Saudi business culture therefore, is characterised as highly centralized with high uncertainty avoidance, collectivism and a more feminine approach compared with other developed countries such as the USA and UK. These differences may affect the way HRD is undertaken.

The Saudi development plans are also a helpful way to further understand Saudi national and business culture. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has a planning tradition that spans over 30 years. The formal planning process, which started in 1970, was established to enable the Saudi Government to make decisions in the distribution and utilization of its resources for development.

This planning was set by five-year term plans and has evolved through the past three decades. The first five year Development Plan was focused on the development of infrastructure such as education and health but the most recent plans such as the seventh and eighth socio-economic development plans focus more on the long term perspectives, looking to the year 2024 while setting short and medium-term objectives which focus on human resources development and the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector. The following table shows this development.
The development of planning as a feature of government in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) as shown in the Saudi development plans from first to eighth.

Table 3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>A.H.</th>
<th>A.D.</th>
<th>FOCUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Plan</td>
<td>1390-1395</td>
<td>1970 – 1975</td>
<td>Infrastructure and government services and utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Plan</td>
<td>1395-1400</td>
<td>1975 – 1980</td>
<td>Infrastructure and addressed the financial and administrative framework for private sector development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Plan</td>
<td>1400-1405</td>
<td>1980 – 1985</td>
<td>Efficiency, and promoted regional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Plan</td>
<td>1405-1410</td>
<td>1985 – 1990</td>
<td>Diversification of the economy and macro-economic management and the focus on Saudization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth Plan</td>
<td>1415-1420</td>
<td>1995 – 2000</td>
<td>The role of the private sector in diversifying the economic base, promoted economic efficiency in both public and private sectors and emphasized overall human resources development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh Plan</td>
<td>1420-1425</td>
<td>2000 – 2005</td>
<td>This plan start to focus on a long-term perspective (year 2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight Plan:</td>
<td>1425-1430</td>
<td>2005 - 2010</td>
<td>A long-term perspective, looking to the year 2024, support of the private sector, improving their efficiency and continuing with administrative restructuring of government agencies and improving their efficiency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Saudi development plan process can be characterised as: its focus is on economic planning rather than being left for market forces; second, it is a very structured process which is hierarchal and top down. The development of these plans shows that they shift the focus from the infrastructure to the long term focus (until the year 2024). The following part will focus on many significant issues related to HRD/M in Saudi Arabia.

3.3 Eighth Development Plan and HRD/M Role:

The eighth development plan focuses on many significant issues related to HRD/M such as the long term strategy for the population and the labour market; institutional and administrative reform. The eighth development plan provides many attempts to develop HRD/HRM and these attempts still face many challenges. The following section will highlight the expected population and Saudi workforce until the year 2024, the focus on HRD’s role in achieving these strategies and the main attempts and the challenges that may face the achievement of this strategy (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2009).
3.3.1 Long term strategy for population and the labour market:

This section will highlight the most related strategies in the eighth plan to this thesis; population, workforce and employment and labour force forecasts by level of educational attainment in 2024 (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2009).

3.3.1.1 Long-Term Population Forecasts

The following table shows that the highest number of expected Saudi labour in 2024 will be about 26 million with an average growth in the annual rate of 2.25 million people in each five year period. This table also shows that the forecast of the population (Saudi and non-Saudi) will grow at an average annual rate of 0.87 percent during the period of the strategy, to reach 29.86 million in 2024, of whom four million will be non-Saudi. The net dependency rate of Saudis as indicated in the plan will decrease from about 4.7 millions in 2004 to about 2.2 millions in 2024 (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2009, pp.57-66).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Population (Million)</th>
<th>Average annual growth rate (%) 2004–2024</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saudi</td>
<td>16.53</td>
<td>19.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Saudi</td>
<td>6.14</td>
<td>5.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>22.67</td>
<td>24.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net dependency Rate of Saudis**</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>3.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Eighth Development Plan  **Net dependency rate = No. of Saudi population/ No. of Saudis employed.

This expected growth of the Saudi population by the year 2024 increases the need for the government to set HRD policies and strategy to increase the capability of Saudis. The following section will highlight the expectations of the Saudi labour force in the year 2024 in the eighth development plan.

3.3.1.2 Labour Force and Employment

The eighth development plan estimates the rate of national labour participation and the estimated size of the population of working age. The plan indicates that the participation rate of the Saudi workforce will increase from 36.9 percent in 2004 to 56.3 percent in 2024. This
is in line with the government policy of reducing the size of foreign labour and reducing unemployment.

Moreover, this plan expects that the total workforce will grow from 8.55 million workers in 2004 to about 15 million workers in 2024 at an average annual rate of 2.8 percent, and the national workforce will increase from 3.5 to 11.8 million workers, at an average annual rate of 6.2 percent, and there will be a decrease in the foreign workforce from about 4.7 to 3.2 million workers, at an average annual rate of 2 percent (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2009, pp.57-66).

Table 3.4
Indicators of Workforce and Employment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>(000s)</th>
<th>Average Annual Growth Rate 2004–2024</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total workforce</td>
<td>8549.74</td>
<td>9360.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Saudi workforce</td>
<td>3804.19</td>
<td>4885.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total employment</td>
<td>8281.84</td>
<td>9221.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign employment</td>
<td>4745.55</td>
<td>4474.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National employment</td>
<td>3536.29</td>
<td>4747.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of unemployed</td>
<td>267.90</td>
<td>138.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total participation rate of Saudi workforce (%)</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation rate of Saudi male workforce (%)</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>64.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation rate of Saudi female workforce (%)</td>
<td>10.27</td>
<td>14.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi unemployment rate (%)</td>
<td>7.04</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudization rate (%)</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Eighth Development Plan

This estimation of the increase in the number of nationals in the labour force and the reduction in the numbers of expatriates can only be achieved by establishing an effective strategy of HRD in Saudi Arabia to increase the national employment capability. The following section will show the expectation of the Eighth Development Plan of Saudi educational attainment in the year 2024.
3.3.1.3 Labour force by the level of educational attainment:

The Eighth Development Plan highlights the distribution of the national labour force by level of educational attainment. Both the nature and scope of the envisaged economic development in Saudi Arabia requires high degrees of skill and specialization. The plan expects that the number of university graduates will grow at an average annual rate of 8.2 percent during the period from 2004 to 2024. Similarly the number of secondary-school and intermediate school graduates is expected to grow at an average annual rate of 8.4 percent during the same period. However, the other groups (primary education, Saudis without qualifications and Intermediate education) are also expected to grow at an average annual rate of about 1.8 percent (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2009, pp.57-66).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Saudi Workforces</th>
<th>Average Annual Growth Rate 2004-2024</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Saudi Workforce</td>
<td>3804.19</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without qualifications</td>
<td>551.61</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary education</td>
<td>696.17</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate education</td>
<td>699.97</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary education</td>
<td>1046.15</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University education</td>
<td>810.29</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eighth Development Plan

The Saudi government expects to increase the number of Saudi nationals in the labour force and reduce the numbers of expatriates by the year 2024. This plan follows structured, hierarchal process and top down processes. To achieve the government expectation of the year 2024 the government has adopted a set of economic policies as well as institutional and administrative reforms and emphasis on the importance of Human Resources Management and Human Resources Development.

3.3.2 Institutional and Administrative Reform and HRM/D:
Institutional and Administrative reform is a priority of the top leader in the kingdom, King Fahad Al-Saud, who has emphasized that it is essential that the performance of government agencies is monitored, that the problem of administrative corruption is addressed, and that administrative reforms are put into effect. He also acknowledged the important part played by the Council in monitoring the activities and results of government agencies and departments (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2009).

To enhance the Institutional and Administrative Reform role, a ministerial committee was established and chaired by the Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence to carefully examine the administrative framework of government agencies and institutions, to help monitoring departments fulfil their role more effectively, to consider the size of each government agency or administrative body in respect of its duties, and to help government agencies and institutions to operate more efficiently financially (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2009).

Human Resource Development (HRD) in the public sector is supported by the government of Saudi Arabia through a royal decree (in 1998) announcing the establishment of an Administrative Development Department (ADD) in every public sector. The goal of this department is to develop all administrative issues and develop the workforce in the public sector. To achieve that development, the role of the ADD is linked directly with the general manager of the public sector to get the proper support and achieve the needed development in government sectors. This role and its weaknesses can be understood more clearly by exploring the role of HRM in Saudi Arabia.

3.3.2.1 Ministry of Civil Services (HRM)

The Ministry of Civil Services was established in 1999 and its responsibility is to provide an HRM role to the public sector. The Ministry of Civil Services is the only employment agency for new public servant entries in the Kingdom and its role is to plan the requirement of the government sector for the civil workforce and to achieve the Kingdom’s requirement from the capability of civil servants (Ministry of Civil Services, 2009).
The Civil Services Ministry website (see www.mcs.gov.sa) shows five main responsibilities of the Ministry of Civil Services; first, it employs new entrants to any of the Saudi public organisations when any of personnel departments in public organisation have a recruitment requirement. The Civil Service Ministry role is to make sure that the candidate’s qualification matches the job description and if there is more than one candidate to the same job they employ the candidate who has a higher grade (a candidate who graduated with a very good grade is chosen before the candidate who has less grade) or higher qualification; second, the Ministry of Civil Service designs the individual performance appraisal that is used in the public sector. They have different performance appraisals such as appraisal for education jobs or professional jobs. Third, it designs the training policy in the public sector; the employee can gain points from training with maximum six points in the employee field to be used every grade. These points can be collected by attending well know training agencies and the employee can get one point for every month of training programmes; fourth, every public employee gets a fixed salary increase every year according to his/her grade. Finally, the ministry designs the promotion system to enable the employees to get promotion to the next grade after every four years of service when the following conditions are met:

- If there is availability to a vacant job.
- The employee completes four years in his/her grade and gets four points.
- High score place for the employee's seniority (one point is given for every extra year).

Based on these policies it is apparent that the civil services ministry system practice is very different to processes used in USA and UK. First the recruitment system does not depend on the candidates’ capability since it gives more weight to the candidate who has higher grades (such as a candidate who has distinction grades having priority over a candidate who has very good grades) or higher qualification (such as a candidate with bachelor having priority over one who has high school). Second, the individual performance appraisal is completed by the managers without discussion with the employee and it is not linked with the individuals' promotion, not linked with the development system and not linked with the motivation system. Third, training policy focuses on attendance at the training programmes and gives more weight to the number of training programmes that have been attended and not the value or worth of the training to the organisational strategy or to individual capability. Fourth, the
pay system is linked with length of service and not individuals’ capability, performance appraisal, development or achievements. This system gives incompetent employees the same financial motivation as a competent employee. Fifth, the promotion system gives high scores for the employee's seniority and not the employee’s capability or performance appraisal or achieving the organisation's goals. These gaps are highlighted by Budhwar and Debrah (2001) when they criticise public sector system in Saudi Arabia in that it is affected by seniority wages, lifetime employment, and social cohesiveness rather than competence and capability.

3.3.2.2 Human Resources Development

To meet the expectation of a greater proportion of Saudi labour in 2024, the Eighth Development Plan focuses on development of human resources to enhance national capability. The educational standards of graduates of the Kingdom require quality improvement of workforce to raise its productivity, efficiency and innovative capabilities. The Saudi Government has increased the importance of national policy since the late 1990s when they established many HRD organisations such as the Human Resources Development Fund, Institute of Public Administration and several technical colleges in different regions of the country. These organisations and their role are briefly considered next.

The Institute of Public Administration (IPA) was established by Royal Decree number 93 in 1961 as an independent government agency with a moral character that aims at achieving administrative development to enable organisations to face current and future challenges. The IPA is the central authority for training, development and consultations for governmental agencies (IPA, 2009). Its aim is to serve the cause of comprehensive development in the Kingdom. The IPA’s objectives, as stated in its by-laws is to increase the capability of public sector employees, managers and instruct and train them to achieve their tasks and to contribute to the development of administration and support the foundations of administrative development; help public organisations by consultations in administrative fields; support the efforts of administrative reform and development, contribute to administrative research (see www.fifty.ipa.edu.sa ).
The IPA role is to “set up and implement in-service training programs for various employment grades in the government; set up pre-service programs in various administrative fields according to market needs; conduct workshops and seminars for the executive branch in the government; sponsor conferences and symposia concerned with administrative development issues; provide consultations to government agencies and assist in their implementation” (IPA, 2009, p.1). The number of trainees that were enrolled in IPA programs in 2004 is 21,000 (Eighth Development Plan, 2009).

In addition to the IPA the Human Resources Development Fund was created in 2000 (Eighth development plan, 2009). The main objectives of this fund are:

- To provide financial support for training Saudi nationals to prepare them to be employed in the private sector.
- To finance a percentage / proportion of the salaries of Saudis employed in the private sector for two years.
- To support programmes and projects designed to bring about ‘Saudisation’.
- To support centres and institutions which are involved in training and developing ‘national labour’ loans. These loans are designated for the improvement of the institutions’ methods.
- To promote studies, research and consultancy relevant to the training and development of national labour.

Government Organisation for Technical Education and Vocational Training (GOTEVT) is considered one of the HRD organisations which provide technical colleges and vocational training programmes for a number of government and private agencies, working jointly with public and private sector agencies. The total number of students in 2004 was 39,500 and the graduated number was 10,100 (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2009).

HRM/D is very important for Saudi long term plans but these organisations face many challenges. First, the focus of organisations that are responsible for HRD/M in Saudi Arabia is on training programmes rather than the value or worth of the training to the organisations’ strategies. Second, HRD organisations in Saudi Arabia provide training without proactive
interventions and participation in the formulation of the public sector and private sector strategies. Third, there is a lack of focus on the importance of measuring the value of the HRD role to the organisational strategies. Another important issue in the previous and the current Saudi development plans is to meet Saudization policy which will be discussed in the following section.

3.4 Saudization of Employment

Saudization is now one of the most important issues of workforce and employment planning in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The government has focused on this policy (replacing non-Saudi workers with Saudis in the private sector) since the fourth development plan as part of its aim to overcome the unemployment problems and the pitfalls of depending on expatriates. The government is still working in the eighth development plan to achieve this policy and to avoid the previous challenges through many policies that aim at increasing employment opportunities of Saudi labour in the private sector.

However, this attempt to achieve Saudization has been criticised by Achoui (2009) in that it fails to take into account the labour market structure and the development of human capital as well as the private sector preference to employ cheap foreign skilled labour from India or Bangladesh (Ramadi, 2005). Achoui (2009) argues that one of the most important reasons for not achieving this policy may be for the lack of participation from the private sector in the HRD aspects in Saudi Arabia.

Development of the private sector has been associated with the parallel development of the activities of its institutions, represented mainly by the Chambers of Commerce and Industry (20 chambers) and their affiliated companies and establishments, which number about 174,000 (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2009).

During the Seventh Development Plan period from 2000 – 2004, the real growth rate of the private sector was an average of 4.3 percent annually. In 1999, the private sector’s percentage share in the GDP was 52.4 percent. This grew to 54.6 percent in 2004 compared to the target of 55.4 percent. Alongside this, private investment increased by 2.3 percent each year compared to the planned target of 8.3 percent (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2009).
CHAPTER 3 - SAUDI ARABIA

The eighth plan suggests that the reason for the gap between the actual and targeted rates is attributed to the recent conflicts and tensions in the region, which adversely affected the investment climate and led to a delay in the implementation of some of the major private investments foreseen by the plan in such sectors as petrochemicals and mining.

The Eighth Development Plan outlines ways of tackling these challenges through: improving the investment environment; enhancing the role of the private sector in economic and social development; accelerating Saudization of jobs in the private sector; expanding channels of consultation between the private and public sectors with respect to private sector related matters, and increasing investment and business opportunities available for women (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2009).

Ramadi (2005) argues that the reasons why private sector employers may prefer foreign labourers (expatriates) to Saudis are: high cost of Saudi labour; negative social and cultural perceptions and attitudes towards manual work; foreign labourers are more disciplined than Saudis; Saudis being less qualified in English language and technical skills.

3.5 Studies on HRD in Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries

The literature in this thesis has highlighted the importance of alignment between the HRD investment process and organisational strategy and the measurement of its contribution to organisational strategy. This final section discusses studies that have evaluated the HRD role or evaluation practices in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries:

Abdalla & Al-Homoud (1995) found a lack of attention to evaluation in the role of training and development in large Kuwaiti organisations. Needs assessments and programme evaluation were lacking in these organisations and no specific 'follow up' procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of T&D programmes were evident.

Al-Athari and Zairi (2002) examined challenges that face T&D in five Kuwaiti organisations. Their study reveals that the majority of respondents, both in government and in private sectors, only evaluate their training programmes occasionally. They found that the most common model used by Kuwaiti organisations is the Kirkpatrick model, while the most common level of evaluation for both government and private sector is the reaction level.
Alsheraimy (2006) found in his thesis that the Saudi Arabia public sector appears to be most dominated by single loop types of learning, from both the managers and employees perception.

The previous two studies suggest that most of these organisations evaluate the merit of training programmes rather than value or worth of the HRD role to the organisational strategy (see for example Garavan, 2007; Anderson, 2009). Other studies have discussed the national strategy in Gulf and Saudi contexts and the role of HRD/M to achieve it.

Al-Lamki (2000) addressed the challenges that face Human Resource Management (HRM) and training with particular emphasis on Omanization in the Sultanate of Oman and found that: 1) a missing link in the successful realisation of Omanization in the private sector is a holistic and integrated coordination and cooperation between the government, the private sector employers and the employees, 2) slow progress has been achieved in the employment of Omanies in the private sector despite the government's considerable effort and active role in encouraging and promoting Omanization.

Alzalabani (2002) explored the training and development strategies and practices in Saudi Arabia in a context where the Saudi government has given a high priority to training and development in order to meet its Saudisation programme. Alzalabani argues that the Saudisation programme has two main aspects: 1) short-term nature, which is to solve the problem of unemployment among Saudis, 2) long-term strategy, to reduce the quantity and significance of expatriate labour which should lead to self-sustaining growth. He added that the development plans have placed importance on human resources development through continuous advance in general and higher education, as well as in technical education and vocational training in particular.

Al Dosary (2004) outlined two important issues in HRD role in Saudi Arabia: 1) the problems associated with foreign workers against the alternatives of developing human resources locally through training and skill development 2) policies and practices to localise the labour force given the prevailing evidence from the local labour market. The paper concludes with a few specific policy options that may well lead to the nationalisation of the
labour force through developing the skill profile of nationals in a concerted effort of planned human resources development and selecting appropriate labour force importation policies.

Mellahi (2007) study explored the implications of the emerging legal framework for HRM in the private sector, and evaluated the adequacy of changing HRM practices through laws and regulations. The paper discusses the implications of the research findings for private sector managers and policy makers. Mellahi found that

- Saudi Arabia’s accession to the world trade organisation WTO in 2005 means that transnational bodies such as the International Labour Organisation ILO and WTO will closely monitor Saudi Arabia’s adherence to international labour standards in areas.

- Private sector managers need to recognize that Saudization is a reality in the Saudi labour market today and little can be done to reverse it.

- The workforce in the private sector is becoming more diverse but entrenched values and behaviours towards the management of foreign employees have not changed.

Achoui (2009) highlights the challenges of human capital development in the Gulf Arab countries in general and in Saudi Arabia in particular. Achoui found that most of the GCC countries such as Saudi Arabia are focusing more on a long-term vision and planning that might elevate some of the highlighted challenges and pave the way for sound development that is based on human capital development and there is no particular emphasis on reforming the whole educational system in the country and there is no clear strategy for integrating the macro and the micro aspects of HRD in the country besides integrating the private and the government efforts in human capital development.

Although these researchers show the importance of national strategy in many Gulf states to be achieved in the private sector, a number of gaps in knowledge remain: first the extent to which HRD professionals in organisations are able to participate in the formulation of national and organisational strategies; second, the ways in which the HRD role can be aligned with public and private sector strategies and third, the extent to which the value of HRD is measured.
Conclusion

This chapter shows that Saudi Arabia is a wealthy country which follows a planned approach to economic development with structured, hierarchal and top down processes. The Eighth Development Plan focuses on the long term (until year 2024) and provides many attempts to improve the competency, effectiveness and efficiency of the public sector and Saudization. These attempts face many challenges. First, the Saudi business culture (highly centralized, high uncertainty avoiders, collectivistic and feminine side) is different to the culture of developed countries (see for example Hofstede, 1984). Second, government attempts to achieve Saudization policies do not take into account the labour market structure, the development of human capital or the lack of participation from the private sector in HRD. Third, the role of the Ministry of Civil Services does not support the development of capability of the employees or of organisations. The next chapter will discuss the methodological approach for the research to probe more deeply into HRD issues from the perspective of organisational decision-makers.
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology which accompany the study’s research focus and research objectives. As indicated at the conclusion to Chapter 2, this thesis is based on broad research objectives rather than specific and detailed research questions; the intention and purpose is to explore and understand how HRD professionals and senior managers in public and multi-national private sector organisations in Saudi Arabia value and evaluate their strategic learning and to probe into the differences as well as similarities of experiences and opinions in different types of organisations and between two different sets of organisational stakeholders (HRD specialists and senior managers). Although specific and detailed research questions were not set three main features of SHRD, identified from the literature review, formed part of the process of investigating these issues: the strategic role of HRD, the alignment of SHRD and the measurement of SHRD.

Methodology is described as the theory examining how research should be carried out, taking account of the underlying theoretical and philosophical assumptions and how these impact decisions on which method or methods are used (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). The organisation of this chapter consists of 13 main sections: research philosophy, research approach, research design, sampling strategy, data collection, the development of the semi-structured interview guide, access issues, the field work, ethical consideration issues, data collection challenges, limitations of the current research, the trustworthiness of qualitative research and data analysis.

4.1 Research Philosophy

This section discusses the research philosophy of this study, explaining what forms of reasoning are deployed to gain a better understanding of the phenomena being studied (Bassey, 1990). According to Bryman and Bell (2007), research philosophy usually addresses two considerations; epistemological and ontological. These two considerations are discussed in the following section.
4.1.1 Epistemology

Epistemology refers to the branch of philosophy concerned with studying the nature of knowledge and justification (Schwandt, 2001; Saunders et al., 2007). These considerations concern the issue of knowledge that is or ought to be considered to be relevant to a discipline (Bryman and Bell, 2007). In other words Proctor (2005) argues that it is concerned with how the researcher can know things. Many researchers describe this consideration as the ground of knowledge (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005; Bryman and Bell, 2007).

According to Saunders et al. (2009), there are two primary epistemological positions in social sciences, namely the interpretivist and positivist positions. A positivist approach is the prevalent epistemology used in the natural sciences when laws provide the basis of explanation. It allows phenomena to be anticipated, expects that they will occur, and gives organisations direction in their control (Saunders et al., 2009).

The interpretivist approach is based on the assumption that the social world of business and management and other forms of human endeavour is far too complex to lend itself to theorising by definitive laws in the same way as the physical sciences. This approach recommends for the researcher to understand the differences between individuals as social actors (Saunders et al., 2009).

4.1.2 Ontology

This refers to “theories of being or existence and the ways in which our existence is shaped by the nature of knowledge” (Aitchison, 2003, p.196). It has been described as “the nature of the world” (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005, p. 10; Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 25). Bryman and Bell (2007) argue that questions of social ontology must be linked with issues concerning the conduct of business research. According to Proctor (2005), ontology increases the need to answer questions about the nature of reality and is linked with the assumption of the kind of things that are found in the world.
The main point of orientation in ontology considerations is to find out whether social entities can and should be thought of as objective entities with a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be thought of as social constructions based on the perceptions and actions of social actors (Bryman & Bell, 2007). According to Johnson and Duberley, (2000) an objective view of ontology assumes that social and natural reality existed before human consciousness while subjectivist ontology takes it for granted that what we consider to be reality is an output of the human cognitive process. As a result, Bryman & Bell, (2007, p.22) argue that “Ontological assumptions and commitments will feed into the ways in which research questions are formulated and research is carried out”. This consideration of ontology contains two positions in the social sciences namely objectivism and constructionism (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

The objectivism position asserts that social phenomenon and their interpretation exist apart from social actors (Bryman and Bell, 2007). In this position, researchers (when testing a theory) try to isolate variables, measure a given effect and offer a quantitative result in relation to a single outcome (Docherty, Forslin Shani, 2002). This approach has been criticised for its lack of depth and richness (Robson, 2002). An objectivist ontology position assumes an objective form of knowledge, to measure relationships using quantitative research.

The constructionism position is “an ontological position (often also referred to as constructivism) that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are constantly being brought into being by social actors (Bryman and Bell, 2007). This position challenges the suggestion that “categories such as organisation and culture are pre-given and therefore confront social actors as external realities that they have no role in fashioning” (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 792).

This position accepts a degree of interaction between the researchers and the subject of the research to form an agreed, informed construction through dialectical exchange (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Saunders et al. (2009) argue that this approach is used when the researcher seeks some pattern in reality and looks forward to drawing a conclusion; in this case it is concerned with building theory. The purpose of this approach is to describe, analyse and
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

understand the behaviour of individuals and/or groups of people from the perspective of the subject being studied (Myers, 1997).

Those who advocate this constructionist ontology suggest that it has many advantages: it helps the researcher to ask the right questions and even gives him/her additional confidence in his/her conclusions (King et al., 1994), it has the purpose of allowing important social phenomena to be investigated by immersing the investigator for prolonged amounts of time (Slavin, 1992) and it rejects the idea that one reality is founded regardless of the influence of individual people (Allan, 1998).

These advantages do not mean that this position does not have any disadvantages. According to Allan (1998) and Creswell (2004) the results of qualitative research cannot be generalised to other situations or a larger population, because qualitative data cannot be tested for statistical significance. Anderson’s (2007) study can be considered as a constructivist-interpretivist approach since it seeks meaning and understanding associated with how HRD professionals and the general manager (CEOs) in the UK value and evaluate their learning.

The research reported here is also constructionist in its ontology. It focuses on discovery and exploration of the social phenomena to assert how social entities (HR professionals and CEO managers or public and multinational private sectors in Saudi Arabia) value and evaluate their strategic learning. This understanding can be seen from the interaction between the researcher and the subject of the research which enables the researcher to seek some pattern in reality and look forward to drawing a conclusion.

4.2 Research Approach

This section discusses the difference between inductive (qualitative) and deductive (quantitative) approaches and the approach adopted in this study.

The inductive approach is used when the researcher uses systematic procedures to analyse data and looks forward to draw a conclusion (Thomas, 2006). The main purpose of this approach is to describe, analyse and understand the individual or group behaviour from their
perceptions (Thomas, 2006; Myers, 1997). This approach has an area of research and accepts the theory to appear from the research data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Strauss & Corbin (1998) argue that the use of an inductive approach is common in several types of qualitative data analyses, especially grounded theory.

The deductive approach is most common with positivist research (Saunders et al., 2009). This approach refers to the analysis that focuses on testing whether data are consistent with prior assumptions, theories, or hypotheses that are supported or constructed by the researcher (Thomas, 2006). In this case the results are expected to be generalisable because this approach believes that there is one reality in a rational quantifiable world (Allan, 1998).

Thomas, (2006) argues that inductive, deductive, qualitative and quantitative approaches are used in many projects in practice. However this thesis is inductive because it focuses on understanding how CEO managers and HR professionals measure and value their strategic learning. It is grounded in a wide diversity of literature but seeks to explore the understanding of those involved in their terms rather than through testing theories or hypotheses.

4.3 Research Design

According to McNabb (2008), the researcher should spend considerable time and effort in the design selection process. Research design refers to the logical structure that is used by the researcher in his/her research project. In this thesis two issues have an influence on the research design: the aim of the research and the research objectives.

The aim of this study is to investigate the value attached to learning in multinational private and public organisations in Saudi Arabia. The following section discusses the research design issues. Bryman and Bell (2007) identify five types of research design: (1) experimental design, (2) longitudinal design, (3) case study design and (4) cross-sectional design (5) comparative design. McNabb (2008) affirmed that there is no best design, but there are many acceptable way to conduct research.

Experimental design involves dividing subjects into two groups at random, the experimental group and the control group (David and Sutton, 2004). David and Sutton argue that “it is often not possible to allocate subjects randomly into two groups, and even where possible,
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

there is an issue of other external factors influencing the measured observation” (p.134). This design is seldom used in business which are organisationally focused and management research where it is difficult to achieve the required level of control when dealing with organisational behaviour (Bryman and Bell, 2007) and it is inappropriate to the objectives of this thesis.

Longitudinal design involves data collection during a period of time. It is especially valuable in research which is examining social change. The researcher collects data from the same sample and determines the change at two points or more in time (David and Sutton, 2004; Smith & Cowie and Blades, 2003). Although it has great potential, the time constraints make it outside the scope of the research for this thesis. This type is not used much in business and management research because of the time and cost involved (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

Case study design is a common methodology in social science (Yin, 2009; Yin, 1993). It concentrates on thorough analysis of one or more single case (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Yin, 2009). Bryman and Bell (2007) argue that some of the best known studies in business and management research are based on the four types of case study; a single organisation, a single location, a person or a single event. Moreover, the most common use of the case study location is a workplace or organisation. Despite the importance of this design it is not used in this thesis as the focus of research involves a comparison between many cases (10 public and 10 multinational private organisations) and between HR professional and CEO managers.

Cross-Sectional design entails the collection of data on more than one case and at a single point in time in order to collect data in connection with two or more variables, which are then examined to detect or explore patterns of association (Bryman & Bell, 2007). According to Kumar (2005), this design is most commonly used in the social sciences and it is appropriate when taking a cross-section of population for studies aimed at examining the prevalence of a phenomenon, situation, problem, attitude or issue. This design is suitable when dealing with the relative positions of phenomena or their interrelationships at a particular (Polit & Beck, 2006, p. 192). This research underpinning this thesis may to some extent, be considered as a cross-sectional design since the sample of the study involves more than one case (multi-national private and public organisations and CEO managers and HR professionals) in Saudi Arabia and the research was conducted at one point in time.
Bryman and Bell (2007) argue that cross-cultural or cross-national research is considered one of the most obvious forms of this design. Cross-cultural refers to various cultures in a single country or variations between one cultural group and another while cross-national refers to research conducted in two countries or more. According to Waltz, Strickland and Lenz (2005), frequently cross-national research is cross-cultural, but cross-cultural is not necessarily cross-national. This increases the importance of using the cross-organisational design because it is better to try to explain similarities and differences between organisations so that generalisations can be developed from them, or they can be used to develop a better awareness or greater understanding of the social reality in a particular national environment (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

Comparative design compares how effective two or more interventions which have different theoretical and historical backgrounds are (Weiner, Freedheim, Schinka & Velicer, 2003). According to Bryman and Bell (2007, p.66-69), using comparative design in business research is popular because it usually takes two or more organisations as cases for comparison. The main advantage of this design is that when comparing two or more cases (which may be organisations, nations, people etc.), the researcher is in a better position to establish the circumstance in which a theory will or will not hold.

This thesis tries to understand how CEOs and HR managers and how multi-national private and public organisations in Saudi Arabia value and evaluate their strategic learning using a cross-cultural design. Comparisons between CEO managers and HR professionals and between public and multinational private sectors are considered rather than assuming one culture e.g. between HR professionals or public organisations only.

The advantages of using cross-national design can be seen from the focus on the similarities and differences between CEOs and HR managers and between multi-national private and public sectors on how they value and evaluate their learning, and then comparing the findings with western studies (USA and UK). In the organized planning for the research, it was planned to use the cross-national design more fully by involving the multinational private organisations owned by US or UK interests, but data access proved impossible. Therefore the research reported here focuses on the top 100 multi-national private organisations by revenue in Saudi Arabia because they have other branches in different countries. This involvement
increases the chance of gaining deeper understanding of social reality in different organisational contexts.

Therefore, the design in this thesis is both comparative design and cross-sectional. The research seeks to understand how the public organisations and the multinational private sector organisations and how HR professionals and CEO managers within them measure and value their strategic learning. To understand how to achieve these two designs it is important to highlight the sample strategy in this research.

4.4 Sampling Strategy

In this research three issues influence the sampling procedures: the research objectives, the qualitative methods and the features of the research design for both cross-national and comparative research design. According to Polit and Beck (2006), some sampling procedures for qualitative studies include: identifying the population, specifying the eligibility criteria, specifying the sampling plan and recruiting the sample. The following section explains how these procedures were used in this research:

The research population is the entire set of all individuals or elements who fulfil the criteria set for the sample (Burns and Grove, 2005; Polit and Beck, 2006). The population for this thesis is:

- All 100 top multi-national private organisations by revenue in Saudi companies that may be under Saudi or shared ownership (51% of Saudi investment and 49% non-Saudi). The inclusion of these organisations in this study is important because they have branches outside Saudi Arabia, where there is more competition with other private organisations, making it more likely that there is significant concern about effective learning and performance improvement. The fact that they are high revenue earners also increases the likelihood that they have more established HR than other private firms, and are more likely to be influenced by other international cultures into an HRD approach.

- All main headquarters of public organisations in Saudi Arabia.
Specifying the eligibility criteria is the second step in the sampling strategy. It refers to the qualities which must be possessed to belong to the target population (Burns and Grove, 2005). Criteria can be developed from the research problem, the purpose of the study, review of the literature, and the conceptual and operational definitions of study variables and design (Burns & Grove, 2005).

In this research two types of organisations and two levels of senior managers were chosen for the following reasons. Selection of two types of organisations (public and multi-national private sector) was intended to allow for variation in their strategic focus (profit and services respectively) and the perspectives on the learning function and its contribution to the organisation. In addition, selection of two functions in each organisation (HR professional and CEO managers) rather than just one, (HR or CEO manager only), is intended to allow for variations in how they value and evaluate their strategic learning. Choosing HR professionals in the sample is important, because they are responsible for learning and development; but the literature review also indicates that they cannot provide an effective and efficient service without an understanding of their role on the part of their general managers. The role of HR professional and CEO managers is important in this research because their role is critical to the HRD practice under consideration, and because they may be able to explain the complexities or details that could not be achieved by using one of them alone.

Specifying the sampling plan and recruiting the sample is the third step in sampling strategy. Sample refers to any subset of the population that is used in the research to study the population as a whole (Schutt, 2008; Polit and Beck, 2006).

The literature provides very little direct guidance on the size of the sample in qualitative research, because sample size itself does not determine the significance of the research (Patton, 1990; Crabtree and Miller, 1992; Gerrish & Lacey, 2006). In general, the sample size in qualitative research is relatively small but consists of information-rich cases (Holloway, 1997). A sample size of six to eight subjects is advocated for homogenous samples (Crabtree & Miller, 1992), while Sandelowski (1995) affirms that a sample size of 10 may be judged as too little to be able to reach maximum variation of a complex phenomenon or to construct a theory, or too large for some sorts of narrative analyses. Whatever the sample size, Morse (1991, p.129) argues that “it is essential for the researcher to discover who will be the most appropriate informants before beginning data gathering and that informants must be carefully selected or carefully chosen according to specific qualities”.
During this study, 40 interviews were planned to be conducted with general managers and HR professionals in 20 multi-national private and public organisations in Saudi Arabia, as follows:

- A random sample of 10 multinational private organisations was drawn from the top 100 Saudi companies by revenue, which may be under Saudi or shared ownership (51% of Saudi investment and 49% non-Saudi). These were created using an Excel worksheet in tabular form, then 15 random numbers were generated for the organisation in the range 1 to 100. Fifteen organisations were chosen, rather than 10, in case any of the first 10 did not accept the invitation to participate. HR professionals and CEOs were chosen in these organisations.

- A random sample of 10 organisations was drawn from public organisations in Saudi Arabia. These were created using an Excel worksheet in tabular form, then 15 random numbers were generated for the organisation in the range 1 to 100. 15 organisations were chosen, rather than 10, in case any of the first 10 did not accept the invitation to participate. HR professionals and CEOs were chosen in these organisations.

4.5 Data Collection

This part explains the choice of semi-structured interviews method. Three issues had an influence on choosing the method of data collection which are; research objectives, constructivist ontology and qualitative methods. According to Morris (2006) and Bryman and Bell (2007), the most common qualitative methods are interviews, observation and the review of documents. Observation and the review of documents were inappropriate for this study because this research sought to draw information or expressions of opinions or beliefs from the interviewees’ perceptions of how HR professionals and CEOs value and evaluate their learning. The most appropriate qualitative method is interview (Howitt & Cramer, 2000; Marczyk et al., 2005; Thomas, Nelson & Silverman, 2005). Casell and Symon (2004) stated that interviews are preferred in examining subjects where different levels of meaning need to be explored. According to Denzin (1989), an interview is a face-to-face verbal interchange in which the researcher attempts to draw information or expressions of opinions or belief from the interviewee.
According to Marsh (2002), there are three types of interview that can be used to conduct research, the differences between them being mainly in their structure. Marsh (2002) classifies them as structured, unstructured and semi-structured. According to Gratton and Jones (2004), a structured (standardised) interview is essentially a questionnaire where the questions are prepared and fixed; the researcher reads them aloud to the interviewee and notes the responses. One of the advantages of this type of questionnaire over a purely written form is that the respondent can seek clarification of questions that may be unclear or ambiguous, while the main weakness of this type is that the respondent cannot give clarification of his or her views, because the answers are restricted (Richardson, 1992).

An unstructured (non-standardized) interview is more like an ordinary conversation. This type is chosen when the researcher does not have a clear idea of what he/she is going to learn; he/she does not know what to ask, so he/she does not begin with a prepared set of questions (Polit & Beck, 2004). The researcher has only a general idea of the topic to be covered and the respondents tend to lead the direction of the interviews. The main weakness here is that the participants tell their story with little interruption from the researcher (Polit & Beck, 2004). This type is not the most suitable in this study because there is detailed guidance on how the topic should be explored; the general questions were formulated in advance (by reference to the literature) although the researcher sought to encourage development of answers through probing questions.

The semi-structured (semi-standardized) interview is less formal than standardised interviews and has more focus than non-standardised, unstructured interviews (Shepm, 2004). It was preferred in this research for four reasons; the researcher could clarify questions for the respondents and follow up on answers as appropriate (Gillham, 2000; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005), it provides greater breadth and depth of information, in that it reveals the respondents’ experience and interpretation of reality and it gives access to the ideas, thoughts and memories of the respondents in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher (Klandermans & Staggenborg, 2002), it involves predetermined questions or themes to follow and also it encourages the development of these themes within certain limits through probing questions (Shepm, 2004) and it allows in-depth exploration of individual views and
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perspectives with the use of question guidelines (Sarantakos, 2005).

Semi-structured interviews can be conducted face-to-face or by telephone. Face-to-face interviewing has the following weaknesses: cost and the lack of privacy and anonymity, so that respondents may feel embarrassed or threatened when asked questions that relate to personal issues. Another weakness is that the sample may choose not to participate in interviews regarding sensitive topics. In addition, the bias or interests of an interviewer may have an effect on how the interviewees respond (Kumar, 2005). Moreover, Bryman and Bell (2007) argue that gaining access and arranging a mutually convenient time in which to conduct an interview in business and management research to interview senior level staff can be extremely difficult.

Marsh (2002) notes that interviews are not always conducted face-to-face; for example, telephonic interviews may be used, as in the study by O’Driscoll et al. (2005). Using a telephone interview has advantages in that it can achieve speed of data collection and low cost. Alternatively, disadvantages include: the difficulty in taking notes during the interview, the interviewee may be less willing to participate in the telephonic interview for as much time as with a face-to-face interview and it is not easy to develop more complex questions in comparison to face to face interview (Saunders et al., 2009).

Given these advantages and disadvantages, this research used face-to-face semi-structured interviews and followed some procedures to seek in-depth descriptions of how the HR professionals and CEO managers in multi-national private and public organisations in Saudi Arabia perceive the value of learning to their organisations. The aim was to obtain a breadth and depth of information, collecting the thoughts and memories of the respondents in their own words rather than in those of the researcher.

4.6 The Development of the Semi-Structured Interview Guide

This part discusses the development of the semi-structured interview guide that was used in this research. This development enabled the researcher to make sure that the semi-structured interview data addresses the research objectives. An interview guide lists questions or issues
that are used in the study (Patton, 2002). Cassel and Symon (2004) suggest that the researcher should prepare an interview guide to lead the conversation throughout the interview, which is supplemented by probes, to be used to obtain more details from participants on particular points as required. Its purpose is to ensure that the interviewer remains focused on the issue at hand, while allowing enough conversation so that the participants can introduce and discuss relevant topics (Calder, 2005). The use of an interview guide has some advantages: the researcher makes best use of the limited time available in an interview situation and it helps to do the interview with different interviewees in a more systematic and comprehensive way by determining in advance the issues to be explored (Patton, 2002, p.343). The development of the semi-structured interview guide in this study was established by using four steps: translation of semi-structure interview, first pilot study, second pilot study and third pilot study.

The six interview questions that were used in O’Driscoll et al. (2005) and Anderson (2007) were amended to be understood in a Saudi context. Anderson (2007) built on O’Driscoll et al.’s (2005) study to explore how senior managers perceive their strategic learning in the UK without needing to translate the questions because they were used in a similar culture (USA/UK). However, the following steps were taken in order to use these interview questions in a Saudi context.

Translation of the questions is the first step in developing the semi-structured guide. The interviews were done in the Arabic language, because some of the respondents may have been unable to understand questions in English or unable to respond in English. The interview guide was based on the six questions that were used in the studies by O’Driscoll et al. (2005) and Anderson (2007).

The six questions were therefore translated from English to Arabic, and the accuracy of the translation was checked by the use of back translation (double translation) method, whereby one bilingual person first translates the English version into Arabic and a second then translates this back into English, the result being compared with the original text. If the two versions are significantly different, the Arabic version is altered to more closely approximate the original English (Fisher & Lerner, 2005). The original questions were sent to the translation department at the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) for translation into
Arabic as the first step in this process. Then the Arabic translation was translated back to English using a different translator. The researcher and the supervisor reviewed the original six questions with the translated questions from Arabic to English, and they found that they reflected the same understanding with the original interview that was used in O’Driscoll et al.’s study.

The translated questions were then sent to four specialists in HRD in Saudi Arabia and at this stage they indicated some problems with understanding the concept of learning in the field of HRD in Saudi Arabia, preferring the use of the term training.

In the light of this three pilot studies were also done to test the research instrument as well as to provide the researcher with the ability to measure the procedures of the study prior to the actual research. This was to ensure that the interview questions that were put to the HR professionals and CEOs in the Saudi organisations were understood in the same way as those used by O’Driscoll et al. (2005) and Anderson (2007).

The first pilot study was conducted in February 2008 when the IPA in Saudi Arabia (the researcher’s sponsor) helped the researcher to make arrangements with the respondents through writing a letter that was signed by the general manager of training and development at the IPA. This letter was sent with a letter from the researcher to each of the two pilot participants one week before the proposed interview time, setting out the purpose of the research and the main interview questions, seeking consent and inviting the person to agree on a time for the interview to take place. Moreover, it indicated to the need to record the interview if they did not mind. Telephone interviews were conducted with the participants and not face-to-face. This was because of the difficulty of travelling to Saudi Arabia. These participants were not from the main research sample, but they had the same characteristics.

The following table shows interview questions that were used in the O’Driscoll et al. (2005) and for the Arabic translation see appendix (A):
Table 4.1 O’Driscoll et al. (2005) interview questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q 2</th>
<th>Q 3</th>
<th>Q 4</th>
<th>Q 5</th>
<th>Q 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does the learning function provide strategic value to your organisation?</td>
<td>How does the learning function’s strategic activity translate into business results?</td>
<td>What is the learning investment process and your involvement in it?</td>
<td>How do you know the learning function is maintaining ongoing alignment with your strategic business needs?</td>
<td>How do you measure the learning function’s value contribution to your organisation?</td>
<td>How do you know the learning function is performing as efficiently as possible?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interviews were recorded and one of them with CEO manager took 37 minutes and the other with HR professional took 43 minutes. Evaluation of the pilot suggested that the interview questions were not clear for the respondents; they asked the researcher to repeat some questions and they asked what was meant by the concepts of ‘learning function’, ‘learning strategy’, ‘strategic value’, ‘learning investment processes’, ‘value contribution’, and ‘alignment’. However, they were “happy” about the length of the interview.

After the interviews had finished, the researcher transcribed the interviews to identify the difficulties in the understanding of these questions. Following this process the interview questions were amended to be as follows:

Table 4.2 Interview question in the second pilot study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q 2</th>
<th>Q 3</th>
<th>Q 4</th>
<th>Q 5</th>
<th>Q 6</th>
<th>Q 7</th>
<th>Q 8</th>
<th>Q 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the purpose and what are the objectives of the training and development department currently provide for the employees?</td>
<td>What kind of training and development does the Department of Training and Development currently provide for the employees?</td>
<td>How is the spending for training and development decided?</td>
<td>What do you do if you need to do more spending on training and development?</td>
<td>In spending decisions about training and development, what is the role of the training manager and what is the role of the top managers in the organisation?</td>
<td>How do you know if the training and development department is as efficient as possible in its work?</td>
<td>How do you know if the training and development department provides a useful contribution to the organisation’s high objectives?</td>
<td>How do you ensure that the work of the training and development department is remain connected to the needs and objectives of the organisation?</td>
<td>What procedures are used to know that the training and development provides a contribution to your organisation’s objectives?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second pilot study was undertaken in March 2008 with one of the HR professionals in the public organisation. Evaluation of the process suggested that the interview questions were better understood than the first ones, and the interview took 52 minutes. At the end of the interview the interviewee was asked for his comments and he said it was understood. Furthermore, the interview was transcribed and reviewed many times and then it was discussed with the supervisor. According to the discussion, two questions were found to be
useful additions to the research questions, and it was found that it was more appropriate if Question 11 was moved to be after Question 4.

### Table 4.3 Interview questions in the third pilot study

| Q1 | What is the purpose and what are the objectives of the training and development department? |
| Q2 | What kind of training and development does the Department of Training and Development currently provide for the employees? |
| Q3 | Do you intend to provide any kind of training or development in the future to help your individuals or groups perform their jobs efficiently? |
| Q4 | Do you have any training or development activities provided in the workplace to help the employees carry out their tasks efficiently? |
| Q5 | What procedures are used to know that the training and development provides a contribution to your organisation’s objectives? |
| Q6 | How is the spending for training and development decided? |
| Q7 | How do you do if you need to do more spending on training and development? |
| Q8 | In spending decisions about training and development, what is the role of the training manager and what is the role of the top managers in the organisation? |
| Q9 | How do you know if the training and development department is as efficient as possible in its work? |
| Q10 | How do you know if the training and development department provides a useful contribution to the organisation’s high objectives? |
| Q11 | How do you ensure that the work of the training and development department is remain connected to the needs and objectives of the organisation? |

A third pilot interview was done in April 2008 with another HR professional. During this interview, the questions were understood and the HR professional answered them smoothly. Then the interview was transcribed and reviewed. The transcription involved many themes that were mentioned in the previous studies (US and UK studies) which are related to the research questions. This transcribed interview was discussed with the researcher’s supervisor. The supervisor and the researcher were satisfied with the last series of transcribed interview questions and it was agreed that it was appropriate to collect the final data.

### 4.7 Access Issues

In making arrangements to interview the research participants, it became clear to the researcher from his communications that it might be difficult to do the interviews with the CEOs and with some HR professionals in some of the public or multi-national private organisations. To improve access, the researcher used the IPA (the researcher’s sponsor) as ‘gatekeeper’ because it was considered an important organisation for public and multi-national private organisations for its role as the trainer for the public organisations and its
graduates usually work for the multi-national private and public organisations. In addition, contacts with friends and relatives were used to encourage access to these individuals.

The researcher provided the IPA with the organisations’ names, the CEOs’ titles and the HR professionals’ titles and asked the IPA to write a letter signed by the general manager of the IPA to the CEO of the organisation to help the researcher to collect the data.

These letters were sent by the researcher to each CEO in the public and multi-national private sector, at least one week before the interview, setting out the purpose of the research and the main interview questions, seeking consent and inviting the person to agree to a time for the interview to take place. Moreover, it requested recording of the interviews with their agreement and the following points were explained through a letter from the researcher:

- All information provided will be used for research purposes only.
- The interviewee has the choice to withdraw from the interview at any time.
- The information and recorded data will be deleted after five years from the time it is gathered.
- Anonymity and confidentiality will be ensured as far as possible.

4.8 The Field Work

The field work was conducted between May and August 2008. During this study, 40 interviews were planned to be conducted with general managers and HR professionals in 10 multi-national private and 10 public sector organisations in Saudi Arabia.

In conducting the interviews; first, the researcher tried to focus on quality of information that was gathered during the interview. According to Patton, (1990) and Hine & Carson (2007), the researcher should be very skilful, experienced and knowledgeable about the topic. Secondly, the interviewer chose an appropriate time, avoiding peak working hours and selecting a time when both researcher and respondent feel like talking (Glesne and Peshkin (1992). Third, the interviewer sought a suitable atmosphere in which the subject might feel able to talk freely about his/her experience (Kvale, 1996). The interviewer also asked some
biographic questions at the beginning of each interview to build an appropriate atmosphere for each interviewee but in spite of this some data collection challenges were experienced.

Although many procedures were used to record the interviews, more than half of the interviewees (19 of the 37 participants) did not accept recording the interviews and they told the researcher that they would speak slowly and the researcher would have the right to stop the interviewee at any time during the interview and they would be happy to repeat any answers. In such cases, the researcher tried to repeat a summary of each answer and at the end of a non-recorded interview the interviewer reviewed the answers and made his comments to make sure that they had answered all the interview questions and interviews was summarised and noted on the computer on the same day. Moreover, most of the interviewees provided the researcher with their cards and they told him that he could phone them if he needed any more information. Their cards included their phone number, their fax and most of them included their mobile numbers. The recorded interviews were digitised and stored on the researcher’s computer as mp3 files.

Five interviews were very short (between 15 and 35 minutes) this was because they had written their answers before the meeting, and they said that their answers to the interview question were typed but if the researcher still needed more information, or any answer was not understood, then he could phone them and they would be happy to answer any further questions. In this case the answers were read and the researcher arranged a meeting with them to develop their answers if needed. The other 32 interviews lasted between 45 and 130 minutes.

At the end of the interviews with seven of the managers (two senior managers and five HR managers) from multinational private organisations the researcher was asked for a copy of the thesis when it has completed.

However, only 37 managers participated in these interviews (10 HR professionals and 7 senior managers in multi-national private and 10 HR professionals and 10 senior managers public organisations) and their characteristic can be represented in the following tables (4.4-4.8).
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Table 4.4 Private Sector Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Org. code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retail and Services</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>B, D, G, K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial and Telecom Sector</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>C, J, F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services and Banking</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A, E, H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 Public Sector Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Org. code</th>
<th>Number of employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministries and big organisations</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>D, E, A, C</td>
<td>10000 employees or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Development Org</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>G, K</td>
<td>Less than 1500 employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Organisation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>B, J, F</td>
<td>1500 and less than 10000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6 Senior Managers' Qualifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>HR</th>
<th>CEO</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters holders</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor and less</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 Senior Managers' Experience in the Current Jobs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>HR</th>
<th>CEO</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 5 and 10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8 Participation from Senior Managers and CEO managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Public sector</th>
<th>Private sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior managers</td>
<td>A,B,C,D,E,F,H</td>
<td>A,C,H,J,K,E,F,G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO managers</td>
<td>G,J,K</td>
<td>B,D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The previous tables show that this study involved different sectors, most of the participants are well educated (26 of 37 have Masters or higher) and are experienced in their work and in their organisations.

4.9 Ethical Consideration Issues

Confidentiality was ensured. Only the researcher and the supervisor saw or heard the data during the research period and none of the individual research interviewees heard or read any data from other participants via the researcher. Anonymity was also to be ensured as far as possible. Named information from interviews between any of the participating organisations or with any other people was not shared or mentioned in any part in the research period.
Moreover, the names of participants were not required in answering any of the research questions. What is more, the researcher did not mention any of the interviewees by name, or their organisation’s name in this research. As a result, the researcher used categories of organisation by using symbols or type (such as organisation A, public, HR or organisation A, private, senior manager) to safeguard the anonymity of respondents and their organisations.

4.10 Data Collection Challenges

During the research period the researcher faced two challenges: access to sample and access to individual respondents: First those whose support was important for achieving access were initially unconvinced about the need to gather data for HRD research from senior managers. The Institute of Public Administration for example, told the researcher that he did not need to do the interviews with CEOs because the focus of the research questions were on training and development and this data could be collected from HR professionals only. As indicated in Saudi chapter the Saudi culture perceives responsibility for HRD differently to the views in western developed economies but the researcher persisted in trying persuade the IPA that the CEOs’ perception is important in order to know to what extent there is a difference between the HR professionals and the CEO perspectives. The general manager of the training and development department at the IPA and the general manager of the IPA accepted signing a letter to increase the chances of getting help from the organisations (see Appendix E).

Access to individual respondents was also challenging during the field data collection. When the researcher phoned the secretary of the CEO managers to arrange a meeting with the CEO managers and an HR professional they also suggested doing the interview with HR professionals only, two reasons were given. In the case of the Saudi banks, the HR managers or secretaries told the researcher that it is very difficult to meet the CEO or the vice president because they are very busy and they could not find time to do the interview. For this reason, they said it may be possible to meet one of the senior managers (there are about three or four general managers in each bank) and they could answer the interview questions. In case of the ministries, the large public organisations and other large multi-national private organisations, HR managers told the researcher that it is very difficult to do interviews with the top management because they are very busy and they think that the interview questions could be
answered by the HR professional in the organisation. Regarding this, most of the top managers transferred the researcher to the HR professional and three of them suggested doing the interview with a second person in the organisation rather than themselves.

Where access to CEOs through the IPA was impossible another route was attempted. When interviews were finished with some of the HR professionals they were asked to help to obtain an interview with the CEO. They replied that they could not find any advantage in doing the interview with general managers because they had the same answers, or the interview questions are not related to their experience. The researcher persuaded them of the advantages of doing this interview with the CEO but some of the HR professionals still thought that it not useful to do the interview with the CEO manager.

The researcher also found it impossible to overcome the difficulties in doing the interview with three of the CEOs in the multi-national private organisations because they were very busy and the HR professionals told the researcher that their answers would be the same.

4.11 Limitations of the Current Research

A key issue for any data collection in cross-cultural research is conceptual equivalence. The literature argues that the use of ‘back translation’ is one way to assess conceptual equivalence (see for example Fisher & Lerner, 2005) however, the experience of this research shows that other local and contextual factors will also affect the success of conceptual equivalence with data gathering and this may be the case regardless of whether a qualitative or quantitative approach is used (Albawardy, 2009). When the translated questions were sent to four specialists in HRD in Saudi Arabia, some initial delay in receiving feedback was experienced and eventually it became apparent that, although unwilling to be explicit about this, those who were asked for feedback had problems with the reference in the interview questions to ‘learning’, a focus that was unfamiliar to HRD specialists in a country-context where most attention is focused on formal training programmes rather than discussion of the wider concept of ‘learning’ (Albawardy, 2009). A further limitation of the research is that this
study focussed on organisations that were found in Riyadh city. This is because Riyadh city is the capital and it is the biggest city in Saudi Arabia. For this reason, the headquarters for multi-national private organisations are in Riyadh. Moreover, the ministries and the public organisations are located in Riyadh city although they have branches in other cities (such as Jeddah and Dammam). In addition the research focused on the senior-decision makers of organisations rather than all the managerial levels so the perceptions of other levels are not included in the analysis. Furthermore, there were difficulties in gaining access to multi-national private organisations in Saudi Arabia, owned by US or UK interests, for security reasons. As a result of these difficulties, they were removed from the target population.

4.12 The Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research

This section discusses whether the research reported here reflects the reality and the ideas of the interviewees and if these interviews can answer the research objectives. Bryman and Bell (2007) identify three of the most prominent criteria for the evaluation of business and management research; reliability, replication and validity.

According to Phillimore and Goodson (2004, p.159), qualitative approaches are “often criticised by positivists because of the lack of objectivity and generalisability associated with them”. The term trustworthiness is used in qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2007) as a measure of whether the research reflects the reality and the ideas of the interviewees. A judgement of trustworthiness involves the assessment of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Holloway, 1997; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004; Bryman and Bell, 2007). Since the proposed research used the qualitative research method of semi-structured interviews, it was thus appropriate to assess its trustworthiness by examining its credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility refers to confidence in the truth of data, something that can be assessed by “prolonged engagement and present observation, and triangulation, peer debriefing, member checks” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: pp.301-314).

Moule and Goodman (2009) argue that the internal validity of qualitative data can be assured when the researcher employs an expert review process and member checking and requests
that those taking part go over the analysis and interpretation. According to Holloway (1997, p. 186) a member check can be done when the researchers “verify their findings through feedback from the participants to whom they return with the finding and interpretations of their study”.

Two procedures were carried out to assess the credibility of the data methods. First, the translated questions were sent to four specialists in HRD with the research questions. One of them was in a university, two in the IPA and one chosen from HR professionals in the public organisations. The researcher invited their comments on the content and form of the questions including how clear they were, whether they covered all the issues related to the value of learning and whether they were understandable. The researcher was looking to receive their comments to develop the interview questions but they did not respond; possible reasons may be that the research questions that were used in O’Driscoll et al. (2005) focused on learning, while in Saudi Arabia the main role of HRD usually focuses on training programmes and the concept of “learning” in a Saudi context has the same meaning as “education”. However, three pilot studies were undertaken to enhance the credibility. According to Streubert and Carpenter (2006) a pilot study is necessary in the case of qualitative research proposals to show the strengths and weaknesses of the design that is being considered. Pilot studies were done in this research, to enhance the research instrument as well as to provide the researcher with the ability to assess the procedures of the study prior to field work (see pilot study). At the end of the third pilot study, the researcher and the supervisor read the transcript and they found the interviewees mentioned themes that showed that they understood the questions in the same way as those of O’Driscoll et al. (2005) and Anderson (2007).

Transferability is concerned with how much the findings of a study can be applied in other settings or groups (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). It is therefore related to the quantitative criterion of external validity. According to Flick (2002) qualitative research has no generalisability but has limited transferability to other contexts. In this case the researcher needs to present a thick description. According to Merriam (1998) thick description is a “term from anthropology and means the complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated” (Merriam, 1998, pp. 29-30). Merriam argues that a rich, thick description provides sufficient description for readers to be able to decide whether their situation
corresponds to the research situation, and if it is thus possible to transfer findings (Merriam 1998).

In this thesis thick descriptions were set out in the reporting of the respondent’s perceptions relative to the research questions. This thick description will give the reader the ability to identify applicable settings, to determine the appropriateness of the stated findings, and whether the results are applicable to another situation (see analysis chapter). These descriptions were compared with those of O’Driscoll et al. (2005) and Anderson (2007) to establish whether they can be described as transferable to other situations. Mathie and Camozzi (2005) argue that thick descriptive data which leads to a detailed analysis is frequently drawn on to show external validity in qualitative research.

Dependability consists of considering if results are consistent and can be reproduced (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004); it is therefore related to the quantitative criterion of reliability. Dependability and confirmability can be met by the audit trail so during the research it is important to keep adequate records (Erlandson & Harris, 1993).

All the interviews were planned to be recorded with the interviewees’ permission, which gave the interviewer the chance to ask deep and useful questions without being concerned with noting replies. Moreover, the recorded interviews allowed the researcher to listen to the interviews several times before they were transcribed and typed. The researcher followed some procedures to avoid the weaknesses associated with not recording an interview (see pilot and field study).

Confirmability pertains to how neutral a finding is (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). It is related to the quantitative criterion of objectivity. The aim of this assessment is to determine whether two or more researchers can agree on the decisions made during the study on what data to collect and how to interpret it, including the implications or relevance of the study findings for practice in the field. This can be done by using audit trails to decide what data to collect; then, when another knowledgeable researcher uses the same data they will arrive at the same interpretation (Stommel & Wills, 2003). The researcher sought an appropriate level of interaction with the respondents to make sure that they understood the questions in the same way as was done in the studies by O’Driscoll et al. (2005) and Anderson (2007).
However, HR professionals and general managers in Saudi Arabia might have different views on the topics, since they are working at different levels and in different types of organisations.

In order to increase the confirmability of the proposed research, appendix J carries a summary of one theme involve interviews quotations, to give readers the opportunity to verify the interpretation of the researcher and enable them to make their own judgments. Moreover, there are descriptions and quotations as part of the analysis chapter.

4.13 Data Analysis

The final part of this chapter explains the data analysis process used in the research. Bryman and Bell (2007), describe four levels of analysis; society, organisations, groups and individuals. In this study, comparative analyses were conducted at two levels between multinational private and public organisations and between HR professionals and general managers. Using two levels of analysis is important because the two types of entity may differ in their perspectives about the strategic value of learning to the organisation (HR and CEO perspectives or public and multinational private sectors). Three other issues influenced the data analysis: the research questions, the research design and the constructivist ontology.

A qualitative software package, Nvivo 8, was used to facilitate the management and analysis of the data from the semi-structured interviews. Many reasons underpinned the decision to use qualitative software rather than manual analysis. First, the software provides many options for document preparation, coding, retrieval, dynamic links to memos, documents and nodes, and visual representation (Patton, 2002; Bringer, Johnston & Brackenridge, 2004). This is with the caveat that the advantages of the software are dependent upon many key issues; the skills of the researcher to use the software and how the researcher uses available tools (Bringer et al., 2004). Second, it enabled the researcher to use security passwords and multiple backups to protect the research data and analysis from loss (Bringer et al., 2004). This is difficult to achieve with manual methods. Third, the software helped the researcher to speed up the process of locating coded themes, grouping data together in categories, and searching for specific word passages in transcripts (Patton, 2002). Finally, it enabled the
researcher to send a copy of the data to his supervisors to see the themes and relation and differences without needing to explain that to them which is difficult to do manually (Merriam, 2001).

### 4.13.1 Data preparation:

Data preparation is used to analyse the data using NVivo 8, interviews were transcribed and then they were transferred into an electronic format and were stored in the researcher’s computer as Microsoft Word documents. The file names were replaced by code, so that they were not easily identified by anyone other than the researcher and the supervisor. The files names were modified to be “Title, Public, Letter” or “Title, Private, Letter”. the word “Title” was to identify whether it was an HR professional or a senior manager and the words ‘Public’ or ‘Private’ meant the type of organisation and the word “Letter” was to identify the name of the organisation to the researcher and supervisor.

After this step the transcribed interviews (Microsoft Word documents) were converted from Word format (.doc) files into rich text file format (RTF) files in order to process them as NVivo document files and use NVivo’s rich text and visual coding features and then these files were transferred into the NVivo Document browser.

The final treatment for the transcripts before data analysis was removing any identities within the text and replacing them with the participant’s code. For security reasons the data were stored on the researcher’s computer and his private USB and the document was saved in a locked room/cabinet.

The interview data were transcribed and then subjected to thematic analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Because it is a simple matter to map analysis onto research questions, this kind of analysis can be used to produce a very clear narrative (Gibson & Brown 2009). The researcher started to analyse the data using three stage processes: data reduction, data display and drawing conclusions/verification (Kent, 1993; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Humphrey & Lee, 2004; Saunders et al., 2009; Punch, 2005).
4.13.2 Data reduction

Data reduction was used to reduce the data through the development of summary themes or categories from the raw data without losing any of the research information by focusing on the important information (Punch, 2005; Saunders et al., 2009; Thomas, 2006), in a way that enabled the researcher to draw and ultimately to verify the final conclusions (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

In this case NVivo was used to highlight sentences, phrases and words that were related to each question and its probe questions. These highlighted sentences and phrases were linked with the suitable codes or themes of key issues raised by the interview. These were double-checked when the answers were read again to see if there were any sentences, phrases or words which may have been forgotten, whether a new theme emerged from the data or should be coded to another code.

Throughout the research process and especially during the coding and analysis period, the supervisor saw the coding and her comments were taken as a main comment. This was recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985) when they suggested that, in order to enhance the reliability in a qualitative project, it is important for the researcher to have a research team.

After finishing the coding process, the researcher reviewed the node browser to see the patterns that emerged from the each question and whether there was any theme that may have needed to be changed or merged (Richards, 2002).

4.13.3 Data display

Data display was then used to present the qualitative data to enable the researcher to assess, interpret and evaluate the interpretation and initial research conclusion (Punch, 2005). This involves organizing and displaying the information by using some methods such as charts, matrices, networks (Robson, 2002). This phase allowed the researcher to compare between participants’ perceptions and to identify any possible relationships between the data which might help to interpret the data and draw meaning (Saunders et al., 2009). In this instance tables showing the quotation of participants under each theme to enable a comparison
between the participants’ perceptions was undertaken first. In this phase researcher took the reduced data and displayed it in an organised, compressed way so that initial patterns might be identified. To improve the validity of the analysis, a “coding decision table” was developed, based on key elements such as Question 1 and Question 2 etc. and themes under these questions.

4.13.4 Draw conclusions and verification

Formulating conclusions and verification is the final analytical activity for the qualitative researcher. In this phase the researcher aims to draw meaning from the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and this involves making decisions about: “what things mean, noting regularities and patterns, explanations, possible configurations, casual flows and propositions” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 10-11).

Lynch (2003) identifies the close relationship between data verification and analysis as the researcher checks back into the data to make sure that all the relevant information is included and when alternative explanations and counter examples are sought. For this thesis the process of analysis and interpretation was an iterative process and involved a number of stages of analysis and questioning involving the researcher and members of the supervisory team. First many tables from the Nvivo software that represented the ‘frequency’ and ‘density’ of the different themes were considered. As part of the initial analysis process each table displayed one theme at a time and represented the data from senior managers and HR professionals as well as responses from those in public sector and private sector organisations.

The process of consideration and review of the themes and their basis in the data set then led to further analysis and interrogation of the interview transcripts resulting in the merging of some themes and deliberation about some of the important concepts that emerged. For example, a new theme (career management) was identified and analysis within themes to recognise and classify subthemes (such as ‘management improvement’ and ‘organisation improvement’ within the overall ‘performance improvement theme’) took place.

Further reflection and further interrogation of the data set was then needed to develop the interpretation process about the measurement and evaluation of strategic learning in
respondents’ organisations and the differences in their perceptions. At this stage it became clear that, amongst other things, the interviewees found difficulty in understanding the differences between the effectiveness and efficiency of HRD process. This stage of the analysis also involved a more detailed comparison between the responses of those in the public and private sectors and between the HR professionals and senior (general) managers.

As the analysis proceeded it became apparent that two subthemes that were prominent in the interview transcripts had not formed part of the initial literature review into SHRD: ‘management improvement’ and ‘prepare manager for future’. Therefore the literature relating to strategic management and leadership development was reviewed to ensure an integration between the literature review and the analysis process and to explore how senior managers expect the role of SHRD and strategic management development to combine together to contribute to organisation strategy.

Much of the initial analysis process was grounded in three main elements: an assessment of responses about the strategic contribution of T&D; an examination of strategic alignment issues, and an appraisal of the measurement and evaluation approaches that were cited by respondents. However, towards the end of the analytical activity a further interrogation of the data set occurred to look across responses to all question areas and ensure that insights from later questions were included in the interpretation of ‘earlier’ analytical elements where appropriate and this enabled a more ‘rounded’ understanding to be achieved.

Based on this analysis chapter 5 will outline the main themes identified from the data. From time to time a diagrammatic figure will be used to summarise the main themes and issues and the way that the analysis indicates that they relate with each other. These identification of themes occurred through an inductive approach to data analysis which allowed themes to ‘emerge’ from the data. A number of illustrative quotations are provided within the chapter to show the ‘boundaries’ of different themes and to illustrate the data. Inclusion of all the relevant transcript and notational material from the qualitative data is impractical; the quotations chosen for inclusion offer a fair illustration of the data for each of the themes.
Conclusion

This chapter has described the research methodology for this research. This thesis is based on constructionist ontology and an inductive approach. The data in this thesis were collected by using semi-structured interviews to assess how HR professionals and senior managers in public and multinational private sectors in Saudi Arabia value and evaluate their strategic learning. Ten HR professional and ten senior managers from public sector and ten HR professional and seven senior managers from the private sector participated in this study. Many processes were used to ensure the clarity of interview questions and the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the data. Nvivo software was used to analyse the interviews based on thematic analysis and a three stage process: data reduction, data display and drawing conclusions/verification was utilised. The following chapter will discuss how HR professionals and senior managers in public and multinational private sectors in Saudi Arabia value and evaluate their strategic learning.
CHAPTER 5 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will focus on the understanding and meaning of senior managers’ perceptions in public and multinational private organisations in Saudi Arabia regarding the strategic value of learning.

The following three objectives guided this study:

- To examine the strategic value of learning from CEO managers’ and HRD practitioners’ perceptions in multinational private and public organisations in Saudi Arabia.
- To establish the extent to which the value attached to learning in the public sector is different from that in the multinational private sector in Saudi Arabia.
- To examine any differences in the value attached to learning by training and development specialists and senior managers of organisations in Saudi Arabia.

To examine these objectives, semi-structured interviews were carried out with the following key managers in public and multinational private organisations:

- 20 interviews were carried out with 10 HRD professionals and 10 senior managers from 10 public organisations selected randomly from Saudi public organisations.
- 17 interviews were carried out with 10 HRD and seven senior professionals from 10 multinational companies selected randomly from the top 100 organisations by revenue in Saudi Arabia.

This chapter is divided into three parts: 1) data about senior managers’ perceptions of the strategic role of HRD in the organisations is considered first, 2) the T&D investment process and alignment is then examined 3) finally approaches to measuring and monitoring the value of T&D to organisational strategy are considered. Each of these parts will involve two sections: the first section will discuss the main themes in the perceptions of interviewees...
CHAPTER 5 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

about the role of T&D in organisational strategy (HRD outcomes). The second section will discuss the main themes of how the senior managers ensure HRD achieves that role (HRD process). At the end of each part a diagramatic figure is used to summarise the main themes that have been presented and discussed. These themes were identified from the interview data on an emergent basis and illustrative quotations from HR professionals and senior managers from the different public and multi-national private sector are provided. Writing out all of the data for each theme would be impractical and the examples are chosen to illustrate the theme from the perspective of the interview participants.

Each section will also discuss the differences between the public and multinational private sector and between T&D specialists and senior managers if a difference is found.

This discussion will also highlight difference between the context of HRD in Saudi Arabia (both national and organisational levels) and in the developed Western economies, and weaknesses in the training and development spending decisions in Saudi organisations and its measurement.

This chapter will show how the senior managers from both sectors in Saudi Arabia found difficulties to provide evidence of how the T&D process provides a contribution to organisation’s strategies. The focus of most organisations in Saudi Arabia is on planning processes that focus on operational triggers rather than organisational strategy priorities, little evidence is shown by the organisation of the expectation of the investment in training and development process to focus on organisational outcomes, there is more focus on traditional evaluation techniques as a measure of ‘success’ and there is some evidence of the importance of measurement at organisational level but also very little evidence of any consistent practices used by the organisation.

The term training and development (T&D) will be used in this chapter instead of HRD although HRD definition is used by the researcher in chapter 2. This is because the term T&D is more understood and used in the Saudi context (see chapter 3 and 4).
5.1 The Strategic Role of T&D

This part will analyse the senior managers’ perceptions and their understanding about the strategic role of T&D in large organisations in Saudi Arabia and the first four interview questions were asked to T&D professionals and senior managers in the multinational private and public sectors in Saudi Arabia to discover their perceptions about how training and development provide a positive contribution to their organisation’s strategy. The fifth interview question was put to interviewees, asking how they know that T&D provides a positive contribution to organisational strategies.

This part will show how senior managers expect T&D outcomes to contribute to organisational strategy and the difficulty for their T&D process to achieve the organisation’s strategy.

5.1.1 HRD Contribution:

Regarding the first four interview questions, the senior managers highlighted the ways in which they felt that T&D contributed to performance improvement, preparation for the future, career management. The following part will discuss each theme in more detail.

5.1.1.1 Performance Improvement:

Performance improvement is seen as an HRD outcome in much of the literature review (see for example Hamlin et al. (2008); Gilbert, (2007), Stolovitch & Keeps (1992) and Rothwell et al., (2000). Moreover, it is highlighted by O’Driscoll et al. (2005) and Anderson (2007), who also note that it is a particular concern of CEO managers.

The interview data from this study confirmed that this is an important expectation and was highlighted by the majority of the HR professionals and senior managers in both sectors in Saudi Arabia. This theme was used to articulate the expectation of key managers that training
and development provides a positive contribution to their organisational strategy through performance improvement.

Analysis of the data in this research suggested that the generic theme of performance improvements incorporate two different features of the concept: management performance improvement and organisational improvement. The following section will discuss those features in more detail.

**Management improvement**

The importance of the performance of managers was seen by more than half of the interviewees as a positive contribution of training and development to the implementation of their organisation’s strategy. The literature about strategic management development highlights the importance of managers to improve the current business and achieve organisational objectives and competitive advantage (see for example Gold et al., 2010; Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2010; Brown, 2005). The outcome of strategic management development is suggested to enhance the satisfaction of the managers, reduce their turnover and increase the opportunities to fill future jobs (Jensen et al., 2001) and this awareness was clear amongst many of the interviewees in this study.

The following quotation from one of the senior managers in the private sector illustrates this:

*This department is concerned with providing the directors and the staff with the skills and creative capabilities required for the realisation of our strategy.* (CEO, Private, D).

The following quotation from one of the senior managers in the public sector focuses on the training programme to increase managers’ skills:

*The directors offer training programs for their deputies through assigning certain tasks to them to carry out after they get courses in leadership or decision making in order to know if they have acquired these skills such as the leader’s way of leading his department or the ability he shows when supervising it or making any decision related to it.* (CEO, Public, D).
In addition the data also show that there is some slight difference of emphasis between the multinational private and public sectors in line with the different purposes of the organisations. Some of the multinational private companies focus on preparing the managers for current capabilities to achieve financial outcomes. The public organisations by contrast were more focused on management development to improve customer satisfaction without making an explicit link between customer satisfaction and organisational strategy.

The following quotation shows how multinational private organisations expect the T&D role to prepare qualified managers to increase organisation profits:

_We prepare qualified managers who are capable of leading (the organisation) towards success, and we concentrate on exchange programmes and product marketing because it is the field to increase (organisational) profits._ (HRD, Private, H).

The following quotation from a public organisation expects the T&D role to provide the managers with the capabilities that help them to deal with the customers:

_Directors need a lot of training. I am a director of senior staff from among the contractors and, therefore, the director is supposed to have the capabilities to receive the auditors and know how to deal with them and find out capabilities related to the completion of work and personnel management. Furthermore, he is supposed to know their needs, capabilities and latent competencies._ (CEO, Public, B).

**Organisational improvement**

In common with the studies by O’Driscoll et al. (2005) and Anderson (2007), data from this research highlighted the other feature of performance improvement that of organisational improvement. This theme was used to articulate the expectation of key managers that training and development provides a positive contribution through organisational improvement in general.

In line with much of the literature about HRD (see for example Garavan, 2007) the data shows that the majority of the HR professionals and senior managers in both sectors who were interviewed suggest that the T&D role focus is to improve the employees’ performance
to improve organisational performance. In this study interviewees focused on a range of outcomes such as: improve services, meet market need and achieve financial outcomes.

The following quotation from one of the senior managers in the public sector links the T&D role explicitly with organisation strategy:

*The aim that this department seeks to achieve is to contribute to the development and qualification of the staff of (the organisation) and improve their performance to enable them to lead (the organisation) towards the achievement of its strategies.* (CEO, Public, E).

Another quotation from one of the T&D professionals from the multinational private sector focuses on the HRD role to achieve their strategies:

*We aim at developing the cadres, linking our strategies with the needs of our labour force, developing the competencies needed for the company's expansion, and developing the company’s level of competitiveness.* (HRD, Private, C).

The following quotation from one of the T&D professionals also illustrates this focus:

*Our role is to provide the appropriate training which helps improve the employees' level of performance and raise their capacity and productivity, and provide them with the skills that enable them to perform their tasks efficiently.* (HRD, Public, 6).

As a conclusion the senior managers in both sectors in Saudi Arabia expect T&D to provide a strategic contribution to their organisation through performance improvement (financial and non-financial outcomes) which is reflected through two features: management improvement and organisational improvement, something which is, of course, a main feature of the literature about HRD (see for example Gilbert, 2007; Stolovitch & Keeps, 1992; Rothwell et al., 2000; Anderson, 2007; Goss, 1997),
5.1.1.2 Future Orientation

In addition to performance improvement, preparing for the future was highlighted by more than half of the managers in both sectors in the sample group. This term is used here to represent the expectation of key managers that training and development provide a positive contribution to their organisational strategy through proactive development to meet future changes.

Again, the data from this study suggests that this general theme reflects two different features of preparing for the future: preparing managers for the future and preparing organisations for the future.

Prepare Management for future

Linked with reflection about the importance of management performance improvement more than half of interviewees identified how training and development provides a positive contribution to their organisation’s strategy through future development for managers, something which is also highlighted in the literature (see for example Gold et al., 2010; Goss, 1997).

The data from this study suggest that this is a common expectation of senior managers and HRD professionals in both sectors, when they expect proactive learning to build the capability of managers or individuals to be ready for future management jobs.

The following quotation from an T&D professional show that they follow some traditional succession planning processes for replacement in the future:

*We make a programme to provide a second line of persons to practise the function; so we classify the replacement schedule and this schedule is a model in which we mention the divisions and the sections. We have several sections and under each section we use a symbol in a certain colour; under that colour we put the person nominated for that position, chosen by the manager. Then we test how ready they are. There is a ready one and another who will...*
be ready in four years; we have a test to define the strength and the weakness in connection with their administration according to the required skills for this job. (HRD, Private, K).

The following quotation from a senior manager illustrates that they prepare their future managers through participation in programmes about leadership and strategic planning:

*Furthermore, we have a programme called the Future Directors’ Programme where we try to send the directors and distinguished members for programmes on leadership and strategic planning, so as to enable them to take charge of the Ministry in the future and to provide the appropriate alternative to replace any of the directors after their retirement* (CEO, Public, D).

The following quotation from the public sector illustrates the focus on training programmes to build future directors:

*We try to send the directors and distinguished staff members for training programs in order to be able to establish a replacement team of directors and try to equip them with programmes on successful leadership* (HRD, Public, D).

**Prepare Organisation for future**

In addition to preparing managers for future jobs, preparing organisations for the future was articulated by interviewees as a way by which training and development provide a positive contribution to the organisations’ strategy. The importance of a proactive link between learning and planned change initiatives is an important theme in the literature (see for example Rummelr and Brache, 1995; Rothwell, 1999; Tiem et al., 2006; Way and Johnson, 2005; Semler, 1997; Verburg et al., 2005). This feature was highlighted by interview data from more than half of senior managers in both sectors and they linked their proactive training with organisational strategies. The following quotation from one of the senior managers illustrates the awareness of this link:

*The goal must suit with the company strategy; we have a strategy for three years and objectives for one year, and the plans have to be conformed with the strategy. Therefore they*
must focus on creating capabilities and talents capable of achieving those strategies. (CEO, Private, G).

The following quotation from one of the senior managers in the public sector illustrates this theme:

Now the training and development sector were transferred to the human resources group because it is important and kind of strategy and we insert the planning with it for the work forces and the training and the development; and we work on preparation, training and development of the work staff and planning for the future; and we afford the employees with the needed specification to occupancy a higher position or other new jobs. (CEO, Public, J).

The interview data show that there are slight differences between public and private sectors. Private organisations focus more on competitors in their responses, while public sector interviewees focused on meeting other changes in the future.

The following quotation from multinational private organisations illustrates this point:

Our objective is to develop the staff’s capabilities and talents to create a generation capable of leading the company under the current competition. The Human Resources Dept. must always be prepared and does not wait for reactions. Also, it must be a partner of other sectors and a key contributor in the changing process, since we have changed from an independent Ministry into a company. (CEO, Private, F).

The following quotations from a public organisation illustrate their slightly different focus:

We focus on developing the skills of the staff in the field of computers, modern age crimes, mobile communications, computer-related crimes and bank credit card since they are ever-changing tools and inventions, and criminals usually use them in committing their crimes (CEO, Public, F).

Development of skills of workers and professionals, whether at stations or departments to do their best and to develop their abilities to perform other tasks in the future. (HRD, Public, J).

As a conclusion, the interviewees from both sectors in Saudi Arabia expected that T&D would contribute to their organisational strategy through; preparing management for future
The Strategic Value of Learning

jobs and preparing organisations for future change, something which is also highlighted in the strategic HRD literature (see, for example Gold et al., 2010; Garavan, 2007; Wognum, 2001).

5.1.1.3 Career Management/Development:

The interview data also highlighted some concern with linking learning to career management and this theme was highlighted by less than half of senior managers in both sectors. Career management is an important feature of HRD (see for example Swanson, 2001 and McLean and McLean, 2001). This theme was highlighted also by interviewees in O’Driscoll et al.’s (2005) study in the USA and in Anderson’s (2007) study in the UK.

The interview data suggest the following two features of career management are associated with T&D outcomes in the reflections of senior managers in Saudi Arabia; long-term and short-term development.

Long-term development

Those who articulated a concern with long-term development expected training and development to provide a positive contribution to their organisation’s strategy through long-term development (more than one year) for the workers to increase their skills. Interestingly, most of the interviewees who highlighted this theme did not seem to link it explicitly to organisational strategy. Most of the interviewees’ quotations show that the first reason for focusing on this theme is to make their employees eligible for promotion at some future time.

The following quotation from a senior manager in the multinational private sector illustrates the focus on long-term development:

*The employee receives a two-year training programme to be promoted.* (CEO, Private, A).

In addition, slight differences between respondents’ focus is evident in the data. Public organisations and HR professionals tended to focus more on career path issues, while senior managers in multinational private organisations focus more on the T&D role to prepare them
to be experts. Experts can be technicians or specialists in specific jobs. Senior managers in both sector in Saudi Arabia highlighted different patterns of career path; flexible career path and career path with lack of flexibility.

The following quotation from a T&D professional in the public sector illustrates the focus on career path:

*Two years ago, we started the oriented training through the career path, and we will know after 20 years, as the employee starts and promoted until become a leadership.* (HRD, Public, J).

The following quotation from a T&D professional in the private sector illustrates the focus on career path:

*Our management and General Manager think of linking development programmes with career path to identify the requirement to be flexible.* (HRD, Private, H).

The following quotation from a senior manager illustrates the focus on expertise:

*The Department of Companies for which I work differs considerably from any other department as the employee receives a two-years training program to be promoted to the rank of an expert.* (CEO, Private, A).

**Short-term development**

The expectation of short-term development (less than one year) as an outcome of T&D was also articulated by senior managers as a way by which training and development provides a positive contribution to their organisation’s strategy through an increase in skills in the organisation. This was something that senior managers in both sectors expressed and their quotations show that short-term development is closely linked with their concerns about performance improvement in Section 1.1.

The following quotation from senior managers in multinational private organisations illustrates the focus on short-term training to create capability;
The programme's period ranges from one week to 10 days. The participants discuss true cases that took place in international companies and see how these problems are solved. They thus exchange expertise and develop their creative abilities since they are all coming from international companies. (CEO, Private, D).

In their interviews HR professionals and senior managers in both sectors mentioned different types of learning: off-the-job training programmes and the on-the-job training. The on-the-job training was highlighted by multinational private organisations more than public sector and this was raised in the case of financial jobs.

The following quotations from a multinational private sector focus on on-the-job coaching in the case of financial jobs:

*When the trainee is trained on certain skills like ... and when he practices his job, he works with a supervisor for a week, then he performs his work with a supervisor who is charged with that role, because it is dependent on financial tasks. Performance enhancement in exceptional ways is very important to us; the supervisor’s role here is to work with him and make sure of his accuracy at work, his skills and ensure that he has all the skills which he is trained on at an efficient and high level; and according to his ability, to be able to perform the business of a high quality and with an absence of errors. At that time we consider the training he had is successful.* (HRD, Private, H).

The following quotation from a T&D professional in the multinational private sector focuses on short-term to provide talent:

*We have a team of employees entitled to set the required project. A group of them is entitled to attract new talent (to the organisation) and another one is required to create a questionnaire and choose a group of employees to work on a given project, such as improving the performance of a particular department or reducing the costs of a particular product. At the end of the project we submit it to a group of their colleagues and we call some directors to attend. Afterwards, we carry out a comprehensive discussion of the team’s recommendations and some are applied under the supervision of the directors.* (HRD, Private, C).
The following quotation from a T&D professional in the public sector focuses on creating talent in the field:

*Those aimed at providing the necessary creative skills enable us to create talent in the field of accurate specialties and thus are our training direction to enable us to go ahead with our career direction and thus obtain a progressive course in specialisation of the sub-trainer.* (HRD, Public, H).

In the last three quotations it can be noted that the term ‘talent’ was used by senior managers in public and multinational private sectors in Saudi Arabia when they highlighted that the T&D role is to improve the performance of employees to be specialists in doing their work efficiently. The term *Talent* has become very popular in western countries and was highlighted by Chen and Lin (2003) and Anderson (2007) and Deb (2006) and the data from this study provide evidence that the managers in Saudi Arabia endeavour to operate in ways that reflect contemporary thinking about HRD.

In summary the interviewees’ responses suggest an awareness of the role of T&D for their organisations that reflects the HRD literature about the strategic value of learning to organisations. In this study three main themes were identified: performance improvements both for organisation and management; preparing for the future for both organisation and managers; career management for both long- and short-term. The literature highlights the importance of linking these themes as HRD outcomes with organisational strategy to provide value based on financial and non-financial outcomes (see for example Goss, 1997; Rummler and Brache, 1995; Rothwell, 1999; Tiem et al., 2006; Way & Johnson, 2005; Semler, 1997; Verburg et al., 2005; Wognum, 2001; Garavan, 2007; Sadler-Smith, 2006; Anderson, 2007; O’Driscoll et al., 2005). However, the evidence of this study is that this is not fully approached by all of senior managers in Saudi organisations.

In addition, interview data show that there are similarities between the perceptions of the interviewees taken as a group regarding T&D although there are slight differences between the expectations of those from the private sector whose focus on the financial outcomes and competition, and the public sector who focus more on service improvements and other non financial outcomes.
The next section builds on this initial analysis and discusses the themes of the strategic contribution by considering the perceptions of key managers about the HRD processes they have in place that help them ensure that training and development provides a contribution to their organisation’s strategies.

5.1.2 HRD Processes

The participants highlighted three themes about the HRD process they have to ensure that training and development provides a contribution to their organisation’s strategies: satisfaction assessment, employee capability measurements, achievement of organisational outcomes. This section will discuss these themes and if there are differences between the public and private sector and between the recommended process in SHRD and the T&D process in Saudi Arabia.

5.1.2.1 Satisfaction Assessment

Many interviewees (but less than half) from both sectors indicated that they know that training and development provides a contribution to their organisation through collecting data about the perception of trainees about their satisfaction with the training programmes in the Kirkpatrick model of training evaluation (see for example Al-Athari & Zairi, 2002). The following quotations from the public and multinational private sectors illustrate this theme:

*After the program, a questionnaire is distributed to the participants. If the evaluation is less than 80% this means that the participants did not benefit from the course.*  (CEO, Private, F).

*After implementation we have carried out a questionnaire to measure satisfaction with the trainer, and it was found to be high, which confirms the existence of distinct ability to provide this session efficiently and effectively.*  (HRD, Public, H).

The data from this study confirm the attractiveness of traditional evaluation measures such as satisfaction level of the Kirkpatrick model (see for example Al-Athari & Zairi, 2002; Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2005). However, although this measurement is important, it is noteworthy that it focuses on the merit of the training and not the worth or value of the
learning to the organisation’s strategy (see for example Scriven, 1995), it does not involve formative or summative evaluation (Harlen and James, 1997), it does not measure effectiveness or efficiency of the HR interventions learning (Prakken, 2000), nor link learning intervention with organisational strategies (Anderson, 2007).

This raises the question of why this approach is so prevalent, even though it cannot provide evidence of how useful the learning intervention is to organisational strategy. In part, this is likely to be influenced by the Saudi Eighth Development Plan (see Chapter 3), which focuses on the provision of training programmes rather than the wider issue of learning, and which does not focus on how to evaluate strategic training and development in terms of its value to the organisation. Moreover, most studies in the UK, US and other parts of the world show that the reaction level is the most popular method of evaluation with trainers, perhaps because it is easy to apply (see for example Dixon, 1990; Al-Athari and Zairi, 2002; Gordon, 1991; Twitchell et al., 2000).

5.1.2.2 Employee Capability Measurements

A further approach to assessing how well T&D contributes to strategy indicated by interviewees concerned measuring the development of employee capability. The public and private sector data show that they focus on individual change through using evaluation to assess the change in behaviour before and after the training.

The following quotations from a T&D professional and a senior manager illustrate this focus:

*We have evaluated and we evaluate also after six months to be sure of our programmes’ success and this leads to the desired target from these programmes* (HRD, Private, H).

*Furthermore, the employee will be trained on the accomplishment of those tasks and then he will be completely in charge of the job after the evaluation of his behavioural conduct and performance.* (CEO, Public, D).

The following quotation from the multinational private sector illustrates their focus on the coaching:

*He is left at the beginning to work as a supervisor through his participation, to work with an expert; that expert guides him and gives him the notes in order to train him to do his work*
efficiently; then the employee is assigned to do some tasks by the expert to make sure that he does his work efficiently. (HRD, Private, J).

Although these processes are important for HRD it is noteworthy that the data suggest a focus on individual outcomes and satisfaction rather than any explicit link with organisational strategy (see for example Anderson, 2007; Garavan, 2007). Discussion of these processes was dominant in the interview data although some interviewees did highlight some HRD processes relating to organisational outcomes and these are discussed next.

5.1.2.3 Achievement of Organisational Outcomes

The interview data also suggest that both public and private organisations expect training and development to provide a contribution to organisational outcomes and areas that they focused on particularly were: increased sales and customer satisfaction.

The link between T&D and improved process to provide financial outcomes (see for example Garavan, 2007; Sadler-Smith, 2006; Anderson, 2007) is clearly established in the literature and the data from this study confirm that Saudi managers in the private sector share this expectation.

Increase in sales was highlighted by some (less than half) of the senior managers from the multinational private organisations as a way of knowing about the contribution of T&D. Some of the participants highlighted that T&D processes focus on: increasing their income or on contract with specialised companies to improve their sales. The following quotations illustrate the focus on increase the sales:

*We usually link the success of the programme we provide with the realisation of the desired results which focus on increasing our sales and providing our ability to create expert competencies in general.* (CEO, Private, B).

*When there had been a trend towards marketing one of our (organisation’s) products, a programme was designed to identify the skills required to increase the sale rate (of the company).* (CEO, Private, E).
There is also a six-day academy programme for sales as we have contracted with a specialised company to improve our sales performance. (HRD, Private, B).

A further area where a direct link is expected between T&D and levels of customer satisfaction is something that has been highlighted by Anderson (2007) and O’Driscoll et al. (2005). This theme was also evident in the Saudi data from this study but was highlighted by public organisations more than private organisations and by T&D practitioners more than senior managers in the Saudi study.

The data analysis shows that there are slight differences between public and multinational private organisations, where the public sector focused more on reducing the number of dissatisfied customers, and in the multinational private sector there was a focus on increasing the number of customers.

The following quotation illustrates how T&D processes focus on meetings to discover weaknesses in the skills that lead to disgruntled customers in one of the public sector organisations:

*We in the meetings discuss the problems that we are suffering from, where there were problems is the lack of skills and knowledge to our staff resulted in disgruntled customers of companies in understanding attributed to the system of work and workers.* (CEO, Public, K).

The following quotation from a multinational private organisation illustrates the focus on increasing the number of customers every year:

*We have standards which we depend on measuring the results, the success of the branches, how much increase in customers every year.* (HRD, Private, H).

As a conclusion, Section 2 shows the processes that interviewees highlighted to ensure that training and development contributed to their organisations; traditional measurements, employees’ capability measurements and organisational outcomes (such as increased sales and customer satisfaction).

However, processes related to reaction or employee capability only do not provide evidence about the worth or value of the learning to the organisational strategy (see for example Garavan, 2007; Sadler-Smith, 2006; Anderson, 2007; Wognum, 2001; Sims, 2006; Scriven, 1995).
Interestingly the data also show that there are no important differences between the public and private sectors and between HR professionals and senior managers on how they expect HRD outcomes and processes to contribute to their organisation’s strategy. Figure 5.1 summarises this part of the analysis:

**Figure 5.1 HRD contribution to the organisation strategy in Saudi Arabia**

The following part will discuss how HR professionals and CEO managers in public and multinational private sectors in Saudi Arabia explain how they align learning investment processes with organisational strategy.

**5.2 HRD Alignment**

HRD alignment refers to a proactive HRD investment process that is linked with organisational strategy; vision and mission (see for example Wognum, 2000). Despite the
importance of achieving the required alignment of SHRD, research suggests that it is difficult to achieve (see for example McCracken and Wallace, 2000b; Harrison, 1997; Anderson, 20009).

To understand senior manager expectation of how T&D is aligned with organisational strategy, interviewees were asked about how the spending process for training and development is decided, and to explain how the T&D department maintain ongoing connections with the organisation’s objectives. This part will be divided into two sections: the spending and budgeting process for training and development and how T&D is maintained alignment with organisation strategy.

5.2.1 The Spending and Budgeting Process for Training and Development

This section analyses the interviewees’ responses on how they link the T&D spending process with their organisation’s strategies.

The interview data show that senior managers highlighted two themes of training and development spending processes based on: annual needs and urgent needs.

5.2.1.1 Annual Needs

The annual process of spending on T&D was highlighted by all of participants in this study. This was to be expected as a driver of T&D in Saudi Arabia, since the Saudi government follows a very planned approach to economic development (see chapter 3) and this is based on an annual budget allocation process.

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 summarise the data under this theme and show the expected T&D investment process outlined by senior managers in both sectors and the following process occurs: 1) the T&D department receives information about the needs from the departments, 2) the T&D department discuss the needs with departments/community, 3) the T&D department identify priorities, 4) expected T&D outcomes are defined, 5) the cost of the T&D
is identified, 6) the CEO manager approves the budget when he is convinced, and 7) the CEO
convinces the finance ministry about the public organisation budgets (where appropriate).

Table 5.1 The T&D investment process in private sector organisations

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Table 5.2 The T&D investment process in public sector organisations

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The most interesting thing about Tables 5.1 and 5.2 is that they show that very few organisations in public or private sectors explicitly try to identify the expected T&D outcomes to the organisation and this will make it difficult for them to be able to achieve any strategic evaluation of the impact of T&D. These tables also suggest that all organisations follow a ‘bottom-up’ approach by linking their processes and activities with departments’ needs, rather than an engagement with CEO managers in analysing organisational strategies or the contribution that learning could make (see for example Wognum, 2001 and Anderson, 2009).

The following quotation from a T&D practitioner from a multinational private sector illustrates the departmental-led approach:

*The Department of Training invests according to the requests of other departments wherein they declare their needs for specific training. Afterwards, we meet with the Financial Department and put our estimation of the costs after comparing it with the costs of last year’s budget, and thus determine the requirement for the coming year, and submit the report with reasonable reasons for the required training and the urgent priorities and the desired results expected thereof.* (HRD, Private, A).

A further quotation from a senior manager from the public sector illustrates the focus on a ‘bottom-up’ approach:

*We have human resources management that prepares the plan in agreement with the directors of departments (it is possible to look at the plan for last year if you want) where the need is determined by the departments and discussed with human resources management to agree on the actual requirement and then the plan is offered to me after it’s classified according to external and internal programmes.* (CEO, Public, K).

The tables also highlight expected differences in the investment processes between multinational private organisations and public sectors. The public sector budget involves the T&D budget and this budget needs to be approved by the Ministry of Finance every year after it is approved by the CEO manager, while in most private sector organisations it is approved by CEO managers or the board of director.
The tables show that the private sector focuses on the priorities and the cost of training more than the public sector which may be because the individuals in the public sector in Saudi Arabia can attend most of the training programmes or education for free (see chapter 3) as part of the national plan to ‘up skill’ public sector workers which forms part of the Saudization strategy. In this respect the context for T&D in the public sector is very different to that in most Western developed economies.

The following quotations from senior managers in both sectors illustrate this focus:

*Departments usually submit their needs of programmes to the headquarters or to any of its branches. Therefore the training costs estimates are to be given in accordance with the plan approved by the General Department of Human Resources and the Financial Department. This study has to be submitted to me to discuss with the members and set the priorities that go in line with the strategies of [the company]. (CEO, Private, A).*

*The departments introduce their training requirements in their annual plan. This plan includes the departments that need training and set the number of candidates and the type of internal or external courses and the cost of programmes. These are all discussed by a commission appointed for this purpose to ensure that the departments are in need for such programmes and to measure its efficiency for the development of individuals and departments. (CEO, Public, B).*

Taken as a whole, the data indicate a traditional approach to budgeting for T&D on an annual basis. Costs are less significant than departmental ‘needs’ in most cases and very little attention is paid to specifying the T&D outcomes that would be expected.

**5.2.1.2 Urgent Needs**

The second theme relating to the learning investment process in Saudi organisations was ‘urgent needs’. This theme was highlighted by a majority of senior managers in both sectors in Saudi Arabia in response to the interview question: what do you do if you need to spend more on training and development?.
The interview data show that although the responses show more awareness of the need to address the T&D outcomes and positive advantage to the organisation if additional spending is to be secured most organisations still follow a ‘bottom-up’ approach by linking their processes and activities with departments’ needs, rather than an engagement with CEO managers in analysis of strategies and the contribution that learning could make.

Tables 5.3 and 5.4 show that senior managers in both sectors follow one or more of the following processes in case of urgent need: 1) HRD receives the need, 2) meeting has taken place to discuss the advantage of the T&D outcomes to the organisation, 3) cost of the T&D is estimated, 4) approval based on the advantages (customer satisfaction, profit, avoid weaknesses), and 5) postponed some approved programmes to the next year and approval of the ‘new’ programme in some cases.

### Table 5.3 Dealing with “urgent” training needs” in the public sector

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Table 5.4 Dealing with “urgent” training needs in the private sector

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<th>Org.</th>
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<th>Discuss the advantage</th>
<th>Cost of the T&amp;D</th>
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Tables 3 and 4 show interesting features of T&D: cost is not an explicit issue in almost any of the organisations, there is very little discussion of ‘the advantage’ (or not) of the new requirement for training in relation to other existing T&D commitments and the ease (in the public sector) with which some T&D programmes can be postponed.

These tables also show that all public and private organisations follow a ‘bottom-up’ approach by linking their processes and activities with departments’ needs. However, the data show that there seems to be more awareness of the links of T&D with organisational strategies than in the case of annual budgeting.

The following quotations from a senior manager illustrate this focus:

*After discussing and examining the demands of the concerned departments and making sure that these programmes have positive impact on the company's realisation of its strategies, I strongly support to it. (CEO, Public, B).*

*If the budget falls short to meet the needs of the departments as happened four years ago, then we shall report it to His Excellency the Secretary who, due to his conviction of the reasons we put before him, will approve the budget and raise the item allotted for training. (HRD, Public, B).*
When there is an urgency that could not be deferred. Moreover, we aim to achieve more profits. Thus training is an important factor for the realisation of this goal. After introducing the programmes to the departments that fall under my control, I discuss them with both the Directors of Human Resources and Financial Departments. Then we discuss them with the CEO to convince him of their importance and in the end we get his approval. (CEO, Private, E).

In addition, some of the interview data from some of the organisations suggest that some T&D practitioners see it as part of their role to convince the CEO managers about the value of learning intervention to the organisation. The literature review highlighted that it is important for T&D representatives to provide learning interventions that focus on achieving organisational goals (see for example Anderson, 2007; Garavan, 2007; Wognum, 2001).

The following quotations from HR practitioners from the public and private sectors illustrate this:

We ask for an exception from the Board of Directors who approve our claim on the condition that profitability is guaranteed, the decision maker is convinced of its effectiveness, the results are highly positive and the programme’s efficiency is ensured. (HRD, Private, G).

We discuss how much benefit of that programme on the employees performance or the [organisation] results; after that we gather with the general manager to discuss it and when he approves; it is accredited or delayed if isn’t seen their importance. (HRD, Public, H).

Such explanations are to be expected as CEOs will not agree to more investment in learning if they are not convinced of its usefulness to the organisation, something highlighted by Wognum (2001) who suggested that CEO managers and HRD professionals need to work together to formulate an organisational strategy. The following quotations illustrate this awareness:

The concerned department shall submit a report containing the reasons and justifications of the need, time and costs required. If such reasons are convincing then the item will be approved and supported by other items. But if there is no other item to support that of the training then some programmes shall be delayed. (CEO, Public, B).
Therefore, I support the training budget and confirm it immediately as long as it is subject to the evaluation and focuses on covering the weaknesses in the company. (CEO, Public, C).

The data show that there is a slight difference between multinational private and public organisations. The multinational private companies have more flexibility than public organisations if they need to spend more on learning. This may be seen when CEO managers from the public sector may delay some training to the next year (see for example CEO, Public, A).

The reason for that may be because money for T&D is not a big issue in the public sector as it is so well funded by the government. This might lead to programmes being approved that are not particularly of strategic priority and so they are easy to postpone if a more urgent need comes up.

In summary, two spending processes for T&D were highlighted by the senior managers and HRD professionals in Saudi Arabia: annual needs and urgent needs. The data show there is a gap between SHRD theory and practice, since all T&D practitioners in Saudi Arabia tend to follow a ‘bottom-up’ approach by linking their processes and activities with departments’ needs, rather than an engagement with CEO managers in an analysis of organisational strategies and the contribution that learning could make (see for example Anderson, 2007; Garavan, 2007). In addition there is little emphasis given to establishing what T&D outcomes are to be expected.

Only in cases of ‘urgent need’ do the data suggest that HR professionals are aware of the need to persuade CEO managers about the value of learning to the organisation, and the CEO managers will not agree if there is no evidence of positive outcomes of the learning at the organisational level.

The previous section discusses T&D alignment and investment in learning through spending decisions; the following section will discuss the perceptions of senior managers about how they ensure that the learning function is maintaining ongoing alignment with their organisational strategy. In order to make this appropriate in the Saudi Arabia context (see Chapter 4), the question for this research was posed as: what procedures are used to ensure that training and development is maintained, in line with your organisation’s objectives?
5.2.2 Maintained Alignment

In the previous section the initial investment and spending decision in relation to alignment is discussed as an outcome and this section will discuss how senior managers expect they maintain ongoing alignment with HRD as a continuous process.

The interviewees in this study highlighted two main approaches taken by those in Saudi organisations to ensuring that training and development is maintained in line with their organisation’s objectives: meetings with managers and monitoring organisational outcomes. In addition the interviewees from the public sector highlighted a number of perceived measurement problems.

The data suggest that alignment is more of concern to those in private organisations than in the public sector. Indeed the responses from the public sector made little mention of seeking to achieve it. This may be because they are not profit-making companies or there are no competitors, or because their budget is coming from the government and therefore there is no strict criteria for their success. In addition, although the Eighth Development Plan in Saudi Arabia focuses on the role of T&D in the public sector it does not link that role with organisational strategies and does not focus on alignment issues.

5.2.2.1 Meeting with Managers

A regular meeting with managers as an approach to alignment is a particular feature of the data from Anderson’s (2007) study, and it was also evident in this data set as the procedure used to ensure that training and development remains connected with the organisation’s objectives. This theme was highlighted by a few interviews from public organisations and by more than half of those from multinational private companies. Not surprisingly, interviewees who highlighted this theme were those with a clearer expectation that T&D processes should be linked with organisational strategy.

The following quotation from a senior manager illustrates the focus on organisational strategy:
In this case, our focus on which the amendments or approval will be based are the extent to which this programme will achieve the strategies of the company. This is not the final step, since the Human Capital team holds meetings with the departments to ensure the success of plans, training and development and that these plans add value to the company, and that they know the problems that they face, and provide plans to avoid them. (CEO, Private, F).

Other quotations from the HR professionals illustrate this focus on organisational strategy:

*The Committee chaired by the president held quarterly meetings to review the performance of the Centre and to link it to the strategies of the company. It is through the Committee and the regular meetings among the colleagues and the heads of Business Sectors that I make sure that the development programmes we design are in line with their needs and the company’s overall strategy.* (HRD, Private, C).

This quotation illustrates the focus of one senior manager on meeting to discuss the problems and the department requirements:

*We hold meetings which are usually attended by the Rector, the Director of Human Resources and the Deans to discuss the progress we are making and ways of reaching universality. These meetings include discussions on the impact of training, problems it faces and the requirements of the departments.* (CEO, Public, C).

*The Committee of Training and Expedition meets weekly and discusses everything in terms of training and expedition and also discusses the problems faced by departments and training provided and whether any new programmes must be provided. If there are particular problems, for example, an expat has a problem with his studies or a trainee cannot finish his session, we gather to discuss the subject and find out the causes and treatment method, and then take a decision on how to achieve the objectives of the Institute.* (CEO, Public, H).

What is interesting in this data is that two of the T&D professionals mention the word ‘alignment’ although the interview questions do not involve this concept. This may be because they are updated in the knowledge or they participate in a programme that is focused on the strategic alignment of HRD, or because they have branches in the developed countries which affect their understanding. The following quotation illustrates one of the HR professional’s perceptions:
If we are not aligned, the training and development that we give will not have any effect; and this is done through holding periodic meetings, and we have balanced scorecards. (HRD, Private, K).

The data provide evidence with slight differences between the private and public sector of an expectation of alignment between HRD and organisational strategy as reflected in the literature (see for example Anderson, 2007; Garavan, 2007). Some interviewees were quite explicit about this and about the importance of meeting managers to maintain alignment but others were less articulate in the area.

5.2.2.2 Measuring Organisational Outcomes

The measurement of organisational outcomes was also identified by about half of senior managers in private companies as a way of checking that training and development is continually connected with the organisation’s objectives although this theme was not mentioned by any of the public sector interviewees.

Those who discussed measures and metrics highlighted a range of approaches to contribute to alignment assessment such as: balanced score cards (BSC), employee retention, added value, managers’ satisfaction and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The following quotation from a senior manager illustrates the T&D role in achieving the organisational strategy by using Key Performance Indicators:

*Training is not the centre of attention. Rather we concentrate on learning and organisational learning. It is an ongoing process, in fact. Moreover, we have adopted the KPI system to monitor our progress in order to make sure that our strategic objectives are achieved, and the change we seek is taking place.* (CEO, Private, C).

Balanced Score Cards were also cited as a way by which to identify their strategies, provide required learning to achieve this strategy and hold meetings to find out about their achievement regarding their strategies:

[… and we have the balanced score cards and the objectives of each company beside which we combine our objectives with the general objectives of the company, which is formed in balanced score cards until we make alignment […] no one works separately but we work as
one group. And there is a quarterly report for the balanced score cards results and there is a balanced score cards committee which gathers monthly and they follow up the objectives and if there is any delay, they follow it and make sure that everything is ok. (HRD, Private, K).

Some senior managers in the public sector had more difficulty in explaining how to maintain ongoing alignment with organisational strategy but they did refer to annual planning as a way of maintaining ongoing alignment with the organisational strategies.

The following quotations from the public sector illustrate their alignment problems in the case of ‘Annual planning’. The following quotation from a senior manager illustrates this problem:

*There is some sort of programme such as those carried out to meet our needs. The concerned department discusses its needs with the Training Committee which report them to the executive agency and agree on the contents of the programme and its duration. These issues are all linked to our goals.* (CEO, Public, F)

Another quotation from an HR professional illustrates this perception:

*We are associated with all departments in [our organisation]. We offer programmes aimed at achieving the strategic objectives of the organisation and thus achieving the objectives of the nation.* (HRD, Public, G).

These quotations show that key managers from the public sector view traditional planning as a way of maintaining the T&D function’s ongoing alignment with organisational priorities. However, although these responses indicate a focus on how the learning intervention is linked with the organisation’s goals, it does not focus on whether these goals were achieved or not, why, and what is needed to achieve them.

In summary, the data from this research show the importance of processes for T&D investment process and initial alignment. However, this investment is based on the HR professional role in persuading the CEO managers of the value of the interventions according to the departments’ needs and there seems to be little explicit attention given to the organisation’s strategic priorities. It is possible that alignment of HRD is more clearly
expressed when urgent need is considered although a mostly reactive approach is used in such circumstances.

Alignment also seems to be one of the few areas where more of a difference of perception and practice between public and private sectors is evident. Respondents from the private sector were better able to highlight how they maintain ongoing alignment with organisational strategy and the respondents from the public sector found it harder to relate to the alignment concept and focused more on annual planning processes.

Meeting with managers and measuring organisation outcomes by using internal and external benchmarks and KPIs are the main ways that interviewees use to assess the extent of ongoing alignment of HRD and organisational and departmental priorities.

The organisational alignment in Saudi Arabia can be summarised in Figure 5.2.
This part of the analysis has shown how the use of information about training and organisational priorities is important for alignment. The following part will consider further how managers in Saudi Arabia try to measure the value of learning from both process and outcomes, what challenges they face and how they try to address these challenges.
CHAPTER 5 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.3 Measuring and Strategic Learning

Measurement is a key issue in SHRD (see for example Sadler-Smith, 2006; Garavan, 2007; Anderson, 2007). This requires HR professionals and CEO managers to agree on the expected HRD outcomes to the organisational strategy, and to measure the achievement of those expectations and their contribution to the achievement of organisation strategy (see for example Semler, 1997; Fiegenbaum et al., 1996).

Two questions (Q9 – how do you know if the training and development department provides a useful contribution to the organisation’s high objectives (strategy), and Q10 – how do you know if the T&D department is as efficient as possible in its work? (process) were asked to all interviewees. This part will show the importance of measurement at organisational level with little evidence of any consistent practices used by the organisations, something which was also found in the USA and UK studies. Their responses emphasised: traditional measurements, employee capability measurements, and measuring organisational outcomes. In addition the interviewees highlighted a range of measurement problems that they faced. As a result interviewees indicated similar themes about both efficiency and effectiveness.

5.3.1 Traditional Measurement

This theme was highlighted by less than half of the interviewees as a way of assessing the training and development department’s contribution to the organisation’s high objectives and its efficiency. The following quotations illustrate this theme:

*We evaluate the employee’s level of satisfaction with the programme if it is provided outside (the organisation). (CEO, Public, D).*

*Therefore, we sent a questionnaire to the sales directors and subordinates to ascertain their reaction to learning. (HRD, private, B).*

*This is gauged through the reaction of the employee owing to the difficulty of measuring the impact of training and a lack of specialists. (HRD, public, D).*

The following quotation from an HR professional illustrates that they focus on returns from
outputs:

We measure the level of learning resulting from training and development by using a number of axes such as the trainee, the client, the director, and the returns of learning represented in the outputs. For evaluation, we use the Kirkpatrick system that consists of four levels, the most important of which is the client. (HRD, Private, C).

Therefore, although the literature suggests that HRD should provide strategic value, the respondents in this research tended to focus on the satisfaction assessment (merit) rather than the value or worth of the training to organisational strategy (see for example Scriven, 1995 and Anderson, 2007).

5.3.2 Employee Capability Measurements

This theme was mentioned by more than half of the participants and in their response the key managers focused attention on individual change rather than strategic change. The following quotations from HR professionals and senior managers illustrate this focus:

This is known from the directors or the evaluation of their employees of how they have improved as a result of the programmes. (CEO, Private, G).

We assess staff performance through the director's feedback. We usually receive reports from the director on the employee's level of performance and development during his work. (HRD, Private, A).

After his returning to work his manager evaluates him; here we face sometimes the compliments from his manager but we consider the progress of the administration performance or the workers as a standard of value. (HRD, Public, J).

This theme was also highlighted by interviewees in response to an earlier interview question about how participants know whether the T&D department is as efficient as possible in its work. These responses are consistent with the argument that HRD processes and activities, as described by participants in this study, are not explicitly linked with organisational strategy and it does not measure the value of HRD outcomes to organisational strategy (see for example Scriven, 1995; Harlen and James, 1997; Prakken, 2000; Anderson, 2007). However, other responses did indicate an expectation of organisational outcomes.
5.3.3 Organisational Outcomes Measurements

Organisational outcomes measurements was highlighted by less than half of senior managers in the multinational private sector and only one senior manager in the public sector as a strategic measurement.

The literature review shows that there is no consensus on specific measurements of the efficiency and effectiveness of HRD to the organisational strategy (see for example Fiegenbaum, et al., 1996 and Semler, 1997). The interview data from this study suggest similarly that there is no clear agreement on specific measurement for strategic evaluation when the senior managers identified a range of internal and external measurement such as high quality, employees’ satisfaction, scarcity of errors, customer satisfaction, KPIs.

The following quotation from an HR professional illustrates the use of KPIs to measure strategic achievements:

*Also we have KPIs to define the required tasks for the person and his management and can observe how much the employee gained from the required skills* (HRD, Private, H).

The following quotation from a senior manager from the private sector focus on KPI:

*We also have a KPI evaluation system that measures the level of performance in terms of the quantity and quality. Each form contains 10 points. This is noted through the number of the employees we trained in 2005 and 2006. However, this system provides information about the training programmes, the number of hours they last and the time and capabilities required for the employees.* (CEO, Private, B).

The following quotation from the private sector illustrates that they focus on reducing employee turnover:

*We are thinking now of the job turnover rate and we are trying to reduce it. When the rate of turnover and the employees' recurrent leaving increases in [the company] we started searching for the causes and interviewed those who wanted to leave [the company. Furthermore, we went back to the records of those who left it in order to know the reasons...*
behind this and we found that there were a number of factors responsible for this, such as training and the long working hours. (HRD, Private, D).

In addition, the data show that some (but less than half of) senior managers highlighted the importance of measuring customer satisfaction as an indicator of T&D’s contribution. It can be noticed that there is similarity between the perceptions of senior managers when they measure the T&D role to the organisational strategy through customer satisfaction.

The following quotation from a senior manager illustrates their focus on many outcomes:

*I think that the most important criterion is the evaluation of ourselves and this can be learnt through satisfied or unsatisfied auditors, customers and their orientation for us to increase in the number and their turnout for us annually or through their refusal to deal with us.* (CEO, Public, K).

The following quotation from the multinational private sector illustrates that they used an external specialised company to evaluate customer satisfaction:

*We also carry out a questionnaire about client satisfaction with the performance of our staff and the products we introduce. This job takes place through a marketing research which we carried out with the help of a specialised company.* (HRD, Private, B).

The following quotation from one of the public sector organisations illustrates their focus on the level of customer satisfaction of their outcomes:

*Therefore, we approached the places where our graduates have been employed to inquire after their performance and we came to know that the level of satisfaction has become highly remarkable at the labour market.* (HRD, Public, B)

It may be noteworthy that at this late stage in the interview, one senior manager in the public sector highlighted balanced score cards measurement (BSC) as a way of evaluating T&D although this was not raised when discussing alignment:

*Balanced Score Cards can be rendered effective on the level of divisions. Moreover, we have a strategic plan to be implemented and performance measurement stands to be part of it. We have a system of evaluation for individuals and the measured skills, as well as an assessment*
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of the departments and the organisation as a whole. You can see the graph that illustrates this progress. (CEO, Public, A).

The data indicate an overall consistency between the respondents to this question as the interviewees went on but an additional issue raised by interviewees is the challenges of measurements.

5.3.4 Problems of Measuring the Contribution of HRD to the Organisation’s Strategies

Although measurement is accepted as being very important, many managers highlighted difficulties with this. The literature does not indicate consensus about appropriate measures and metrics (see for example Semler, 1997; Verburg et al., 2005) and this seems to be the experience of the respondents to this study.

The following quotation illustrates this perception from HR professionals in multinational private companies:

**But the problem is that there are other variables affecting the employees' performance.** (HRD, Private, B).

The following quotation from an HR professional in a public organisation illustrates this theme:

**we look for whether reflect attendance the seminars on the performance and the problem is that the employee is not changed because of program but because the regulations modified or his supervisors has changed and thus is an incentive for staff to do more** (HRD, Public, H).

Another quotation from the multinational private sector illustrates this theme:

**Dealing with resources is the biggest challenge for us. This difficulty occurs in measuring the achievement in this respect.** (CEO, Private, C).
In addition some (but not all) the public sector interviewees suggested that it is difficult to measure the value of T&D on their organisational strategy because they are not a profit-making organisation and the following quotation illustrates this concern:

*The benefit and value in the government sector are difficult because we do not focus on profitability or profit. But we know through the beneficiaries. Where we note an increase in the number of trainees each year and pay attention to evaluation by the trainees on our programmes.* (CEO, Public, H).

In summary, measuring the impact of T&D at an organisational level is a challenge for those involved. Common approaches to measurement are: 1) traditional measurements, 2) employee capability measurements and 3) organisational outcomes measurement.

Although traditional measures of satisfaction and employee capability are important in many cases in this data set they are not linked with organisational strategy and they do not measure change at an organisational level (see for example O’Driscoll, 2005 and Anderson, 2007).

In addition, and in common with the USA and UK data, participants expressed problems of measuring the contribution of HRD to the organisation’s strategies. The following figure summarises these findings.

*Figure 5.3 Measuring and monitoring the value of T&D at strategic level*
Conclusion:

This research has focused on three aspects of the role of T&D in organisations in Saudi Arabia: the strategic role of T&D, T&D investment process and alignment, and measuring and monitoring the value of T&D to organisational strategy. These features can be presented in the following figure:

Figure 5.4 SHRD model in Saudi Arabia
The analysis of this chapter shows the following challenges to the strategic T&D role in Saudi Arabia:

1- Although HRD value is a key issue in contemporary literature about HRD (see for example Garavan, 2007; Sadler-Smith, 2006); traditional measurements (satisfaction assessment and individual capabilities) to measure T&D rather than value remain prevalent in Saudi Arabia.

2- Although interviews show many problems of measurement, none-the-less there is evidence of the development of some practices to assess T&D outcomes (such as increased sales, and customer satisfaction). It is noteworthy that most of the interviewees focus on the input side of HRD processes rather than an outcomes side.

3- The interview data show that the public and private organisations tend to follow a ‘bottom-up’ approach to linking the T&D spending process with organisational strategy and priorities. This process focuses on departments’ needs, rather than an engagement with CEO managers in analysis of organisational strategies of the contribution that learning could make (see for example Anderson, 2009).

4- The analysis suggests that alignment is found more in the private organisations when they highlighted meeting with managers and some internal and external measurements. Most participants from the public sector made little mention of maintaining ongoing alignment with organisational strategy.

5- About half of the interviewees highlighted difficulties in measuring the contribution of the T&D role to the organisational strategy.

In order to consider the evidence from this research in the light of findings from other similar studies the following table compares the feature of SHRD in different cultures; this thesis (in Saudi Arabia), O’Driscoll et al, 2005 (in the USA) and Anderson, 2007 (in the UK). This table focuses on three main features 1) the strategic role of HRD, 2) T&D investment process and alignment, and 3) measuring and monitoring the value of T&D to organisational strategy.
### Table 5.5 Main themes in this thesis, O’Driscoll et al, (2005) and Anderson (2007)

|---------------------|-------------|------------------------|-----------------|

This table shows that; firstly, there are similarities between the expectations of the senior managers in all of these studies about the role of SHRD; secondly, there are also similarities across the three studies since they highlighted the same themes regarding the SHRD alignment and; thirdly it shows that there are more similarities than differences although there is, perhaps, more emphasis on financial and other measures in the non-Saudi studies.

In summary HRD in Saudi Arabia occurs in a very different context to that of developed Western economies. In particular there is a consensus that national HRD is a priority and government plans ensure that the cost of training and development is not an issue. There is also a tradition of an annual (generously-funded) training planning process at both national and organisational levels.

The evidence from this study suggests that senior managers in both public and private sectors in Saudi Arabia articulate an awareness of the strategic value of learning and training and
development is expected to make a strategic contribution to their organisations. However, the HRD processes in place in their organisations make it difficult to put their strategic intent into practice.

The evidence from this study suggests that most training and development spending decisions undertaken within the planning processes of Saudi organisations are based on operational rather than strategic ‘triggers’. There is scant evidence that specific organisational outcomes are expected from investment in training and development processes and programmes and there is a reliance on traditional evaluation techniques as a measure of ‘success’. However, there is also evidence of the development, in some organisations, of an awareness of the importance of fuller (and aggregated) measures of performance at the organisational level and its use to enhance the alignment of training and development with organisational strategy and objectives.
CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

This thesis has focused on the challenges of evaluating the contribution of strategic HRD to employing organisations and the limitations of traditional approaches to training evaluation (see for example Anderson, 2009). Strategic HRD aims to be aligned with organisational strategy and with stakeholders’ expectations and to measure the value of an investment in learning to the organisational strategy from both financial and non-financial outcomes (see for example Anderson, 2007 and Garavan, 2007).

This thesis was undertaken to examine to what extent HRD professionals and also CEO managers in public and private sector organisations in Saudi Arabia understand how the HRD role is aligned with their organisational strategies and to understand how they value and evaluate its role to the organisational strategy.

6.1 Research Aim and Objectives

This thesis investigates the strategic value of learning in multinational private and public organisations in Saudi Arabia. Three objectives guided this study: to examine the strategic value of learning from CEO managers’ and T&D practitioners’ perceptions in multinational private and public organisations in Saudi Arabia, to establish the extent to which the value attached to learning in the public sector is different from that in the multinational private sector in Saudi Arabia and to examine any differences in the value attached to learning by specialists and senior managers of organisations in Saudi Arabia.

6.2 The Advantages and Limitation of this Thesis

The thesis contributes to knowledge through many areas: first, it provides an in depth consideration to find out more about what strategic HRD means in the Saudi Arabian context; second, it focuses of the qualitative understanding in an under-researched area; third, it contributes an assessment on the perception of general managers as well as HR specialists; fourth, it also enables a comparison between public and multi-national private sectors in
Saudi Arabia, something that is under-represented in the literature; fifth, it is the first of its kind to use and apply O'Driscoll (2005) and Anderson (2007) in the Saudi context, and finally, it contributes to knowledge about the strategic value of learning in the work place from the perception of senior managers in public and private sector organisations rather than from the perspective of those who deliver training.

Although the achievement of qualitative analysis of HRD issues in Saudi Arabia is a major contribution to knowledge, the research was limited by data access issues such as physical access when some CEO managers would not participate in this study and many cognitive access when some CEO managers did not feel able to speak their response (they wrote their answer to the interview questions and sent it to the researcher by fax or e-mail in advance of the interview time). In addition, some of the CEOs were reluctant to participate in the interviews because they considered the interview questions to be relevant to the HRD department and not to them while others recommended that the interviews be done with a less senior person.

Another limitation is that some interviewees did not accept the recording of the interviews but rather for notes to be taken and the answers repeated when needed and they welcomed the researcher to contact them if he needs more information. This thesis focuses on the perceptions of senior managers and does not involve all stakeholders such as middle managers, line managers and employees and focuses on the senior-decision makers as a key stakeholder to discover their perceptions of the strategic value of learning. The role of HR professionals and CEO managers is important in this research because their role is critical to the theory under consideration, and because they may be able to explain the complexities or details that could not be achieved by one of them.

The last limitation is that three senior managers from multinational companies did not accept to participate in these interviews because they were very busy or as suggested by HR professional that their answers will be the same with their answers. This means that only 37 senior managers (20 HR professional and 17 senior managers) from 20 organisations were accessed.
6.3 Main Conclusion
The discussion of the conclusions of this research will be divided into three sections based on the research objectives.

The first objective is to examine the strategic value of learning from CEO managers’ and HRD practitioners’ perceptions in multinational private and public organisations in Saudi Arabia.

The research shows that most organisations link the HRD role with individual performance. Respondents from organisations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) tended to focus on four issues: trainees’ satisfaction; employee capability; operational issues and formal training programmes. In this context HRD in KSA seems to be focused on individuals rather than organisational strategy: The reasons for this may be because; the persuasive effect of the Kirkpatrick evaluation framework (Al-Athari and Zairi, 2002), the policy of the Ministry of Civil Services in Saudi Arabia that is linked with training and development does not support the organisation change (see chapter 3) or the eighth development plans do not focus to link HRD with public and private sector organisations strategies.

Trainees’ satisfaction is recommended in the Kirkpatrick model to evaluate the training programmes at the end of the training to measure the trainees’ satisfaction (see for example reaction level in Kirkpatrick model in chapter 2). However, this approach enables organisations to focus on the individual level and not organisational change (such as KM or OL theory), organisational outcomes (see, for example, Dixon, 1992; Leondes, 2005; O’Dell & Grayson, 1998; Wiig, 1993; Love et al.,2000) and it does not explicitly align the HRD role with organisational strategy (see for example Garavan, 2007; Anderson, 2009).

In addition, the focus of HRD concern in KSA is on employees’ capabilities and their performance improvement as a result of the training they attended. Again this means that there is little attention paid to the organisational strategy (see for example the recommendations of Sadler-Smith (2006) and Garavan (2007)), the organisation outcomes such as KM and OL (see for example Yang, 2004; Knowles, 1980), the alignment of the learning investment process with organisational strategy (see for example Anderson, 2009; Sadler-Smith, 2006) and the value of HRD investment to organisation strategy (see for example Garavan, 2007).
The research also indicates that the senior decision makers tend to focus on an operational level through their focus on department need and employee needs rather than the strategic level to improve organisational performance. This resonates with ideas about HRD formulated in the 1980s (see for example Nadler & Wiggs, 1986; Chalofsky and Lincoln, 1983) that focus on the individuals or organisational change but does not indicate the alignment of HRD with the organisational strategy and stakeholders’ expectation (see for example Sadler-Smith, 2006; Garavan, 2007; Anderson, 2007).

Fourth, T&D in KSA tends to focus in most cases on the provision of formal training. Although HRD clearly involves formal training and learning procedures such as classroom or training programmes (see for example Nadler and Wiggs, 1986; Richard, 2009), the literature (see for example SHRD definition, learning theory and economic theory) also highlights the importance of learning as a broad issue and not training programmes or classrooms only. Respondents to interview questions in this study provide evidence that senior executives focus on training programmes in most cases is linked with individual need and not the value or worth of training programmes to organisational strategy (see for example Gordon, 1991; Al-Athari & Zairi, 2002).

However, in addition to these features the research also provides evidence of recognition of the need for strategic alignment particularly by the private sector organisations and respondents highlight their use of some strategic measurements such as using external benchmarks and KPIs. This is manifest in the approach taken to planning and budgeting for training and occasions where additional needs must be met.

The data also show that there are some issues that were highlighted by some organisations and they do exhibit aspects of evaluation of HRD at a strategic level; they identity the need to demonstrate the economic value of learning and some of them were aware of the contribution of a culture to support learning as a strategic issue.

In summary of the points this section shows that most (but not all) of the senior managers in both public and private sector organisations focus on individual change rather than organisational strategy.
CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

The second objective of the research was to establish the extent to which the value attached to learning in the public sector is different from that in the multinational private sector in Saudi Arabia.

Although the multi-national private sector is by nature more exposed to foreign ideas and activities, more similarities than differences were found in this study with the public sector. In both sectors there is a strong concern about satisfaction assessment, the need for employees’ capability, a focus on the operational rather than strategic and a dependence on provision of formal training programmes when they are evaluating T&D.

There are a number of reasons that may be relevant here; first this similarity between the responses of those from the multi-national private and public sectors may result from the similarity in the backgrounds and assumption of the decision makers; many private sector managers started their career in the public sector in KSA. Secondly, although many of the interviewee respondents have high qualifications in business from UK or USA universities, the extent to which they can apply the ideas they have learned may be affected by the Saudi culture that focuses on and supports traditional approaches to T&D evaluations.

Nonetheless, the data show that there are some differences between public and multi-national private sector respondents. Multi-national private sector interviewees showed more awareness of strategic issues in their interviews and the need for training to be aligned with organisational objectives and strategy. Moreover, they highlighted a wider range of measurement than was highlighted by the public sector. This may be because some in the multinational private sector have more competition from other international organisations. In addition it is possible that senior managers in these organisations are keen to consider new ideas and knowledge; they are updated with strategic issues by encouraging their individuals to attend strategic courses in training or inviting professionals from Western developed countries to provide training about aligning the HRD role with organisational strategy.
The third objective is to examine any differences in the value attached to learning by HR specialists and senior managers of organisations in Saudi Arabia.

The data indicate a strong similarity between HR professionals and senior managers with regard to evaluating learning. Both sets of interviewees focused on similar issues (individual evaluation of satisfaction and employees capabilities). The reasons for that may be that they have common understanding about T&D and its organisation in KSA, or because they all have very similar backgrounds. A further influence may be because some senior managers ask the HR interviewee to write the answers of the interview questions for them, perhaps because they think the interview questions are not relevant to their role, or because they do not see HRD as their responsibility.

6.4 Discussion of the finding

This thesis shows the strong influence of traditions of training and development which link with an “older” traditional role of HRD and there is less evidence of more contemporary strategic approaches.

Strategic thinking is a complex process and this concept is considered as relatively new in the KSA. In addition senior positions are not necessarily filled by those with strategic qualifications although some managers are highly educated and they studied strategy in developed countries such as the USA or UK. However, it is possible that when they return to the KSA they did not find the opportunity to apply what they have learned or the system in Saudi Arabia does not support the strategic approach of HRD (see chapter 3).

The research highlighted many barriers which inhibit people applying strategic ideas relevant to HRD.

Barrier 1 – The literature recommends that strategic HRD should incorporate top-down planning rather than relying on a bottom-up approach. As indicated in chapter two this requires processes such as: analysing organisation strategy, assessing current and future weaknesses in HRD terms, and identifying current and future development priorities at all company levels (strategy, tactic and operational). This involves strategic choices and a proactive approach to decisions about HRD investment processes that are linked with
organisation strategies, vision and mission, current and future problems, and current and future objectives. Thirdly it involves a dialogue with internal stakeholders such as senior managers about how ongoing alignment with organisation strategy will be maintained. These processes provide the basis for strategic HRD evaluation as indicated (see, for example, O’Driscoll et al., 2005; Anderson, 2007).

This study shows that public and multi-national private sector organisations in Saudi Arabia face difficulties in achieving such a strategic approach; most Saudi organisations describe their T&D investment process as more of a ‘bottom-up approach’. For example, HR professionals and senior managers highlighted the fact that the T&D department undertakes planning and budgeting processes based on information about the needs from the departments and there is scant evidence of any dialogue between the T&D department and senior managers to translate the organisation strategy into practical terms and identify its HRD implications. Budget approval by senior managers is, therefore, based on operational issues rather than strategic priorities.

Adopting this approach has a number of disadvantages for organisations and individuals. 1) HRD investment may be dominated by trainee demand for programmes that are unrelated to organisation strategy and priorities for the future; 2) the training programmes may provide merit in terms of the employee experience but are not worthwhile or valuable in organisational terms; 3) the training may develop employees’ capability but the skills and knowledge developed may not relate to the organisation strategy. These weaknesses were rarely highlighted by participants in this study. Indeed many senior managers in the public sector organisations were unconcerned about the cost of training and development and lack concern about delays in providing some approved training programmes so that more urgent (and reactive) training programmes are provided. Moreover, in both public and private sectors most of the senior managers were rarely able to explicitly identify the expected outcomes of investment in T&D.

To overcome the weaknesses highlighted here, HR professionals and CEO managers would be advised to complement the existing approach with more of a ‘top-down’ set of decision. This would involve HR professionals in discussions about the formulation of organisation strategy and its translation into other levels. HR professionals need to 1) develop aligned HRD strategy, policy and processes that provide value for the organisation strategy and
stakeholders’ needs, taking into account financial and non-financial outcomes; 2) agree with the internal stakeholders on how to maintain ongoing alignment with organisation strategy; and 3) measure the value of SHRD for the organisation strategy from the managerial perspective, taking into account both financial and non-financial outcomes. This would provide a stronger basis for individuals, the HRD department and the managers in the organisation to support the continuous and proactive learning that is linked with their organisation strategy and also focus on the strategic measurements that will enable them to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the strategic T&D role regarding the organisational outcomes. Such a focus would increase the visibility of the cost of the training and development and allow a clearer identification of the expected T&D outcomes. This would then enable a strategic evaluation of the impact of the T&D role and the value of learning to the organisation in its specific context.

**Barrier 2** – The strategic literature outlined in chapter two suggests SHRD practices based on learning, economic and systems theories are required to provide proactive learning processes in different ways (for example, through education, training programmes, organisation development, organisation learning, etc.). This can be achieved when HR professionals and other stakeholders in the organisation focus on different types of learning: individual capability (Swanson & Holton, 2009), the organisation’s capacity to innovate and change (Grover & Davenport, 2001), and organisation strategy to provide value based on financial and non-financial outcomes (Anderson, 2007).

This thesis shows that a lack of alignment at systems level between HRD and other processes in organisations in Saudi Arabia inhibits people at all levels in the organisation from prioritising the achievement of organisational strategies when considering learning and development needs. As indicated in chapter three training policy operated by the influential Ministry of Civil Service for example uses training as a ‘gateway to promotion’ rather than a means of developing the capabilities of the employees whereby attendance on training courses makes participants eligible for promotion regardless of their capabilities or experience. In addition the recruitment and promotion systems link reward to education achievement levels (ascribing higher values to people who have higher grades or certificated qualification levels) rather than to experience or capability. As a consequence most of the senior managers from organisations in both sectors relied on traditional measurements (such
as the trainee satisfaction level of the Kirkpatrick framework) to evaluate training in their organisations.

To overcome this barrier the Ministry of Civil Service would need to reassess its training policy so that the motivation for learning and development (understood as involving both formal and informal development) is linked more explicitly to organisational strategic priorities. This requires the proactive participation of a wider range of organisational stakeholders in identifying learning needs in relation to organisation strategy and also avoids the weakness of giving reward equally to employees who work in an effective way and those who are less effective in their work roles. This would also provide a basis for the alignment of HRD strategy and policy to focus on human capital development to provide value to the organisation strategies, taking into account both financial and non-financial outcomes.

**Barrier 3** – This thesis also shows the inhibiting effect at the systemic level of the Saudi national HRD policy in relation to organisational effectiveness. As indicated in chapter 3, the national HRD strategy in Saudi Arabia is based on an ‘up-skilling’ set of objectives. This emphasises the provision of training and education (rather than acknowledging learning as a broad issue) in order to improve qualification levels. However, the policy formulation process at the national level does not involve the participation of the public sector or multi-national private organisations and there is scant evidence of attempts to maintain ongoing alignment with public sector or multi-national private organisations’ strategies and priorities. As such there is no attempt to measure the value of the HRD (qualification) outcomes with organisational priorities.

As a consequence investment is made in providing skills and knowledge to ‘supply’ the labour market without any assessment of the ‘demand factors’ that are required to support performance at organisational levels. Little attention is paid to the contribution of training and education to organisational change or strategic achievements in Saudi Arabia within the development planning process in Saudi Arabia that is described in chapter 3.

To achieve a closer alignment between national HRD and organisational-level SHRD in Saudi Arabia it is recommended that national and organisational policies broaden their focus beyond ‘up-skilling’ and provision of formal training and education to include consideration of workplace learning and development needs, accepting that learning is a broad issue. Public and multinational private sector need to participate in formulating national HR policy, and the
HRD investment process needs to be aligned with their strategies to provide a basis for measurement of the effectiveness and efficiency of the HRD contribution to organisational and national strategies.

**Barrier 4** – The first three barriers highlighted here focus on systemic issues as well as the role perceptions of HRD specialists. In addition the HRD literature outlined in chapter 2 emphasises the importance of focusing training and development on the expectations and needs of other organisational stakeholders, particularly line managers. However, the thesis (particularly in chapters 3 and 4) illustrates how most managers in the Saudi context do not see training as part of their role. This lack of awareness may be a consequence of the Saudi policy that training is provided for free (by the state) and may also be linked with the promotion system (see barrier 2) where the number and length of the training programmes attended and the number of education certificates acquired by an individual are taken into account in promotion decisions rather than the employee’s skills and capabilities. As a result employees may attend training programmes that do not provide value or worth connected to their organisation’s priorities and the managers may overlook issues relating to the value of the learning to their organisation strategy.

Therefore, if managers are to be more involved in decisions about HRD, it is important that a more explicit approach to both strategic direction and potential learning contribution is developed. Managers should be more involved in strategy formulation and encouraged to work with HRD specialists to identify HRD priorities at an organisational level. Currently strategic awareness on the part of managers in many organisations is limited and wider organisational processes restrict their awareness of what can be achieved if HRD policies and strategies at the departmental level are aligned with the organisation strategies.

This discussion about the barriers that face organisations in Saudi Arabia may raise the question of why some private organisations give a more strategic response.

The data show that some private organisations focus more on strategic issues and they show more participation in the strategic level. This strategic role may be because of the competitive factors in the private sector, or they are open to a wider global environment which makes them aware of a more stakeholders’ involvement for strategy and for learning.
6.5 Contribution of the study overall

The research shows that in Saudi Arabia as elsewhere SHRD evaluation is more difficult to achieve than is suggested in the literature. This gap can be seen also in the West; the literature shows that there seems to be a gap between theory and practice (see for example Wognum, 2001; Anderson, 2007). This study examines in depth what the situation is in the KSA and explains many reasons for the gap in Saudi Arabia relating to both national societal culture (which may be one of the reasons that affects the strategic HRD role) as well as the inherent conceptual and practical challenges of alignment. The Saudi culture tends to support deference to superiors, the hierarchical and top down approach to planning and management. In addition, the complexity and ambiguity of strategic thinking processes may affect the practice of HRD in the KSA. The cohesive culture tends to inhibit large change in training. However, government policy on education and training and the nature of competition may also be forcing some of the private companies to apply a more strategic role in HRD and the global competitive environment may also influence some organisations in following the strategic approach of HRD.

6.5.1 Contribution to Theory

This thesis provides a contribution to knowledge relating to the following theories and models:

**Learning theory and systems theory:** A key contribution of this thesis is to demonstrate the close interrelationship between systems and learning theories. As indicated in chapter 2, HRD practice is based on a number of learning theories (behavioural, cognitive etc.) as a basis for developing effective learning processes and activities to improve individual performance. These take into account different stimuli and motivations and different contexts that contribute to individual learning (Gredler, 2001; Swanson & Holton, 2009). These theories have been put into practice in different ways as HRD specialists have set out to identify individual performance gaps in a way that involves employees’ participation and encourages learning through defining the expected outcomes (Yang, 2004). HRD specialists have also
drawn on learning theories in their recognition of the importance of building an appropriate culture and atmosphere to support continuous learning, both formal and informal, as part of the process of linking learning goals with the required individual performance outcomes (Richard, 2009; Laird, 1985).

However, these approaches and practices have been criticised for their focus on individual capability rather than organisation change; here the view is that focus on the actual process of learning rather than the value of what is being learned is too limited (Schoenholtz-Read & Rudestam, 2009). Therefore, in addition to more ‘traditional’ approaches, a focus on organisation change has been advocated that links learning with organisation priorities (Woodall, Lee & Stewart 2004) so that the HRD focus is on learning at the organisational as well as the individual level (Dixon, 1992).

This thesis contributes to these areas by highlighting the dominance of the individual approach in practice in Saudi Arabia. Although managers aspire to an organisational approach, their activities and priorities focus on trainee satisfaction and employees’ capabilities without a wider reference to organisational requirements. In this case theoretical ‘prescriptions’ are not enacted in practice as a result of many systemic features of management and organisations in Saudi Arabia. This thesis, therefore, highlights the dominance of systems issues as a factor affecting the implementation of learning theories in practical organisational contexts. The evidence of this thesis is that organisational change and strategic issues are not taken into account as HRD systems, policies and processes do little to support continuous learning and development to improve organisational performance with the participation of a range of stakeholders in organisations.

Economic and performance theory: This thesis contributes new insights into the relationship between national HRD strategies and organisational level approaches to maximising value through HRD. The discussion about SHRD in chapter 2 highlights the current demand-led approach to human capital as dominant. As such the organisational perspective is dominant and SHRD is expected to focus on the value added by learning to organisation strategy (Smith, 2003). Human capital management enables the organisation to achieve its strategies and mission by focusing on achieving economic outcomes. Such
approaches recommend that HRD investment processes are linked with organisation strategy and also advocate building a culture that supports measurement of the value of the HRD investment to the organisation strategy (Toth, 2003).

This thesis identifies how national HRD policies directly affect what is possible in organisational SHRD terms. It highlights the potential for tensions between national development plans that focus on a supply-led approach to skills and qualifications and the more demand-led approach assumed at organisational levels in the SHRD literature. The thesis highlights the limitations of national development planning processes that do not take into account organisational strategic priorities and where there is no measurement of the value of the outcomes (at national and organisational levels). Although this thesis focuses on the situation in Saudi Arabia, a contribution here is to highlight how economic and performance perspectives that take into account societal contexts as well as organisational priorities are required if theory is to be enacted in practice. A key contribution here is to highlight how economic theory and practice is interpreted in different ways in different societal contexts and how this affects the way SHRD at an organisational level is likely to be undertaken.

**Strategic HRD alignment:** This thesis shows that the aspiration of the strategic literature expressed in alignment models is more difficult to achieve than is suggested by literature and that the literature is dominated by the experience of HRD in Western countries. The focus of the literature about alignment of SHRD has shifted from an individual to a more strategic approach with four main features; 1) examining HRD involvement and participation in analysing organisational strategy to identify the organisation’s capability, strengths, and weaknesses and suggesting the needed development at all company levels; 2) making strategic choices about how the learning investment process and activities can support organisation strategies, vision and mission, problems, and developments; 3) identifying how ongoing alignment will be maintained; 4) reaching agreement with other organisational stakeholders about how the SHRD contribution to organisation strategy will be measured (see for example Sims, 2006; Way & Johnson, 2005).
This thesis contributes to this literature by showing the problems inherent in putting such aspirations into practice, and builds on Western studies that show that there is limited evidence of alignment occurring in practice (see for example Anderson, 2009; Wognum, 2001; CIPD, 2007). In this study only a few organisations from the multinational private sector were able to highlight how they maintain and measure ongoing alignment with organisational strategy through their use of internal and external benchmark data and KPIs. One explanation for this may be that these organisations, operating as they do in a context of international competition are more open to influence by HRD practices from other parts of the world and this encourages their organisational progress towards an SHRD approach. Such an interpretation would form part of an explanation of ‘lag’ factors in SHRD in different country contexts whereby practices in developing parts of the world gradually ‘catch up’ with Western dominated practices. On the other hand, however, the comparison in Chapter 5 of findings from Saudi Arabia from this thesis with findings of alignment studies in USA and UK suggest more similarity than differences in the problems that are found. This thesis suggests that measurement and alignment may be more problematic, dynamic and processual than the process suggested in much of the literature and current approaches underestimate the challenges involved.

**Strategic HRD value and evaluation:** This thesis also contributes by highlighting a number of limitations in the literature about strategic measurement and SHRD evaluation and by showing the need for new approaches to be considered. The SHRD literature highlights the need to value and evaluate organisation strategy (see for example Garavan, 2007; Anderson, 2007). It establishes the expectation that HR professionals and CEO managers should agree on the expected HRD outcomes of the organisational strategy, and should measure the actual result against the expectations to assess the contribution that SHRD has made to organisation strategy (see for example Semler, 1997). However, it gives very few clues about how this might be achieved; indeed studies undertaken in the UK and USA suggest a lack of consensus about measurement priorities and practices (Anderson, 2007; O’Driscoll (2005).

This thesis highlights the pervasive influence of traditional approaches to HRD measurement which focus on individual outcomes and programmes and employee capability measurement. It can be argued that these measurements focus on the merit of the training and not the value
of worth of the training to the organisation strategy; they are measures of HRD functional efficiency (and sometimes its effectiveness) but they do not address issues of strategic contribution at an organisational level.

This thesis highlights the lack of appropriate models of measurement and evaluation at a strategic level in the current literature. It highlights the difficulties of embedding strategic measures and indicators into organisational processes. Strategic measures have to be organisationally relevant, aligned, and actionable and have a capacity for longitudinal tracking. This thesis demonstrates, however, that the current literature about strategic HRD and evaluation inadequately highlights that different organisations may require different sets of measures to reflect their different strategic drivers and requirements. In considering the experiences and views of both senior line managers as well as HRD specialists this thesis also highlights how the current literature underestimates the important linkages between the processes of strategic measuring, communicating and management of HRD processes.

6.5.2 Contribution to practice

The literature recommends that HR professionals work with CEO managers to translate their strategy into action and then translate it to other levels with participation of all individuals. The HR professional is recommended to design policies and strategy based on the organisational strategy and stakeholders’ expectations. This participation enables the organisation to assess its past and current and future weakness and provide current and future learning and development that is aligned with strategic priorities. Most of HRD role in Saudi Arabia focuses on the satisfaction assessment, employee capability, operational level and training programmes. Focusing on the individual level only may not guarantee that the HRD role will achieve organisational strategy (such as customer satisfaction or profit) or stakeholders’ expectation (such as reduce the cost) in the strategic level. A fuller appreciation of the potential contribution of SHRD by general and line managers is required if a more strategic approach to HRD is to be achieved.
6.6 Future Studies

This thesis focuses only on the strategic level of vertical alignment (senior executives or managers) and shows a gap between theory and practice regarding strategic measurement and evaluation of HRD. Further research might address the issues as they are understood in foreign-owned multinational organisations operating in Saudi Arabia and by line managers and training specialists in middle management or junior management positions or employees. Further research into strategic measurement and evaluation of HRD in organisations in other Arabic countries would also be appropriate.
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Moule and Goodman (2009) *Nursing Research: An Introduction is an invaluable resource to both students at upper undergraduate and graduate level as well practicing nurses undertaking research*. London. SAGE.


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References


Appendix A Back translation of the interview questions

The following six questions were used in O’Driscoll et al. (2005) and Anderson (2007) studies.

| Value of strategic learning interview question (O’Driscoll et al., 2005 and Anderson, 2007) |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Question 1 | How does the learning function provide strategic value to your organisation? |
| Question 2 | How does the learning function’s strategic activity translate into business results? |
| Question 3 | What is the learning investment process and your involvement in it? |
| Question 4 | How do you know the learning function is maintaining ongoing alignment with your strategic business needs? |
| Question 5 | How do you measure the learning function’s value contribution to your organisation? |
| Question 6 | How do you know the learning function is performing as efficiently as possible? |

Those questions were translated from English to Arabic. The following translation shows these six questions in Arabic Language:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>س1</th>
<th>كيف تقوم وظيفة التعلم بتوفير قيمة إستراتيجية لمنظمةك؟</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>س2</td>
<td>كيف يترجم النشاط الاستراتيجي لمنظمة التعلم إلى نتائج تتعلق بالأعمال؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>س3</td>
<td>ما هي عملية الاستثمار في التعلم ومشاركتك فيها؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>س4</td>
<td>كيف تعلم أن وظيفة التعلم تتعامل على تواصل مستمر مع احتياجات منظمتك الإستراتيجية المتعلقة بالإعمال؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>س5</td>
<td>كيف تقيس مساهمة قيمة وظيفة التعلم في منظمتك؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>س6</td>
<td>كيف تعلم أن وظيفة التعلم تعمل بالقصي كفاءة ممكنة؟</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those questions were translated back from Arabic to English. The following questions show the final translation

| Final back translation of strategic Value of learning interview questions |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Question 1 | How could learning function provide strategic value to your organisation? |
| Question 2 | How could the strategic activity of learning be translated into business outcomes? |
| Question 3 | How do you define the investment process in learning and how far is your contribution to it? |
| Question 4 | How could you know that learning maintains ongoing congruence with the needs of your organisation's strategic needs related to business? |
| Question 5 | How could you measure the contribution of learning in your organisation? |
| Question 6 | Do you know the learning function is performing as efficiently as possible? |
Appendix B Letter from Supervisor

Valerie Anderson  
Department of HRMM  
Direct Line 00 44 23 92 844029  
Email valerie.anderson@port.ac.uk

To Whom It May Concern

15 May 2008

Dear Sir,

I am writing to state that Mr Faisal Albawardy is a PhD student at the University of Portsmouth. Mr Albawardy is researching into the value attached to learning by training specialists and senior managers in organisations in Saudi Arabia.

Mr Albawardy’s research involves conducting interviews with senior managers and senior training and development managers in organisations in Saudi Arabia. It will be very helpful if you will allow him to conduct interviews in your organisation. He will be able to provide you with more details about his research.

These interviews will be critical to his research activity and so I ask you to help him with his interviews if this is possible.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Valerie Anderson  
PhD Supervisor  
Principal Lecturer
Appendix C initial evaluation of the first set of interview questions by Saudi expert

Dear / 

I am working now on this project to get the PhD thesis titled: ‘evaluating learning: a comparative analysis of the value attached to learning in public and multinational private sector organisations in Saudi Arabia’. The aim of this research is to investigate the value attached to learning in multinational private and public organisations in Saudi Arabia. This research includes three objectives:

- To examine the differences involved in valuing and evaluating learning in the workplace, rather than training.
- To establish the extent to which the value attached to learning in the public sector is different from that in the multinational private sector in Saudi Arabia.
- To examine any differences in the value attached to learning by specialists and senior managers of organisations in Saudi Arabia.

Based on these objectives the focus of this study is on the General managers in the public and private sectors, and HRD in the public sector and private sector in Saudi Arabia.

The literature review affirm to evaluate the interview questions before start in collecting the data from specialist and because your subject and your contribution to the literature review in HRD

It will be great help to the research if you agree to evaluate the enclosed interview questions to make sure that it is understood from the participants.

Faisal Albawardy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address in United Kingdom</th>
<th>Permanent address in Saudi Arabia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 THELIGHT HOUSE GUNHARF QUAYS</td>
<td>Institute of Public Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PORTSMOUTH, HAMPSHIRE PO13TJ</td>
<td>Riyadh, Saudi Arabia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00447920065572</td>
<td>P.O. : 205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>00966502030000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


e- mail famb20022002@hotmail.com
Appendices

Appendix D letter to Saudi manager to invite them to participate in the pilot study

Dear Manager
I am working now on this project to get the PhD thesis titled: ‘evaluating learning: a comparative analysis of the value attached to learning in public and multinational private sector organisations in Saudi Arabia’. The aim of this research is to investigate the value attached to learning in multinational private and public organisations in Saudi Arabia. This research includes three objectives:

- To examine the differences involved in valuing and evaluating learning in the workplace, rather than training.
- To establish the extent to which the value attached to learning in the public sector is different from that in the multinational private sector in Saudi Arabia.
- To examine any differences in the value attached to learning by specialists and senior managers of organisations in Saudi Arabia.

It will be great help to the research if you will agree to be one of the participants in the study. You will be asked following six questions:

How does the learning function provide strategic value to your organisation?
How does the learning function’s strategic activity translate into business results?
What are the learning investment process and your involvement in it?
How do you know the learning function is maintaining ongoing alignment with your strategic business needs?
How do you measure the learning function’s value contribution to your organisation?
How do you know the learning function is performing as efficiently as possible?

If you don’t mind I hope you accept that I do the interview with you within two weeks from now and I will call you to arrange the suitable time for you. Moreover, I would like from you to read the enclosed letter and affirm the informed consent.

Faisal Albawardy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address in United Kingdom</th>
<th>Permanent address in Saudi Arabia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 THELIGHT HOUSE GUNHARF QUAYS PORTSMOUTH, HAMPSHIRE PO13TJ 00447920065572</td>
<td>Institute of Public Administration Riyadh, Saudi Arabia P.O. : 205 00966502030000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix E Letter from the General Managers of the IPA

الموضوع تسجيل مهمة بحث إجراء مقابلة

معاليكم

سلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد

أهود معاليكم أن الاستاذ/ فصل بن عبد الله البواردي عضو هيئة التدريب في المعهد، المثبت للدكتوراه في مجال إدارة المحاربة البشرية، يعمل حالياً على جمع البيانات لرسالة الدكتوراه بعنوان "القيمة الاستراتيجية للتعلم: تحليل مقارن بين القطاع العام والقطاع الخاص في المملكة.

ولإنجاز رسالة الدكتوراه فإن الاستاذ/ فصل يحتاج إلى إجراء مقابلة مع معاليكم وموافقة مع مدير عام.

أمل من معاليكم الموافقة على إجراء تلك المقابلات، وسيقوم الاستاذ/ البواردي بالتنسيق مع مدير مكتبة لتخصيص الوقت المناسب لإجراءها.

شكراً وتقدير.

مدير عام معهد الإدارة العامة

عبدالرحمن بن عبد الله الشقوي
KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

NUMBER: 5723

DATE: 5 JAMADALTHNIA 1429H

SUBJECT: TO HELP THE RESEARCHER TO CARRY OUT INTERVEWS

Dear excellence

I would like to inform you that Mr. Faisal Albawardy is one of the Institute of Public Administration staff, and he has a scholarship to study for his PHD in the field of Human Resources Management. He is working now on collecting data for his thesis “Strategic Value of Learning: a comparative analysis between public and multinational private sector organisations in Saudi Arabia”

To achieve his PHD, Mr. Albawardy needs to conduct two interviews in your organisation; one with you yourself and the other with the HRD manager.

I hope that you agree to allow these interviews to take place. Mr. Albawardy will liaise with your secretary to determine a suitable time for you and your HRD manager. You will find with this letter a letter from Mr. Albawardy about his situation and the interview questions.

We appreciate your cooperation.

Please accept my gratitude and appreciation.

GENERAL MANAGER OF THE IPA
ABDULRAHMAN BIN ABDULLAH ALSHAGAWI
Appendix F Letter from the Researcher to Main Study Participants

Form - 1

Dear Manager

I am working now on this project to get the PhD thesis titled: ‘Strategic Value of Learning: a comparative study between public and multinational private sector organisations in Saudi Arabia’. The aim of this research is to investigate the value attached to learning in multinational private and public organisations in Saudi Arabia. This research includes three objectives:

To examine the differences involved in valuing and evaluating learning in the workplace, rather than training.

To establish the extent to which the value attached to learning in the public sector is different from that in the multinational private sector in Saudi Arabia.

To examine any differences in the value attached to learning by specialists and senior managers of organisations in Saudi Arabia.

It will be great help to me if you agree to be one of the participants in the study.

You will be asked following questions:

| Q 1 | What is the purpose and what are the objectives of the training and development department? |
| Q2 | What kind of training and development does the Department of Training and Development currently provide for the employees? |
| Q3 | Do you intend to provide any kind of training or development in the future to help your individuals or groups perform their jobs efficiently? |
| Q4 | Do you have any training or development activities provided in the workplace to help the employees carry out their tasks efficiently? |
| Q5 | What procedures are used to know that the training and development provides a contribution to your organisation’s objectives? |
| Q 6 | How is the spending for training and development decided? |
| Q7 | What do you do if you need to do more spending on training and development? |
| Q8 | In spending decisions about training and development, what is the role of the training manager and what is the role of the top managers in the organisation? |
| Q9 | How do you know if the training and development department is as efficient as possible in its work? |
| Q10 | How do you know if the training and development department provides a useful contribution to the organisation’s high objectives? |
| Q11 | How do you ensure that the work of the training and development department is remain connected to the needs and objectives of the organisation? |
If you don’t mind I hope you accept that I do the interview with you within two weeks from now and I will call you to arrange the suitable time for you. Moreover, I would like from you to read the enclosed letter and affirm the informed consent.

- The following point will be insured:
- This research will assure the Anonymity and confidentiality.
- All information provided will be used for research purposes only.

The data to be collected and analyzed will be used exclusively for research purposes, so only the researcher and the supervisor will see this data during the research period and then it will be deleted.

Name: Faisal Abdullah Albawardy
Address in UK: 2 THE LIGHTHOUSE GUNHARF QUAYS, PORTSMOUTH, HAMPSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM, PO13TJ
Telephone 00447920065572 in the UK and 00966502030000 in Saudi Arabia
Permanent address: Institute of Public Administration, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, P.O. : 205

Education: PhD student, Human Resource Management., Business school
Appendix G Informed Consent Document

Dear General Manager of the Organisation,

I am working now on this project to get the PhD thesis titled: ‘evaluating learning: a comparative analysis of the value attached to learning in public and multinational private sector organisations in Saudi Arabia’. The aim of this research is to investigate the value attached to learning in multinational private and public organisations in Saudi Arabia. This research includes three objectives:

- To examine the differences involved in valuing and evaluating learning in the workplace, rather than training.
- To establish the extent to which the value attached to learning in the public sector is different from that in the multinational private sector in Saudi Arabia.
- To examine any differences in the value attached to learning by specialists and senior managers of organisations in Saudi Arabia.
- This research will involve one General Managers and one HR professional in your organisation to be participant in this interview. They will be asked the enclosed questions.

It will be great help to the research if you will agree that your organisation to be one of the participants through doing interview with the General Managers and the HR professional.

The following point will be assured:

This research will assure the Anonymity and confidentiality.

All information provided will be used for research purposes only.

The data to be collected and analyzed will be used exclusively for research purposes, so only the researcher and the supervisor will see this data during the research period and then it will be deleted.

According the previous reasons, I would like from you to affirm the following consent letter. This research study has been reviewed and approved by the faculty research committee, Portsmouth University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects’ rights, I can contact the Facility Research Committee Dr. Valerie Anderson and Proff. Charlotte Rayner.

Faisal Albawardy, Principal Investigator
Address in UK: 2 THELIGHTHOUSE GUNHARF QUAYS, PORTSMOUTH, HAMPSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM, PO13TJ, 00447920065572

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Project name: Evaluating learning: a comparative analysis of the value attached to learning in public and multinational private sector organisations in Saudi Arabia

The study I am being asked to participate in is a PhD thesis designed to develop a better understanding of the value attached to learning in the organisations in Saudi Arabia. The data will be gathered between April and July of the year 2008.

As a participant in this project I will be interviewed and this interview will take place for about one and one hour. If necessary and I agree, the interview may be audio taped. Furthermore, the interview notes will be used for the research purpose. The information and recorded data will be deleted until after the thesis is assessed and will therefore be deleted.

If I experience any distress due to my involvement in this study, I can withdraw from this participation. I understand that participation will not affect my employment status.

For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, I can contact the Facility Research Committee Dr. Valerie Anderson and Proff. Charlotte Rayner.

I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

_____ Yes, I voluntarily agree to participate and to be audio taped in this study and my organisation does not have any specific procedure required for ethical permission to be granted.

_____ Yes, I voluntarily agree to participate without to be audio taped in this study and my organisation does not have any specific procedure required for ethical permission to be granted.

Signature of Participant                      Date

Name: Faisal Abdullah Albawardy
Appendix H Nvivo software illustrate the number of HR professional, CEO senior managers, public sector and private sector who highlighted different themes (organization outcomes, measurement problems, reaction measures and employee capability) about T&D contribution.

The quotations of the HR professional and CEO managers from public sector and private sector about one of the themes “the measurement problems” are shown in appendix J.
Appendix J Examples from Nvivo software illustrate the coding of senior managers, HR professional, public sector and private sector organisations interviews to one of the theme “Problems of Measuring the Contribution of HRD to the Organisation’s Strategies”.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>CEO Private sector</th>
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<tr>
<td>&lt;Internals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dealing with resources is the biggest challenge for us. This difficulty occurs by measuring the achievement in this respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;Internals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can measure the level of the technical training programs but it is difficult to measure the general ones in terms of their value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference 2 - 2.08% Coverage</td>
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<tr>
<td>But the problem that overtook us in the past was that when we promised our salespeople financial incentives after receiving the necessary training, we found an increase in the sales rate and this took place in all branches of the bank over the past years and we also noticed that the employees wanted to stay at work after the working hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;Internals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Value is difficult to measure clearly but has come back and says that value comes from the productivity of the person as well as the extent his useful from the session.</td>
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</table>
I believe that measuring such thing is difficult.

Reference 2 - 0.71% Coverage

But the problem is that there are other variables affecting the employees' performance.

I think this is also difficult to measure especially when talking about (the company) which produces products with globally high demand and we are keen to recruit qualified staff with talents and capabilities so as to make certain that our clients are not subject to any kind of loss. But as something concrete I think it is difficult to measure.

It is hard to measure as they found before complaints from some managers that they couldn’t achieve the required results because the weak standard of the employees;
It is not easy to measure the value in a number of specialties as in the field of medicine, for example, where I can say that the use of the telescope has resulted in a considerable increase in the number of operations that have been done successfully and also in a shorter time. It is also difficult to measure the level of its success and link it to the training program since there are some competencies caring only for their self-development.

This is not easy since it often takes long time to make sure that the employee has mastered the required skills.

This is a difficult question to answer if we take into consideration the number of the programs we offer. They are not few, anyway, and the number of the staff members is huge and the programs are not completely technical.

The benefits of the program are not easy to be discovered in a single course since we work in a collaborative organisation which includes departments, employees, system and common goals that can not be realized without the cooperation of all departments.

The benefit and value in the government sector are difficult because we do not focus on the profitability or profit. But we know through the beneficiaries. Where we note an increase in the number of trainees each year and pay attention to evaluation by the trainees on our programs.
## Appendices

### HRD PUBLIC sector

<table>
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We have nothing official with which we can measure the value but I have called for a training course to help measure the impact of training on the employees.

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We admit that we have no proper measurement nor an objective plan according to which we could suggest programs. Furthermore, the majority of the employees are not after more courses nor their benefits, but they are trying to secure other targets.

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This is an easy task when compared with the tasks that can be observed, but there are some other tasks that can not be observed such as supervision in that the impact of training could not be reflected in a short period of time. Rather the supervisor can observe his capacity to organize and accomplish the objectives of his department.

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<td>2.40%</td>
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The benefit provided by the training and development we are difficult to measure it because we train staff to do its work in the future and this confirms that the benefit of the training cannot be obtained within a short period and such talk, even on the prep programs.

<table>
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<th>Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;Internals\HRD PUBLIC\H Public \HRD&gt;</td>
<td>1.36%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

we look for whether reflect attendance the seminars and reflect on the performance and the problem is that it is not changed because of program but because of the behaviour and it has changed because the regulations modified or your supervisors Change and thus is an incentive for staff to do more,
Appendix K  Ethical Review Checklist – Staff and PhD researchers

This checklist should be completed by the researcher (PhD students to have DoS check) and sent to Sharman Rogers who will coordinate Ethics Committee scrutiny.

No primary data collection can be undertaken before the supervisor and/or Ethics Committee has given approval.

If, following review of this checklist, amendments to the proposals are agreed to be necessary, the researcher must provide Sharman with an amended version for scrutiny.

1. What are the objectives of the research project?
   - To examine the differences involved in valuing and evaluating learning in the workplace, rather than training.
   - To establish the extent to which the value attached to learning in the public sector is different from that in the multinational private sector in Saudi Arabia.
   - To examine any differences in the value attached to learning by specialists and senior managers of organisations in Saudi Arabia.

2. Does the research involve NHS patients, resources or staff?
   **NO**
   If YES, it is likely that full ethical review must be obtained from the NHS process before the research can start.

3. Do you intend to collect primary data from human subjects or data that are identifiable with individuals? (This includes, for example, questionnaires and interviews.)
   **YES**
   If you do not intend to collect such primary data then please go to question 14.
   If you do intend to collect such primary data then please respond to ALL the questions 4 through 13. If you feel a question does not apply then please respond with n/a (for not applicable).

4. What is the purpose of the primary data in the dissertation / research project?
   The purpose of the primary data is answering the proposed research objectives.

5. What is/are the survey population(s)?
   This study will interview (40) managers from 20 multinational private and public organisations in Saudi Arabia. So the senior General Manager and the HR professional will be participants from these 20 organisations in Saudi Arabia.
6. How big is the sample for each of the survey populations and how was this sample arrived at?

Ten multinational private organisations and ten public organisations in Saudi Arabia

7. How will respondents be selected and recruited?

20 multinational private and public organisations in Saudi Arabia will be selected as follows:

- A random sample of 10 multinational private organisations from the top 100 Saudi companies by revenue, which may be under Saudi or shared ownership (51% of Saudi investment and 49% non-Saudi) will initially be selected and approached. If an organisation is unwilling to participate then a further selection from the research population will be made. This process will be repeated until there are ten participating organisations.

- A random sample of 10 public organisations in Saudi Arabia will initially be selected and approached. If an organisation is unwilling to participate then a further selection from the research population will be made. This process will be repeated until there are ten participating organisations.

Then the senior General Manager and the HR professional in these organisation will be the participants in this study, and the following will take place:

- A letter will be sent to each candidate at least one week before the proposed meeting, setting out the purpose of the research and the main interview questions, seeking consent and inviting the person to agree on a time for the interview to take place. (please see form - 2)

- Each interview will be recorded only with the agreement of the interviewee, to whom the following points will be explained:
  - All information provided will be used for research purposes only.
  - The interviewee has the choice to participate or not.
  - The information and recorded data will be kept until after publication.
  - Confidentiality will be ensure (please see part and 11)
  - Anonymity will be ensured as far as possible. (please see part and 12)
Appendices

8. What steps are proposed to ensure that the requirements of informed consent will be met for those taking part in the research? If an Information Sheet for participants is to be used, please attach it to this form. If not, please explain how you will be able to demonstrate that informed consent has been gained from participants.

A letter in English will be sent to each candidate at least one week before the proposed meeting; the interviewee will be asked to sign on a form to clarify that they give written proof about their informed consent. (see form 1)

9. How will data be collected from each of the sample groups?

Semi-structure interview data will be collected from the senior General Manager and the HR professional in the chosen organisations to answer the research objective. Each interview will be recorded only with the agreement of the interviewee. If not the researcher will summarise the answers and note them as fully as possible after the meeting.

10. How will data be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the research?

The data to be collected and analyzed will be used exclusively for research purposes, so only the researcher and the supervisor will see this data during the research period. The transcribed data will be saved on my computer with password. But the document and tapes will be saved in locked room/cabinet. Moreover, the researcher will then keep these transcribed data until after the thesis is assessed and then it will be deleted.

11. How will confidentiality be assured for respondents?

Confidentiality will be ensured. The researcher and the supervisor will see this data during the research period. None of the individual research interviewees will hear or read any data from other participants from the researcher.

12. What steps are proposed to safeguard the anonymity of the respondents?

Anonymity will be ensured as far as possible. I will not share named information from interviews between any of the participating organisations or with any other people. And they will not be mentioned in any part in the research by their name or their organisation names.

The names of participants will not be required in answering any of the research questions.
What is more, the researcher will not mention any of the interviewee by name or
organisation’s name. Moreover, the researcher will use categories to categorize the organisation by using a symbol or type (e.g. organisation A or organisation B) to safeguard the anonymity of the respondent.

13. Are there any risks (physical or other, including reputational) to respondents that may result from taking part in this research?
   
   NO
   
   If YES, please specify and state what measures are proposed to deal with these risks.

14. Are there any risks (physical or other, including reputational) to the researcher or to the University that may result from conducting this research?
   
   NO
   
   If YES, please specify and state what measures are proposed to manage these risks.¹

15. Will any data be obtained from a company or other organisation.

   Yes (For example, information provided by an employer or its employees.
   
   If NO, then please go to question 18.

16. What steps are proposed to ensure that the requirements of informed consent will be met for that organisation? How will confidentiality be assured for the organisation?

   A letter will be sent to the organisation about the research objective. This letter will explain that the researcher will not mention the name of the participant and organisations to guarantee the anonymity, and the researcher will use categories (Organisation A and Organisation B etc) instead of the organisation names.( please see form – 2)

17. Does the organisation have its own ethics procedure relating to the research you intend to carry out?

   The researcher will send a letter to the organisations to get informed consent (please see form -2).

¹ Risk evaluation should take account of the broad liberty of expression provided by the principle of academic freedom. The university’s conduct with respect to academic freedom is set out in section 9.2 of the Articles of Government and its commitment to academic freedom is in section 1.2 of the Strategic Plan 2004-2008.
If YES, the University will require written evidence from the organisation that they have approved the research.

18. Will the proposed research involve any of the following (please put a √ next to ‘yes’ or ‘no’; consult your supervisor if you are unsure):

- Vulnerable groups (e.g. children) ? YES ☐ NO ☑
- Particularly sensitive topics ? YES ☐ NO ☑
- Access to respondents via ‘gatekeepers’ ? YES ☐ NO ☑
- Use of deception ? YES ☐ NO ☑
- Access to confidential personal data ? YES ☐ NO ☑
- Psychological stress, anxiety etc ? YES ☐ NO ☑
- Intrusive interventions ? YES ☐ NO ☑

19. Are there any other ethical issues that may arise from the proposed research?
   No

Details of applicant

The member of staff undertaking the research should sign and date the application, and submit it directly to the Ethics Committee. However, where the researcher is a supervised PhD candidate, the signature of the Director of Studies is also required prior to this form being submitted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approval by Ethics Committee

I/We grant Ethical Approval

FREC

Date

AMENDMENTS

If you need to make changes please ensure you have permission before the primary data collection. If there are major changes, fill in a new form if that will make it easier for
everyone. If there are minor changes then fill in the amendments (next page) and get them signed before the primary data collection begins.
Valerie Anderson

To famb20022002@hotmail.com, Charlotte Rayner

From: Valerie Anderson (Valerie.Anderson@port.ac.uk)

Sent: Wednesday, February 27, 2008 9:59:59 AM

To: famb20022002@hotmail.com; Charlotte Rayner (Charlotte.Rayner@port.ac.uk)

For some good news see the attached email

--Forwarded Message Attachment--
Date: Tue, 26 Feb 2008 15:11:18 +0000
From: Sharman.Rogers@port.ac.uk
To: Valerie.Anderson@port.ac.uk
Subject: Fwd: RE: Faisal Albawardy - ethical review process - E53

Dear Valerie

- following resubmission of Case E53, I can now confirm approval of Faisal Albawardy's application.

Best wishes

Sharman
Appendices

CHANGES TO ETHICS PERMISSION

VERSION: _____
Please describe the nature of the change and impact on ethics:

Please print the name of: I/We grant Ethical Approval

Researcher ______________________ FREC ______________________
Signed: ______________________ (Signed) ______________________

Date ______________________ Date ______________________

(please cut and paste the next section, together with the heading at the top of this page, as many times as required)

VERSION: _____
Please describe the nature of the change and impact on ethics: