Staff Perceptions of how Human Resource Management Practices influence Organisational Performance: Mediating roles of Organisational Culture, Employees’ Commitment and Employee Retention in Bahrain Private Universities

By

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BSc, MBA

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DECLARATION
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Date 08-02-2016

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<td>AC</td>
<td>Affective Commitment</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMO</td>
<td>Ability, Motivation And Opportunity</td>
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<td>BARS</td>
<td>Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scales</td>
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<td>BOS</td>
<td>Behavioural-Observation Scales</td>
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<td>CC</td>
<td>Continuance Commitment</td>
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<td>CEOs</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officers</td>
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<td>CFA</td>
<td>Confirmatory Factor Analysis</td>
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<td>CFI</td>
<td>Comparative Fit Index</td>
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<td>EPC</td>
<td>Educational Projects Company</td>
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<td>GRS</td>
<td>Graphic Rating Scales</td>
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<td>H</td>
<td>Hypothesis</td>
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<td>HERU</td>
<td>Higher Education Reviewing Unit</td>
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<td>HPWP s</td>
<td>High Performance Work Practices</td>
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<td>HPWs</td>
<td>High Performance Work Practices</td>
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<td>HR</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
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<td>HRM</td>
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<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
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<td>IWE</td>
<td>Islam Work Ethic</td>
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<td>JIT</td>
<td>Just in Time</td>
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<td>LCs</td>
<td>Learning Centres</td>
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<td>MLE</td>
<td>Maximum Likelihood Estimation</td>
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<td>NC</td>
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<td>OC</td>
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<td>OCBs</td>
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<td>OCS</td>
<td>Organisational Commitment System</td>
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<td>PM</td>
<td>Personnel Management</td>
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<td>QAAET</td>
<td>Quality Assurance Authority of Education And Training</td>
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<td>RBV</td>
<td>Resource Based View</td>
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<td>SEM</td>
<td>Structural Equation Modelling</td>
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<td>SHRM</td>
<td>Strategic Human Resources Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>TLI</td>
<td>Tucker-Lewis Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>TQM</td>
<td>Total Quality Management</td>
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<td>UK</td>
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ABSTRACT

Recently in Bahraini private universities there has been an increased focus on the importance of HR practices. This research examined the link between HR practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance. The research explored staff perceptions of the link directly and also examined the effect of mediating variables – organisational culture, employee commitment and employee retention.

The researcher developed a model, based on an extensive review of the literature and using the resource-based view and contingency theory. Within the model a set of HRM practices and mediators including organisational culture were suggested as determinants of organisational performance. A set of research hypotheses concerning the links between variables were formulated.

Data was gathered using a set of questionnaires to measure staff perceptions. The questionnaires were designed to take cultural considerations into account and the survey was conducted ethically and objectively. The questionnaire survey was targeted at 300 academic and administrative staff employed by five Bahraini private universities. Stratified sampling was used and two hundred and eighty usable responses were received.

The results were analysed to determine the relationship between variables in the model using PLS (Partial Least Squares). SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was used for statistical analysis of the responses to the questionnaire which gave further insights into the use of specific HR practices.

The research findings indicated that there was a direct relationship between HR practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance and this was also mediated by organisational culture, employee retention and employee commitment.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge of HRM by providing new insights into the interplay between adoption of SHRM practices and organisational performance of private universities in a developing country. This contributes to the literature on the effects of HRM on organisational performance, which are currently drawn mainly from a Western context.
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RELATED PUBLICATIONS BY THE RESEARCHER


CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 HRM Practices and Organisational Performance

In a world in which the impact and challenges which have been brought about by a move towards globalization and “free markets” economics there has been a rise in the attention which has been given to the impact of Human Resource Management (HRM) on organisational performance. Accordingly, this has led to a significant increase in terms of the number of research studies in this area. The purpose of these studies has predominantly been to examine the potential contribution of appropriate Human Resources practices in improving organisational performance. A large number of studies have claimed to have identified a correlation between HRM practices and the performance of organisations. (Katou, 2008) but there is still some debate on the validity of the research particularly in relation to how to demonstrate that particular HR practices or groups of HR practices can be shown to have a significant impact on organisational performance and what the most important mechanisms are which are significant in that link. Prominent scholars in this wide area of research have frequently suggested that there is a need to have a better understanding of how Human Resource practices are related to the performance of companies (Becker & Huselid, 1998; Gong et al., 2009; Kazlauskaite et al., 2011).

A number of studies in strategic management (e.g. Porter, 1980; Barney, 1991; Drucker, 1999) contributed to the view that organisational systems of HRM are considered to be one of the most important sources for sustaining the competitive advantage of companies. A common theme in these is that employees have to be seen in terms of the way in which they can be considered to be an important source of competitive advantage (Pfeffer, 1994).
According to Fey et al. (2008), the choice of HRM practices is significant since the company's HR is capable of creating high benefits.

There are a variety of reasons that have had a significant role in highlighting the importance of HRM as an important way in which organisations can gain a competitive advantage, especially the emergence of the resource-based view, the evolution of the concept of competencies, the emergence of the importance of knowledge and its management, and, the emergence of the concepts of human and intellectual capital. These have all led to a changing perception of the value which organisations place on their HR functions (Francis, 2003; Morley et al., 2006; Satwinder Singh et al., 2012).

According to resource-based theory, (sometimes referred to as the Resource-Based View) in strategic management competitive advantage is determined by the following distinctive resources; organisational capabilities and competencies; technological capabilities; and the intangible assets of knowledge, skills and expertise of staff. In addition, the Resource Based View (RBV) supports the view that it is important to build capacity for the development and nurturing of core skills of staff and at the same time consider how to ensure that attitudes and values that support this are developed. (Abraham & Cohen, 2005; Kozlenkova et al., 2014). Also the resource based view also recognises the increased problems associated with challenges cause by imitation by competitors of technological and material resources advantage.

The evolution of the concept of building organisational capacity to support competencies contributed to establishing the relationship between HRM and competitive advantage. Most studies in the field of business indicate that the competitiveness of organisations depends on the extent to which the business not only exhibits competitive advantage in the present but that the business is also agile and able to maintain this advantage in a future
which is subject to rapidly changing challenges and opportunities. This ability to be agile requires the organisation to carefully examine particular core or distinctive competencies which strategic management (of which HR should be considered a part of) must support. These may also be defined as a combination or set of distinctive skills which again may be represented by tangible or intangible assets of special nature. Ability to adapt to high-level technology changes and routines which can be easily adapted to a changing environment form the cornerstone of competition and the ability of the organisation to achieve sustained competitive advantage (Lado & Wilson, 1994). This concept led to a focus on changing the basis of the role and function of the HR Department both in terms of how it functions and the expertise within the HR Department to support how it accomplishes its work. Thus the 'administrative' role of the HR Department as typically being a 'personnel management' department was changing to reflect the fact that the HR Department now played a significant role in providing strategic direction within an organisation and consequently the organisation's perception of the HR function shifted from being administrative to being strategic.¹

The concept of organisational knowledge in the resources-based theory confirmed the growing role that needed be played by knowledge in achieving a sustainable competitive edge in organisation, as it represents the strategic assets that help the organisation to survive, especially in a volatile environment (Grant, 1996). The way in which this knowledge is formed, developed and retained became intimately linked with and controlled by the HR department within the organisation, and has an impact on the distinctive

¹ It should be noted, however, that this view may not be universally accepted. In Bahrain HR Departments are still very much associated with administrative processes involved in supporting management in the hiring of staff, dealing with the legal issues or contractual issues related to employee performance and employee relations and ensuring the institution acted within legislation which governed those functions.
performance of the organisation (Hitt, 2001). Therefore, in terms of the developing theories of knowledge management some researchers have asserted that management of both the explicit and tacit knowledge base of the organization is another critical HR function (Chaudhry, 2005) if the organisation is to be better able to achieve sustained competitive advantage.

Thus emergence of the concepts of human and intellectual capital thus has also had a significant impact on the growing interest in the role that may be played by HR to achieve sustainable competitive advantage for the organisation. It is now generally recognised that human capital is of critical importance to any organisation and HR Departments have to be a vital part of investing in that human capital and considering more broadly the strategic management of the organisation to ensure that this investment returns dividends which enhance the organisation's capacity to not only gain competitive advantage but sustain that advantage.

There is no doubt that strategic management theory is completely aligned with the vision of HR as an important source of competitive edge for the organisation (Grant, 1996; Bourne et al., 2013). However, a question still remains for researchers concerning how to demonstrate that link between HR practices and organisational improvement.

1.2 Organisational Culture

Recently, HRM researchers signalled that it is necessary to go further than examining the direct correlation between business strategy and HRM's impact on a company's performance to explore more complex relationships (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Becker & Huselid, 2006). If the premise that there is positive link between HR practices and organisational performance is accepted, the logical corollary is that research must
investigate why this is the case and thus more attention must be given to explaining the link by investigating the key characteristics and conditions which optimize the ability of HR to make an impact on both specific projects within an organisation and overall organisational performance. This initiated the question “which features of HRM have the greatest impact and what is the causal connection in the link”? Many studies (Wright and Gardner, 2003; Wright et al. 2005) place the emphasis on the presence of an administrative set of practice, which are sometimes rather inappropriately described as “high performance practices”. The more these are present the higher performance becomes. This reinforces the idea that “strong” HR systems may be what matters (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004).

Although these studies were promising, they failed to fully explain how the link between HR practices and performance arises. In particular, they failed to examine in detail the mechanism by which demonstrate the way in which HR practices may influence employee's attitudes towards commitment, retention and the possible influence of such attitudes and behaviour on performance. Some studies have tried to explain the relationship by emphasising the important role of HR departments in supporting the best utilisation and development of skills and flexibility of staff, (Acton and Golden, 2003) others focus on performance incentives and the development of robust appraisal and consequent implementation of appropriate systems for incentive and reward. (Behery and Paton, 2007) A number of researchers advocate the view that a core variable is the employee's commitment, implying that the focus should really be on "high commitment HR practices” (Pfeffer, 1998).

Given the above discussion on linking competitive advantage to HR practices the main emphasis is clearly on the role of employees and their development. Thus organisational culture and the attitudes and behaviours of staff are important considerations.
Therefore, it was contended that HR practices should be focussed on enhancing commitment and be reflected in the employee's responses to indicate this commitment, which could be demonstrated by examining overall retention, and satisfaction. Whatever model is advocated, there are assumptions rarely explored in the literature and research on HRM and performance on the impact of HR practices on employees (Theriou and Chatzoglou, 2009). Organisational culture was therefore seen to be an important area for research and, in particular, could potentially provide a better explanation of the link between HR practices and organisational performance.

HRM practices clearly have an important role to play in organisational culture as it involves the people who work for the organisation, who embrace and develop particular cultures within the organisation; hence, any desired change in the culture of the organisation has to be made through and by the people (Bae & Lawler, 2000; Harney and Jordan, 2008). HRM policies significantly impact the employees and this will eventually impact the organisational performance. Human resource decisions are important not only in ensuring that an organisation hires personnel that who can identify with and be assimilated into the organisation's culture. It has an ongoing function to enhance shared social knowledge between employees and ensure awareness of organisational goals (Ouchi, 1983). An interdependent relationship exists between HRM policies and procedures and organisational culture, especially in human resource policy areas such as hiring and promotion of staff, training and staff development, compensation and appropriate award, and systems used for the appraisal or evaluation of employees. These all have significant impacts on organisational culture (Theriou and Chatzoglou, 2014; Earle, 2003). In particular, in the context of this research as will be discussed in more detail within the thesis, the role of staff commitment and staff retention in Bahraini private universities have been identified as potentially significant mediating variables.
Therefore, in addition to investigating the direct link between HRM practices and organisational performance, this study attempts to examine the link between HRM practices and organisational performance among Bahraini private universities and its specific relations with organisational culture and within that the influence of commitment, and retention as mediating variables. The relationship of these variables with organisational performance will be discussed. As Wright and Gardner noted:

"One of the first issues that must be settled in the effort to understand how HR practices impact performance is to theorize the means through which this relationship occurs, in essence specifying the intervening variables between the measures of HR practices and firm performance." (Wright and Gardner, 2000: p.4)

In the light of this comment, many scholars have suggested that there needs to be more investigation of the ‘black box’ and this study contributes to that goal (Gardner et al. 2001; Purcell et al., 2003; Harney and Jordan, 2008). This study will specifically attempt to do so through undertaking an empirical investigation of the perceptions of staff working in private Bahraini universities with respect to the different factors that form part of the existing models of the link between HR and organisational culture.

1.3 Context of the Study - Bahrain Private Universities

This study is conducted in Bahrain and it focuses on the private universities located in Bahrain, hence, the study’s sample encompasses five private universities. Previous studies showed that some Bahrain private universities achieve success, while others fail in this endeavour. This is evident in the differing performances of institutions to meet the stringent requirements of the Higher Education Council in Bahrain which is seeking to implement robust systems to evaluate the quality of institutions and more directly in the difference in performance of institutions to gain competitive advantage in a limited market
in terms of attracting students. Both successful and unsuccessful universities are working in the same environment and have broadly the same financial resources and revenue streams and must adhere to the same requirements of the national authority for qualifications and quality assurance of education and training (which is the authority that regulates and supervises all universities in Bahrain). Based on the resource-based view, the success of a university/institution is believed to primarily depend on the quality of its human resources, and therefore, it is implicitly recognised in the literature that human resource capacity is at the core of any successful performance. There is very little literature specifically dealing with HRM practices in the Kingdom of Bahrain though more exists which covers the Gulf region (Ali 1990; Bourma et.al, 2003; Bjork, 1993; Al-Buraey, 1988). It is important to note that it is a mistake to assume that HRM practices are uniform across the Gulf region. In the very limited references to Human Resource managers in Bahrain, the impression is given that they are preoccupied with a variety of transactional or administrative issues. However, the evidence to support this is not strong. These observations are generally based as noted above on observations of HR practices in the Gulf region generally and also the authors cited tend to comment very subjectively on practices – often biased towards their own individual's work experience in Bahrain. Thus, the basis for concluding that many of the HR departments in Bahrain universities are still playing a minor role in this domain is flawed and very subjective. In addition the publications are now very dated and fail to take account of the fact that many private universities are making a dedicated effort to integrate human resources into their core operations (Mellahi and Budhwar, 2010). In addition it should be noted that the author of this thesis is a senior HR manager employed by one of the major private universities in Bahrain and has personal experience of the rapidly changing HR practices which are now being adopted by many organisations in Bahrain.
Bahrain is chosen as a context to study the relationships in this study for two reasons. First, there is an increasing interest among scholars in the study of cross-national differences in HRM practices (Rowley & Benson, 2002), and there are some discussions on whether differences in HRM among or between different regions would be minimized due to globalization and its relative impact on the organisational performance (Lui et al., 2004). This study contributes to the research literature through examining the general literature and extending this to a different context. The study helps to supplement existing literature through examining the links between the implementation of HRM practices and the performance of an organisation which operate in the context of a developing country.

Second, Bahrain recently witnessed unexpected developments in the Bahraini private universities which led to a transformation of the HR function from traditional personnel management to modern HR management and that provides an opportunity to explore the possible emergent factors that serve as the antecedents of HRM in the Bahraini organisations and which are currently driving change. Change was prompted significantly by a government led initiative to implement a review of its educational provision with the ultimate aim of driving up the quality of the educational institutions operating in Bahrain. Quality Assurance Agency for Education and Training in Bahrain. Available at: http://www.4icu.org/institutions/659.htm) The Higher Education Council (HEC) through the establishment of the Higher Education Review Unit (HERU) developed and implemented a complex series of programme and institutional reviews and participation in these was mandatory for all higher education providers. The overall aim of these reviews was to improve the quality of education and they required institutions to critically examine all aspects of the way in which they operated - including the manner in which the HR department managed and assured the quality and development of the university's staffing resource. This prompted a more rigorous examination of the relationship between HRM
and organisational performance. However, the literature that examines this phenomenon in Bahrain is quite limited. Studies of HR policies, if any, are limited to studying the effect of individual policy on performance. For example, researchers may find some studies (e.g., Hasan, 2011) on employees’ satisfaction, or studies on job evaluation, or individual HRM practice assessment in the Bahraini public or private sector. Hashim (2010) has also researched HRM practices on organisational commitment from an Islamic perspective (Hashim, 2010). This study, however, is far larger in scope and investigates the effect of HRM practices in the context of Bahraini organisational culture which provides an important contribution to the literature which seeks to examine a cross-national examination of HRM practices in different countries. This in turn assists research into refining a more general model or framework that incorporates cultural considerations into the relationship between HRM practices and performance. Moreover, findings of the study may prove to be a source of useful knowledge that may have practical implications for the HRM practice in other developing countries.

1.3.1 Cultural considerations

The context in which private universities in Bahrain operate differs significantly from the context in which university education operates in other countries and some of these differences will have a direct impact on how Human Resource Departments in Bahrain operate. A significant growth of private universities, increase in choices for students within and the sector and fierce competition between university as a lack of suitably qualified academic staff and high turnover of staff (with consequently high costs for staff replacement), have forced universities into a situation where the competition for suitably qualified academic staff is very aggressive. (Deghady, 2008). As a consequence, it is crucial to important to address the question of how HRM practices impact on the
performance of an organisation. There is a need to understand in Bahraini private universities how the HR function makes a beneficial difference to their organization and to understand that fully requires a consideration of the cultural influences which impact on the context in which organisations in Bahrain function - particularly those that directly relate to attitudes and approaches to work.

According to many studies, Bahrainis are described as 'high in power distance' which means Bahrainis accept hierarchies in which everyone has a place without the need for justification (Mellahi, 2000; Ali, 1993). They are also described as high in ‘uncertainty avoidance’ As Mellahi (2000) explains, this is reflected in Bahraini society in the way in which Bahrainis try to deal with situations which potentially could cause anxiety by making efforts to minimize uncertainty. Mellahi (2000) further notes that a characteristic of people in cultures with high uncertainty avoidance is that they have a tendency to be more emotional; and thus “they try to minimize the occurrence of unknown and unusual circumstances and to proceed with careful changes through step by step planning and through implementing rules, laws and regulations” (Mellahi, 2000; Ali, 1993). Bahrainis are also highly collectivist within specific groups (tribe or extended family) and on the other hand highly individualist with the out-group (non-kin and guest workers). They deal with the 'out-group' quite differently from the 'in-group'. Thus, for example, Ali (1993) stated that Bahraini nationals attract the best remuneration packages followed by Americans and Europeans and other Arabic nationals. Broadly speaking Filipinos, and Koreans attract lower salaries and, at the lowest salaries are paid to Indian subcontinent nationals (Ali, 1993). The interaction between managers and employees is also influenced by Islamic practices. One particular example of this is that on at least 2 occasions each day Muslim workers and managers meet and pray together irrespective of managerial position, status or influence (Mellahi, 2010). In addition, the impact of Islamic religious observance is also seen in the period of
Ramadan and this clearly has implications for HR management and must be taken into account in terms of HR procedures (Hashim, 2010). In addition, due to oil, the standard of living in Bahrain is very high compared to other developing countries, and Bahraini employees are usually selective in terms of the positions they choose. This has led to overdependence on expatriates and imposed different requirements regarding attitudes like commitment and behaviours influencing retention which need to be investigated in this context. Taking into consideration that there is an increasing interest among scholars in the study of cross-national differences of HRM, there is some discussion on whether differences in HRM among different regions would be bridged due to globalisation and its relative impact on company performance.

Without doubt the distinguishing characteristics of Bahraini culture, some examples of which are given above, affect Bahraini organisational culture in private universities and will have a role in shaping the relationship between HRM practices and organisational functioning. Cultural issues may have an impact on HRM in Bahrain so it is important to clearly be aware that these need to be taken into account in any study of organisational culture or involving HRM performance-related issues. These will be discussed in detail in Chapter III of this thesis.

1.4 Rationale for the Study

To the best knowledge of the researcher, no studies in Bahrain have provided a thorough examination of the link between HRM practices and performance and generally very little published on HRM in an educational context. Therefore, this study examines HR practitioners’ perception of the role of HR practices in improving Bahraini universities’ performance. In addition, studies in countries other than USA or UK, and specifically studies for human resource managers in higher education are rare. According to Julius:
“Worthwhile publications and related literature designed solely for practitioners in higher education are rare” Julius (2000, p.50).

Results of this study will address the gap in the literature, and may provide leaders in higher education with new knowledge related to the value-added strategic approach to HR and its applicability to higher education in Bahrain. Accordingly, the researcher encounters two alternatives. The first alternative is to accept the assumption that HRM practices are universalistic which has not indicated by the literature so far and as discussed above does not take into account any unique factors which are at work in Bahrain nor the cultural dimension which impacts on HR practices in the country. The second alternative, which is the approach adopted in this study, is to empirically test this relationship in the Bahraini environment, taking into account the potential impact of any special features that differentiate it from other countries.

1.5  Research Aims, Objectives and Research Questions

1.5.1  Aims

The main aim of this study is to empirically examine staff perception of how human resource management practices are related to organisational performance within their university. In addition, the research tests the mediating roles of organisational culture, employee commitment, and employee retention in Bahrain private universities. This study is consistent with addressing concerns which have prompted increasing attention being given to the importance of enhancing performance of the universities that operate in a competitive environment. Specifically, this will contribute to literature establishing how staff perceive that HRM practices are linked to improving performance of Bahrain private universities.
In this study the link between HRM practices and organisational performance in the Bahrain private universities will be investigated through university staff perceptions in two ways: the direct and indirect relation between HRM practices and perceived performance. In the direct relation, this study will examine the effect empirically without considering any mediating variable. This is addressed through an exploration of the first hypothesis of the research.

In the indirect relation, the researcher will use HR outcomes which have the potential to mediate the relationship between HRM practices and staff perceptions of performance - the mediation approach. These two approaches have been most commonly applied in most of the relevant studies, (e.g., Fey et al., 2008; Yesmin, 2008). The mediation approach will be addressed through an examination of the remaining hypotheses - these address the mediation relationship of employee commitment, employee retention and organisational culture and organisational performance. Finally, the inter-relationship between these mediating factors needs to be examined.

These are examined through a rigorous quantitative approach using structured equation modelling (SEM) to analyse the data gathered from an extensive questionnaire survey of staff working in the private higher education sector in Bahrain. All of this will be informed by relevant theory from a detailed literature review of the subject. In addition, the data collected from the questionnaire survey provides a basis for a closer examination of the 'black box' between HRM practices and organisational performance and the results will be analysed to provide conclusions on the role that employee commitment and retention, and organisational culture play as mediating variables.
1.5.2 Objectives

The main objectives of study are the following:

1. To review the literature related to HRM practices and organisational performance.
2. To build a study model that relates the way in which HRM practices is linked to perceived organisational performance, including the variables (employee commitment, employee retention, and organisational culture) that mediate the relationship.
3. To empirically test and validate the study model within a selected group of Bahraini private universities.
4. To provide and offer implications and recommendations for theory and practice based on the results of this research and note the limitations of the approach and its context in dealing with staff perceptions.

1.5.3 Research Questions

The following research questions are stated as being important to achieve the study's aims and objectives:

1. In the context of Bahraini private universities, to what extent do staff perceive HRM practices have a direct relationship to organisational performance within their institutions?

2. In the context of Bahraini private universities, do these other variables that lie between HRM and perceived organisational performance (mediating variables) partially or fully mediate the relationship between staff HRM practices and staff perception of organisational performance?
3. To what extent do HRM practices in Bahraini private universities have a direct relationship with staff perceptions of the mediating variables?

4. In the context of Bahraini private universities, do staff perceive that the mediating variables of employee commitment, employee retention and organisational culture are related to organisational performance?

5. Do staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that organisational culture directly relates to other two mediating variables (employee commitment and employee retention)?

1.5.4 Study Hypotheses

To fit in with the quantitative approach methodology adopted to investigate the links between the variables examined in this research the research questions have been formally formulated and presented as five main hypotheses, where each of the main hypotheses from 2-5 is divided into two sub hypotheses. This can be graphically illustrated as follows:
Thus the study will test the validity of the hypotheses which are stated as follows:

**H1:** Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that there is a direct, positive and significant relationship between HRM practices and organisational performance.

**H2:** Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that employee commitment mediates the relationship between HRM practices and organisational performance.

**H2a:** Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that HRM practices directly, positively and significantly are related to employee commitment.

**H2b:** Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that employee commitment directly, positively and significantly are related to organisational performance.

**H3:** Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that employee retention mediates the relationship between HRM practices and organisational performance.

**H3a:** Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that HRM practices directly, positively and significantly are related to employee retention.

**H3b:** Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that employee retention directly, positively and significantly are related to organisational performance.

**H4:** Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that organisational culture mediates the relationship between HRM practices and organisational performance.

**H4a:** Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that HRM practices directly, positively and significantly are related to organisational culture.

**H4b:** Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that organisational culture directly, positively and significantly are related to organisational performance.

**H5:** Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that organisational culture is directly and positively related to the mediation variables; employee commitment and employee retention.

**H5a:** Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that organisational culture directly, positively, and significantly is related to employee commitment.

**H5b:** Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that organisational culture directly, positively and significantly is related to employee retention.

### 1.6 Design of the Study

This study applied an assessment tool developed by the researcher which was based on a careful examination and synthesis of several similar tools used by other scholars to further
understand the value-added approach to delivery of HR services in the field of higher education. The questionnaire survey resulted in 280 responses from staff employed in Bahraini private universities.

An important consideration was not only to design assessment instruments which accurately examined HR practices but also to look at organisational performance measures. These are generally seen to be based on the nature of the sector. Various measures have been proposed and are discussed in the literature review. The approach taken to this is normally to use a number of different variables to measure organisational performance (Chenhall & Lanfield, 2007). These variables defined by the authors as: “effectiveness”, which is a measure of the ability of the organisation to meet all of its objectives; “efficiency”, which is deemed to be high if the organisation is able to use the minimum possible resources in order to achieve its objectives; “development”, which measures the extent to which the organisation is able to react to change and in particular to be able to respond positively and rapidly to challenges it faces or opportunities which may present themselves; “satisfaction”, which includes the satisfaction of all participants (stakeholders, employees, and customers); “innovation”, which measures the uniqueness of its products and processes; and “quality”, which is generally measured as a function of the perception of the quality of its services from the point of view of users of these services (adapted from Chenhall and Langfeld, 2007). It should also be noted that while there is logically an argument that financial indicators such as profit or market share should be used, the ability to establish a clear and direct link between these measures and HRM interventions is too complex to be determined with any real degree of accuracy. As Guest (1997) observed “the distance between some of the performance indicators (e.g. profits, market value) and HR interventions are simply too large.”
The problem of benchmarking performance in the research presented here has been tackled by directly approaching staff working within the sector and using appropriate instruments to measure those constructs which in the private university sector are principally reliant on the performance of the universities in terms of attracting students and in achieving satisfactory outcomes in national accreditation and reviews.

It is also important to note at this point that in order to facilitate the study the researcher had to be careful to assure participants across the five universities taking part in the research that the research was not aimed at providing conclusions which attempted to differentiate the performance of the different universities. The input to the research from different universities was collectively analysed and conclusions which were reached reflect the situation in Bahrain universities as a whole. If this approach had not been adopted the study would not have been possible as there would have been a great reluctance at staff from participating university to take part in a study which may potentially show their university as performing more poorly than others. While in western cultures this is generally not a consideration which needs to be taken into account, in the Bahrain culture it is clearly an important factor. In addition, it should be noted that without the inclusion of staff from a range of universities the research would have been reduced to being a case study of one institution and the researcher would not have been able to achieve the volume of responses which enable statistical manipulation of the data to give meaningful results.

1.7 Importance of the Study in 'opening the black box'

There are numerous relevant literatures and studies conducted on the impact of HRM practices on the organisational performance -generally situated within or biased towards western cultural norms (Purcell and Hutchinson, 2006; Paul and Anantharaman, 2003; Delaney and Huselid, 1996)). However, most of these studies attempt to draw a relation
between HRM and performance without revealing the content of the 'black box'. Hence, the outcome of HRM practices which lies between HRM practices and performance have rarely been examined. Moreover, the majority of such studies were conducted in developed countries such as USA and UK, (e.g. Holden and Roberts, 2000) and studies on developing countries, such as Bahrain are very limited. Therefore, the researcher intends that this study will bridge the gap caused by the lack of similar studies in Bahrain. In addition, the majority of studies in the HR literature which were examined as part of this research, were mainly concerned with answering the simple question “Do human resource decisions influence organisational performance?”, however, in scholarly publications (Delaney and Huselid, 1996) the fact that research does not exist which addresses or sometimes even acknowledge the importance of examining the mechanisms whereby HR practices may impact organisational performance or "Why and how do human resource decisions influence organisational performance?" (Harney & Jordan, 2008). The content of the “black box” is an issue which has not been satisfactorily explored in the HRM-performance field. The researcher has quantitatively investigated the hypothesis that organisational culture, employee commitment and employee retention are important mediating variables. In addition, the researcher has collected a large volume of data through the questionnaire survey and while this (unlike the systematic statistical treatment when testing the hypotheses) does not provide sufficient evidence for statistically significant conclusions it does provide an insight into the key issues which affect their commitment to their institution and the factors which would influence their decision to remain with the institution. Therefore, this study examines the “black box” and tries to reveal the mediating variables, which are crucial for better linkage between the study variables.
1.8 Research Philosophy

A researcher’s philosophical outlooks and experiences, combined with the nature of the research question and the target audience in the research, guide the selection of a research design and data collection methodology during exploration of the research topic (Creswell, 2003). At the outset of this research the researcher adopted a personal, pragmatic world-view to HR in the academic area. Furthermore, Cresswell (2003) argued that knowledge in the pragmatic paradigm is viewed as reality based and socially constructed with the truth being what works at the time. The pragmatist’s interest is with:

“applications – ‘what works’ – and solutions to problems” and, as a result, pragmatic researchers choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research that meet their needs and purposes” (Cresswell, 2003, p. 12).

However, as the research progressed the researcher came to the conclusion that there was a significant gap in the way in which published research on the subject had been conducted and reported in the literature. In particular, there were many claims about the influence of HRM practices on organisational performance but frequently there was no solid justification given. Thus in conducting this study the research approach adopted sought to gain this evidence and therefore a mainly positivist approach was chosen to examine value-added approaches to HR in higher education. This, as the literature on research methodology and methods makes clear, means that the researcher adopted a quantitative approach and used quantitative research tools in order to derive results that could be shown to be statistically significant. The reality of HRM practices and its effect on staff perceptions of organisational performance through the assumed mediators within the context of Bahraini organisational culture is considered stable and may be measured directly.
1.9 Contributions of this Study

In spite of previous attempts to study these, the relationship between HR practices and organisational performance, there is no integrated model that describes, tests in detail, and uses a systematic quantitative approach to exploring these relationships. Through examining employees' attitudes and behaviours, the mediating mechanism that underlies the value-creation process linking HRM practices to performance of organisations, this study extends previous HRM research in the area and contributes to the development of such a model. Results of the application and testing of the model provided evidence that supports the view as stated in the research hypotheses. HRM practices can influence skills acquisition by individuals, and create the motivation to engage with the organisational culture and enhance retention of staff.

It may be concluded that the original contributions of this study are the analysis of HRM in an area in which educational practices are less developed than in the western world. The methodology for testing the relationship between HRM practice and staff perceptions of organisational performance (in this case in universities) and in particular the testing of both direct and indirect (mediating) variables may considered as contributing to research in this area.

1.10 Thesis outline

This thesis is presented in eight chapters. Chapter I comprises the introduction and gives a broad overview of the thesis and the overall framework of this study. Chapter II includes the theoretical background and a conceptual framework for the study and presents a review of the literature. The chapter begins by examining a range of HR practices. It goes on to describe and evidence the fact that the national context and culture in which HRM practices are implemented can strongly influence the reported outcomes of studies and then
examines in more detail the link between HR practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance. The chapter then examines the importance of explaining the mechanism by which HR practice influences performance and, in particular, deals with the HRM 'black box' and finally looks specifically at the variables and mediating variables which are of primary importance in the research presented here. Chapter III examines the context in which the empirical study was undertaken and provides background on the traditions and culture of Bahrain which are important in understanding the context of the study. Chapter IV provides a comprehensive discussion of the research approach and the methodology (quantitative) and research methods used. Dependent and independent variables are described and the research hypotheses are formally presented. In Chapter V a detailed account of this is given of how the research was conducted providing a discussion of the questionnaires used to collect data and the way in which the survey was carried out. In Chapter VI outcomes from the quantitative analysis of data collected as part of the empirical investigation is presented and the outcome of testing the hypotheses are related to the conclusions of other published research findings in the field. Chapter VII gives a wider discussion of the research findings taking into account some of the key issues which were raised from data collected in the questionnaire survey and comments made by respondents. The thesis concludes with Chapter VIII, which gives a discussion on contribution of the thesis to theory and practice, the limitations of the thesis, and directions for further research.
Chapter II

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Chapter I described in detail the background to the problem being examined in this thesis. It set out the study aims and objectives and using these created a set of hypotheses for the study. This chapter is devoted to introducing a critical review of literature in the various areas related to the study. This chapter covers a review of the concept of HRM, its importance as a source of competitive advantage, HRM in education, and strategic HRM practices. In addition, the chapter provides a discussion of organisational performance, the relationship between HRM and performance, and theories underlying these relationships. This is necessary to support what Guest (1997) pointed out, that is, that there is a need to develop a theory about HRM, a theory about performance and another about how they are linked to each other. Finally, HRM Black Box and HRM outcomes (the mediators) will be discussed. Particular attention will be given to organisational culture and its association with employee commitment and employee retention be examined comprehensively as they represent a core part of the study model and are also (as will be discussed in Chapter III) of particular importance in the context of Bahrain.

The researcher will start by defining the concept of HRM as it appears that there is no consensus on the nature of HRM and a lot of imprecision, variability, ambiguity and contradiction are evident in the definitions of HRM (Storey, 2001). HRM is defined as different things for different people (Fey et al., 2008). There is a need to understand the concept to understand its relationship with other variables such as commitment, retention, organisational culture, and organisational performance.
2.2 Concept of HRM

For more than thirty years the term "Human Resources Management – HRM" has been in common use in organisations. Before that, this area of activity was generally termed “Personnel Management - PM” (Daud, 2006). Torrington and Hall (1998) note the distinction that Personnel Management is a “workforce centred idiom”, while HRM is a “resource-centred idiom”. Thus as Guest points out HRM should not be seen as an alternative for Personnel Management as a term but is something quite distinctive (Guest, 1987).

Traditionally Personnel Management was focused on performance of the workforce and the conditions in which this could be optimised. Thus administrative issues such as salary and benefits were more significance. However, the focus of HRM is at a higher level and directly impacts on all aspects of the strategic decision making process within the organisation.

It should be noted that a variety of views concerning the nature of HRM are still used and different researchers discusses HR from different aspects some of which still emphasise the administrative function. This can be seen for example in a range of studies on HRM (Teo, 2002; Hitt et al., 2001; Batt, 2002; Capelli and Neumark, 2001).

This research follows the views of Armstrong (2006) who emphasised the strategic dimension of HRM by defining it as “a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organisation’s most valued assets” – which he saw as the employees of the organisation and in particular how they are working to achieve the objectives of the organisation. Thus far from being just administrative, HRM is a management function that
supports the strategic selection, recruitment and training and development of members of an organisation (Ashwatappa, 2008).

Before going on to examine in detail the literature which aims to link HRM practices and performance it is worthwhile firstly looking at the distinctive features of strategic human resource management as one of the key claims made for implementing strategic HRM is that it has a direct impact on organisational performance.

According to Radcliffe (2005), HRM is defined as the management of HR system (which does not provide a particularly helpful definition), whereas Lado and Wilson define an HR system as a

"Set of distinct but interrelated activities, functions, and processes that are directed at attracting, developing, and maintaining an organisation’s HR" (Lado and Wilson, 1994, p.701).

Wright and McMahan also define strategic HRM as “a pattern of planned human resource deployments and activities intended to enable the firm to achieve its goals” (Wright and McMahan, 1992).

Boselie et al. (2005) defined HRM in its more strategic role as a group or, combination of practices, which have been carefully designed for managing employees in order to achieve and improve organisational effectiveness and thus lead to better performance outcomes for the organisation. The most important thing that can be derived from a whole range of definitions of SHRM is that in common these definitions all emphasize the contribution of SHRM to organisational performance.

Regarding the distinction between SHRM and HRM, it is argued that the central argument of SHRM lies in the connection of HRM with firm strategy. More specifically, SHRM may
be regarded as a bridge between a firm's strategy and its HRM function (Truss & Gratton, 1994; Armstrong, 2006). It is intricately linked with the development of strategic management.

2.3 Strategic Human Resource Management

As defined by Wright and Snell, SHRM is 'the way we combine and align people that give us a competitive advantage' (1999: p.62). Thus, Truss and Gratton proposed that SHRM is:

"Linking HRM with strategic goals and objectives of the firm to improve organisational performance and develop organisational cultures that foster innovation and flexibility" (Truss and Gratton 1994: p.663).

Both illustrations emphasize the nature of SHRM as the connection of management and HR deployment with the business process as a whole (McMahan, Virick & Wright, 1999). This helps in making the distinction of SHRM from HRM, with the latter as one of business functions only. With the further involvement of HRM into a more comprehensive system, such as SHRM, its linkage into overall business process could contribute to the realization of organisational goals.

Wright and Boswell (2002) summarized in their work, the difference between traditional HRM and SHRM which lies in the different role and focus of these two approaches. In taking a 'micro' approach to HRM, traditional HRM focuses more on individuals, while SHRM is more of a 'macro' approach, by which the organisation is used as the unit of analysis. Whereas various sub-functional HRM practices are studied separately in traditional HRM, they are examined in the form of a 'system' in SHRM.

Another basic distinction is the qualitative difference between SHRM and HRM (Truss & Gratton, 1994). SHRM links employee deployment and organisational management within
the scope of overall business and its contextual environment, while HRM is only one
organising activity under it. Specifically, line management share responsibility for HRM
implementation in SHRM process, and managers' initiating role and commitment are also
emphasized in SHRM (Baker, 1999). A detailed comparison of PM, HRM and SHRM is
in Table (2.1).

In contrast to PM by which people are regarded as commodities, people are regarded as
resources in HRM while the basic assumption underlying SHRM is that people are the
strategic resources of a firm. In brief, cost minimization is the goal of PM versus
maximization of the individual HR outcome in HRM, while the goal of SHRM is the
organisational effectiveness as a whole. While the nature of PM is plural and reactive,
HRM is unitary and more active and SHRM is a strategic proactive approach for managing HR.

In terms of the level of focus, SHRM is concerned more about top level of organisation
while focus of PM and HRM is on lower and middle management levels. SHRM plays its
role as the strategic partner of organisation, but the contribution of PM is marginal and
HRM acts as a major managerial function only. As to the major actors of these three
approaches, both line and HR managers take active roles in SHRM, with HR managers
playing a supportive role; while in HRM, HR managers and professionals are the major
actors with only few tasks delegated to line managers.

Table (2.1) Comparison of PM, HRM and SHRM

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<th>Personnel Management (PM)</th>
<th>Human Resource Management (HRM)</th>
<th>Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Assumption</td>
<td>People as commodity</td>
<td>People as resources</td>
<td>People as strategic resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Performance of pre-defined professional activities</td>
<td>Individual HR outcome</td>
<td>Organisational effectiveness as a whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature</td>
<td>Plural, collective Reactive</td>
<td>Unitary, individual Active</td>
<td>Strategic; proactive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Framework | Lack of a systematic framework | Isolated HR activities which are separate from each other and not linked to the overall environment of the organisation | Broad, contingency-based, and integrative framework; an HR system designed to fit the organisational environment and mutually reinforcing or synergistic in strategic intent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Relatively Lower level</th>
<th>Middle level</th>
<th>Top Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Special field within the organisation</td>
<td>Within the organisational scope</td>
<td>Interact with organisational factors as well as external factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Contract</td>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Long-term Commitment/development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Cost-minimization</td>
<td>Utilization maximum</td>
<td>Overall business success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Major managerial function</td>
<td>Strategic Partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>'Contract Managers/Collective bargaining expert</td>
<td>HR professional/manager devolving some to line managers</td>
<td>HR and line managers, with HR a supportive role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Short-term/long-term</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Summarized from Wright & Boswell (2002), Truss & Gratton (1994), and Baker et al. (1999).

2.4 Linking SHRM and Organisational Performance

A number of studies appear to confirm a link between SHRM practices and organisational performance and some of these are discussed below.

Green et al. (2006), in their study of ‘Work Attitude and Work performance’ conducted a survey which involved 269 HR professionals employed by large US manufacturing firms. The conclusions which they reached were that an approach to HR practices which was well integrated with the organisation’s strategic plans engendered high levels of satisfaction and enhanced commitment in employees who in their words “demonstrated remarkable individual and team performance.”

Datta et al. (2005), in their paper ‘HRM and Labour Productivity: Does Industry Matter?’ adopted the view that one of the most important roles of HRM is that it should ensure that
ways in which the workforce can be made both more productive and more satisfied with their role are identified and implemented. They argue that in order to do this senior management of the organisation have to recognise and regard the development of the workforce as a vital competitive advantage. In order to do this senior management must engage in careful planning and ongoing evaluation of the workforce.

Guest and Conway (2004), in paper entitled ‘Using Sequential True Analysis to Search for ‘Bundles’ of Human Resource Practices’ reported their study's findings of HR practices on the performance of 1308 managers. Again the conclusions which these authors arrived at also support the view that an organisation's human resources are one of the most significant potential contributing factors to being able to sustain competitive advantage. Thus human resource management managing can support the development of staff with unique competencies and this in turn will support the development of products and services which are well-differentiated from those of competitors. This view of human capital investment is a theme in many writings concerned with the impact of SHRM. Thus, for example, Bartel (2003) in his article “HRM and Organisational Performance: Evidence from retail banking” stated that investment in human capital has been central in explaining individual performance differences. This appears to support the view that investment in education and training is a central issue in SHRM.

Thus the scope of HRM has changed and it is no longer limited to employment relations and payment of wages and salary. Human resource in an organisation represents its largest investment. So it is important now to examine how this is HRM contributes to the achieving competitive advantage.

It has been argued by some authors in the field of HRM that increasingly a number of trends have tended to raise the importance of HR as a source of competitive advantage. In
particular, because markets now are increasingly regulated and the impact of competitive advantage gained from product and process technology is less significant (often because of easy imitation of these the real advantage is more centred on an organisation’s internal resources – particularly its human capital.  Pfeffer presented the view that access to financial resource and economies of scale are now less powerful than they once were (Pfeffer, 1994) and that it is as noted previously organisations must learn more quickly and effectively than its rivals. (Hamel & Prahalad, 1991) This represent a paradigmatic shift in the research on firm performance, and strategy researchers begun to focus on internal resources as the drivers of firm performance specifically, intangible resources are seen as being the key to sustained competitive advantage as they are difficult to identify and imitate.

Bohlander, Snell and Sherman (2001) argue that while people have always been central to organisations they have now taken on an even more central role. They emphasize, in common with other researchers in the field of knowledge management, that success is centrally dependent on the knowledge, skills and abilities embedded in an organisation's employees.

Resources may be categorised as either tangible or intangible assets. These usually include financial and physical, organisational, technology, and human resources. The important assets are those which are not easily replicable and thus authors have stressed the importance of human resources as ‘non-substitutable’ (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997) or difficult to replace quickly and easily.

Thus the central way in which HRM can contribute to competitive advantage is by enhancing the capacity of its human resource to more efficiently and effectively meet the goals of the organisation. Human resources management (HRM) has been described as the
central sub-system of an organisation (Gupta, 1997). HRM interacts with all management subsystems - including finance, products, services and materials procurement, technical, and marketing functions in an organisation. In all of these areas people are the most important source of sustained competitive advantage (Pfeffer 1994). Thus, if it is accepted that research has shown that the human resource of the organisation is significant for success it is important that an organisation understands and adopts HRM practices that optimise the use of its employees. Gratton (1997) stated that most organisations are now of the belief that human resources may offer a much greater competitive advantage rather than financial or technological resources.

The key link between gaining competitive advantage and HR interventions lies in the potential for HR to directly influence organisational performance through enhancing staff performance. Pfeffer (1994) has outlined sixteen practices of competitive advantage through people. (Table 2.2)

**Table (2.2): Pfeffer's Practices of Competitive Advantage through People**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Security</th>
<th>Selectivity in recruiting</th>
<th>High wage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incentive pay</td>
<td>Employee ownership</td>
<td>Information sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation and empowerment</td>
<td>Teams and job redesign</td>
<td>Training and skill development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic egalitarianism</td>
<td>Wage compression</td>
<td>Promotion from within</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term perspective</td>
<td>Measurement of practices</td>
<td>Overarching philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cross-utilization &amp; cross-training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This research will test whether or not a link between organisational performance and strategic HR practices can be demonstrated. In addition it will look at potential mediating variables - in particular organisational culture, staff commitment and staff retention. However, in the context of this research it is questionable whether the list of 12 sources of competitive advantage through people are relevant in the context of Bahrain and in the
context of higher education. This is why it is important not only to establish whether there is a link between HR practices and organisational performance but also to explore mediating variables, it is important therefore to look at the specific HR practices which may contribute to this link.

2.5 HRM Practices Included in this Study

Literature on HRM practices in this study is extensive and includes practices such as recruitment, selection, compensation and job design and specification. The following section discusses the HR practices used in this study – the reason for selecting these particular practices was based on their relevance to the Bahraini private universities being studies and also on their fit with SHRM practices which have been identified in the literature as having a very specific link with organisational performance.

2.5.1 Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and selection is the process by which appropriate actions and decisions are taken to ensure that an organisation employs the most appropriate applicant for any post. Recruitment as a general term refers to the arrangements made to ensure that potential applicants are aware of the intention of the organisation to make an appointment and facilitating the procedure to allow potential applicants to provide appropriate information to demonstrate their suitability for the particular position to be filled. Selection refers to the procedures used both to examine applications which have been received and determine how well the applicant matches the job specification. Generally, the process involves short listing a group of applicants and engaging in some form of formal interview for the post. Foot and Hook (2005) suggested that: ‘‘although the two functions are closely connected, each requires a separate range of skills and expertise, and may in practice be fulfilled by
different staff members. The recruitment activity, but not normally the selection decision, may be outsourced to an agency. It makes sense, therefore, to treat each activity separately”.

A direct link between the rigour of the process for attracting and selecting the most appropriate employees and overall employee productivity was reported in Hustled (1995) in his research which involved HR practices in “high performance companies”. He also claimed a link in terms of enhancement of overall organisational performance and a reduction in staff turnover.

The importance of recruitment to the overall organisational culture is noted by Williams et al. (1993). They contend that recruitment is the most direct manner in which innovative thinking and practices can be introduced into an organisation and, in particular, is the "most direct channel of injecting new ideas into an introspective and self-perpetuating organisational culture" (Williams et al., 1993). Recruitment and selection forms a core part of the central activities underlying HRM: namely acquisition, development and reward of workers. In Bahrain there are particular challenges with this as will be discussed in Chapter III.

2.5.2 Training and Development

Training, as defined by Armstrong (2006) “is the use of systematic and planned instruction activities to promote learning”. It is important to note from this definition that this is a formal processes so must involve not only mechanisms to provide employees with access to training in order to acquire the skills they need to perform their jobs effectively but also the identification of the nature and level of training which is required. Therefore, while training may in some cases be about practical skills and application or implementation of
new techniques or processes in the context of universities or other knowledge intensive organisations, it also covers the development and dissemination of knowledge. Under quality assurance arrangements for universities in Bahrain each university must clearly demonstrate that it has a staff development and training policy and that it monitors this to ensure that it is effective.

Organisations should consider training as a form of human capital investment. It can be viewed partly as the responsibility of the individual but it is also important that the organisation itself recognises its responsibility to encourage and support its employees to ensure that they maintain the currency of their knowledge and skills (Wetland, 2003). Any organisation must ensure that, having gone through a rigorous process to appoint the most suitable employees that those employees are clearly informed not only of the expectations of the organisation of what their current role is but also that the organisation expects that they have an obligation to continue to develop their knowledge and skills. This also places an obligation on the organisation and staff should be encouraged to take part in training activities which are directly relevant to their job in order to maintain or improve their skills and performance. Huselid (1995) maintains that enhancing employee’s skills, will directly impact on increasing employee productivity and in addition argues that training and development increases job satisfaction for employees and as a consequence may result in a reduction of staff turnover and an increased commitment on the part of employees to the organisation (Huselid, 1995).

Noe et al. (2004) add that the purpose of staff development is not confined to preparing staff to maintain their skills at the level which is commensurate with their current position in the organisation but that is also necessary to prepare employees for more senior roles and enhance their ability to take up such roles. This contributes to the organisation in
terms of ‘succession planning’ and avoids the creation of a skills gap when senior employees leave the organisation. Hence, training is an important function that influences the organisation's ability to achieve its goals (Selden, 2005) but in fact can also positively contribute to ensuring that it is able to continue to achieve these goals and is not vulnerable to being too dependent on a few key staff.

2.5.3 Contingent Pay and Reward Schemes (Compensation System)

The issue of remuneration and reward is clearly very important in attracting and retaining quality staff. Again in Bahrain there are important differences in the way in which this operates. Any organisation must have a clearly developed reward strategy which makes clear to employees the remuneration which they can expect and the basis on which this is determined. Within public sector institutions this can be constrained by national agreements or formulae for payment of staff but in the private sector there is generally more flexibility and an important issue for private universities in Bahrain if they are to be competitive in attracting and retaining staff concerns the pay policies and practices which they use. This may cover a range of options to incorporate bonuses and incentives, employee benefits or performance-related pay. Each organisation has to develop its own framework for its reward and recognition practices and set down basic principles governing pay and benefits. Contingent pay and reward schemes are essentially designed in order to attract employees who have the appropriate qualifications to perform the job which they are required to do and they must be appropriately aligned to the remuneration offered by comparable institutions or organisations. They ideally should accurately reflect the importance of the role within the organisation and be clearly linked to the contribution which the role plays in achieving the overall aims and objectives of the organisation. They can also be used as a means to increase morale, commitment, productivity, and teamwork.
by providing staff with rewards which are differentiated in terms of individual or team performance. Rewards and recognition can be offered through both monetary and nonmonetary means. There is a great deal of literature which supports the idea that reward and recognition are important factors that influence employee behaviour, job satisfaction and organisational performance (Keller & Szilagyi, 1976). Incentives are pay systems that reward employees for exceptional performance and this may be achieved at individual level, group level, or organisational level. A range of mechanisms to achieve this are discussed in the literature (Heneman & Gresham, 1998). Merit pay may be provided to employees for their individual behaviour or performance contributions to an organisation. Skill based pay may take the form of pay increases based on employees demonstrating achievement of particular skills (usually tested through external training or examination bodies). These can be powerful incentives to promote organisational learning and reward staff for engagement in continuous improvement.

The literature discusses a range of ways of providing incentives but generally many of these are not really relevant to a university context and in Bahrain would rarely be applied. For example, organisational level incentives may be given by using incentives such as gain sharing, profit sharing, stock sharing, and executive pay. While this has not traditionally been a significant issue in the context of universities it is interesting to note recently the adoption of these incentives are being suggested in Western universities and, in particular, are very relevant to the private university sector.

2.5.4 Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal is a formal process the purpose of which is to monitor, and subsequently, to improve the productivity of workers (Brown and Heywood, 2005). The appraisal process consists of three distinct stages - firstly the definition of the job, secondly
the appraisal of employee performance, and finally provision of feedback to the employee on his/her performance. As with staff development it is a compulsory requirement in universities in Bahrain to demonstrate that they have formal systems in place to achieve this.

Mullins (1999) observed that effective performance management requires an ongoing process to appraise the behaviour and performance of staff. He also notes that a central part of the process of monitoring performance is ensuring that employees are aware of what is expected of them and thus as well as a clear definition of the job (or job specification) the parameters by which performance will be measured must be clear to the employee. In addition, performance appraisal usually involves evaluating an employee’s current and/or past performance relative as well as to externally set objectives and agreed standards which have been discussed with the employee prior to the formal appraisal (Dessler, 2008). Systematic appraisal systems can assist in the identification of training needs, identify weaknesses in individual performance which may need to be addressed through disciplinary action, or identify exceptional performance which may contribute towards promotion opportunities or attract a financial reward. Thus performance appraisal must be accompanied by complementary HRM practices like formal training, incentive pay and a robust disciplinary system. This must all be in place if performance appraisal is to be effective in leading to greater productivity (Brown & Heywood, 2005). The performance appraisal systems adopted in universities in Bahrain are far less formal than those described above but have a number of elements in common with the objectives which the various formal methods are seeking to achieve. Irrespective of the exact method adopted to perform appraisal it is important that the process is engaged in by all staff. Ellickson (2002) found that the performance evaluation systems impact significantly on the overall job satisfaction of employees. In addition, Dailey and Kirk warned that “ineffective
performance appraisal and planning systems contributed to employees’ perceptions of unfairness”. The authors argued that the result of this was that employees were more negatively disposed towards the organisation and may this could be a significant factor in their decision to remain with the organisation (Dailey and Kirk, 1992). Thus it is clearly important to ensure that the performance appraisal system which is adopted is acceptable to employees and meets with their expectations of providing a fair evaluation and differentiation of performance.

2.5.5 Employee Relations and Involvement

One of the traditional, and in the past one of the most important functions of the HR Department, has been involvement in employee relations. As Bluestein and Bluestein (1992) noted this particular function has its roots in the history of labour relations (particularly in western organisations) and was a very significant function in terms of dealing with employees in highly-unionized environments. This involved the collaboration (and often confrontation) of company management and union representatives. This in western organisations is still a very important aspect of the HR function - mainly around negotiation of pay and conditions of employees and as a means to assist discussion and resolution of collective or individual staff grievances about the working environment or perceptions of unfairness of treatment of employees or even situations in which employees felt that the organisation was not acting in their best interests in terms of working conditions and health and safety in the workplace. This is not an important feature in Bahrain but it is important to note that this does not mean the HR function does not concern itself with employee relations. There is a recognition that it is important to ensure that all employees feel actively involved in the role of the university.
Employee involvement has been investigated in terms of the motivational factors which are important to employees (Beach & Mitchell, 1990). This is closely aligned with what are generally seen as the four main motivation inducement system—reward, task, managerial, and social incentivization. Collectively measures to maintain and enhance these is seen by some authors as another perspective on the processes by with employees gain involvement and satisfaction in the work environment (Leonard, Beauvais, & Scholl, 1995, as cited by O’Connell, 1999). It is crucial in the process of clearly communicating to employees the rationale for certain decisions but also allows feedback and generation of new ideas for organisational improvements. Above all it provides a sense to employees that their views and opinions are valued. Employee involvement is a mix of many concepts and has developed out of many predecessors. Employee involvement processes do not always share the same methods, and may include indirect techniques with relatively modest scope, such as employee suggestion boxes and employee opinion surveys.

This is an important area to consider, particularly in the light of the previous discussion on culture in Bahrain and contrasting this with traditional western approaches. As has been noted employees in Bahrain are more accepting of hierarchies and authority and there is less tendency amongst the workforce to question decisions by management. This is in direct contrast to the situation which has evolved in western universities where, in particular academic staff, are not only used to being consulted and involved in management decisions but frequently see this as an essential part of their working environment (Houston, Meyer and Paewai, 2006).

Until this point, the researcher has discussed the importance of HRM practices in both general organisational contexts and within higher educational organisations, and also discussed the HRM practices that will be used in this study. To further understand the
relationship between HRM practices and organisational performance, there is a need to review the measures of organisational performance that have been used in HRM research. Moreover, there is also a need to examine the conceptual definition of performance and how performance can be measured.

2.6 Organisational Performance

Organisational performance is widely used as the dependent variable in any research targeting organisations which seeks to demonstrate an improvement resulting from a particular innovation or intervention. The study of organisational performance is still ambiguous and consists of a set of 'loose constructs' (Rogers & Wright, 1998). To understand the relationship between HRM practices and organisational performance, there is a need to review measures of firm performance that are used in HRM research. There is therefore a compelling need to examine the conceptual definition of performance and how performance could be measured.

According to Richard et al. (2009), the analysis of a company's organisational performance is based on an examination of the company's goal or objectives and comparison with three specific outcomes: firstly financial performance (which was measured by examining profits, return on assets, return on investment (ROI), and other standard measures used to assess the financial ‘health’ of an organisation); product market performance (measured in terms of sales and market share of the product or range of products); and shareholder return (measured in terms of the economic value added and in terms of total shareholder returns). In addition, the business dictionary adds that in some cases it may also be appropriate to examine production capacity

(http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/organizational-performance.html)
It is generally acknowledged that improving productivity of an institution is essential to its survival in the competitive world. Specifically, in the context of educational institutions it is therefore necessary to examine carefully the goals and outcomes which a university seeks to achieve and then determine whether there are appropriate measures which can be identified which positively indicate an improvement in performance (Shrestha, 2006). These, however, do not fit easily into the previous definition of how measurement of organisational performance is typically conducted.

The subject of how to measure and evaluate operational performance in an organisation is a theme which comes up frequently in academic literature in terms of providing a clarification and definition of the concept. (Fleetwood and Hesketh, 2006). The earliest and still one of the most commonly used general classifications is that provided by Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986), who adopted a strategic management perspective and focussed and biased the measurement more towards profitability and productivity and drew a clear distinction between financial and operational performance, with the emphasis on the latter.

From the point of view of HR practitioners Pfieffer (1998) suggested that a focus on financial and accounting measures of performance could ultimately prove to be futile. The detailed consideration of competing and sometimes conflicting measures based on accounting rules could become very complex and biased towards “goal-value assumptions” which could not be clearly defined (Pfieffer, 1998).

In much of the literature there is a focus on manufacturing performance and reliability, which is clearly not relevant to this research and while Corbett and Van Wassenhove’s model which considers three dimensions of performance: Cost (or Efficiency), Quality and Time is more relevant it also fails to provide a measure which can be applied in an
educational setting. Dyer and Reeves (1995) examined a range of measurements which included outcomes such as employee turnover, absenteeism and job satisfaction but also examined general staff productivity. These are more relevant but it could be argued are not in themselves direct measures of organisational performance. The factors consisting organisational performance, which are considered as particularly relevant in this research, are as follows: “Effectiveness”, if the organisation meets its objectives; “efficiency”, if the organisation uses the fewest possible resources to meet its objectives; “development”, if the organisation is developing its capacity to meet future opportunities and challenges (Katou, 2008).

2.6.1 Organisational Performance in Universities

In the university sector in Bahrain organisational performance of the private university sector is determined mainly by three factors. Firstly, the financial performance of the university which is generally a function of the number of students it can attract. Secondly the success of the university in terms of quality assurance reviews: such reviews are critical to the success of the universities as they can fundamentally affect their ability to offer degree programmes. Thirdly, and linked with the others, is the reputation of the university for providing high quality education (while there are no formal league tables for the sector in Bahrain there are shared perceptions within the sector on the relative reputation of different private universities).

Again it is important that this is taken into account when examining the link between HR practices and organisational performance. In particular, in a very competitive environment for staff it is extremely important that universities attract and retain high-quality academics who will contribute to the quality of the education provided but this must also be achieved at a cost which will sustain the profitability of the university.
Educational institutions are subject to a constant change according to the needs of a variety of stakeholders which may include government, the student community and the changing needs of society. Increasingly with the shifting emphasis to ensure that universities have a central role in society to prepare students for employment and to engage in practical research to benefit society, the university as an institution which had been relatively stable in its structure and organisation is facing a situation in which its performance as an organisation and force for change are being more carefully scrutinised. Nilakanth and Ramnarayan (2008) discussed the following eight organisational aspects which they assert are extremely important in management of changes in almost any organisation. These are: “leadership, strategy, structure, people management, technology, marketing, quality, and costs”. Thus HRM practices can contribute significantly to change management in any organisational context (and universities are not an exception to this). Arguably as they are currently subject to relatively rapid change (in Bahrain as in the rest of the world) the management of people needs more attention than previously to prepare them to successfully make the necessary changes.

Smart (2003) further stated that measuring performance in education is very important. The outputs from universities may, for example be measured in terms of the quality of graduates which they produce or the quality of the research outputs of their staff or the degree to which they engage with the community to disseminate knowledge or expertise which can inform local or national issues. These are typically identified in the three main areas which the Quality Assurance Agency in Bahrain identifies the contribution of universities i.e. teaching and learning, research and community engagement.

In terms of the context in which this research is situated the primary focus is on teaching and learning but it could be argued that in terms of all three of the above listed criteria the
quality of outputs is driven very much by the quality of the employees of the University and the relevance and maintenance of their skills to have an impact on the mission of the particular university in which they are employed.

The academic literature specific to HR in Higher Education is scarce when compared to the general HR body of literature in terms of the way in which it can influence organisational performance. For example, Buck and Watson in their research noted that a search of literature in six databases using the key words “HR” and “higher education” provided articles which were mainly related to the development of HR curriculum for student instruction. However, they also noted that by changing the search strategy and searching for “Personnel Administration” provided more relevant articles but these were mainly focused on topical issues like retention (Buck & Watson, 2002) or employment law (Mitchell, 2004) and none of the literature focussed on the application of HR practices in developing countries.

This confirms that it is very important to examine organisational performance in universities in the specific context in which the universities operate – in this case in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

2.7 Relationship between HRM Practices and Performance

Researchers have claimed to have found evidence that links HRM practices with corporate performance (e.g., Fey et al., 2008; Yasmin, 2008; Akhtar et al., 2009). According to an analytical study conducted by Davenport (1999) on the link between different types of assets and market value, the value of human capital was found to be increasingly important and this is particularly important in 'knowledge based' organisations such as universities.
Historically the initial attempts to research the link between HR practices and organisational performance were published in the middle of the 1990s. (Arthur, 1994; Osterman, 1994; MacDuffie, 1995). The seminal article in the field which has been repeatedly cited in further studies was by Huselid (1995). The publication of Huselid’s empirical study was a catalyst to further research in the area – although confined mainly to empirical research studies in Europe and the United States.

Literature shows various findings about the relationship between HRM practices and organisational performance. For example, Katou and Badhwar (2006) identified recruitment, training, promotion, incentives, benefits, involvement and health and safety as HR practices which influenced performance. Lee and Chee (1996) on the other hand found no conclusive proof which would support that link. However, Bae and Lawler’s (2000) study contradicted this and Huselid (1995) suggested that the link may be confined to certain “High Performance Work Practices” which he identified as including selection strategies and processes, incentive options, robust staff evaluation and management systems, and extensive involvement and staff development.

In a study in Pakistan which represents a developing country researchers examined HR practices in higher education. Shahzad et al. (2008), sought to determine the relationship between 3 main factors – promotion, remuneration and performance appraisal – on perceived employee performance of academics. They found a positive correlation between remuneration and promotion opportunities but they could not demonstrate any significant correlation between performance appraisal practices and employee performance. It should be noted however, that the researchers did not provide specific details on the nature of the performance appraisal system which was being used nor did they examine the link between performance appraisal and remuneration. Pfeffer (1998) noted that there were seven HRM
practices: employment security; selective hiring; team working, decentralization; remuneration and incentives which theoretically could have a significant impact on performance. In an empirical examination of HR practices, however, the author concluded that extensive investment in training; status difference and sharing information were the factors which contributed significantly to operational performance.

Again, and with particular reference to an educational context, Muslim et al. (2014) also examined the impact of human resource management practices on organisational performance. The study was very extensive involving 300 employees in a public university (consisting of both administrative and academic staff). The survey instrument consisted of 46 items designed to examine the potential link between selected HRM practices and university performance. The results of the study indicated that selective recruitment (including detailed job specifications), training and development, performance appraisal; career planning’ employee participation; and compensation all had a significant relationship with university performance.

An important meta-analytical study was conducted by Boselie, Dietz and Boon (2005). The researchers analysed the reported outcomes of 104 empirical articles published within a 9-year time period (1994 to 2003, restricting their selection of articles for inclusion to those in established academic journals with robust refereeing processes. Their findings demonstrated a range of different results and generally a lack of clear definition of the concepts and theories which the publications were attempting to address. To conclude, this implies that there is a need to investigate the reasons behind the variation in findings that the previous studies demonstrate regarding the link between HRM practices and performance. According to Bosilie et al. (2005), the huge variety of methods used for measuring HRM performance means it is impossible to compare results from different studies (making meta-analytical studies very difficult to conduct). Conclusions of different
studies are still unclear. Findings are limited by the methodologies used; variation in consideration of potentially decisive variables, some of which may have been omitted, or causality cannot properly be inferred as most studies have been cross-sectional and confined to fairly narrow correlations.

2.8 Theories of the Relationship between HRM Practices and Performance

Despite the overwhelming evidence (at least in terms of the number of studies) presented of a link between HR practices and organisational performance, many authors are still highly critical of the strategic importance of HRM in general and the HRM-performance relationship in particular (see Keenoy, 1997; and an overview by Boselie, 2005). Fleetwood and Hesketh, for example, concluded that;

"… empirical evidence for the existence of an HRM-Performance link is inconclusive… a statistical association in, and of itself, constitutes neither a theory nor an explanation" (Fleetwood and Hesketh, 2006, p.1997).

Guest had already drawn attention to this problem in 1997 and indicated that he was concerned about the paucity of theory in published research, which, he contended was a significant drawback to researchers being able to put forward a credible justification for the findings arising from their studies. This section of the literature review thus discusses the relevant theories. Guest (1997) strongly suggested that in order to improve our understanding of the impact of HRM on performance, we need to examine the problem from three theoretical standpoints - a theory about HRM, a theory about performance and thirdly a theory about how they are linked to each other. What Guest emphasized is the need for more theory-driven research, or a better theory with respect to HRM (i.e. what do we mean by it?), with respect to performance (what kind of performance and at which level of analysis?) and the need for a theoretical framework with respect to the linkage between
the two. Consistent with Guest (1997), this study will concentrate on the relationship between HRM and performance.

There are various conceptual frameworks which have attempted to explain the relationship between an organisation’s HRM system or practices and performance. These relationships are represented in several theories such as: General System Theory; Role Behaviour Theory; Institutional Theory; Resource Dependency Theory; Human Capital Theory; Agency Theory, and Resource-Based Theory. All of these theories are consistent in terms of having a common consensus on the importance of HRM practices in the determination of an organisation’s performance. (Yesmin, 2008). Eight years after Guest's (1997) article, Boselie et al. (2005) in their meta-analytic study concluded that the three most commonly used theories were: Strategic Contingency theory, Resource-Based view (RBV) and ability, motivation and opportunity (AMO) theory. Two other theories are also noted as being important - Universalistic Perspective Theory and Configurational Approach Theory.

These theories are discussed in the following sections.

2.8.1 Resource-Based View (RBV)

According to RBV, HRM practices directly impact on employees and influence skills; attitudes and behaviour in terms of the outcome of the practices which are put in place. Subsequently the outcome of this should be to improve organisational performance (Boxal & Steeveld, 1999). RBV theory further asserts that the potential for competitive advantage of an organisation is based on its ability to take full advantage of the expertise and skills which collectively characterize the workforce in an organisation and which are unique to that organisation. Thus, that difference in business performance may be ascribed to the resources which cannot easily be replicated by competitors. (Barney, 1991) points out that
it is more than just putting in place particular HRM practices as the practices themselves can be easily copied (Wright et al., 2003). Guest (1997), therefore, focussed primarily on the specific outcomes of implementing good HRM practices, such as improvements in skills, attitudes, and behaviour. It is only when these are achieved that higher organisational performance be expected. This discussion is important in terms of the current research as it underlines the need not just to look at specific HR practices bur requires an exploration of the nature and influence of mediating variables in the HRM-performance relationship (Wright & Gardner, 2003).

2.8.2 Strategic Contingency Theory

Contingency theorists suggest that an organisation needs to adapt specific HRM practices for different firm strategies. Contingency theory or what is known as the best fit HRM lacks the universal prescription of particular HR practices in all circumstances. It is all affected by organisation’s context, culture and its business strategy (Wright & Snell, 2005). The best fit theory emphasizes the importance of ensuring that HR strategies are appropriate to the circumstances of the organisation, including culture, operational processes and external environment. The organisation and its people needs should be considered as part of HR strategy. Integration between strategic management and HRM may be seen through the linkage between organisation strategy and HRM practices (Mahoney & Decktop, 2006). Strategic Contingency Theory is based on the assumption that an organisation’s HRM practice must be aligned with other aspects of the organisation for these practices to have an impact. Delery and Doty (1996), state that the relationship between the relevant independent variable and the dependent one will vary according to influences which are peculiar to a company's characteristics. So a contingency perspective
will explain the interaction between the organisational strategy with HR practices and how it affects the organisational performance in a limited context.

The Contingency Theory of HRM implies that in general, HR systems with internally-fitted practices that match the strategy of the firm will perform best (Wood 1999). Wood distinguishes between four fitted practices: internal (between HR practices), organisational (coherent HR system), strategic (SHRM) and environmental (contextual). However, an important fitted practice seems to be omitted from Wood's consideration, i.e. the person-organisation fits. This fit deals with the like-mindedness between people and organisations; how the employee perceives HR practices and how this aligns with values and objectives of the organisation (Paauwe & Boselie, 2005). According to Rondeau and Wagar:

"Contingency theory suggests that if certain HR practices have the ability to influence performance outcomes, they might only be effective if aligned appropriately with normative culture or operative workplace climate."

(Rondeau and Wagar, 2001 p. 195).

One criticism often levelled at the contingency model is that it tends to over-simplify organisational reality. According to Purcell (2001), this theory is limited by the impossibility of modelling all contingent variables and the difficulty of showing interactions that a variable may impact on the effect of another variable.

2.8.3 AMO Theory

AMO theory centrally gives attention to what are termed “high performance work systems”, the three main constituents of which are: firstly: ability/skills such as education and training, secondly motivation/incentives such as job security, good internal communications, opportunities for promotion, and equitable remuneration and thirdly: the
opportunity to participate in sustained quality consistently which may be dependent on labour cost per unit of output and thus operating profit (Appelbaum et al., 2000).

Boxall and Purcell (2003) summarized this theory through the following equation:

\[ P = f (A, M, O) \]

Where \( P \) is performance, \( A \) is ability, \( M \) is motivation, and \( O \) is an opportunity to take part in management. This equation means that HR practices should foster ability, motivation, and opportunity to participate and contribute to organisational performance. People perform well when they are enabled to do their job using skills and knowledge they have and that is affected by the extent of incentives they receive. Many theoretical arguments have suggested that ability and motivation of employees, and opportunity to participate in decision making, affect both organisational effectiveness and employee satisfaction (Katz et al., 1985).

The other two theories that concern relationship between HRM practices and performance are: Universalistic Perspective and Configuration Theories (Delery & Doty, 1996), a brief explanation of each follows.

### 2.8.4 Universalistic Perspective

The Universalistic Perspective considers that there is hierarchy of HRM practices in terms of their effectiveness and as a consequence most organisations should adopt these best practices. HRM practices are included in the universalistic approach and the assumption made that they can be universally applied largely because of globalization and increasing competitive pressure within organisations which led to a search for a general solution which it was assumed could be globally applied. As Daud notes, it is important to take into
account the fact that it is a simple approach and the most widely used (Daud, 2006) but it should not be assumed that because of this it is the best approach.

Research studies which adopt the universalistic perspective are micro analytical in nature and are generally focussed on demonstrating that some HRM practices are better than others are, and that as a consequence all organisations should adopt these practices (Daud, 2006). Different studies have utilised various assortments of these HRM practices, but there has been little work that provides a definitive description as to which HRM practices should be included in a “best practice” system (Pfeffer, 1994; Huselid, 1995; Delery & Doty, 1996;).

Huselid’s (1995) work reflected upon the “universalistic” approach to HRM. He noted that this perspective assumes that there are certain “best” HRM practices that contribute to increased financial performance regardless of the strategic goals of organisations. Further, a universalistic approach to HRM research assumes that HRM practices contribute to worker motivation (and thereby increased productivity) as well as increased efficiency (Ichniowski et al., 1996). Pfeffer (1994) advocated a complex framework which consisted of the use of sixteen management practices to achieve higher productivity and profits. In another work, Delery and Doty (1996) distilled this down to seven practices which they considered to be strategic in nature and which should be adopted consistently. The practices identified were internal career opportunities, formal training system, appraisal measures, profit sharing, employment security, voice mechanism and job definition.

However, this theory of HRM has been criticized mainly on the grounds of shortcomings which result from inconsistent methods and analysis of results in the published studies which report on empirical work done in the area. which stem from inconsistencies surrounding empirical research methods and findings. Examples of this diversity of
approach is particularly noticeable in the range of different practices which researchers focus on when examining ‘Best Practice’ relationships and examining different outcomes. In trying to define a set of “best practices” that translates well to all organisations the main difficulty which has arisen is that researchers have not been able to agree upon a set of practices that all organisations may benefit from. Although there are issues with identifying HR “Best Practices”, certain HR practices have been found to translate well among different organisations. Thus, for example, among HR practices that seem to apply across organisations, training and employee participation in decision-making have been found to translate well (Tzafrir, 2006). However, overall the approach does not appear to provide a sound basis which can inform practice. As has been noted in the context of this research, for example, Bahraini culture in the workplace is very accepting of hierarchical decision making and involvement and participation in decision making processes may not be seen by staff as important as it is in Western organisations.

2.8.5 Configurational Approach

The Configurational Approach also involves examining the pattern of multiple independent variables is related to a dependent variable as opposed to examining individual practices and relating these to the dependent variable. It seeks to put together a unique combination or configuration of practices which within the approach are referred to as “bundles with maximum performance”. It is therefore quite different from the universalistic perspective and does not assume that particular practices of themselves will consistently deliver the same outcomes in different contexts.

The basic premise of the configurational approach is that in order to be both efficient and effective the HRM system must achieve “horizontal and vertical fit”. Horizontal fit refers to the consistency of implementation of HRM practices is achieved across an organisation
and vertical fit refers to the degree to which these HRM practices are aligned and integrated with other features of the organisation, such as mission or organisational strategy (Delery & Doty, 1996).

Configurational approaches to HRM stipulate that configurations or patterns of unique practices, in combination with polices and strategies (Martin-Alcazar *et al*., 2005), will work with one another in a nonlinear; synergistic fashion; so as to produce a maximum organisational effectiveness (Delery & Doty, 1996). A condition of this effectiveness is that the pattern of HR practices that must achieve both horizontal (internal to HR) and vertical (external to HR) fit (Ericksen & Dyer, 2005). Horizontal fit refers to the idea of consistency among all HR practices. For example, an organisation’s recruiting practice, selection practices; compensation practices, etc. are all aligned with and complement one another. Vertical fit refers to how the entire HR system (all practices in combination) is aligned with organisational characteristics, such as, the strategy of the organisation.

It has been claimed that the configurational approach helps to explain the basis behind how various HR practices impact on organisational outcomes (Ericksen & Dyer, 2005). Research has attempted to demonstrate that through systems (i.e., configurations, patterns of unique practices) of HR practices rather than through single HR practices, a better explanation of how HPWPs contribute to performance may be explained (Chan *et al*., 2004). Additional findings in the literature have also provided some support for the configurational perspective (Delery & Doty, 1996).

2.9 Research Studies on HRM practices

This section presents a literature review of relevant research work on HRM practices. There is a very large body of research and the main focus has been to examine research in
the context of HRM systems in developing countries. Such research is much scarcer than studies which are centred on UK or US HRM practices. However, various researchers have suggested that it is important that more HRM studies should be conducted across more diversified cultures and nations. It is important to know - given the global nature of business - what factors are important in HRM in various parts of the world. Only when it is possible to pick out the most important factors that may influence the implementation of HRM practices in different organisational settings will it be possible to conduct meaningful evaluations which can cumulatively achieve a body of research which can support HRM theories and relevant policies and practices which have general application (Budhwar & Debrah, 2001).

Until the 1970s, the view that management theories were universally applicable was almost assumed without question. However, the influence of what was termed the ‘Convergence Hypothesis’ within business research is no longer accepted and in large part this has been because of evidence which researchers in cross cultural studies have provided (Hofstede, 1993). Most HRM models have been rooted in a western tradition but it is questionable whether this applies across cultures. Researchers have recognized the importance of developing appropriate theory and practice to encompass the use of SHR in different contexts (Blunt & Jones, 1991).

This therefore compounds a problem which has already been noted in this research in terms of determining which HR practices should be considered. Bosilie et al. (2005) in their analysis of over 100 research studies related to HRM and performance found there was no fixed list of practices that define HRM. They identified 26 types of practice of which the principal four comprised (ranked according to frequency of use) training and development, reward and remuneration, management of performance (including the
employee appraisal system adopted), and policies and procedures with respect to recruitment and selection. (They also indicated that the three theoretical frameworks used most extensively to research HR practices were the contingent framework, the resource-based view, and AMO theory).

The following discussion focuses on some of the research studies which can assist in providing better insight into the use of HRM practices in developing countries and thus correct the Anglo Saxon bias which is a feature of the general literature in this area. As noted by Blunt and Jones it is important for researchers to understand the important aspects of HR practices the developing world in order to develop appropriate theories which have general application (Blunt and Jones, 1991).

In the context of India, Kundu and Malhan (2007), conducted research which they published in their article entitled 'HRM Practices in Insurance Companies Operating in India’. They analysed data from 218 respondents from two multinational insurance companies and two Indian insurance companies. The results they reported through the application of factor analysis demonstrated that training and benefits were a highly significant feature of HR activities within the companies. There was less emphasis on performance appraisal, recruitment and selection procedures and socialization employees within the Indian companies. An analysis of variance showed little diversity in the characteristics of the workforce in the Indian insurance companies as compared to multinational companies and also the results indicated that remuneration was not as strongly linked to performance in Indian companies as compared with the multinational insurance companies studied.

In addition, in a study in Sri Lanka, Ruwan (2007) empirically evaluated a range of human resource practices which had been implemented to have an impact on marketing executive
turnover of Leasing Companies. The HR practices assessed included a range of practices which were largely aimed at socialisation of employees to broadly examine organisational culture. Specifically, the researchers examined role analysis, work life balance, career development, support structures from supervisors/management and compensation. The researchers sought to determine whether and how these impacted on employees’ decisions to leave their companies. Regression results indicated that out of six human resource practices compensation and career development have the strongest influences in reducing the turnover of staff. Other practical measures which involved HR practices which involved socialisation of employees were not shown to have significant impact on the turnover of marketing executives. This clearly should not be taken to indicate that such practices are not important but again demonstrates that context is important and in this particular context career development and compensation are clearly stronger influencing factors.

The civil service in developing country (Eritrea) was the subject of study by Tessema and Soeters (2006) in their article ‘Challenges and prospects of HRM in developing countries: testing HR Performance link in The Eritrean civil service’. While finding that HR practices had a beneficial influence on individual performance could not make direct comparisons with western practices because of the very significant difference in which HR practices were implemented.

Also in the context of India it is interesting to note that Budhwar and Boyne (2004), conducted a comparative study of 137 Indian public and private manufacturing firms, and found that largely the HRM practices which were employed were broadly similar. The role of HR departments in areas such as recruitment and selection, pay and benefits, training and development, employee relations were similar. Significantly, however, they report that
in the private sector organisations there is evidence that companies take a different, and they argue more rational, approach to dealing with HR practices such as compensation, training and development compared to public sector organisations. This conclusion is supported by Singh (2004) in his article 'HRD Practices and Philosophy of Management in Indian organisations’. His study consisted of 95 respondents from two private sector organisations and 119 respondents from two public sector organisations to investigate relationship between human resource practices and philosophy of management of the Indian business organisations. He found that the variables of recruitment and selection were highly but negatively related to philosophy of management in organisations which he asserted indicated that the Indian organisations were very traditional in their philosophy of management. Thus the HR practices adopted in this context cannot be directly correlated with the implementation of the same HR practices in the western world.

2.10 Studies on the Linkage of HRM-Performance

Despite numerous studies in HRM literature on the relationship between HR practice and firm performance, doubts exist among scholars about confirming such a linkage theoretically and empirically (e.g., Guest, 1997; Gerhart, 1999). What those studies actually referring is that search into effects of human resource practices on organisational effectiveness, while promising, is still in its infancy. Studies are few in number and generally lacking in conceptual sophistication.

Chang and Chen (2002) investigated the link between HRM practices and firm performance in Taiwan's high tech industry. They found a positive relationship which was statistically significant in terms of the six dimensions of HRM practices which they investigated. These were - training and development, teamwork, benefits, human resource planning, performance appraisal and employment security. They measured these against
two items which were used as indicators of the company’s firm performance - employee productivity and employee turnover. The conclusions they reached were that all six HRM practices which they had tested had a positive influence on employee productivity and firm performance. Also in Taiwan, Lee and Lee, (2007), in study of Taiwanese Steel Industry’ investigated the impact of HRM practices on business performance. The researchers focussed specifically on training and development, teamwork, compensation and incentives, human resource planning, performance appraisal, and employee security to improve firm’s business performance including employee’s productivity, product quality and firm’s flexibility.

Similar evidence on impact comes from Guthrie (2001). In the article ‘High – Involvement Work Practices, Turnover and Productivity: Evidence from New Zealand’, Guthrie examined a New Zealand corporation and concluded that financial measures used (turnover and profitability) were related to HRM practices. Harel and Tzafir (1999) who examined both public and private sector organisations in Israel also reported similar findings as did Tsai, who, in a study in Taiwan, found a positive relationship between HRM practices related to employee empowerment and firms’ performance (Tsai, 2006). Ahmed and Schroeder (2003) confirmed the link between HR practices and performance through comparing a very wide range of HRM practices with firms’ operational performance and similarly further evidence comes from Lam and White (1998) who studied 14 manufacturing industries,

In a very extensive study, Delaney and Huselid (1996) surveyed 590 firms to investigate the link between HRM practices and organisational performance. The publication of their findings in the Academy of Management Journal had a significant impact on research in
this area. Examining the impact of HRM practices on perceptions of organisational performance they concluded that, in particular, highly-selective staff recruitment (linked to appropriate compensation) and training, and development had a significantly positive relationship with firm performance. In a study of the banking sector Delery and Doty (1996) reported performance-based compensation as the single most significant indicator which was linked to organisational performance. Katou and Budhwar (2007) in their study ‘Effect of HRM Policies on organisational performance in Greek Manufacturing Firms’ analysed 178 Greek manufacturing firms and using the universalistic model reported that the ‘bundle’ of HRM policies and procedures which were most significant related to recruitment, training, promotion, incentives, benefits, involvement and health and safety are positively related to organisational performance.

Chand and Katou (2007) in their study of HRM practices on organisational performance in the Indian hotel industry surveyed 439 three to five star hotels and claimed that results revealed conclusively that performance in the hotel sector was positively related to HRM practices. Their correlation analysis showed that recruitment and selection, manpower planning, job design, training and development, quality circles and pay and incentives positively impacted the performance of hotels.

Interestingly in terms of this debate, Paul and Anantharaman (2003) in their study of 35 Indian software companies attempted to link HRM practices with organisational performance and found that it was not possible to identify a single HRM practice with a direct relation to an organisation’s financial performance. However, they concluded that collectively the HRM practices which they studied had an overall indirect impact on the operational and financial performance of the organisation. Again their work claims to demonstrate the link between staff development and organisational performance. Although
not fully supported by their study they put forward a proposal that career development programs were particularly important in organisations for the growth and development of its personnel. Again without fully justifying their case empirically the noted that this practice in turn, stimulates commitment and devotion, which, subsequently, raises personnel productivity and output. Wall and Wood (2005) conducted a more rigorous analysis based on a study of 25 organisations to find the relative fit of HR practices and performance, indicated that there is indeed evidential support to confirm the fit of HRM practices and performance is promising in some cases but given the inadequate research design they found that the claims of effectiveness could only be supported in 19 of 25 studies. Thus the variation in reporting needed to be explained and in particular a more solid research basis had to be established to support claims and investigate discrepancies in reporting on why positive relationships between HR practices and performance are not consistently evidenced.

In summary these studies and others demonstrate that the application of HRM practices cannot be considered to be globally uniform and the degree to which HRM practices have been fully implemented or the emphasis on particular HRM practices varies depending on the international context in which companies or organisations operate.

**Table (2.3): Studies on Moderating and Mediating Effect of HRM Performance Linkage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors (Publication Year)</th>
<th>Major Findings (Approaches employed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chan, Shaffer &amp; Snape (2004)</td>
<td>Through surveying senior executives and HR managers from 82 Hong Kong firms from multi-industries, relationship between High Performance human resource practices and firm performance, and the moderating effects of organisational culture and differentiation strategy were tested. Results indicated that SHRM-performance relationship and moderating role of strategy were not supported, and only partial support was found on moderating role of culture (Universalism and contingency perspectives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Study Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Collins &amp; Clark (2003)</td>
<td>Through surveying CEOs and top managers from 73 high-tech firms in my-Atlantic region of US, the relationship between a set of TMT network building HR practices and firm performance were examined as mediated by internal and external social networks of top managers. Full mediating role of TMT social network was found to influence relationship between SHRM and firm performance (contingency perspective)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bae, Chen, Wan, Lawler, &amp; Walumbwa (2003)</td>
<td>Through surveying individuals responsible for HRM in 700 firms in South Korea, Thailand, Taiwan and Singapore, the relationship between utilization of HPWS techniques and organisational effectiveness was examined. Moderating effects of the host country and home country origin were also tested. Results supported the positive association between HPWS and performance of firms in all four countries. However, both the host country and home country effects on HPWS-performance relationship were not significant (Universalism and contingency perspectives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panayotopoulou, Bourantas, &amp; Papad ex-andris (2003)</td>
<td>Through surveying HR specialists (for HRM orientation) and marketing executives (for strategy, environment and performance) of 104 organisations in Greece; environmental factors (dynamism/munificence), organisational size, and strategy (cost leadership/differentiation/focus) were examined to have impact on the relationship between adoption of SHRM represented by four different models (rational/control/flexible/internal) with firm performance (contingency perspective)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harris &amp; Ggborma (2001)</td>
<td>Through surveying general managers and marketing managers from 1000 units of UK firms in multi-industries sampled from FAME database by systematic random selection; market orientation, was found to mediate relationship of SHRM and firm performance (contingency perspective)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delery &amp; Doty (1996)</td>
<td>Through surveying senior HR director and president of firms in banking industry, three perspectives underlying SHRM, i.e., universal, contingency and configurationally view are tested, finding that some HR practices, including performance appraisal, participation and internal career opportunities are positively linked to firm performance, with strategy (prospector, defender, analyser and innovation) as main moderator (universalism/contingency/configurationally perspectives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martell, Gupta &amp; Carroll (1996)</td>
<td>115 SBUs of US Fortune 500 firms were adopted to test relationship of 16 HRM practices with firm performance. Eight practices are found to be directly linked (universal) to firm performance, two strictly contingent on firm strategy (Differentiation and cost leadership), and one simultaneous universal/contingent relationship (best practice/Universalism and best fit/contingency perspective)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird &amp; Beechler (1995)</td>
<td>Through surveying senior personnel managers from 219 Japanese-owned companies in U.S., match between business strategy and HR strategy was found to be linked with better HRM related performance, such as rate of promotion and turnover (best fit/contingency perspective)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Huselid (1995)</td>
<td>968 firms with more than one hundred employees are sampled, and questionnaire surveyed, finding that High Performance Work Practices have an impact on employee outcome (turnover and productivity) and short &amp; long term financial performance, while the impact on performance is partially mediated by employee turnover and productivity (best practices/universalism)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
There is no consistent evidence illustrating what constitutes these systems or bundles of HR practices. For example, Dyer and Reeves (1995) found that the few 'bundles' typologies from those typical studies rarely covered the same HRM practices. Taking four studies (Ichniowski, 1990; Ichniowski et al., 1993; Arthur, 1994; MacDuffie, 1995) as examples, they found that number of HR practices covered in these studies ranged from six to eleven, and there were in total twenty-eight different measures. Those termed 'High Performance Practices' or 'Best Practices' varied significantly in terms of practices included, with some even conflicting with each other (Dyer & Reeves, 1995; Becker & Gerhart, 1996). For example, 'Variable Pay' is given a low emphasis in Arthur’s (1994) commitment system, while emphasizing greatly on HR systems defined by MacDuffie (1996) and Huselid (1995). In addition, measures used in most studies are too generic in nature to contain enough information that it should reflect.

Finally, in this consideration of HRM practices and links to organisational performance an important factor concerns the measurements themselves in terms of the source(s) of data used in the analysis. Most studies of HRM use a set of HR practices as proxy and data are collected from HR managers/executives. Dependence on a single or limited number of respondents is usually used. Thus it can be argued that the validity of the construct is then threatened, due to possible introduction of a large measurement of error or variation depending on the data source. Wright, Gardner, Moynihan, Park, Gerhart and Delery (2001) provided evidence for such measurement error through testing three organisations from different industries at different levels and gaining data from the corporate level, business and job level, respectively.
In summary, to avoid issues related to the use of HRM as a proxy, a construct capturing the fundamental meaning of HRM is needed but this may well be sensitive to the context in which the HR system is being used. In this study, HRM this has been carefully taken into account and the researcher has defined as a series of HR practices that are aligned with factors which are of particular importance in the context of the private universities operating in Bahrain.

2.11 HRM Black Box

Irrespective of whether HRM and performance are strongly related that is to say that HRM practices and performance are indicative to organisational performance, researchers still must be mindful of other causal factors and thus there needs to be a considered understanding of the “Black Box” through which HRM practices are supposed to contribute to performance. The importance of being clear on "how" something is done compared to just “what” has been done is very relevant and thus the research literature became increasingly focussed on "black box" (Boselie et al., 2005). Essentially this refers to a process that seeks to make clear how providing specific inputs these are then converted into useful outputs (Purcell et al., 2003). There has been a persistent appeal in the literature (e.g. Sun et al. (2007)) for future HRM research to move beyond a demonstration of main effects of HR practices to an examination of both how and why high performance human resource practices are related to organisational performance.

It is through investigation of this problematic model of "Black Box" that factors which are otherwise often termed as "a remaining void", "a gap" or " a largely unexplained facet" can be clarified. The purpose of this research is to discover answers to such problems which are often ignored but yet are crucially important in defining the relationship through which HRM has an impact of performance can be established. Researchers generally have
highlighted the study of Black Box as a means of understanding what can appear to be paradoxical or inexplicable findings. Looking inside the black box will provide approaches of which can be adopted in models that help to associate the intervening variables that goes into the back box resulting in the performance measurement as indicator of how practice contributes to improvement. Hence, this largely unexplained facet of HRM-performance relationship has been labelled “black box”. Certain models having been developed which attempt to map the relationships on the “black box” including intermediary ones, in HRM-performance chain (Paauwe & Richardson, 1997). This intermediary phase of the relationship, at this stage, includes outcomes of the so called satisfaction, motivation, retention, social climate, involvement, commitment, trust and finally loyalty (Paauwe and Richardson, 1997).

One hypothesis to explain why shared values positively contribute to organisational performance is that, unless organisations are very small they are made up of a variety of sectional groupings. This may manifest itself in terms of geographic locations, functional zones, departments or divisions, and individuals not only have to cohere within these groups but also across the wider organisation. Without this there may be “dysfunctional consequences” which arise from the fact from differential treatment are applied across groups (Kepes and Delery, 2006). Thus a collectively held value system can be seen as “the glue binding different groups within the workplace together” (Schneider, 1988, p.231).

It is believed that the development of so called shared value between individuals and organisation is in itself sufficient to be strongly related to HRM practice (Dorenbosch et al., 2006), and so even be viewed as both an antecedent and an outcome. The values of an organisation determine practices and practices in turn reinforce desirable behaviours amongst the workforce. There must be an established platform through which consistent
and consensual messages are sent to the workforce that reinforce a certain value system and this is a central role for SHRM.

In order to better understand the ‘black box’, in-depth studies of the goals, mediators, and outcomes of particular HR systems in organisations are needed. Figure (2.1) shows schematically the “Black Box” of organisation” and Table 2.4 summarises the main “black box” propositions while Table 2.5 summarises the main models which have been proposed.

**Figure (2.1): Black Box of Organisation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author (Publication Year)</th>
<th>Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theriou, Chatzoglou (2009)</td>
<td>Although there are a large number of research papers which have been published which looks at the effect of HRM practices on performance there is little work done which provides an underpinning theory which can be generally applied. The mechanism by which processes lead to “competitive advantage” are not clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lytras, Ordonez de Pablos (2008)</td>
<td>The literature lacks an underpinning rationale which explains the key factors which can be identified as explaining how HRM practices generate organisational performance improvements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boselie et al. (2005)</td>
<td>The inputs and outputs to the transformational process are not clearly defined and little attention is paid to examining the potential for intermediate or compounding variables. Generally there is very little research which focusses on the &quot;linking mechanisms and &quot;mediating effects of key variables&quot; in this relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wright et al. (2003)</td>
<td>Much of research has demonstrated statistically significant relationships between HR practices and firm profitability. While these studies have been useful for demonstrating the potential value created through HR practices, they have revealed very little regarding processes through which this value is created.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many previous studies have examined the link between HRM practices and performance and shown there to be a positive relationship, but none has explained the nature of this connection *how* and *why* HRM practices impact on performance.

### Delery (1998)
Causal pathways which explore the mechanisms which influence results which are positive are neither clearly understood nor described in much of the literature. Influencing factors to explain research results need to be more clearly described.

### Huselid & Becker, (1996)
The starting point for research in the areas is often from a standpoint where there is an implicit assumption that HRM practices which are properly structured and implemented will inevitably be an “economic asset”. The detailed supporting evidence for value creation pathways leading from this are not fully explored. Research is required in order to "peels back onion" and more clearly defining and describing the most significant factors which characterize the processes involved and the extent to which these help to explain the outcome of the process.

### Becker & Gerhart, (1996)
The positive association between specific practices in “adding value” is often presented as re is as the main goal or objective of research but does little to explain both how and why this is the case.

It can be seen that a key theme which characterises the publications discussed above is that there is a need to focus on mechanism and mediating variable and this research seeks to fill that gap in the literature.
### Table (2.5): Comparison of "Black Box" Models (based on Savanaviciene and Stankeviciute, 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>HR practices</th>
<th>Mediating variables</th>
<th>HR related outcomes</th>
<th>More distal outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wright, Nishii</td>
<td>Intention of HR managers_actuality_Perception</td>
<td>HR managers_Senior Management Line managers_Employees</td>
<td>Impacts on employees_described as: Behavioural Attitudinal Cognitive</td>
<td>Organisational Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purcell et al.</td>
<td>Focus on practices which impact on staff:</td>
<td>AMO framework: Abilities, Motivation, Opportunity to participate Applied across all employees at all levels</td>
<td>Organisational commitment Motivation Job satisfaction</td>
<td>Individual effectiveness (performance improvement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becker et al.</td>
<td>Skills_Commitment/motivation of employees_Accurate specification of jobs_Clear and detailed work structures</td>
<td>Mainly focussed on managers to design appropriate environment to support these</td>
<td>Innovation Impact Engagement of all staff</td>
<td>Performance improvement (mainly operational) Financial gains in from both increased profits and extended markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest (1997)</td>
<td>Recruitment procedures_Skills knowledge and competence_Performance appraisal_Employee retention and commitment (through secure employment and career opportunities)_Appropriate reward and remuneration_Involvement and consultation_Status and hierarchy_Clarity of job specification</td>
<td>Focus mainly on HRM managers intervention to achieve these</td>
<td>Improvements in organisational culture commitment of employees</td>
<td>A blend of internal outcomes related to operational performance and effectiveness, attitudinal and behavioural improvements and financial gains in terms of return on investment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lepak et al.’s (2006) review of the subject advocated that instead of taking a theoretical perspective of ‘high performance work systems’ as a starting point that researchers should focus on identification of the organisational climate and the context specific intended outcomes by management seeks to achieve by adopting such practices. Thus the propositions put forward relating to the “Black Box” concept and a comparison of “black box” models should inform any proposed research on the subject.

2.11.1 Significance of unlocking HRM black box

According to Becker and Huselid, the utmost theoretical and empirical challenge in Strategic HRM literature is all about the exploration of a “clearer articulation of ‘black box’ between HR and firm performance” (2006). As a consequence, a number of authors proposed a variety of solutions to unlock the black box. The different solutions varied in terms of the variables which were deemed to be important in the HRM to organisational performance link and they also varied in terms of the context and conditions under which the link should be tested. A particularly important solution is the “people and performance model” introduced by Purcell et al. (2003) and this has proven to be particularly popular approach. The model concentrates on the development of the ability, motivation and efforts of employees as the main way in which HRM can directly affect employees and thus influence performance outcomes. Purcell et al. (2003) have identified four black boxes which lie between HRM and organisational performance which they assert must be researched or at least taken into account any research which purports to explain complex nature of the link between the two. Examining the constructs put forward by Purcell and a variety of other authors it is clear that one of the major constructs is the influence of organisational culture - including employee commitment and evidenced in employee
retention. As mediating variables these are centrally concerned with people and people management. They are also extremely important in the context of HRM as practiced in Bahrain and thus the researcher will examine these as mediating variables. Within this model Purcell et al. (2003) particularly stress the role of line managers which is often neglected in research on the grounds that;

"They have discretion in the way that they implement HR practices and lead their employees". (Savaneviciene and Stankeviciute, 2010, p. 430).

The people and performance model on the other hand has as one of its bases the extent to which line managers can have an impact on HRM performance through eliciting appropriate employee behaviours and attitudes (Purcell et al., 2003). A consequence of a number of empirical studies designed to ‘unlock the black box’ of HRM-performance linkages was to draw attention to the importance which line managers (or supervisors) and in particular the role they may play in the inner workings of ‘black box. The examination of their role further drew attention to the deficiencies relating to attempts to evaluate the impact of HRM practices in isolation from the political and structural relations ‘outside black box’ which condition or mediate in the implementation of HRM practices and places limits on the relative discretionary behaviour of staff. Research suggests that HRM theory needs to develop in those seemingly contradictory directions which are currently often perceived as being irrelevant to HRM policy and practices in terms of examination of performance. This research conducted here has carefully ensured that there is a balance of input by both ‘employees’ and ‘supervisors’. This gives rise to a suggestion that more detailed debate which considers line manager’s contribution to HRM-performance linkages is needed particularly around their role in shaping employee outcomes (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). Becker and Huselid contend that there needs to be a shift in SHRM and organisations to focus on ‘strategic jobs’ which
are critical to strategy implementation, so that this should be reflected in the centrality of line manager (Becker & Huselid, 2006).

Gerhart perfectly captures the essence of this argument when he notes that;

"Supervisors that show respect to employees and value their contributions on a day to day basis, as well as informal social norms of interaction and more formal social activities that build social ties and celebrate success, may be especially important determinants of employee relations. These would somehow need to be better incorporated in studies of HR practices; else, the standard HR practices and performance paradigm may miss too much that is important in HR". (Gerhart, 2005: 182-183).

It has been asserted in studies that ‘loyalty to supervisors and team leaders may be more important than ‘organisational commitment in driving performance (McGovern et al., 1997). An understanding of organisation culture is thus very important. This is assisted by an examination of Purcell's work on the People-Performance Framework.

2.11.2 People-Performance Framework

The ‘People and Performance Framework’ is the result of 12 in-depth case studies (Purcell et al., 2003) is based on two assumptions which are central to ‘unlocking black box’ or ‘peeling back the onion’ (Guthrie, Datta, & Wright, 2004) of HRM-performance linkages. Initially, the framework advances the concept of discretionary behaviour (Applebaum et al., 2000) by which it means all employees should have the capacity to engage in discretionary behaviour and, to trigger such useful behaviour, organisations must go beyond expectations that employees simply meet basic job requirements - that is important in leading higher performance (Purcell, et al., 2003). It is also worth noting that as line managers have discretion in the way that they apply HRM practices and subsequently reflect this behaviour towards employees, they become a critical mechanism for study to
see how they actually go about improving the levels of employee job satisfaction and commitment in encouraging employees to exercise such discretion beyond their own set of role behaviours (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). Thus, the framework actions the discretionary behaviour that is exercised by line managers at the centre of analysis for it is the front line managers who actually condition the gap between espoused and enacted practices (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). The key pillars of ‘People-Performance Framework’ give further justification for examining organisational culture, employee commitment and employee retention as mediating variables and for the choice of HR practices used in this research. In general, (in Pillar 1 of the Framework) it advocates the use of involves traditional generic HRM areas of recruitment and selection, training and development, appraisal and reward (Fombrun, Tichy & Devanna, 1984) with HR policies which support organisational culture. Pillar 2 of the Framework deals with the ‘black box and in particular the use of the AMO theoretical framework to examine causality. This is based on the view that there is a need for research on employee attitudes based on the following three areas. ability (‘they may do the job as they possess the necessary skills’); motivation (‘they will do the job as they want to and are given adequate incentives to do so’); and opportunity (‘the work environment provides the necessary support and avenues for expression’).

The ‘AMO’ theoretical framework encompasses mediating changes in employees’ abilities (A), motivations (M) and opportunities to participate (O) (Boselie et al., 2005; Boxall & Purcell, 2003). The core of the ‘people and performance framework’ relates employee attitudes (such as job satisfaction and commitment), the possible discretionary behaviour and performance in light of the three AMO conditions.
Thus, competitive advantage is considered as the base for the ability of organisations to elicit effort from their employees (Applebaum et al., 2000). In a similar vein Organ (1998) coined the term ‘Organisational Citizenship Behaviour’ (OCB) as such behaviours which are sometimes seen as having a discretionary nature and are not part of an employee’s formal role requirements but contribute significantly to the effective functioning of an organisation. Thus it is logical to consider measures within the organisation that may stimulate the type of behaviour from employees that may have a positive effect on individual employees and overall organisational performance (Chen & Farh, 2002).

2.12 HRM Outcomes/ mediators

Most prior studies have examined the relationship between HRM practices and organisational performance directly. It is now, however, accepted that this approach is not the only way in which the link can be investigated as HRM practices can affect performance indirectly through intervening factors referred to as HR outcomes. (Wall, 1989; Truss, 2001; Wright and Sherman, 1999). Thus both direct and indirect influences should be taken into account in research. This implicitly accepts the arguments of Huselid and Becker (1996), who supported the view that a causal relationship exists from HRM practices to organisational performance, and of Delery and Doty (1996), who further assumed that the relationship between HRM practices and organisational performance is linear, thus implying that there is no synergic interdependence of the different HRM practices. Essentially it is important to ensure that research, such as the research conducted here, explores both potential pathways.

In the literature, there are a lot of variables that have been proposed as mediating variables. Beer et al. (1984), for example put forward the proposal that the important variables were competence, commitment, congruence and viewed cost effectiveness as an intermediary
variable. Guest et al. (2000) argued that employee attitudes and behaviour need to be explicitly incorporated into models of HRM and performance if we want to improve our understanding of HRM-performance relationship. Becker and Huselid (1998) identified variables such as: employee skills; employee motivation; job design; and the work structure link to operating performance, which in turn, influences profit and market value. The approach of using intermediary variables is adopted in many articles (e.g., Fey et al., 2008; Yesmin, 2008).

Based on an intensive and comprehensive review (and informed by the researcher's knowledge of the key issues which concern HR practitioners in Bahrain), this study will investigate the most important HR outcomes or mediators in terms of organisational culture commitment to the organisation (employee commitment), and employee retention. The next section of this chapter will discuss these variables in detail. Commitment represents employees’ attitudes, retention represents behaviour, and organisational culture represents the core variable of this study and features that distinguish it. In the coming paragraphs the researcher will discuss these mediating variables before elaborating on the study model used in the research.

### 2.13 Organisational Culture

A theory of organisational culture has evolved through a combination of research grounded in organisational psychology, social psychology, and social anthropology (Scott, Mannion, Davis & Marshall, 2003). The term organisational culture first appeared in the academic literature in Administrative Science Quarterly in an article by Pettigrew (1979). However, researchers have noted that its essential themes may be traced to earlier literature on organisational analysis (Scott et al., 2003).
2.13.1 Definition of Organisational Culture

There are multiple definitions of organisational culture. Hofstede provides the one which is most often cited in the literature when he defines organisational culture as:

"Collective programming of the mind which distinguishes members of one organisation from another" (Hofstede, 1998, p.2).

Generally, cultures affect different aspects of life. Businesses are one of the most significant areas that are affected by organisational culture and this is usually reflected most prominently in HRM departments and practices. HR manager’s different enterprises take into consideration cultural variations. It can have an impact on all dimensions of an organisation’s operations e.g. use of incentives as a variable in HR practices may be affected by culture - this is discussed in more detail in the section of this chapter on employee commitment. To understand culture fully we need to understand assumptions that are related to culture. There are a number of implicit assumptions about organisational cultures. First, although cultures may be resistant to change, they are to some extent flexible and manageable (Scott et al., 2003). According to Ogbonna and Harris (1998), this assumption resulted in a stream of research on manageability of organisational culture. There are three different views pertaining to managing culture: (a) Organisational culture may be controlled by management, (b) Cultural change may occur only under particular organisational conditions (e.g., leadership crisis), (c) Conscious management of culture is likely to result in considerable benefits. In a recent publication, Ogbonna and Harris (2002) analysed the extant literature on culture change and came to the conclusion that the process of organisational culture change may be influenced and that a number of contemporary organisational culture researchers are increasingly adopting this perspective. The second assumption is that organisations possess distinct cultures that are related to business
performance. Obgonna and Harris (2002) speculated that possibly the most compelling rationale for the interest in managing culture is based on this assumption. Third, it is possible to identify particular cultural attributes that facilitate or inhibit good performance; therefore, it should be feasible for managers to design strategies for cultural change. Finally, it is assumed that the benefits accrued from changes in organisational culture will outweigh any undesirable consequences thus it is crucially important for management to give careful consideration to the type of culture which they wish to inculcate (Scott et al., 2003).

2.13.2 Organisational Culture and National Factors

National factors can play a very important if not dominant role in shaping organisational culture. Management practices and organisational culture inevitably must reflect national factors in both in terms of which how organisations are established in particular areas and the ongoing environment in which they must operate (Chew, 2000). Even in organisations which are global in nature national culture will have a fundamentally important role in how they function. In literature which deals with cultural considerations in management practice, the most extensively used model for comparison of national culture is that put forward by Hofstede (1980, 1991). This has formed the basis of numerous studies in the area of management in general though surprisingly is not as well referenced in the literature relating to HR practices specifically.

National culture refers to the culture specific to a national group.

"It is shaped by a number of factors unique to the country, some of which are the historical and political background, social norms and customary beliefs that are passed on from generation to generation in a particular racial or ethnic group". (Chew and Sharma, 2005, p. 560).
National culture is usually highly resistant to change as it is deeply embedded in the normal life of citizens of the country. Entrenched values (which are sometimes reflected in national legislation) deeply affect how management structures and carries out management practices (Chew and Sharma, 2005). Most recently, Katou (2011) investigated the relationships between ethical beliefs, national culture and national institutions and preferences for HRM practices in Oman through the use of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approach. The researchers concluded through a detailed examination of data that national culture has a direct positive effect on HRM policies and practices. Based on both theory and empirical research it is well established that national culture is one of the most important influencing factors that impact on preferences for HRM practices. Hence, in this study, the national culture of Bahrain is also considered to be the most important factor that will affect the cultural profile of local organisations and thus care has been taken to give detail of this in the research. Factors related to adaptation have been taken into account (particularly when examining the responses from expatriates and non-Bahraini staff employed in the university sector) and the research has also taken into account work environment and interpersonal relations as reported by respondents to the questionnaire survey.

2.13.3 Organisational Culture and Sustained Competitive Advantage

The resource-based view of the firm suggests that organisational culture may lead to a competitive advantage and enhance business performance. Barney (1986) developed a theoretical framework linking relationship between organisational culture and sustained competitive advantage. In this framework, sustained competitive advantage is a source of sustained superior financial performance. Barney (1986) specifies conditions that must be met for a company’s culture to achieve sustained competitive advantage. First, culture, he
asserts must be “valuable”. The meaning he ascribes to the term valuable is that it must not only allow but also direct the manner in which a company does things and behave in particular ways that lead to higher profits, lower costs, and other results that add financial value to the firm. Second, culture must be” rare”. By “rare” he means that the culture of a particular organisation must have attributes and characteristics that are not common to the cultures of a large number of other firms in the same industry. It is proposed that rare experiences may lead to a rare culture. If cultures are valuable and rare, they have a better opportunity to be a source of sustained competitive advantage. Third, a culture must be imperfectly imitable. Barney (1986) believes that, even if potential imitators may understand valuable and rare organisational cultures, it still may not be possible to imitate those cultures. Becker and Gerhart (1996) reiterate this idea through arguing that it is very difficult if not impossible to successfully reproduce socially complex elements such as organisational cultures and interpersonal relationships. Therefore, shaping organisational culture in a way that enhances firm's performance is one strategy that is difficult for competitors to imitate; and therefore, this strategy is one of the most powerful approaches to implement (Onken, 1999).

2.13.4 Link of HRM and Organisational Culture

Finally, it is important to explain how organisations may link HRM with organisational culture and why this proposed as a mediator in the HRM-Performance relationship.

It should be stated at the outset that relatively little is known about the relationship between organisational culture and HRM, and there have been relatively few studies to test the relationship (e.g., Rogg et al., 2001). Some empirical research provides support for the assertion that HR practices are related to organisational culture. For instance, Singh (2009)
found from a correlation analysis used to infer the relationship between variables of HRM practices and organisational culture that there was a link. A healthy culture is required for utilising and enhancing employee competencies and to develop people. His study focuses on the positive significant relationship between HRM practices and organisational culture in private sector organisations and concludes that there is a positive significant relationship between HRM practices and variables of organisational culture operationalised in terms of self-realization, status enhancement, inventive values and socio economic support.

Ngo and Loi (2008) explored the relationships between human resource (HR) flexibility, organisational culture, and organisational performance. Drawing on previous works, the researchers developed a conceptual model that links the constructs together. It is hypothesised that the three sub-dimensions of HR flexibility (i.e. employee skill flexibility, employee behaviour flexibility, and HR practice flexibility) affect adaptability culture, which in turn impacts HR related and market-related outcomes.

It was found that different HR practices made different contributions to the development of cultural types. HR practices accounted for 24% of variance in group culture, 17% of variance in developmental culture, 12% of variance in rational culture, and 1% of variance in hierarchical culture. Other major findings were that (a) cultural type and strength were associated with organisational performance, (b) HR practices varied by culture type, and (c) HR practices were significant predictors of organisational culture (Yeung et al., 1991). It should be noted that the evidence presented in the work of Yeung et al (1991) which indicated the cross relationships between culture and HRM was not conclusive. The causality implied in their research was theoretically guided but not empirically established.

Chan et al. (2004) surveyed senior executives and HR managers representing 82 companies in a firm-level field study of multiple industries in Hong Kong. The broader purpose of the study was to understand how organisations sustain a competitive advantage
through effective HRM. Thus, objectives were (a) to assess the direct link between HR practices and firm performance and between organisational culture and firm performance and (b) to examine the area of resource co-specialization by testing the potential interactive effects of HR practices and organisational culture on firm performance. The second objective was based on Chan et al.'s (2004) belief that organisational culture would not only facilitate a firm's superior performance but strengthen the impact of HR practices on organisational performance.

Research assessed firm outcomes with the two perceptual measures of performance developed by Delaney and Huselid (1996). HR practices were measured with a scale of items developed by Huselid (1995). Organisational culture was measured by using the four cultural scales developed by Denison and Mishra (1995). The four culture traits included involvement, member conformity, policy consistency, and, adaptability and mission.

Research findings did not support the expected direct effect of HR practices on organisational performance. Delaney and Huselid speculated that this unexpected finding may be explained by the general HR environment and by the role that HRM plays in companies in Hong Kong. As hypothesized, all organisational culture traits demonstrated significant and positive correlations with measures of organisational performance. It should be noted that, although none of the cultural traits emerged as significant predictor of performance in the regression analyses, they did, as a block, influence organisational performance. Results only partially support the contention that the interactive effect of HR practices and culture are significantly related to firm performance. Contrary to their prediction, Delaney and Huselid found a negative moderating effect for a few interaction terms; they believed that the significant negative moderating effect could also be explained by some characteristics of HRM in Hong Kong. However, these results clearly indicated
that some dimensions of organisational culture and HR practices did interact to impact firm performance (Chan et al., 2004).

2.13.5 Organisational Culture as a Mediator in HRM-Performance Relationship

Some theorists speculate that uncertainty surrounding the link between HRM and performance may be potentially explained through looking at the role other organisational variables may play in the relationship (Becker & Gerhart, 1996; Harris & Ogbonna, 2001; Collins & Clark, 2003). Harris and Ogbonna suggested that, as HRM is premised on the management of organisational culture and organisational culture may affect the relationship between HRM and organisational performance. Wright et al. (2001) called for more sophisticated models of the relationship between HR and performance.

They called for models in which it could be demonstrated that HRM systems play a role in creating organisational cultures or mind-sets that enable maintenance of unique firm competencies. They also proposed models in which HRM systems would promote and maintain socially complex relationships characterized by trust, knowledge sharing and teamwork instead of simply testing a link between HR practices and sustained competitive advantage. In short, Wright and colleagues (2001) proposed an examination of more complex structural models.

Becker and Gerhart (1996) conducted a comprehensive review of empirical literature on the HRM-organisational performance link and called for testing more complete structural models with intervening variables. They argued that, without intervening variables, it is difficult to explain how HRM influences organisational performance and rule out an alternative explanation for an observed HRM-firm performance link such as reverse causation.
Chan et al. (2004) demonstrated an empirically-proven relationship between HRM practices, organisational culture, and organisational outcomes. The organisational level field study included multiple industries in Hong Kong. The total sample included unpaired responses from chief executive officers and HR managers from 82 companies. Chan et al. (2004) noted that, despite the debate about the instability of HRM practices, it is generally agreed that a supportive organisational culture is necessary for HRM practices to function to their fullest potential. Thus, they proposed that a supportive organisational culture would not only facilitate an organisation's superior performance but also strengthen the impact of HRM practices on organisational performance. They tested the hypothesis that organisational culture would positively moderate the impact of high-performance HR practices on organisational performance. Moreover, Cegarra-Leiva et al. (2012) aimed to explore the impact of the availability of work-life balance (WLB) practices on organisational outcomes in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) mediated by the existence of a culture that supports WLB. An empirical study was performed with a sample of 229 SMEs representing the metal industry sector of Southeast Spain. The findings showed that a WLB supportive culture mediates the effect of the availability of WLB practices on organisational performance. The study findings did not support a direct effect of HR practices on organisational performance. However, other studies have shown that some cultural dimensions had a significant impact on firm performance. It was also found that some dimensions of organisational culture and HR practices did interact to impact firm performance. Chan et al. (2004) speculated that the significant negative moderating effect of organisational culture suggested possible clashes between a high-involvement culture and HRM practices of companies in Hong Kong. Thus, although the results of this study demonstrated that organisational culture moderated relationship between organisational
performance and high-performance HRM practices, their generalisability is limited (Chang et al., 2004).

2.14 Employee Commitment

Employee commitment has been studied extensively over the past three decades due to the belief that commitment among employees will result in greater organisational effectiveness and productivity (Fiorito et al., 2007; Meyer & Allen, 1997). The construct of commitment has been receiving wide attention in organisational psychological research for many years (Gutierrez, Candela & Carver, 2012; Huang, You & Tsai, 2012; Meyer, 1997; Meyer et al., 2012; Wayne et al., 2013). Organisational commitment refers to the extent to which employees of an organisation see themselves as belonging to the organisation (or part of it) and feel attached to it (Meyer et al, 2013). According to Allen and Meyer (1990), Component Model of organisational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991) posits that employees bind with their organisations as a result of desire (affective commitment), need (continuance commitment) and obligation (normative commitment). According to Meyer and Allen:

"A committed Employee is one who stays with organisation through thick and thin, attends work regularly, puts in a full day (and maybe more), protects company assets, shares company goals, and so on. Viewed from an organisational perspective, having a committed workforce would clearly appear to be an advantage". (Meyer and Allen, 1997)

Thus, the concept of commitment in the workplace has been a topic of vast interest to academics and practitioners due to its perceived linkage to organisational performance and competitive advantage.
Prior to the 1960s, the explicit study of organisational commitment was largely absent from the workplace literatures (Klein et al., 2009). Some of the earliest research on organisational commitment may be traced back to pioneering work of Becker (1960) and Kanter (1968). Becker (1960) asserted that an individual becomes committed to a course of action (i.e., staying at a job or company) through placing a side bet. Side bets are the costs associated with taking an alternative course of action, thereby increasing commitment to the current course of action (Powell & Meyer, 2004). For example, when employees invest considerable time and effort learning skills that cannot be easily transferred to other organisations, they are betting that investments will pay off. Winning the bet requires continued employment in an organisation. Becker asserted that over time, the costs associated with leaving an organisation accumulate and it becomes more difficult to leave (Cohen, 2003). Kanter's theory of commitment is somewhat more positive and was based on the study of social groups such as Utopian communities and focused on how the required behaviour of group members influenced their commitment to the group (Klein et al., 2009). Kanter (1968) described commitment as the willingness of social actors (i.e., group members) to give loyalty and energy to the organisation and thus develop an emotional attachment to the group (i.e., affective commitment).

### 2.14.1 Major Theories of Employee Commitment

Building on the work of early theorists such as Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian the construct of commitment has been identified as an attitudinal state reflecting

Attitudinal commitment focuses on processes by which people think about their relationship with an organisation (Mowday et al., 1979). Organisational commitment (OC), according to Porter et al. (1974) is characterized by three components: a strong belief in and acceptance of an organisation’s goals and values; a willingness of employees to exert higher levels of effort on behalf of an organisation; and a desire to maintain organisational membership (Porter et al., 1974). Although Porter et al.’s (1974) definition of OC had three components; commitment was viewed as a one-dimensional construct focusing on affective commitment (Mowday et al., 1979).

In the 1980s, O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) were among the first to define commitment as a multi-dimensional construct based on a behavioural approach. In the behavioural approach, employees become committed to a particular course of action (e.g., staying employed) rather than to an entity (Meyer & Allen, 1997). O'Reilly and Chatman (1986, p.492) defined organisational commitment as one's "psychological attachment to an organisation—the psychological bond linking individual and organisation". Other authors suggested that the basis for one's psychological attachment (or commitment) to an organisation could take three forms: Compliance, Identification, and Internalisation. Compliance refers to instrumental behaviour that must be exhibited to gain rewards. Identification occurs when employees wish to maintain a relationship with the organisation due to its desirable goals or values, even though the goals or values may not be personally adopted. Internalisation reflects behaviour driven by aligning goals or values between individual and organisation. O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) multidimensional model of OC provided a depiction of the rationales used by organisational members for making sense of their commitments (Bentein et al. 2005).
In 1990, Allen and Meyer introduced a multidimensional OC construct that integrated attitudinal and behavioural approaches to commitment including what they termed affective commitment. This has links with employee retention as employees with strong affective commitment continue employment with organisation as long as they want to do so and continue to identify with the organisation.

Clearly, some overlap exists in the way that Porter et al. (1974) conceptualized commitment as compared to the subsequent work of O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) and Allen & Meyer (1990). The approach taken by Porter et al. (1974) is similar to the O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) description of the internalisation dimension and Allen and Meyer’s (1990) affective commitment component. However, construct put forward by Porter et al. (1974) focused exclusively on affective commitment. Multidimensional constructs of O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) and Allen and Meyer (1990) furthered a more complete understanding of OC and helped to pinpoint its contribution in both theory and practice.

2.14.2 Consequences of Employee Commitment in Workplace

Early research concerning commitment was stimulated by the belief that committed employees would exhibit higher levels of job performance and reduced levels of withdrawal behaviours, such as turnover, absenteeism, and tardiness (Mowday, 1998). Over the past three decades, additional outcomes have been added to the taxonomy of OC consequences, such as organisational citizenship behaviours and employee health and well-being (Klein et al., 2009; Meyer, 2009; Riketta & Van Dick, 2009). Research suggests that increasing commitment among employees will result in beneficial in-role and extra-role behaviours (Riketta, 2008). The following is a brief review of the literature concerning the consequences of organisational commitment.
One of the most compelling benefits of organisational commitment is its claimed relationship to job performance. Recent meta-analyses conducted by Cooper-Hakim and Viswesvaran (2005) and Riketta (2002) reported modest positive correlations between affective commitment (AC) and job performance. A meta-analysis conducted by Jaramillo, Mulki and Marshall (2005) that included studies over a 25-year period across 14 countries found that the relationship between (OC) and job performance was positive and stronger for sales employees (.25) as compared to non-sales employees (.18). Riketta (2008) conducted a meta-analysis of 16 studies in which the relationship between performance and OC were measured. Similar to previous findings (i.e., Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005; Riketta, 2002), Riketta (2008) found that the positive effect of OC on subsequent job performance was weak yet statistically significant. In a study conducted within a U.K. media company (n =151), Sturges, Conway, Guest and Liefooghe (2005) found that AC was positively related to job performance (.30). Finally, in a study comprising 342 call centre employees at a U.K. bank, Malhotra and Mukherjee (2004) found a positive correlation between AC and service quality (.371). A similar relationship was noted between NC and service quality (.203). A negative relationship was found between CC and service quality (-.012), although the correlation was not statistically significant.

The link between commitment and performance at the organisational level has also been documented. Wright and Kehoe (2009) cited multiple studies in which profitability and productivity were linked to commitment across diverse organisational samples.

In addition, organisational commitment has been shown to predict withdrawal behaviours such as absenteeism and tardiness (Becker et al., 2009). In Mathieu and Zajac's (1990) meta-analysis, attendance was found to be positive, albeit modestly, correlated with AC (.102) and negatively with tardiness (-.116). Luchak and Gellatly (2007) noted a (- .20)
zero-order correlation between AC and absence frequency, but found no significant
correlation (0.08) between continuance commitment and absence. Similar results for
correlations between NC or CC and absenteeism (.06 and .05, respectively) were found in a
meta-analysis conducted by Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky (2002). In
published between 1993 and 1995 that the separated absence into voluntary and
involuntary categories. They concluded that: taken together, the results of these studies
suggest that affective commitment is significantly related to volunteering, but not
involuntary absence and that research in which the two types of absence are combined is
likely to underestimate the influence of affective commitment on attendance behaviour
over which employees have control.

Higher levels of OC also have been linked to positive organisational citizenship behaviour
(OCBs) among employees (Meyer, 2009). OCBs are extra-role or pro-social behaviour that
generally benefit organisational effectiveness (Riketta & Van Dick, 2009). OCBs are
defined as discretionary work-related activities performed by employees who increase
organisational effectiveness, but are beyond the formal scope of one's job responsibilities
and not recognized by an organisation's formal reward system (Riketta & Van Dick, 2009).
Turnley, Bolino, Lester, and Bloodgood (2003) described OCBs in terms of an employee's
"willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty" for benefit of an organisation or
other individuals within the organisation. According to Zellars, Tepper, and Duffy (2002),
"Examples of OCBs include helping co-workers with work-related problems, behaving
courteously to co-workers, and speaking approvingly about the organisation to outsiders".

Zayas-Ortiz et al. (2015) investigated whether there was a relationship between
commitment and the behaviour of organisational citizenship among bank employees. The
paper found that there is a positive correlation between the organisational commitment and the indicators of organisational citizenship behaviour and civic virtue, courtesy and Altruism dimensions have shown by the employees. The dimensions of affective and moral commitment had the strongest correlation with the civic virtue dimension of organisational citizenship.

In a meta-analysis of 22 studies conducted between 1985 and 2000, Meyer et al. (2002) noted significant positive correlations between OCBs and affective and normative commitment (.32 and .24, respectively). Researchers, however, found no significant correlation between OCBs and continuance commitment (-.01). Gellatly et al. (2006) revealed similar results, which were documented in a study of 545 hospital employees. Researchers found a positive correlation between affective and normative OC and citizenship behaviour (.29 and .23, respectively), however, not with continuance OC (-.02). In a study conducted among 46 organisations in Turkey (n=914), Wasti (2005) noted positive correlations between two types of OCBs (altruism toward colleagues and loyal boosterism) and all three components of Meyer and Allen’s (1997) OCS. In each of the aforementioned studies, evidence supports the notion that employees demonstrate the highest levels of discretionary effort when they have strong affective and normative commitment.

Finally, it is important again to emphasize the importance of culture. Taking the example of incentives to induce commitment, culture affects the method of introduction of incentives (Alamri & Zuraikat, 2011). In developing countries, incentives are considered correct human management behaviour that improves business performance. In some other countries, incentives do not affect business performance. In these countries, wages and other advantages gained by employee through the contract are considered the major incentives to improve performance and quality of work ((Alamri & Zuraikat, 2011). In the
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), cultural factors highly affect the incentive systems. KSA is known as an oil country. Most KSA citizens join positions with high wages. Their lifestyles make their care less for wages less than the employees of other nationalities as an indicator of their worth to the organisation. Thus a policy of individual incentives is more common. Evaluation of the effect of incentive polices is still in shortage in KSA as oil country with high income. Literature has shown that the investigation of incentives for individuals, performance, type of organisation and productivity is still in shortage (Alamri & Zuraikat, 2011).

2.15 Employee Retention

Noe et al. (2003) noted that there are two types of turnover from the perspective of employees: involuntary and voluntary. Involuntary turnover is driven by the organisation, normally to remove a chronically low performer or problem employee or to react to external pressures to cut costs. Voluntary turnover is initiated by the employee and can be due to a variety of reasons. An employee may decide to terminate his or her position due to personal reasons such as age, health issues, relocation, or family issues. In addition, of course, many employees decide to terminate their position due to dissatisfaction with organisation, supervisors, peers, or the job in general. Noe et al. noted that it was important for organisations to ensure that good performers were motivated to remain with the organisation and to encourage (or even force) poor performers to leave. However, they might have added that it is also important to explore the reasons for performance and mitigate against this through training and development.

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2 It is interesting to note, particularly in the context of the current research that Noe et al. omit to include involuntary turnover because of external considerations related to national legislation or by laws. In Bahrain recently the Higher Education Council introduced a measure which legislated that in the university sector senior staff holding positions as Vice Presidents or Deans of Colleges were required to retire from their post after reaching the age of 60. This clearly is an important issue in terms of consequences for HR but also serves to demonstrate the importance of considering national or even regional culture when researching the impact of HR practices.
The objective of a staff retention strategy should be that it incorporates a range issues which not only help to retain the workforce but also encompasses how to attract, and motivate employees to be committed and dedicated to the organisation. The way in which retention strategies need to be viewed and the factors which inform how successful they will be thus very much dependent on a clear understanding of what motivates employees to work – not only for the particular organisation but also more generally. With reference to this the historical comparisons drawn by Izzo and Withers (2002) are interesting. The authors concluded that before the mid-1970s in the United States employee’s attitudes to work was very much to see employment primarily as a way to earn money or to “make a living”. It was not considered to be an activity in which there was an expectation of gaining personal fulfilment, growth, or learning. This directly contrasts with research that at the time their study was conducted, 70% of workers who were surveyed viewed work as being much more an integral part of their life and an activity in which they felt was integrated into their personal and private life providing a psychological link to their personal identity. In addition, many workers now are of the view that they wish to maintain a personal work life balance. Thus any organisation which wishes to retain and motivate its workforce must understand at a fundamental level what motivates its employees to work and to remain in work.

Research also confirms a negative correlation between commitment and turnover intention. In a longitudinal study (n=364) of university graduates in Belgium between 1988 and 1997, Bentein et al. (2005) revealed consistent negative correlations between affective commitment (AC) and normative commitment (NC) and turnover intentions over three different points in time (with correlation coefficients ranging from -.18 to -.42). Luchak and Gellatly (2007), in a study of unionized utility workers, calculated zero-order correlations of -.48 and -.24 when relating AC and CC to turnover intentions. In a study of
Malaysian government doctors, Samad (2006) noted "a negatively strong to moderate and significant relationship between organisational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative) and turnover intentions" (p. 116). Likewise, in a study of 514 practicing lawyers in Hong Kong, Loi, Hang-Yue, and Foley (2006) discovered a negative correlation (-.66) between AC and intention to leave. These results, together with the aforementioned studies, suggested that employees with strong commitment are likely to remain in the organisation but this is not necessarily always the case and thus the research presented here will differentiate between employee commitment and employee retention in terms of how these are used as mediating variables.

### 2.16 Study Model

Building upon the previous discussion of HRM practices, organisational performance, mediators, and the idioms’ behind the black box, this research has sought to build a model to test the interrelated impacts within these variables. The three main parts of the model are HRM practices, HR outcomes, and organisational performance. Chosen HRM practices in this study were selected as they cross over considerably with other research, and, more importantly, as they represent practices which are familiar within the environment of Bahraini private universities. The literature highlights that there was no consensus on which HRM practices should be used in a study. There are widespread differences across various studies about which specific HRM practices “matter” for performance. Practices that are chosen are the following: training and development, recruitment and selection, contingent pay and reward schemes, performance appraisal and employee involvement. HRM practices and organisational performance are bundled constructs as Figure 2.2 below shows. The theorization of the relationship between HRM practices and performance has been done through the preceding very comprehensive review of the literature to provide a
deep understanding of how practices lead to better performance. Wright *et al.* (2003) noted:

"One of the first issues that must be settled in the effort to understand how HR practices impact performance is to theorize means through which this relationship occurs, in essence specifying intervening variables between the measures of HR practices and firm performance." (Wright *et al.*, 2003).

Mediators which represent the second part are the following three variables: Employee commitment, employee retention and organisational culture. The organisational culture construct in this study consists of three variables, namely, adaptability, work environment and innovation. The model shows a special role of organisational culture in affecting both commitment and retention which also will be investigated in this study. The researcher paid special attention to organisational culture and its role in unlocking the HRM black box. Organisational culture as the model shows may play a major role in affecting commitment and retention through enlarging and fostering the effect of both on organisational performance. The third part represents organisational performance, which encompasses the following variables: effectiveness; efficiency; development; satisfaction; innovation and quality. The model also shows the direct effect of HRM practices on performance, the reason for testing direct relationship is to compare that with the indirect one. Testing this direct relationship has not been studied before in Bahrain. Thus, the researcher is seeking to investigate these direct and indirect relationships within Bahraini private universities in order to find out how the impact of practices are transferred to performance, and through what intermediate variables the effect is transformed into performance.
2.16.1 Definitions of variables used in the Study Model

This section gives a brief summary of the variables which are tested in the study model.

**Employee Commitment** – As defined in the literature on organisational psychology, employee commitment refers to the extent to which employees identify with the aims and goals of the organisation for which they are employed and are willing to invest time and effort in supporting the organisation to meet these goals. In the context of private universities in Bahrain, employee commitment is very much associated with loyalty to the organisation and in particular acting in a way in which no actions are taken which would
badly affect the competitive advantage of the university. A full discussion is provided on pp 84-91 of the thesis.

**Employee Retention** is defined in terms of the extent to which an individual is motivated to remain with an organisation. This motivation will be affected by a number of factors including personal career aspirations and the attitude of the organisation to rewarding good performance. Employee retention is discussed on pp.91 – 93 of the thesis. In the context of Bahrain private universities employee retention must be viewed in terms of the practice of employing staff on relatively short renewable contracts as discussed in Chapter III of the thesis.

**Organisational Culture** as noted in the thesis is defined by Hofstede as the “Collective programming of the mind which distinguishes members of one organisation from another” (Hofstede, 1998 p.2). Organisational culture is thus defined as the factors which differentiate the organisation from other similar organisations and are reflected in particular management structures and management practices. As noted in the thesis organisational culture is by definition closely linked to national culture which is shaped by social norms and cultural beliefs which are shared by particular racial or ethnic groups. Organisational culture is discussed in more detail on pp. 76-79 of the thesis.

**HR Practices** – these are defined as the particular policies and strategies adopted in an organisation which affect the manner in which individuals are recruited to and work within an organisation. Generally, these are associated with Strategic HRM and cover a range of practices which organisations adopt to ensure that staff work consistently and effectively towards achieving the strategic goals of the organisation. The HR practices which have been identified as being of particular importance in private universities in Bahrain are – recruitment and selection, training and development, contingent pay and reward schemes
(compensation system), performance appraisal, and employee relations and involvement. These have been selected based on two reasons—firstly their relevance to the situation in Bahrain private universities and secondly because they have been identified in the literature as having a specific link with organisational performance. These HR practices are discussed in detail on pp.33-41 of the thesis.

Organisational Performance—there are a wide range of ways in which organisations measure their performance and as noted in the thesis there is no clear definition of absolute measures of performance. In the context of universities operating within the Gulf region there is no clearly defined, publicly available ‘ranking’ or ‘league tables’ of university performance. In the thesis organisational performance is defined in terms of the financial performance of the university (which is generally linked to the number of students which it can attract), the performance of the university in programme and institutional review, and the reputation of the university (in relation to other private universities within the region). Within Bahrain these factors are well established as the measures by which universities measure their performance. Organisational performance generally and performance of universities is discussed on pp 41-45 of the thesis.

2.17 Summary

This chapter has been devoted to introducing a critical review of the areas related to the research. It is divided into three broad: the first one is about HRM concepts and dimensions, the relationship between HRM and performance, and five theories underlying these relationships (Strategic Contingency Theory, Resource-Based View (RBV) and the Ability, Motivation and Opportunity (AMO) Theory, The Universalistic Perspective, and the Configurational Approach) have been discussed. This chapter has presented a literature
review of relevant research work done by various researchers in HRM and organisational performance linkage fields. This is linked with the first hypothesis which the research is testing i.e. the link between HR practices and organisational performance.

The chapter has also examined the HRM Black Box, propositions and the significance of unlocking the HRM black box has been addressed in this chapter with a concentration on the importance of the ‘People-Performance Framework’ and, in particular, Ability, Motivation, Opportunity (AMO) involving supervisory/managerial style as a key factor in examining HR interventions.

Furthermore, HRM outcomes/the mediators have been discussed in terms of organisational culture and employee commitment and retention.

Finally, the study model was built and demonstrated to test the interrelated impacts within these variables. The main three boxes of the model are HRM practices, HR outcomes, and organisational performance. The chosen HRM practices in this study were selected because they are supported by a range of previous research, and because they represent familiar practices which are represented within the environment of the Bahraini private universities.

The next chapter (Chapter III) deals with the background of Bahrain, its profile, national culture and HRM, the influence of religion, the influence of tribal and family traditions, and HRM policies and practices in Bahrain.
Chapter III
BACKGROUND of BAHRAIN

3.1 Introduction

The Bahraini Private Higher Educational sector has grown rapidly over the past fifteen years and is now one of the most important sectors in Bahrain's economy. Among the reasons for this is that not only is there a high level of demand from Bahraini students who wish to achieve a higher education qualification but there is also a large demand from students from neighbouring Gulf countries. Currently there are 9 private universities in Bahrain in addition to 3 public universities. This rapid increase in establishing private universities was overwhelming and posed considerable challenges for the Bahraini Ministry of Education which is responsible for overseeing the accreditation and quality assurance of universities operating within the Kingdom of Bahrain. (www.moe.gov.bh, 2012).

The Bahraini Ministry of Education, working in cooperation with the Quality Assurance Authority (QAA), implemented a rigorous quality assurance system and established the Higher Education Review Unit (HERU) to review all aspects of higher education in Bahrain. HERU instituted a system of programme reviews (which focussed on the quality and standard of the degrees provided by universities) and institutional reviews (which have a broader remit to examine the overall quality assurance arrangements and governance of universities). Participation in the review process was compulsory for all universities and those who failed to meet the standards required by external audit by HERU or put in place suitable improvement plans could potentially have programmes of study discontinued or even lose their license to provide degrees in Bahrain. The system of reviews posed considerable challenges to universities and in particular it compelled them to examine very
carefully how they could enhance their organisational performance (http://www.qaa.bh/, 2012).

This background is very relevant to the research presented here. The system of programme reviews required universities to report on the systems which they had in place to assure the quality of academic staff, demonstrate how staff were appraised and also demonstrate that there was a robust system in place to deal with staff development and promotion opportunities for academic staff. The system for institutional reviews also had a very strong focus on institutional governance and of eight standards which universities were required to demonstrate, one standard (which it was compulsory to demonstrate had been achieved or the institution would be given a judgement of ‘no confidence’) was devoted entirely to Human Resource Management. Based on the above discussion, public and private universities clearly had to re-examine the processes and procedures they had in place for HRM and in particular, in order to comply with the standards, had to demonstrate that their HRM practices were strategic. Their interest in HRM practices arises from the desire to satisfy the requirements of the QAA in order to keep their licenses and to remain competitive or at least survive in a highly competitive environment. Private universities that meet the QAA requirements should be well positioned to enrol a high number of students which is the principal revenue stream for private universities operating in Bahrain. (http://www.qaa.bh/, 2012).

Private and public universities in Bahrain are thus now fully aware of the need to have better HRM practices to gain competitive advantage. This awareness has been translated into a continuous search for methods of developing, training, retaining, selection, recruiting, and performance appraisal and other practices to enhance their staff and faculty members.
In Bahrain, all universities are required to have a special (separate) department to assure implementation of a quality system. All academic and administrative departments must work with the quality assurance centre or department to meet the requirements of quality assurance authority (QAA) and the Bahraini Ministry of Education (Al-Misnad, 2008).

Competitive advantage within institutions of private education in Bahrain requires high performance employees, whether they are administrators or faculty staff. It is important not to overstate the case that universities in Bahrain are being compelled to put in place better HRM practices because of the requirement of external review. Some universities have clearly accepted that, as this thesis proposes, there is a close relationship between HRM practices and employee performance and thus organisational performance. In this study, this relationship will be tested empirically in Bahrain universities. There are many cases where clearly HRM practice should improve productivity. For instance, a low turnover rate in personnel at the university should reduce the need to acquire and integrate new workers into the quality system. Another example is that the success in achieving and sustaining competitive advantage in universities should clearly depend on training and development of employees, performance assessments, procedures of selecting and appointing employee, and other HRM practices. However, it is important that this is not simply assumed to be the case and there is thus a need to demonstrate this clearly.

3.2 Bahrain Profile

Bahrain is a small archipelago in the Persian Gulf with a total area of 665 Km². Shiá

3 Unlike UK, the Arab world refers to Persian Gulf as Arabian Gulf. As this thesis is being submitted to a British institution, the term Persian Gulf will be utilized. Author adopts this for ease of communication and not as an endorsement of the term.
Muslims who form approximately 50\%⁴ of a total population of just under 700,000 (Glanz, 2004) are indigenous Bahrainis. However, Shiá have traditionally been socioeconomically and politically marginalized (Bahgat, 1999). The ruling Al-Khalifa family and other economic and political elites are Sunni Muslims. Al-Khalifas are a branch of the Bani Utbah tribe of Kuwait who in the early 18th century broke away and established an emirate in Zubarah on the Qatari coast (Lawson, 1989). In 1783, they attacked and took Bahrain subsequently losing control of Zubarah. This was followed by further Sunni migration to Bahrain from the rest of the Arabian Peninsula (Zahalan, 1998).

Income from the Bahraini oil industry has allowed the government to modernize its infrastructure, from roads to schools (Bahgat, 1999), and to hire skilled and unskilled guest workers from Europe, North America and South Asia (Fakhro, 1990). In recent years, with the depletion of oil reserves in Bahrain itself, the economy has diversified through relying on refining oil from other countries and the development of banking and tourism (Hammouche, 2004). Thus the impact of lower productivity of oil in other Gulf countries significantly affects Bahrain. Economically, Bahrain is considered the weakest of the Gulf States, relying on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for most of its oil refining business and capital for other ventures (Hammouche, 2004). This underlines the importance that its service based economy - including education - is able to function competitively and that the country maintains its position as being able to offer quality higher education which is attractive to students throughout the Gulf region.

The country operates as a constitutional monarchy. It has a mixed two-house parliament. The first legislative body, Chamber of Deputies, is composed of officials elected by nationwide ballot and responsible for passing laws (UN Commission on Human Rights, 2002). A

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⁴ This is according to Glanz but nobody knows the exact percentage as the government do not formally publish such a statistic.
separate advisory council, the Shura Consultative Council, reviews laws passed by the other house before they are sent to King for final approval (UN Program on Governance, 2002).

3.3 National Culture and HRM

It is important in the context of this to examine how organisational culture and managerial behaviour is shaped and influenced by a variety of factors in Bahrain. In particular it is important to note how national culture can have a very important impact on what HR practices are adopted, how they are adopted and how they are perceived. (Badawy, 1980; Yavas and Yasin, 1999) assert that social attitudes and cultural values in Bahrain are distinctive and differentiated from other geographic regions. It is important, therefore, to identify the significant difference and in reviewing the literature in general on Islam and management, there is consensus that organisational culture and managerial behaviour is shaped and influenced by Islam, tribalism, state control (including a consideration of the general economic and political situation) and Western influences. Some of these factors are clearly interlinked and taken together the extent to which the different factors influence. In particular, it is important to note both the link between the two main factors which are generally cited as religion and tribal/family traditions as it is very difficult to draw a line which clearly distinguishes them as family and tribal values have their roots in the practice of Islamic religion. Finally, it is also worth emphasising that, as noted by Allinson and Hayes (2000), the state of economic development of a country is an important factor in understanding national culture and it would be wrong to believe that Arab countries do not vary in terms of political and economic development. As Branine and Pollard, 2010, note
"The issue for HRM in Arab society is to design work practices which integrate local value systems but meet the needs of a competitive global environment and in particular are equivalent to the best working practices in western cultures". (Branine and Pollard, 2010 p.714)

3.3.1 Influence of Islamic Religious Practices and Values

The legal framework of the Islamic religion and the moral and ethical codes it espouses are based on the holy Quran and Hadith (words of God and words of the Prophet respectively). In general terms the principles and prophetic prescriptions are applicable to all areas of social activity – and business practices are not an exception to this. Specifically, in terms of HR practices these have a profound influence on composition of the workforce (specifically employment of women), management structures and styles, and the ethical beliefs which underpin management interventions and actions.

In Bahrain (though notably not general throughout the Gulf States) there has recently been considerable investment in education and training of women. This could potentially lead to a change in the role of women and the enhanced opportunities provided to increase their participation in both schools and universities in Bahrain. However, involvement of women in the workforce is still modest compared to western standards. An accurate and systematic survey data on employment of women is not included in most national statistics but, based on the relatively small number of national statistics available it can be concluded that in comparison with other nations, Bahrain in the past has had one of the lowest percentage of the workforce comprised of women. It is often asserted that this is because of commonly held moral and religious belief in Bahrain that the primary role for women is marriage and child-bearing (Doumato, 1999). This attitude that the ‘woman’s place is in the home’ and caring for children greatly impedes women’s ability to work. In addition to this occupational segregation based on gender is still common and this effectively limits
women’s chances to obtain work within particular sectors and certainly where segregation is not openly practiced women certainly do not compete for employment on an equal basis with men. A report by Al-Iktissad Wal-Aamal summarized options open to Bahraini women as follows:

“[Bahraini women] will not stand in production lines in large factories, and will not work as secretaries in companies and will not work in service industry as hostesses in airplanes or sales assistants” (Al-Iktissad Wal-Aamal, 1997, p.60).

Thus, the issue of employment of women in Bahrain is problematic. Historically there have been limitations which have greatly reduced the possibility of this because of deep rooted cultural and religious traditions but there is some sign that this may be changing. New generations are certainly more open to adopting new values, attitudes and customs. In addition, the government is becoming involved and within the public sector have intervened to develop and implement new initiatives to address the problem. The impact of these initiatives have yet to be seen – particularly with respect to the focus on education. It is relevant to note in this context that in KSA (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), while women make up more than 50% of all graduates there are less than 5% of women graduates in the workforce. Thus whilst the changes are gradual the important point to note is that in future current initiatives should lead to change. Thus while presently the employment and equal treatment of women as participants in the workforce is not a significant issue this may in the future have implications for HRM practices.

Islamic values also influence management practices. One very significant example of this influence is that as Islam tends to support a strictly hierarchical and authoritarian approach and assumes that in the workplace there is little questioning of the authority of a leader or of senior managers. There is thus an expectation that subordinates should not question
management decisions. In addition, authors on the link between Islam and management practices note a range of characteristics which mediate the practice of management – e.g. Islam strongly encourages managers to be kind, forgiving and compassionate. Atiyyah (1999) and Abuznaid, (2006) have argued that Arab and Islamic values emphasize harmony, co-operation and brotherly relationships. Thus there is a strong imperative to avoid or suppress conflict in the workplace. Alhabshi and Ghazali (1994) provide a long list of core Islamic management values and more recently Branine and Pollard note that:

“As far as the practice of HRM is concerned there are many values and norm as that managers should adhere to in Islam. Values such as trustworthiness, responsibility, sincerity, discipline, dedication, diligence, cleanliness, cooperation, good conduct, gratitude and moderation guide the principles on which human resources are managed. All of these principles are supported with verses from the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Mohamed” (Branine and Pollard, 2010 p.718)

It has also been suggested that religious observance in Islamic practices could also have the potential to influence manager-employee interactions. For example, it has been noted in studies on cross cultural management that Arab managers as a general rule find it difficult and uncomfortable to have conversations or negotiations which potentially focus on negative issues or result in heated or what may be perceived as hostile situations - such as points in performance appraisals which have to tackle the issue of poor performance which may engender confrontational situations (Mellahi, 2006). The fact that Muslim managers and their subordinates meet in prayer often several times a day has led to a suggestion that this potentially results in lessening the ‘psychological distance; between managers and employees which supports a tendency to deal with ‘difficult’ situations in an informal rather than professional setting.
Another facet of the manner in which Islam influences management practices is discussed in the literature in terms of the influence of Islam on the work ethics of Muslim employees. As in many of the western religions there is a widely-held belief in Islamic states that there is a ‘Day of Judgment’ on which rewards and punishments for actions are meted out. It should be noted that this belief is much more widespread and the notion of retribution and rewards is taken much more seriously by Muslims than by western religions. This has given rise to the concept of Islam Work Ethic (IWE) that is supported by four fundamental precepts; “effort, competition, transparency, and morally responsible conduct” (Mellahi, 2006). The idea is further expanded upon by Ali, 2008 who notes that Islam is more than a belief by a complete way of life which impacts on economic and social activities who also notes that it has been compared by some authors as akin to the ‘Protestant work ethic’ (Ali, 2008).

If these fundamental precepts were to be followed and integrated into working life then clearly a very dynamic, successful and effective organisation would be the result. It has been suggested, however, that this is not the case because Bahraini people do not really genuinely attempt to integrate many Islam expressions and sayings into their working life (Mellahi, 2006). However, this is perhaps a harsh judgement and as with the concept of the ‘Protestant work ethic’ noted above the cultural trend is not necessarily to be taken as an indication that it is universally applied. Thus on the crucial question of the extent to which Islamic principles are practised there is little evidence that these are explicitly integrated by Islamic managers. However, when considering this fully we need also to consider the influence of western influences and national or tribal traditional norms.
3.3.2 Influence of Tribal and Family Traditions

The literature which deals with the predominant culture in the Arab world describes it as a very conservative, family oriented (which includes a wide extended family) and patriarchal society in which women have a secondary role. (Badawy, 1980; Abdalla, 1997). There is a very clear social impetus towards reliance on the extended family and a very strong focus on the value and expectation of friends (Hofstede, 1984). This is frequently referred to a tribal society. A consequence of this, which is not always overtly recognised in the literature is that ‘tribal traditions’ can be both unifying and divisive. Thus consultation and loyalty may be features within a particular tribal group the converse may be true when dealing with groups which are ‘not so cohesive and this can result in the adoption of authoritarian approaches being adopted by the dominant tribe. This may explain the phenomenon reported in the literature that research on dominant management styles in Bahrain often gives rise to contradictory views. Thus (Ali, 1989; Ali and Al-Shakis, 1985 and Ali, 1993) report conflicting findings. Muna (1980) argues that this is because in Bahrain and other Arab countries consultation is really only paid ‘lip-service’ to and not actually implemented. However, this view is perhaps too critical and does not take into account the diversity of the communities in which consultation takes place.

Clearly the cultural influences which impact on management styles are very complex. Thus, while Atiyyah (1999) noted that organisations in Bahrain operate on a tribal basis this is very much an over-simplification of the situation. Within the immediate tribe or extended family Bahrainis are highly collectivist but this does not extend to those out with that community. Within that ‘out-group’ which comprises other Arabic nations and expatriate workers, interactions are more critically based and the main emphasis is on perception of the value, commitment and worth of the individual within a work situation.
This has led to the conclusion by (Budhwar. and Debrah, 2001) that “When dealing with the out-group, managers apply the same standards to all employees and put a strong emphasis on tasks rather than relationships: the relationship between employer and employee is ‘calculative’. Within in-group, however, from birth onward, people are integrated into strong and cohesive groups (tribes and extended families) that protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. Individuals subordinate their personal interests to the goals of their collective, or in-group.” A typical manifestation of this is seen in basic salary differentials. Al-Qassimi (1987), for example, observed that there is a clear order of precedence applies to remuneration. Nationals within the country in which the organisation are based consistently attract the best salaries. This then is followed by successively lower salaries being offered to Americans and Europeans, Arabs, Filipinos, Koreans and, at the bottom of the scale, Indian subcontinent nationals. This therefore explains the contradiction in the relationship between management and employees as the relationship and how it manifests itself in attitudes which affect behaviour varies depending on the ‘relationship; between the manager and the individual.

Hofstede’s model which was introduced by the author at the start of the century. (Hofstede 2001; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005) describe distinguished cultures on the basis of five dimensions: power distance, which represents the extent to which the less powerful members of organisations and institutions (like family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. Individualism/collectivism is the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. Masculinity/femininity refers to the distribution of roles and values between the genders. The women in feminine countries have the same modest, caring values as the men; in masculine countries they are somewhat assertive and competitive, but not as much as the men, so that these countries show a gap between men's values and women's values. Uncertainty avoidance is a society's tolerance for uncertainty and
ambiguity. Long/short-term orientation describes what Hofstede terms a “societies' time horizon”. The characteristic of long-term oriented societies is a recognition of the critical importance of current actions in terms of the future. Such societies will value planning activities to cope with change and a concern for the future informs their actions e.g. in terms of financial planning and saving. Short term oriented societies are more focussed on traditional values and ways of doing things and generally are more concerned about social obligations which come out of respect for tradition. Hofstede’s model provides scales from 0 to 100 for 76 countries for each dimension, and each country has a position on each scale or index, relative to other countries.

Thus Bahrain has been characterised in terms of Hofstede’s model as being “high in power distance, high in uncertainty avoidance and collectivist within particular tribal groups” (Bjerke and Al-Meer, 1993). This has been attributed to both Muslim and Bedouin beliefs and traditions (Mellahi, 2000. In addition, Ali (1993) claimed that tribal beliefs had a very strong impact on the attitudinal position of the workforce in Arabic countries claiming that this tended to see disagreement with established authority or behaviour out with the normally accepted pattern of behaviour as being threatening. This in itself also fostered a suppression of group or team working and engendered a stronger emphasis on individual responsibility and achievement.

3.4 HRM Policies and Practices in Bahrain

An important starting point in any discussion of HRM policies within Bahrain concerns the question of ownership of the organisation. Two important factors have to be considered. Firstly, the question of whether or not the organisation is seen as owned by Bahrain itself (generally with investment from other Gulf states) or whether it is a multinational company which is then subject to degree of conformity with ‘international norms’. Secondly it is
important to note that whether or not the company is privately owned or in the public sector is also very important. (Ahmad and Allen, 2015) have noted how the main model for HRM within the public sector in Bahrain is characterized by a presumption on the part of employees of stable, lifelong employment and competitive wages. Nationals in Bahrain have grown to have high expectations from their governments as historically governments Bahraini citizens have been used to a society which offers them preferential benefits and salaries based purely on their nationality. This has led to a situation where native Bahrainis have developed an expectation that the government has an obligation to its citizens in particular in providing highly paid employment in the public sector (commensurate with their level of educational qualification). Also it is important to note that in Bahrain, regulation any foreign employee can only work in Bahrain if his employment is endorsed by a Bahraini organisation. Thus foreign nationals cannot switch to another Bahraini employer while working in Bahrain without legal permission. While this policy allows the government to have a high degree of control over employment of expatriates it means that the workforce can potentially be very static and this is a serious obstacle when implementing successful HRM policies in Bahrain. Laws in Bahrain and in GCC are intended to revise the structure of the workforce with the goal of, where possible, replacing expatriate workers with a national workforce. An addition, these laws have the objectives of providing all GCC citizens with equal rights so it is not truly a national initiative but one that certainly encourages both the public and private sector to employ GCC employees.

This is consistent with the discussion above on tribal influences as high level public sector work in Bahrain is predominantly the preserve of native Bahrainis and in the cultural context previously described organisational needs are subordinated to tribal ties. (Budhwar & Debrah, 2001). Thus in the public sector employment opportunities and promotion opportunities are often seen as nepotistic and there is less emphasis on the link between
performance and rewards. The government is currently focussing on how to change attitudes and make more effective use of the indigenous Bahraini population to decrease reliance on expatriate workers. (It should be noted that a similar issue has pre-occupied the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia over the last decade).

However, the situation is different within the private sector where there is a greater emphasis on implementing strategic HR. However, this is still at a relatively early stage and prior to real progress being made the issue of consistent development and application of some more fundamental HR practices needs to be tackled. Kamal and Wood (2001) have argued that within the private sector there are two parallel HR practices which are applied separately to indigenous and foreign workers. They also note that dearth of legislation specifically relating to employment law which aims to ensure equality of treatment and legal enforcement of basic contractual rights such as minimum wages, discrimination, and measures which provide protection and job security for employees. (Kamal and Wood, 2001).

In such an environment there is scope within organisations in Bahrain to adopt a much stricter and direct approach to management which focuses on the perception of senior managers about the best way to maximise profit. The role of management is then seen as enforcing performance using ‘tried and tested’ approaches and stifling innovative approaches by individuals. At its worst this is driven by a simple imperative of improving efficiency by minimising costs and adopting a very proscribed approach to enforcing work practices which are viewed as ensuring efficiency and output. There is little incentive in such an environment to implement strategic human resource development (HRD) practices unless it can be shown that they will significantly improve outputs. In terms of skills development for example (which is an example of a strategic HR practice which focuses
on the long term benefit to the organisation of developing its ‘human capital’) there is a view that it is more cost effective simply to ‘buy in’ new skills when they are needed. In addition, recruitment itself is done on the basis of looking at the short term need of the organisation to maximise profit.

Particularly in small and medium-sized companies’ managers are finding that there is a tension caused by practices which require Bahraini workers to be given considerable flexibility and accorded a different status in the workplace. In the increasingly competitive and global world in which business is conducted they must develop their staff and provide encouragement for them to feel involved and valued. Previously the extensive employment of foreign workers effectively meant that HR simply had to identify an appropriate candidate with the right skills and agree administrative detail on pay and conditions. This is no longer the case and in seeking to develop the best possible workforce HR managers have an important role to play in attracting, developing and retaining Bahraini employees who can demonstrate they have appropriate skills and expertise. Of paramount selecting and developing e, however, is that the management function itself must change from being based around a “control paradigm” which Atiyah (1996) describes as ‘management by fear of sending you home’ to a focus on management which actively fosters and develops its workforce (Atiyyah, 1996). While Al-Rasheed reported in 2001 that Arab management was largely traditional and in particular frequently suffered from a lack of delegation of authority, this perception is beginning to change as organisations are more willing to adopt practices which they believe will make an impact on organisational performance (Al-Rasheed, 2001).
3.4.1 Current HRM in Bahrain

As has been discussed above, Bahrain has some unique cultural and social practices which impact directly on HRM practices. In particular, Islam exerts a strong influence on national culture. In addition, western practices and policies within HR cannot be easily integrated in Bahrain because of the economic and social pressures which have traditionally constrained the way in which government could legislate in the area of employment law. The government clearly realises the need for change and reform of the system and there are signs that change is beginning to take place. More significantly, however, there is a growing realisation within organisations themselves that change is required in order to be competitive in the global business environment. Thus, specifically in the private education sector for example, the universities are being assessed against international standards for the organisation and delivery of education. In order to demonstrate that they can do so effectively they must demonstrate that the HR function is operating on the basis of employing the best possible staff and deploying and developing them appropriately to maintain high quality standards of delivery.

3.4.2 Characteristics and Influences on HRM

It is important to note that there has been very little research done within the general field of HR in Bahrain itself. Most of the attention in the literature has been given to Islamic economics and Islamic banking practices and there is not a great deal written about Islamic management practices and in particular very little on the implications of this for HRM practices. There have been general studies based around specific Arabic speaking countries – notably Jordan and Oman (Katou et al., 2006) Thus, for example in their research on HR practices in Oman Al-Hamadi and Budhwar found that Islam was the single biggest factor which influenced organisational culture from the perspective of
employees and was more significant than national culture. But this does not necessarily mean such a finding can be extrapolated to other Arab states. While many authors try to base a discussion on HR in Bahrain on these studies it is important to note that it is wrong to treat the region as a single entity. While Islam and Arab culture is generally referred to as a single entity in western writings discussing management practices in the Gulf States that in fact there are important local cultural forces which need to be considered. Notwithstanding this and despite the lack of concrete empirical evidence it can be confidently stated that the key factors at work are religion and tribal/family ties and it would be wrong to ignore these in any consideration of HR practices in Bahrain. This fundamental difference led Pollard and Tayeb (1997) to report that western management principles and practices sometimes are not compatible with management as it is practised in Islamic countries.

With the ongoing tendency towards globalisation and harmonisation of practices across the world academics have become increasingly interested in the manner in which HR practices vary depending upon region. This has certainly led to an increase in the number of studies which seek to look at cultural differences in HR practices but it remains the case that there is no comprehensive study of HR within Bahrain itself (Brewster et al. 2008; Wright et al., 2005).

Finally, it is important to look at economic and social influences. Prior to the discovery of oil in Bahrain, most of the businesses were owned and managed by a single person. The owner of the firm carried out almost all the HR functions – perhaps assisted by family, or friends. Rather than being seen as an objective assessment of an individual’s performance, “performance appraisal” was largely based on the personal perspective of the owner or his senior management. Upon discovery of oil in Bahrain, new business practices
in all operational areas, including HRM, began to spread as the scale and complexity of dealing with an extended workforce was too complex to be managed by a single individual or small group of individuals. Now the vast majority of modern organisations are using advanced HRM methods and practices - though it is always important to look behind the adoption of these practices at the deep-rooted cultural environment which can still have an impact on them.

Some of the functions and supporting functions of HR in western cultures are now being more commonly implemented. Thus the analysis and specification of work, planning and forecasting of workforce requirements, use of information systems and observation of health and safety obligations are all now observed more rigorously. As noted previously this development of HRM has been consolidated and reinforced by a commitment of Government to modernize the workforce and adopt an economic model that integrates highly skilled professionals. The impetus to ‘modernize’ the workforce has also stimulated the adoption of innovative methods of management, and meet the challenges of globalization. Currently, a majority (80% of the Bahrain workforce) of Gulf council countries (GCC) workforce consists of foreigners or expatriate workers. Despite the fact that governments do their best to get nationals to work, only small rate of nationals are part of labour force, hence, great efforts are yet to be exerted in this endeavour. In Bahrain, there is a very large expatriate population. In fact, in the Bahraini private sector in 2002, 87% of employees were non-Bahraini. In contrast, the rate of non-Bahraini employed in 2002 was only 26% of the public sector though that is clearly still by international standards a very high percentage. Most of the Bahraini workforce (about 90%) is skilled or professional, while, most of expatriates are unskilled (about 75%). This is indicative of the fact that most of the foreign workers are employed in jobs that either require considerable manual effort or are not attractive to Bahrainis. These jobs are mostly in manufacturing.
retailing, construction, domestic service and hotel and catering services. The same situation may be found in the other GCC countries. More important is the fact that this situation is impossible to sustain the same particularly when the oil production is completely finished and the country lacks the resources to continue to depend predominantly on foreign labour. (Ali & Al-Kazemi, 2006). In the university sector this divide between skilled and unskilled clearly does not apply – however, there is still a high reliance on staff who gained doctoral qualifications from developing countries and in particular the employment of US or UK expatriates tends to be limited because of the high cost implications.

In the light of this, particularly in the university sector, HRM departments in Bahrain have a challenge to become professionally structured and accepted. In most of the Bahrain private sector for instance, and especially small and medium size organisations in Bahrain’s private sector, the HR function is very limited. Remuneration in some private organisations is poor compared to the public sector and it is also fragile in that it is not uncommon in the private sectors for companies to delay or even not pay employees’ salaries at all. Reforms are thus necessary to in order to incentivise local Bahrainis to choose employment in the private sector. Whilst the situation in the private university sector in Bahrain is not as unstable as in some other private sectors it is nonetheless true that it is more difficult for the private universities to attract highly-qualified international academics because contracts of employment and, in particular, periods of tenure or duration of contracts is sometimes out with the control of the employing university and there is great deal of bureaucracy (evident in the complex bylaws which the HEC imposes). This is not favourable to international academics who may wish to pursue a long-term career with a private university in the region. Another drawback which impacts on HRM in Bahrain is the persistent conflict which is present within the region (and often even the perception of conflict). It is by no means true that in the Gulf all countries are unstable but
clearly certain states within the Gulf Region are subject to political violence and unrest and thus the perception of those who may otherwise wish to find employment in the region is that GCC member states in general are prone to terrorist threats or political instability. This is clearly not conducive to an open recruitment policy which seeks to recruit the best possible academics from an international pool of talent.

Finally, to add balance to this discussion on culture and HRM in Bahrain it should also be noted that, whilst there has been no specific study in the literature, there are potential issues which are the result of international workers not having a clear appreciation of the cultural dimensions to working in Bahrain. At its worst this may in fact manifest itself as a degree of intolerance by foreign workers - particularly in the skilled sector such as universities - to practices and methods of working which are not the norm in their own culture. Thus for example, as noted above politeness and avoidance of conflict or confrontation are features of the Bahraini work environment - international workers who do not understand this or who choose to ignore this may quickly become alienated and will fail to be integrated into the working environment. Clearly then, given the differences in culture and the reliance on expatriate or foreign employees, it is extremely important that cultural issues are resolved in order to ensure that in any Bahraini organisation there is a clear communication of organisational goals and expectations of how employees behave in order to work collectively towards achieving them. HRM in Bahrain can play an important role in ensuring that cultural sensitivities are both understood and taken carefully into account in terms of manpower planning and development.
3.5 Private Bahraini Universities under Study

3.5.1 Applied Science University

The first university has earned its license and accreditation from Ministry of Education according to Decree issued by Minister’s Council No. (WD 140/2004) dated 5th July 2004 making it one of the first private universities in Bahrain to teach in both Arabic and English.

The university comprises three faculties (Colleges), and 11 Departments offering both Bachelor and Master programs with more than 2000 students currently registered in these programs. University employs 75 faculty members and 41 administrative staff of which 60 and 38 are full-time respectively.

University objectives at modelling HR through reinforcing theoretical knowledge with the necessary practical skills required for career success in the respective disciplines chosen by its students. The university assures its students a high quality learning experience, providing them with the leading edge required to excel in today’s competitive and global environment.

Total number of registered students in summer semester of the academic year of 2008/2009 was 1229. 382 students graduated from the university by the end of the academic year of 2008/2009, 35 of whom obtained their post graduate degrees. The university has a team of 57 qualified academic staff of whom 9 are part time lecturers. The university educational system is based on American system of credit hours. In addition, the university deems it compulsory for its students to complete a certain number of mandatory hours of internship for all programs offered by university, before they may graduate in their selected disciplines. ASU in Bahrain has affiliations with prominent educational institutions from
across the region like Mu’tah University in Jordan, Helwan University in Egypt and Royal Police Academy in Bahrain. Such an association adopts the form of an academic cooperation. As mentioned previously, the university currently offers 11 undergraduate and 7 postgraduate programs all of which are approved by Ministry of Education in Bahrain. Programs are taught in both English and Arabic.

3.5.2 Kingdom University

The second university is a higher education institution and private academy, offer higher education and engage in research. The university was established in 2001, yet it started student intake only in 2004 on the temporary campus and continues to function in the same campus until today’s date. Current campus has limited infrastructure and facilities. The university was inaugurated on a solid and strong base with a clear mission. Since its inception, it worked continuously to consolidate its position among the higher education institutions in Bahrain and in the region. Today, it is one of the popular universities in the country.

This university is one of the first and most popular private higher education institutions in the Kingdom of Bahrain, with a total enrolment of over 1,000 students in 2008. This number decreased due to the decision of the higher education ministry to stop some of its programs because they did not meet the ministry’s requirements and confidence. The university offers programs leading to Bachelor's degrees and Master's degrees. Bachelor's degree requirements include a solid academic major curriculum combined with work experience (industrial training). Students are also encouraged to take part in extracurricular activities and social services. Education at the university is offered to student of all ages and genders. Classes are conducted in morning and evening sessions. Most of its students are Bahrainis, with a few students from other GCC countries and North Africa. The
university's faculty, however, is a multi-national, multi-ethnic community. Its campus is located in the city of Manama, and extends over an area of 2,200 m². It is equipped with facilities to accommodate around 1,200 students. The university employs a total of 98 staff members comprising 55 academic and 43 administrative members. There are 877 students enrolled in the first semester of the academic year (2009-2010) distributed among the different university programs. The university is organised into five colleges in which there are 10 departments. University moved to its permanent new campus on 2013.

3.5.3 Royal University for Women

The third university is the first private, purpose-built, international university in Bahrain dedicated solely to educating women. It provides a comfortable environment in order to create leaders, develop vibrant personalities, dynamic decision makers, independent thinkers and community-conscious individuals. Its main focus is on academic excellence and personal development.

It is housed in a custom-designed campus and is equipped to cater to the needs of 1000 students. A fully equipped sports facility and residence hall is part of the campus. The university aspires to become a regional leader in academic excellence in women's education, research and development. In 2011, university has 601 students and 34 academic staff members. It offers nine programs across four faculties.

The university’s initial degree programs were designed in collaboration with two reputed universities, McGill University in Canada and Middlesex University in U.K.

According to letter No. 1/1/9 issued by Royal Court dated 09 July 2002, and Ministerial Order No. 146/2002, dated 16 July 2002 issued by the Ministry of Education; a special University for Women was licensed for operation. In letter No. 304/2002 dated 02 November 2002 issued by the Ministry of Education, the university opened for enrolments
in a temporary venue in October 2005. In August 2006, its permanent campus in Riffa was opened.

The university has five faculties:

- Faculty of Arts & Design
- Faculty of Business & Financial Sciences
- Centre For General Studies
- Faculty of Information Technology
- Faculty of Law

The university has appointed several women to senior positions. There is now a female Vice President (Albeit Acting) and all Deans are female. Furthermore, 73% of all faculties are female. This gender profile provides students with strong role models, which is in line with the university’s vision to prepare students ‘to become leaders who are engaged members of society’.

3.5.4 Gulf University

The official registration of U4 with the Ministry of Education for its scheduled academic programs was effective from September 21st, 2002; on the basis of his highness’s the prime minister’s cabinet decree number 1649-03 issued on the 2nd of September, 2001. There are five colleges in the university: Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Computer Engineering and Sciences, College of Administrative and Financial Sciences, School of Law, and College of Education. U4 is a dual-medium University, the languages of instruction being Arabic and English. Teaching in the College of Law and the College of Education is in Arabic; teaching in the College of Engineering and the College of Computer Engineering and Sciences is in English;
The university also has postgraduate program. The minimum period of studying the Bachelor's degree is three years and shouldn't exceed eight years. The Master's degree has a minimum duration of a year and a half and shouldn't exceed four years. The university follows a ‘course’ system with two regular semesters (Fall and Spring) of 16 weeks each, and two shorter Summer semesters per year. The university offers what it terms “flexible schedules”, which are made up of evening and weekend classes, in addition to the regular day classes.

In 2009 the headcount enrolment of the university currently stands at 2779, and primarily comprises students from Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf (GCC) countries. A large proportion of the student body (approximately 60%) is from Kuwait with some 20-25% from Saudi Arabia. The target enrolment is for 7000 students to be enrolled within 3 years. The university, due to some restrictions from QQA, was forced to close the engineering college, the education collage and the law school, and it is now trying to conform to the requirements of QQA with the remaining colleges. In 2013 the number of the students was very low and reached to approximately 600 students.

3.5.5 Arab Open University

The fifth university started its operation at AL-Haram Plaza building, Manama, Bahrain on March 2003 after being granted approval by the Ministry of Education in Bahrain. In July 2003, the branch was officially inaugurated under the patronage of HH Prime Minister, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa.

The university with its new methodology of learning, instruction, use of current and emerging information technology platforms has opened new vistas of learning opportunities. The ultimate objective is to provide opportunity to every individual who has the potential and interest to pursue university education.
The opening of Bahrain Branch Bachelor’s degree programs provided opportunities for those in the upper age group and currently employed and within low or middle-income strata of society, hence, they cannot afford to pay for higher education in other private institutions.

The university used an open system, good quality subsidized higher education, and flexible mode of learning which attracted students from a wide cross section of Bahraini population and also from the Eastern province of KSA.

Both Bachelors programs in Business and in Information Technology have been recognized and accredited by National Higher Education Council.

The university branch in Bahrain is also considered by Ministry of Higher Education in Malaysia as the official learning centre of Open University of Malaysian degree and continuing education programs in Bahrain and other countries in Gulf region. The branch is also granted to offer Open University of Malaysia Master’s degree programs by Higher Education Council in Bahrain. Ministry of Education in Bahrain has accredited all the Open University of Malaysia MBA degree programs offered at university campus in Bahrain.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has dealt with the economic, social, and cultural background of Bahrain. The Bahraini private university sector is a very significant sector in Bahrain’s economy. Performance of these universities and their effects on the domestic higher education in Bahrain are gaining huge importance.

However, cultural values and social attitudes of management and work in Bahrain are differ considerably from those in other geographic regions. Practices like lifetime
employment; seniority being close linked to wages; and social cohesiveness rather than objective measures of competence based on robust performance appraisal systems are not common across Bahrain – particularly in the public sector. In Bahraini cultural context, an ethos of tribal loyalty and individual relationships sometimes take precedence over considerations of organisational success. The culture of Islam and its inherent values and practices can exert a strong influence on the organisation of HRM in Bahrain. Thus HRM practices and policies which are prevalent in western countries (and thus inevitably affect the cultural and social practices in these countries) do not always fit well in a Bahrain context. It is therefore always important in this study of the link between HRM practices and organisational performance to take this into account. This is particularly true of the educational sector where globally there has been a trend towards standardisation of practices and seeing the market for skilled employees as an international market which employs and seeks to retain the best possible staff based on their academic credentials and their abilities. As the bylaws and regulations which govern the hiring and treatment of staff within the higher education sector in Bahrain clearly demonstrates this is not a situation which can be assumed in Bahrain. These factors give further justification for the research to investigate organisational culture, employee commitment and employee retention as mediating variables in explaining the link between organisational performance and HRM practices. The study will reflect these special features of Bahraini organisational culture on study's model and hypothesis, organisational culture in this study will not be treated as an ordinary mediator, as it affects both employee commitment and retention. Therefore, its role in strengthening the effect of both commitment and retention will be tested. Organisational culture will be treated as the core mediating variable of the study's model. Finally, organisational commitment and employee retention will also be empirically investigated.
Chapter IV

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the research approach used to investigate how HRM practices adopted by private universities in Bahrain impact on staff perceptions of organisational performance. The chapter starts by discussing the range of research approaches that may be employed in studying HRM performance relationships. Based on the research questions to be addressed the chapter discusses the philosophical basis of the research and critically examines a variety of paradigms which provide the fundamental basis for different approaches to undertaking research. This then forms the basis for adopting a particular methodology for the research and this in turn is used when considering the particular research methods to be used. Based on this the researcher provides a justification for adopting a quantitative approach to the research. Research hypotheses are then defined and the design of the empirical research methods is then considered. This includes the rationale for the design of the questionnaires which are used as instruments to collect information and measure the relevant variables included in the hypotheses (data collection). Factors which were important in administering the survey are discussed and finally the chapter introduces the methods used to analyse the data.

Criteria for determining the sample, i.e. selecting universities for inclusion in the research sample and the appropriateness of the selected unit of analysis for the purposes of this research is discussed is also discussed in this section of the chapter. The strategy for data collection i.e. methods used to obtain data from respondents in the sampled universities is also described.
The design of the questionnaires themselves is described and in particular this is linked to a discussion on how the researcher ensured that items included in the survey instruments were appropriate and aligned with the theoretical constructs included in the research model.

Finally, the chapter gives an introductory account of how the analysis of the quantitative data was conducted, (the analysis itself is provided in Chapter V) and how conclusions about linkage between variables will be determined in order to test the research hypotheses. Ethical issues that had to be considered in the research are also noted.

4.2 Research Questions

Research questions are presented in this section as they are the basis of research. The key research questions of the thesis are formulated to explore staff perceptions of the relationship between HRM practices and staff perception of organisational performance and to empirically test the direct relationship between these factors. In addition, the researcher seeks to empirically examine the indirect relationship through mediating variables and find out whether they fully or partially mediate the relationship. It is important to note that the study is conducted in the context of Bahraini private universities and thus it is important to understand the effect of cultures which are different from western culture (and the western cultural influences clearly bias the approach taken to these questions in the foreign literature). The researcher was careful to consider the effect of Islamic, tribal and family cultures and also give consideration to particular characteristics of social life in the Gulf Region which has an impact on organisational culture within Bahraini private universities.
4.3 Research Design Philosophy

The researcher has used Crotty's research model (Crotty, 2003) with modifications suggested by Creswell (Creswell, 2003). Crotty’s research model identifies four basic elements of the research process - epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods (Crotty, 2003). Crotty argues that if these four elements of the research process have been clearly defined and linked together then the conclusions of the research (the research outputs) can be deemed to be valid.

4.3.1 Positivism

This project is based on the positivist paradigm. Positivist philosophy makes the basic assumption that the same approach to explaining the causes of social phenomena can be derived by using the same type of investigation of patterns of cause and effect irrespective of whether the study involve social phenomena or physical phenomena. Thus a ‘scientific’ method of testing the relationship between cause and effect can be based on the same methods irrespective of whether the researcher is examining human subjects or events in the physical world (Roth & Mehta, 2002). Johnson and Duberley (2005) reported that positivism could be traced to the eighteenth century and the term was first used by the French philosopher Comte. Durkheim promoted the view that positivism should be the basis of all social sciences research (Appignanesi, 2007). It sought to rationalise behaviour and apply universal models to observable relationships (Thomas, 2003) and was based on the premise that we could apply the same methods as had been used as the basis for research into physical sciences to social sciences. (Behling, 1980). Positivism seeks to apply a form of observation or study of an object of research which is ideally completely objective and objectivity is central to application of a positivist approach. Thus, Nodoushani (1999) reports that positivist research often analyses these relationships using
inferential statistics, mathematical analysis, hypothesis and correlation testing. One advantage of positivism is its detachment from the research subject, meaning that it advocates ‘value neutral research’ (Johnson & Duberley, 2005). Carrying out value neutral research indicates that researchers enter the research process without their own biases or judgements; assuming total objectivity. This objectivity is achievable as phenomena are viewed as being functionally necessary and objectively neutral (Johnson & Duberley, 2005).

Post-modernism suggested that the scientific approach to research was not the only valid way of conducting research. (Appignanesi, 2007). Post modernists argue that research needs to look more closely at the explanation of phenomena rather than understanding the phenomena being observed. Many of the claims of the positivist approach were therefore rejected. Post modernism also challenged the way in which the research methodology was implemented. The small number of variables which were tested in empirical surveys was seen as being too restrictive. Those who were opposed to positivism argued that often the basis for selection of variables to be tested and the ability to transfer the research findings to other contexts when conducting parallel studies was questionable. This led Blumer (1969) to argue that “the basis for conducting surveys in terms of what variables would be measured was generally flawed”. Naturalistic observation and participant observation became more important in conducting research. (Blumer, 1969).

This view is also seen in another significant viewpoint from which positivism is seen to be flawed (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Johnson and Duberley, 2005) in terms of its claims to objectivity. Detachment and objectivity in observations was questioned in sociological research (Outhwaite, 1975). While it is possible to achieve this in scientific or medical research where the researcher can use randomized control trials or carefully controlled experiments to accurately ensure a clear distinction between the observer and the observed,
when dealing with human phenomena the distinction becomes much more difficult to achieve.

Thus the important points which a neo-positivist research approach stresses are:

- that there is a need to ensure objectivity with reference, both to the instruments used to gather data/responses from the sample population and also the possible bias which is introduced because of the researcher’s own views or opinions;
- that the context of the research is extremely important and can limit claims for it being generalizable;
- that there needs to be very careful consideration in terms of identification of appropriate variables and a demonstration that there is a clear causal relationship or correlation between the variables which are measured if conclusions are to be considered valid.

These are very important points which relates to the research. Although closely involved in HRM within the Kingdom of Bahrain as a senior HR manager of one of the private universities the researcher is not attempting to justify a particular point of view. The researcher is seeking to look objectively at how to interpret the views and opinions of participants in the research to derive conclusions which may lead to acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses which have been put forward. Thus a fully positivist approach is not possible but using neo positivist approaches helps to ensure that all possible steps are taken to avoid researcher bias.

Other research paradigms such as constructivism/interpretivism, realism and pragmatism were considered by the researcher. However, as the researcher wished to be as objective as possible when conducting the research which involved establishing clearly relationships within a model of the linkages between HR practices and staff perception of organisational
performance which could be seen to be statistically significant, the researcher concluded that the most appropriate paradigm is the positivist paradigm as extended by neo-positivist thinking. In addition, the researcher has concluded that there is value in considering aspects of pragmatic research thinking in order to fully explore the theories underpinning the relationship between HRM practices and performance and conduct empirical research in the area. In this research, the main objective is to examine the intermediate linkages (mechanisms) through which HR management impact individual and staff perceptions of organisational performance. Given this objective, the positivist perspective is appropriate as it supports a methodology that seeks to objectively measure the impact of a particular set of variables on organisational performance. These variables, as suggested by neo-positivist considerations have been carefully selected and as noted in the literature review for this thesis the various links between a range of variables and organisational performance has already been well researched. In addition, and again as noted as an important consideration in the neo positivist research approach, the researcher has taken care to ensure that intermediate variables are considered and thus addresses the criticism made of positivist approaches that causal relations are not fully explored. The researcher has carefully considered the importance of objectivity in positivist research and has been carefully to design the study in such a way as to remove any pre-conceptions or bias from either the subjects of the research or the researcher himself. Finally, and again consistent with the discussion of neo positivism given above, the researcher has been very careful to give full consideration of the context in which the research has been conducted (Bahraini private universities) and ensure that the outputs of the empirical work are described and interpreted within this context. Generally quantitative approaches are used when conducting positivist research and in terms of research methods “positivist research tends towards the use of survey questionnaires for data collection and statistical analysis for
hypothesis testing so that relationships may be explained and a valid and generalizable conclusion reached” (Malhotra and Birks, 1999, p.76). Thus positivist research tends to be more structured and often uses measures which are based around ensuring that findings are “statistically reliable” (Wright and Crimp, 2000).

Examining the research questions, it can be seen that to answer these, the best suited approach is to use the positivist line of inquiry. These questions have been thoroughly examined and a set of hypotheses are developed (Section 4.5). The development of the research questions has been based on a comprehensive review of theories relating to HRM and the link between HRM and organisational performance, which subsequently led to the formation of a conceptual framework (Section 4.5). The process then follows a deductive line of reasoning through theories of the relation between HRM and performance, which helped to frame the questions to ensure that the results were valid and reliable and did not make claims beyond the very specific claims which were tested. Thus, hypotheses from the conceptual domain, causality i.e. how HRM relationship to perceptions of organisational performance, comparisons with empirical results and theory, discussion of implications, assumptions made, and finally generalisation of findings after rigorous analysis are all important to ensure that the researcher fully meets the claims for the study.

4.4 Deductive reasoning

There are several theories that are important in examining the relationship between HRM and organisational performance such as Contingency Theory; AMO Theory; Universalistic Perspective; Configurational Approach; and HRM Black Box. The examination of theories and the arguments which they put forward formed the basis of the three research questions used for research. These research questions which were discussed in Chapter I are formulated based particularly to theories based on the concept of the HRM-performance relationship and HRM Black Box. This research is very solidly based around knowledge of
these theories and thus it is appropriate to apply a methodology involving deductive reasoning. As researchers have argued, with deep roots in the theory of the study, the deductive approach seems the most suitable path to use in finding answers to these questions (Bryan & Bell, 2007; Saunders et al., 2009). According to Saunders et al. (2009), the process involves five major steps: Determining a testable hypothesis or hypotheses, expressing the hypotheses in operational form; testing each operational hypothesis; examination of findings and finally modification of the theory if necessary (based on findings).

Table (4.1): Testable hypotheses developed from the integration of the theories to form the conceptual framework. *

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<th>Summary of Hypotheses</th>
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<td>H1: Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that there is a direct, positive and significant relationship between HRM practices and organisational performance.</td>
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<td>H2: Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that employee commitment mediates the relationship between HRM practices and organisational performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H2a. Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that HRM practices directly, positively and significantly are related to employee commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2b. Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that employee commitment directly, positively and significantly are related to organisational performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3: Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that employee retention mediates the relationship between HRM practices and organisational performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3a. Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that HRM practices directly, positively and significantly are related to employee retention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3b. Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that employee retention directly, positively and significantly are related to organisational performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4: Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that organisational culture mediates the relationship between HRM practices and organisational performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4a. Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that HRM practices directly, positively and significantly are related to organisational culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4b. Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that organisational culture directly,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
positively and significantly are related to organisational performance.

H5: Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that organisational culture is directly and positively related to the mediation variables; employee commitment and employee retention.

H5a. Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that organisational culture directly, positively, and significantly is related to employee commitment.

H5b. Staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that organisational culture directly, positively and significantly is related to employee retention.

The first step involved in the process is determining the research questions resulting from the conceptual framework based on theory. The next phase of the deductive process is to express the hypotheses in operational form. This is how the generated hypotheses may be measured. The appropriate measurement tools or methods to be used in the context of this research will be discussed in Chapter V on the Study Design.

4.5 Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

The study aimed to find out to what extent staff perceive HRM practices in Bahraini private universities to affect organizational performance and to investigate what the role of HR outcomes is in mediating this effect in Bahraini private universities. The study model which the researcher developed is shaped from three comprehensive variables, comprising HRM practices, mediating variables, and staff perceptions of organisational performance. The independent variables under consideration have been discussed in Chapter II and are illustrated in Figure (4.2) as follow: The HRM practices which have been used in the study and the rationale for selecting these practices have also been discussed in Chapter II.
4.6 Summary

This chapter has dealt comprehensively with the selection of the research approach by giving considering existing research paradigms. It has then given a comprehensive account of the detailed research methodology and related this to the hypotheses that were formulated when discussing the aims of the research in Chapter I and the study model including HRM practices and mediating variables to be tested described in Chapter II. In particular, it has given a clear justification for adopting a quantitative approach to examining the direct and mediating variables to be tested.

The following chapter (Chapter V) seeks to provide a clear picture of the tools and methods involved.
Chapter V
RESEARCH DESIGN

5.1 Introduction

This study has a total of nine (9) hypotheses of which five (5) are the main hypotheses. These hypotheses are formulated based on the study’s questions to address the relationships between three constructs:

- HRM Practices;
- Mediation Construct (comprising Organisational Culture, Employee Commitment, and Employee Retention); and,
- Organisational Performance

To investigate answers to the relationship between these constructs (and thus reach the study’s aims) to the researcher has designed a research survey which empirically tests the study’s hypotheses which have been carefully described and which examine the link between all constructs.

Data was collected by means of carefully-designed questionnaires which were administered to an appropriate population sample following a strict procedure to ensure validity and reliability of the conclusions. The data was input in summary form to SPSS and, more importantly to test the hypotheses it was prepared for statistical analysis. Nowadays, this is carried out with the aid of sophisticated statistical computer packages to test the strength of the links amongst the constructs (Newman, Benz & Carbondale, 1998). This analysis enables the researcher to determine to what extent there is a relationship among the proposed model variables. Statistical analysis permits the researcher to discover complex relationships and to determine to what extent one variable influences another. The results of results of statistical analyses can then be presented and discussed. In
addition, the summarized results from the questionnaire surveys provides further evidence which may help to explain some of the factors which are relevant to any identified links.

5.2 Principles

Objectivity is very important in quantitative research. Consequently, the researcher took great care to avoid his own presence, behaviour or attitude affecting results (e.g. by changing the situation being studied or urging participants to behave differently). It also critically examined all methods in order to identify and correct any possible bias to ensure that it is really measured what the study claim to be measuring.

External factors, which might affect the results, should also be controlled for. It would be important to make sure that the introduction of the research variables is not accompanied by other changes (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) which may have introduced confounding variables. The main emphasis of quantitative research is on deductive reasoning which tends to move from the general to the specific. This is sometimes referred to as a top down approach. The validity of the conclusions is shown to be dependent on one or more premises (prior statements, findings or conditions) being valid. However, the current study also includes an element of inductive reasoning in some stages of the research.

5.3 Sample and Data Collection

To follow the quantitative approach in this study, it is important that people involved in the study are a representative sample of the wider population/group "Bahraini private universities". However, the extent to which generalizations are possible depends to a certain extent on the number of people involved in the study, how they are selected and whether they are representative of the wider group. Random samples are preferred (so that each potential participant has an equal chance of participating) (Aken, Bij & Hans, 2012). The remaining of the methodology part of this chapter is concerned with implementing the
quantitative approach principles. In terms of samples for HR research, Pfeffer noted that a study of HRM practices in a specific industry conveys more meaningful results than cross-industry studies as industry economic conditions are constant for all firms in the same industry (Pfeffer, 1998) and in the context of university education the study sample conforms to this. Staff from five private universities operating in Bahrain participated in the study. Collectively, these form the unit of analysis which reflects university level as the organisational unit of analysis for several reasons. This is important for two reasons. First, Gerhart et al. (2000) noted that whole establishment level (in this case university level) surveys may be more reliable than general corporate level surveys as managers are likely to be more familiar with HRM practices that are being implemented at their establishment unless the organisation is extremely large (see also Takeuchi, R. et al. (2007). Second, while the ability of managers and employee and faculty staff at a university may certainly affect variation in performance in different levels (in this case at College or Departmental level), much university HRM activity occurs at the university level. As subunits of a single organisation, these faculties follow a central HRM strategy and almost all follow HRM procedures that are common across the university.

Procedures followed to obtain data for the research are explained as follows - first, the unit of analysis is identified by what type of universities were studied and secondly data collection strategies and the technical details of the empirical research are described.

5.3.1 Population Sample

Population is defined in terms of units of analysis as follows:

5.3.1.1 Description of Unit of Analysis

Specification of the scope of empirical studies in the HRM field should be conducted according to the objectives and research model that the researcher has designed and must
be very careful to give a detailed description of the context in which they were undertaken (Wright & Gardner, 2003). This is true of both qualitative and quantitative studies (although arguably much more important in the former). Hence, the current study, focused on Bahrain private universities which shared a large number of common characteristics.

The population of this study consists of all Bahrain private universities that meet the following criteria:

1. In line with previous research, the number of academic & administrative staff is considered as an indicator of university size, and only universities with more than 100 employees were selected. It is believed that minimum firm size is required to identify organisations with an explicit or formalized human resource management.

2. Private Universities that approved "full confidence" by Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAAET) in Bahrain that meet the criteria of the Ministry of Higher Education in Bahrain are included. This again ensures that there is a degree of uniformity in the sample as this provides an important indicator of quality of the universities and the adoption of robust practices across the university to deliver that quality.
## Table (5.1): Study Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bahraini private universities with full confidence</th>
<th>Number of Academic staff</th>
<th>Number of Administrative staff</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applied Science University</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingdom University</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal University for Women</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulf University</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab Open University</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>258</strong></td>
<td><strong>283</strong></td>
<td><strong>541</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study deals with organisational level construct (staff perceptions of organisational performance) and HRM practices at the operational level. Since HRM practices affect all managerial levels, employees and academic staff, the study sample includes managers and staff at all levels. Surveying academics and administrative staff will provide an opportunity to understand the private university sector comprehensively and as part of the competitive business environment for higher education in Bahrain.

### 5.3.1.2 Stratified Random Sample

In statistical surveys it can sometimes be the case that within the overall population there are a number of groups (or ‘subpopulations) which vary depending on a particular characteristic. When the population being surveyed is likely to exhibit this then it is best to ensure that in the overall survey there is a representative sample from each of these sub groups or subpopulations (referred to as strata). The process of dividing members of the

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5Source: Higher education ministry in Bahrain & Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAAET) in Bahrain
population into sub-populations is referred to as stratification. The ideal stratified sample is one which has an homogeneous or representative sample from each of the subgroups. The strata should be mutually exclusive i.e. each member of the overall population should be in one and only one stratum. In addition, taken collectively, the strata should “collectively exhaustive” i.e. the must collectively account for the entire population so that no stratum is excluded. A random or systematic sample can then be taken from each stratum. The purpose of this is to ensure that the population is representative. (Esfahani and Dougherty 2014). If the population from which a sample is to be drawn does not constitute a homogeneous group, then the stratified sampling technique is applied so as to obtain a representative sample. In this technique, the population is stratified into a number of non-overlapping subpopulations or strata and sample items are selected from each stratum. If the items selected from each stratum are based on simple random sampling for the entire procedure, then, the first step is stratification after that simple random sampling is applied (Tyrrell and Sidney, 2001). Finally, random sampling is conducted within subgroups/strata of the elements which may be either proportionate to the population or equal to one another. Random stratification has the three following advantages:

(1) Ensures that at least some members are in each strata;
(2) Allows different collection methods (phone; in person) for each strata;
(3) Reduces sampling error through restricting the range of scores within strata.

In the case of this study the researcher included a very large population but was still careful to ensure that the principles of stratified sampling were followed. This was more difficult in the context of Bahraini private universities as academic staff often have a number of administrative or managerial roles. However, the researcher took care to ensure that there was no cross classification of roles and carefully identified the primary role of each survey respondent and categorised them appropriately. The overall population consisted of 541
permanent academic and administrative staff (258 of whom were academics), employed within 5 Bahraini universities and useable responses were provided by 280 staff out of a total of 300 who were targeted as participants.

5.4 Ethical Approach

This section addresses the ethical concerns associated with the study since it provides some guidelines into the compliance with the ethical issues regarding research in general and this study in particular.

When conducting research within Bahraini culture, it is essential that ethics and the unbiased answers by respondents are taken carefully into account. This study complied with these issues through assuring that the answers of the respondents will be confidential and assuring subjects that they would be used only for the purposes of the research being undertaken and through reassuring them that they will not be subject to any risk. Since Bahrainis in general are culturally attuned to seeking to be socially accepted, they may, without careful explanation of the rationale for the questionnaire survey tend to provide positive answers to the items. To decrease the impact of this issue, the researcher sent the survey to all participants directly or by email and ensured that they were given the opportunity to answer the survey items freely without considering any other opinion that might affect their objective answer. The surveys themselves were anonymous and the respondents were invited to choose how they wished to return these to the researcher - opting for return by post or deliver personally to the researcher if they did not wish to rely on e-mail communication. To conduct the study, it was necessary to obtain verbal or written consent from all participants. Copies of these consent forms were retained by the researcher. In addition, an ethics form is filed with the Ethics Committee at London School of Commerce.
To encourage universities to participate effectively in the study, a written report was sent to the universities to assure them that the results of this study would be available for them once all formal process regarding the study is finished in compliance with the university rules and regulations.

The participants, the respondents did not report any concerns related to ethics. The researcher was granted a permission to distribute the questionnaires to all respondents in the participant universities. Furthermore, despite all the ethical assurances and clearance granted to researcher study, numerous respondents still spoke “off the record” after they finished filling up the questionnaire which obviously have not included in their answers to the items. Moreover, the researcher is aware of his legal obligations under Data Protection Act 1998 with regard to how long he may preserve data with the fact that he took all necessary precautions to protect all participants.

Published standards on use of surveys state that prior to involving a person in a survey the person should have all information to understand and comprehend the purpose of the survey and the uses to which it will put which may reasonably influence his/her willingness to participate.

APA's Ethics Code (informed-consent rules) mandates who conduct research to inform participants about the following:

1. Purpose of research, expected duration and procedures.

2. Participants' rights to decline to participate and to withdraw from the research once it has started, as well as the anticipated consequences of doing so.

3. Reasonably foreseeable factors that may influence their willingness to participate, such as potential risks, discomfort or adverse effects.

4. Any prospective research benefits.
5. Anonymity and the limits of confidentiality, such as data coding, disposal, sharing and archiving, and when confidentiality should be broken.

The ethical considerations used before, during and after the process are summarised in the following diagram (Figure 5.1)

- Ethical approval gained from London School of Economics
- Approval to approach staff gained from Universities participating in the research
- Participants informed of purpose and procedures of research
- Participant assured of measures to ensure confidentially and security of data
- Participants given opportunity to decline/withdraw from research
- Anonymity of additional information requested or given by participants assured by researcher
- Communication with participants restricted to assisting them to understand requirements rather than bias their responses
- Participant data filed securely in electronic format and paper copies securely filed and accessible only by the researcher
- Paper and electronic data disposed of securely on completion of analysis

**Fig 5.1 Ethical processes followed in conducting the research**
5.5 Cover Letter Stressing Importance of Ethics and Confidentiality

Pursuant to APA's Ethics Code, the researcher included a covering letter with the questionnaire specifying what he was looking for, why he was looking for it, what would be done with the results. Moreover, the researcher showed respect to participants’ rights of privacy regarding revealing or keeping confidential their information and identities. Printed letters in Arabic and English language were signed personally by the researcher and sent to each individual.

Again at this point it is important to again stress the cultural context of the research. In western cultures it is less common to prepare and distribute questionnaires using a paper based format. Web questionnaires using tools such as Survey Monkey™, provide are make data collection from questionnaires very easy and the software also provides a group of features and functions to professionally design the questionnaire and to do basic analysis of the results when they have been collected. Such surveys also have an advantage in giving an immediacy of response. Recipients can simply be provided with a link to the survey, embedded in an e-mail describing the purpose of the survey and then complete it online and send it back to the researcher. This often results in poor response rates, however, this can be remedied quite easily because it is simple to send a very large volume of e-mail requests for participation. Such a method would certainly not have been viable in Bahrain where a slower process of explanation of the purpose of the questionnaire and assurance of the fact that it will be used ethically are much more important.
5.6 Procedure for Data Collection

5.6.1 Questionnaire Surveys

The most widely used data collection method in educational research is the questionnaire and it is very important that the questionnaires used are designed carefully and systematically. Primary data collection for this research was carried out through distribution of the self-administered questionnaire to the academic staff, managers, and employees in the sample universities. The researcher either sent the questionnaire via electronic mail to the respondent or personally gave it to him/her. The researcher designed the questionnaire items based on an extensive and comprehensive literature review. The questionnaire was then checked by experts (managers) and academics (faculty) for wording, sequence and ambiguity. Notes of the experts and academics have been given full consideration through the necessary modification that the researcher made to the questionnaire and this is fully discussed below with examples of how the input from consultation led to a modification of the questionnaires used.

In order to make sure that the questions being asked in the questionnaire were as understandable as possible the researcher asked staff within his own institution who taught and researched HRM and also the HR department managers (practitioners) to provide feedback. The questionnaires were provided both in Arabic and English as both teaching staff were fluent in both languages. In addition to ensure that the English language translation matched the Arabic as closely as possible, a professional translator was asked to review the questions.

Using Norland’s approach to establishing validity (Norland, 1990) the experts used were asked to ensure that:
1. The questionnaire was valid (i.e. measuring what was intended)
2. The questions accurately represented the content
3. Questions were appropriate for the group being asked to complete them
4. The questionnaire was comprehensive enough to collect all the information needed to meet the goals of the study
5. The questionnaire was clear and easy to complete

5.6.2 Examples of changes resulting from validation by expert consultation

Examples of modifications which were provided were as follows:

In the section on HR practices the first question to rate was originally:

We have an extensive employee selection process for jobs in this organization.

On advice that this may not be completely understood this was changed by adding some examples to clarify what was meant by employee selection process – the final question was thus:

We have an extensive employee selection process for jobs in this organization (e.g. use of tests, interviews etc.).

In the same section of the questionnaire the third question was originally

The selection decision is collaborative

Because of the way in which this translates in Arabic and the way in which the English word Arabic may have been translated by respondents as implying a team process which emphasizes consensus in decision the final wording of the questionnaire was:

The selection decision is participative

The section on training was changed extensively as it originally tried getting quantified responses in each of the questions. For example, the third question was phrased as:

How much money is spent on training programmes in your work unit (and a range of amounts was given).
The staff who reviewed the questionnaires correctly pointed out that the results from this would be inconsistent and difficult to analyse. The question was changed to:

**Sufficient money is spent on training programmes in your work unit (with a 7 point Likert scale used to get the level of agreement)**

In section on Contingent Pay and Reward Schemes the third question was amended. Originally the question was:

**Payments to faculty members and staff are related to length of continuous service**

This would have been confusing for staff in Bahrain because of the fact that generally the universities operate using short term renewable contracts and the preferred wording which was agreed as giving the best equivalent of this was

**Payments to faculty members and staff are based seniority.**

In the section on Commitment the third and fourth question was originally phrased as

**I strongly identify with my organisation, and**

**I strongly identify and engage with problem solving within the organisation**

The idea of ‘strongly identify’ was difficult to translate into Arabic accurately and the translation was very difficult. In the original Arabic version of the questionnaire this could have been interpreted by an Arabic reader as saying “I am my organisation”

The translation was corrected but to be completely clear the wording of these questions was also changed to:

**I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation, and**

**I really feel as if this organisation’s problems are my own.**
The staff consulted also helped in resolving some minor problems over accuracy of phrasing both in English and in Arabic.

Finally, the modified questionnaire (the final version) comprised five parts with total of sixty-five (65) items. 300 questionnaires were filled out and returned to the researcher, of which 280 questionnaires were eligible for analysis. Therefore, the response rate was 84%. The questionnaires are included as Appendix 1.

5.6.3 Questionnaire Reliability

Part (1): Demographic Information

This section consists of seven items formulated to collect information about the respondents. The researcher adopted collection of demographic data as part of standard practice used in many questionnaire surveys. However, it is important to note that, because of the scope of the research and the large amount of additional testing and data analysis involved, the demographic data was not fully explored to develop conclusions from the survey based on particular demographic characteristics. As noted in the final chapter of the thesis, however, there is considerable potential to use this data to develop further research related to the relationship between HRM practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance.

Part (2): HRM Practices

This section encompasses 33 items aimed to measure the attitude of the respondents regarding their university’s HRM practices within the 5 areas of HR practice identified in the literature review as being most relevant. (Recruitment and Selection (5), Training (5), Contingent Pay & Reward Schemes (8), Performance Appraisals (7) and Employee Involvement (8)). Respondents were asked to indicate their response to the items through
Likert scale which ranged from (1) “strongly disagree” to (7) “strongly agree”. A single overall score to summarise the result for each HRM practice was computed.

The HRM practices questions were taken mainly from the work of Snell and Dean (1992). Use of standard questionnaires used in previous studies should provide consistency and a strong basis for comparison of results with other research. Snell and Dean’s work is very widely used in the literature in HRM and it has almost become a standard for questionnaire design in this area. There are more than 1300 citations to previous literature making use of Snell and Dean’s work in a whole range of primary research publications (as reported on Google). In addition, as noted below other studies in the field, some of which were more specific to linking HRM practices and organisational performance were also used. The extensive use of the questions selected for inclusion in the study reported on in the thesis gave the researcher grounds for being confident that the questions were reliable. Snell and Dean (1992) provide an extensive discussion of how the measures used were used to establish reliability of the measures using a two stage rule to categorize items to factors and checking all items to ensure that a given item represented the construct underlying each factor and deleting those items from the final scales which failed to meet the weight (0.3) which they established as the minimum cut off. However, as noted below and noted also in the limitations section of the thesis, there are other steps which ideally the researcher should have taken to provide further evidence of reliability and validity.

**Recruitment and Selection Measurement**

Organizations may influence skills of employees through the way in which they approach recruitment processes. Taking into account prior research in this area (Bae & Lawler, 2000; Wan, Kook & Ong, 2003), this study has measured staff responses to use of recruitment practices within their organisation by using Snell and Dean’s (1992) acquisition scale. This scale measures the breadth and depth of an organisation’s approach
to recruitment. This measure has employed in various other studies and has been reported as having high validity and reliability. The measurements used cover a variety of aspects of the process, including expenditure on recruitment and crucially whether respondents perceive that the university achieves its goal of hiring the right person for the right job”.

Training and Development Measurement

The training instrument questionnaire was also adapted from Snell and Dean (1992) and is a seven-item index designed to gather data on how extensive staff development policies and procedures operate. This questionnaire was selected because in comparison with other survey instruments it gives an emphasis to formal training opportunities targeted at specific individuals (which is more appropriate in the context of universities in Bahrain) in addition to capturing a general overview of the effectiveness of the overall training program to support employees as identified by Cassio (2000), Delaney and Hustled (1996), Wan, Kook, and Ong (2003) and Haster (2005).

Contingent Pay and Reward Schemes Measurement

Questions were adapted from the previous works by Antoncic (2011); Rogg, Schmidt, Shull and Schmitt (2001); Kang, Stewart and Kim (2011) and Guerrero and Herrbach (2009). The researcher designed an assessment tool to assess HR contingent & reward schemes which consisted of 8 statements.

Performance Appraisal Measurement

Seven questions regarding performance appraisal were designed by researcher to assess employees' perceptions of fairness, the importance of performance appraisals to their university, the adequacy of feedback they receive regarding their evaluations, as well as how the performance appraisal benefits their career.
Employee Involvement

The statements used in surveying employee involvement are drawn from a study of literature on HRM practices and its impact on organisational performance. Items used in the study are adapted from different studies (Ghebregiorgis & Karsten, 2007; Kundu & Malhan, 2007; Lee & Lee, 2007; Tzafir, 2005).

Part (3): Mediating Variables

This part deals with HRM outcomes with the focus on the mediating variables; which encompass organisational culture, employee commitment and employee retention. Organisational culture was measured by utilising 8 items; employee commitment was measured with 8 items. Finally, employee retention was measured by utilising 8 items. Respondents were asked to indicate their response to the items through a Likert scale which ranged from (1) “strongly disagree” to (7) “strongly agree”.

Organisational Culture

The organisational culture instrument was adapted from Cooper (2011), Shazad et al. (2012) and Judge and Cable (2006). The instrument measured three dimensions of organisational culture: Adaptability, Work Environment and Innovation. To reflect the situation in Bahrain universities two of the 9 questions in the original instrument were combined thus 8 items were included.

Employee Commitment

Organisational commitment is a psychological state that binds an employee to an organisation. Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) and Meyer and Allen (1997) instruments have been widely used to measure employees’ commitment (Khan, Awang and Ghouri, 2014). The factor structure of Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) organisational
commitment construct has been examined in several studies, and studies have provided empirical support to demonstrate that the construct is reliable (Khan, Awang & Ghouri, 2014). Ashman (2007) gives an extensive discussion of approaches to evaluating construct validity in organisational commitment scales. Khan, Awang and Ghouri (2014) examined the validity and reliability of Mowday (1979) organisational commitment construct applying 311 respondents from Pakistani small and medium scale firms. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were used to measure the construct. The EFA results suggested that all nine items of organisational commitment measures are valid. In addition, Ashman (2007) notes that: “Mowday et al. (1979) report truly impressive properties for the OCQ” The reported Cronbach Coefficient (0.82-0.93) suggests the items are relatively homogenous with respect to the underlying construct and in addition the test/re-test reliability was favourable (r=0.53, 0.62 and 0.75 over 2-, 3- and 4- month periods. In this study one of the nine statements was found to be inappropriate in the Bahraini context and was omitted.

Employee Retention

In this study, employee retention will be measured by utilizing 8 items adapted and edited by the researcher from TL-100 ©2010 Manpower Inc. (us.manpower.com). This particular questionnaire needed significant changes in order to fit in with the Bahraini context for, as noted in Chapter III of the thesis, the contractual conditions and legal framework for retaining staff is quite different from that in the West.

Part (4): Organisational Performance

Staff perceptions of organisational performance were measured through 7 items. Respondents were asked to indicate their response to the items through Likert scale ranging from (1) “strongly disagree” to (7) “strongly agree”.

This measure assessed employee’s perceptions of their university's performance. The measurement is adapted from Katou (2008) to include multiple dimensions of staff perceptions of organisational performance. Recognising the potential problems with self-report measures to ensure reliability and validity of indexes and to minimize random fluctuations and anomalies in data, respondents are asked to report performance over the past three years.\(^6\) The specific items constituting staff perceptions of organisational performance construct is as follows: “Effectiveness”, which centres around the fact that objectives (or organisational mission) are being met; “efficiency”, which means that resources are not wasted and the fewest possible resources are used to meet objectives; “development”, which concerns the question of ability of an organisation to develop and react to future opportunities or is prepared to meet future challenges. Katou does not report on reliability of the questionnaire used but simply notes that:

“Most of the questions from the survey were drawn from existing international HRM surveys such as the Price Waterhouse Cranfield Project Survey” (Katou and Budhwar, 2009, p.29)

The questionnaire by Katou had to be extensively modified as it was very biased towards a commercial environment and questions had to be rephrased to fit with the perspective of how a university typically views organisational performance as discussed in Chapter II.

As previously noted the questionnaires were reviewed by a number of experts (academics and HRM practitioners) to ensure that they were appropriate and understandable and also as noted some of the questionnaires used in this study were modified because they did not fit with the context of HRM practices in the Kingdom of Bahrain. In addition, it should also be noted that the studies reviewed by the researcher frequently did not on reliability

\(^6\) Note that this caused a minor difficulty which was not picked up during the pilot and review of the questionnaires as some staff had not been in post for 3 years – the researcher corrected this through an email to clarify that in such cases respondents should reply based on the length of time they had been in post.
and validity in a systematic way. This is not a problem which is limited to research in HRM. In his publication reported in the Journal of Extension, Radhakrishna reports that an analysis of research studies conducted in agriculture and extension studies 64% of the articles reviewed reported using questionnaires but more than 30% of these failed to give any discussion of procedures for establishing validity and reliability. (Radakrishna, 2007 p.1).

Ideally because the researcher had made changes to the number and to the phrasing of some questions used in previous studies a reliability check should have been conducted. However, based on the steps taken to ensure validity which are consistent with Norland’s approach of using expert consultation (Norland, 1990) and the fact that the CA reported in the results of the study are high there is a strong case for arguing that the constructs used were reliable.

5.7 Methods of Collecting Data

5.7.1 Questionnaire Writing in Arabic and English

To have an access to all respondents regardless of their country of origin, the questionnaire was translated into Arabic as the cover letter indicated, then, the questionnaire was distributed among the respondents who participated in the sample of the study who either can answer the questionnaire in Arabic or English. This was necessary to ensure a good response rate (by giving respondents to choose the language). Again it is important to note the cultural context here. The researcher had to be very careful to ensure that the translation of the questionnaire and the translation of the responses was sensitive to different linguistic interpretations which can cause difficulty when expressing the same ideas in Arabic and English.
5.7.2 Physical Collection of Data

The researcher relied on mixed data collection methods to collect data through the survey in order to attain high response rate. These methods include the following:

1. **E-Mail Questionnaire**

The researcher emailed questionnaires to the participants in the survey with a request to return it upon completion. Email is established as the most widespread and extensively used method in various economic and business surveys but again it is important to be sensitive to cultural issues as routine use of email cannot be generally assumed in Bahrain - even within an academic community. Respondents were invited to complete the survey at his or her convenience. All respondents were given adequate time check his or her responses and verify information or request clarification by contacting the researcher. However, the researcher still has to exercise care in dealing with the process of sending, chasing and tracking receipt of questionnaire returns - particularly in cases such as this where the researcher was seeking to ensure a balance in the numbers of questionnaires collected in order to get a data set which truly represented the stratified sample which he aimed to achieve.

2. **Follow Up Letter**

The researcher tried to follow up the people who did not respond through different kinds of reminder. The first reminder is sent for the respondents after the first week. When the second week passed, the prompting method changed through sending a new cover letter accompanied by a new questionnaire. Finally, the reminder after third and fourth week included a message of which indicated the importance of subjects’ contribution to the study and an offer to meet personally if the participant was having in any difficulty in understanding what was required.
3. **Drop Boxes**

A drop box set up by the researcher as another useful method of collecting completed surveys. The option was given to use this to all respondents and was a useful option for respondents who felt it was more appropriate then responding directly to the researcher.

4. **Personal Interview**

Filling up the questionnaire through conducting personal interview with respondent was also followed by the researcher. It was anticipated that this sort of engagement with the respondent would encourage him/her to give genuine and precise information. The researcher asked respondent the questions (items) that included in the questionnaire and wrote their answers, participants are allowed to ask any questions for clarification if there is any sort of ambiguity regarding the questionnaire items. This method was not widely used but did not prove to help to get respondents who were reluctant to use email, had difficulty in understanding some of the language of the questionnaires or who simply needed the incentive of the researcher taking on the burden of completing the form. It should be stressed again that the researcher in such cases merely acted in a role of transcribing the respondent’s views on to the questionnaire and, while during the course of this there were some interesting discussion which involved wider issues, the researcher was carefully always to restrict his role to simply recording the respondent's views.

5.8 **Validity & Reliability: Pilot Study**

To check the internal reliability of the scale, Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient was calculated. Cronbach’s alpha coefficients of 0.7 or higher are considered acceptable and this was the case for all of the questionnaires used. Then, correlation between the factors was used to calculate whether these variables are interdependent or not. Again, calculation of correlation indicated that those variables were consistent and that they do not contradict
each other. Face validity of the questionnaire was checked using the view of specialists in this field and taking notes of respondent’s comments in the pilot questionnaire to clarify and amend the questionnaire before it was widely distributed. Note that as part of the pilot the researcher made a minor modification to the way the scale was phrased and replaced the words 'Good' and 'Bad' (which could have negative connotations particularly in Arabic translation) with a scale which used the phrase (1=very low, 7= very high), as shown in Appendix I. The instrument was pilot tested through distributing the questionnaire among twenty-five employees from the sample. Results of the pilot study reflected the fact that the questionnaire was clear and appropriate for gathering the data which the researcher required.

5.9 Statistical Techniques of Data Analysis

This study utilises the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approach with Partial Least Square (PLS) as an analysis method. PLS has been widely used for theory testing and validation. PLS examines the psychometric properties and provides appropriate evidences on whether relationships might or might not exist (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In this study, the researcher performed data analysis according to a two-stage methodology (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) using Smart PLS 2.0 M3. The first step is to test the content, convergent, and discriminant validity of constructs using the measurement model, whilst the second step is to test the structural model and hypotheses.

5.10 Summary

This chapter has dealt in detail with the design and conduct of the questionnaire survey. It has described the five universities which collectively formed the unit of analysis. This study collected data through questionnaires administered to staff within these universities and so considerable attention given to dealing with questions used and the measurement
scales for the theoretical concepts included in hypotheses. Finally, the statistical procedures used to analyse the research data to reach conclusions about the causal linkage between variables including some specific techniques and models necessary to test the research hypotheses were reviewed.

The next chapter (Chapter VI) of the thesis will detail the results of statistical analysis of the data to support or reject the research hypotheses.
Chapter VI

ANALYSIS OF STATISTICAL RESULTS TESTING HYPOTHESES

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the descriptive statistics and inferential statistics from the analysis of the data collected to test the research hypotheses related to the research model in Figure 4.2 (presented in chapter IV). While SPSS software was used for descriptive statistics, structural equation modelling (SEM) was applied using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method for detailed data analysis. The Smart PLS 2.0 M3 package was used for validating the research model and testing the research hypotheses.

6.2 Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics of the sample showed that 41.8% of the respondents were female and 58.2% were male. Respondents aged between 18 to 30 years formed the largest age group and represented 33.6% of the sample. The majority of respondents were employees (i.e. administrative staff not involved in management of the University) and they represented 38.9% of the sample. Senior level employees (i.e. managers and supervisors) represent 36.8% of the sample. The rest are academic staff whose main role is teaching students. Most of respondents (46.1%) have 1-5 years of experience. Table 6.1 provides frequency statistics of all respondents.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>58.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-30</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 60</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Staff</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years of Experience</strong></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>46.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.3 Data Analysis and Results

This section provides the results of testing the proposed research model, by using SEM. A large body of literature has documented the use of SEM in different research fields (Gefen et al., 2000). SEM allows researchers to explore the overall structural model at once. In this study, SEM was applied using the PLS method, using the Smart PLS 2.0 M3 package. PLS is considered better suited for explaining complex relationships (Fornell et al., 1990). In this study, the researcher performed data analysis in accordance with a two-stage methodology (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) using Smart PLS 2.0 M3. The first step was to test the content, convergent, and discriminant validity of constructs using the measurement model, whilst the second step was to test the structural model and hypotheses.

6.3.1 Measurement Model

First, the researcher assessed the reliability and validity of the measurement instrument using content reliability, and convergent validity criteria. The content validity of the survey instrument was established in two ways. First, the constructs along with their measures which are used in this study, were already validated in previous studies as they were all adopted from the existing literature. Second, the results of the pre-test the researcher undertook with subject-matter experts assured content validity of the survey instrument. For reliability of the scale, Cronbach’s alpha, which is a common method used to measure the reliability and internal consistency of scales, was used (Cronbach, 1970; Hair et al., 2006) suggested that the reliability of the scale is generally accepted if the value of Cronbach’s alpha for each construct is equal or greater than 0.70. The constructs included within the study’s model can be seen to have exhibited a high degree of internal consistency as the values of Cronbach’s alpha ranged from 0.87 (Organisational Culture) to 0.93 (HRM Practices) as shown in Table 6.2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
<th>AVE</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>Cronbach α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HRM Practices (HRP)</td>
<td>HRP1</td>
<td>0.756</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HRP2</td>
<td>0.814</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HRP3</td>
<td>0.836</td>
<td>0.585</td>
<td>0.938</td>
<td>0.930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HRP4</td>
<td>0.820</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HRP5</td>
<td>0.753</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Commitment (EC)</td>
<td>EC1</td>
<td>0.694</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EC2</td>
<td>0.580</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EC3</td>
<td>0.846</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EC4</td>
<td>0.809</td>
<td>0.554</td>
<td>0.906</td>
<td>0.879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EC5</td>
<td>0.806</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EC6</td>
<td>0.827</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EC7</td>
<td>0.798</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EC8</td>
<td>0.519</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Retention (ER)</td>
<td>ER1</td>
<td>0.705</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ER2</td>
<td>0.731</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ER3</td>
<td>0.879</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ER4</td>
<td>0.606</td>
<td>0.564</td>
<td>0.911</td>
<td>0.887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ER5</td>
<td>0.827</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ER6</td>
<td>0.792</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ER7</td>
<td>0.706</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ER8</td>
<td>0.727</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Culture (OC)</td>
<td>Cult 1</td>
<td>0.743</td>
<td>0.526</td>
<td>0.898</td>
<td>0.870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cult 2</td>
<td>0.804</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructs</td>
<td>Items</td>
<td>Factor Loading</td>
<td>AVE</td>
<td>CR</td>
<td>Cronbach α</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cult 3</td>
<td>0.734</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cult 4</td>
<td>0.633</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cult 5</td>
<td>0.613</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cult 6</td>
<td>0.757</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cult 7</td>
<td>0.747</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cult 8</td>
<td>0.747</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff perceptions of OP</td>
<td>OP1</td>
<td>0.598</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OP2</td>
<td>0.488</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OP3</td>
<td>0.528</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OP4</td>
<td>0.825</td>
<td>0.564</td>
<td>0.911</td>
<td>0.889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OP5</td>
<td>0.655</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OP6</td>
<td>0.813</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OP7</td>
<td>0.790</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) tests were conducted to measure convergent validity. Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggested that the value of CR for each construct must exceed 0.70 whilst the value of the AVE must exceed 0.50 for the convergent validity to be assured. The CR and AVE values for the constructs included in the study model, with one exception, are all above acceptable levels. Moreover, the
standardized path loadings for all indicators were above 0.50 and thus they are all significant (Falk & Miller, 1992), except OP2. Given that the path loading for OP2 was the weakest, so it was deleted first and the model were reassessed again. Thus content validity, reliability, and convergent validity of the measurement instrument are all satisfactorily met in this research. As for discriminant validity, it is actually established when the square root of the AVE from the construct is greater than the correlation shared between the construct and other constructs in the model (Chin, 1998). The discriminant validity of the measurement instrument is confirmed in this study given that the square root of the AVE from each construct is larger than all other cross-correlations with other constructs (see Table 6.3).

Table (6.3): Descriptive Analysis and Discriminant Validity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>OC</th>
<th>EC</th>
<th>ER</th>
<th>HRP</th>
<th>OP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ER</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRP</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The square roots of the constructs’ AVE values are shown in the diagonal line (in bold); non-diagonal elements are latent variable correlations.

6.3.2 Evaluation of model fit

Table 6.4 shows the results of the evaluation of model’s fitness. According to Hair et al. (2006), the $\chi^2$/DF value of 1.865 which is below the threshold level of significance .05,
which suggests the differences in predicted and actual matrices were insignificant and this demonstrates a strong indication of the model’s fit.

Table (6.4): Evaluation of model fit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fit statistics</th>
<th>Conceptual model</th>
<th>Criterion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-square/d.f.</td>
<td>1.865</td>
<td>&lt;=3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>.958</td>
<td>&gt;.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGFI</td>
<td>.901</td>
<td>&gt;.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>.981</td>
<td>&gt;.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMR</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>&lt;.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also values of the two indices AGFI (adjusted goodness-of-fit index) and GFI (goodness-of-fit index) should be greater than 0.9 and comparative fit index (CFI) (0.981) value is considered close to the recommended values.

Furthermore, the smaller the RMR (root-mean-square residual) is, the better the fit of the model. A value of less than 0.05 indicates a close fit. RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation) shows that the model meets a reasonable error of approximation with a cut-off of 0.08.

6.3.3 Structural Model

In addition to the PLS Algorithm, the bootstrapping procedure was used and the researcher selected 280 cases, 5000 samples, and the no sign changes option to evaluate the significance of the path coefficients (Hair et al., 2012). The results of the PLS-SEM analysis show, as in Table 6.5 and Figure 6.1, the structural model estimation and evaluation of the formulated hypotheses. Results indicated that HRM practices have
significant and direct effects on employee commitment, organisational culture, employee retention and staff perceptions of organisational performance ($\beta=0.360$, $p\leq0.001$; $\beta=0.638$, $p\leq0.001$; $\beta=0.392$, $p\leq0.001$; $\beta=-0.121$, $p\leq0.05$; respectively). Results also revealed that organisational culture is also a major predictor of employee commitment, employee retention and staff perceptions of organisational performance ($\beta=0.341$, $p\leq0.001$; $\beta=0.461$, $p\leq0.001$; $\beta=0.734$, $p\leq0.001$, respectively). Further, the results also indicated that employee retention has significant and direct effects on staff perceptions of organisational performance ($\beta = 0.149$, $p \leq 0.05$). Finally, it was found that employee commitment has a direct significant effect on staff perceptions of organisational performance ($\beta = 0.130$, $p = 0.020$). The pathways tested can be summarised in the following:

\[
x_1 = \mu_1
\]

\[
x_2 = \beta_{21}x_1 + \mu_2
\]

\[
x_3 = \beta_{31.2}x_1 + \beta_{32.1}x_2 + \mu_3
\]

\[
x_4 = \beta_{41.23}x_1 + \beta_{42.13}x_2 + \beta_{43.12}x_3 + \mu_3
\]

\[
x_5 = \beta_{51.134}x_1 + \beta_{52.134}x_2 + \beta_{53.129}x_3 + \beta_{54.123}x_5 + \mu_5
\]

\[
\beta_{31.2}
\]

\[
\beta_{32.1}
\]

\[
\beta_{32.34}
\]

\[
\beta_{41.2}
\]

\[
\beta_{42.1}
\]

\[
\beta_{51.234}
\]

\[
\beta_{54.1}
\]

\[
\beta_{53.2}
\]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Beta (β)</th>
<th>t Value</th>
<th>p Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1: HRP → OP</td>
<td>0.121</td>
<td>2.274*</td>
<td>0.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2a: HRP → EC</td>
<td>0.360</td>
<td>5.239***</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2b: EC → OP</td>
<td>0.130</td>
<td>2.35*</td>
<td>0.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3a: HRP → ER</td>
<td>0.392</td>
<td>6.838***</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3b: ER → OP</td>
<td>0.149</td>
<td>2.053*</td>
<td>0.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4a: HRP → OC</td>
<td>0.638</td>
<td>14.795***</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4b: OC → OP</td>
<td>0.734</td>
<td>13.172***</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5a: OC → EC</td>
<td>0.341</td>
<td>4.477***</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5b: OC → ER</td>
<td>0.461</td>
<td>8.617***</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p ≤ 0.05, **p ≤ 0.01, ***p ≤ 0.001
As shown in Table (5.6), the $R^2$ value for each endogenous latent construct (i.e. employee commitment, employee retention, organisational culture, and staff perceptions of organisational performance) demonstrated an acceptable prediction level in the empirical research. The coefficient of determination $R^2$ which is the central criterion for the structural model’s assessment (Klarner et al., 2013) has a high value of 0.641 for this study’s key target construct; staff perceptions of organisational performance. This value of $R^2$ which is above 25% demonstrates a highly acceptable prediction level in empirical research (Griffith, 1996; Gaur & Gaur, 2006). Indeed, the high $R^2$ proves the model’s predictive validity (Hair et al., 2012). This study supports the prior finding through the use of $Q^2$ predictive relevancy measure (Stone, 1974). The obtained $Q^2$ values, after running the blindfolding procedure (Chin, 1998) with an omission distance $D=8$, were (0.13) for employee commitment, (0.22) for employee retention, (0.16) for organisational culture,
and (0.30) for staff perceptions of organisational performance. All of the $Q^2$ values are well above zero; indicating the predictive relevance of the PLS path model.

**Table (6.6): Results of $R^2$ and $Q^2$**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Endogenous Latent Variables</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$Q^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee Commitment</td>
<td>.404</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Retention</td>
<td>.598</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Culture</td>
<td>.408</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff perceptions of organisational performance</td>
<td>.641</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To test the mediating role of employee commitment, organisational culture and employee retention, this research employed the causal steps approach based on the work of Baron and Kenny (1986). Baron and Kenny’s paper has been cited over 8,120 times that adds credibility to this method (Bontis et al., 2007). PLS is best used with the casual steps approach that relies on regression analysis. The path coefficients generated by PLS provide an indication of relationships and can be used similarly to the traditional regression coefficients (Gefen et al., 2000). According to Baron and Kenny (1986), to find out if there is any mediation role between two variables, there are four steps of mediation analysis. The following Figure 6.2 represents visually each step. Briefly, the four steps are:

1. Test the significance of path A between X (i.e. the independent variable) and Y (i.e. the dependent variable).

2. Test the significance of path B between X and M (i.e. the mediator variable)

3. Test the significance of path C between M and Y variables and;
4. The relationship between the independent and dependent variables must be significantly reduced when the mediator is added.

![Figure (6.2): Testing the mediating effect]

The goal of above-mentioned steps is to establish that zero-order relationships among the involved variables are existent (i.e. Path A, Path B, and Path C are significant). If one or more of these relationships are non-significant, then mediation is not likely.

The following equations depict the forecasting model based on the study model

\[
\begin{align*}
y &= 2.395 + .513x_1 \\
y &= 2.321 + .369x_1 + .206x_2 \\
y &= 1.838 + .291x_1 .151x_2 + .218x_3 \\
y &= 1.793 + .267x_1 .123x_2 + .190x_3 + .089x_4 
\end{align*}
\]
Baron and Kenny (1986) steps were used to evaluate the mediation effect of organisational culture between HRM practices as an independent variable and staff perceptions of organisational performance as the dependent variable. As shown in Figure 6.1 and Table 6.4, HRM practices have significant and direct effects on organisational culture and staff perceptions of organisational performance ($\beta=0.638$, $p \leq 0.001$; $\beta=-0.121$, $p \leq 0.05$; respectively). In addition, organisational culture has significant and direct effects on staff perceptions of organisational performance. In other words, Path A, Path B, and Path C were significant. This indicates there is a mediation role of the organisational culture. Similarly, results indicated that HRM practices have significant and direct effects on employee retention and staff perceptions of organisational performance ($\beta=0.392$, $p \leq 0.001$; $\beta=-0.121$, $p \leq 0.05$; respectively). The results also indicated that employee retention has significant and direct effects on staff perceptions of organisational performance ($\beta=0.149$, $p \leq 0.05$). This indicates there is a mediation role also of the employee retention. It’s obvious from Figure 6.1 that the mediation role of employee commitment also exists. As shown in Figure 5.1, it was found that employee commitment has a direct significant effect on staff perceptions of organisational performance ($\beta=0.130$, $p = 0.020$). In addition, results showed that HRM practices have significant and direct effects on employee commitment and staff perceptions of organisational performance ($\beta=0.360$, $p \leq 0.001$; $\beta=-0.121$, $p \leq 0.05$; respectively). In other words, Path A, Path B, and Path C were significant.
CHAPTER VII

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings related to the aims of the research. It will deal in detail with the hypotheses and will then go on to look in more detail at the responses collected – particularly from the questionnaires relating to HR practices – to discuss some of the views presented on the way in which HR practices have an influence on staff in the private university sector. While the questionnaires did not specifically seek to get qualitative views or comments from staff many respondents provide comments either directly on the questionnaire or in notes accompanying the returned questionnaire and these have been a valuable source of information. In addition the researcher was able to use the quantitative responses when they were coded into SPSS to explore issues which relate to the responses given by staff based on the demographic data provided by each respondent.

7.2 Quantitative Results

As a part of the task of providing answers to the study research questions, a set of hypotheses were postulated in this study based on the extensive literature review. The analyses and the results of testing these hypotheses were presented in Table 6.4 and Figure 6.1. This section interprets and discusses these results. All research hypotheses and sub-hypotheses (H1, H2, H2a, H2b, H3, H3a, H3b, H4, H4a, H4b, H5a, and H5b) have been supported from the empirical test. In addition, Figure 6.1 provides a summary of statistical results (such as coefficients Beta and significant level) of the significant relationships in the
research model. The results indicated that the research model explained 64% of the variance in staff perceptions of organisational performance ($R^2 = 0.641$).

7.2.1 Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis of this study (H1) hypothesizes a relationship between human resources management practices (training and development, recruitment and selection, and compensation system) and staff perceptions of organisational performance (effectiveness, efficiency, development, innovation, and employee satisfaction); hence it states that HRMP directly, positively, and significantly affects staff perceptions of organisational performance. The outcome from testing this study’s hypothesis demonstrated that the relationship is supported (t value = 2.274, $p < .05$). The result of this study is consistent with Amin et al. (2014) which found that a range of human resource practices had a direct relationship with staff perceptions of organisational performance. Specifically, these were: recruitment policies and procedures (with appropriate job specifications), staff development, performance appraisal, career planning, employee participation, and compensation. It is also consistent with Moideenkutty et al. (2011) which indicated that high involvement human resource management practices were positively related to subjective staff perceptions of organisational performance and an objective measure of performance, i.e. ratio of market value to book value. Moreover, the result of this study is consistent with Tzafrir (2006), which showed that several HRM practices contribute to enhanced organisational performance. In particular, Tzafrir (2006) noted that organisations achieved better organisational performance when they viewed their employees as assets and invested in their capabilities and involvement in decision making. Finally, the result of this study is in line with several other studies such as (Katou, 2008; Dimba & K’Obonyo, 2009; Wright et al., 2005; Bartel, 2004; Daud, 2006; Kundu & Malhan, 2009; Bilseto, 2008; Kummerfeldt, 2011; Ulferts et al., 2009; Weinacker, 2008).
7.2.2 Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis of this study (H2) hypothesizes that employee commitment mediates the relationship between HRM practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance; hence it states that employee commitment mediates the relationship between HRM practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance. The result of testing this hypothesis showed that the relationship is supported. The result of this study is consistent with Elorza et al. (2011) who developed and tested a model in which employees’ commitment mediates between the actual system and unit-level absenteeism, which in turn has an effect on productivity. The result of this study is also consistent with Kim and Sung-Choon (2013) which found that the effects of a strategic HR function on firm performance were moderated by employee support for and commitment to these strategies. Specifically, Kim and Sung-Choon (2013) examined the impact of “high involvement work practices” which covered career development and planning, collaboration with unions to develop and implement company strategy, and performance related pay. It is also in agreement with the result of Suleiman and Al Kathairi (2012), which showed that organisational justice (procedural, interactional) is positively and significantly correlated with affective and continued commitment as well as with job performance. In addition, the result of the statistical analysis supports the moderating effect of affective and continued commitment of high job performance. Moreover, the result of this study is in agreement with Piaralal et al. (2014) which indicated that there are two factors, namely, empowerment and training, affecting service recovery performance (SRP). The employment status moderated the relationship between reward and SRP. Finally, the result of this study is inconsistent with Boxall et al. (2011), which showed that affective
commitment does not mediate the relationships between HR practices, supervisory/management styles, and employee performance.

The first sub-hypothesis of the second hypothesis (H2a) hypothesizes the relationship between HRM practices and employee commitment; hence it states that HRM Practices directly, positively and significantly affect the commitment of employee. The result of testing this study’s sub-hypothesis showed that the relationship is supported (t value = 5.239, p< .001). The result of this study is consistent with Smeenk et al.'s (2006), since the analyses of web based survey data revealed that in the case of 'separatist' faculty decentralisation, compensation, training/development, positional tenure and career mobility have significant effects. Age, organisational tenure, level of autonomy, working hours, social involvement and personal importance significantly affects the employees’ organisational commitment in the 'hegemonist' faculty. It is also consistent with Stup (2006) which indicates that employee-reported perceptions of HRM practices were strongly related to organisational commitment. Satisfaction with feedback, employee participation, and satisfaction with performance reviews were significant (p < .05) predictors of affective and normative organisational commitment, and perceived organisational support. In addition, the results of a survey conducted by Chew and Chan (2008) are in agreement with the result of this study since their study revealed that organisational commitment was positively affected by 'person organisation fit', remuneration, recognition, and an opportunity to undertake challenging employment assignments. Intention to stay was also significantly related to person-organisation fit (P-O fit), remuneration, recognition, training and career development. Surprisingly, training and career development was not significantly related to organisational commitment and providing the employee with a challenging assignment was not significantly related to intention to stay. Also, the result of this study is in line with the result of Hashim (2010)
which revealed that the selected organisations frequently practice the Islamic approach in all its human resource management (HRM) functions. The results of correlation and regression analysis show that the Islamic approach in HRM was highly and significantly correlated to organisational commitment. About 45 per cent of the organisational commitment variance was explained by the Islamic approach in HRM. Moreover, Palmer (2006) result is in line with the result of this study since it showed the relationship between the HRM practices (orientation of recruits, departmental guidelines and career development) and the employee commitment components (affective, normative and continuance). The study revealed that there is a positive relationship between HRM orientation of recruits and employees’ level of commitment. Finally, contrary to the result of this study, Aladwan et al. (2015) established that training and development practices have been rarely and not effectively employed within Jordanian organisations.

The second sub-hypothesis of the second hypothesis (H2b) hypothesizes the relationship between employee commitment and staff perceptions of organisational performance; hence it states that employee commitment directly, positively and significantly is related to staff perceptions of organisational performance. The result of testing this study’s sub-hypothesis shows that the relationship is supported (t value = 2.35, p < .05). The result of this study is consistent with Suliman and Iles (2000) who confirmed that organisational commitment is a three-dimensional concept. The findings also uncover positive relationships between the global form of commitment and its three components on one hand, and job performance on the other. It is also consistent with a study by De Cuyper and De Witte (2011) which showed that affective organisational commitment associated positively with performance. However, the result of this study is partially in line with Roca-Puig et al. (2007) which examined the effect of organisational commitment to employees (OCE) on staff perceptions of organisational performance through two different approaches – a
configurative approach and a universalistic approach. The theoretical model formulated in this paper integrates both propositions with the aim of analysing which has the most relevant impact on staff perceptions of organisational performance. It was found that the configurational hypothesis is more important than the Universalist hypothesis since OCE by itself does not affect organisational performance. Moreover, the result of this study is partially consistent with Merriman (2005) which partially supported a relationship between employee commitment levels (affective and continuance) and the education and income variables tested. The remaining variables tested (age, gender, tenure, and management status) were not supported by the hypothesis.

7.2.3 Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis of this study (H3) hypothesizes that employee retention mediates the relationship between HRM practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance; hence it states that employee retention mediates the relationship between HRM practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance. The result of testing this study’s hypothesis indicated that the relationship is supported. The result of this study is consistent with Lee et al. (2013) which tested the relationship between work life balance (WLB) practices (among the most relevant highlighted HR practices) and organisational outcomes mediated by the existence of a culture that supports WLB. The findings show that a WLB supportive culture mediates the effect of the availability of WLB practices on staff perceptions of organisational performance. The result of this study is also consistent with Cegarra-Leiva et al. (2012) which indicated that transformational leadership and social support make significant contributions to expatriate adjustment and performance. The moderating roles of socialisation experience and cultural intelligence were also confirmed in this study. Additionally, the result of this study is in agreement with Erkutlu, (2011)
which supported the moderating role of organisational culture of the justice perceptions-organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB) link. As hypothesized, results showed a stronger relationship between interactional justice and OCB for organisations that are higher in respect for people and a weaker relationship between distributive and procedural justices and OCB for organisations that are higher in team orientation. Finally, the result of this study is in line with Baek-Kyoo (2012) which examined the influence of leader–member exchange (LMX) quality on in-role job performance and the moderating effect of learning organisation culture in a Korean conglomerate. The results indicated that LMX quality had a significant impact on employees’ job performance as rated by their supervisors. In addition, although no direct relationship was found to be significant, the moderating effects of the two dimensions of learning organisation culture on the relationship between LMX quality and in-role job performance were significant.

The first sub-hypothesis of the third hypothesis (H3a) hypothesizes the relationship between HRM practices and employee retention; hence it states that HRM Practices directly, positively and significantly affect the retention of employees. The result of testing this study’s sub-hypothesis shoes that the relationship is supported (t value = 6.838, p< .001). The result of this study is consistent with Brigitte and Charissa (2013) since it showed that career development motivation was related to retention at the agency, but that this relation became weaker when tenure with the agency increased. HR practices (like training, supervisory support, career development support, information sharing and employee participation) proved to be related to lower turnover intentions of flex workers with a career development motivation. For flex workers with a freedom motivation the HR practices had no relationship with retention. Also, this study result is consistent with Kummerfeldt (2011) demonstrated in their study of a not-for-profit organisation that clear and consistent communication of the mission and vision of the organisation was of central
importance. In addition, recruitment policies, staff development, and management of performance were shown to improve job satisfaction and performance. Moreover, the result of this study is in agreement with Thite and Russell (2010) findings which suggest that the contribution of HR to employee retention is a necessary but not sufficient condition for retention in the context of Indian call centres. In addition, there is a partial agreement between this study and De Vos and Meganck (2008) which indicated that HR practices which were intended to support the retention of staff end to focus more on factors which practices focus more on external factors which are believed to cause employee turnover (e.g. financial rewards and career progression) rather than on factors which are considered to enhance employee retention (e.g. social conditions, job definition and job satisfaction, and work-life balance). It is interesting to note that in their study de Vos and Meganck (2008) highlighted the importance of career opportunities. The impact of career progression opportunities was found to have a stronger impact on employee loyalty as compared with financial incentives.

The second sub-hypothesis of the third hypothesis (H3b) hypothesizes the relationship between employee retention and staff perceptions of organisational performance; hence it states that employee retention directly, positively and significantly relates to staff perceptions of organisational performance. The result of testing this study’s sub-hypothesis shows that the relationship is supported (t value = 2.053, p<.05). The result of this study is consistent with other studies since it showed that prioritising employee interests and making rational decisions about retention strategies has had a very positive impact. The result of this study is also consistent with Beresford (2013) which suggested that high-turnover organisations can simultaneously have high rates of retention, and that the stability provided by the retention can yield financial benefits. Organisations in industries plagued by high turnover may find benefit in supplementing their turnover dashboards and
strategies with an increased focus on retention. The result of this study is in agreement with Kontoghiorghes and Frangou (2009) which found talent retention to exhibit a correlation of 0.43 or higher with all performance measures examined. Talent retention was found to exhibit especially high correlations with fast and successful response to environmental threats and opportunities (p < 0.01), providing best value to the customer (p < 0.01), being an innovative organization (r = 0.58; p<0.01), and quality performance (p < 0.01). Finally, the result of this study is in line with Bethke-Langenegger, Mahler and Staffelbach (2011) which indicated that talent management practices with a strong focus on corporate strategy have a statistically higher significant impact on organisational outcomes such as company attractiveness, the achievement of business goals, customer satisfaction and, above all, corporate profit, more so than any other areas that talent management focuses upon.

7.2.4 Hypothesis 4

The fourth hypothesis of this study (H4) hypothesizes that organisational culture (adaptation, work environment and innovation) mediates the relationship between HRM practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance; hence it states that organisational culture mediates the relationship between HRM practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance. The result of testing this study’s hypothesis showed that the relationship is supported. The result of this study is consistent with Triguero-Sánchez et al. (2013) which showed that hierarchical distance is a cultural dimension which moderates the relationship between HRM practices and organisational performance. Furthermore, when organisational performance is studied in relation to HRM practices, the use of perceived measures is considered more appropriate as these indicate the opinion of employees and managers regarding staff perceptions of organisational performance. It is also consistent with Wei et al. (2011) which examined an interactive model in which corporate culture and structure are proposed to moderate the strategic
human resource management (SHRM) – product innovation relationship. Empirical results from a sample of 223 Chinese enterprises indicate that SHRM has a positive impact on firms’ product innovation and this relationship is stronger for firms with a developmental culture. Additionally, the study result is in line with Ngo and Loi (2008) which revealed that organisational culture was positively affected by integrating employee flexibility and adaptability by implementing appropriate HR practices. In addition, an adaptability culture was found to positively impact on market-related. Finally, the result of this study is consistent with Kagaari (2011), which revealed a significant positive relationship between performance management practices and managed performance. A moderating influence of organisational culture and climate on performance management practices and managed performance was also established and confirmed significant.

The first sub-hypothesis of the fourth hypothesis (H4a) hypothesizes the relationship between HRM practices and organisational culture; hence it states that HRM practices directly, positively and significantly affect organisational culture. The result of testing this study’s sub-hypothesis indicated that the relationship is supported (t value = 14.795, p< .001). The result of this study is consistent with Ngo and Loi (2008) since its results of structural equation modelling (SEM) reveal the positive effects of employee behaviour flexibility and HR practice flexibility on adaptability culture. Employee skill flexibility, however, exerts no such effect. The result of this study is also in agreement with Tastard (2012) study's findings which investigated the importance of successful initiatives to create cultures of high performance being led by top down by the executive leader and also supported by organisational development to build a systemic capability to transform the legacy culture into a high performance culture. Two categories of criteria were found to be required (a) strategy and leadership and (b) organisational structure and capability. Finally, the result of this study is in line with Simmons (2008), which examined the relationship
between two communication-related dimensions of organisational culture, workplace incivility, and turnover. In particular, it investigated the impact that four human resources practices have on the relationship between incivility and turnover. These practices are training, formal policies, grievance procedures, and vertical hierarchy. The results indicated that formal human resources policies, systems, training, and flattened hierarchy can reduce both the incidence of incivility and turnover.

The second sub-hypothesis of the fourth hypothesis (H4b) hypothesizes the relationship between organisational culture and staff perceptions of organisational performance; hence it states that organisational culture directly, positively and significantly relates to staff perceptions of organisational performance. The result of testing this study’s sub-hypothesis shoes that the relationship is supported (t value = 13.172, p < .001). The result of this study is consistent with Bruyere (2013), which utilised Denison’s Organisational Culture Model (DOCM), which is a very well researched framework linking organisational culture and performance. The results support the overall suitability of the DOCM for high-hazard environment and points toward some potential improvements of the model in this context. The result of this study is consistent with Ngo and Loi (2008) which showed that adaptability culture is found to affect both HR-related and market-related performance in a positive manner. Moreover, the result of this study is in agreement with Chan et al. (2007) which revealed that several of the culture dimensions were related to firm performance: involvement, policy consistency and adaptability were significantly and positively correlated with staff perceptions of organisational performance. Similarly, the mission trait was correlated with organisational performance. Additionally, the result of this study is in line with Asree et al. (2010) findings which indicated that leadership competency and organisational culture have positive relationships with responsiveness. Their study also concluded that responsiveness has a positive relationship with organizational performance.
(in this case hotel revenue). Finally, the result of this study is consistent with several studies such as (Simmons, 2008; Victoria et al., 2009).

### 7.2.5 Hypothesis 5

The fifth hypothesis of this study (H5) hypothesizes that organisational culture mediates the relationship between employee commitment and employee retention; hence it states that organisational culture affects positively and directly mediation variable employee commitment and employee retention. The result of testing this study’s hypothesis indicated that the relationship is supported. The result of this study is consistent with Islam et al. (2013) which indicated that leader-member exchange, organisational learning culture and organisational commitment are found to correlate with each other. Furthermore, structural equation modelling confirms that organisational commitment performs the role of mediator between organisational learning culture and employee turnover.

The first sub-hypothesis of the fifth hypothesis (H5a) hypothesizes the relationship between organisational culture and employee commitment; hence it states that organisational culture directly, positively and significantly affects the commitment of employees. The result of testing this study’s sub-hypothesis showed that the relationship is supported (t value = 4.477, p < .001). The result of this study is consistent with Messner (2013) also demonstrated that, among the organisational culture dimensions, in-group collectivism and performance orientation are the antecedents with the biggest effect on employee commitment. Other culture dimensions show varying degree of positive and negative influence on employee commitment. It is also consistent with a study by Ortega-Parra and Sastre-Castillo (2013) which confirmed the authors’ hypothesis that a better adjustment between the perceived and the stated values has a positive relation with commitment. Particularly, people-oriented values and ethical behaviour are the ones that best predict affective commitment. The study verifies, also, that appropriate human
resources practices greatly affect the perception of values. The result of this study is also in agreement with Okpara (2007) which suggested (in support of many western studies) that cultural factors are positively and significantly related to job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Finally, this study is consistent with Jain (2015) which showed that culture had a positive influence on affective and continuance commitment.

The second sub-hypothesis of the fifth hypothesis (H5b) hypothesizes the relationship between organisational culture and employee retention; hence it states that organisational culture directly, positively and significantly affects the retention of employees. The result of testing this study’s sub-hypothesis shoes that the relationship is supported (t value = 8.617, p < .001). The result of this study is inconsistent with Chenot (2007) findings which revealed that hypotheses concerning the effects of organisational culture and service quality on retention were not supported. However, the result of this study is consistent with Eversole et al. (2012) which claimed that organisational cultures that will be able to retain employees across generations need to be developed. Each generation seems to be alike in one crucial area: their desire for workplace flexibility. Middle managers need to be inducted and trained to accept a culture where they maintain accountability without power and control. In addition, the result of this study is partially in agreement with San Park and Hyun Kim (2009) which concluded that consensual culture exhibited the strongest, negative association with the turnover intention of the nurses, while hierarchical culture showed a significant, positive association. Moreover, the result of this study is consistent with Larsson et al. (2007) which suggested that the extent to which employees viewed the strategy of the organisation positively affected their motivation. The same positive effect was also associated with employee perception of performance appraisal and this is significantly correlated with their intention to remain with the organisation. Finally, the result of this study is in line with Shim (2009) whose study was in the context of publicly
employed child welfare officers and which indicated that organisational culture and climate are significant predictors of employee’s turnover. Among organisational culture and climate variables, Emphasis on Rewards (ER) and Emotional Exhaustion (EE) appeared as significant determinants of employee’s intention to leave in public child welfare agencies. These findings suggest that public child welfare employees who have clearer and more effective incentives and rewards for a job well done or who have more sufficient emotional energy for the job show less intention to leave their current jobs.

The quantitative analysis of the data thus demonstrates the link between HR practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance and also support a close examination of the link between mediating variables which may moderate this i.e. organisational culture, employee commitment and employee retention. Testing the mediating variables and demonstration of the link which was hypothesised in the study model should therefore be seen as a contribution to ‘opening the black box’ as it clearly demonstrates the significance of the mediating variables pathway in the model.

It should be noted that whilst the researcher has conducted an empirical piece of research which, in order to ensure conclusions were valid and robust, was focussed very much on using a quantitative approach to demonstrate as set of 5 hypotheses/sub-hypotheses, the research process involved a much wider examination of the subject of linkages between HRM and staff perceptions of organisational performance. In particular, the collection of an extensive data set which was derived from the views of 280 staff working in the sector and the interviews and contact made by the researcher with the HR community and university employees in Bahrain provides the basis for making some more general conclusions and observations. This has informed some of the discussion which follows in this chapter.
7.3 Commentary on questionnaires

As noted previously the results from the questionnaire survey were also put into SPSS. This section presents some findings and observations which are a result of examining the overall responses to the questionnaires and, where interesting trends could be identified the data was explored further. The following observations are therefore presented to give a more descriptive picture of the questionnaire responses and to note points which may also be seen as assisting in ‘opening the black box’.

7.3.1 Organisational Performance

The responses to this questionnaire tended to be biased towards very high and high level of agreement to the statements. This is probably because the private universities have all been subjected to intensive quality review. One of the most important areas that has been examined in review is the institutional mission and vision and the way in which this is communicated to staff. In comparison with western universities the mission and vision is very prominently displayed across the private universities and all staff and departments are well informed of the importance of meeting the aims and objectives of the university. In addition, because of the highly competitive nature of business in the higher education sector in Bahrain staff are generally very aware of the importance of innovation in programme design and offering and the need to be very rigorous in programme design and to meet ensure that the programmes have a distinctive competitive advantage.

7.3.2 Organisational Culture

Again the emphasis on mission explains the very high positive response to the first question of this section which examines staff understanding of the mission, vision and goals of their departments. There was a very high level of satisfaction with the working
environment which again can be explained relatively easily as the private university sector in Bahrain in the last few years has invested very heavily in state of the art buildings and expanding their premises to meet the increasing demand for students who wish to take up higher education. The overall picture is very positive also in terms of the satisfaction of staff with the environment in which they work with their colleagues. Interestingly, the responses from those staff who are not native to the Gulf region showed a lower level of satisfaction on questions 5 and 6 which dealt with the decision making process and the basis on which decisions were taken. Reflecting on the findings in the literature on the culture in Bahrain (Chapter III) this is probably an indication of the general way in which tribal, family and religious beliefs can influence organisational culture.

7.3.3 Employee Commitment

From a cultural perspective there is a very strong emphasis on Bahrain on commitment and loyalty of employees. This is very much reflected in the responses in this section. It is acknowledged that, as noted in Chapter III, staff in Bahrain tend to be very positive in their responses, and as this is well known to be a very important trait of employees by senior management this may have influence the responses. The most significant indicator of the high overall level of commitment was provided in question 7, which attempted to find out the extent to which employees felt ‘emotionally attached’ to the organisation.

From the literature it should be noted that this may also be linked to the high level of importance given to communication of mission and vision. As noted previously in this thesis, the case study by Kummerfeldt (2011) of a large not-for-profit organisation demonstrated the impact of clear communication of the mission and vision to employee (in this case volunteers) retention and the overall organisational performance.
7.3.4 Employee Retention

The responses on retention and in particular the response to the first question asked in this section of the questionnaire on career development tended to have lower levels of agreement. Again as explained when discussing the national culture in Bahrain this is explained because of the working practices and legislation which tend to disadvantage a very open approach to employee retention – typically short contracts are the norm.

On examining the data in detail two interesting trends are apparent. The first is the trend for non-Gulf staff to rate the potential for career development lower (and to an extent this was also true of their responses to questions 4 (dealing with employee reward and recognition) and question 8 (dealing with university management support for employees). As noted in Chapter III of the thesis there is a quite clear cultural difference in how Gulf staff and staff from other geographic regions are treated within employment practices and this is almost certainly the explanation for the result.

The second was a low response to career development by senior management. This is explained in terms of recent legislation whereby the Higher Education Council decreed that no Dean or Vice President could remain in post after the age of 60 (as noted in Chapter III).

The results from both groups noted above did not significantly skew an otherwise very positive response but it is important to note that such variations are present.

7.3.5 HR Practices in Bahrain

7.3.5.1 Recruitment and Selection

The way in which organisations ensure that they have a workforce which is adequate to meet their requirements hinges around the way in which they implement appropriate
recruitment and selection process and strategies. Recruitment refers to the organisation’s processes to identify and attract applications from potential employees (whether these are internal or external to the organisation). Selection is the process of determining from the applications which have been generate the most suitable candidate or ‘preferred candidate’ for a position in terms of how well they meet the criteria which have been set out by the organisation to ensure that applicants are suitable for the role for which they are applying.

Bratton and Gold (2007) differentiated the two terms while establishing a clear link between by noting that recruitment is the process of generating a number of applicants who are capable of performing the job and selection is the process by which managers use particular instruments to determine the best of these candidates taking into account the goals of the organisation and legal requirements (Bratton and Gold, 2007).

Examining the responses to the part of the questionnaire devoted to recruitment and selection there was a high level of uniformity and a high level of satisfaction with both the processes used by the universities to recruit suitable candidates and ensure that the most suitable candidate was selected. The processes for recruitment and selection are clearly well known to staff and it was also evident from some written comments by respondents in this section that they felt very involved in the process – several respondents giving detailed information on how staff participated directly in the process.

7.3.5.2 Training and Development

The ultimate purpose of training or staff development, as identified by Armstrong (2006) are to enhance the performance of the organisation by maintaining and extending the skills of employees to improve their performance. The target for staff development activities is to ensure that all employees are capable of contributing to support the organisation in its
plans to meet its strategic goals. It seeks to do this by providing learning time for employees to support activities which enable them to be eligible for transfer or promotion, which uses the skills or knowledge which they have acquired through the process.

According to Peter Drucker (1999), managers are responsible for the development of employees in an organisation. He argued that as part of their role, managers should be able to turn their employees' strengths into active job performance through consistent training and development.

In this section of the questionnaire there was a difference in responses from those who were line managers for service departments of administrative staff and also from administrative staff themselves. This group of staff were consistently more supportive of training opportunities and the time provided to undertake formal training. Academic staff were more critical of the training opportunities and in particular of the amount of money which was devoted to training.

This is best explained by what staff interpreted as ‘training’. It was clear from written comments on the questionnaire that some academic staff were not satisfied with the opportunities made available to them for their own subject specific development – in particular the lack of opportunity to attend international conferences and seminars was noted by 23 academic staff. A written comment by one member of staff sums up what appears to be a more widespread feeling amongst academic staff:

‘There is plenty of opportunity and a lot of time spent on general training sessions on IT and on quality assurance but what I really want is more opportunity to meet with colleagues who are teaching the same subject and get some support for my scientific research and make contacts for collaboration” (Academic staff response written on questionnaire).
This is an area in which the universities should be more proactive – particularly as some respondents also expressed the view that whether or not a member of staff could get permission to attend conferences was arbitrary and the process for approval not clear.

7.5.5.3 Contingent Pay and Reward Schemes

There is a great deal of literature which supports the idea that reward and recognition are important factors that influence employee behaviour, job satisfaction and organisational performance (Keller & Szilagyi, 1976). What is more open to debate is which of a range of possible practices designed to support reward and recognition are most effective in strengthening employees’ commitment to the organisation and encourage improvements in personal or team performance.

The questionnaire results show a very positive attitude to pay and reward. For both academic and administrative staff, the results show a high level of satisfaction with the reward schemes in place – note was made by 18 staff across 3 universities which indicated they were particularly satisfied that results from good performance in quality assessment exercises were rewarded through bonuses. The results to questions 7 and 8 which directly asked about salaries and incentives in comparison with other universities were surprisingly uniform across the universities surveyed. The explanation may be that staff were responding in terms of a comparison of their pay and incentives compared with colleagues working in the public sector. The public universities in Bahrain generally offer lower payments and do not provide additional incentives. Again there was some difference between responses from staff who were nationals of Gulf States and others. For staff who were nationals in western countries the responses were when averaged slightly lower and for those staff who were from Asian countries the results were even lower (though not
significantly so). Again this is explained by national and cultural factors at work in Bahrain.

Across the sector academics are being challenged to deliver high quality teaching to meet the increasing demands from students who pay full fees. As a result, turnover of academic staff in Bahraini private universities is high. Other researchers had proposed that, one of the principal causes of high staff turnover has been identified as low employee commitment as a result of dissatisfaction with pay, promotion policies and career development opportunities (Jantan, Shahnon, Chan & Sibly, 2006) and this gives the opportunity to study the impact of this broadly across the sector. The results from this survey, however, would indicate that this is not the case in Bahrain.

7.3.5.4 Performance appraisal

Performance of employees is evaluated by their supervisors, peers or outside external stakeholders (in a university context this may involve students for example). There may also be a degree of peer evaluation. The literature reviewed suggests that there are a number of very complex systems which may be used to provide the basis for implementing a performance appraisal system. (Muchinsky, 1999).

Riggio (2003) notes that there are many complexities associated with using behavioural or attitudinal scales. The first group is Graphic Rating Scales (GRS), which are the most commonly-used techniques of performance appraisal. In GRS, employees are rated on a number of traits or factors. Behaviourally anchored rating scales (BARS), behavioural-observation scales (BOS), and mixed standard rating scales to undertake very sophisticated analysis of performance appraisal.
In Bahrain it was clear from the questionnaires that the performance appraisal system as perceived by the staff is much less complex but comments on the questionnaires indicated a high level of satisfaction with the systems being used for performance appraisal. The only area in which responses were more negative was around the final question of this section which dealt with the link between performance appraisal and promotion opportunities. Again this was particularly related to academic staff responses and a number of comments on the questionnaires clearly indicated that the promotion system was not at all clear.

**7.3.5.5 Employee involvement**

The responses on employee involvement were positive across all staff. Staff clearly feel that they have all of the information they need to work effectively and that they are confident that they can make decisions within their own particular areas of responsibility. Again related to the mission, the question on communication of strategy was almost universally positive from staff.

Reflecting on the results in this section it is again important to understand them in terms of the culture in Bahrain. It was noted in Chapter III that in Bahrain there is a greater willingness than in other cultures to accept hierarchies and so it is likely that staff are less concerned about the detail of their involvement in decision making. Having said this comments from staff clearly showed that they were well informed and staff from 4 of the universities also took the opportunity to note on the questionnaire that they were very closely involved with their managers and suggested that there was a lot of opportunity to discuss work both formally and informally (and again this corresponds with the views noted in Chapter III about the way in which Islamic religious practices bring staff from all areas of the University together). Five staff in one university also commented on formal
arrangements to bring all of the staff regularly to discuss the University’s progress and receive updates on this.

7.4 Summary

This chapter has provided a discussion of the empirical results of the analysis of the data derived from the questionnaires administered to staff within the private university sector in Bahrain. As noted in the Chapter the hypotheses have been rigorously tested and hypotheses and sub hypotheses have all been accepted. It is important to emphasize that the significant contribution of the empirical work is the rigorous testing of the model based on using structured equation modelling. The researcher has demonstrated clearly where these results are aligned in other studies in the literature but again it is important to note that the real contribution of the empirical study has been that it has used very rigorous research methods to derive these results.

This research has taken into account the complexity both direct and mediating variables and thus the conclusions can be taken to be more robust. The conclusions clearly support the link between staff perceptions of organisational performance and HR practices and in terms of further explanation to ‘open the black box’ they conclusively demonstrate the importance of the outcomes of the mediating variables. In particular it very much supports organisational culture as an important aspect to explain results.

The questionnaires summary data which was input to SPSS has also been discussed and more general observations made from these. These observations again support the importance of cultural considerations and results from the questionnaire surveys themselves have been examined from the perspective of the key issues which are discussed in the literature and from a detailed consideration of specific circumstances which are relevant to Bahrain.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes this thesis by considering the main contributions of this research. It outlines the research findings and the main academic contributions, and then reflects on the findings both from a theoretical point of view and in terms of the implications for HRM practitioners. Finally, it highlights the limitations of this research, and then discusses and provides guidelines for further future work.

8.2 Achievement of Aim and Objectives

As outlined in Chapter I, the aim of the research was to investigate the link between staff perceptions of HRM practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance. In addition, the research also hypothesised that organisational culture, employee commitment and employee retention were mediating variables which could further explain the link.

To achieve this aim the researcher listed the following objectives for the study:

1. To review the literature related to HRM practices and organisational performance.

   This was achieved and a very comprehensive literature review is given in Chapter II of the thesis. In addition, when examining the impact of national culture and when critically examining the research methodology the researcher used a wide range of published sources.

2. To build a study model that relates HRM practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance, including the variables that mediates the relationship.

   The model was constructed and explained in Chapter II of the thesis and the implications of the model for testing the research hypotheses is provided in Chapter V of the thesis.
3. To empirically test and validate the study model within Bahraini private universities.

Chapter VI of the thesis discusses in detail the way in which the model was tested using a group of five Bahraini private universities. The researcher designed a series of questionnaires which were completed by a representative sample of staff working within each of the private universities and in Chapter VII provided a detailed analysis and discussion of the causal links within the model.

4. To provide and offer implications and recommendations for theory and practice based on the results of this research.

Chapter VII of the thesis gives a discussion of the findings from the empirical study and this chapter (Chapter VIII) provides further discussion of the implications, limitations, and suggested directions for future research.

The researcher adopted a rigorously quantitative approach to this investigation having defined a model to illustrate the links between staff perceptions of HR practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance (including these mediating variables) the researcher formulated appropriate hypotheses to test these links. The hypotheses as stated in Chapter 1 were tested and all were accepted. The researcher thus demonstrated that not only is there a link between staff perceptions of HR practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance but that organisational culture, employee commitment and employee retention are all variables which mediate that link. Having demonstrated this the main aims of the thesis were achieved in that the researcher not only demonstrated that there was a link between HR practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance but also that the outcomes of HR practices as evidenced by organisational culture, employee commitment and employee retention were significant and the inclusion of these in a model to further explain the link between staff perceptions of organisational performance and HR practices was valid. In this way the research contributed to ‘opening the black box; and give further explanation of the link.
In addition, this thesis reports on empirical research into the effect of human resource management practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance in the Arab world, specifically Bahrain. This study examined the link between staff perceptions of HRM practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance and tested the mediating roles of organisational culture, employee commitment, and retention in the Bahraini private universities. It was motivated, as noted in Chapter I, by the increasing attention to the importance of maximizing performance for universities that, in Bahrain and increasingly in the rest of the world, exist in a competitive environment in which there is a growing recognition that stronger and more developed HRM systems are required to support success. However, prior research on HRM practices and organisational performance has largely focused on the developed countries. Consequently, little attention has been given to examining this important issue the Arab nations in particular. This gap is significant given cultural and social characteristics of developing countries including Arab nations differ significantly from those of the Western nations (Baker et al, 2010; Olasina & Mutula, 2015). Therefore, the second motivation of this study is the lack of empirical research that focuses on examining the relationship between HRM practices and organisational performance and exploring the mediation role of important factors such as organisation culture, employee commitment and employee retention in the Arab world, Bahrain in particular. Filling this gap in the literature is one of the motivations for conducting this study in a country such as Bahrain, with different cultural and social values.

In order to pinpoint the research problem, this study developed, validated and tested an integrative and comprehensive research model. Based on the PLS analysis, it was found that of the various factors considered in the research organisational culture contributes the most to university performance (β=0.734) suggesting that it is imperative for managers and
employees to understand their organisational culture and its structural influence on individual and group patterns of behaviour and thinking, which may eventually lead to changes in the work environment which will positively contribute to improving the university’s effectiveness, efficiency, development, quality of services, innovation and employees satisfaction (i.e. organisational performance in this study). Findings also indicated the positive impact of organisational culture on both employee commitment and employee retention. The present study suggests that employees’ perception of organisational culture enabled them to be more committed to their organisations. In addition, organisational culture that fosters innovation and adaptability in the workplace and which will be able to attract and retain employees across generations, needs to be developed in Bahraini private universities.

In addition, the empirical findings of this study as demonstrated by an analysis of the questionnaires used to derive constructs to test the variables were examined to further contribute to ‘opening the black box’ This analysis suggested that organisations including universities need to attract and retain talented staff and leverage them for competitive advantage. Candidates need to be selected based on requisite skills knowledge, attitude and qualification using appropriate selection techniques. The study has also demonstrated training and development as its essential component of high performance work systems. Additionally, this study showed that, staff in Bahraini private universities perceive that effective implementation of these human resource management practices could lead to enhanced employee retention and reduce employee turnover especially within the education sector which was the focus of this study. This should have a positive impact on workforce productivity. Furthermore, the results of this study indicated that employee perceptions of HRM practices were important when predicting the employee commitment. Therefore, owners and managers must find a way to ensure that employee perceptions
about organisational HRM practices are positive if they are to improve the commitment of their employees.

Based on study results, organisational culture, organisational commitment and employee retention included in this study were found to mediate the relationship between HRM practices and organisational performance. These findings supported the argument that an appropriate culture, commitment and retention strategies would facilitate the implementation of effective management practices such as HRM practices, and thus strengthen the effect of HRM practices on staff perceptions of organisational performance.

8.3 Implications for Theory and Research

This study has thoroughly reviewed the literature related to human resource management practices and organisational performance. The main area of research to which this study has aimed at contributing is the research on human resource management practices in effect to staff perceptions of organisational performance in general and in an Arabian Gulf country, the Kingdom of Bahrain universities in particular. To the best of the researcher’s knowledge, this is the first study of HRM practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance in the Kingdom of Bahrain which specifically focuses on the educational sector. The following provides a summary of the most important theoretical contributions that this study has made to staff perceptions of organisational performance and to theories of motivation.

First, despite prior studies suggesting the importance of HRM practices and its effect on staff perceptions of organisational performance, there is little prior empirical evidence based on the rigorous application of statistical techniques of the effect of HRM practices (training and development, recruitment and selective hiring, and compensation) on organisational outcomes related to staff perceptions of organisational performance.
(innovation, efficiency and effectiveness). This study provided evidence supporting this relationship. Moreover, this study gives constructive insights into the scope of interest that human resource management practices addresses. The elaboration of the research on staff perceptions of organisational performance conducted in this study resulted in identifying the factors of human resource management practices used which are most relevant for Bahrain private universities – i.e. training and development, appropriate recruitment and selective hiring strategies and compensation.

The study has also demonstrated that staff perceive that training and development as its essential component of high performance work systems. Hence, it can be a source of competitive advantage. It can foster the creation of innovative ideas and the knowledge obtained by an employee can be disseminated for others to learn from it. This result is encouraging for human resource managers who argue for an internal development approach to managing human resources in the Arabian Gulf. It provides them with evidence to counter the arguments of cynics who favour a more instrumental, skill acquisition approach. This is important in the light of the fact that a significant proportion of the private sector workforce in the Arabian Gulf is comprised of expatriates and employers may be reluctant to invest in internal skill development. Another important contribution that this study has for staff perceptions of organisational performance is that it has highlighted the importance of selective hiring. Instead of merely concentrating on hiring staff to fill vacancies, it is more important for universities to consider carefully a range of issues which are important to the selection and hiring process which have an impact on the overall strategic direction of the university and are consistent with its aims and vision and the strategic direction which it is pursuing. This is to prevent turnover of employees, develop committed and motivated employees and eventually build a high performance organisation where human capital is valued.
Second, agreement in the literature concerning what the content of the "black box" has not yet been established. As Boselie et al. (2005) stated, their meta-analytic study which examined 104 articles concluded that 'linking mechanisms' between HRM practices and in particular the way in which a range of variables can affect this are, on the whole, not dealt with in the current literature. Edgar and Geare (2009), on the other hand, do note that there has been some useful contribution in the literature which confirms the existence of the "black box" exists, and note that some studies have been published which try to map both the direct and indirect influencing variables in the HRM performance chain. These models, have tried to explore what are referred to as "causal pathways", which seek to draw out the more complex way in which HRM practices can support organisational success through a series of intervening variables which may also form complex linked constructs which impact on the way in which they operate (Guthrie et al., 2004). Hence, based on intensive and comprehensive literature review, this study considered three factors which potentially represented significant issues within the “black box” content and mediate the relationship between the implementation of HRM practice and staff perceptions of organisational performance. The three factors included in this study are organisational culture, organisational commitment and employee retention. Organisational culture, organisational commitment and employee retention included in this study were found to significantly impact the relationship between HRM practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance. These findings supported the argument that an appropriate culture, commitment and retention strategies would facilitate the implementation of effective management practices such as HRM practices, and thus strengthen the impact of HRM practices on staff perceptions of organisational performance.

Third, through the investigation of the multiple aspects of the internal management process including organisational culture, organisational commitment, employee retention and their
interaction effects on organisation, this study contributes to the HRM practices literature by enhancing our understanding of how HRM practices can be implemented and managed effectively. For instance, by presenting significant relationships between several HRM practices and organisational commitment that both replicate and challenge previously found relationships, this study contributes to the theory on the effects of HRM practices on organisational commitment.

Finally, since this study provided empirical evidence showing the importance of the study of HRM practices, it enriches the ‘social context’ view of HRM practices.

8.4 Implications for Managerial Practice

The study revealed that staff working in the private university sector perceive that HRM practices have a significant impact on staff perceptions of organisational performance. It has been found that university performance can be attributed to HRM practices including training and development, recruitment and selection, and compensation system.

A major practical contribution of this study is that it demonstrates the importance of training and employee development with respect to staff perceptions of organisational performance. Leveraging the ability and motivation of the employees through the enactment of decisions and procedures has a positive impact on the organisation. Specifically, in order to increase staff perceptions of organisational performance, the HR department should enhance the number of training activities as well as develop the employees and empower them make decisions regarding their job. Hence, appropriate training program for academics and support staff should be organised to continuously improve their skills in line with the developments needs of the university. Sufficient and appropriate training would assist in enhancing employees’ competencies and knowledge while they are performing their tasks but the benefits go far beyond this. Managers should
understand employees’ career plans so that they match the career aspirations of employees and the needs of the university. Therefore, learning and growth should be considered by management as one of the dimensions, which include progression of staff to move up the career ladder hence the importance and this will engender greater employee satisfaction if they feel that the organisation is supportive of their own personal ambitions and aspirations.

Universities need to have an effective recruitment policy to promote a robust system for the selection, screening and assessment of the suitability of prospective employees which goes beyond a consideration of the applicant's 'paper-based' qualifications and competencies and encompasses a wider consideration of their fit with the organisation and its goals. Depending on the nature of the vacancy being filled an appropriate mix of senior staff should participate in selection process to provide as wide as possible a perspective on the applicant's suitability. Further this must be done in a manner that acknowledges that while this may result in different preferences for particular candidates the process must be mediated by HRM providing clear and practical guidance on selection criteria for different positions within the organisation. I.e. candidates need to be selected based on requisite skills knowledge, attitude and qualification using appropriate selection techniques. Consequently, selective hiring plays an important role as the selection process done on the basis of ensuring that criteria for selection ensures a holistic consideration of how the applicant will integrate with existing teams within the university and add make a positive contribution to the work of such teams.

Also, good compensation designed by the organisation will directly affect the staff’s performance, while as compensation may appear to be consistent and aligned with the rewards offered by similar institutions, employees are de-motivated if they feel that the rewards which are provided are not equitable across the university or fail to take account of
particular skills or competencies which they have brought to the university or have
developed during their employment with the university. Furthermore, incentives have
proven to have positive effects, both for the completion of group objectives and for the
enhancement of knowledge, skills and abilities of employees.

Adequate training should be provided to enhance the interest of employees in furthering
their career in the organisation, especially for those in key positions. It could also
contribute to develop employee commitment particularly if it is reinforced by providing
accurate information to employees about their individual work performance and that of
their teams in terms of meeting the strategic objectives of the organisation.

Career development practices could be the best predictors of affective and normative
commitment. Hence, organisations which take active roles in helping employees to prepare
for advancement in the organisation, and do so in a manner that creates a perception of
support, might foster a stronger bond to the organisation among employees than those that
do not. By doing this, employees feel a sense of being important and respected and this
will enhance their commitment to the organisation.

Furthermore, when employees are supportive of the efforts of the organisation not only in
recruiting and selecting staff, but also in providing a sufficient guarantee to retain
employees in the organisation this will encourage commitment (It should also be noted that
employees also need to be aware that the organisation's retention strategy fairly
discriminates on the basis of high level or poor performance).

The literature review showed that commitment is important to consider because it can have
a direct impact on a company’s profitability. That is, having a committed workforce means
that workers are more likely to remain with their organisation and thus become more
productive over time. Consistent with the literature review, this study found that
organisational commitment is linked to staff perceptions of organisational performance. Hence, Bahrain universities should be careful to constantly ensure that it is pursuing best practice in providing employee training and career development, selective hiring, and a good and fairly and transparently managed compensation and reward package. These factors were consistently emphasized in both the literature and as part of the empirical studies undertaken by the researcher and if implemented it is strongly indicated by previous research and by participants in the research that commitment levels of employees will be increased as consequently will the performance of the organisation.

Moreover, organisations are likely to experience frequent employee turnover as long as they fail to put in place appropriate employee-retention strategies. Frequent labour turnover is detrimental to performance. If an organisation must end the contact of some of its employees this must be done in such a way as to clearly state the reasons behind it to ensure that other employees in the organisation are not discouraged or de-motivated. Adequate rewards are motivating factors for employee retention and performance. Putting into consideration, the level of rewards that will motivate employees for retention and performance is vital for organisational survival and growth.

This study showed that the perception of staff working within the Bahraini private university sector is that there is a significant, positive and meaningful relationship between HRM practices and organisational culture. HRM practices become the means whereby organisational culture is created and sustained. Designing new culture requires that HRM professionals are ahead of the cultural change curve with innovative and exciting HRM practices. It has been proposed that HRM has the potential to be a powerful lever for shaping and changing the culture of an organisation to make the organisation more effective (Ulrich, 1997). Therefore, to foster university performance in a sustained manner, Bahrain universities which are aware of the significance of developing and maintaining an
appropriate corporate culture are likely benefit the most. These systematic improvements can be expected to enhance the performance of the Bahrain universities. Furthermore, this study indicates that if a university is serious about attracting and retaining the best and brightest, then it must create an exciting and productive environment in which employees are continually challenged and motivated to do their best. This means developing a culture of continuous innovation and creativity, which is also an obvious business advantage in and of itself. The majority of organisations including universities are not actually prepared to deal with innovation because it tends to be revolutionary in nature, subverting ‘tried and true’ processes and solutions. Universities must, therefore, be flexible, adaptable and willing to take risks in order to embrace innovative ideas and really benefit from them.

To this end, to succeed in innovation, as this study results showed, the university needs to have an environment that supports the identification, development, and implementation of innovative ideas. Employees need to hear a clear message that the university expects them to take the initiative and try new ways of doing things. If successfully implemented, an innovation culture will provide a competitive advantage, and this will eventually result in industry leading performance.

The results of this study implied that managers need to understand the important role played by the prevailing culture in their organisations in order to develop those culture types that encourage employee commitment. Hence, the current study reinforces the need to continuously invest in programs, processes, and systems, which target organisational culture in a way that employee commitment is improved. For certain types of corporate culture, certain types of organisational commitment model are appropriate in the organisational setting than others. In other words, there is a match or compatibility between the aims and strategic direction of the organisation and the type of organisational culture.
and type of organisational commitment required to motivate the employees in an
organisation.

Finally, there is an important message the researcher (who is himself a senior HR manager
working in a private university in Bahrain) derives from this study and would wish to
disseminate more widely, which is that HR managers should better take into account what
their employees value and how they evaluate their organisation’s efforts towards retention
management if they are to contribute in a cost-efficient way to the strategic objectives of
the organisation. For HR managers to be effective in their retention management, they need
to abandon the commonly accepted views on what employees’ value. This, in turn, should
contribute to their role in the company as a strategic partner given that the attraction and
retention of talented employees will stay a factor of competitive advantage for
organisations, and this may be particularly important in times of economic downturn or
radical change.

8.5 Contribution to knowledge and Limitations of the study

In terms of contribution to knowledge it is important to note the following two points.

Firstly, the research was firmly grounded in a consideration of appropriate research
approaches and in particular provided a solid basis for using a research methodology which
involved the use of quantitative methods to derive statistically valid conclusions. The
application of very robust statistical and analytical techniques and deductive reasoning to
demonstrate the link between organisational culture and staff perceptions of organisational
performance as well as the impact of mediating factors complements and supplements
other research in the field. This adds support to similar claims that have been made using
other methods (particularly where these have been derived from an interpretivist research
approach and based largely around the application of qualitative methodologies).
Secondly this is the first significant study of staff perceptions of the link between HRM practices and staff perceptions of organisational performance to be undertaken in the Gulf Region where strategic HRM practices are not as embedded as within western cultures. The research examined carefully the impact of the culture in which it was situated and thus is new in terms of its discussion and investigation of strategic HRM within the Arabic culture.

In terms of contribution to practice the most significant impact of this research has been that it has stimulated debate and discussion within the Bahrain HE sector on the role of strategic HRM and reinforced the need within private universities within the sector to seriously consider the implications of its findings in developing their competitive advantage. Particularly when the research is translated into Arabic and more widely disseminated, it will ensure that the findings are much more accessible to universities in Bahrain which will increase its impact.

8.5.1 Limitations

As with all studies, this study has its own limitations. This is a study that represents a slice of time (snap shot) and does not show how the variables which were tested may vary over time. Studies employing a longitudinal design would ascertain whether or there were trends in the relationship between HR practices and perception of organisational performance.

Another limitation is derived from the geographical location of the current research (i.e. Bahrain). Although, the findings are believed to be applicable to other universities in Arab countries that share demographic characteristics with Bahrain, it should not be assumed that these findings are generally applicable. Therefore, further study in different countries would most likely strengthen and validate the model findings of this study and also help to
further determine the key elements within HR practices which were common in providing a demonstrable link between implementation of particular practices and improvements in staff perceptions of organisational performance.

There are also a range of other methodological and practical limitations which would have strengthened the conclusions of the research and which should be taken account in future studies.

These can be broadly categorised as dealing firstly with the overall methodological approach and some limitations on the use of the data which was collected.

8.5.1.1 Methodological Approach

As discussed in the chapter on Research Methodology the researcher adopted a positivist approach to the research. The main justification for this was that the researcher wished to adopt an approach which allowed him, as far as possible, to take an objective approach to the analysis and interpretation of the data which was gathered. This was particularly important because of the fact that the researcher has a senior role in Human Resources Management in one of the universities which participated in the survey. Reflecting on the approach it could also be noted that the use of a mainly statistical approach would also be consistent with the use of a pragmatic design for the research. As noted in their web article on conduction research Alzheimer Europe state that:

“The pragmatic approach to science involves using the method which appears best suited to the research problem and not getting caught up in philosophical debates about which is the best approach. Pragmatic researchers therefore grant themselves the freedom to use any of the methods, techniques and procedures typically associated with quantitative or qualitative research. They recognise that every method has its limitations and that the different approaches can be complementary.” (Alzheimer Europe, 2009)
This approach would have given a solid theoretical basis for using mixed methodologies. In fact, in addition to using quantitative methods as the main method for data analysis and conclusions the researcher also examined some of the data qualitatively and the results of examining the qualitative comments provided on some of the questionnaires and the comments fed back verbally to the researcher are discussed in the Conclusions chapter. However, this could have been more extensively done. However, it would have been very challenging to take a completely comprehensive approach to analysing the data exhaustively using appropriate tools for interpretation of qualitative data, for example through using textual analysis. In addition, as noted in the thesis the application of a qualitative design would have been difficult because culturally conducting open discussions and using, for example, focus groups and interviews is not common in the culture of Bahrain.

8.5.1.2 Data collection and analysis

The sample size in the research was restricted to staff of 5 private universities in Bahrain. The reasons or doing this are discussed in the research methods chapter and were mainly because at the start of the research it was felt that staff in this group of universities would provide more informed responses because these universities were sufficiently large and the institutions had already passed quality audits conducted by the Higher Education Review Unit in Bahrain and demonstrated that they had well-functioning human resource departments which were adequate in supporting their operations. This resulted in the collection of 280 usable questionnaire returns. The sample size could have been increased by being more inclusive of other institutions. A larger and more diverse sample of staff working in higher education institutions in Bahrain would have given more strength to the
conclusions regarding staff perception of the link between HRM practices and organisational performance.

In addition, as noted in the discussion in Chapter VI of the thesis the questionnaire collected demographic data. However, the volume of work involved in evaluating and discussing the research questions which were formulated as the research hypotheses meant that there was insufficient time to look at the cross sectional data which a full analysis of the demographic data would have allowed. Note is therefore made, for example, in future directions for the research in following up on some of this by, for example, looking for correlations and comparisons in the responses of female respondents as opposed to male respondents. This would be particularly interesting given the discussion in Chapter III of the thesis on the position of women in the workforce in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Conducting such research would also help in extending the conclusions of the research reported here which is, as noted throughout the thesis, is restricted to looking at the relationship between HR practices and staff perception of organisation performance to beginning to examine ‘causal relationships’ particularly if further research was also focussed around examining in detail examples of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ HR practices.

Also, as discussed in Chapter V on the research design the researcher based the questionnaires on previous work in the area and modification of previous questionnaires. Many of the modifications were required in order to take into account the cultural factors which characterize use of HR practices within the Kingdom of Bahrain. While the researcher was careful to ensure that these questionnaires were valid (through the use of expert consultation prior to issuing the questionnaires) and reliable (as reported in previous studies) ideally the modified questionnaires should have been put through a pilot test in order to establish reliability and reporting on Common Variance. This would have given certainty of the accuracy or precision of the questionnaires as a measuring instrument by
formally establishing the reliability co-efficient (alpha) of the questionnaires and allowed the opportunity for any necessary modification. It is however noted that the Cronbach alpha scores which were reported in the questionnaire pilot were very high (all greater than 0.8 and generally a score of greater than 0.7 confirms reliability of the questionnaire instrument). In addition, examining the outputs from the Structured Equation Modelling results shows that the CA coefficients were high. This gives a strong indication indicate that although the questionnaires were not systematically checked by repeated application of Common Method variance tests they can still be considered to have been reliable. Thus the omission of this step in handling the data was not of critical importance.

8.6 Future Directions

The acknowledged limitations of this study have led to suggestions for further research. Future research should include more universities both public and private. In addition, future researchers should also consider moderating variables such as national culture, the labour market and legal and regulatory environment. Adding other dimensions of the staff perceptions of organisational performance such as the financial dimension would be a valuable addition to the research model but as explained in the research presented here this is not a viable option without a culture change which brings about more openness and transparency within the sector not only in terms of their financial performance but also in a whole range of performance related benchmarks. As noted these are generally available in western cultures through the provision of league tables for a range of areas of activity and from statistical data on university performance (published in the UK for example by the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA))
Moreover, as noted above the current study used a cross-sectional design, and it would be valuable to conduct a longitudinal study to examine whether or not the variables and their relationships are consistent over time.

It should also be noted that the research has collected a large and useful data set which represents a significant population in terms of the employees of Bahraini private universities. There is potential to 'mine' this data further. In particular, it would be interesting to examine the data and draw comparisons between some of the different groups of respondents to the questionnaire survey. For example, there the data could be used to look comparatively at responses by gender or by nationality of employees. However, the researcher is aware that in order to do this it would be ethically correct to contact the respondents to ensure that they were willing for the data to be used for purposes other than that for which it was originally gathered.

Finally, the results reached in this study are believed to assist Bahraini universities and other Arab countries with similar characteristics. However, comparative studies would be valuable to compare the findings of this study with other developing countries. By conducting a similar study on different countries that perhaps share basic characteristics with Bahrain, the findings reached might be compared to the results of this study, and affirm, refute, or extend its results.
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Appendix I

Questionnaire
Dear Sir/Madam,

The purpose of this letter is to request your cooperation in data collection for my Doctoral Research Project. I am presently pursuing a Doctoral Programme in Business Administration at Cardiff University, London.

My dissertation topic is: *Effect of Practitioners’ Perceptions of Human Resources Management Practices on Organisational Performance: Mediating Roles of Organisational Culture, Employee Commitment, And Retention in Bahrain Private Universities*. The concept of culture has been introduced and identified as an important element in the relation between HRM practices and performance.

The enclosed survey is organized into three sections:

1. General Questions (Demographic Data)
2. Management practices
3. Organisational performance

I would appreciate that you answer the entire questionnaire as we will not be able to use incomplete surveys in the data analysis. Please respond to each question as you believe the situations exists and not as you think it should be. I am interested in the information from groups as a whole, not in the individual responses. This study will contribute to the advancement of knowledge on the relation between performance and human resources management.

This survey has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of Cardiff University. There are no risks associated with participating in this study. All responses are confidential as you are not asked to write your name on the survey, or any identifying information. Participation in the survey is voluntary. If there are queries regarding this study, please contact me at 36330065

Thank you for participating.

Sincerely yours,
Mohammad Yosef
Candidate for Doctorate in Business Administration
Department of Business administration - Cardiff University
Part 1: Demographic Data

Please complete the following demographic information. Responses to all questions on this survey are strictly confidential.

1 What is your gender?
   Male [ ]                Female [ ]

2 What is your level of education?
   Lower than Bachelor Degree [ ]    Bachelor Degree [ ]
   Master’s Degree [ ]        Doctoral Degree [ ]    Other______.

3 What is your age?
   18-30 years [ ]
   31-40 years [ ]
   41-50 years [ ]
   51-59 years [ ]
   60 years and over [ ]

4 Length of service with organisation?
   0-1 year [ ]
   1-5 years [ ]
   6-10 years [ ]
   Over 10 years [ ]

5 Length of time in current position.
   0-1 year [ ]
   1-5 years [ ]
   6-10 years [ ]
   Over 10 years [ ]

6 Full-time employed [ ]
   Part-time employed [ ]    Other______.

7 Please indicate your job title.
   Supervisor [ ]
   Manager [ ]
   Clerk [ ]

   Other______________.
Part 2: HR Practices

“Listed below is a series of statements related to HR practices used to retain an organisation valuable asset - employees who in turn provide human capital. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements by circling a number from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 - strongly agree”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>HR recruitment and selection</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>We have an extensive employee selection process for jobs in this organization (e.g., use of tests, interviews, etc.).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Generally, we try to fill an open position immediately, once a job becomes open in a unit.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The selection decision is participative.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The university invests in hiring the right person for the job.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Multiple applicants are screened before a position is filled to ensure the best person is selected for the job.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Listed below is a series of statements related to HR practices used to retain an organization valuable asset - employees who in turn provide human capital. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements by circling a number from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 - strongly agree”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There is extensive opportunity for training for members of my work unit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A high priority is placed on training employees in my unit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The training process is formally managed and professional</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sufficient money is spent on training programmes in your work unit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I am provided with sufficient time to undertake formal training in my work unit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Listed below is a series of statements related to HR practices used to retain an organization valuable asset - employees who in turn provide human capital. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements by circling a number from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 - strongly agree”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Contingent pay and reward Schemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The university relies on the results of the performance appraisal system in granting incentives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Faculty and staff Payments are based on academic qualification and academic ranks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Payments to faculty members and staff are based on seniority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The university offers material and moral incentives promote creativity and excellence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I got financial incentives during my service in the university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I got moral incentives during my service in the university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The salaries that I receive are the highest comparing to colleagues at other universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Incentives charged are higher than colleagues in other universities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Listed below is a series of statements related to HR practices used to retain an organisation valuable asset - employees who in turn provide human capital. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements by circling a number from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 - strongly agree”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Performance appraisals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Performance of faculty members is evaluated by the Head of Department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Performance of faculty is evaluated by colleagues in the department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Performance of faculty members is evaluated by students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The focus of the performance appraisal system is to know the reasons for low level of performance of the faculty members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A faculty member has the right to see the results of the evaluation of his performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The university relies on the results of the performance evaluation in the identification of training needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The university relies on the results of the performance appraisal system in the process of promoting and transferring staff and faculty members.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Listed below is a series of statements related to HR practices used to retain an organisation valuable asset - employees who in turn provide human capital. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements by circling a number from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 - strongly agree”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Employee involvement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I have enough information to do my job well.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The information systems I use are effective.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Senior executives at university clearly communicate the long-term strategy of the university.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>My supervisor helps me obtain the developmental experiences I need to do my job well.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I receive the needed coaching and feedback about my performance.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I am encouraged to take appropriate action without waiting for approval.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I am encouraged to work across organisational and functional boundaries.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I have the authority to make decisions that improve the quality of my work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 3: Intermediate Variables

“With respect of your knowledge of HR outcomes in the organisation for which you now work, please indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement by circling a number from 1 - strongly degree to 7 = strongly agree”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I would not leave my organisation right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Most employees are willing to put in a great deal more effort than normally expected to help our organisation be successful.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation right now.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right for me to leave my organisation now.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I feel &quot;emotionally attached&quot; to this organisation.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I believe that I have too few options to consider leaving this organisation.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Listed below is a series of statements related to HR outcomes used to retain an organisation valuable asset - employees who in turn provide human capital. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements by circling a number from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 - strongly agree”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retention</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 I feel I have a possibility for a career development in this university.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 I get along with the manager and co-workers of this university.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 My university conducts skills development and training for different roles.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 I am satisfied with the university employee reward and recognition programs.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 The university has opportunities for sharing best practices, with rewards for participation.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 I am satisfied with the university employee job surveys.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 I am happy with the university regular performance evaluations, which includes peer-to-peer feedback.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 I am satisfied with the university management support for employees.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Organisational Culture**

“Listed below is a series of statements related organisational culture that affect the retention of the organisation valuable asset - employees who in turn provide human capital. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements by circling a number from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 - strongly agree”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisational Culture</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 I understand the department’s mission and the goals and objectives of the department are clear and reasonable</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 My values fit with the organisation’s values and beliefs.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Creativity and innovation are supported in my organisation.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 The office environment at my work is pleasant.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Colleagues do not allow personal feelings or animosities to interfere.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Decisions are made promptly and on the basis of the facts, not personal prejudice or self-interest.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Time and money are committed to exploring new ideas.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Ideas are welcomed from any level in the university and everyone’s views are taken into account before important decisions are made</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 4: Organizational performance

“Listed below is a series of statements related to organizational performance. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements by circling a number from 1 = Very High/strongly agree to 7 = Very Low/strongly agree.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Organisational performance</th>
<th>Very high</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Somewhat high</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Somewhat low</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Very low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The achievement of the university during the past three years to its stated objectives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The university achieved its stated goals over the past three years while providing adequate resources</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The university has the capacity to meet future opportunities and challenges expected in the next three years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>All stakeholders associated with the university, employees and students have considerable level of satisfaction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The level of innovation in the university and the ability to design new services and procedures are important.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The proportion of learning outcomes of high quality in the university is considered.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>There is a high degree of cooperation between the employees and the management.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Competences of employees and faculty staff are very high.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
الجزء الأول: البيانات الإحصائية

الرجاء ملئ المعلومات الديموغرافية التالية. الإجابات على جميع الأسئلة في هذا الدراسة هي سرية للغاية.

1. ما هو جنسك؟
   [ ] ذكر  [ ] أنثى

2. ما هو مستوى التعليم؟
   [ ] بكالوريوس  [ ] أقل من درجة البكالوريوس  [ ] درجة الماجستير  [ ] الدكتوراه  [ ] أخرى

3. كم مضى من عمرك؟
   [ ] 18-30 سنة  [ ] 31-40 سنة  [ ] 41-50 سنة  [ ] 51-60 سنة  [ ] أكثر من 60 سنة

4. مدة الخدمة في المؤسسة؟
   [ ] 0-1 سنة  [ ] 1-3 سنة  [ ] 3-5 سنة  [ ] 5-10 سنة  [ ] أكثر من 10 سنوات

5. طول الفترة التي قضيتها في المسمى الوظيفي الحالي.
   [ ] 0-1 سنة  [ ] 1-3 سنوات  [ ] 3-5 سنوات  [ ] 5-10 سنوات  [ ] أكثر من 10 سنوات

6. موظف بدوام كامل  [ ] موظف بدوام جزئي  [ ] أخرى

7. الرجاء الإشارة إلى مستوى عملك.
   [ ] مدير  [ ] رئيس مباشر  [ ] كاتب  [ ] رئيس مباشر

8. المسمى الوظيفي: ________________________________
الجزء الثاني: ممارسات الموارد البشرية:

المدرج أدناه هو عبارة عن سلسلة من العبارات ذات الصلة بممارسات الموارد البشرية المستخدمة في المحافظة على الأصل الأكثر قيمة، الموظفين الذي هم الرأسمال البشري. الرجاء الإشارة إلى مستوى الاتفاق أو الاختلاف مع العبارات التالية بوضع دائرة حول الرقم (من 1 = لا أعافق بشدة و إلى 7 - أوافق بشدة).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>دور الموارد البشرية في التوظيف والاختيار</th>
<th>التدريب</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>عملية اختيار الموظف للعمل في هذه المؤسسة هي عملية شاملة وواسعة (على سبيل المثال، استخدام الاختبارات، والمقابلات، الخ.)</td>
<td>هناك عملية تدريبية مكثفة لأعضاء جامعتنا</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>نحاول ملئ الشاغر الوظيفي على الفور عندما يصبح متاحا في قسم ما.</td>
<td>يتم اعطاء أولوية قصوى لتدريب الموظفين في قسمي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>قرار الاختيار هو قرار تشاركي.</td>
<td>هناك الكثير من الشكليات في عملية التدريب؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>تستمر الجامعة في توظيف الشخص المناسب في المكان المناسب.</td>
<td>يتم اتفاق مبلغ كبير من المال على برامج التدريب في قسمي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>يتم فحص عدة متقدمين قبل أن يتم شغل وظيفة.</td>
<td>يتم إعطاء أي موظف عادي في قسمي عدد كبير من ساعات التدريب الرسمي في السنة.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

المدرج أدناه هو عبارة عن سلسلة من العبارات ذات الصلة بممارسات الموارد البشرية المستخدمة في المحافظة على الأصل الأكثر قيمة، الموظفين الذي هم الرأسمال البشري. الرجاء الإشارة إلى مستوى الاتفاق أو الاختلاف مع العبارات التالية بوضع دائرة حول الرقم (من 1 = لا أعافق بشدة و إلى 7 - أوافق بشدة).
المدرج أدناه هو عبارة عن سلسلة من العبارات ذات الصلة بممارسات الموارد البشرية المستخدمة في المحافظة على الأصل الأكثر قيمة للموظفين الذي هم الرأسمال البشري. الرجاء الإشارة إلى مستوى الاتفاق أو الاختلاف مع العبارات التالية بوضع دائرة حول الرقم (من 1 = لا أوافق بشدة و إلى 7 - أوافق بشدة) في الجدول التالي:

النظام الأجو و المكافآت

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>رقم</th>
<th>1</th>
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التقييم الأداء

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</table>
المدرج أدناه هو عبارة عن سلسلة من العبارات ذات الصلة بممارسات الموارد البشرية المستخدمة في المحافظة على الأصل الأثري قيمة الموظفين الذي هم الرأسمال البشري. الرجاء الإشارة إلى مستوى الاتفاق أو الاختلاف مع العبارات التالية بوضع دائرة حول الرقم (من 1 لا أوافق بشدة و إلى 7 - أوافق بشدة) 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>العبارات التالية</th>
<th>رقم</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>لدي ما يكفي من المعلومات لأقوم بعملي بشكل جيد.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>نظم المعلومات التي استخدمها فعالة.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>يوصل كبار المسؤولين التنفيذيين في الجامعة استراتيجية الجامعة طويلة الأجل بوضوح.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>شرفي في العمل يساعدني في الحصول على الخبرات التنموية (التطويرية) التي احتاجها لأقوم بعملي بشكل جيد.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>التدريب التدريبي اللازم وردود الفعل (الإطلاعات حول أدائي).</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>يتم تشجيعي لاتخاذ الإجراءات المناسبة دون انتظار الموافقة عليها.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>يتم تشجيعي على العمل ضمن الحدود التنظيمية والوافقة.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>لدى الصالحيات باتخاذ القرارات التي من شأنها تحسين نوعية عملي.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

القسم 3: المتغيرات الوسيطة

فيما يخص معرفتك بممارسات الموارد البشرية في المؤسسة التي تعمل بها الآن، الرجاء الإشارة إلى مستوى الاتفاق أو الاختلاف مع العبارات التالية بوضع دائرة حول الرقم (من 1 لا أوافق بشدة و إلى 7 - أوافق بشدة) 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>العبارات التالية</th>
<th>رقم</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>لا أود أن اترك مؤسستي الآن لأن لدي شعور بالالتزام إلى الناس فيها.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>معظم الموظفين على استعداد لبذل مزيد من الجهد ودرجة أكثر من المتوقع في سبيل نجاح المؤسسة التي أعمل بها.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>انتهى بالتمايل قوي إلى مؤسستي.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>إذا أشعر كما أن له مشكلات هذه المؤسسة هي مشكلاتي.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>استطاع شراء ثقته في حياتي إذا قررت مغادرة مؤسستي الآن.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>أنا لا أشعر أنه سيكون من المناسب مغادرة مؤسستي الآن حتى لو كانت تصب في مصلحتي.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>أشعر أنني &quot;مرتبط نفسي&quot; بهذه المؤسسة.</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>اعتقد أن لدي عدد قليل جداً من الخيارات للنظر فيها من أجل ترك هذه المؤسسة.</td>
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</table>
المدرج أدناه هو عبارة عن سلسلة من العبارات ذات الصلة بممارسات الموارد البشرية المستخدمة في المحافظة على الأصل الأكثر قيمة، للموظفين الذين هم الرأس المال البشري، الرجاء الإشارة إلى مستوى الاتفاق أو الاختلاف مع العبارات التالية بوضع دائرة حول الرقم (من 1 = لا أوافق بشدة و إلى 7 = أوافق بشدة).

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المدرج أدناه هو عبارة عن سلسلة من العبارات ذات الصلة بممارسات الموارد البشرية المستخدمة في المحافظة على الأصل الأكثر قيمة، للموظفين الذين هم الرأس المال البشري، الرجاء الإشارة إلى مستوى الاتفاق أو الاختلاف مع العبارات التالية بوضع دائرة حول الرقم (من 1 = لا أوافق بشدة و إلى 7 = أوافق بشدة).

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الثقافة التنظيمية

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البيئة المكتبية في عملي لطيفة

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لم يسمح الزملاء للمشاعر الشخصية أو العادات بالبقاء موجودة.

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潜水 لاحظ القرارات بسرعة واعتمادا على أساس الحقائق، وليس على أسباب الاتخاذ للأشخاص أو المصطلحات الذاتية.

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يتم الترحيب بالأفكار التي تأتي من أي مستوى في الجامعة كما تأخذ أراء الجميع بعين الاعتبار قبل اتخاذ القرارات المهمة.

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</table>
القسم الرابع: الأداء التنظيمي

المدرج أدناه هو عبارة عن سلسلة من العبارات ذات الصلة بمعايير الموارد البشرية المستخدمة في المحافظة على الأصل الأكبر قيمة. الموظفون الذين أمروا بالردوس البشري. الرجاء الإشارة إلى مستوى الاتفاق أو الاختلاف مع العبارات التالية بوضع دائرة حول الرقم (من 1 = لا أتفق بشدة و 7= أتفق بشدة)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>الهدف التنظيمي</th>
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<tr>
<td>تحقيق الجامعة خلال السنوات الثلاثة الماضية لأهدافها المعلنة</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>التفاعلات من الموظفين وأعضاء هيئة التدريس مرتبطة جدا.</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>هناك درجة عالية من التعاون بين الموظفين والإدارة.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>أظهرت الجامعة أهدافها المعلنة على مدى السنوات الثلاثة الماضية باستخدام أقل قدر من الموارد المتاحة.</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مستوى تطور الجامعة مقارنة بقدرة تلبية الفرص المتوقعة في السنوات الثلاثة القادمة.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>أن جميع أصحاب المصلحة المرتبطة بالجامعة والموظفون والطلاب راضون عنها.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>العاملون في الجامعة راضون على وظائفهم.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>تشعرنا أننا موضوع أحرار وثقة في العمل.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>كل موظف يعرف ما يتوقعه مشرفه منه في العمل.</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>لدينا الصلاحيات الكافية من الاستقلالية في عملنا.</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>متطلبات العمل لدينا مفعول.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>عاملنا يتحلى لنا أن نصبح خلوقين ومبتكرين.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>نحن على ثقة بأن عملنا سوف يكون ملباً لرغبتكما في المستقبل.</td>
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<tr>
<td>مستوى الإبداع والقدرة على تصميم خدمات وإجراءات جديدة تؤخذ بعين الاعتبار</td>
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<tr>
<td>نسبة خريجات التعليم ذات الجودة العالية تؤخذ بعين الاعتبار</td>
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