

**INVESTIGATING THE SKILLS-GAP IN THE KUWAITI LABOUR
MARKET: PERSPECTIVES FROM POLICY MAKERS, EMPLOYERS,
GRADUATES, AND HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACCI	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
AGR	Association of Graduates Recruiters
ASTD	American Society for Training and Development
BMI	Business Monitor International
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CSC	Civil Services Commission
ERT	European Round Table of Industrialists
ESP	Employability Skills Profile
FDI	foreign direct investments
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HECSU	UK Higher Education Career Services
HRD	Human Resource Development
KISR	Kuwaiti Institute of Scientific Research
KU	Kuwait University
LFS	Labour Force Survey
ME	Middle East
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PACI	Public authority for civil information
PAEET	Public Authority for Applied Education and Training
SCANS	Labour Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
STC	Systematic Training Cycle'
TNA	Training Needs Analysis
UNICE	Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe

ABSTRACT

Investigating the Skills-Gap in the Kuwaiti Labour Market: Perspectives from Policy Makers, Employers, Graduates, and Higher Educational Institutions

Immediately after the discovery of oil, the State of Kuwait put in place a plan for massive economic and social development for its people. This proposed plan required sophisticated labour skills to implement development requirements. However, over the years the country has continued to witness a labour market imbalance due to an inadequate supply of graduate skills that did not satisfy the demand from its workplace. The purpose of this study was to investigate the mismatch between outputs from higher education and labour market requirements.

The present study employed a mixed approach to address its main research questions. It applied a quantitative approach using questionnaires prepared for graduates currently working and employers from both the public and private sector. It also utilized a qualitative approach using interviews with stakeholders in the labour market such as higher education personnel and policy makers. The literature review provided an overview of educational objectives and their relation to economic, social, and human resource development. It also looked at the nature of the relationship between higher educational institutions and the labour market, as well as providing some examples of the labour market gap around the world.

The key findings indicated that higher educational institutions faced problems with regard to their role in the provision of knowledge and skills. The study found that employers believe that the quality of education provided by the institutions is low. Similarly, the study found that employers believe that the communication amongst stakeholders in the education system is not effective. In addition, employers reckoned that the main factors influencing graduates' quality of education were the lack of skills, lack of motivation and weak communication.

Similarly, graduates believed that the main factors influencing their quality of education were lack of skills, as well as overestimating job privileges and area of study. Furthermore, graduates satisfaction with their current jobs was influenced by many factors; such as low-quality education, disappointment with career development, source of skills, area of study, and gender. In fact, the literature identified the low quality of education as the main cause of the skills-gap worldwide, while it had always valued communication for closing the skills-gap.

This study has confirmed that there is an imbalance within the Kuwaiti labour market. The theoretical and practical implications of the findings are discussed in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

To my Great Husband: **Jasem Al-Nusif**, who supported and encouraged me through the journey despite the ups and downs.

To my dear parents: **Fouad Al-Badir** and **Huda Al-Kulaib**, who always prayed for me and gave me confidence.

To my dearly Loved children:

Mohammad.....for being a great friend,
Deema.....for her endless compliments,
Omar.....for his love,
Baby Abdullwahab.....for the pleasing spirits he gave me,

To my grandmother **Shareefa**, uncle **Abdulazeez**, and brother **Ahmad** who supported me through the journey

To the soul and memories of my grandmother; **Mama Taiba**

To my brother **RaKan**, sisters **Mariam**, **Noor**, **Iman**, **Shikha**, **Hessa**, and friends who were always in touch and kept the distant close.

I Dedicate This Work with Thankfulness and Apologies

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In today's global economic and social environment, the level and quality of education provided by institutions in any country will determine the level of the country's development and stability. Leathes defines education as "the process by which an individual is adjusted to his whole ambit of existence, the whole being is the subject of education; and the whole of life is its end" (Leathes, 2009: 34). However, it is widely acknowledged that education enables countries to boost their social and economic development by providing well-educated and skilled individuals to the labour market. For example, Jacob Mincer in the 1970s had indicated how earnings are related to the individual's education and other human capital. This work has initiated a good number of studies. See, for example: Card (1990), Ashenfelter and Card (2000), Heckman et al. (2000), Hanushek and Welch (2006).

It has been argued that a higher level of education is fundamental for nations to be able to achieve higher levels of economic growth (Hanushek, 2005). Thus, many studies have found a significant correlation between education, productivity and earning, which indicates clearly that there is a strong relationship between economy, education, and the labour market (see here also Psarchopolos, 2000; Jones, 2001). Hence, a study by Hanushek and Woessmann, (2008) has indicated that determinants of aggregate economic growth would also assume the important role of cognitive skills. Furthermore, Al-Jassar (2007) stated that, "the economic and social development of a country depends on its ability to develop effectively and utilize the innate capacities of its human resources, especially graduates" (Al-Jassar, 2007: 14).

Previous studies have confirmed the relationship between education, the labour market, and economic and social development. Because education boosts an employee's productivity and skills, helps individuals obtain better jobs, this naturally leads to a higher income. Thus, the international trend worldwide is to attain education with the primary objectives of promoting sustainable growth and development by matching them with labour market needs. For example, India is now developing technologies to acquire up-to-date education for its citizens. It launched EDUSAT, an education satellite that can reach more people in the country at a greatly reduced cost (Sankar, 2007). There is also an initiative started by the OLPC foundation, the 'One Laptop per Child Association'. This is a U.S. charity organization established to supervise the creation of an affordable educational plan for use in the developing world (Jonathan, 2010).

Furthermore, in Africa, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), an economic development program of the African Union, has launched an "e-school program" to around 600,000 primary and high schools with learning materials, computer equipment, and internet access (NEPAD official website).

Kuwait is not very different from other countries. Immediately after the discovery of oil, the State of Kuwait put in place a plan for massive economic and social development for the good of its people. This proposed plan required sophisticated and competent workers to fulfill it. Kuwait is one of the world's most important oil producing countries, and ranks third in the Middle East in proven oil reserves after Saudi Arabia and Iraq (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), 2007). The latest Kuwait oil and gas report from the Business Monitor International (BMI) in 2010 forecasts that the country will provide 10.25% of the Middle East (ME) supplies (BMI, 2010). In terms of income per capita, Kuwait has one of the highest in the world (Burny, 2008).

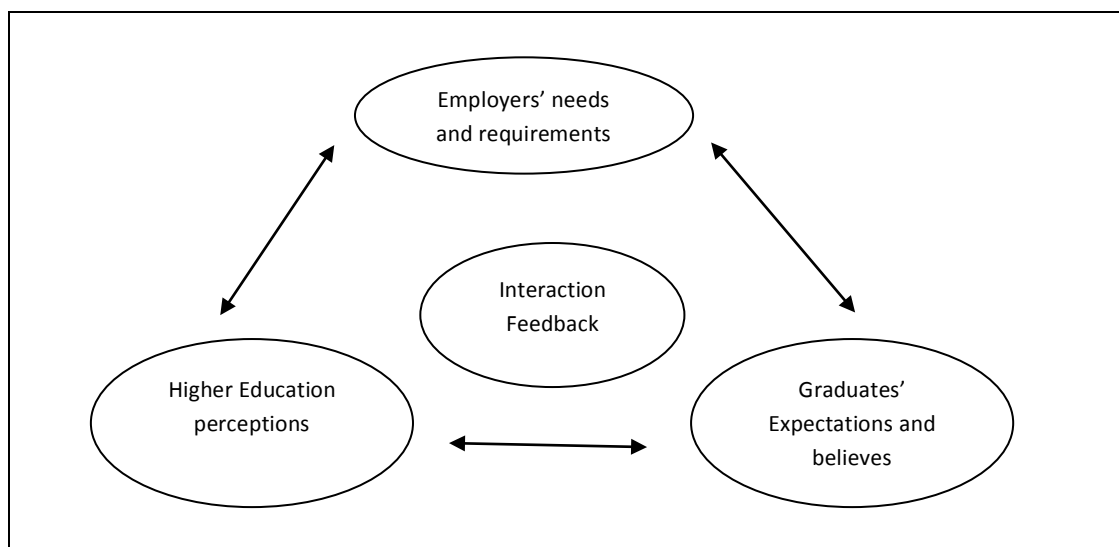
The proposed development plan requires education, which is one key issue facing developing countries today. Hence, the Kuwaiti education system is marked by several accomplishments in recent years. In 2006, Kuwait assigned 13 % of all public expenditure to education (Ministry of Planning, 2007). Furthermore, in 2007 the literacy rate of Kuwait was 93.3 % (Ministry of Planning, 2007). Higher education is also on the rise in Kuwait. Kuwait University, its biggest university, is free for Kuwaitis and has over 1,500 faculty members and 22,000 students (Kuwait University, 2008). There are also a number of private higher institutions such as Gulf University for Science and Technology, the Australian University of Kuwait , Box Hill College Kuwait, and Maastricht Business School of Kuwait (Ministry of Higher Education, 2009).

In Kuwait, jobs for each graduate are guaranteed. According to the Kuwait Constitution, article 41, "the state shall endeavor to make work available to citizens". However, Kuwait is facing challenges in developing the quality of education at all levels and to build up the capabilities of its children from a young age (Ministry of Higher Education). In 2006, 19,000 citizens changed their work because they were not fit for the specific needs and requirements of the labour market (Hossam, 2007).

Moreover, a survey by the Arabic Planning Institute in 2008 has shown that the majority of organizations in Kuwait suffer from gaps in skills. This means that the skill level of employees is inadequate and thus supports the claim that there is a gap between the skills supplied by new graduates and employers' needs and requirements. In fact, there is increasing recognition that the curricula of education and training institutions in developing countries are not catching up with the changes in the economy (Bannell, 1996,1998; Bannelle et al., 1998; Gill et al., 2000; Middleton et al., 1993).

However, around the world, graduate recruitment has become one of the challenging issues because company executives seek the value of talented people and their contribution to enhance organizational performance (Branine, 1999). Most of these talented people are young, ambitious, clear-minded, well educated graduates. A 2007 study has demonstrated that a strong recruitment market is graduates from the UK. The Association of Graduates Recruiters (AGR) manages a survey of its employer members twice a year and explores their recruitment plans. A total of 222 large organizations were surveyed in the winter review, which revealed that more than half of employers (58%) expect to hire more graduates in 2007 than they did in 2006. Positions in general management and retail management are forecast to increase by 15% and 14%, respectively (AGR, 2006). Thus, the relationship between the key parties: higher educational institutions, employers, and university graduates is critical towards managing the labour market effectively (see Figure 1.1). There must be a shared understanding if they are to build a broad coalition of employers, graduates and educators, needed to drive significant developments. Thus, encouraging communication and feedback is vital to achieving good interactions between the key parties in the labour market.

Figure 1.1 Managing Labour Market Model



Source: the Author

The first part in the labour market management process is higher education institutions. In general, to recruit the right applicant for the right vacancy, the requirements and needs of both the demand side (represented by employers), and the supply side (representing the output from higher education) in the graduate labour market must be matched. To do so, a number of studies have argued that universities must prepare their students with the knowledge, abilities, talent, and skills that are demanded by employers. They argued that the main role of higher education institutions is to prepare students for employment, and it is their responsibility to do so (Nabi and Bagley, 1998). They believe that, colleges have an institutional commitment to meet the requirements of communities (Cohen and Brawer, 1996; Dennison and Gallagher, 1986; Levin and Dennison, 1989). For example, Leathes (2009) had argued that if education is preparation for life, it must be a preparation for business. For business is the key part of life. In addition, Levin (2002) indicated that colleges should mainly concern with the operational requirements of business, industry and the marketplace. On the other hand, other studies have argued that the role of universities is to produce pure and general knowledge. According to Reid and Barrington (1997; 47), education is "the activities that aim to develop the knowledge, skills, moral values, and understanding required in all aspects of life rather than knowledge and skills relating to only a limited field of activity". Therefore, many university professors in Kuwait have pointed out that the main objective of educational institutions is to improve knowledge and learning. Not only that, they also argued that employers should take the responsibility to train their employees in a way that matches their specific requirements (Al-Alwan, 2005).

This is an old argument. Socrates in ancient Greece argued that education was about drawing out what was previously inside the student. At the same time, the Sophists, a group of itinerant teachers, promised to provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills to gain places in the city-state (Yero, 2002). Although each view has its supporters, in reality both are interrelated and have considerable impact on each other (Branine, 1999).

The second part in the labour market management process is employers. Executives require a lot more than just the crucial technical skills. They expect graduates to have initiatives, good presentation, high levels of accuracy, and good literacy and numeracy skills (Richardson, 2007). Moreover, both students and employers require new skills, knowledge, and expertise to compete in today's fast changing economy (Jacob, 2006). Thus, graduates' personal and high skills qualities are the key to their success in the labour market (Moreau et al., 2006). Due to the fact that we live in a knowledge-based economy, the labour market's demand for sophisticated and skilled employees to compete effectively, domestically, and globally, has increased.

The third part in the labour market management process is university graduates' expectations and perceptions. Hence, graduates have a lot of expectations from their employers. According to a study of 2,322 students who graduated in 1998, graduates mostly expect a lucrative career and international travel, as well as a balanced lifestyle that allows time for family, friends, and leisure (Ruth, 1998). Moreover, in a survey by *Al-Qabas* (2005) of final year students at Kuwait University, asking them to rank their expectations from their potential employer, a high salary was the first choice of the majority (47%). After the salary, flexibility at work comes in second place (13%), while having the opportunity to develop one's careers and experience comes in third (10%). The rest have different views or expectations.

In addition, a job recovery survey by a career journal finds that the three top expectations for a perfect job were 62%-tuition repayment, 60%-competitive holiday and vacation benefits, and 59%-competitive salary (Brown, 2003). However, Kandola (2001) suggested that graduates are also aware that their careers will not only remain within a specific organization, but it will be about moving from one organization to another. So, they have other expectations such as maintaining employability, having a variety of experiences, autonomy, balanced and comfortable lifestyle (Kandola, 2001). Thus, executives must take into account the expectations of potential employees when designing recruitment campaigns. On the other hand, graduates must learn to recognize how to get the best out of any graduate job.

To sum up, this study tries to examine the Kuwait labour market by analyzing the relationship between the supply of university graduates and the demand from the graduate labour market.

1.2 Problem Statement

The previous section reviewed different views by different authors on the graduate labour market. This section presents the problem statement. The problem statement initially came to the author's attention through the observation of Kuwaiti education and labour system. The problem statement is further refined and buttressed by an extensive review of the relevant literature.

Kuwait is one of the world's most important oil-producing countries with 10 % of the world's oil reserves (OPEC, 2009). But the literature suggested that it has a major problem with graduate employment (El –Bederi, 2010; AL-Wehaib, 2004; Hossam, 2007). According to El Bederi (2010), a journalist of the *Al-Jaleel* newspaper: "The inadequate education and training system which is designed to meet the needs of the Kuwaiti labour market in many disciplines, is a major reason for the aggravation of the problem of imbalance in the composition of this market. There is a significant gap between the educational system and the labour market" (El –Bederi, 2010, 23). Moreover, AL-Wehaib (2009) stated that 96% of Kuwaitis work in the government sector, which is over-staffed, and most of them are doing jobs not relating to what they have learned and trained for in various educational institutions.

Furthermore, in 2006, 19,000 Kuwaiti citizens changed their work because they were not fit for the specific needs and requirements of the labour market (Hossam, 2007). Also, a survey by 'Arabia Inform' (2008) has shown that the majority of organizations in Kuwait suffer from gaps in skills. This mismatch between labour market requirements and higher education output in developing countries was also highlighted by the World Development Report. In 2007 the World Development Report suggested that although curricula and teaching methods have remained mainly unchanged in developing countries over the years, employers are increasingly demanding a stronger link to be made between education policy and labour market. (World Bank, 2007).

This supported the claim that there is in Kuwait a gap between the skills supplied by graduates and employers' needs and requirements. Therefore, this study attempts to examine the Kuwaiti labour market by analyzing the relationship between the supply of university graduates and the demand for the graduate labour market.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this research is to critically examine the issue of the mismatch between graduate skills on the one hand and labour market requirements on the other. Hence, the main objectives of the study are the following:

- 1- To critically analyze the expectations of the labour market vis-à-vis the provision of workforce from universities in Kuwait.

- 2- To critically analyze the perceptions of the universities vis-à-vis their role in the provision of knowledge and skills.
- 3- To determine the extent to which employers are satisfied with the quality of education that university supplies.
- 4- To explore graduates' perception of the relevance and appropriateness of their educational qualification to their current jobs.

1.4 Research Questions

The study is intended to answer five key questions:

1- What role do universities believe they should play with regard to the provision of knowledge and skills?

The debate on the role of universities had been going on among researchers around the world for quite some time now. It is argued that higher education must prepare students with knowledge, abilities, competencies and skills, which are demanded by employers. Brown and Hesketh (2004) stated that "the rapid expansion of higher education is having a profound impact on the employability of highly qualified labour, but not in the way that people anticipate. Rather than being recruited into high skilled jobs, many potential knowledgeable workers are finding themselves in a competitive scramble for managerial and professional jobs, which will leave many of them disappointed".

In addition, Rehman (2008) argued that the curriculum of Kuwait's higher education need to be conceived in terms of market needs and employer perceptions. However, other researchers have argued that the main role of higher education is to acquire pure knowledge and it is the responsibility of employers to train their employees. For example, Reid and Barrington (1997) think that education aims to develop the knowledge and skills required in all aspects of life rather than knowledge and skills relating to only a limited field of activity.

2- What role do players in the labour market expect universities to play regarding the provision of knowledge and skills?

This question investigates the role of universities regarding the provision of knowledge and skills from the labour market's point of view (employers and policy makers). Employers in Kuwait had always complained that graduates' skills and competencies are insufficient, and that it is the role of higher educational institutions to provide graduates with high quality skills and job-related competencies. For instance, a study conducted by Marouf and Rehman (2005) has shown that a clear majority of employers in Kuwait showed dissatisfaction with the quality of local graduates and expected further initiatives in this regard from the higher education institutions in the country.

3- What Factors Influence Employers' Attitudes to Graduates' Quality of Education?

The question investigates the perceptions of the labour market with regard to university graduates' potentials. The literature review suggests that the labour market in Kuwait had always perceived higher education graduates as low skilled and lacking in competencies. According to a study by Rehman (2008), there is a general dissatisfaction among corporate employers regarding Kuwaiti graduates and their competencies. In addition, Al-Shaty (2005) states that final year students should be aware that half of new recruiters are expected to struggle in accomplishing recruitment objectives - with the biggest factor being the lack of applicants with the right skills and competencies.

4- What Factors Influence Graduates' Attitudes to the Quality of Education They Have Received from University?

The question investigates the perceptions of graduates currently working on the quality of education they have received from university. The literature suggested that graduates have a variety of expectations regarding their jobs and careers (Ferguson and Cheyne, 1995; Nelson and Cooper, 1995; Howard and Frink, 1996). In other words, it can be argued that graduates currently working do believe that certain qualifications would lead them on the road towards achieving their career aspirations. Therefore, it is important to understand the factors that affect graduates' perceptions of their educational qualification. This will help clarify the reason(s) for such perceptions in Kuwait.

5- What are the Factors that Affect Job Satisfaction from the Standpoint of Graduates Currently Working?

The question investigates the perceptions of graduates currently working on their job satisfaction. Hence, the literature seems to suggest that there is an increased demand for graduates in the labour market due to a highly competitive marketplace (Branine, 1999; AGR, 2006). On the other hand, the ambitious fresh minds also have a lot of expectations from their potential employers. Therefore, it is vital to understand the expectations of graduates by their potential employers to attract, recruit, and retain the best by matching their expectations and keep them satisfied. However, graduates have a lot of expectations from their employers. According to a survey by 'Robert Half International', a recruitment consultants, flexible working hours, a better work/life balance, and clear career development programs, are the main motivators for generations born after 1980 (Fuller, 2006).

Nevertheless, a recent study on Kuwait's Medical Laboratory Sciences graduates regarding their degree of satisfaction with their jobs determined that a high percentage of respondents were generally not satisfied with their jobs or with specific features of their jobs (Rehman, 2008). Thus, the literature has indicated that graduates have a variety of expectations regarding their jobs and careers. Therefore, it is important to investigate if graduates expectations were met and satisfied, as it will affect their performance, which would affect on the achievement of their career aspirations.

1.5 Justification of the Study

This section is concerned with the justification for the study. First of all, education is indeed important and vital at this stage of Kuwait's economic and social development. As mentioned earlier, it is generally understood that there is a positive correlation between education and earnings (Cantu, 2003). There is also social gain associated with education because it facilitates the creation of a successful society with young, ambitious, and well educated citizens having the appropriate skills to work in an increasingly knowledge-based global economy. "We need well-educated and skilled people to create the kind of society that we would all wish to live in, and education and training are key to social inclusion" (Al-Jassar, 2007). Therefore, there is a need to investigate how higher education is meeting the needs of the economy.

Secondly, there is a gap in the literature regarding the mismatch between the output of higher education and the needs and demands of the labour market. These important issues of graduate employment have been discussed by many researchers in other industrialized countries, for example: Barnett (1994), Brown, Hesketh and Williams (2004) from the UK; and Allen, et al (2000) from the Netherlands. However, this remains a widely known dilemma in Kuwait.

The mismatch between Kuwait's labour market needs and graduate skills has been discussed in public throughout the national newspapers as well by members of parliament within the National Assembly. For example, the *Al-Jareeda* newspaper (2010) highlighted the mismatch between university output and labour market needs as the biggest dilemma for the Kuwaiti labour market. Furthermore, Dr. Salwa Al-Jassar (2010), a member of Kuwait's parliament, indicated that the education system in Kuwait should be reformed to match labour market needs and demands in order to maintain Kuwait's development plans. In light of the above, this study sets out to fill this gap in the literature.

Finally, because researchers have commented on the mismatch between what higher education institutions provide and the needs of the labour market, there is a need to investigate the effectiveness of the relationship and communications between higher education institutions and the labour market.

1.6 Conceptual Frameworks

The conceptual framework is aimed at identifying the key factors in a study. It is defined as "a visual or written product, one that explains, either graphically or in narrative, the main thing to be studied - the key factors, concepts, or variables - and the presumed relationships among them" (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 18). Also, Johnson (2004) states that the conceptual framework also constructed a logical progression of ideas. It consists of two key elements: (1) the objectives of the research; and (2) the conceptions that result and follow logically from those objectives.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the gap between university graduates' skills and labour market needs. This issue has been discussed by many researchers worldwide (see Nabi and Bagley, 1998; Leathes, 2009; Levin, 2002; Cohen and Brawer, 1996; Dennison and Gallagher, 1986; Levin and Dennison, 1989). This is a vital issue as it concerns the economic and social development of countries and the need to raise individual income.

For example, the 'World Economic Forum' (WEF) recently released the 'Arab World Competitiveness Report', which highlighted the significance of education quality in the Arab world in order to ensure economic growth independent of energy prices. According to the report, seven of the thirteen Arab countries admitted that an "inadequately educated workforce" is the most severe obstacle to their development (Arab World Competitiveness 2007 Report).

The framework for this study has been developed on the basis of the literature review on higher education and the graduate labour market in Kuwait. The review of literature suggests that education institutions worldwide are not catching up with the changing economy (Bannell, 1996, 1998; Bannelle et al., 1998; Gill et al., 2000; Middleton et al., 1993). Similarly, it is suggested that there is a gap between the supply of university graduates and the demand from the graduate labour market. Hence, the outputs of Kuwait's education system, in particular graduates' skills and competencies, are not commensurate with the demand from the labour market (Al-Badri, 2005)

Evidence suggests that matching the supply and demand in the labour market will enable countries, especially developing ones to gain a competitive advantage globally through utilizing effective human resources (The World Bank, 2007; Al-Jassar, 2007; Mincer, 1970; Card, 1990; Ashenfelter and Card, 2000; Heckman et al., 2000; Hanushek and Welch, 2006). Consequently, well-educated skilled graduates can support the labour market in Kuwait to better function and compete in the global village, which will in turn result in improving economic and social performance of the country.

Policy makers in developing countries have recognized the issue of the quality of education and its relation to the economic development of their countries. Hence, Achoui (2009) stated that policy makers in the gulf countries are aware that the key challenge facing them is ensuring educational quality and excellence, as well as nurturing the gulf's young individuals with the abilities and skills required to be capable to find jobs in an increasingly integrated and competitive global economy. Therefore, the presented conceptual framework is used to identify the variables presumed to be able to close the gap between supply of university graduates and demand for them in the labour market, as well as boosting social and economic development in Kuwait.

However, evidence suggests that communication and feedback between the key parties (higher education institutions, labour market, and university graduates) have the potential to close the gap in the market through mutual understanding. For example, Graf (1997) stated "it is important for the academic community to foster relationships and develop open lines of communication with both students and the business community". In addition, Gabrich et al. (2001) are certain that communication and interaction should flow not only between the academic society and students, and between the academic society and the business community, but also between the business community and students.

The framework then argues that in order to have an effective match between the demand and supply of graduates in the Kuwaiti labour market, there must be an effective communication and feedback between stakeholders and universities. In other words, while the mechanism of the framework is still hypothetical and insufficiently specific at this stage, it is assumed that the role of higher educational institutions in providing better job related skilled graduates and for employers to meet the expectations of graduates would depend on communication and feedback between these key parties.

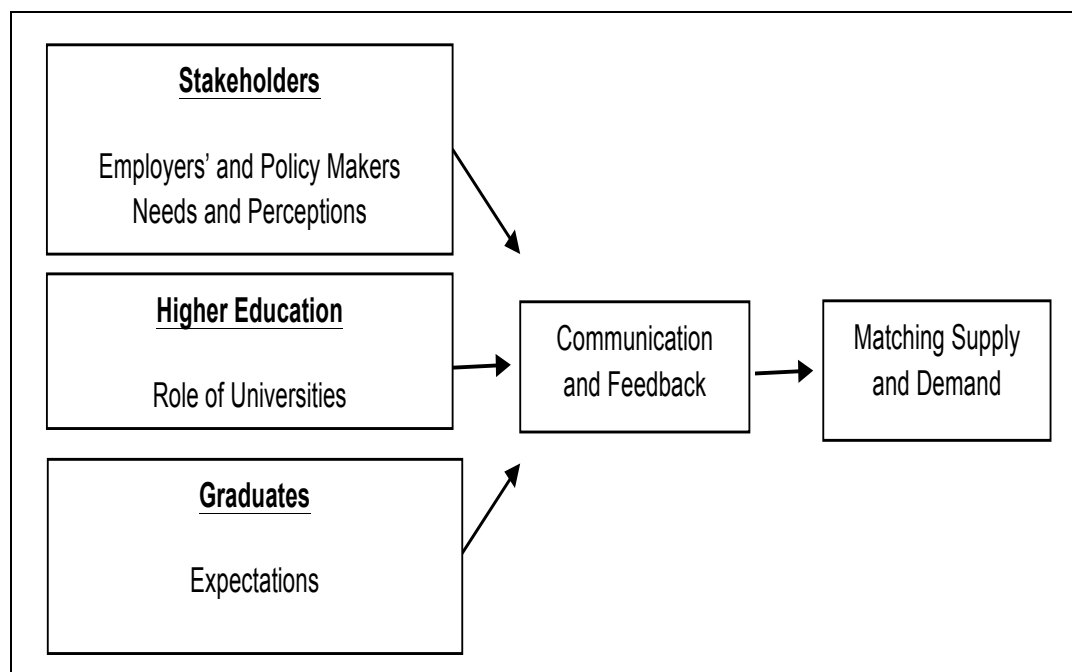
The main basis for this argument in the framework rests on HRD literature. The three most significant conceptions covered by HRD are education, learning, and training (Barrington et al., 2004). There is emphasis on the need for education providers to survey and study the labour market requirements when developing training and skills acquisition programs. Similar literature also argues for the need to address the needs and expectations of all stakeholders in education, training and development programs (Garavan and McGuire, 2001; Rehman, 2008). Such stakeholders include trainees themselves, funders of training and most importantly, employers (Watts, 1999; Patton and McMahon, 1999).

This study examines in more detail the variables included in the framework (see Figure 1.2). The first variable is higher educational institutions and their role in the provision of knowledge and skills. The second variable is the perceptions by the labour market regarding the role of universities as well as university graduate potentials. The final variable is the graduates' beliefs and expectations regarding their ability to do a job competently so as to progress in their career.

The study adopts an attitudinal and perception investigation rather than secondary data analyses or policy analyses due to four reasons. Firstly, there is no academic study in Kuwait that investigated the views of stakeholders and education providers vis-à-vis the needs of the labour market. Secondly, secondary data analyses are not enough to reveal the complexity of the demands and supply of labour market from the point of view of graduates, employers and educational institutions;

Thirdly and perhaps most importantly, this study is an investigation of the demand and supply of graduates from stakeholders' point of view rather than an analysis of government's secondary statistical data. Finally, the research questions can only be answered using attitudinal and perceptual approach. This is because of the assumption that the behavior of educational providers is influenced by their perception and understanding of what they think the labour market demands from them. Also, career choices of graduates would be informed by their perception and understanding of the requirements from the labour market.

Figure 1.2 Conceptual Frameworks



Source: the Author

1.7 Brief Research Methodology

A research methodology is defined as "an operational framework within which the facts are placed so that their meaning may be seen more clearly" (Leedy, 1989, as cited in Remenyi et al., 1998, p. 28). The aim of methodology in this study is to assist the selection of data collection in order to help the researcher deal with the research questions. Table (1.1) next page provides a summary of the research methods. Fuller details on the research methodology, research strategy, sampling and data collection methods, are provided in chapter four.

Table 1.1 Summaries of the Research Questions and Data Collection Methods

Questions	Methods	Respondents
1- What role do universities believe they should play with regard to the provision of knowledge and skills?	'Interviews' E.g. questions on roles, responsibilities, and strategies of higher education.	Higher education personnel; deans and doctors.
2- What role do players in the labour market expect universities to play regarding the provision of knowledge and skills?	'Interviews' E.g. questions on roles and responsibilities of higher education.	Policy makers; ministers and parliament members.
	Questionnaires' E.g. questions on roles and responsibilities of higher education.	Employers
3- What Factors Influence employers' attitudes to graduates' quality of education (perceptions)?	Questionnaires' e.g. questions on employer's perceptions.	Employers
4- What factors influence graduates' attitudes to the quality of education they have received from University?	Questionnaires' e.g. questions on graduates belief in their qualifications.	Graduates currently working
5- What are the factors that affect job satisfaction from the standpoint of graduates currently working?	Questionnaires' e.g. questions on graduates satisfaction with their current jobs.	Graduates currently working

1.8 Design of the Thesis

The main purpose of this investigation is to examine the mismatch between the provision of skills by higher education institutions and the labour market in Kuwait. Therefore, **Chapter Two** will present a general review of the literature on education and its relation to the economic and social development of a country. It will also provide a literature review on the role of universities regarding the provision of knowledge and skills. In this context, this chapter will cover the famous debate over higher education institutions' roles and responsibilities regarding the labour market. It will also cover the mismatch between university graduates and labour market needs in the literature from different countries and contexts. It will also provide a description of the process of graduate employability and competencies needed by the labour market worldwide. The chapter also provides a discussion of the main expectations and requirements from both employers and graduates in the market. This literature review clarifies the international perspectives on the mismatch between higher education institutions' outputs and the needs of labour market, and therefore to understand the source of the conflict between the key sectors of the market.

Chapter Three will present an overview of the State of Kuwait, a brief explanation of its economic structure and growth, a clarification of some social aspects of the country such as culture, population, and higher education, as well as a brief discussion of the role of Kuwait Universities regarding the provision of knowledge and skills. The chapter will also provide a discussion of the main expectations and requirements of government and private employers as well as those of graduates in the Kuwaiti labour market. This literature review clarifies the viewpoints of both sides, the supply and demand of the Kuwait labour market, and thereby to understand the causes of the gap between the supply of and demand for labour, if any.

Chapter Four will be devoted to the research methodology used in this research. It will explain the methods employed in collecting data as well as the selection of the targeted samples. Thereafter, the different stages of analysis will be explained for both the interviews and questionnaires.

Chapter Five will be devoted to the description of the data gathered via questionnaires. The study will be using two questionnaires with two different samples. The first questionnaire is aimed at graduates who are currently working. The second questionnaire targeted employers in both the public and private sector.

Chapter Six will provide a presentation and analysis of the data collected through the employers' and graduates' questionnaires. The analyses of the data will be carried out through explanatory factor analysis, reliability test, cross-tabulation, correlation, and regression analysis. The analysis will be conducted using SPSS software version 17 and the data will be interpreted using Excel software 2007 to formulate the graphs and tables.

Chapter Seven will present the data collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews. The interviews will be aimed at collecting qualitative data in order to supplement the quantitative data already obtained through the questionnaires.

Chapter Eight will discuss the findings of the study according to the questionnaires and interviews, and this in relation to the literature reviewed in chapters two and three. The findings will be grouped in terms of the research questions while each of the questions will be discussed in terms of the research findings and in relation to the literature review.

Chapter Nine will provide a summary of the main findings of this research. It reconsiders the objectives of the study while providing a set of recommendations on the basis of the findings of this study. Moreover, the chapter will review the limitations of the study and make some suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE GRADUATE LABOUR MARKET: A THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The main aim of this study is to investigate the mismatch between the output of higher education institutions and labour market needs in Kuwait. Therefore, this chapter will provide an overview of the nature of the relationship between higher education and the graduate labour market worldwide. This chapter is divided into the following sections. Section one will examine the education process and its relation to a country's economic and social development. Section two will explain the relationship between education and human resource development. Section three will shed light on the international debate over higher education's role in relation to the labour market. Section four will provide an overview of the gap between supply and demand in the international labour market. Section five will cover the process of graduate employability. Section six will introduce the key competencies required by employers in the international labour market. Section seven will review the process of graduates' recruitment including employers' and graduates' expectations. Ultimately, understanding the international views and perceptions of the labour market's demand and supply sides will help shed light on their impact on related issues within the context of the State of Kuwait.

2.2 Definition of Education

First of all, it is important to define and understand education, as it is a key aspect of this research. Education has been defined as "the process by which an individual is adjusted to his whole ambit of existence, the whole being is the subject of education; and the whole of life is its end" (Leathes, 2009: 34). It has also been defined as "a pre-experience activity, which leads to academic or vocational qualification prior to one's employment" (Al-Marry, 2007: 46).

Reid and Barrington (1997) defined it as "the activities that aim to develop the knowledge, skills, moral values, and understanding required in all aspects of life rather than knowledge and skills relating to only a limited field of activity" (Reid and Barrington, 1997: 22). Hence, definitions of education vary depending on who is defining it. This debate on definition will be discussed later in this chapter.

2.3 Economic and Social Rewards of Education

As explained in the previous section, education is a means of improving a person's existence (leathes, 2009). In that sense, education has economic and social rewards. Education has always been vital and is cherished more than ever even now. According to Cantu (2003), moving into the 21st century, education's economic rewards remain as significant to individuals' economic success as it is to their employment achievement. This relation between skills and knowledge gained from education and the economic rewards for individuals and nations is well supported in the literature. Theories in the literature such as "human capital" and "signaling" support the claim that there is a positive correlation between earnings and education (see Spence, 1973). There are, as a result, economic and financial rewards for individuals, employers, and community in general flowing from investing in education (Psarchapolos, 2000).

It is generally understood that there is a positive correlation between education and earnings. Walker and Zhu (2003) stated that "the relationship between education and earnings is strong, there is a large earnings premium associated with more education – perhaps as much as 10 per cent per additional year of education" (Walker and Zhu, 2003; 145). Accordingly, education endures as a producer of high returns to individuals in the labour market (World Bank, 2007). As well, education develops the individual's contribution to the production of goods and services (Thorow, 1990). So that skills and knowledge gained from education have great economic impacts on both the individual's income and on the national growth (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2007).

Researchers have found solid positive effects of education on earnings in developed countries including Canada, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom (Finnie and Meng, 2001, 2002; Green and Riddell, 2003). It has been argued that countries around the world will improve education to sustain their economies in the long term. For instance, Martins and Pereira (2004) has conducted a research to measure the returns on education for a number of European countries and found that education returns increased for all countries except Greece (as seen in World Bank, 2007). Moreover, education in the United States, for example, is at an all time high. As seen in Table (2.1), evidence suggests that the returns on an additional year of education increase the earnings distribution (Cantu, 2003).

Table 2.1 Lifetime Earnings by Education in the United States

Education Level	2001 Hourly Earning	Estimated Work Life Earning
High School Grade	\$14.03	\$1,167,480
Some College, No Degree	\$16.51	\$1,373,600
Associate Degree	\$17.50	\$1,455,960
Bachelor's Degree	\$22.58	\$1,878,760
Master's Degree	\$27.21	\$2,263,560
Professional Degree	\$39.63	\$3,296,840
Doctorate Degree	\$36.15	\$3,007,280

Source: 2003 Current Population Survey (as cited in Cantu, 2003)

In addition, in the UK, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) revealed that there is a relationship between personal income and educational levels. It suggests that there is a high economic return on education (Walker and Zhu, 2003). For example, education in the UK has grown dramatically in recent years. The percentage of young individuals enrolled for a full-time university degree has increased from 13% in 1980 to 33% in 2000. In 2003, 41.5% of young people (age group 18-30) entered higher education and the government target is to raise this proportion to 50 % by 2011 (Walker and Zhu, 2003).

As mentioned earlier, the “human capital” theory and “signaling” theory both indicate that there is a correlation between education and income (see Spence, 1973). However, economists also consider that there are more than economic returns to education. They pointed to the wider benefits of education such as social benefits (see for e.g. Feinstein, 2002a; 2002b). For example, social returns on education range from lesser infant mortality and better contribution to democracy, to reduced crime and even the simple pleasure of acquiring knowledge. Hence, social returns on education could be higher even than private returns, as returns are defined simply as the net benefits of education off its costs (Currie and Moretti, 2003; Moretti, 2004a). These massive economic and social values of education partly explain the general tendencies among countries worldwide to invest more in education and to encourage its citizens to seek higher education.

Consequently, education is viewed as a key tool for promoting high performance and rewards not only at the economic level but also at the social and organizational levels of society (Buarki, 2010). Hence, Berryman (1997) claimed that the social and economic rewards of education could be summarized into two broad aspects: first, in adjusting behavioral attitudes to match social development goals; and second, in preparing qualified human resources with high skills, knowledge, and values to build economic and social projects and live successfully in an age of advanced technology. Moreover, Salganik et al. (1999) detected that high levels of knowledge, skill, and competencies are vital for promoting social, economic and political developments. These developments are to ensure the future well being of people, businesses, and societies.

2.4 Education and Human Resource Development

The previous section explained how education is correlated with economic and social rewards. However, there are other benefits associated with education. There is a connection between education and improving human resource development (World Bank, 2008; Barro, 2000). The World Bank (2008) states that education is a vital catalyst for improving the livelihood of individuals. Human Resource Development (HRD) is defined as the development of skills, knowledge and abilities of the individuals who can contribute to the economic and social development of a country (Barro, 2000:16). This definition implies that HRD is a result of education and suggests the importance of education towards HRD. Hence, HRD is a vital issue as Munro and Ranbird (2002) argued, for nations will be trapped in low skills, low wages economy if there is no investment in human resource development.

There is abundant literature offering indications on the value of investing in education to improve human resources and its influence on economic development and progress (see, for example, Hanushek and Kimko, 2000; Krueger and Lindahl, 2000; Hanushek and Woessmann, 2007). For example, the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE) claimed that producing developed human resources that meet labour market needs should lead to a successful and effective competition in the international market (UNICE, 2000). Evidence in the literature also shows that appropriate education for human resources, with the required knowledge, skills, and a set of personal competences, is seen as vital to effective functioning and progress in the long run (see e.g. Anderson and Marshall, 1994; Nijhof, 1998). The World Bank (2008) also stated that identifying concrete educational policy actions has benefited countries in the development of educated and skilled human resources that assist in the growth and development of the global economy.

This conjures up HRD strategy as the prospective of individuals and implies the principle of future planning (Al-Marry, 2007). Thus, human resource development would empower individuals to gain, retain and develop knowledge, skills, and competences that support them to contribute in economic and social development. All in all, education is associated with many benefits such as economic and social rewards as well as improving human resource development. Following this, the next section will explain the relationship between higher education and the labour market.

2.5 Higher Education and the Labour Market Debate

There is an ongoing debate in the literature regarding the relationship between higher education and the labour market. This debate concentrates on the role and responsibilities of higher education towards preparing graduates to handle jobs in the labour market. A number of researchers believe that to recruit the right applicant for the right vacancy, the requirements and needs of both the demand side (represented by employers) and the supply side (represented by the output from higher education in the graduate labour market) must be matched (Branine, 1999).

To do so, higher education must provide students with knowledge, abilities, and skills demanded by employers (Al-Marry, 2007). Hence, evidence suggests that workers' productivity in the labour market is contingent on the number of years of education and what is learnt at school (Heckman et al., 1995; Murnane et al., 1995). Here, it is argued that the main role and responsibility of higher educational institutions is to prepare students for employment (Nabi and Bagley, 1998).

Therefore, a good number of researchers suggest that colleges have an institutional obligation to meet the requirements and needs of communities (Cohen and Brawer, 1996; Dennison and Gallagher, 1986; Levin and Dennison, 1989). The World Bank (2008) has also argued that higher education should play a dominant role in preparing graduates to enter the labour market, as well as preparing them with the necessary skills to involve themselves in lifelong learning experiences. Furthermore, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2001a) issued a code of practice which states that higher education institutions must prepare graduates not only "for a successful transition to employment" but also "for effective management of their career thereafter" (Cited in Watts, 2006).

Curtis and MacKanzly (2001) suggested that there is traditional acceptance that university ought to prepare graduates with a set of higher-order intelligent and generic skills for the market. The academic education is challenged with the huge responsibility of preparing students for functioning in the labour market (Semeijna et al., 2006). Also, Boshuizen (2004) emphasized that educational institutions have the responsibility to prepare students for specific knowledge and skills or “specific competence” that are related to the type of jobs that educational programs prepare them for. Hence, recent research pointed to work-related competences gained from education as boosting the chances of finding a matching job, while general or academic competences provide the chances of finding jobs not related to their own professional field (Heijke et al., 2003b). Evidence also suggests that in order for individuals to have successful performance and development later in the labour market, labour market relevant skills, knowledge, and a set of personal competences are seen as crucial (see e.g. Anderson and Marshall, 1994; Nijhof, 1998). All in all, Semeijna et al. (2006) argued that competence-based education with which education programs prepare graduates for the labour market is worthwhile, as demonstrated by examples worldwide (see e.g. Boyatzis et al., 1995; Stillman et al., 1997; Schlusmans et al., 1999).

On the other hand, the second team believes that educational institutions and programs may have diverse aims regarding preparation for the labour market. They appear to encounter criticism for not connecting students’ learning to “real world events” (Grubb, 2001). However, researchers would argue that education’s core role is to provide knowledge and only pure knowledge (see for e.g. Reid and Barrington, 1997, 47; Al-Alwan, 2005). Lewey (1991) also argued that the aim of academic institutions is less likely to be responsive to economic or employment pressure, as it is more closely associated with academic teaching. Hence, the main purpose of academic education is the acquirement of character traits that enable students to embark reliably in the pursuit of true knowledge (Bock and Timmerman, 1998). It is concerned with people above all as its content is drawn from the cultural value system, social psychology, and national policy (Tabbron and Yong, 1997).

The philosopher John Dewey argued that the aim of academic education is to provide students with ‘certain traits’. Dewey called them “moral traits” as those traits are supposed to produce rational graduates. This will yield rational and humane graduates who will be keen to continue self-study in a globally accelerating world, and who appreciate the best cultural values and activities of society (as cited in Eksi, 2005). However, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2004) argues that if education is not relevant to actual skill requirements, this skills shortage creates a gap within the labour market (ACCI, 2004). Therefore, the next section will explore the gap between the supply of university graduates, and the demand for them in the international labour market.

2.6 Gap between Supply and Demand in the International Labour Market

As mentioned in the previous section, the gap between supply and demand in the labour market is suggested to be a result of 'skills shortages' (ACCI, 2004). The ACCI (2004) argues that graduates struggle in the labour market because education and training are not applicable to actual skill needs. This skill shortage happens when business owners struggle considerably to fill vacancies because there are only unsatisfactory job seekers without the required skills (Fitzgerald and McLaren, 2006). Hence, McLaren and Spoonley (2005) have highlighted that skill-shortages contributed to the misalignment and mismatch of supply and demand in the labour market. Further, Brown et al. (2002) also argued that incompetence among graduates is a major issue challenging employers who regularly report that university graduates lack the required business understanding and are inadequately prepared for work.

2.6.1 Examples of the Gap Worldwide

Evidence suggests that a considerable number of organizations and countries worldwide find that their graduates lack the appropriate skills and education. In Mongolia, 30 % of companies listed the absence of suitable skills and education as a severe limitation. In addition, 93 % of employees from these companies admit that they lack creative thinking and behavioural skills (World Bank, 2007). Furthermore, a study in four African countries presented that a shortage of entrepreneurial skills was a vital restriction in the creation of a practicable private sector (Bennell and Al-Samarrai, 2007).

In Greece, the lack of understanding in the educational system about the requirements of the labour market is emphasized by the European Commission (EC) almost every time it inspects the Greek labour market (Livanos, 2009). Furthermore, a survey of workforce development in Britain discovered that 57 % of jobs need less than three months of training, whereas 29 % required two years of training (PIU, 2001: 26). Moreover, in Europe, the "European Round Table of Industrialists" (ERT) also recognized a gap within the labour market in terms of the mismatch between what industries needed and what schools produced (European Round Table of Industrialists, 1997). Furthermore, there is general agreement in Australia that young graduates require a set of skills, which will prepare them for both advanced learning and employment (ACCI, 2001). In addition, in 1996 the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses conducted a survey of its small and medium-sized members vis-à-vis employment practices. It found that 45% of employers had difficulties finding qualified labour to meet their employment needs (Gingras and Roy, 2000).

In New Zealand, the lack of skilled workers is a bigger problem facing employers compared to the situation in 23 other countries (Vaughn, 2005). A study in New Zealand conducted by McLaren and Spoonley (2005) and supported by the Department of Labour (2005) revealed that 45% of employers had difficulty finding skilled staff, 26% of employers could only find unskilled staff, and 26% of the same employers said that their shortage of skilled staff is one factor limiting their capacity to expand. Also in the US, the National Alliance of Business (NAB) tried to address the lack of qualifications and skills by developing a qualification framework for certification in several industries (Curtise and McKenzie, 2001).

2.6.2 Reasons for the Gap Worldwide

There are several reasons that could explain the gap in any international labour market. These include inadequate education, technological progress, shifts in consumers taste, institutional changes, and demographic variation (Gingras and Roy, 2000). Also, the World Bank (2007) argues that the continuous fluctuations in the supply and demand of the labour market are due to a variety of factors. These factors include technological progress, institutional changes, and education system. However, most researchers agree that the most significant cause of the gap between supply and demand has to do with issues regarding the quality of education (World Bank, 2007). Thus, this research will focus on the quality of education within the labour market, which the literature suggests to be the main cause of the aforementioned gap in the international labour market.

The literature suggests that the main reason for the existing gap within the labour market is because of issues regarding the quality of educational qualifications (see e.g. Fitzgerald and McLaren, 2006, Brown et al., 2002; Vaughn, 2005; World Bank, 2007; Bennell and Al-Samarrai, 2007; Livanos, 2009). For example, a study by Fitzgerald and McLaren (2006) conducted on the New Zealand labour market revealed that the majority of employers (71.4 %) reckon that the major reason for positions with skills shortages is a lack of appropriate qualifications. Hence, the mismatches between education and jobs are to be associated with mismatches between available skills and required skills (Velden and Allen, 2001).

The recognition of educational quality as the major cause of the gap has its roots going back to the 1990s. In Australia, the “Finn Review” took a major step in 1991 to solve the gap and reviewed the quality of education in an effort to enable graduates to develop key competencies required by the labour market (Australian Education Council, Finn Review Committee, 1991).

Then in 1992, Australia needed policy mechanisms to reinforce the communication between educational institutions and the labour market so as to overcome the gap in the market (Australian Education Council Mayer Committee, 1992a). This suggests that in order to provide high quality education, communication between educational institutions and the labour market should be encouraged. Moreover, The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) indicated that during the 1990s, Canada faced a gap of low skills labour force in its labour market. The reason was because the country lacked a strong practice of close engagement between its educational institutions and employers (OECD, 1998). These issues regarding the importance of communication and interaction between the labour market and educational institutions later highlighted the notion of employability. Thus, the next section will be devoted to investigating this employability concept.

2.7 Employability

The concept of employability has increasingly been discussed in the literature over the last few years because it addresses the main reason for the gap in the labour market (see for e.g. Brown et al., 2002; Brown and Lauder, 2001). There are various definitions of employability according to different studies. Some definitions of employability focus on 'core skills' or 'key employability competencies'. These definitions consider the aim of employability as having to do with the ability of graduates to cope with the demands of the workplace without any need for extra training (Watts, 2006).

Other definitions in the literature would focus on 'sustainable employability'. They focus on the ability to remain employable throughout life and not only to secure a first job (Knight and Yorke, 2004; Yorke, 2006). From this perspective, Hisketh (2004) went on to define employability as "the relative chances of finding and maintaining different kinds of employment". Knight and Yorke (2004, p. 46) formulated the USEM model to clarify the concept of employability (**U**nderstanding- **S**kills - **E**fficiency beliefs – **M**etacognition). The USEM model viewed employability as being influenced by four inter-related components for the sake of being fitted for the market and remaining employable. The first component includes understanding, which is broader and deeper than only 'knowledge'. The second component includes the placement of skills. The third component includes efficacy beliefs or students' views of themselves and their personal qualities while the last component includes students' self-awareness and capacity to reflect on their learning.

Brown et al. (2002) indicate that employers have increasingly emphasized employability in an effort to move the responsibility for training, jobs, and careers onto the individual. Moreover, Lauder (2001) states that employers consider employability as a ready package of skills and knowledge matching the job. They tend to favour hiring workers on a “plug-in-and-play” basis, instead of investing in expensive and intensive training. However, evidence suggests that these ready packages of skills and knowledge or ‘key competencies’, which promote graduates’ employability, are indeed considered and accepted as valuable for the market (e.g. Lawson and Hopkins, 1996; Russell, 1996).

2.7.1 Employability and Competencies

It is important to discuss related employability concepts such as skills or competencies as they describe the characteristics that individuals developed through education and training, which are relevant to a wide range of contexts but transcend the precise discipline-area of the study (Curtis and Mackenzie, 2001). Competencies are thus defined as “any form of knowledge, skill, attitude, ability, or learning objective that can be described in a context of learning, education or training” (Coi et al., 2008). It has also been defined as “the ideal combination of skills, knowledge, attitudes and experience, the possession of which enables employees to become high performers and who have the potential to add value to the organization” (Gorsline, 1996). Furthermore, The Australian Education Council’s Mayer Committee (1992a) described it as “the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments. This is a broad concept of competency in that all aspects of work performance, not only narrow task skills, are included” (Australian Education Council, Mayer Committee, 1992a, p. 7). The council argued that competencies are crucial to any preparation for employment for they ensure that graduates contribute effectively and efficiently in workplaces and to adult life more generally. Hence, Russell et al. (1996) indicate that the availability of key competencies is crucial in the labour market as it guarantees employability.

2.7.2 Link between Employability and Education

This link between employability and education has captivated researchers for years. In 1977, a researcher introduced the term “Career(s) education”. It was formulated by Watts (1977), following Law and Watts (1977), to facilitate the development of four relevant components: self-awareness (abilities, interests, morals, etc.), opportunity awareness (work opportunities and needs), decision learning (decision-making skills), and transition learning (self presentation skills and job hunt).

In 1991, a similar model was adapted in the USA by Peterson et al. (1991) called the “cognitive processing theory of career development”. Later on, the term “career development learning” (mentioned earlier) was introduced in 1999 (Watts, 1999; Patton and McMahon, 1999).

For all intents and purposes, the linkage between employability skills and education system is undeniable. Education improves individuals’ employability in the labour market and widens their choices of career opportunities (Grubb, 2001). Curtis and McKenzie (2001) stated that “the concept of key employability skills provides a bridge between education and work.” They argued that it is vital to have some linkage between the education system and the labour market, even if it is only to adjust core or generic skills that can be productive in different settings because “job-specific skills” which employers require are difficult to predict in such a dynamic and knowledge-based economy. Thus, in order to recruit a larger proportion of highly skilled graduates, raising the educational standards to international levels of excellence is a must (Brown and Lauder, 1996; 2001).

Evidence in the literature suggests that in the mid-1990s the labour market stakeholders in many developed countries worldwide started to reappraise the problem within the market and called for change. Employers and educational institutions alike began to demand for change in undergraduate institutions (Jones, 1997). Hence, both players in the labour market, employers and universities, seek to sustain or develop their reputational capital (Brown and Scase, 1997). Major and Palmer (2001) argued that both educational institutions and employers wanted students who are ready for the labour market; students who could think critically, solve problems, and work in teams. This growing understanding from both players in the labour market had led to higher education having to adapt itself to the labour market or career learning movement. Watts (2006) suggests that there is growing attention within higher education to improve students’ skills and employability: “The last few years have seen a rapid growth of career development learning programs within higher education institutions”. Moreover, evidence suggests that colleges today are mainly oriented towards the operational requirements of trade, industry and the marketplace (Levin, 2002). For example, Pierce (2002) conducted a skills related survey in the UK, which revealed that around a third of higher educational institutions in the UK reported that career management skills modules were available to students. In one university (University of Reading), this became compulsory for all students. While in Australia, a project called “Generic Capabilities of ATN University Graduates” was formulated by the “Australian Technology Network” (ATN) Universities. The aims of this project were to identify and define graduate skills, as well to assist in the development of graduate skills (Bowden et al., 2000; see also section 2.4.3 for more examples).

There is a fast expanding phenomenon where educational institutions implement and adapt 'employability skills approaches' for their assessment and reporting around the world. The aim of such approach is to prepare graduates with a range of higher-order intellectual-generic skills for the market (Bowden et al., 2000). This approach has its roots in bigger economies and may require a long timeframe. For example, for more than 25 years, the Alverno College in the United States developed a framework to integrate generic abilities and skills in its curriculum, and has thus researched the attributes of its graduates extensively (Alverno College Institute, 2000).

Furthermore, since 1995, the University of South Australia had developed a set of "Graduate Qualities". They believed that these generic skills or qualities apply across all discipline areas of the university and are vital for adjusting to the workplace upon graduation (University of South Australia, 2000). Feast (2000) stated that during 2000, the University of South Australia adapted its "Graduate Qualities" project. This allowed students to document their accomplishment in terms of the set of "Graduate Qualities" they have acquired.

2.7.3 Political Importance of Employability

Political and business leaders constantly inform people that the process of employability is essential for national development. The efficiency and justice contingent, with individuals obtaining the skills, knowledge, and capabilities that employers require in an increasingly knowledge-motivated economy, is vital (CBI, 2001; as cited in Brown et al., 2002).

In Australia, the 2001 report of the Prime Minister's 'Youth Pathways Action Plan' recommended the development nationwide of an agreed set of 'key employability competencies' as a national goal to mirror changes in the workplace: "Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments in consultation with key industry organizations and the Australian National Training Authority develop a nationally agreed set of key employability competencies to reflect changes in the workplace, emerging new industries over the last ten years and projected changes to the year 2010" (Eldridge, 2001, Recommendation 2). Accordingly, employability is perceived as a source of competitive advantage and national prosperity contingent for improving the skills, knowledge, and entrepreneurial passion of the workforce (Brown and Lauder, 2001).

2.8 Relationship between Higher Education Institution and Labour Market

The preceding section had indicated the significance and importance of employability within such a dynamic competitive global marketplace. This prominence of employability has led researchers and governments to this key argument. They argued that there is a need for both businesses and educators to work together more effectively, and to learn from each other in order to provide a framework that helps clarify employer views (CBI 1998; 1999; 2000a; 200b; ACCI, 2004).

The key factor in the relationship between educational institutions and the labour market is delivering qualified graduates with high employability skills (Al-Marry, 2007). Hence, Curtis and McKenzie (2001: vii) indicated that: "The lack of shared understanding makes it difficult to build the broad coalition of governments, employers and educators needed to drive substantial reform". Thus, in an effort to close the gap and adjust the balance and understanding between supply and demand for labour, the relationships between the labour market and education system ought to be reinforced and supported (ACCI, 2004).

A number of countries in the world had taken serious steps in an effort to close or reduce the gap in the labour market. For example, in Australia, there is considerable effort to strengthen the linkage between education and the labour market according to several reports and policy developments (ACCI, 2004). This interest had started back in the 1990s when the "Mayer Key Competencies" were established in an attempt to have them embedded in educational and training provision: "One of the key policy mechanisms for strengthening the linkages between education and the labour market has been the attempt to embed key employability skills more deeply in curricula and student assessment" (Curtis and Mackenzie, 2001; 10). One of these key policies is the attempt to implant 'key employability skills' deeply in student assessment and curricula (Australian Education Council, Mayer Committee, 1992a).

The Commonwealth and State/Territory Education and Training Departments as well as the non-government sectors in Australia have all been co-operating with industries over the last decade. Their cooperation is an attempt to ensure that young people are skilled, employable and to provide them with experience in real work settings. In 1998, the Australian ACCI's General Council introduced a policy of increased education and training pathways from school to the workplace (ACCI, 2004).

In the UK, higher education has recently been more oriented towards communicating with the labour market to prepare students for the needs of the marketplace (Watts, 2006). Back in 1998, the CBI was the chief mover to have the initial set of key skills recognized in the UK. The CBI claimed that qualifications framework ought to incorporate academic and employment-specific education and training (CBI, 1998).

The CBI recommends in a number of reports that the 'key skills' formulate the foundation for both the ongoing employability of the workforce as well as for recent school, college, and university graduates (CBI, 1999; 2000a; 2000b). Thus, some researchers introduce the term 'career development learning' which involves teaching students job-related skills (Patton and McMahon, 1999; Watts, 2006). This term has witnessed growing usage within higher education in the UK (Watts, 2006).

In the US, the Labour Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) released a report in 1991 on detecting the skills required for employment. The implementation plans involved both schools and businesses. This report defined what it called "workplace know-how" which comprised a set of workplace competencies (SCANS, 1991). This commission continued its development with more recent work such as the 21st Century Workforce Commission (2000).

In Canada during the 1990s, the country realized that it lacks a strong practice of close engagement between educational institutions and employers, which resulted in a gap for the market (OECD, 1998). Thus, the National Business and Education Center then organized the Conference Board of Canada in the early 1990s. This project endeavours to answer the key question among educators: "What are employers looking for?" (Conference Board of Canada, 1992). The conference established an "Employability Skills Profile" (ESP) to identify the generic academic, personal management, and teamwork skills in an effort to inform government, business and educational leaders, and the community (Conference Board of Canada, 1992). Moreover, in 1998, the Canadian industry took major initiatives to bridge this gap by adopting the "ESP" in an effort to reconnect education institution goals with the labour market (OECD, 1998).

2.9 The Process of Recruiting Graduates

As mentioned in the previous section, to promote understanding between supply and demand for labour, relationships between the labour market and education system ought to be supported (ACCI, 2004). Thus, to facilitate such understanding, expectations and requirements of employers must be understood. Hence, graduates themselves need better understanding of labour market requirements and objectives (Semijin, 2004). On the other hand, graduates' expectations must be understood as well because their expectations could affect their job satisfaction in the future (Ferguson and Cheyne, 1995; Nelson and Cooper, 1995; Howard and Frink, 1996). Therefore, it is crucial to investigate employers' and graduates' expectations in terms of the graduate labour market.

Graduate recruitment has become one of the major challenging issues because a good number of employers have realized that the future of their business is contingent upon the recruitment and selection of the finest from among a growing number of graduates in different disciplines and from a wide range of higher education institutions (Branine, 1999). The demand for highly educated skilled graduates is on the rise worldwide.

Moreover, a UK study has predicted a strong recruitment market for 2007 graduates. In other words, the AGR conducted a survey of its employer members twice a year and asked about their plans for recruitment. A total of 222 large organizations were surveyed in the winter review, which revealed that more than half of employers (58%) were expecting to hire more graduates in 2007 than they did in 2006. Positions in general management and retail management are forecast to increase by 15% and 14% respectively (AGR, 2006).

However, the ambitious fresh minds have a lot of expectations from their potential employers (Ruth, 1998). Some researchers had argued that expectations could affect, either positively or negatively, employees' job satisfaction (Ferguson and Cheyne, 1995; Nelson and Cooper, 1995; Howard and Frink, 1996). Thus, to recruit and retain the best graduates, it is vital to satisfy graduates' expectations; for it is widely known that a satisfied employee generally stays longer in that particular job (Schmidt-Hoffman and Radius, 1995). Whereas, dissatisfaction with a job is often the reason for high employee turnover (Lucas et al., 1993; Stagnitti et al., 2006; Blau et al., 2006). Spencer (1982) also found a link between the sense of work accomplishment and career satisfaction.

Consequently, employers should investigate graduates' expectations or at least attempt to match them in order to attract, recruit, and retain the best. Thus, understanding graduates' expectations and causes of job satisfaction certainly helps when making decisions about employment and job design (Al-Enezi et al., 2009). Most importantly, the dynamic global competition had changed economies and societies, thereby escalating the significance of up-to-date skills and competencies (Curtis and McKenzie, 2001). Thus, continual upgrading of the skills and competencies of the workforce must take place regularly so as to acquire coherent strategies for "lifelong learning" (OECD, 1996). The OECD (2001) has argued that the progress of the "knowledge economy" has increased the need for innovative or additional types of competencies among individuals.

The studies discussed earlier suggest that the demand side of the market has specific requirements that are to be expected from the supply side; graduates must mirror competency criteria so as to be able to handle global competition. There is an essential need to meet the ever-growing expectations of employers depending on what employability actually constitutes (Goffman, 2004). Thus, any graduate recruitment programme should take into consideration these expectations in structuring their recruitment plans (Kandola, 2001). Curtis and McKenzie (2001) stated that "employers are clearly a key stakeholder group in identifying the skills people need to obtain, hold and develop in employment, and to create new employment opportunities for others" (Curtis and McKenzie, 2001:3). Hence, many researchers had argued that there ought to be a relation between employability skills expected by employers and the education system at least in the long run (Law and Watts, 1977; Watts, 1999; Patton and McMahon, 1999). Thus, it is important to recognize employers' expectations because this will guide educational institutions to better prepare their graduates with job related skills and/or to be fully 'employable'.

2.9.1 Employers' Expectations

The literature on human resource development has gradually focused in recent years on how best to choose and retain efficient and performing employees (Garavan and McGuire, 2001). The process of choosing human resources is introducing a certain number of expectations to be fulfilled. Rehman (2008) argues that "during the last few years, a number of studies have been conducted that deal with the phenomena of changing corporate environment, employer and managerial perceptions about their expectations of information professionals, and response of the higher education institutions to producing graduate equipped with new competencies".

In general, employers need lot more than just crucial practical skills. They expect graduates to have creativity, good presentation, good literacy, numeracy skills, and high levels of accuracy (Richardson, 2007). Accordingly, employers expect graduates with specific skills related to work competencies (De Coi et al., 2008). Cappelli and Singh (1992) argue that knowledgeable and competent employees could be a competitive advantage where such competencies are firm precise and are hard to imitate. Cheetam and Chivers (2005) defined competency as an “effective performance within a domain/context at different levels of proficiency”. At a simplistic level, competency models try to recognize the idyllic set of skills, knowledge, attitudes and experience, the possession of which would help workers to become high performers with the potential to add value to the organization (Gorsline, 1996).

According to Do Coi et al. (2008), there are two types of competence profiles according to their purpose. The first is the acquired competence profile. This type detects the achievements (in terms of competences) of workers and learners. These are usually employed in order to display which competences have been developed or to represent the expected achievement after the successful completion of a program. The second type is the required competence profile. This type detects the needs (in terms of competences) to be met by an applicant. These are usually applied in job descriptions demanded of graduates seeking a specific job. Due to the fact that we live in a knowledge-based economy, the labour market increases the demand for sophisticated skills employees to compete effectively, domestically, and globally (Al-Marry, 2007). For this reason, employers are expecting more from employees, as qualifications and experience of potential employees are no longer sufficient to satisfy market demand.

Hence, competencies are getting harder to come by as students and organizations demand new skills and expertise to compete in today's fast changing economy (Jacob, 2006). No doubt, graduates' skills and personal abilities or what so called “general skills” are crucial to their success in the labour market (Moreau et al., 2006). For example, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Business Council of Australia surveyed employers regarding the critical skills and abilities that businesses require to thrive. The results were the following employability skills: teamwork, communication, problem solving, innovative, planning and organizing, self-management, and technology skills. In addition, the required personal properties were: commitment, loyalty, honesty and integrity, motivation, enthusiasm, reliability, commonsense, positive self-esteem, ability to deal with pressure, and adaptability (Swinburne University, 2006). See Appendix 1 for a list of the top ten most highly rated competencies of European and Japanese Graduates.

Also, Ashton et al. (2000) indicated that employers put greater emphasis on skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and self-management skills. In addition, the Australian “ACNielsen Research Services” report on the satisfaction level of employers with graduates’ skills revealed that enthusiasm, creativity and flair as well as the ability for independent and critical thinking are the most important skills needed (ACNielsen Research Services, 2000).

Consequently, there was and still a great emphasis among employers around the world on generic employability skills and on advanced job-specific technical skills (Curtise and McKenzie, 2001). Hence, Field and Mawer (1996) identified a number of generic employability skills: “decision-making; delivering results; thinking creatively; customer focus; systems understanding; change management; improving own performance; cultural understanding; leadership; understanding organizational culture; negotiating; planning; goal setting; adding value; being confident; applying business acumen; listening; and writing with impact” (Field and Mawer, 1996, p. 22).

There is no agreed international definition of generic skills. The Australian Mayer committee identified a number of generic skills: collecting, analyzing and organizing information; communicating ideas and information; planning and organizing activities; working with others and in teams; solving problems; using technology (Australian Education Council, Mayer Committee, 1992b). Of relevance here is the European Round Table of Industrialists which identified generic skills as “understanding of the basics of math and science; critical thinking; communication skills; ability to work in a group; a sense of responsibility; decision-making; a sense of initiative” (European Round Table of Industrialists, 1995, p. 13). The examples above would seem to imply that national generic skills schemes vary from country to country depending on their ranking for those skills although across the board they are indeed fairly similar.

The Allen Consulting Group (1999) found that generic skills were vital to sustaining innovation, flexibility, and enhanced productivity in the economy. They found that “an increasing premium is being placed on generic skills, both ‘hard’ (notably IT skills) and ‘soft’ (e.g. problem-solving, team skills, willingness and ability to adapt) to be developed prior to recruitment” (Allen Consulting Group, 1999, p. v). Also, Kearns (2001) reviewed employers in Australia and elsewhere and there also found an increasing demand for generic skills.

According to a study in the United Kingdom and Spain, general skills are being gradually respected in labour markets characterized by change, and where there is continuous need to adjust to new technological development and working methods (Cruz-Castro and Conlon, 2001). Also, a study by Fitzgerald and McLaren (2006) on the New Zealand labour market revealed that 38.5 % of employers place emphasis on more general skills such as customer service skills, 30.8 % value good personal characteristics, management and oral communication skills, among others. Furthermore, the World Bank (2008) state that “the current global economy values individuals who, in addition to basic cognitive skills, have core competencies in critical thinking, problem solving, and entrepreneurship” (World Bank, 2008). In addition, a study by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) highlighted skill groups across all job families. The first group focused on generic skills such as the following: basic competency skills (such as writing, reading, and computation), communication skills (such as speaking and listening), adaptability skills (such as problem solving, thinking creatively), developmental skills (such as self-esteem, motivation and career planning), group effectiveness skills (such as teamwork, negotiation), and influencing skills (such as understanding organizational culture, sharing leadership) (Carnevale et al., 1990).

2.9.2 Graduates’ Expectations

The literature seems to suggest that there is an increased demand for graduates in the labour market due to a highly competitive marketplace (Branine, 1999; AGR, 2006). In the UK for example, around two-thirds of graduate vacancies are for graduates in just about every subject (Graduate Prospects, 2005/6, p. 17). Thus, it is vital to understand the expectations of graduates from their potential employers especially if one is to attract and recruit the best in the process of graduate recruitment.

Just about everywhere, the first thing employees would expect is a suitable salary that matches the expected level at recruitment markets for graduates. According to a study by the UK Higher Education Career Services (HECSU), the average salary offered by advertisers in the 2005/06 issue of prospect directory is £22,852 per annum, with a median of £21,000. So, graduates will expect to be offered £ 22,851 or higher before tax per annum (Graduate Prospects, 2006). Furthermore, a study of school students in the UK discovered that the main personal motives cited for heading to university were ‘to study a subject that really suits me’, ‘to have a professional career’, ‘to improve my job prospects’, ‘to gain entrance to a well-paid career’. These four reasons were valued by around four-fifths as extremely important (Connor et al., 1999, p. 12).

2.10 Labour Market and HRD

In today's increasingly competitive global economy, employers are not only counting on their expectations of graduates' or potential employees' skills and abilities. Therefore, organizations are implementing HRD initiatives to aid forming human resource decisions, such as hiring, promotions, and training (Berge et al., 2002).

Hence, because sometimes the skills provided by education institutions would not match the requirements of employers, employers will try to fill the gap in the skill requirements practice HRD. Swanson (1995: 208) defined HRD as "the process of developing and/or unleashing human expertise through organization development and personnel training and development for the purpose of improving performance." Thus, training is a major component of HRD as it facilitates the systematic development of skills and knowledge in individuals to improve performance (Swanson, 1995).

The main aim of HRD is to fulfill organizations' goals and objectives (Anderson, 1994). HRD incorporates enhancing performance on job by preparing individuals for future training, and assisting individuals to meet future organizational development (Nadler and Nadler, 1989). Therefore, training is the "historic root" of the HRD profession (Tarrco and Swanson, 1995). This introduces the term 'Systematic Training Cycle' (STC). Bowman and Wilson (2008) indicate that STC includes many stages in order to carry out HRD initiatives within organizations. It includes Training Needs Analysis (TNA), training design, training delivery, and evaluation. 'Training Cycle' or 'Training Wheel', as Bee and Bee (2002) call it, will be discussed in more detail below.

According to Bee and Bee (2002), there are 6 main stages in the 'Training Wheel' as follows. The first stage is identifying objectives. This can be done by implementing a systematic environmental scan, which will help to understand business needs. The second stage is to identify training needs in order to understand performance requirements using techniques such as critical incidents, management information system, performance appraisal systems, and human resources planning. The third stage is specifying the training needs in order to understand precisely the performance gap. This can be done by investigating with stakeholders such as designers, managers, supervisors, instructors, or operators (Hollnagle, 2003) and acquiring data regarding skills required such as direct observation, expert interviews, and operating manuals (Annett, 2003).

The fourth stage is translating training needs into action through training decisions such as deciding on formal or informal training and preparing training specification. The fifth stage is reaching the targeted training plan through assembling and prioritizing information and then preparing and monitoring those training plans. The last stage is evaluating the training to see if it is effective in meeting the objectives.

Boydell (1976) asserted that training needs must be determined before training itself can be usefully undertaken. Therefore, TNA is an important stage in this context as it mainly focuses on business and employers' needs before undertaking the training itself (Bowman and Wilson, 2008). According to Clarke (2003), TNA refers to the collection of data that supports decision-making in relation to whether training can develop performance, training content, and who should obtain training. Hence, Anderson (1994) indicates that the focus of training analysis is job performance, where TNA improves job performance through identifying the various job tasks for which individuals lack the knowledge or skills necessary to perform successfully.

Therefore, Boydell (1976), one of the earliest writers about TNA, asserted that TNA serves to overcome a particular weakness within organizations. Bee and Bee (2003) presented a similar perspective by declaring that employers and business needs are the main drivers for training to close any performance gap. Thus, TNA is vital because it helps employers to identify skills shortage in various job tasks in order to improve performance to match their particular needs and requirements. This will support narrowing the gap in the labour market.

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed theoretically the international higher education and labour market. In terms of education, the literature reviewed showed that there is a strong correlation between education on the one hand and economic and social development of nations on the other. Many studies have confirmed that providing well-educated and skilled individuals to the labour market enables countries to boost their social and economic development and generate national economic growth. Therefore, in today's global economic and social environment, developing well-educated and skilled human resources for Kuwait will end up enjoying a highly competitive advantage in an ever-dynamic and knowledge-based global village.

The mismatch between the labour market's supply and demand is a recognized issue worldwide. This gap is simply the outcome of the mismatch between the output from educational institutions and labour market needs and demands. There has been a growing reaction against the limited number of skills within the labour market worldwide. The literature suggests that it is a widely known persistent dilemma not only with developing countries but even developed countries such as Australia, UK and USA also suffer from the consequences.

According to the reviewed literature, there are many factors that contribute to the existence of the gap in the market which include technological progress, institutional changes, and the education system. Hence, the most critical explanation for such a gap in the labour market has to do with issues regarding the quality of education. Therefore, there is a need to examine the perceptions among key players in the Kuwaiti labour market and determine the degree to which there is a gap and the reasons for such gap.

This introduces the famous debate as to the main purpose of education, which has been discussed in the literature for years. Many researchers would argue that the main drive for education is the acquisition of general knowledge. They believe that it is not the goal of education to provide individuals who are ready-made for the labour market. On the other hand, others would claim that education should provide individuals with job-related skills so as to bridge the skill-gap in the labour market. They believe there is an urgent need for business and educators to work together more effectively and to learn from each other for the sake of addressing the needs of the labour market. Whereas, each view has its supporter, this research support the second group and believe that employers and educators should communicate to adopt the needs of the labour market.

Addressing the needs of the labour market is called employability. Hence, the literature suggests that living in a dynamic and knowledge-based economy necessitates and highlights the issue of graduates' employability within the labour market. This process is mainly about forming graduates with the appropriate education, job-related skills, and the capacity to continually adapt and upgrade with skills that can be applied in different settings of the labour market. Therefore, employers the world over are increasingly looking for graduates with appropriate employability skills that fit the jobs in the labour market. This call from employers had created an accelerating phenomenon in the global labour market.

The literature reviewed had indicated that there is a fast expanding phenomenon in the global education system where educational institutions implement and adapt employability skills approaches in order to prepare graduates to fit jobs in the labour market. Clearly, as far as Kuwait is concerned, developing an education system that provides human capital with the appropriate employability skills is essential for matching the demand from the labour market. This means that if Kuwait's educational institutions prepare their graduates with key employability skills, the gap if any will vanish and that the supply and demand of the labour market will ultimately be met.

The literature reviewed also showed that key employability skills provide a bridge between education and jobs. Eventually though, both business leaders and educators realize that they need to work together more productively, in order to learn from each other. Then, it will be easier to manage the graduate labour market, improve their reputational capital, solve problems, and bridge the gap in the market. Many countries such as Australia, the UK, and Canada have introduced policies to support the communication between educational institutions and the labour market. Therefore, both employers and universities in Kuwait ought to be more directly oriented towards communicating and interacting with the labour market in the preparation of graduates for the needs of the marketplace. This will enable both employers and universities in Kuwait to maintain or improve their reputational capital and solve problems within the labour market.

The process of graduate recruitment is also becoming a very challenging issue in today's labour market. Employers worldwide have discovered that human resources with the proper education and skills would promote the achievement of competitive advantage globally. They have understood that the success of their business contingent hinges upon the recruitment of the best from among an increasing number of graduates from higher educational institutions. Moreover, employers all around the world are demanding specific employability skills from those fresh-minded and often-ambitious graduates, to be mirrored in their newly acquired competencies to help sustain the growing global competition. Thus, the labour market and educational institutions in Kuwait should consider the trend in those international skills and key competencies as guidance for competing in such a global village. On the other hand, graduates themselves have specific requirements and expectations from their employers. These expectations would also have to be addressed by employers in Kuwait if they are to recruit and retain the best talents out there for the sake of attaining that much sought-after competitive advantage especially at the international level.

Matching employers and graduates expectations leads us to the HRD term. Hence, the main aim of HRD is to improve performance on job and assist employees to meet future organizational growth and development throughout training. Thus, HRD introduces the term “Training Needs Cycle”, which discussed earlier to enhance individual performance. Higher education institutions can adopt the same logic of “Training Needs Cycle” in developing their programs and curriculum. The literature suggests that training needs must to be determined before training itself can be suitably undertaken. This is also applicable for higher education institutions in order to produce useful graduates.

Therefore, higher education institutions should establish their own main objectives in relation to national development plans. Then it should identify skills, needs and requirements from employers in both public and private sector using techniques such as management information system. Next, it should specify employer’s needs in order to understand precisely the skills gap in the labour market using methods such as investigating labour market stakeholders (e.g. ministers, member of parliaments, employers, and potential graduates) as well as acquiring data related to skills required such as direct observation and expert interviews. Later, higher education institutions should translate skills requirements and needs into action and prepare their programs and curriculum to match the skills needed specification. Afterward, it should start with one or two programs and monitor those plans in order to evaluate and investigate if they are effective in meeting the skills needed by employers. This can be done by communicating with labour market stakeholders to acquire their reaction and feedback and then to better prepare individuals to fit labour market needs.

CHAPTER THREE: THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND LABOUR MARKET COMPOSITION IN KUWAIT

3.1 Introduction

In light of our research aim, which is investigating the mismatch between Kuwait's output of higher education and labour market demands, the previous chapter examines education and labour market trends worldwide. And while keeping in mind the international trends just described, this present chapter marks a clear shift in focus towards the 'local scene' as it were, i.e. to the social and economic characteristics as well as the education and labour market within the context of Kuwait. It is vital to understand the economic and social structure as well as education and labour market trends in Kuwait for it will help in assessing the contribution of the supply side of the labour market (the output of the education system) towards meeting the skills needed by employers in the labour market.

This chapter presents thus the background to the Kuwaiti context. It will provide a brief explanation of the geography of Kuwait as well as a clarification of key aspects of Kuwaiti society such as culture, language, and religion. It will also provide an overview of Kuwait's population in terms of growth rate and population composition as well as its economic structure and growth. Perhaps more importantly for the purpose of this thesis, this chapter will also provide a discussion of Kuwait's labour market and education system.

3.2 Geography of Kuwait

Kuwait is an oil-rich Arab country with an area of 17,818 sq. km situated at the northwestern tip of the Arabian Gulf, located at 30.27°N and 48.46°E. Its territorial waters include nine islands and a 290-km long coastline. The capital of Kuwait is Kuwait City.

The country is bordered to the south by Saudi Arabia, to the north and west by Iraq, and to the east by the Arabian Gulf. Kuwait has a dry desert; in summer the climate is intensely hot but cool in its short winter season (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009). Kuwait lies third in the Middle East in terms of proven oil reserves (after Saudi Arabia and Iraq) and was a founding member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC, 2007).

3.3 Social Characteristics and Population of Kuwait

This section will illustrate a few relevant social aspects of Kuwaiti society. It provides a brief explanation of the country's distinctive culture, language, and religion as well as an overview of Kuwait's population in terms of growth rate and composition.

3.3.1 Kuwaiti Culture

Culture is a major determinant of people's behaviour as well as being the source of a wide range of influences on their worldview. Likewise, Kuwaiti culture has had a major influence on graduates' choices and decisions regarding future careers. Culture is extremely pervasive and complex. Hence, culture is not only difficult to define, there is also no single agreed-upon definition. Still, Terpstra and David (1985: 51) defined culture as "a learned, shared, compelling, inter-related set of symbols whose meanings provide a set of orientations for members of a society. These orientations, taken together, provide solutions to problems that all societies must solve if they are to remain viable".

In terms of the entire spectrum of culture, Kuwait lies within the context of what may be described as high culture. The communication within such cultures depends heavily on context and/or non-verbal aspects of communication. Major key aspects include the who and what of the person (e.g. age may be more important than ranking), personal and social relationships, and factors such as trust, patience, reliability, ethical stance, etc. (Hitchreson, 2007). Kuwaiti society is religious and conservative where the family is the cornerstone of all relationships (Al-Haji, 2004). Therefore, the most distinctive aspect of Kuwaiti culture is personal and social relationships, which are shared according to family values. It includes the nuclear family, immediate relatives, distant relatives, tribal members, neighbors, and friends. Thus, all those family relations and values have, each in their own, a vital and direct influence on graduates' choices of future careers (Al-Haji, 2004).

3.3.2 Language and Religion

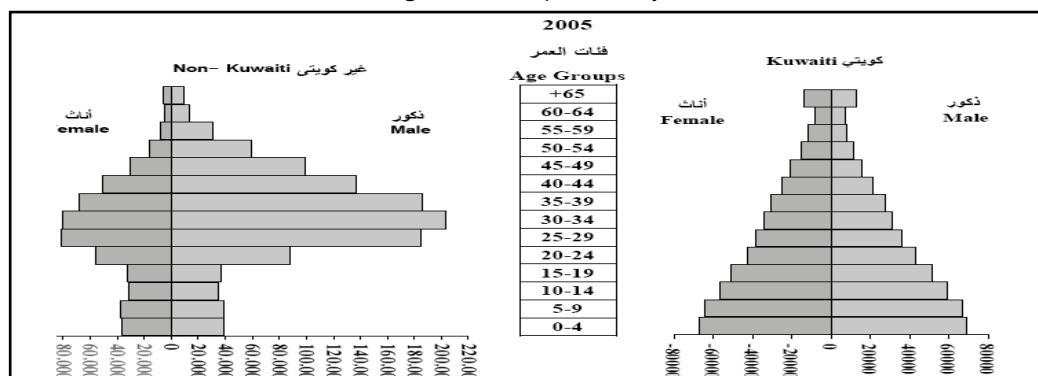
The official language of Kuwait is Arabic. However, English is widely spoken and taught at schools as the second language. English is broadly used in work floors related to industry and commerce as well as among private sector organizations. The official religion of Kuwait is Islam (Al-Haji, 2004).

3.3.3 Population Composition and Growth

In the summer of 2009, Kuwait had an estimated population of 3,441,813 (Ministry of Planning, 2009). Gender wise, the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) indicated that Kuwaiti females (%51) surpass male (%49) (PACI, 2008). Moreover, the composition of Kuwait's population has two unique aspects: nationality and age. In terms of nationality, the most dramatic division within the population is between the minority local population and the larger population of foreign workers who make up more than 65 % of the total population (see Appendix 3). There are about 2,354,261 foreign workers and their families living in Kuwait (Ministry of Planning, 2009). The composition of the population is divided into Kuwaitis 35%, other Arab nationals 22%, and non-Arab nationals (mostly Asians) 39%, and the stateless 4% (PACI, 2006). The percentage of immigrants rose steadily following the growth in oil revenues and the subsequent government development plans, which saw a rapid need for an extensive increase in the workforce.

As pointed out, the second unique feature of Kuwait's population is age. Kuwait has a relatively young population (see Graph 3.1), with those less than 24 years of age constituting around 40 % of the population, a direct consequence of a continued high birth rate throughout the last three decades.

Figure 3.1 Population Pyramid



Source: Ministry of Planning, Annual Statistical Abstract, 2005, p. 53

Given the government's economic support by way of family and children allowances, the fertility rate is not expected to present any substantial decline anytime soon (Al-Ramadhan and Nurney, 2006). That high fertility rate which is around 4 children per female (Lahmeyer, 2004) explains the high population growth rate in Kuwait. For example, between 1995 and 2003, the local population increased at an average annual rate of 4.47 % per annum.

However, the expatriates' growth increased due to government immigration policies with a growth rate amounting to 7.29 % for the same period (see Table 3.1). The Central Intelligence Agency (2007) ranked Kuwait's population growth rate of 3.56 % at seventh place among all countries of the world. However, the high growth rate and a very young population also have some negative implications such as an increased labour supply, resulting in a surplus within the labour market. Naturally, this also brings about increasing government expenditures, since the Kuwaiti government has had to adopt an economic development strategy where services such as education, health care, housing, water, and others are provided to nationals free of charge.

Table 3.1 Average Annual Population Growth Rate by Nationality for Six Periods

Period	Nationals			Expatriates			Overall		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1957 – 61	9.31	9.20	9.26	12.37	21.50	14.52	11.03	12.90	11.72
1961 – 65	7.45	8.54	7.97	10.57	14.05	11.55	9.29	10.62	9.79
1965 – 70	9.29	9.84	9.56	7.05	14.84	9.61	7.95	11.98	9.58
1970 – 75	6.16	6.50	6.33	4.69	7.97	5.97	5.31	7.19	6.14
1975 – 80	-4.14	-3.68	-3.91	13.76	12.36	13.19	7.39	5.20	6.42
1980 – 85	4.46	3.54	4.00	4.44	5.29	4.78	4.45	4.72	4.56
1985 - 95	3.20	3.49	3.34	-2.12	-3.92	-2.82	-0.55	-1.00	-0.74
1995 – 03	4.28	4.67	4.47	8.15	5.66	7.29	6.88	5.18	6.19

Source: Ministry of Planning, Features of Population and Labour, 2004

3.4 Economic Structure

The economy of Kuwait is reasonably solid and is based almost entirely on oil. Crude oil reserves are estimated at about 104 billion barrels - 8% of all world reserves. Petroleum accounts for nearly half of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 95% of export revenues, and 80% of government income (Al-Haji, 2004). In the last few years, the Kuwaiti economy has continued its growth while witnessing a surplus in its budget due to the high oil prices (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009). Nevertheless, because of the global credit crunch, Kuwait's economy was also hit and witnessed a slower economic growth in 2009 due to a drop in oil prices (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009).

In per-capita terms, Kuwait has one of the highest incomes per capita in the world (Burny, 2008) and a standard of living, which, for most developing nations, remains a remote dream for the foreseeable future (Hill, 1997). Alongside oil, Kuwait has two other main sources of income, namely, the payment of war compensations by Iraq and overseas financial investments revenues (Ministry of Finance, 2006). Kuwait could not acquire agriculture as an economic activity because of the harsh climate and the lack of arable land and water. Agriculture only accounts for around 1% of the GDP. About 75% of potable water must be distilled or imported. Because Kuwait depends on oil as its main source of income, the Kuwaiti market offers abundant opportunities to importers: 90% of consumer products are imported, particularly food products, transport, capital goods, and manufactured products (see Table 3.2 below).

The Kuwaiti government also tries to encourage Foreign Direct Investments (FDI): foreigners are allowed to hold 100% of a company's capital and can benefit from attractive tax regulations. The state mainly supports FDI's in high technology, petrochemical, infrastructure, and financial sectors (Ministry of Finance, 2009).

Table 3.2 Sector Composition of Kuwait's Real Gross Domestic Product (%)

Sector	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Commodity Producing Sectors	89.40	81.04	68.73	56.74	64.72
Agriculture & Fishing	0.13	0.15	0.17	0.66	0.67
Mining & Quarrying	87.61	76.90	62.02	50.13	61.69
Manufacturing	1.27	3.18	3.70	5.01	4.08
Electricity, Gas & Water	-0.31	-0.78	-1.50	-3.20	-3.23
Construction	0.69	1.58	4.35	4.13	1.51
Service Producing Sectors	10.60	18.96	31.27	43.26	35.28
Wholesale & Retail Trade	2.08	4.59	9.11	9.14	7.12
Transport & Communication	0.68	1.23	2.87	4.32	2.92
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	3.39	5.21	7.57	12.12	9.31
Community & Social Services	4.45	7.93	11.72	17.68	15.93

Source: Ministry of Planning, Annual Statistical Abstract, 2009, p. 16

3.4.1 Economic Growth

Different issues have affected Kuwait's economic growth in terms of real GDP. The historical development of the Kuwaiti economy went through two main phases. The first phase is the pre-oil discovery stage. Living in a desert by the sea forced Kuwaitis to focus on marine activities such as fishing, dhow building, and pearl diving (Al-Haji, 2004). The income per capita was really low and the economic growth was understandably very slow if not negligible.

Phase two started with the discovery of oil in 1936, which brought much opulence to the country. A new era in the country's economy began, in which the oil sector played the most important role. This discovery led to the creation of the modern state of Kuwait. It brought tremendous changes and great benefits for its people. New jobs were created, new schools and hospitals were opened, and many desalination plants were installed. The end result of that discovery is, without any shadow of a doubt, prosperity (Al-Haji, 2004).

During this prosperous phase, Kuwait faced three main economic flops. Firstly, the country went through a domestic stock market collapse during the early 1980s, along with the Iran-Iraq war, which forced the gross capital formation of the country to decline. Secondly, the country had to suffer through the pain of the Iraqi occupation. During the Iraqi occupation (1990-1991), numerous amounts of Kuwaiti assets were removed to Iraq. The Kuwaiti government, however, retained control of the country's very significant overseas assets. In a move to stimulate private investments, the government paid off household debts, increased government salaries, and paid compensations for war damages (Al-Marry, 2007). This spending and the costs of the war reduced Kuwait's overseas assets from \$100 billion in 1990 to \$40 billion in 1992 (Ahmad, 2005).

After the liberation, limited oil exports restarted. Gradually, oil exports began to get back to normal while higher oil prices helped reduce the budget deficit in 1999 (Ahmad, 2005). Thus, the sustained high oil price has provided the Kuwaiti government with a generous windfall in 2003 and 2004 (Imad, 2004). And with oil price still high, the country had extra bounces (Federation of International Trade Associations, 2006). Lastly, the economy was hit by the global credit crunch of 2008 during which oil prices dropped (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009).

3.5 Educational Trends in Kuwait

In Kuwait, the main aim of education is to produce dependable and active members of society (Buarki, 2010). Both Kuwait's policy makers and population at large have generally considered higher education vital to the country's future and critical to any socioeconomic consideration:

"Kuwait's education improvement plan stresses the functions of its educational institutions in developing and training its citizens to be part of its experienced human resources. The role of education is to develop the character of all its citizens, to prepare them to meet changes in the country locally and internationally, to provide expertise, to train Kuwaitis to meet technological developments, and to prepare its students for practical future life" (International Bureau of Education, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2003).

According to the constitution of Kuwait (1962, Article 40), education in the State of Kuwait is obligatory and free of charge from kindergarten until university level:

"Education is a right for all citizens to be provided by the State in accordance with the law and in keeping with the general system and ethics. Education is compulsory and free of charge in its primary stages, according to the law"

Hence, compulsory education in Kuwait ends at the age of 16, even if the intermediate level is not completed (Nashif, 1985). During the period of compulsory education, Kuwait is responsible for providing the educational facilities, teaching staff, and all schooling essentials such as meals, books, transportation and so forth.

3.5.1 The Ministry of Higher Education

Kuwait's Ministry of Higher Education was established in 1988. It is the authorized institution for delivering higher education in the country such as university education and all post-secondary education and training. It does so through two primary higher education institutions: Kuwait University (KU) and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) which provides training free of charge to all citizens (Ministry of Higher Education, 2006). Since the focus of PAAET is primarily vocational or pro-vocational studies, KU is the only institution responsible for producing professionals to supplement the needs of the different disciplines within the Kuwaiti labour market (Rehman, 2008).

A number of private post-secondary colleges and universities have been established and approved by the Kuwait Ministry of Higher Education within the last few years. These include the Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST), Australian College of Kuwait (ACK), and the Open University. But these institutions are yet to produce their early batches of graduates. Thus, the focus of this research will only be on the graduates of KU.

3.5.2 Kuwait University (KU)

Five years after Kuwait became an independent state, Kuwait University was established in October 1966. The main aim of KU is continuing its educational standard through delivering the highest level of teaching, progress in knowledge, and encouraging creativity, picturing the improvement of higher education, guaranteeing continuous development of its teaching programs, increasing interacting with the public through continuing educational programs, and providing the country with scientifically trained and practically qualified human resources in various disciplinary branches of learning (Kuwait University Centre of Information Systems, 2006).

KU began with the Colleges of Science, Arts, and Education and a women's college, with a total student roll of 418 students and 31 faculty members (Kuwait University, 2006). By 2008/2009, the student population had increased to 20,711 (see Table 3.3). Today, Kuwait University has 14 colleges and offer 72 programs in humanities and sciences at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels, with an internationally renowned and culturally varied community of professors and academicians, delivering the highest level of teaching, research and scholarship with English as the language of instruction (Al-Kharafi, 2003; Academic Activity Unit, College of Education, 2003).

The acceptance policy of KU for all Kuwaiti citizens depends on secondary school results or their equivalent. As for emigrants, KU gives twenty seats annually to students whose parents are employed at KU. Another 50 places are offered as scholarships through the Ministry of Higher Education (Kuwait University: Deanship for Admission and Registration, 2006).

Table 3.3 Registered Students at Kuwait University 2008/2009

College	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Total
Science	2,113	374	2,487
Arts	1,978	260	2,238
Education	2,753	410	3,163
Law	1,387	71	1,458
Islamic Studies	1,116	159	1,275
Adm. Science	2,083	157	2,240
Engineering	2,850	296	3,146
Medicine	331	57	388
Dentistry	66	7	73
Allied Health	580	113	693
Social Science	2,336	161	2,497
Medical Science	135	31	166
Pharmacy	153	14	167
College for Women	684	36	720

Source: Ministry of Planning, Annual Statistical Abstract, 2009

3.5.3 Public Authority for Applied Education and Training

In 1982, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) was established using the diverse educational facilities that had been set up to address the country's requirement for scientific and vocational preparation. PAAET is responsible for delivering and developing a national labour force that meets the developmental needs of the country. It also works towards expanding Kuwait's national economy by training students for jobs beyond the oil industry (Kuwait Cultural Office, 2006).

3.6 Kuwait's Labour Market

In this section, the major characteristics of the Kuwaiti labour market are explained. It starts with a discussion of the composition of the labour market, which relies heavily on migrant labour, for there is already a very low unemployment in Kuwait, estimated at 0.13% in 2008 (ILO, 2009). This is followed by a brief presentation about the development in educational status within the labour force. Then, an overview is provided over the makeup of the labour force according to economic activity. And finally, the trend towards privatization of Kuwait's labour market will be looked at.

3.6.1 Composition of Kuwait's Labour Force

The rapid growth of the Kuwaiti economy has instantly led to the need for a larger workforce. Gradually, the labour market began to take in more and more expatriates for a number of reasons. The most important reason of course was the small size of the population and, in the early years at least, their low level of education (US Library of Congress, 2006). By the end of 2004, the total number of Kuwait's labour force was approximately 1,551,342. Kuwaitis represented 290,746 while expatriates accounted for 1,260,596 (Table 3.4). The current structure of the labour force in Kuwait is not idyllic, and that is due mostly to such issues as the quality of education, nature of available jobs, required skills, and so forth (Abduljader, 2010).

Table 3.4 Labour Forces in Kuwait during Census Year by Nationality and Gender

Year	National			Expatriates			Overall		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1957	24,218	384	24,602	53,993	1,693	55,686	78,211	2077	80,288
1965	41,926	1,092	43,018	133,603	7,676	141,279	175,529	8,768	184,297
1970	63,314	2,055	65,369	162,286	14,541	176,827	255,600	16,596	242,196
1975	84,367	7,477	91,844	185,009	27,729	212,738	269,376	35,206	304,582
1980	93,588	14,172	107,760	334,644	49,105	383,749	428,232	63,277	491,50
1985	101,607	24,803	126,410	436,650	107,325	543,975	538,257	132,128	670,385
1995	105,580	42,743	148,323	468,016	147,114	615,130	573,596	189,857	763,453
2004	176,369	114,337	290,746	983,973	276,623	1,260,596	1,160,342	391,000	1,551,342

Source: Ministry of Planning: Features of Population and Labour, 2005, Kuwait

Table (3.4) shows that Kuwait's labour force consists mainly of expatriates. In 2008, expatriates represent more than 70 % of the total labour force, while native Kuwaitis account for around 30 % (Ministry of Planning, 2009). Another unique feature of the labour force composition is an increase in the female labour force contribution rate. In 1957, the Kuwaiti female participation rate was 1.09%. However, by 2007, it reached 38.92%. While female expatriates' participation rate was 13.97% in 1957, it reached 75.30% in 2008 (Ministry of Planning, 2008).

3.6.2 Privatization and the Kuwaiti Labour Market

Every Arab Gulf state depends heavily on foreign labour and Kuwait is no exception (Alqabas, 2004). This accounts for the major imbalance in the composition of the country's labour force. The supply of expatriate labour increased sharply from 55,686 in 1957 to 1,722,035 in 2007, while the native Kuwaiti labour force increased from 24,602 to 295,555 for the same period of time (Ministry of Planning, 2008). This overwhelming dependency on expatriates has also raised some concern over their possible impact on society.

The presence of expatriates leads naturally to a drain on Kuwaiti resources, a slowing down of national human resources, and an unwarranted entitlement to various subsidies for expatriates (Al-Ghaith, 2000). Thus, Kuwait has focused in recent years on the indigenization and nationalization of its labour force. During the 1990s, the Kuwaiti government decided that expatriates in government departments should not exceed 35 % of the total sector employment (Ramadan, 1996). On the other hand, the private sector prefers to employ expatriates as they are seen to be more productive, fully skilled, cheap, and patient (Al-Nafasi, 1998).

Moreover, the *Kuwaitization* of Kuwait's workforce is emphasized and effected through a reforming of the educational and training systems so as to better align them with the labour market need for more locals. Kuwaitis have generally perceived a university degree as a passport to enter the public sector (which is conventionally preferred over the private sector) where 93% of Kuwaitis work as it offers better working conditions and better pension scheme (Ministry of Planning, 2009).

In 2005, the public sector employed almost 25% of the total labour force (including both citizens and foreign nationals) and 93 % of Kuwaiti workers, whereas expatriates made up 94% of the private workforce (Federation of International Trade Associations, 2006). That leaves only six % of all Kuwaiti workers who are being employed within the private sector.

3.6.3 Educational Status of Kuwaiti Labour Force

In the early years, Kuwait suffered from a low level of education, which led to reliance on expatriates. Hence, in 1965, from among the Kuwaiti labour force, 51.6% were illiterate (see Table 3.5). However, oil revenues and government investment in education resulted in more highly educated Kuwaitis and a significant improvement in the educational level of its labour

force. In 2007, Kuwait was listed as the top Arab country for literacy rate, having the highest literacy rate in the Arab region (See Appendix 4 for Adult literacy rates in the Arab States). 98% of its youth and 95% of its population are literate (See Appendix 5 for literate adults and youths in Kuwait).

By 2008, only 1.2% of the Kuwaiti labour force was still illiterate (Ministry of Planning, 2009) (see Table 3.5). Now, the Kuwaiti labour force has started to replace foreigners at the highest levels of employment. However, this highly educated population is relatively small (US Library of Congress, 2006) and the quality of education of its labour force is still low (Al-Jassar, 2010).

Table 3.5 Educational Status of the Labour Force in Kuwait (%)

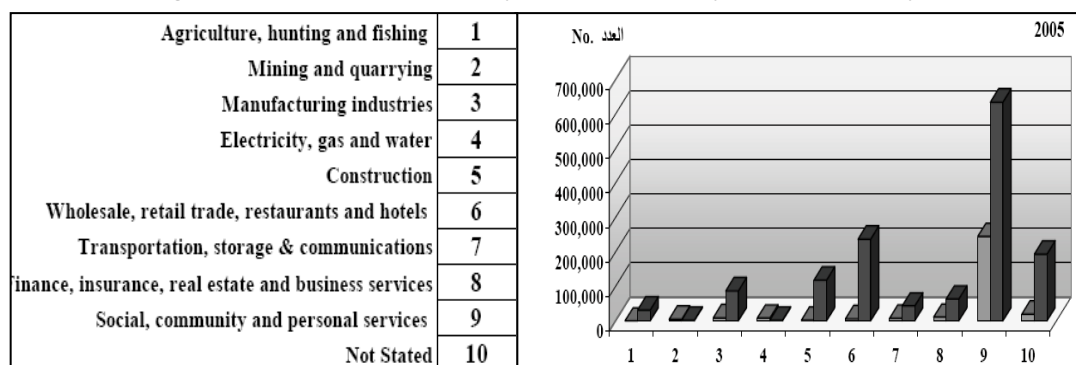
Educational Status	2005	
	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti
Illiterate	2.49	18.54
Read and Write	4.65	36.83
Primary	8.77	9.17
Intermediate	15.01	16.55
Secondary	66.29	16.24
Above Secondary and Below University	2.43	2.16
University and Post Graduate Studies	0.36	0.51
Total	100	100

Source: Ministry of Planning, Annual Statistical Abstract (2008)

3.6.4 Division of Labour Force According to Economic Activity

Over the years, most of Kuwait's labour forces were mainly involved in the service sector (see Figure 3.2). This comprises social, community, and personal services such as education, public administration, and others. Hence, in 1957, the Kuwaiti labour force that had worked in the services sector was estimated at 52%. Nevertheless, in 2007, around 85% of the Kuwaiti labour force were active in services activities (Ministry of Planning, 2008). This indicates that this trend towards the services sector will continue to increase.

Figure 3.2 Distribution of Employed Labour Force by Economic Activity



Source: Ministry of Planning, Annual Statistical Abstract (2008)

3.7 Politics and Labour Market Rules

According to the World Bank (2007), to understand the demand for labour in any economy, the rules of the labour market must be understood. In Kuwait, there is no taxation policy on citizens. At present, there are no direct or indirect taxes on Kuwaiti labour such as income tax, wealth/property tax, sales tax, or excise tax (Ministry of Finance, 2008). The average monthly salary among Kuwaiti citizens is 850 KD (around £1700) and a minimum wage of 400 KD (around £800), while the average working hours is 5 hours/day (Civil Services Commission, 2010).

The Kuwaiti government has also set up a bulk of employee protection regulations. These regulations encompass a huge number of stipulations to support and protect the rights of national employees especially in the private sector. These rules are vital for the Kuwaiti labour market especially after the global credit crunch in 2008 when plenty of firms released hundreds of their staff without prior notice (Al-Qabas, 2010).

In Kuwait, jobs for graduates are guaranteed. According to the Kuwaiti Constitution, article 41:

"The state shall endeavor to make work available to citizens"

It is for this reason that the government sector is a very attractive environment for graduates where indeed 93 % of Kuwaitis work (Ministry of Planning, 2009). The government sector jobs are provided upon graduation, with worthy salaries and suitable working hours. Moreover, graduates in Kuwait will not need to worry about being fully employed with a wide range of skills because the employment policy in Kuwait enables fresh Kuwaiti graduates to join the government sector, allowing them to occupy respectable even comfortable jobs with a relatively decent salary on the other hand the private sector provides better career opportunities (Al-Marry, 2007). However, there are few graduates (around 7 %) who look for work in the private sector and they will have to go through the normal process of finding a job. According to the Civil Services Commission (2010), of 133,230 graduates looking for jobs in the government sector since 1999, 117,210 had found one while 15,000 were expecting to acquire one within the following year (Civil Services Commission, 2010).

3.8 Higher Education and Kuwait's Graduate Labour Market: The Debate

The previous chapter reviewed the well-known international debate over the role of universities regarding the preparation of students for the labour market. Kuwait is not immune to the same debate. A lot of people in Kuwait had argued that the main role of universities is to prepare students for the labour market, which is also the main reason for students entering universities (see e.g. Rehman, 2008).

For example, Rehman (2008) argues that the emerging global competition within Kuwait's labour market requires fresh competencies. This of course would put new pressures on higher educational institutions whose responsibility it is to produce such professionals, implying therefore the necessity perhaps for intensive curricular changes. Hence, the curriculum needs to be conceived in relation to market needs and employer perceptions about necessary professional competencies (Rehman, 2003b). However, according to Reid and Barrington (1997; 47), education is "the activities that aim to develop the knowledge, skills, moral values, and understanding required in all aspects of life rather than knowledge and skills relating to only a limited field of activity". As such, quite a number of university professors in Kuwait have come out in support of the main objectives of educational institutions as indeed the improvement of knowledge and learning. Not only that, they also argued that employers should take the responsibility of training their employees in the way that matches their specific requirements (Al-Alwan, 2005). Although each view has its supporters, in reality, both are interrelated with one having a considerable effect on the other (Branine, 1999).

3.9 The Gap between Supply of University Graduates and Demand for them from Kuwait's Labour Market

Employers have come to realize the impact of fast-moving changes in a highly competitive global marketplace. Fitzgerald and McLaren (2006) stated that “the match between employer demand for skilled labour and the labour supply is one of the most critical factors concerning growth of the national economy.”

Hence, the new economy needs innovative methods of thinking, new methods of management, and new methods of performance. As the nature of jobs continues to change, the level of education and skills also requires change (Murnane et al., 1995). Evidence suggests that in Kuwait, there are two issues responsible for the gap in the labour market, namely, the quality of education and personal relations, both of which will be discussed below.

3.9.1 Quality of Education in Kuwait

It is widely known internationally that the main reason for the gap in the labour market has to do with the quality of education (see e.g. Fitzgerald and McLaren, 2006; Brown et al., 2002; Vaughn, 2005; World Bank, 2007; Bennell and Al-Samarrai, 2007; Livanos, 2009). Hence, in the Arab world, this dilemma within the labour market is a key issue. For example, in 2007, the World Economic Forum (WEF) released an Arab world competitiveness report, which highlighted the significance of quality of education in the Arab world, which in turn would ensure an enduring economic growth independent of energy prices. The report revealed that seven of the thirteen Arab nations had complained that ‘inadequately educated workforce’ is the major sobering obstacle to their development (as cited in Achoui, 2009).

Evidence also suggests that there has always been a gap between higher education skills or disciplines and the needs of employers within the labour markets of developing countries. The World Bank (2008: 14) had simply stated: “There is an urgent need to improve the quality of education in developing countries”. It had also said that core competencies and cognitive skills would give graduates the foundation for operating effectively in any sector of the economy. However, the education systems of most developing countries still lack the capacity to develop these skills among graduates, creating a very real albeit worrying skills-mismatch (World Bank, 2008).

Razag (2010) had also pointed to the inadequate education system in the Arab world as the main reason for the insufficient human capital. He argued, for example, that in the 1950s, income per capita for most Arab countries was higher than that of South Korea. However, South Korea's income per capita is today much higher than most Arabic countries. This is because Arab countries' education system remains under-developed. Hence, the Arabic Planning Institute (2010) had also voiced the same concern that despite the increase in Arabic human capital within the last three decades, it was not accompanied by an increase in productivity when compared to other countries because of a largely inadequate educational system (Arabic Planning Institute, 2010).

In Kuwait, the needs of the economy for a well-educated and skilled labour force have yet to be met by the output of its educational institutions (Al-Wehaib, 2008). The skills-mismatch in the labour market is undoubtedly a result of the shortage in skilled labour through inadequate education (Cruz-Castro and Conlon, 2001; Diaz et al., 2004; AFESD, 2003). Currently, there is no correlation between the qualification of Kuwaiti graduates and the jobs they occupy (Al-Marry, 2007).

Accordingly, the department of research studies in Kuwait's national assembly is also of the same opinion that Kuwait's educational system is facing a major problem in meeting the requirements and needs of its labour market (National Assembly, 2007). For example, a survey by Arabia Inform in 2008 has shown that the majority of organizations in Kuwait suffer from gaps in skills. This means that the skills level of employees is simply not up to standard. This is not a recent problem; in 2003 the total number of employees who would require some form of training is 42,000. This number represents approximately 16% of all employees (Toh, 2003).

Furthermore, a report by the Kuwaiti Institute of Scientific Research (KISR) and the International Bank (2001) had recommended that Kuwait should urgently reinforce changes in the structure and policies of its educational and training system in order to match its labour market needs (KISR, 2001). Moreover, KISR (2001) reported that expatriates had to take up jobs in both the government and private sector because of the inadequate quality of the Kuwaiti labour force. This can only mean that Kuwait's human resources have yet to match up with the real needs of its labour market in both qualitative and quantitative terms (Al-Hamed, 2000).

Organizations in Kuwait still seem to lack qualified human resources with the appropriate competencies, who can take up key managerial and professional roles in areas of information and knowledge (Rehman, 2008). This is because Kuwait's education policy lags behind when compared to the country's level of social, technological and cultural development (Al-Enezi et al., 2009). In 2007, 19,000 citizens were out of work in Kuwait because they were simply unsuitable for the specific needs and requirements of the labour market (Hossam, 2007). A number of managers in IT and HRD also complained that they could not recruit staff with the appropriate sets of skills and capabilities required by the market (Rehman and Marouf, 2004).

3.9.2 Personal Relationships in Kuwait

The most distinctive aspect of Kuwaiti culture is personal and social relationships, which are shared according to well-defined family norms and values (Al-Haji, 2004). Thus, social and personal relations, or "alwasta" as Kuwaitis call it, also heavily influence the labour market in Kuwait (Al-Jassar, 2007). This connection between social elites and the link to employability is not limited to Kuwait alone. Some researchers have also found that social elites with the proper cultural capital are often the ones allocated the best jobs worldwide (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1964; Collins, 1979).

Brown et al. (2002) pointed out that in the race for credentials and jobs, people and social groups often employ the power of their material, cultural and social capital: "Social background remains of major importance in explaining who gets access to fast-track graduate programs". Furthermore, Bourdieu (1986; 1997) also thinks that in many domains of modern life, people and social background "play-out" a constant competition for positional benefits. Bager (2007), for example, states that the labour market in Kuwait largely depends on "alwasta", for if a graduate has good relations, s/he would likely get the best job. That is, it is not what one knows but whom one knows.

Nevertheless, "wasta" has been shown to create many problems for people who are not able to take advantage of it. For example, Al-Shaigy (2011) indicated that "wasta" has a negative influence on individuals who cannot use it. It affects job satisfaction and subsequently performance and motivation to work.

Also, Al-Jassar (2007) reckoned that people who do not have or use “wasta” to gain employment would eventually lose their appetite to work when they see people who are less qualified than they are taking up positions that are better than theirs. Furthermore, a study by the Kuwaiti National Assembly involving 376 graduates indicates that graduates ranked “wasta” as the number one problem affecting their careers (AL-Mahna and Al- Enezy, 2000).

3.9.3 Communication between Labour Market Stakeholders

It seems fairly obvious that in order to close the skills gap in the market, positive and constant communication and feedback between the two key parties, employers and higher education institutions, are indispensable. Gingras and Roy (2000) said that it is hugely important for higher educational institutions to remain alert and be responsive to the requirements of the labour market and economy. That is why Ghaneimat (2006) argued that due to the big gap in Kuwait’s labour market, there must be positive communication between the educational system and the labour market in view of the skills and requirements needed. But such communications between stakeholders in the labour market should be regulated by a set of policies (World Bank, 2008). This is more so when the government’s marketplace policies are grounded on the hypothesis that the competitive advantage of countries and the economic prosperity of individuals depend on the knowledge, skills and innovative desire of human resources (Brown et al., 2002).

However, the labour market policies practiced so far in Kuwait with respect to education and the workplace have failed to increase skill levels with the result that Kuwait has had to put up in recent years with a low-skills economy (Al-Wehaib, 2004). This proposed mismatch in the labour market had cost the State of Kuwait a fortune.

The Civil Services Commission (CSC) has had a plan since 1986 to send students for higher education abroad in order to upgrade an incompetent educational system. This has cost the Kuwaiti government around 200 million KD /around £400 million since its inception. However, the last eight years had cost 69,989,000 KD/ around £140 million (Civil Services Commission, 2010/ See Appendix. 6 for Amount Paid by Kuwaiti Government to Send Students to Study Abroad).

3.10 Graduates' Recruitment Process

Graduate recruitment is a process of searching for and acquiring potential job candidates from graduates in satisfactory number and quality for the sake of selecting the most suitable candidates to fill in job vacancies (Branine, 1999). It should be noted that graduate recruitment is a very expensive and complex process. Carl Gilleard, chief executive at the Association of Graduate Recruiters, has said that employers are increasingly shortening their graduate recruitment programmes. "They are very expensive" (Higginbottom, 2003; 9).

Phillips (2001), for example, also reports that on average it is estimated that it costs £5,000 to sign up a single graduate in the UK. Moreover, Mitchells and Butlers Company is spending £100,000 over two years on a graduate recruitment programme (Carter and Hotelkeeper, 2003). Matching the expectations of both employers and graduates will result in a successful recruitment campaign. For it will lead to a satisfactory work accomplishment for employers and career satisfaction for graduates (Spencer, 1982).

3.10.1 Kuwaiti Employers' Expectations

Literature increasingly investigates the evolving topic of employability skills and what employers expect from their potential employees (see e.g. Bailey, 1997; Packer, 1998; Overtoom, 2000; Murnane and Levy, 1996). Overtoom (2000) had defined employability skills as "the transferable core skill groups that represent essential functional and enabling knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by the 21st century workplace. They are necessary for career success at all levels of employment and for all levels of education". Hence, the dual challenge of working in a highly competitive marketplace with rapid technological changes has demanded a reform of the workplace into an innovative work environment. This environment requires those employability skills. It expects employees at all levels to solve problems, create ways to develop the methods they use, and be involved efficiently with their co-workers (Bailey, 1997; Packer, 1998).

Employers in Kuwait have not been expecting much from graduates as the structure of the labor force in Kuwait is not idyllic, and that is owed mostly to such causes as the nature of available jobs, the level of education, required skills, and so forth (Al-Tammimi, 1996). For example, Al-Shaty (2005) thinks that final year students should beware that half of the recruited are expected to struggle in fulfilling recruitment objectives with the biggest factor being a lack of applicants with the right skills.

However, the World Development Report (2007) suggests that even though teaching methods and curricula have persisted largely unchanged in developing countries throughout the years, organizations are increasingly demanding strong thinking, communication, and entrepreneurial skills (World Bank, 2007). For example, a manager of a large Arabic company of computer systems and measurement products once said: "We expect at least a credit average for academic results. We also like to see that applicants have some work experience, preferably dealing with customers. More importantly, we look for a good team player with excellent interpersonal skills who is focused on high levels of achievement, shows flexibility and enjoys challenges" (Arab-net, 2006). The World Bank (2007) had also weighed in to the same effect: "In developing countries both general and core competencies and skills have become increasingly valuable in labor markets that are characterized by change and in which there is a constant need to adapt to new developments in technology and working methods" (World Bank, 2007).

3.10.2 Kuwaiti Graduates' Expectations

All around the world, one of the important things qualified employees would expect is a suitable salary that matches the recruitment market for graduates. In Kuwait, there is a national monthly minimum wage. In the public sector, the monthly minimum wage is approximately 400 KD (£800) for nationals and approximately 227 KD (£460) for non-nationals. On the other hand, there is no legal minimum wage for the private sector, although it usually pays more than the public sector. Graduates will however expect more than 400 KD when they apply for a job in the public sector, and will expect even more from the private sector.

Moreover, in a survey by Al-qabas (2005) on final year students at Kuwait University, asking them to rank their expectations from their potential employer, a very high salary was the first choice of the majority (47%). One of the business graduates had thus commented: "I have worked so hard to obtain my distinctions, so I deserve the highest salary I can ever get". After a decent salary, flexibility at work came in second place (13%), while having the opportunity to develop careers and experience was third (10%). The rest had all sorts of expectations.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the background information relating to Kuwait. It has Kuwait's culture in terms of its major characteristics. The State of Kuwait belongs a high context culture. The most distinctive aspect of that kind of culture is the personal and social relationships, which are shared according to family values. Hence, family values have a significant influence on family members and the choices that each has to make.

According to the reviewed literature, this influence can be summarized by two major issues regarding the labour market. First, the influence of family is very strong in such a culture and could influence one's choice of jobs, which could affect the motivation of individuals to do a job properly. Second, the influence of family social relationships or what is called "Wasta" could guarantee a kind of jobs for graduates that they may not be able to obtain on their own.

This chapter has also review Kuwait's economy in terms of the population structure, composition and growth. It was shown that the discovery of oil led to the creation of the modern state of Kuwait. The end result of that discovery is improvements in human capital resources, diversification of the economy, and a higher standard of living. However, the rapid expansion in economic activities has led to a high demand for a sophisticated labour force to fulfill the growth requirements.

For better and/or for worse, this has brought about an inflow of qualified expatriates to the country who were able to take advantage of the high income compared to their countries of origin. But Kuwait's problems remain, namely, of having an increasingly large pool of new entrants to the workforce while needing to urgently retrain the existing workforce to meet the new job requirements. Thus, unless Kuwait improves the education and skills of the national workforce to fulfill the new job requirements, the problem will remain. The literature also suggests that Kuwait has suffered from a low quality of education, which led to a low skilled national workforce and the reliance for years on expatriates. For that reason, expatriates still surpass Kuwaitis in most sectors of the labour force. This exemplifies the most dramatic division in Kuwait's population in terms of a minority of native Kuwaitis and a majority of foreign workers. Being the minority in one's own country is unique by any standard. In this context, higher education in Kuwait clearly needs to improve the quality of education in order to provide employers in both public and private sectors with well-qualified graduates compatible with labour market needs.

Communication and feedback between the two key parties in the labour market, employers and higher educational institutions are indispensable for sustaining a balance in the labour market. The reviewed literature suggested that such communications between stakeholders in the labour market should be regulated by a set of policies to ensure their legitimacy and strength. However, this is not the case in Kuwait as labour market policies failed to increase skills levels.

Employers all around the world need to have effective recruitment methods to ensure that the most suitable and best-qualified applicants are offered the most appropriate vacancies. Thus, in order to create a successful recruitment campaign and employ the best suitable candidates among graduates, the expectations of both employers and graduates should be determined. This will lead to sufficient work achievement for employers and career satisfaction and progress for graduates.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore a certain gap in the Kuwaiti labour market. Thus, the review of the literature in chapter two has provided an international overview of higher education and the labour market. Within the context of the State of Kuwait, chapter three has provided an overview of this study in terms of economic and social aspects, population, education, a gap in the literature on graduates' skills, employers' needs, and graduates' expectations. This present chapter aims to explain and justify the research methodology used in this study while hoping to further explore the research questions mentioned earlier in chapter one. Section one will present the nature of social research and the different research approaches. Section two will set forth the research method employed in this study, namely, the mixed method approach. Section three will be devoted towards explaining methods of data collection. The research techniques used are interviews and surveys. Combining these techniques will help gauge fairly reliable and in-depth information in order to achieve the desired results. Section four will explain research sampling while section five will provide data analysis techniques.

4.2 The Nature of Social Research

There are different approaches to conducting research in social science as exemplified by philosophical aspects of key concepts such as ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Epistemology and ontology exemplify contradictory concepts about what knowledge is, our connection with nature, and our ways of thinking (Walliman, 2006); while research methodology is more concerned with the general principles of data collection (David and Sutton, 2004). The definitions of each term according to various authors will be mentioned below. The three concepts of social science research (ontology, epistemology, and methodology) are significant and vital for any research in this field because they describe basic assumptions about how reality exists and suitable methods for building one's knowledge of reality (Beynon-Davies, 2002). The methodology, which is concerned with gathering and analyzing data, has a natural correspondence with specific epistemological and ontological assumptions (Beynon-Davies, 2002). Hence, a specific research design shapes the selection, use, and fundamental principle upon which it is based for the choice of suitable methods and forms to be used (Crotty, 1998).

Table 4.1 Definitions of Ontology

Beynon-Davies (2002, p. 559)	“That branch of philosophy concerned with theories of realities”
Hickey et al. (2010, p. 3)	“What can the world be said to consist of? Is reality “real” or only relative to particular constructed realities?”
Wong (2010, p.4)	“The theory of existence, or more narrowly, what really exists as opposed to what seems to exist.”

Table 4.2 Definitions of Epistemology

Walliman (2006, p.15)	“How we know things and what we regard as acceptable knowledge.”
Bryman (2004, p. 11)	“What is or what should be regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline.”
Hickey et al. (2010, p. 3)	“What can we claim to know about the “Reality”, and is such knowledge a form of truth? Can we explain or merely describe?”

Table 4.3 Definitions of Research Methodology

Beynon-Davies (2002, p. 559)	“Assumptions on which research approaches are appropriate for generating valid evidence”
Crotty (1998, p. 3)	“The strategy, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes”
David & Sutton (2004, p. 365)	“General principles and traditions of data collection”

The key concepts of social research (ontology, epistemology, and methodology) are interrelated with different broad paradigmatic approaches that have emerged over time but with four main ones: positivism, constructivism, post-positivist, and critical theory (see Table 4.4). These four main strategies of social research must be regarded as ideal or constructed types (Patton, 1998; Smaling, 1994).

According to Blaikie (2000: p. 100), each research strategy has a theoretical groundwork, and comprises ontological assumptions about the nature of reality and epistemological assumptions about how reality can be known. He stated thus: "The research strategies provide different ways to answering research questions by specifying a starting-point, a series of steps and an end-point". Only three major approaches to social enquiry are discussed in this research: positivism approach, post-positivism approach, and constructivism approach - for a detailed discussion of the other eight approaches, see Lincoln and Guba (2000). Then, Table 4.4 summarizes the characteristics of each approach according to the paradigm's positions on selected practical issues.

Table 4.4 Basic Beliefs of Alternative Inquiry Paradigms

Item	Positivism	Post-Positivism	Critical Theory et al	Constructivism
Ontology	Naïve realism "real" reality but apprehend able.	Critical realism – "real" reality but only imperfectly and probabilities apprehend able.	Historical realism – virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic ethnic, and gender values; crystallized over time.	Relativism – local and specific constructed realities.
Epistemology	Dualist/Objectivist finding true	Modified dualist /objectivist; critical tradition/community; findings probably true.	Transactional/subjectivist; value-mediated findings.	Transactional/subjectivist/ created findings.
Methodology	Experimental /manipulative ; verification of hypotheses; chiefly quantitative methods.	Modified experimental/manipulative; critical multiplism; falsification of hypotheses; may include qualitative method.	Dialogic/dialectical.	Hermeneutical/dialectical.

Source: Lincoln and Guba (2000: p.165)

4.2.1 Positivism Approach (Objectivist)

In the last two centuries, the most remarkable feature of social science has been the rise to dominance and subsequent fall of the positivist tradition (Smith, 1998). According to the positivism approach, scientific discoveries are accomplished by objective observations and measurement, and the careful and accurate analysis of data (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). One of the major principles of positivism is that something is meaningful if and only if it can be observed objectively by the human senses (Borg, 1989). Hence, this is an objective approach that establishes causes and effects to test theories and create scientific laws (Walliman, 2006). The researcher who followed the positivism approach considers the social world as a natural phenomenon, by being real, hard, and external to people, and therefore measurable. This approach uses quantitative examination options such as surveys and experiments (Cohan et al., 2000). Hence, the positivism approach uses quantitative techniques to collect data in an effort to generalize conclusions via a process of deduction (Saunders et al., 2007).

The ontological assumption of positivism is concerned with a well-ordered universe, made up of separate and observable events that allow for generalization between concepts, while the epistemological assumption is concerned with knowledge shaped through the use of the human senses and by means of experimental analysis (Blaikie, 2000). Hence, Hickey et al (2010: p.5): "Positivism privileges the mental and physical regularities of human life rather than the meaningful experience that is more definitive of it." In the positivist approach, the researcher must be as 'objective' as possible, wherein the researcher's feelings, values, interpretations, and musings have no place (Sarantakos, 1997).

However, the positivist approach had faced some challenges. For instance, the uses of the 'objectivity' concept have been challenged by many researchers (see, for example, Popper, 1961; Hempel, 1966; Hindess, 1977). Furthermore, Borg (1989) mentioned the following claims. The positivist approach concentrates exclusively on behaviour and rejects all internal experiences being outside the area of scientific inquiry. It does not consider the social values of communities and depends only on academic validity. It aims to achieve 'laws' of human behaviours or 'generalizing' to all environments at all times, even if it is too difficult to accomplish such a goal in social science. As a result, the qualitative interpretive approaches had emerged in response to these claims as viable alternatives to the positivist approaches (Cohen et al., 2000). These include the constructivism approach and post-positivism approach, both of which will be discussed in the following.

4.2.2 Constructivism Approach (Interpretive)

Social action and understanding the social world is the main emphasis of the constructivism approach (Cohen et al., 2000). It is associated with a range of interpretive approaches to social enquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Thus, this approach is widely known as the interpretive approach for it focuses on interpretations and meanings (Walliman 2006). Lincoln and Guba (2000) argued that the positivist approach is concerned with determining the basic patterns in social life, while a post-positivist approach is concerned with forming such patterns in explanatory arguments. On the other hand, the constructivism approach argues that statistical patterns are not understandable on their own, and it is necessary to find out what motivates people into actions that lead to such patterns.

Researchers, who view the social world as human-created for being personal, softer, and subjective, use the subjectivist approach. This approach tends to select qualitative research techniques such as participant observations and personal construct (Cohan et al., 2000). Hence, Saunders et al. (2007, p. 120): "Interpretive approach uses qualitative methods to collect data by the process of induction, but it may arrive at uncertainty, where there is less concern with the need to generalize."

The ontological assumption of the constructivism approach views social reality as the social construction of social actors: mutual knowledge-meanings, social institutions, and cultural symbols. These interpretations facilitate social relationships. While the epistemological assumption is concerned with the everyday concepts and meanings, it is socially constructed from mutual knowledge (Lincoln and Guba, 2000).

However, the interpretive approach has faced some challenges. For example, researchers have questioned the validity of research produced by a subjective instrument (i.e. the researcher?); and how can researchers know the minds of others, the meaning that they give to their actions? (Hickey et al., 2010).

4.2.3 Post-Positivism Approach (Critical Rationalism)

Popper (the founding father of the philosophy of science) first developed the post-positivism approach, known as "critical rationalism" (Phillips, 1990). According to Crotty (1998), the post-positivism approach is located in the wide tradition of positivism and still keeps a number of its features.

However, the post-positivist approach has developed a logic that is the reserve of that advocated by positivism. It consents that all data collection is selective based on the interpretation of the observer, before it can develop a proper logic (Blaikie, 2000). Hence, the critical realism approach is convened somewhere in-between the two previous approaches by developing an analytical framework even though with an understanding of the subjectivities of practice and perception (Hickey, 2010).

The ontological assumptions of the post-positivism approach also share some of those of positivism. However, it rejects positivism's epistemological assumptions, and believes that social life and nature are comprised of essential uniformities (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Popper (1972: p. 47) has placed an argument regarding the post-positivism approach in the following sense:

"The aim of science is to establish generalization that corresponds to these uniformities and theories that explain them. However, it's not possible ultimately to establish whether such generalizations or theories are true, all that can be done is to eliminate false theories, thus getting closer to the truth".

The post-positivist approach had also been criticized. The major criticisms of the post-positivist approach include the procedure of accepting and rejecting theories, which involves psychological and social processes, not just logical ones. Thus, to allow chances for discoveries, science needs to be less logical. Furthermore, paying much attention to logic will suffocate scientific inventiveness (Chalmers, 1982; Lincoln and Guba, 2000).

This research employed both positivism and interpretive approaches in addressing the research questions. It employed the interpretive approach because this approach aims to understand the social world (Lincoln and Guba, 2000) to which organizations in the labour market also belong. Hence, organizations are part of the social world (Beynon-Davies, 2002). Also, it employed the positivism approach because this approach confirms that it understands the physical world (Hickey et al., 2010) to which students' skills also belong. Therefore, data were collected on students' skills from both employers and students using the positivist approach by employing quantitative data. On the other hand, data were also collected from the teaching staff and policy makers using the interpretive approach by employing qualitative data.

Table 4.5 Paradigm Positions on Selected Practical Issues

Item	Positivist	Post- Positivist	Constructivism
Inquiry aim	Explanation: prediction and control		Understanding; reconstruction
Nature of knowledge	Verified hypotheses established as facts or laws	Non-falsified hypotheses that are probable facts or laws	Individual reconstructions coalescing around consensus
Knowledge accumulation	Accretion - “building blocks” adding to “edifice of knowledge”; generalizations and cause and effect linkages.		More informed and sophisticated reconstructions; vicarious experience
Goodness or quality criteria	Conventional benchmarks of “rigor”: internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity		Trustworthiness and authenticity
Values	Excluded - influences denied		Included-formative
Ethics	Extrinsic: tilts towards deception		Intrinsic: process tilts towards revelation; special problems
Voice	“Disinterested scientist” as informer of decision makers, policy makers, and change agents		“Passionate participant” as facilitator of multi-voice reconstruction
Training	Technical and quantitative; substantive theories	Technical; quantitative and qualitative; substantive theories	Re-socialization; qualitative and quantitative; history; values of altruism and empowerment
Accommodation	Commensurable		Incommensurable
Hegemony	In control of publication, funding, promotion, and tenure		Seeking recognition and input

Source: Lincoln and Guba (2000, p.165)

4.3 Research Methods

'Research methods' is defined by Wong (2010, p. 2) as "the procedures and rules developed by social scientists to guide inquiry of a problem in a systematic manner, and to link conceptual or theoretical ideas to empirical data (quantitative and qualitative information)." Crotty (2003) defines research methods as "the strategy, plan of action, process or design laying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcome". The aim of research method in this study is to support the selection of data collection in order to help the researcher deal with the research questions.

There are two major strands of research methods, quantitative research method and qualitative research method, both of which will be discussed below.

4.3.1 Quantitative/ Extensive Research Method

Quantitative research method is a distinctive research strategy. According to Bryman (2004), in broad terms, quantitative research is entitled to the collection of numerical data, exposes the association between theory and research as deductive, and has an objectivist conception of social reality. Therefore, as a research strategy, quantitative research is objective, deductive, logical, and integrates a natural science model for the research process (Bryman, 2004). It aims to draw population inferences from the findings of the observation (the sample), while the typical information yielded from the quantitative method are data appropriate for statistical analysis (Wong, 2010: 3). Thus, researchers using the quantitative method are reasonably distant and uninvolved with their respondents because they sense that their objectivity might be jeopardized (Bryman, 2004).

The quantitative research method is characterized as reliable, hard and unmistakable, subject to the accuracy of its measurement (Bryman, 2004). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), confidence in the neutrality and objectivity of quantitative analysis is high because it offers a series of evidence from transcripts to the results of analysis. Moreover, it ensures that all cases are used in the evaluation of data propositions, avoiding interviewer-based elimination that may introduce unintentional bias. Furthermore, it delivers an analytical framework within which hypotheses can be tested.

In the quantitative approach, design and instrumentation persuade by showing how bias and errors are eliminated (Fireston, 2009). Quantitative purists maintain that social science inquiry must be objective. In this quantitative paradigm, time, context, and free generalizations are desirable and possible, and real causes of social scientific conclusions can be determined reliably and validly (Johnson and Ownuegbuzie, 2004). Hence, in the quantitative research method, researchers test their theories comprised of hypotheses (made up of variables) to support or reject the relationship statements in the theories (Creswell, Plano and Clark, 2007). Then, quantitative research helps add generalizability (Bryman, 1988). According to Bryman (2004; 63), the process of quantitative research involves eleven main steps. It starts with establishing the theory and then generating hypotheses. The third step is to establish the research design followed by devising measures for the concepts. Steps five and six include selecting research site and selecting research respondents. Step seven is about collecting data while step eight is devoted to analyzing the data. Then step nine is dedicated to the conclusion and the final step ten is the writing up of the finding(s).

4.3.2 Qualitative/ Intensive Research Method

The qualitative research method is defined as a "procedure for 'coming to terms with the meaning not the frequency' of a phenomenon by studying it on its social context" (Van Maanen, 1983; p. 9). Hence, Maxwell (2005; p. 16), who states that "qualitative approach is an ongoing process that involves 'tacking' back and forth between the different components of the study, assessing the implications of goals, theories, research questions, methods and validity for one another". As a research strategy, the qualitative research method is intuitivist, constructionist and interpretive (Bryman, 2004). It is a methodology that does not accept being objective as "truth", instead, it seeks to understand meanings and interpretations (Vulliamy, 1990). It aims to study a few cases intensively in order to dig deeper and explore details (Wong, 2010). Thus, it is characterized by the acquisition of rich and profound data (Bryman, 2004).

Qualitative research focuses on determining the meanings for participants. It avoids experimental work such as numerical measurements. Instead, it emphasizes the social meanings of constructs as viewed by participants (Sanders, 2009) and facilitates the interpretation of relationships between variables (Bryman, 1988). Hence, researchers using the qualitative research method try to familiarize with the morals and cultures of respondents in order to emphasize the meanings. They prefer less standardized interviews rather than standardized questionnaires, respondents' observations rather than experiments under artificial conditions (Vulliamy, 1990: 11).

Qualitative data is collected by different measures including gathering documents, observing participants, collecting audiovisual materials, or sites of research (Creswell and Plano, 2007). The famous method for gathering qualitative data is through interviews and is often conflated with interview-based case studies (Easton, 1995). Interviews are open-ended with selected participants allowing them to answer in their own words (Creswell and Plano, 2007). Therefore, qualitative research techniques can capture the decisions that people make and the reasons for making them (World Development, 2007).

4.4 Mixed-Method

Many studies argue that it would be most rewarding to use a mixture of data collection methods when exploring human behavior and attitudes in social science (Patton, 1990; Cohen, 1988; Sandelowski, 2000). The mixed-method approach is defined by Cohen (1988: 294) as "the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspects of human behavior. Utilizing more than one method in research contributes greatly to balance in interpreting scientific and social phenomena embedded in the community being studied. One method can be used to check the validity of another". Creswell et al (2011, p. 256) also defined mixed methods as "the designs that include at least one quantitative method (designed to collect numbers), and one qualitative method (designed to collect words), where neither type of method is inherently linked to any particular inquiry paradigm".

Employing the mixed-method approach enables researchers to expand the scope and develop the analytic power of their studies (Sandelowski, 2000). According to Patton (1990), when exploring human behavior and attitudes, it is most rewarding to use a mixture of data collection methods. Also, Sandelowski (2000: 19) thinks that "researchers have increasingly turned to mixed-method techniques to expand the scope and improve the analytic power of their studies". Moreover, Mason (1994) emphasizes that quantitative and qualitative data are corresponding sources that should be joined to take advantage of the richness of the qualitative findings, and the potential rigor and increased reliability of the quantitative findings.

Wong (2010) had identified several reasons for using the mixed-method approach. Quantitative approach and qualitative approach help each other in many stages of the study. Quantitative study helps qualitative study during the design stage by defining the representative sample. Moreover, quantitative study helps the qualitative during the data collection through supplying the background data. Finally, quantitative study helps the qualitative in the analysis by demonstrating the generality of specific observations.

On the other hand, qualitative study helps quantitative study during the design stage by aiding the conceptual development. Moreover, qualitative study helps the quantitative during the data collection by providing opportunities for some specific (intensive) enquiry. Finally, qualitative study helps the quantitative during data analysis by helping throughout with validation.

Bryman (1988, as cited in Niglas, 2000) argues that there are many reasons for mixing quantitative and qualitative approaches. Mixing qualitative and quantitative research helps to bridge the gap between 'macro' and 'micro' levels. Furthermore, quantitative research assists qualitative research and qualitative research assists quantitative research.

According to Greene et al. (1989), the main purpose for mixing quantitative and qualitative approaches is about 'Complementarity', which enables clarification, illustration, and interpretation of the results from one method with the results from the other. Moreover, according to Hickey (2010: 4), there are many reasons to justify the use of a mixed-method approach. First, it helps to overcome the respective weaknesses of each approach. Secondly, it increases validity and credibility. Thirdly, it provides a broader, more holistic view of the world. Finally, it helps move from understanding/learning to causality/explaining.

Thus, the use of the mixed-method by integrating both approaches, quantitative along with qualitative, is thus essential and valuable (Johnson and Ownuegbuzie, 2004). Hence, employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches will generate greater confidence in the research findings (Bryman, 2004). According to Vulliamy (1990), the qualitative research method emphasizes the validity of the research because it is better at answering the 'why' questions than the quantitative method. On the other hand, the quantitative research method is stronger than the qualitative research method in terms of the reliability and generalizability of the research findings. Hence, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods will enhance the validity, reliability, and the generalizability of the findings. Thus, this research used a mixed-method approach through combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the issue of the mismatch between the supply of university graduates and the demand from the labour market, at least within the context of the State of Kuwait.

4.5 Sampling Techniques

A sample is defined as a set of subjects chosen from a larger population. Miller and Salkind (2002) suggest that the goal of sampling is to come up with one where the sampling error is minimized. In addition, sampling techniques help decrease the amount of data required by only considering data from a sub-group rather than all possible cases (Saunders et al., 2000)

According to Akcoof (1953), there are five kinds. The first kind is cluster sampling where some form of random sampling selects the units. The second kind is stratified cluster where clusters are selected at random from every sampling unit. The third kind is sequential sampling where two or more samples of any of the above types are engaged using results from earlier samples to design later ones. The fourth kind is judgment sampling where a subgroup of the population is selected on the basis of available information and can be judged to be representative of the total population. The fifth kind is quota sampling where the population is classified by pertinent properties to arrive at the desired proportion of sample from each class.

4.6 Sample Selection Process

Sampling is intended to yield some information about a population of concern, in particular for the purpose of statistical inference (Cochran, 1977). For the purpose of this study, the key informants on the relationship between the output of higher education and the needs of the labour market are: employers of both private and public sector, graduates of higher education, policy makers, and higher education personnel. Hence, the study focuses on graduates of Kuwait University. This is because other new private post-secondary colleges and universities approved by the Kuwait Ministry of Higher Education within the last few years are yet to produce their early batches of graduates. The research is based on a stratified cluster sampling of the key informants. The reason for choosing a stratified sampling in this study is that it allows the sample to be more representative and enhances the accuracy of estimation upon selection of a relevant stratification variable (Saunders et al., 2000). Table 4.6 below shows the population and the sample of respondents.

Table 4.6 Populations and Sample of the Study

Sector	Population	Sample	Method
Employers	17 Ministries and 21 Governmental Agencies.	75 Managers	Questionnaires
	94 Listed Companies in the Stock Market	75 Managers	
Higher Education Personnel	Top university management	1 Dean and 1 member of the university council	Interviews
	Academic professors of Kuwait university	9 Academics	
Graduates of Higher Education	Graduates of Kuwait University currently in work	900 Graduates	Questionnaires
Policy Makers	Member of Parliament	3 Members of Parliament	Interviews

4.6.1 Employers

Questionnaires were handed to managers in both the public and private sectors who employed graduates of Kuwait University. The public sector includes 17 ministries and 21 governmental agencies. The private sector includes 94 companies listed in the Kuwaiti Stock Market.

In the Governmental Agencies, the questionnaires were handed to the managers within governmental agencies. The main reason for choosing managers is that they are in a position to provide any information needed in answering the questionnaires. They head the committees of 'personnel affairs' in the ministries that study and approve employees' annual performance. Most importantly, they are in charge of preparing plans related to workforce employment.

In the Private Companies, the questionnaires were handed to CEO's of private companies. The main reason for choosing CEO's is that they are expected to be involved directly or indirectly with the employment process and are thus aware of graduates' skills required for the job as well as the quality of graduates currently in work performance.

4.6.2 Graduates of Higher Education

Graduates and their relevant education and skills are at the core of this study and in particular graduates of Kuwait University. Hence, in 2007, 85 % of the Kuwaiti labour forces were active in service sector, which comprise social, community, and personal services such as education and public administration (Ministry of Planning 2008). Thus, graduates were chosen from three different colleges of Kuwait University, which are: College of Business Administrations, College of Social Science, and College of Basic Studies. Graduates were handed questionnaires in order to find out their perceptions of the quality of their educational qualifications as well as their satisfaction with their current jobs.

4.6.3 Higher Education Personnel

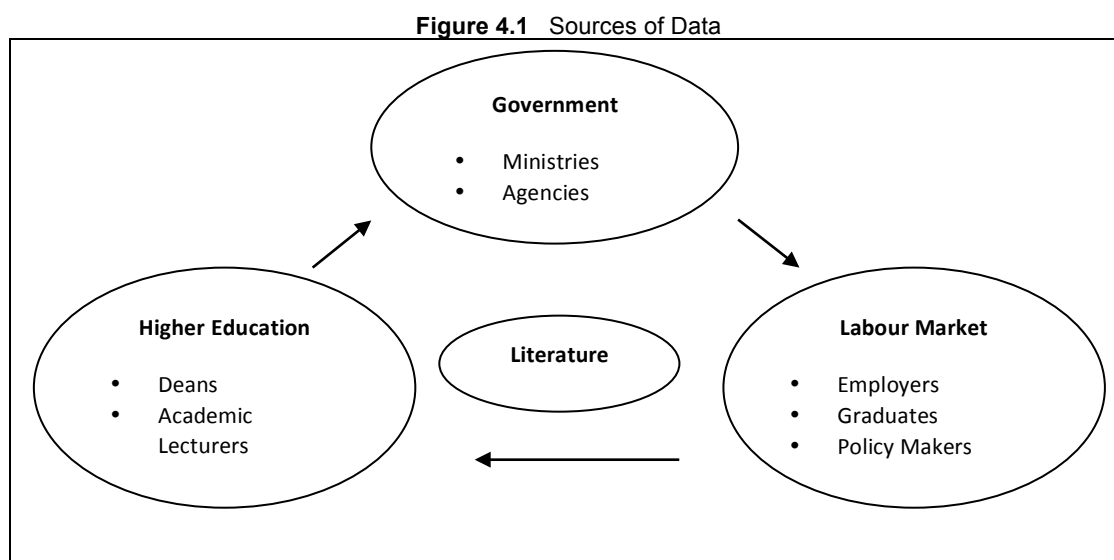
Kuwait University comprises 14 colleges. This research conducted interviews with one of the university deans of the three colleges mentioned earlier: College of Business Administrations, College of Social science, and College of Basic Studies. The reason for choosing the dean` is that their position has an important influence on the output of higher education; they are policy makers and thus in charge of achieving the objectives of their respective colleges. Moreover, professors from Kuwait University were interviewed as they are responsible for delivering knowledge and skills to graduates, as well as being in direct contact with students.

4.6.4 Policy Makers

Policy and decision makers such as members of parliament are the people responsible for generating policies and legislations for the good of the state. Hence, local policy makers with concerns for the labour market and education were interviewed. This should be done both to clarify and highlight the general policies regarding education, the labour market, and the type of legislation to implement in the future in order to link educational institutions to the labour market.

4.7 Data Collection Process

This research is based on information collected from a number of primary and secondary sources. As shown in Figure 4.1 below, a triangulation approach was used to explain the information collected from three key sources.



This research thus intends to use mixed-method research techniques. Interviews and questionnaires were the main research methods used for the collection of primary data in this study, because they contribute towards balancing the social and scientific interpretation in order to have solid, reliable and valid outcomes. The validity of the study is reflected by the integrity and honesty of the conclusions generated from the research (Bryman and Carmer, 1997). The reliability of the results will of course be enhanced if those results are repeatable (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Alternatively, secondary data were obtained from studies that have been carried out on the labour market. Research papers, related books and journal articles will also be used for this purpose.

4.7.1 Interviews

Interviews are the most well-known qualitative research method. According to Miller and Crabtree (1999: 135), they include “the presence of the unscripted input, the steerage, and the personality, background, and the motivations of the interviewer”. There are two main types of interviews: the structured, and the semi-structured. In the structured interview, the interviewer works on a general plan by asking the proper questions that lead respondents into providing the information relevant for the study (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Hence, in the structured interview, each respondent is asked the same exact questions (Keeves, 1997). On the other hand, in the semi-structured interview, there is a freedom given to the interviewer to deviate from these questions when matters of interest arise (Keeves, 1997).

Semi-structured interviews were used in this study. It allows for more flexibility in the collection of data. According to Borg (1989: 597), "semi-structured interviews allow for combination of consistency and flexibility enabling the collection of data that could not be successfully obtained by any other approach". Hence, as has been proven, these interviews allow for the combination of consistency and flexibility (Borg, 1989: 597). Thus, in this study, semi-structured interviews were used to enable interviewees of higher education personnel and policy makers to reveal more information so as to be able to gauge their attitudes, values, and perceptions. The interviews were conducted with higher education personnel, deans and academic professors of Kuwait University.

This research used certain steps to ensure the validity and reliability of the interview questions. First, the interview questions were defined by exploring the current situation in the labour market and educational institutions in Kuwait. Also, the study reviewed the literature regards the skills gap worldwide to aid the design of the interview questions. Furthermore, the questions were written in English, and later they were translated into Arabic by a certified translator so as to be clearly understood by interviewees. Hence, social networks ("wasta") were used to assist the access to the interviewees. At the completion of the interviews, the responses were recorded and translated into English.

4.7.2 Questionnaires

In this study, the survey sample method was carried out using questionnaires to complement the interview findings and to confirm the various features of the event under study. By definition, questionnaires "include all techniques of data collection in which a person is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a predetermined order" (de Vaus, 1996, as cited in Saunders et al., 2000, p. 278). Hence, questionnaires will guarantee a number of advantages as they offer a valid measure of the research questions, obtain the collaboration of the respondents, and draw precise information (Robson, 2002). Moreover, Bouffard et al. (2004, p. 38) stated that questionnaires are "less time consuming and expensive to administer than other methods and can be administered to large groups of individuals". Further, questionnaires can be provided to respondents by a variety of ways including e-mail attachments, post, or via publication on a website (Burgess, 2001).

In this study, questionnaires were produced in the light of the study objectives. The questions were defined by exploring the current situation in the labour market and educational institutions in Kuwait. Also, the study reviewed the literature regards the skills gap worldwide to aid the design of the questionnaires. Then, the questionnaires were handed to two groups directly. The first group were managers and CEO's from both government and private institutions, hence the content of the questionnaire were about general company information, graduate recruitment plans, and graduates' education, skills, training, and background. The second group was graduates of Kuwait University currently in work, and the questionnaire contains questions about the general details of the graduates and their education, skills, training, and background. Hence, to ensure validity and reliability, the questions were translated into Arabic, so as to prevent any misunderstanding by any of the respondents. The translation was carried out by an official qualified translator in Kuwait.

Public relations departments in both government and private organizations were approached in order to seek their agreement to carry out the research. The permission to carry out the research was given after few days because most of the potential respondents were busy. However, most of these departments didn't keep their promise and three weeks later there were only very limited responses. In order to improve the return rate of the questionnaires distributed, social networks ("wasta") was used.

4.8 Pre-testing of Questionnaires

The aim of pre-testing the questionnaires is to help the researcher improve the validity, reliability, and sensitivity of a survey instrument prior to undertaking a household survey. Bowden et al. (2002) warn that failing to investigate the interpretation of questionnaires items may result in misinterpretations (by respondents and researcher), falsified answers, missing responses, and possibly an offended respondent who chases away the interviewer and encourages others to refuse the interview. In this study, pre-testing of questionnaires were carried out with university graduates currently in work in the government sector. This was achieved by conducting test interviews in focus groups, thereby investigating the validity and reliability of the questionnaires before engaging in the actual survey.

4.9 Data Analysis

The data collected from the fieldwork were used in combination with interviews and questionnaires to conduct this study. Then, those raw data were analyzed. Robson (2002) states that analysis is very vital because raw data cannot speak for themselves. For the purpose of this study, the data analysis process was including both qualitative and quantitative analyses, which are discussed below.

4.9.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

The interviews with education personnel and policy makers were analyzed by making a summary of each interview. The next step was to organize and assemble the information relevant to the study such as the graduates' skills, the existence of communication between higher education and the labour market, and responsibilities of higher education to deliver the labour market's needs.

4.9.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using the analytical software THE Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Techniques of quantitative data analysis were used to help the researcher decrease the quantity of data collected, to test relationships between variables, and to develop methods for presenting the results of the analysis to others (Bryman, 2004). Thus, the related data of the study were summarized in cross-tab tables to identify relationships between variables, and then the findings were analyzed and summarized in transcripts and tables.

4.10 Conclusion

In view of its research questions and purpose, this study employed a mixed-method approach. As the literature has suggested, using more than one method will help to combine all the various features of the incident under study. The mix-method approach will emphasize the balance between social and scientific interpretation of data in order to ensure strong, reliable, and valid outcomes for the study. Therefore, this research used a mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches to explore the relationship between the supply of university graduates and the demand for graduate labour in the context of Kuwait. Samples of different professional groups related to the study were handed questionnaires, interviewed and studied. These include government agencies, ministries, private companies, graduates' of higher education, members of parliament, ministers, and higher education personnel.

The qualitative research was carried out using semi-structure interviews with educational personnel and policy makers. Semi-structured interviews were used to encourage interviewees of higher education personnel and policy makers to reveal more information. The objective of the qualitative research is to help explore the vision and perception of education officials and academic staff regarding their role in the provision of knowledge and skills.

Alternatively, the quantitative method was also applied by means of questionnaires. Questionnaires were handed to two groups directly. The first group was employers, both in the government and private sectors. The content of the questionnaire is about general institutional information such as graduates' education, training, and background, as well as their opinion of higher education's responsibilities. The objective of this survey is to help determine the standpoints of the labour market on the role of universities in the provision of knowledge and skills, as well as discovering whether the labour market is satisfied with the skills currently provided by graduates.

The second group in the survey was university graduates. The questionnaire contains questions about general details of the graduates' beliefs in the quality of their skills, education, training, and background, and their previous expectations of employment. The purpose of this survey is to facilitate the understanding of whether graduates believe that their qualification is appropriate for their current job and further progress in their career.

The study also followed the appropriate steps to ensure the validity and reliability of the research on issues such as exploring the current situation in the labour market and reviewing the research questions with the supervisor of this research. Then, interviews were analyzed through the process of summarizing, organizing and assembling the information relevant to the study. The questionnaires were processed through the SPSS software and then analyzed in the form of transcripts and tables. The next chapter will present a description of the data collected from both the interviews and questionnaires.

In general, the research used the phenomenological or qualitative approach along with positivism or quantitative approach because both are important and useful. Thus, the mixed-method will combine both approaches to examine the mismatch between the supply of university graduates and the demand for them from the graduate labour market, at least as far as Kuwait is concerned.

CHAPTER FIVE: DESCRIPTIVE DATA

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to a quantitative analysis and description of the data gathered via questionnaires. The study used two questionnaires with two different samples. The first questionnaire is aimed at graduates who are currently working. The second questionnaire targeted employers in both the public and private sector. Hence, on the basis of the two questionnaires, this chapter is divided into two parts. Part one presents a description of the sample's 616 graduates currently working. The primary objective of this first part is to identify the perceptions and expectations among graduates currently working, as well as the effect of social and personal relationships on their jobs.

On the other hand, part two provides a description of the sample's 140 employers. The main objective of the employers' questionnaire is to recognize the employers' needs and requirements, level of satisfaction with current graduates' skills, and provide evidence about the nature of the relationship between higher education and the labour market. The questionnaire was chosen as a means of gathering in-depth quantitative data. Hence, frequency tables based on both questionnaires will provide descriptions and summaries of the respondents across the various demographic variables. Furthermore, analyses including mean and frequency for both questionnaires are presented in this chapter.

5.2 Part One: Graduates Currently Working Questionnaires

This section presents the data collected from a quantitative survey of graduates currently working. Demographic and descriptive statistics, reliability and validity assessment, frequencies and averages of different variables are presented. Firstly, to analyze the collected data, Cronbach's Alpha was used to show the reliability of the questionnaire. Afterwards, descriptive statistics was used to assess the sociological variables such as gender, age, type of employment and level of education. Then, frequencies and averages for the different variables were presented. SPSS software version 15 with Excel 2003 software was used in this section.

5.2.1 Organization of data

The survey in this research consists of a 3-page questionnaire with 51 questions for graduates currently working. It has 8 sections (A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H). Section (A) includes general information about the employees: gender and area of study. Section (B) includes employment information covering type of job and type of employer. Starting from Section (C) to Section (F), the measure scale used is a Likert style 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Section (C) includes 4 questions regarding graduates' education at university level. Section (D) includes 3 questions about graduates' source of skills. Section (E) includes 9 statements regarding graduates' expectations from any employer while undergoing their studies. Section (F) includes 9 statements assessing the level of the graduates' satisfaction with their current job. In Section (G), the measure scale used is a Likert style 5-point scale ranging from not important (1) to most important (5). It includes 11 basic skills asking graduates about their opinion over the importance of those skills to their organizations when the latter were recruiting graduates. Finally, in Section (H) the measure scale used is a Likert style 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). It includes 5 questions regarding family influence on graduates' choice of job (See Appendix 8 for graduates' questionnaires and the translation into Arabic).

5.2.2 Reliability Test

Reliability analysis studies the properties of measurement scales and the items that build them up. It calculates the number of commonly used measures of scale reliability and also delivers information about the relations between individual items in the scale. A scale with low reliability shows that items making up the scale do not correlate strongly enough, therefore they might not be tapping into the same construct domain. The Cronbach Alpha (α) reliability test will be used.

- **Cronbach Alpha (α)**

Cronbach Alpha (α) is calculated to check the reliability consistency of the research items and to exclude the extreme responses (Hair et al. 2006). It is based on the rationale that items measuring the same concept will highly correlate (Sharma, 2001; Hair et al. 2006). Ideally, the alpha coefficient should be greater than 0.7. In this study, the reliability (Cronbach Alpha) of all 51 items of the instrument was 0.83, meaning that the questions were correlated and addressing the research problem.

5.2.3 Total Sample

A total of 900 questionnaires were distributed and the response was 616. The response rate was 68%, which is considered to be good. The questionnaire respondents were made up of 616 males and females, graduates currently working who have at least two years and at maximum five years of experience.

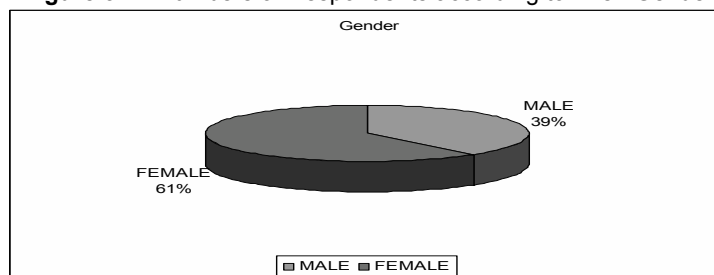
5.2.4 Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Table (5.1) shows that the proportion of responses from graduates currently working was not even; there were more females than males. The females represent 61.4% of the total, with males making up for the rest (38.6%). This is because of the fact that there are more females than males in Kuwait (Chapter Three, section 3.3.3 Population Composition and Growth). In order to demonstrate the distribution of respondent's frequency, a table and graph were used.

Table 5.1 Numbers of Respondents according to Their Gender

Gender	Frequency	%
MALE	238	38.6
FEMALE	378	61.4
Total	616	100

Figure 5.1 Numbers of Respondents according to Their Gender



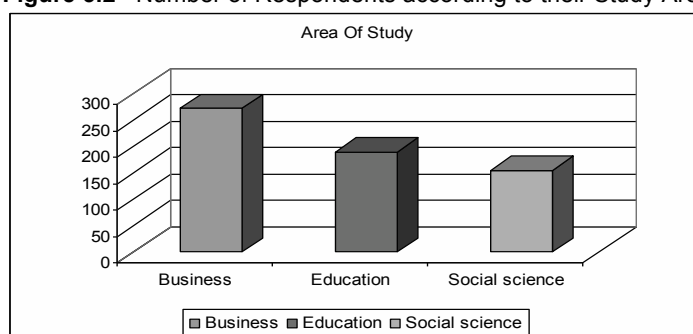
5.2.5 Distribution of Respondents by Area of Study

The focus of the study is on three study areas as mentioned in chapter four: business, education, and social science studies (chapter four, section 4.6.2 Graduates of Higher Education). Table (5.2) shows that 272 of employees graduated from business studies, 189 graduated from education, and 155 graduated from social science studies.

Table 5.2 Number of Respondents according to their Study Area

Study Area	Frequency	%
Business	272	44.2
Education	189	30.7
Social science	155	25.2
Total	616	100

Figure 5.2 Number of Respondents according to their Study Area



Cross-tabulation was performed to indicate areas of study by gender (Table 5.3). A chi-square test was used to determine if there were statistically significant associations when it comes to gender in terms of study areas. The results (chi-square=5.571, df = 2, p=0.062) showed that there is statistically significant association between gender and areas of study with 90% confidence level, indicating a close relationship between the two variables. It implies that the area of study and gender had a clear association.

Table 5.3 Area of Study by Gender (Cross Tabulation)

Area of Study		MALE	FEMALE	Total
Business	Count	115	157	272
	% within Gender	42.3%	57.7%	100%
Education	Count	60	129	189
	% within Gender	31.7%	68.3%	100%
Social science	Count	63	92	155
	% within Gender	40.6%	59.4%	100
Total	Count	238	378	616
	% within Gender	38.6%	61.4%	100

In business, 42.3% were males and 57.7% were females, which is normal for it closely corresponds to the actual population composition (more females than males in Kuwait). The same case also applies in social science, where 40.6% were males and 59.4% females. However, in education 31.7% were males and 68.3% females. This is a high variance, which indicates that women prefer to work in the education sector. This could be due to the education sector privileges of spring and long summer vacations, which enable women to spend more time with their families and children, considering that Kuwait is a high context culture, which appreciate such relations (Chapter Three, Section 3.3.1 Kuwait Culture).

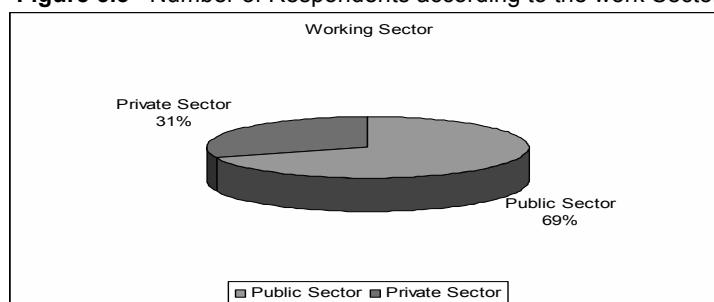
5.2.6 Distribution of Respondents by Working Sector

The majority of the respondents (69.3%) work in the public sector (Table 5.4). Only 30.7% work in the private sector, which is not surprising as the public sector in Kuwait is conventionally preferred over the private sector (Chapter three, section 3.6.2, Privatization and the Kuwaiti Labour Market).

Table 5.4 Number of Respondents According to Work Sector

Sector	Frequency	%
Public Sector	427	69.3
Private Sector	189	30.7
Total	616	100

Figure 5.3 Number of Respondents according to the work Sector



Cross-tabulation was performed to indicate working sector by gender (Table 5.5). A chi-square test was used to determine if there were statistically significant relations between gender and the working sector. The results (chi-square =44.020, df = 1, p=0.000) showed that there is a statistically significant relation between gender and working sector with a 95% confidence level, indicating a relationship between the two variables. It implies that there is an association between the working sector and gender.

It is clear that there is association between gender and working sector. Most of the respondents who work in the public sector were females (70%). This is not surprising in Kuwait because as reviewed in the literature earlier, the public sector provides flexible working hours, higher salary, longer vacations, and many other privileges (Chapter three, section, 3.6.2, Privatization and the Kuwaiti Labour Market). This enables women to spend more time with family members and foster social relations (Chapter Three, Section 3.3.1 Kuwait Culture). On the other hand, males are the majority in the private sector (58.2%). This is because men are prepared to work harder and for longer hours to pursue their careers as provided by the private sector.

Table 5.5 Working Sector by Gender (Cross Tabulation)

Working Sector		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Public Sector	Count	128	299	427
	% within Gender	30%	70%	100%
Private Sector	Count	110	79	189
	% within Gender	58.2%	41.8%	100%
Total	Count	238	378	616
	% within Gender	38.6%	61.4%	100%

5.2.7 Skills of Graduates Currently Working

The set of skills included in the questionnaires were based on the literature as well as the basic skills needed by the labour market internationally and their importance as the minimum skills that employees should possess (Chapter Two, section 2.9.1 Employers' Expectations). Using a set of 10 basic skills, the graduates currently working were asked to indicate the importance of their basic skills to their organization when they were recruited. They were given choices of 5-point Likert style scale, ranging from not important (1) to most important (5) for each of the basic skills included. Table (5.6) provides the results of the analysis along with the mean and standard deviation.

Table (5.6) below shows the responses against each of the skills listed in terms of its importance to employers from the point of view of graduates currently working. The data suggests that the three most important skills that graduates think their employers need are written communication skills, reading skills, and learning abilities at 75%, 73%, 73% respectively. This is not surprising because reading, writing, and learning skills are the most basic skills that any employees in any sector should have. Team work, time management, and problem solving abilities all score 72% and come in fourth place in term of importance. The two least important skills graduates think employers' need are thinking creatively, and leadership at 58% and 57%, respectively.

Table 5.6 Mean, Standard Deviation and Frequency of Graduates' Skills

Skills	SD & Dis % 1 & 2	Neutral % 3	SA & Agree % 4 & 5	Mean	Std. dev.
1- Thinking Creatively	29%	13%	58%	2.40	1.87
2- Learning abilities	16%	11%	73%	3.56	1.51
3- Reading Skills	16%	11%	73%	3.43	1.54
4- Written Communication Skills	15%	10%	75%	3.55	1.47
5- Speaking and listening skills	17%	13%	70%	3.51	1.54
6- Leadership	24%	19%	57%	3.04	1.62
7- Team Work	17%	11%	72%	3.52	1.56
8- Negotiation skills	20%	16%	64%	3.30	1.59
9- Time Management	17%	10%	72%	3.53	1.58
10- Problem-solving ability	16%	12%	72%	3.50	1.57

5.2.8 Expectations of Graduates Currently Working

The respondents were asked about their expectations from any employer while doing their studies. There was a set of expectations included in the questionnaires and based on the literature review regarding the basic expectations of graduates in Kuwait (Chapter Three, section 3.10.2 Kuwaiti Graduates Expectations).

A statistical summary was used to calculate the mean, standard deviation, and graduates' responses to each statement of expectation. Table (5.7) shows that the majority of respondents (90%) expect to work with employer who provides them with opportunity to acquire more experience. 89% of respondents mentioned that they expect to work with employer who provides them with opportunity to acquire more skills. 87% of respondents expect to work with employer who provides them with career opportunities. 82% of respondents expect to work with employer who provides them with opportunity to use their talent.

Table 5.7 Statistical Summary of Expectations

Statements about Expectations	SD & Dis % 1 & 2	Neutral % 3	SA & Agree % 4 & 5	Mean	Std. Dev.
1- I expect to work with employer who provides me with a higher salary.	8%	11%	81%	4.06	.96
2- I expect to work with employer who provides me with flexible working hours. (balanced life style).	16%	18%	66%	3.73	1.10
3- I expect to work with employer who provides me with career opportunities.	4%	9%	87%	4.29	.83
4- I expect to work with employer who fits in with my family expectations.	30%	23%	46%	3.20	1.26
5- I expect to work with employer who provides me with opportunity to travel.	27%	22%	51%	3.37	1.23
6- I expect to work with employer who provides me with opportunity to use my talent.	6%	12%	82%	4.13	.91
7- I expect to work with employer who provides me with opportunity to acquire more skills.	4%	7%	89%	4.27	.82
8- I expect to work with employer who provides me with opportunity to acquire more experience.	3%	6%	90%	4.35	.77
9- I expect to work with employer who provides me with opportunity to work with people I like.	6%	16%	77%	4.04	.96

It is clear that these expectations of acquiring experience, more skills, career opportunities, and the opportunity to use their talent indicate that expectations of graduates currently working are revolving around their career development and realizing their career aspirations. On the other hand, 81% expect to work with employer who provides them with a higher salary, and 66% expect to work with employer who provides them with flexible working hours (balanced life style). This indicates that graduates currently working favor working with employers who provide them with career development more than employers who provide them with job-related material privileges.

5.2.9 Satisfaction Level of Graduates Currently Working

A statistical summary was used to calculate the median, standard deviation of graduates' responses to measure their level of satisfaction. The respondents were asked if they were satisfied with their current employers using the same measure statements of expectations. First, they were asked if they were generally satisfied with their current job. Table (5.8) shows that 54% of respondents indicated they were satisfied, while 27% were not.

Then, the respondents were asked about the reasons for their dissatisfaction. The majority of respondents (41%) were not satisfied with their current job because it does not allow them to acquire more skills. 40% of respondents were not satisfied with their current job because it does not allow them to use their talent. 38% were not satisfied with their current job because it does not achieve their career aspiration. 34% were not satisfied with their current job because it does not allow them to acquire more experience.

On the other hand, only 29% were not satisfied with their current job because it does not pay them a suitable salary and 25% were not satisfied with their current job because it does not provide them with a balanced life style. This indicates that the satisfaction level of graduates currently working is revolving around career development and reaching career aspirations rather than material privileges from their jobs.

Table 5.8 Statistical Summary of Satisfaction Level

Statements about Satisfaction	SD & Dis % 1 & 2	Neutral % 3	SA & Agree % 4 & 5	Mean	Std. dev.
1- Overall, I'm not satisfied with my current job.	54%	18%	27%	2.60	1.23
2- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't provide me with a suitable salary.	52%	20%	29%	2.71	1.22
3- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't provide me with a balanced life style.	57%	18%	25%	2.61	1.22
4- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't help with my career aspiration.	40%	21%	38%	2.98	1.25
5 - I'm not satisfied with my current job because my family influences my job selection decision.	67%	19%	14%	2.23	1.11
6- - I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to travel.	50%	23%	27%	2.68	1.20
7- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to use my talent.	41%	19%	40%	3.01	1.25
8- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to acquire more skills.	38%	21%	41%	3.06	1.24
9- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to acquire more experience.	47%	19%	34%	2.82	1.26
10- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to work with people I like.	59%	21%	20%	2.49	1.20

5.2.10 Source of Skills for Graduates Currently Working

The respondents were asked to indicate where they acquired the skills needed for the job. They were given three choices: from doing the job (work experience), from studying at university, or from company training courses.

Table 5.9 Statistics Summary for Source of Skills

Source of Graduates' Skills statements	SD & Dis % 1 & 2	Neutral % 3	SA & Agree % 4 & 5	Mean	Std. dev.
1- I have gained skills needed for my job from doing it (work experience)	6%	5%	89%	4.20	.85
2- I have gained skills needed for my job from studying at university (education)	31%	25%	44%	3.11	1.07
3- I have gained skills needed for my job from field training.	28%	19%	53%	3.25	1.18

Table (5.9) above indicated that the majority of respondents (89%) have gained the skills needed for their job from doing it. This confirmed that the main source of graduates' skills is work experience. 53% have gained the skills needed for their job from field training. While 44% have gained the skills needed for their job from studying at university (education).

5.2.11 Graduates' Beliefs about Their Qualifications (perceptions)

The respondents were asked about their beliefs and perception regarding their qualifications. Table (5.10) indicates that 37% of respondents believed that there is no relation between what they have studied and the skills they need to do their current job properly. 33% indicated that they feel the university curriculum did not prepare them optimally for the job. 28% indicated that they feel their education does not allow them to be competent at their job. While 19% believed that they feel they are not suitable for the position they hold.

Table 5.10 Statistical Summary of Graduates' Beliefs about Their Qualifications

Graduates Perceptions statements	SD & Dis % 1 & 2	Neutral % 3	SA & Agree % 4 & 5	Mean	Std. dev.
1- I feel that my education doesn't allow me to be competent at my job.	57%	16%	28%	2.53	1.23
2- I feel that the university curriculum didn't prepared me optimally for the job.	50%	17%	33%	2.75	1.18
3- There is no relation between what I have studied and skills I need to do my current job properly.	46%	17%	37%	2.87	1.27
4- I feel that I'm not suitable for the position I hold.	69%	13%	19%	2.18	1.25

5.2.12 Family Influences

The respondents were asked about their family's influence on their jobs, since they live in Kuwait, a country with a high context culture where family influence is highly valued. First, they were asked if their families had an impact on their choice of job. Table (5.11) shows that 36% of respondents indicated that their family had an impact on their choice of job, while 50% indicated that their family had not. Then, the respondents were asked about the kind of family impact they had. 32% of respondents had used their family relationships to get the job they want, 19% of respondents allowed their family to influence their choice of job because they think their family know better, and 12% of respondents had their family influence their choice of job for conservative reasons. While only 4 % of respondents had their family influence their choice of job because they own the company in which they work.

Table 5.11 Statistical Summary of Family Influences

Family Influences statements	SD & Dis % 1 & 2	Neutral % 3	SA & Agree % 4 & 5	Mean	Std. dev.
1- My family had an impact on my choice of job.	50%	14%	36%	2.71	1.30
2- My family influences my choice of job for conservative reasons.	78%	10%	12%	1.96	1.10
3- My family influences my choice of job because they own the organization I'm working in.	89%	7%	4%	1.62	.81
4- My family affect influences my choice of job because they think they know better.	66%	15%	19%	2.18	1.21
5- I used my family relationships to get the job that I want.	57%	12%	32%	2.54	1.44

5.3 Part Two: Employer' Questionnaire

This section presents the data that was collected through a quantitative survey of employers. Demographic and descriptive statistics, reliability and validity assessment, and frequencies and averages of different variables are presented. Firstly, to analyze the collected data, Cronbach's Alpha was used to show the reliability of the questionnaire. Afterwards, descriptive statistics was used to assess the sociological variables including sector, position, and number of employees. Then, frequencies and averages for the different variables were presented. SPSS software version 15 with Excel 2003 was used in this section.

5.3.1 Organization of data

The survey in this section consists of a 3-page questionnaire for employers with 52 questions. It has 8 sections (A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H). Section (A) includes general information about the employers: sector, position, and number of employees. Section (B) includes tertiary education and training covering the main areas of study, sources of employers' skills, role of company training courses, and reasons for recruiting graduates. Section (C) includes the role of government legislation. In section (D) there are two questions. Question one used a Likert style 5-point scale ranging from not important (1) to most important (5). It includes 10 basic skills, asking employers about their opinions on the importance of those skills to their organization when they recruit graduates. Question two then asks employers to rate on average the new graduates' performance on the same 10 basic skills. It also used a Likert style 5-point scale ranging from poor (1) to excellent (5). Starting from Section (E) to Section (H), the measure scale used is a Likert style 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Section (E) includes 4 statements regarding the role of communication in the labour market as well as the employers' communication with higher educational institutions. Section (F) includes 4 questions about employers' perceptions of Kuwait university graduates. Section (G) includes 4 statements regarding the major problems that affect the Kuwaiti labour market. Finally, Section (H) includes 6 statements about employers' suggestions to solve/minimize the labour market problems (See Appendix. 7 for employers' questionnaires and a translation into Arabic).

5.3.2 Reliability Test (Cronbach Alpha (α))

Cronbach Alpha (α) is employed to check the reliability consistency of the research items and to exclude extreme responses (Hair et al. 2006). Hence, the alpha coefficient should be greater than 0.7. In this study, the reliability (Cronbach Alpha) of all 52- items of the employers' instrument was 0.88, meaning that the questions were correlated and addressing the research problem.

5.3.3 Total Sample

A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed and 129 were filled out and returned. The response rate was 86%, which is considered to be very good. The questionnaire respondents were 129 managers from both public and private sectors in Kuwait.

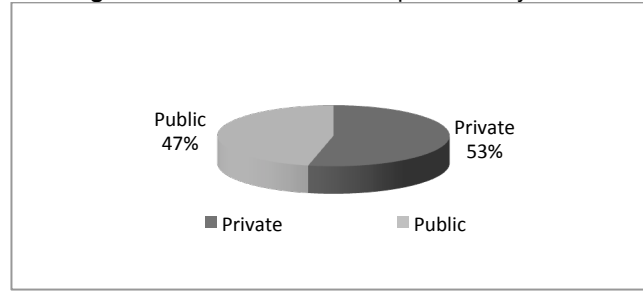
5.3.4 Distribution of Respondents by Sector

The distribution of employers was almost even. Private sector employers were 53.5% and public sector employers were 46.5% (Table 5.12).

Table 5.12 Distribution of Respondents by sector

Sector	Frequency	Percent
Private	69	53.5
Public	60	46.5
Total	129	100.0

Figure 5.4 Distribution of Respondents by Sector



5.3.5 Distribution of Respondents by Position

Table (5.13) shows the distribution of employers by their position in the organization. The majority of respondents were CEOs (36.4%), managers represent 27.9 %, heads of department represent 4.7 %, and others represent 31 %. Others include ministerial under-secretary, loan managers, and other supervisory occupations within the organization.

Table 5.13 Distribution of Respondents by Position

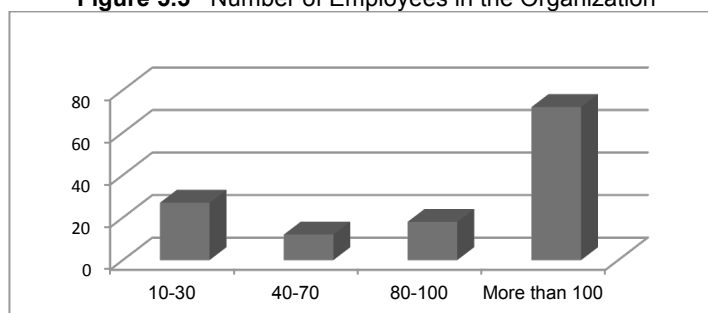
Position	Frequency	Percent
Manager	36	27.9
CEO	47	36.4
Head of Department	6	4.7
Others	40	31.0
Total	129	100.0

5.3.6 Distribution of Respondents by Number of Employees

The majority of respondents were employers of large organizations (55.8%) where they have more than 100 employees. Table (5.14) shows that 20.9% were employers in organizations that have 10-30 employees, 14% were employers in organizations that have 80-100 employees, and 9.3% were employers in organizations that have 40-70 employees.

Table 5.14 Number of Employees in the Organization

Number of Employees	Frequency	Percent
10-30	27	20.9
40-70	12	9.3
80-100	18	14.0
More than 100	72	55.8
Total	129	100.0

Figure 5.5 Number of Employees in the Organization

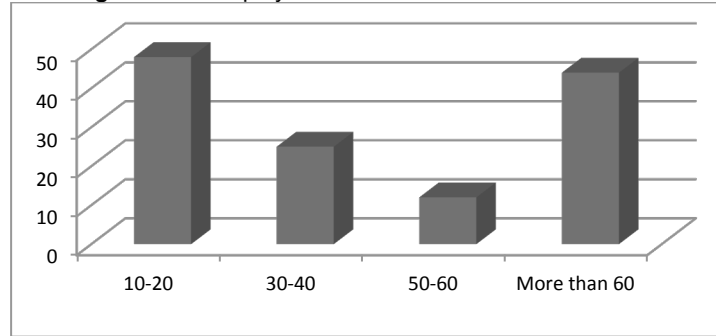
5.3.7 Distribution of Respondents by the Number of Employees Recruited in the Last Five Years

Table (5.15) shows that the majority of employer respondents (37.2%) recruited only 10-20 employees during the last five years. However, 34.1% recruited more than 60 employees, 19.4% recruited 30-40 employees, and only 9.3% recruited 50-60 employees.

Table 5.15 Employees Recruited in the Last Five Years

Number of employees	Frequency	Percent
10-20	48	37.2
30-40	25	19.4
50-60	12	9.3
More than 60	44	34.1
Total	129	100.0

Figure 5.6 Employees Recruited in the Last Five Years



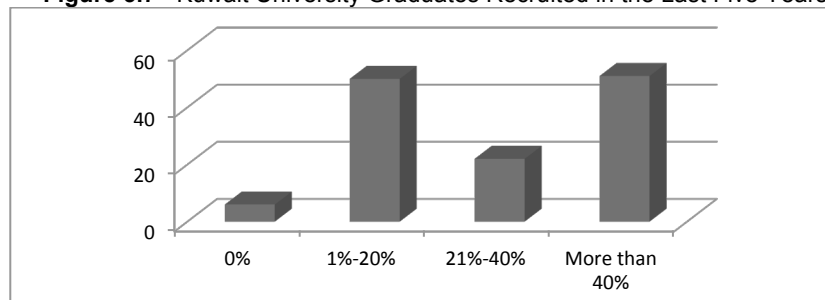
5.3.8 Distribution of Respondents by Number of Kuwait university Graduates Recruited in the Last Five Years

The employers were asked about the percentage of Kuwait university graduates in terms of employees they have recruited at their organizations. Table (5.16) shows that 39.5% of employers recruited more than 40% of graduates, while 38.8% of employers recruited 1% - 20% of graduates. This indicates that there is not a very high demand for graduates in the Kuwaiti labour market. 17.1% of employers recruited 21% - 40% graduates, and 4.7% did not recruit any graduates at all.

Table 5.16 Kuwait University Graduates Recruited in the Last Five Years

Percentage of Kuwait university graduates	Frequency	%
0%	6	4.7
1%-20%	50	38.8
21%-40%	22	17.1
More than 40%	51	39.5
Total	129	100

Figure 5.7 Kuwait University Graduates Recruited in the Last Five Years



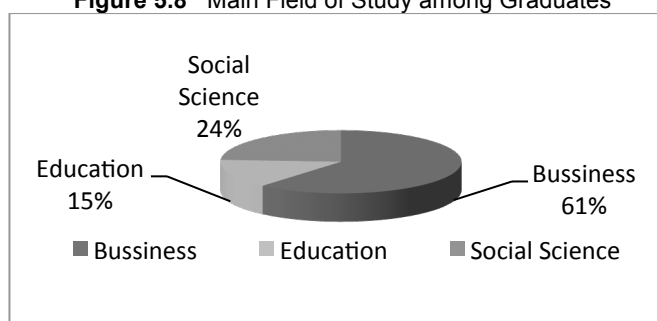
5.3.9 Main Areas of Study for New Graduates Recruited in the Last 5 Years

This study focuses on three main areas of study as mentioned earlier: business, education, and social science. Table (5.17) shows that the majority of respondents (61.2%) declared their graduates currently working to have been business graduates. This may well be because business is an area of study that is demanded by all kinds of organizations for management issues. 24% of respondents stated that their employees were social studies graduates; whereas 14.7% of respondents stated that their employees were education graduates.

Table 5.17 Main Area of Study among Graduates

Area of Study	Frequency	%
Business	79	61.2
Education	19	14.7
Social Science	31	24.0
Total	129	100.0

Figure 5.8 Main Field of Study among Graduates



5.3.10 The Source of Graduates Skills

Employers were asked about the sources of needed skills for jobs among graduates currently working, as shown in Table (5.18). Most employer respondents (82%) declare that graduates currently working gained skills needed for their jobs from doing the job (work experience). This is a very high percentage, which implies that employers believe the main source of skills for graduates currently working is work experience. However, 45% of employers believe that graduates gain skills needed for their jobs from studying at university.

Table 5.18 Source of Graduates Skills

Source of Skills	SD & Dis % 1 & 2	Neutral % 3	SA & Agree % 4 & 5	Mean	Std. dev.
1- Graduates gain skills needed for their jobs from doing their job (work experience)	11%	7%	82%	3.89	.93
2- Graduates gain skills needed for their jobs from learning at university.	28%	26%	45%	3.35	.85

5.3.11 Training of Graduates Currently working

Table (5.19) shows the role of field training courses in providing graduates with skills needed for their jobs. 61% of employers stated that fields training aid graduates to gain the skills needed for their jobs. In terms of the previous section, this shows that employers agree that the two main sources of graduate's skills come from the labour market, either by doing the job and having the necessary experience or by attending field training.

Table 5.19 Training courses

Training	SD and Dis % 1 and 2	Neutral % 3	SA and Agree % 4 and 5	Mean	Std. dev.
1- field training courses aid graduates to gain skills needed for their jobs.	21%	17%	61%	3.54	1.01

5.3.12 Reasons for Recruiting Graduates

Table (5.20) shows the reasons for recruiting graduates from the employers' point of view in terms of the Kuwaiti labour market. 43% of respondents believed that their organization recruits new graduates because they (graduates) have new competency skills. This is close to the 45% of employers who declared that graduates gain the skills needed for their jobs from studying at university as in the previous section. Hence, it implies that almost half of respondents believe that graduates gain the competency skills needed for the job from their education. Moreover, 47% believed that their organization recruits new graduates because they are hardworking with higher career aspirations.

Table 5.20 Reasons for Recruiting Graduates

Reasons	SD & Dis % 1 & 2	Neutral % 3	SA & Agree % 4 & 5	Mean	Std. dev.
1- This organization recruits new graduates because they got new competency skills.	39%	18%	43%	2.89	1.17
2- This organization recruits new graduates because they are hard working with higher career aspiration.	34%	20%	47%	3.05	1.05

5.3.13 Role of Government Legislations

Table (5.21) shows the role of government legislations in the labour market from employers' point of view. It indicates that the majority of employer respondents (64%) believe that their organization recruits new graduates because of government legislations. This is a very high percentage and suggests that a large number of employers seem forced by law to recruit graduates.

Table 5.21 Government Legislations

Government Legislations	SD & Dis % 1 & 2	Neutral % 3	SA & Agree % 4 & 5	Mean	Std. dev.
1- This organization recruits new graduates because of Government legislations.	23%	13%	64%	3.54	1.12

5.3.14 The Important Skills for Employers when Recruiting Graduates

The set of skills included in the questionnaires were based on the literature as well as being the basic skills needed by the labour market internationally let alone their importance as the minimum skills that employees should possess (Chapter Two, section 2.9.1 Employers Expectations). The employers were asked to rate the importance of the basic skills (Table 5.22). The majority of respondents (74%) believe that competency in the graduate's area of specialization is an important skill. Equally, 74% of respondents acknowledged the importance of the written communication skills. Reading skills and learning abilities are not far behind with 72% and 73%, respectively. This indicates that employers appreciate competency in the graduate's area of specialization along with basic skills such as reading and writing, plus the learning abilities that enable graduates to learn the needed skills on the job.

Table 5.22 Skills Important to Employers

Skills	NI & Less Important % 1 & 2	Neutral % 3	I & Most Important % 4 & 5	Mean	Std. Dev.
1- Competency in graduate area of specialization	18%	8%	74%	3.65	.97
2- Thinking Creatively	23%	8%	68%	3.62	1.13
3- Learning abilities	19%	8%	73%	3.89	.99
4- Reading Skills	17%	12%	72%	3.84	.92
5- Written Communication Skills	14%	13%	74%	3.81	.90
6- Speaking and listening skills	17%	13%	69%	3.54	1.14
7- Leadership skills	23%	20%	58%	3.65	1.08
8- Negotiation skills	15%	15%	70%	4.07	1.11
9- Time Management	21%	16%	63%	3.51	1.25
10- Problem-solving ability	17%	15%	70%	3.80	1.14

5.3.15 Employers' Point of View on Skills of Graduates Currently Working

The employers were asked to rate on average the graduates currently working on their basic skills. According to Table (5.23), the three top skills which respondents rate as very good and excellent were learning abilities, written communication skills, reading skills at 49%, 45%, and 43%, respectively. These skills correspond to what most employer respondents believe as the most important skills needed when recruiting graduates. However, those skills don't require a bachelor degree graduates; any secondary grade graduates can do well in those skills. On the other hand, the three skills the respondents rate as very poor even bad regarding graduates currently working were leadership skills, problem-solving ability, and time management at 36%, 35%, and 32%, respectively.

Table 5.23 Employers' Rating of Graduates' Performance

Skills	Poor & Bad % 1 & 2	Good % 3	VG & Excellent % 4 & 5	Mean	Std. dev.
1- Competency in graduate area of specialization	21%	38%	41%	3.41	.92
2- Thinking Creatively	27%	35%	39%	3.35	.94
3- Learning abilities	22%	28%	49%	3.68	1.02
4- Reading Skills	22%	36%	43%	3.41	1.14
5- Written Communication Skills	24%	32%	45%	3.49	.98
6- Speaking and listening skills	24%	33%	43%	3.16	1.09
7- Leadership skills	36%	31%	34%	3.22	1.22
8- Negotiation skills	25%	36%	40%	3.24	1.35
9- Time Management	32%	33%	36%	3.22	1.20
10- Problem-solving ability	35%	27%	37%	3.04	1.38

5.3.16 Role of Communication between the Labour Market and Higher Educational Institutions

According to Table (5.24), the majority of employer respondents (65%) believed that communication with higher educational institutions would ensure that graduates would meet the labour market needs. This supports the literature reviewed earlier, which suggests that communication and feedback between the key parties in the labour market have the potential of closing the gap in the market through mutual understanding (Chapter Two, Section 2.8, Relationship between Higher Education Institution and Labour Market).

Table 5.24 Role of Communication with Higher Educational Institutions

Role of Communication	SD & Dis % 1 & 2	Neutral % 3	SA & Agree % 4 & 5	Mean	St. dev
1- communication with higher education would ensure that graduates match the labour market needs.	16%	19%	65%	3.51	1.1

5.3.17 Communication between the Labour Market and Higher Educational Institutions

The respondents were asked if they communicate with the higher educational institutions, almost half of respondents (46%) indicated that their organization does not communicate with higher educational institutions at all. Hence, it indicates that there is a very weak line of communication between the labour market and higher educational institutions in Kuwait. Table (5.25) also shows that only 27% of respondents declared that their organizations receive invitations for campus visits and recruitment fairs at universities. While only 18% of employers receive invitations for meetings with universities to create curriculums.

Table 5.25 Communication with Higher Educational Institutions

Communication Statements	SD & Dis % 1 & 2	Neutral % 3	SA & Agree % 4 & 5	Mean	St. dev.
1- This organization does not communicate with higher education institutions at all.	25%	29%	46%	2.89	1.30
2- This organization does not receive invitations for campus visits and recruitment fairs in universities.	27%	16%	50%	2.84	1.30
3- This organization does not receive invitations for meetings with universities to create curriculums.	18%	13%	66%	3.51	1.26

5.4 Conclusion

As stated throughout this research, the purpose of this study is to investigate the existence of a skills-gap in the Kuwaiti labour market. In this chapter, a description of the graduates currently working (a sample of 616 respondents) was presented. Descriptive statistics were used to present the averages and frequencies of graduates currently working in terms of their background and employment information, education, source of skills, expectations, satisfaction, and family influences.

The quantitative findings from the graduates' questionnaires showed that the public sector in Kuwait is conventionally preferred over the private sector where the majority of respondents work, a finding that is also supported by the literature reviewed earlier. Moreover, it is clear that there is an association between gender and working sector; women tend to work in the public sector. This is not surprising in Kuwait where the public sector provides many privileges including flexible working hours and longer vacations, which women strongly appreciate. Besides, it enables women to spend more time with their families and children, taking into consideration that Kuwait is a country with a high context culture where family relations are highly appreciated.

The students indicated that they were expecting (when they were undergoing their studies) to work with employers who provide them with opportunities for career development and enable them to reach their career aspirations, more than employers who provide them with job-related material privileges. However, it appears that these expectations of career development, that the graduates appreciate the most, were not met because they were not satisfied with what they got in terms of career development issues when they got the job. These findings also indicate that approximately half of graduates currently working do believe that their qualifications were good enough to prepare them for their jobs. However, the majority of them (89%) have also declared that they gained the skills needed for the job from doing it. It appeared that the main source of their work-related skills comes from work experience.

The findings also suggest that there were family influences on graduates currently in work employment. A third of graduate respondents declared that their families had an impact on their choice of job. However, the most pervasive family influence that was believed among graduates was the use of family relationships and connections to get the job they want, what is known in Kuwait as "WASTA".

This chapter has also presented a description of the employers' sample of 129 respondents. Descriptive statistics were used to present the averages and frequencies for organizational information, graduates' education and training, source of graduates' skills, important basic skills, and performance of graduates currently working.

The quantitative findings from employers' questionnaires showed that large and small organizations tend to recruit more Kuwaiti graduates than medium organizations. Small organizations tend to recruit graduates since they are low in cost, while large organizations tend to recruit graduates since they need more staff to process their numerous operations. Moreover, the majority of employers (61.2%) declared that their graduates currently working were business graduates. It appears that business as an area of study fits in well and is demanded by all kinds of organizations.

The majority of employer respondents (82%) also declared that graduates currently working gained the skills needed for their jobs from actually doing the job (work experience). This supports the beliefs among graduates currently working with regard to the source of their skills, since the majority of them admitted that they gained the skills needed for their jobs from work experience. It implies that both parties, employers and employees, believed that the main source of job skills for Kuwaiti graduates comes from work experience. Not far behind is the second source of graduates' skills that both parties agreed upon, namely, field training.

Less than half of the employers declared that their organizations recruit new graduates because they have new competency skills or are hardworking. Nevertheless, the majority of employer respondents (64%) believed that their organization recruits new graduates due to government legislations. Therefore, it appears that a large number of employers recruit graduates not only for their qualities but also because they are obliged to do so by law.

The majority of employer respondents (65%) also believed that communication with higher educational institutions would ensure that graduates meet the labour market needs. This is supported in the literature reviewed earlier in chapter two which suggests that communication and mutual understanding are vital to the labour market. However, more than half of the respondents do not communicate with higher educational institutions at all. So, it seems that communication between the labour market and higher educational institutions leaves a lot to be desired.

CHAPTER SIX: DATA ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the skills-gap in the Kuwaiti labour market. This chapter provides a presentation and analysis of the data collected through the employers' and graduates' questionnaires. These questionnaires were handed out in order to collect quantitative data for the sake of exploring their points of view regarding the skills-gap and to ultimately address our own research questions. The analyses of the data gathered via the quantitative method were carried out through explanatory factor analysis, reliability test, cross-tabulation, correlation, and regression analysis. The analysis was conducted using SPSS software version 17 and the data was interpreted using Excel software 2007 to formulate the graphs and tables.

This chapter will directly address the research questions using the preliminary data. Also, regression and factor analyses will directly answer parts of question two about the perception of employers on the role of universities regarding the provision of knowledge and skills. They will also address parts of question three about the perception of employers in relation to factors that influence graduates' quality of education. Hence, question one (on the universities' role regarding the provision of knowledge and skills) and the other part of questions two and three (on policy makers' and educators' perceptions) will be directly addressed using qualitative analysis of interview in Chapter Seven ('Interview Analysis'). Moreover, regression and factor analysis will also be used to directly answer research question four about the factors influencing graduates' attitudes to the quality of education they received from university, and question five about the factors influencing job satisfaction level from the standpoint of graduates currently working.

6.2 Reliability Tests

Reliability tests of KMO and Bartlett's Test was conducted for the questionnaires. The result of each test is presented whenever applicable in each section. Also, exploratory factor analysis for the variables was conducted where applicable.

6.2.1 Reliability Tests; KMO and Bartlett's Test

In Chapter Six, Cronbach Alpha (α) was used to test the reliability of the whole questionnaire. In this section, our study employed the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure (KMO). KMO indicates whether or not sufficient items are predicted by each factor (Leech et al., 2005). Hence, the KMO measure should be > 0.70 , and is inadequate if < 0.50 (Leech et al., 2005). If KMO produces values above 0.7, then the correlations, on the whole, are sufficiently high to make factor analysis suitable (De Vaus, 2002). The other test is Bartlett's test. It examines whether the correlation matrix is a distinctive matrix (Leech et al., 2005). The Bartlett's test should be significant (value < 0.05); which means that the variables are correlated high enough to provide a reasonable basis for factor analysis (Leech et al., 2005).

6.2.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis

The study in this chapter used exploratory factor analysis to analyze the questionnaires. Exploratory factor analysis is a data reduction method. It is employed primarily to reduce the number of questions in a questionnaire to fewer variables (dimensions) known as latent variables (Sharma, 2001). The purpose is to hold the nature and character of the original variables, but reduce their number to simplify the subsequent multivariate analysis (Hair et al., 2006). Exploratory factor analysis uses the factor load as an indicator of the degree of association between each dimension and its items (Sharma, 2001). Factor loading is the coefficient of correlation between the factor and the variables (Brace et al., 2003). Factor analysis also presents the percentage of variance explained by each dimension, which was calculated via the "principle component analysis (eigenvalues)". The "eigenvalue" is a measure attached to each dimension and indicates the amount of variance that it explains. The higher this value, the more variance the dimension can explain. The dimension must have an "eigenvalue" greater than one in order to be involved (De Vaus, 2002).

6.3 Research Questions

Each research question will be stated in separate sections below. The answers to the research questions will be stated beneath each of the questions using the appropriate analysis method: interview analysis and/or quantitative analysis of regression, correlation, or t-test where applicable.

6.4 Research Question 1: What role do universities believe they should play with regard to the provision of knowledge and skills?

To answer this question, the views among educators need to be investigated. Educators' views will be investigated using qualitative method of interviews in Chapter Seven (Interview Analysis).

6.5 Research Question 2: What role do players in the labour market expect universities to play regarding the provision of knowledge and skills?

To answer this question, the views of the two players in the labour market (employers and policy makers) need to be investigated. Employers' views will be investigated in this chapter using the quantitative method of questionnaire, while those of policy makers will be investigated using the qualitative method of interviews. These are given in Chapter Seven (Interview Analysis).

6.5.1 Employers' Perception of the Role of Higher Education

Employers' perceptions of the role of higher education were investigated by analyzing the questionnaires using the SPSS software application. Table (6.1) shows frequencies, mean and Std. dev. for the employers' perceptions. The question with regard to the role of higher education was clear and to the point. It simply asks employer respondents if higher education institutions should prepare graduates for the needs of the labour market. The majority of respondents (86%) stated that higher educational institutions should prepare graduates for the needs of the labour market with a mean value of (3.95), indicating that the average response was affirmative.

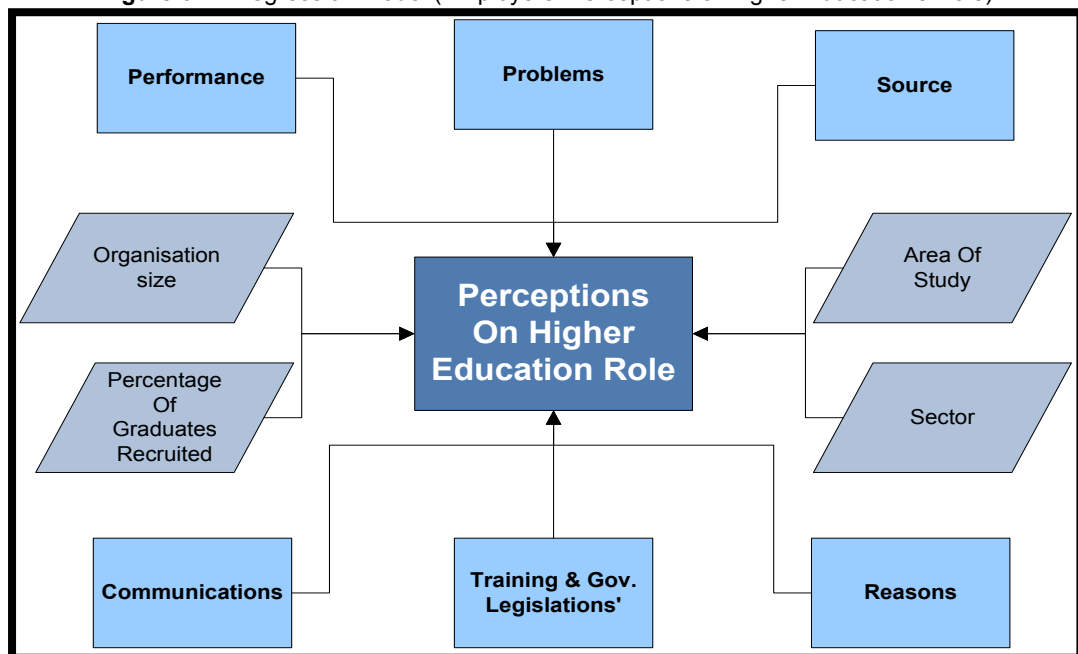
Table 6.1 Employers' Perceptions on the Role of Higher Educational Institutions

Employers' Perceptions	SD and Disagree % 1 and 2	Neutral % 3	SA and Agree % 4 and 5	Mean	Std. dev.
5- Higher educational institutions should prepare graduates for labour market needs	4%	10%	86%	3.95	1.15

6.5.2 Factors that Affect Employers' Perception of the Role of Higher Education

It is important to investigate the factors that affect employers' perceptions in relation to the role of higher education. This will help us understand the reasons for such perceptions. Therefore, this study will employ stepwise regression to examine the contribution of the different variables to employers' perceptions regarding the role of higher education. Stepwise regression analysis models the relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Hair et al., 2006). It is the most popular successive sequential method to variable selection. This method is designed to develop a regression model with the fewest number of statistically significant independent variables but with the maximum predictive accuracy (Hair et al., 2006). Each variable is considered for inclusion prior to developing the equation. The independent variable with the greatest contribution is added first. The independent variables are then selected for inclusion based on their incremental contribution to the variable(s) already in the equation (Hair et al., 2006). There are two assumptions behind this stepwise regression. First, the data should be normally distributed. Thus, the study used the "Central Limit Theory" which suggests that if the data collected are greater than thirty, and there is a mean and St. dev., then it may be assumed that the data are normally distributed. Second, "multicollinearity" is eliminated by "Factor Analyses" (McClave et al., 2005). Moreover, factor analysis was employed in this section to remove data redundancy and disclose the underlying pattern that may exist among the variables. Figure (6.1) evaluates the regression model in terms of employers' perceptions of the role of higher education.

Figure 6.1 Regression Model (Employers' Perceptions of Higher Education's Role)



- **Factor Analysis for the independent variables**

KMO and Bartlett's Test were first performed to check the reliability of the data. The result of KMO test using the SPSS software for the independent variables was 0.774, which is more than the minimum level (0.7). This means that the correlations, on the whole, are sufficiently high to make factor analysis possible. Also, the result of Bartlett's Test was .000, meaning that it is significant (Table 6.2). The factor analysis conducted had reduced the 27 questions of the independent variables into 8 dimensions using the "eigenvalue" (See Appendix 10). Table (6.3) shows the 'Explained Variance' for the eight dimensions. It shows that 75% of the variance accounted for the first eight dimensions, which is more than the minimum 50%, and is thus valid.

Table 6.2 KMO and Bartlett's Test of the independent variables
(Employers' Perceptions of Higher Education's Role)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.774
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1699.736
	Df	351
	Sig.	.000

Table (6.3) also presents factor loads. It shows the latent concepts of leadership besides the items in each concept. Hence, the considered research items (variables) are those with communality (communality refers to the amount of information that a given variable shares with other factors) greater than 50%. The items were assigned to a certain specific concept if their factor loadings on that construct are greater than 50% each. Therefore, the 6 items of the problems concept were rearranged under three dimensions (graduates' potential-related problems, family influence-related problems, and higher education-related problems). In addition, one item in the concept of training and legislation was excluded because its factor load was less than 0.5 (See Appendix 11).

Table 6.3 Factor Analysis for the independent variables (Employers' Perceptions of Higher Education's Role)

Cod	Dimension Name	Explained Variance	Factor Load
1	Rate on performance	28.84%	
	1- Competency in graduate area of specialization		.708
	2- Thinking Creatively		.853
	3- Learning Abilities		.860
	4- Reading Skills		.744
	5- Written Communication Skills		.786
	6- Speaking and Listening Skills		.872
	7- Leadership Skills		.870
	9- Time Management		.873
	10- Problem-solving Ability		.868
2	Graduates' potential-related problems	8.84%	
	2- Lack of graduate skills		.823
	3- Lack of graduate motivation		.829
3	Communication	7.10%	
	1- This organization does not communicate with higher educational institutions.		.818
	2- This organization does not receive invitations for campus visits and recruitment fairs at universities.		.908
	3- This organization does not receive invitations for meetings with universities to create curriculums		.823
4	Reasons for recruiting graduates	6.80%	
	1- This organization recruits new graduates because they have new competency and skills.		.827
	2- This organization recruits new graduates because they are hardworking with higher career aspirations.		.813
5	Family influence-related problems	6.66%	
	1- Family social relationships that ensure acquiring favourable jobs.		.718
	2- Family influence on career choice.		.756
6	Higher Education-related problems	6.42%	
	1- Quality of education.		.686
	2- Lack of communication with the labour market.		.773
7	Sources of skills	5.76%	
	1- Graduates gain skills needed for their jobs by doing them.		.588
	2- Graduates gain skills needed for their jobs from studying at university		.624
8	Training and legislation	4.75%	
	1- This organization recruits new graduates because of government legislations.		.87
	2- Graduates gain skills needed for their jobs from field training.	Excluded	
	Total	75.210	

- **The dependent variable**

The dependent variable includes one item about the role of higher education from the employers' point of view in terms of preparing graduates for the needs of the labour market (Table 6.4).

Table 6.4 Dependent variable (Employers' Perceptions of Higher Education's Role)

Code	Dimension Name
1	Perceptions on Role of Higher Education
	Higher educational institutions should prepare graduates to meet the needs of the labour market.

Stepwise Regression was employed to model the relationship between the following independent variables: employers' rate on performance, graduates' potential-related problems, communication, reasons for recruiting graduates, family influence-related problems, higher education-related problems, sources of skills, training and legislation effects, sector, area of study, organization size, and percentage of graduates recruited in the organization in the last five years as well as the dependent variable of employers' perceptions on the role of higher education. Table (6.5) shows that the correlation between higher education-related problems and employers' perception of higher education's role is 50% (in other words, an average correlation).

Also, Table (6.5) shows that there is a contribution by the higher education-related problems to employers' perceptions of higher education's role by 24% in variance. This indicates that 24% of employers' perceptions of higher education's role come from the significant independent variable mentioned above, while 76% of the employers' perceptions of higher education role is not included in this analysis. Hence, Table (6.6) also shows that the model has reached statistical significance (sig. 0.000, $p < 0.05$).

Table 6.5 Model Summary (Employers' Perceptions of Higher Education's Role)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.498^a	.248	.240	.79952

a. Predictors: (Constant), higher education-related problems

Table 6.6 ANOVA Test (Employers' Perceptions of Higher Education's Role)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.236	1	20.236	31.657	.000^a
	Residual	61.366	96	.639		
	Total	81.602	97			

a. Predictors: (Constant), higher education-related problems

The standardized regression coefficients are presented in Table (6.7) below. It shows employers' perception of higher education's role as a dependent variable; one- independent variables of higher education's related problems are considered within the model, as it is significant with Beta Coefficients representing .498. All other factors were excluded from the final model, as they are not significant (Appendix 12).

Based on the regression results, employers' perceptions of higher education's role are affected by one factor out of twelve. The Beta Coefficient is 0.498 of higher education-related problems, meaning that it makes a positive and unique contribution to explaining employers' perceptions of higher education. This implies employers believe that higher educational institutions encounter problems regarding their role in the provision of knowledge and skills.

Table 6.7 Standardized Regression Coefficients (Employers' Perceptions of Higher Education's Role)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.753	.448		3.908	.000
Higher educations-related problems	.626	.111	.498	5.626	.000

6.6 Research Question 3: What Factors Influence Employers' Attitudes to Graduates' Quality of Education?

To answer this question, Employers' views will be investigated in this chapter using the quantitative method of questionnaire.

6.6.1 Employers' Perceptions on Graduates' Quality of Education

Employers' perceptions were investigated through analysis of the questionnaires using the SPSS software application. Table (6.8) shows the frequencies, mean and Std. Dev. for employers' perceptions. Almost half of the respondents (47%) stated that graduates were not fully prepared for the needs of the labour market, leaving only 19% to disagree with that. Hence, it appears that there is an overall sense of dissatisfaction about graduates' performance in the Kuwaiti labour market. Only 20% of employers declared that they were satisfied with graduates' overall performance. In terms of dissatisfaction, more than half of employers (58%) indicated that graduates have skills deficiencies. However, a smaller fraction (39%) declared that graduates were not suitable for the position they hold. It seems that other qualities of graduates, such as hardworking and career aspiration (mentioned in the reasons for recruiting graduates in chapter six), have reduced the level of dissatisfaction.

Table 6.8 Employers' Perceptions of Potential of Graduates Currently Working

Employers' Perceptions	SD and Disagree % 1 & 2	Neutral % 3	SA & Agree % 4 & 5	Mean	Std. dev.
1- Overall, this organization is not satisfied with their performance.	20%	39%	41%	3.16	.86
2- Overall, graduates have skills deficiencies.	18%	24%	58%	3.32	.97
3- Overall, graduates in this organization were not suitable for the position they hold.	28%	33%	39%	3.19	.77
4- Overall, graduates were not fully prepared to meet labour market needs.	19%	34%	47%	3.14	1.15

However, the mean values of employers' perceptions on the quality of graduates' education or their satisfaction with graduates' potential were close to 3 for all four statements (3.16, 3.23, 3.19, and 3.14), indicating that the average response was neutral. Therefore, in order to acquire a clearer view of employers' satisfaction with graduates' skills, **Cross tabulation** was then performed to examine if graduates met the basic skills demanded by employers. This was carried out by conducting cross tabulation for each important basic skill expected by employers and comparing it with good graduates' performance on the same skill (see Appendix 30 for cross tabulation). The intersection within the cross tabulation that represents important skill and good performance was considered in the analysis in order to show the level of satisfaction within each skill (Table 6.9).

Table 6.9 Employers' Classification on Expectations of Graduates' Performance

Classification	% of met
1- Competency in graduate area of specialization	65%
2- Thinking creatively	60%
3- Learning abilities	61%
4- Reading skills	59%
5- Written communication skills	59%
6- Speaking and listening skills	57%
7- Leadership skills	45%
8- Negotiation skills	46%
9- Time management	51%
10- Problem-solving ability	51%
Overall Average	55%

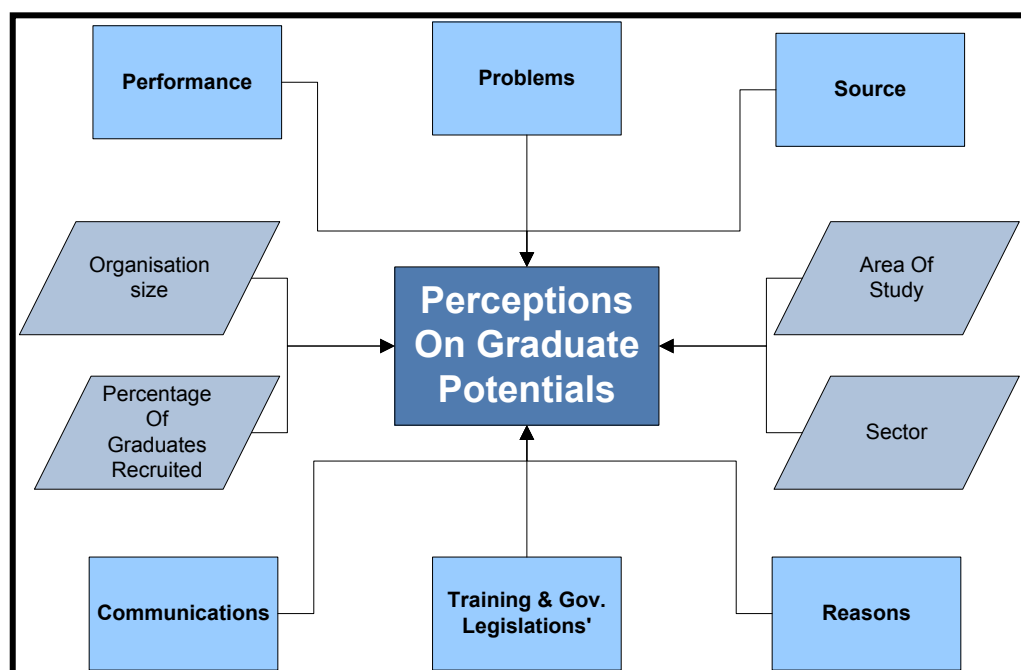
Table (6.9) above shows the percentage of important skills for employers that were met by good graduates' performance. This represents the percentage of employers' satisfaction level in terms of graduates' skills. In other words, it demonstrates how good was the graduates' performance on skills that are significant to the labour market. This can indicate the level of satisfaction for graduates' performance on each important skill that employers expect when recruiting graduates.

The overall level of satisfaction with what was considered as important skills was 55%. It implies that almost half of employers were not satisfied with graduates' performance on the important skills they expected and needed. 65% of employers indicate that competency in graduate area of specialization ranked first in satisfaction as 65% of them believed that this expectation was met (important and good in performance). This was followed by learning abilities and thinking creativity in second and third place with 61% and 60% respectively. However, leadership skills and negotiation skills were considered met by only 45% and 46% of employers respectively.

6.6.2 Factors that Affect Employers' Perceptions on Graduates' Education (Regression)

It is important to investigate the factors that affect employers' perceptions in relation to university graduates' potential. This will help us understand the reasons for such perceptions. Therefore, this study will employ stepwise regression to examine the contribution of the different variables to employers' perceptions of university graduates' potential. Moreover, factor analysis was also employed in this section to remove redundancy in data and disclose the underlying pattern that may exist between the variables. Figure (6.2) evaluates the Regression Model for employers' perceptions of graduates' potential.

Figure 6.2 Regression Model (Employers' Perceptions of Graduates' Potential)



- **Factor analysis of the independent variables**

KMO and Bartlett's Test were performed first to check the reliability of the data, see Table (6.10). The result of KMO test for the independent variables using SPSS software was 0.774, which is more than the minimum level (0.7). This means that the correlations, on the whole, are sufficiently high to make factor analysis suitable. Also, the result of Bartlett's Test was .000, which indicates that it is significant (Table 6.10). The factor analysis conducted had reduced the 27 questions of the independent variables into 8 dimensions using the "eigenvalue" (See Appendix 13). Table (6.10) shows the 'Explained Variance' for the eight dimensions. It indicates that 75% of the variance is accounted for in the first eight dimensions, which is more than the minimum 50%, and is therefore valid.

Table 6.10 KMO and Bartlett's Test of the Independent Variables
(Employers' Perceptions of Graduates' Potential)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.774
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1699.736
	Df	351
	Sig.	.000

In addition, Table (6.11) presents factor loads. It shows the latent concepts of leadership besides the items from each concept. Hence, the considered research items (variables) are those with communality (communality refers to the amount of information that a given variable shares with other factors) greater than 50%. The items were assigned to a certain specific concept if their factor loadings on that construct are each greater than 50%. Therefore, the 6 items of the problems concept were rearranged under three dimensions (graduates' potential-related problems, family influence-related problems, and Hi related problems). Further, one item in the I concepts of training and legislation was excluded, as its factor load was less than 0.5 (See Appendix 14).

Table 6.11 Factor Analysis for the Independent Variables (Employers' Perceptions of Graduates' Potential)

Code	Dimension Name	Explained Variance	Factor Load
1	Rate on performance	28.84%	
	1- Competency in graduate area of specialization		.708
	2- Thinking creatively		.853
	3- Learning abilities		.860
	4- Reading skills		.744
	5- Written communication skills		.786
	6- Speaking and listening skills		.872
	7- Leadership skills		.870
	9- Time management		.873
	10- Problem-solving ability		.868
2	Graduates' potential-related problems	8.84%	
	2- Lack of graduate skills		.823
	3- Lack of graduate motivation		.829
3	Communication	7.10%	
	1- This organization does not communicate with higher educational institutions.		.818
	2- This organization does not receive invitations for campus visits and recruitment fairs in universities.		.908
	3- This organization does not receive invitations for meetings with universities to create curriculums.		.823
4	Reasons for recruiting graduates	6.80%	
	1- This organization recruits new graduates because they have new competency skills.		.827
	2- This organization recruits new graduates because they are hardworking with higher career aspiration.		.813
5	Family influence-related problems	6.66%	
	1- Family social relationships ensure getting favourable jobs.		.718
	2- Family influence on career choice.		.756
6	Hi related problems	6.42%	
	1- Quality of education.		.686
	2- Lack of communication with the labour market.		.773
7	Sources of skills	5.76%	
	1- Graduates gain skills needed for their jobs from doing the job.		.588
	2- Graduates gain skills needed for their jobs from studies at university		.624
8	Training and Government legislation		
	1- This organization recruits new graduates because of government legislations.		.87
	2- Graduates gain skills needed for their jobs from field training.	Excluded	
	Total	75.210	

- **Factor Analysis for the dependent variables**

KMO and Bartlett's Test were performed and the result of KMO test for the dependent variables (employers' perceptions) was 0.715, which is more than the minimum level (0.7). This means that the correlations, on the whole, are sufficiently high to make factor analysis suitable. Also, the result of Bartlett's Test is .000, which indicates that it is significant (Table 6.12). The factor analysis conducted had combined and included the 4 questions of the employers' perceptions into one dimension using the "eigenvalue" (Appendix 15). Table (6.13) shows the 'Explained Variance' for the dimension. It shows that 65% of the variance is accounted for in the dimension, which is more than the minimum 50%, and is therefore valid. Besides, Table (6.13) shows that the factor load arranges the four items of employers' perceptions of graduates' potential under one dimension (Appendix 16).

Table 6.12 KMO and Bartlett's Test of the Dependent Variables
(Employers' Perceptions of Graduates' Potential)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.750
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	195.959
	Df
	6
	Sig.
	.000

Table 6.13 Factor Analysis of the Dependent Variables
(Employers' Perceptions of Graduates' Potential)

Code	Dimension Name	Explained Variance	Factor Loading
1	Perception of Graduates' Potential (PGP)	65.695	
	1- Overall, this organization is not satisfied with their performance.		.890
	2- Overall, graduates have skills deficiencies.		.794
	3- Overall, graduates in this organization are not suitable for the position they hold.		.818
	4- Overall, graduates were not fully prepared to meet labour market needs.		.733
	Total	65.695	

Stepwise regression was employed to model the relationship between the following independent variables: employers' rate on performance, graduates' potential-related problems, communication, reasons for recruiting graduates, family influence-related problems, higher education-related problems, sources of skills, training and legislation effects, sector, area of study, organization size, percentage of graduates recruited by the organization in the last five years, and the dependent variable on employers' perceptions of graduates' potential. Table (6.14) presents the correlation between the following twofold effects: graduates' potential-related problems and communication with the labour market to employers' perceptions of graduates' potential is 36% (which is below the average correlation). In addition, Table (6.14) shows that there is a contribution of the aforesaid effects to employers' perceptions of graduates' potential by 13% in the variance. This indicates that 13% of employers' perceptions of graduates' potential come from the two significant factors mentioned above, while 87% of employers' perceptions of graduates' potential are not included in this analysis. Hence, Table (6.15) shows that the model has attained statistical difference (sig. 0.002, $p < 0.05$).

Table 6.14 Model Summary (Employers' Perceptions of Graduates' Potential)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
2	.361^b	.130	.112	.75511

b. Predictors: (Constant), graduates' potential-related problems, communication

Table 6.15 ANOVA Test (Employers' Perceptions of Graduates' Potential)

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
2 Regression	7.940	2	3.970	6.962	.002^a
Residual	53.028	93	.570		
Total	60.968	95			

b. Predictors: (Constant), graduates' potential-related problems, communication

The standardized regression coefficients are presented in Table (6.16) below. It shows employers' perceptions of graduates' potential as a dependent variable, and as two-independent variables: graduates' potential-related problems and communication with the labour market are considered in the model, as they are significant with Beta Coefficients representing .317 and .216 respectively. All other variables were excluded from the final model, as they are not significant (see Appendix 17).

Based on the regression results, the employers' perception of graduates' potential has a relationship that is affected by two effects out of twelve. The largest Beta Coefficient is 0.317 of graduates' potential-related problems, meaning that this factor makes the strongest positive unique contribution to explaining employers' perception of graduates' potential. Also, communication makes a positive contribution to explaining employers' perceptions. This implies that employers believe that graduates would encounter problems regarding their skills potential. Moreover, employers also believe that communication with higher educational institutions affects graduates' potential as well.

Table 6.16 Standardized Regression Coefficients (Employers' Perception of Graduates' Potentials)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
2 (Constant)	1.579	.441		3.581	.001
Graduates' potential-related problems	.288	.088	.317	3.256	.002
Communication	.168	.076	.216	2.217	.029

6.7 Research Question 4: What Factors Influence Graduates' Attitudes to the Quality of Education they have received from University?

To answer this question, the views of graduates currently working need to be investigated. Graduates' views were investigated using quantitative method of questionnaire.

6.7.1 Beliefs of Graduates Currently Working in their Qualifications

The literature has suggested that graduates have a variety of expectations regarding their jobs and careers (Chapter Two, Section 2.11.2, Graduates' Expectations). In other words, it can be argued that graduates currently working do believe that certain qualifications would lead them to achieve their career aspirations. The graduates currently working were asked about their perception as to the quality of their education. Table (6.17) indicates that 37% of respondents believed that there is no relation between what they have studied and the skills they need to do their current job properly. 33% indicated that the university curriculum did not prepare them optimally for the job. 28% indicated that their education does not allow them to be competent at their job. While only 19% believed that they are not suitable for the position they now hold.

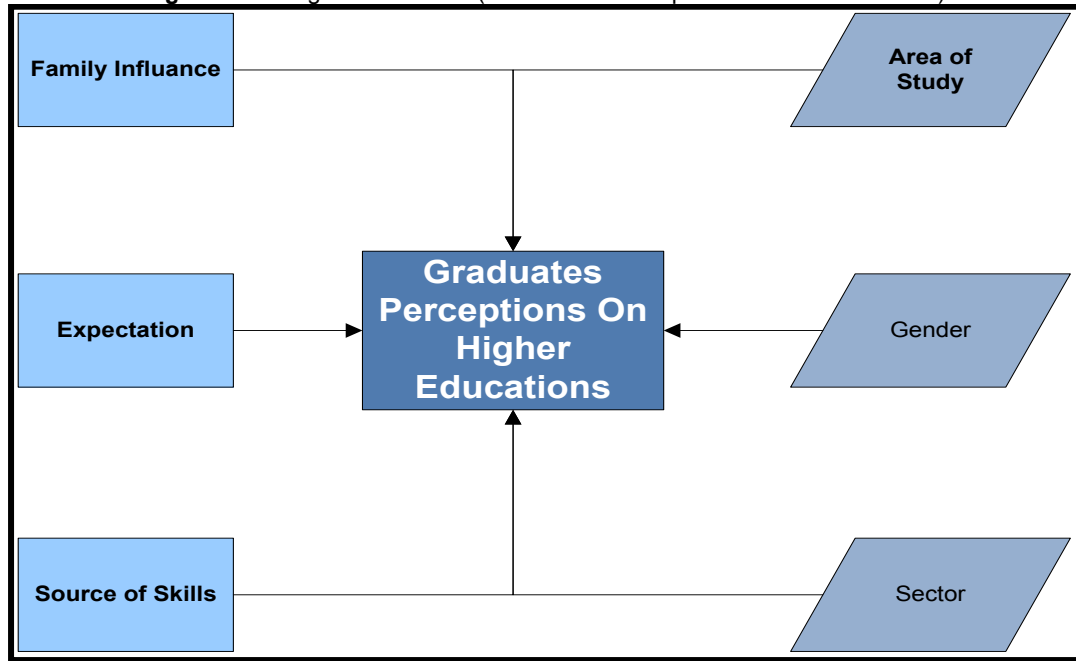
Table 6.17 Statistical Summary of Graduates' Beliefs about Their Qualifications

Graduates' Perception statements	SD and Dis. 1 and 2	Neutral 3	SA and Agree 4 and 5	Mean	Std. dev.
1- I feel that my education doesn't allow me to be competent at my job.	57%	16%	28%	2.53	1.23
2- I feel that the university curriculum didn't prepare me optimally for the job.	50%	17%	33%	2.75	1.18
3- There is no relation between what I have studied and the skills I need to do my current job properly.	46%	17%	37%	2.87	1.27
4- I feel that I'm not suitable for the position I now hold.	69%	13%	19%	2.18	1.25

6.7.2 Factors that Affect the Beliefs of Graduates Currently Working regarding Their Qualifications

It is important to understand the factors that affect graduates' perceptions. This will help us understand the reason(s) for such perceptions. Therefore, this study will employ stepwise regression to examine the contribution of different variables to the perceptions and beliefs of Kuwaiti graduates currently working regarding their qualifications. Moreover, Factor analysis was also employed in this section to remove redundancy in data and disclose the underlying pattern that may exist between the variables. Figure (6.3) evaluates the regression model on the graduates' perceptions of their qualification.

Figure 6.3 Regression Model (Graduates' Perceptions of Their Education)



- **Factor Analysis of the independent variables**

KMO and Bartlett's Test were first performed to check the reliability of the data. The result of KMO test using SPSS software for the independent variables was 0.801, which is more than the minimum level (0.7). This means that the correlations, on the whole, are sufficiently high to make factor analysis suitable. Also, the result of Bartlett's Test was .000, which indicates that it is significant (Table 6.18). The factor analysis conducted had reduced the 17 questions of the independent variables into 5 dimensions using the "eigenvalue" (See Appendix 18). Table (6.19) shows the 'Explained Variance' for the five dimensions. It indicates that 60% of the variance is accounted for in the first five dimensions, which is more than the minimum 50%, and is therefore valid.

Table 6.18 KMO and Bartlett's Test for Independent variables
(Graduates' Perceptions of Their Education)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.801
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2786.665
	Df	136
	Sig.	.000

In addition, Table (6.19) presents the factor loads. As mentioned earlier, the factor load assigned items to a certain specific concept if their factor loadings on that construct are each greater than 50%. Therefore, the factor load rearranged the nine items of expectations into two dimensions (expectations of job privileges and expectations of career development). Also, the three items under the source of skills were rearranged into two dimensions (source of skills by learning and source of skills by experience) (see Appendix 19).

Table 6.19 Factor Analysis of the independent variables (Graduates' Perceptions of Their Education)

Code	Dimension Name	Explained Variance	Factor Loading
1	Career Development Expectations	17.776%	
	1- I expect to work with an employer who provides me with career opportunities.		.695
	2- I expect to work with an employer who provides me with the opportunity to use my talent.		.703
	3- I expect to work with an employer who provides me with the opportunity to acquire more skills.		.870
	4- I expect to work with an employer who provides me with the opportunity to acquire more experience.		.888
	5- I expect to work with an employer who provides me with the opportunity to work with people I like.		.568
2	Family Influences	15.901%	
	1- My family had an influence on my choice of job.		.789
	2- My family had an effect on my choice of job for conservative reasons.		.759
	3- My family had an effect on my choice of job because they own the organization I'm working in.		.647
	4- My family had an effect on my choice of job because they think they know better.		.798
	5- I used my family relationships to get the job that I want.		.529
3	Expected job privileges	12.516%	
	1- I expect to work with an employer who provides me with a high salary.		.643
	2- I expect to work with an employer who provides me with flexible working hours (balanced life style).		.797
	3- I expect to work with an employer who fits well with my family's expectations.		.583
	4- I expect to work with an employer who provides me with the opportunity to travel.		.709
4	Learning as Source of Skills	7.935%	
	2- I have gained skills needed for my job from studying at university (education).		.820
	3- I have gained the skills needed for my job from company training courses.		.776
5	Experience as Source of Skills	6.283%	
	1- I have gained the skills needed for my job from doing it (work experience)		.933
	Total	60.412%	

- **Factor Analysis of the dependent variable**

KMO and Bartlett's Test were performed and the result of KMO test for the dependent variables (graduates' perceptions on their qualification) was 0.737, which is more than the minimum level (0.7). This means that the correlations, on the whole, are sufficiently high to make factor analysis suitable. Also, the result of Bartlett's Test is .000, which indicates that it is significant (Table 6.20). The factor analysis conducted had revealed that the four items of graduates' perception may be considered in one concept using the "eigenvalue" (Appendix 20). Table (6.21) shows the 'Explained Variance' for the dimension. It indicates the 'Explained Variance' of each dimension and shows that 61% of the variance is accounted for in one dimension, which is more than the minimum 50%, and is therefore valid.

Table 6.20 KMO and Bartlett's Test of the dependent variable (Graduates' Perceptions of Their Education)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.737
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	760.200
	Df
	6
	Sig.
	.000

Table (6.21) presents the factor loads. As mentioned earlier, the factor load assigned items to a certain specific concept if their factor loadings on that construct are each greater than 50%. Therefore, the factor load arranges the four items of graduates' perception into one concept (see Appendix 21).

Table 6.21 Factor Analysis of the dependent variable (Graduates' Perceptions of Their Education)

Code	Dimension Name	Explained Variance	Factor Loading
1	Graduates' Perceptions	61.025	
	1- I feel that my education doesn't allow me to be competent at my job.		.822
	2- I feel that the university curriculum didn't prepare me optimally for the job.		.834
	3- There is no relation between what I have studied and the skills I need to do my current job properly.		.817
	4- I feel that I'm not suitable for the position I hold.		.634
	Total	61.025	

Stepwise regression was employed to model the relationship between graduates' performance, family influences, area of study, sector, graduates' expectations, and gender as independent variables on the one hand; and graduates' perceptions of their education as a dependent variable on the other. Table (6.22) indicates that the correlation between the following independent variables (learning as source of skills, expected job's privileges, area of study such as social science), and the dependent variable of graduates' perceptions of their education is 44% (which is close to the average correlation). Also, Table (6.22) shows that learning as source of skills, expected job's privileges, and area of study, all contribute to the graduates' perceptions of their education by 19% in the variance. This indicates that this 19% of graduates' perceptions of their education come from the three significant independent variables mentioned above, while 81% of graduates' perceptions of their education are not included in this analysis. Hence, Table (6.23) shows that the model has attained statistical difference (sig. 0.000, $p < 0.05$).

Table 6.22 Model Summary (Graduates' Perceptions of Their Education)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
3	.440^c	.194	.190	.86874

c. Predictors: (Constant), learning as source of skills, expected job privileges, and area of study (social science)

Table 6.23 ANOVA Test (Graduates' Perceptions of Their Education)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
3	Regression	110.151	3	36.717	48.650	.000^c
	Residual	458.111	607	.755		
	Total	568.262	610			

c. Predictors: (Constant), learning as source of skills, expected job's privileges, and area of study (social science)

The standardized regression coefficients are presented in Table (6.24) below. It shows graduates' perceptions of their education as a dependent variable, as well as three-independent variables: learning as source of skills, expected job privileges, and area of study, are considered within the model, as they are significant with Beta Coefficients representing -.413, .224, and -.167 respectively. All others variables were excluded from the analysis model, as they were not significant (see Appendix 22).

Based on the regression results, graduates' perceptions of the quality of their education are affected by three independent variables out of eight. The largest Beta Coefficient is -.413 from learning as source of skills, meaning that this variable makes the strongest negative and unique contribution to explaining graduates' perceptions of their education. Hence, the social science as an area of study also makes a negative contribution to explaining the graduates' perceptions of their education. On the other hand, the expected job privileges have a significant positive impact on graduates' perceptions of their education.

Table 6.24 Standardized Regression Coefficients (Graduates' Perceptions of Their Education)

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
3	(Constant)	3.134	.197		15.948	.000
	Learning as Source of Skills	-.413	.039	-.392-	-10.719-	.000
	Expected job privileges	.224	.043	.190	5.216	.000
	Area of study (Social Science)	-.167	.081	-.075-	-2.057-	.040

6.8 Research Question 5: What are the factors that affect job satisfaction from the standpoint of graduates currently working?

To answer this question, the satisfaction level of graduates currently working needs to be investigated. Graduates' satisfaction level was investigated using the quantitative method of questionnaire.

6.8.1 Satisfaction Level of Graduates Currently Working

It is argued that satisfying graduates is vital, for it is widely known that a satisfied employee generally stays longer in a particular job (Schmidt-Hoffman and Radius, 1995). Therefore, job satisfaction could affect an employee's performance while in a job (see Chapter Two, Section 2.9, The Process of Recruiting Graduates). A statistical summary was used to calculate the median, standard deviation of graduates' responses to measuring their level of satisfaction. Table (6.25) shows that 54% of respondents indicated they were satisfied, while 27% indicated they were not.

Then, the respondents were asked about the reasons for their dissatisfaction. The majority of respondents (41%) were not satisfied with their current job because it does not allow them to acquire more skills. 40% of respondents were not satisfied with their current job because it does not allow them to use their talent. 38% were not satisfied with their current job because it does not correspond to their career aspiration. 34% were not satisfied with their current job because it does not allow them to acquire more experience. On the other hand, only 29% were not satisfied with their current job because it does not pay them a suitable salary, and 25% were not satisfied with their current job because it does not provide them with a balanced lifestyle. This indicates that the satisfaction level of graduates currently working is revolving around career development and attaining career aspirations rather than material privileges from their jobs.

Table 6.25 Graduates' Level of Satisfaction

Statements about Satisfaction	SD and Disagree % 1 and 2	Neutra l % 3	SA and Agree % 4 and 5	Mean	Std. dev.
1- Overall, I'm not satisfied with my current job.	54%	18%	27%	2.60	1.23
2- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't provide me with a suitable salary.	52%	20%	29%	2.71	1.22
3- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't provide me with a balanced lifestyle.	57%	18%	25%	2.61	1.22
4- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't provide me with career opportunities.	40%	21%	38%	2.98	1.25
5 - I'm not satisfied with my current job because my family had influenced my choice of job.	67%	19%	14%	2.23	1.11
6- - I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to travel.	50%	23%	27%	2.68	1.20
7- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to use my talent.	41%	19%	40%	3.01	1.25
8- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to acquire more skills.	38%	21%	41%	3.06	1.24
9- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to acquire more experience.	47%	19%	34%	2.82	1.26
10- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to work with people I like.	59%	21%	20%	2.49	1.20

However, the mean values of graduates' satisfaction level were close to 3 for almost all the above statements, indicating that the average response was neutral. Therefore, in order to acquire a clearer view of graduates' level of satisfaction with their current job, **Cross tabulation** was then performed to examine if graduates' expectations were met by their current jobs. To do this, cross tabulation was conducted for graduates' expectation from when they were doing their studies and have it compared with graduates' satisfaction on their current job on the same expectation (see Appendix 31 for cross tabulation). The intersection within the cross tabulation (representing an expectation that is agreed upon with a good satisfaction) was considered in the analysis to show the level of satisfaction within each skill (Table 6.26).

Table 6.26 Classification on Graduates' Satisfaction by Expectation

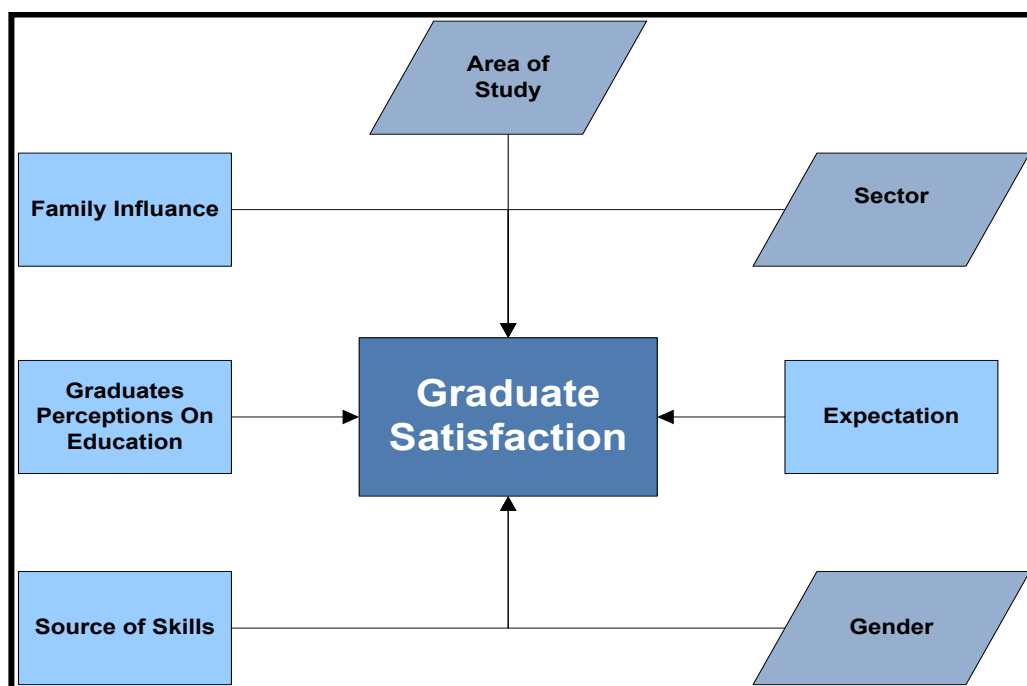
Classification	% met
Suitable salary	37%
Balanced lifestyle	33%
Career opportunities	33%
Fits in well with family expectations	26%
Opportunities to travel	16%
Opportunities to use talent	30%
Opportunities to acquire more skills	32%
Opportunities to acquire more experience	40%
Opportunities to work with people they like	45%
Overall Average	32%

Table (6.26) above shows the percentage of each expectation from employers considered by graduates while doing their studies that was met with a graduates' level of satisfaction. This represents the percentage of graduates' satisfaction with their current job. In other words, it demonstrates how graduates were satisfied with the opportunities they were expecting from employers. This can indicate the level of satisfaction among graduates with their current jobs. Hence, the overall satisfaction with what was considered as expected opportunities from employers was 32%. This implies that the majority of graduates were not satisfied with what they were expecting from their employers. 45% of graduates indicate that the opportunities to work with people they like ranked first in their sense of satisfaction as 45% of them believed that it was met (expected and satisfied). This was followed by opportunities to acquire more experience and suitable salary in second and third place with 40% and 37% respectively. However, the opportunities to travel and being able to fit in with family expectations were considered to be the least met by 16% and 26% respectively.

6.8.2 Factors that Affect the Satisfaction Level of Graduates Currently Working

It is important to understand the factors that affect graduates' sense of satisfaction. This will help us understand the reason(s) for such perceptions. Thus, this study will employ stepwise regression to examine the contribution of the different variables to the level of job satisfaction from the standpoint of graduates currently working. Moreover, factor analysis was employed in this section to remove redundancy in data and disclose the underlying pattern that may exist between the variables. Figure (6.4) evaluates the regression model for the satisfaction level of graduates currently working.

Figure 6-4 Regression Model (Graduates' Satisfaction)



- **Factor Analysis of the independent variables**

KMO and Bartlett's Test were first performed to check the reliability of the data. The result of KMO test using SPSS software for the independent variables was 0.794, which is more than the minimum level (0.7). This means that the correlations, on the whole, are sufficiently high to make factor analysis suitable. Also, the result of Bartlett's Test was .000, which indicates that it is significant (Table 6.27). The factor analysis conducted had reduced the 21 questions of the independent variables into 6 dimensions using the "eigenvalue" (See Appendix 23). Table (6.28) shows the 'Explained Variance' for the six dimensions. It indicates that 62% of the variance is accounted for in the first six dimensions, which is more than the minimum 50%, and is therefore valid.

Table 6.27 KMO and Bartlett's Test of the independent variables
(Graduates' Satisfaction)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.794
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3861.776
	Df	210
	Sig.	.000

Table (6.28) presents the factor loads. As mentioned earlier, the factor load assigned items to a certain specific concept if their factors loading on that construct are each greater than 50%. Therefore, the factor load rearranged the 9 items of expectations under two dimensions (expectations about job's privileges, and expectations about career development). Further, the three items from the source of skills were rearranged under two dimensions (learning as source of skills and experience as source of skills) (see Appendix 24).

Table 6.28 Factor Analysis of the independent variables (Graduates' Satisfaction)

Code	Dimension Name	Explained Variance	Factor Loading
1	Career Development Expectations	14.51%	
	1- I expect to work with an employer who provides me with career opportunities.		.695
	2- I expect to work with an employer who provides me with opportunities to use my talent.		.703
	3- I expect to work with an employer who provides me with opportunities to acquire more skills.		.870
	4- I expect to work with an employer who provides me with opportunities to acquire more experience.		.889
	5- I expect to work with an employer who provides me with opportunities to work with people I like.		.570
2	Perceptions of Education	13.00%	
	1- I feel that my education doesn't allow me to be competent at my job.		.797
	2- I feel that the university curriculum didn't prepare me optimally for the job.		.845
	3- There is no connection between what I have studied and the skills I need to do my current job properly.		.821
	4- I feel that I'm not suitable for the position I hold.		.570
3	Family Influences	12.87%	
	1- My family had an impact on my choice of job.		.797
	2- My family had an effect on my choice of job for conservative reasons.		.762
	3- My family had an effect on my choice of job because they own the organization I'm working in.		.634
	4- My family had an effect on my choice of job because they think they know better.		.799
	5- I used my family relationships to get the job I wanted.		.524
4	Expected Job's Privileges	10.13%	
	1- I expect to work with an employer who provides me with a high salary.		.624
	2- I expect to work with an employer who provides me with flexible working hours (balanced lifestyle).		.781
	4- I expect to work with an employer who fits in with my family expectations.		.593
	5- I expect to work with an employer who provides me with opportunities to travel.		.701
5	Learning as Source of Skills	5.74%	
	2- I have gained skills needed for my job from studying at university (education)		.528
	3- I have gained skills needed for my job from company training courses		.848
6	Experience as Source of Skills	5.30%	
	1- I have gained skills needed for my job from doing it (work experience)		.901
	Total	61.57%	

- **Factor Analysis of the dependent variable**

KMO and Bartlett's Test were performed and the result of KMO test for the dependent variables (satisfaction) was 0.909, which is more than the minimum level (0.7). This means that the correlations, on the whole, are sufficiently high to make factor analysis suitable. Also, the result of Bartlett's Test is .000, which indicates that it is significant (Table 6.29). The factor analysis conducted had reduced the 10 questions of the dependent variables into 2 dimensions using the "eigenvalue" (Appendix 25). Table (6.30) shows the 'Explained Variance' for the two dimensions. It indicates the 'Explained Variance' of each dimension and shows that 63% of the variance is accounted for in the first two dimensions, which is more than the minimum 50%, and is therefore valid. Hence, the factor load shows that the ten items of satisfaction were rearranged under two dimensions (satisfaction with the job's material privileges, and satisfaction with career development - see Appendix 26). Each dimension will be analyzed separately.

Table 6.29 KMO and Bartlett's Test of the dependent variables (Graduates' Satisfaction)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.909
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3103.653
	Df	45
	Sig.	.000

Table 6.30 Factor Analysis of the dependent variables (Graduates' Satisfaction)

Code	Dimension Name	Explained Variance	Factor Loading
1	Satisfaction with Career Development	36.38	
	1- Overall, I'm not satisfied with my current job.		.551
	2- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't aid my career aspiration.		.731
	3- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to use my talent.		.831
	4- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to acquire more skills.		.892
	5- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to acquire more experience.		.844
	6- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to work with people I like.		.521
2	Satisfaction with the Job's Material Privileges	26.26	
	1- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't pay me a suitable salary.		.656
	2- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't provide me with a balanced lifestyle.		.810
	3 - I'm not satisfied with my current job because my family had influenced my choice of job.		.777
	4 - I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to travel.		.545
	Total	63.26	

- **Satisfaction with Career Development**

Stepwise regression was employed to model the relationship between the following independent variables: career development expectations, perception on education, family influences, expected job privileges, learning as source of skills, experience as source of skills, gender, sector, area of study; and one dependent variable: satisfaction with career development. Tables (6.31) presents that the correlation between the following independent variables (perceptions on education, career development expectations, experience as source of skills, expected job privileges, learning as source of skills, area of study, and sector) and the dependent variable of satisfaction with career development is 50% (which is an average correlation).

Also, Table (6.31) shows that the aforesaid variables contribute to the level of satisfaction with career development by 25% in the variance. This indicates that the 25% of the satisfaction with career development comes from the significant independent variables mentioned above, while 75% of the satisfaction with career development is not included in this analysis. Hence, Table (6.32) shows that the model attained statistical difference (sig. 0.000, $p < 0.05$).

Table 6.31 Model Summary (Satisfaction with Career Development)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
7	.503^g	.253	.244	.86896

g. Predictors: (Constant), perceptions on education, career development expectations, experience as source of skill, expected job privileges, learning as source of skills, social, private.

Table 6.32 ANOVA Test (Satisfaction with Career Development)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
7	Regression	153.519	7	21.931	29.045	.000^g
	Residual	453.051	600	.755		
	Total	606.570	607			

g. Predictors: (constant), perceptions on education, career development expectations, experience as source of skill, expected job privileges, learning as source of skills, social, private.

The standardized regression coefficients are presented in Table (6.33) below. It shows satisfaction with career development as a dependent variable, as well as seven-independent variables which are considered in the model: perceptions on education, career development expectations, experience as source of skills, expected job privileges, learning as source of skills, area of study (social science), and sector (private). They are significant with Beta Coefficients representing .243, .194, -.147, .163, -.110, -.102, and -.101 respectively. All other variables were excluded from the final model, as they were not significant (see Appendix 27).

Based on the regression results, satisfaction with career development is affected by seven effects out of thirteen. The largest Beta Coefficient is 0.243 for perceptions on education, meaning that this variable makes the strongest positive unique contribution to explaining satisfaction with career development. Hence, career development expectations and expected job privileges also make a positive contribution to explaining the satisfaction with career development. On the other hand, experience as source of skills, learning as source of skills, sector (private), and area of study (social science) all have a significant negative impact on satisfaction with career development.

Table 6.33 Standardized Regression Coefficients (Satisfaction with Career Development)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
7 Constant	1.451	.339		4.284	.000
Perceptions on education	.252	.041	.243	6.174	.000
Career development expectations	.294	.060	.194	4.909	.000
Experience as source of skills	-.172	.042	-.147-	-4.098-	.000
Expected job privileges	.198	.049	.163	4.048	.000
Learning as source of skills	-.120	.042	-.110-	-2.841-	.005
Area of study (Social Science)	-.233	.081	-.102-	-2.856-	.004
Sector (Private)	-.218	.078	-.101-	-2.810-	.005

- **Satisfaction with the Job's Privileges**

The next step is to employ Stepwise Regression to model the relationship between the following independent variables (career development expectations, perception on education, expected job privileges, learning as source of skills, family influences, experience as source of skills, gender, sector, area of study) and one dependent variable (satisfaction with job privileges). Tables (6.34) indicates that the correlation between the following independent variables (expected job privileges, perception of education, area of study - business, gender - female, and experience as source of skills) and the dependent variable of satisfaction with the job's material privileges is 58% (which is above the average correlation). Also, Table (6.34) shows that there is a contribution of the expected job privileges, perception of education, area of study (business), gender (female), and experience as source of skills to the satisfaction with job privileges by 33% in variance. This indicates that 33% of the satisfaction level with the job's material privileges comes from the significant independent variables mentioned above, while 67% of the same level of satisfaction comes with the job's material privileges which are not included in this analysis. Hence, Table (6.35) also shows that the model attained a statistical difference (sig. 0.000, $p < 0.05$).

Table 6.34 Model Summary (Satisfaction with Job Privileges)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
5	.580^e	.336	.331	.74387

e. Predictors: (Constant), expected job privileges, perception of education, business, female, and experience as source of skills

Table 6.35 ANOVA Test (Satisfaction with job privileges)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
5	Regression	169.584	5	33.917	61.295	.000^e
	Residual	334.769	605	553		
	Total	504.352	610			

e. Predictors: (Constant), expected job privileges, perception of education, business, female, and experience as source of skills

The standardized regression coefficients are presented in Table (6.36) below. It shows satisfaction with the job's material privileges in terms of one dependent variable and five independent variables: expected job privileges, perception of education, area of study (business), gender (female), and experience as source of skills. These are considered within the model as they are significant with Beta Coefficients representing .464, .254, .115, -.101, and, -.096 respectively. All other variables were excluded from the final model as they were not significant (Appendix 28).

Based on the regression results, satisfaction with the job's material privileges is affected by five independent variables out of thirteen. The largest Beta Coefficient is 0.464 for the job's expected job privileges, meaning that this variable makes the strongest positive unique contribution to explaining satisfaction with the job's material privileges. Besides, the perception of education and area of study (business) also make a positive contribution to explaining satisfaction with the job's material privileges. On the other hand, gender (female) and experience as source of skills have a significant negative impact on satisfaction with the job's material privileges.

Table 6.36 Standardized Regression Coefficients (Satisfaction with Job's Privileges)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
5 Constant	.547	.210		2.607	.009
expected job privileges	.514	.038	.464	13.474	.000
Perception of education	.239	.032	.254	7.511	.000
Area of study (Business)	.210	.061	.115	3.451	.001
Gender (Female)	-.189-	.064	-.101-	-2.972-	.003
Experience as source of skills by	-.102-	.035	-.096-	-2.878-	.004

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the quantitative analysis of the data collected through employers' and graduates' questionnaires in an attempt to explore their points of view regarding the skills-gap in the Kuwaiti labour market and ultimately to address the research questions of this study. To be noted, however, is that question one and some parts of questions two and three will be addressed via a qualitative analysis of the interviews in Chapter Seven.

The employers' perceptions of the role of higher education (which answer parts of question two while the other part on policy makers' perceptions will be answered in chapter seven; interview analysis) were investigated through analyzing the questionnaires using the SPSS software application. The majority of employers (86%) stated that higher educational institutions should prepare graduates for the needs of the labour market. However, it was important to investigate the factors that affect employers' perceptions on the role of higher education in order to understand the reasons for such perceptions.

Therefore, this study employed stepwise regression to examine the contribution of the different variables to the employers' perceptions on the role of higher education. Based on the regression results from twelve different variables, the employers' perceptions on the role of higher education are affected positively by higher education-related problems. Hence, higher education-related problems include issues concerning the low quality of education and a lack of communication with the labour market. This suggests that employers are of the opinion that higher educational institutions are encountering problems of education quality and communication issues that affect their role as providers of knowledge and skills for the market place.

Factors influencing employers' attitudes to graduates' quality of education (which answer a part of question three, while the other part on policy makers' perceptions will be answered in Chapter Seven; Interview Analysis) were investigated through analysis of the questionnaires using the SPSS software application. Firstly, employers' attitudes to graduates' quality of education were investigated using preliminary analysis. Almost half of employers (47%) stated that graduates were not fully prepared for the needs of the labour market. Also, more than half of employers (58%) indicated that graduates have skills deficiencies. Moreover, the overall satisfaction with what was considered as important skills was 55%. This implies that almost half of employers were not satisfied with graduates' performance on the important skills that were expected and needed from them.

Secondly, the study employed stepwise regression to examine the contribution of the different factors to employers' perceptions on the graduates' quality of education. Based on the regression results from twelve different factors, the employers' perception of graduates' quality of education is affected positively by graduates' potential-related problems and higher educational institutions' lack of communication with the labour market.

Hence, graduates' potential-related problems make the strongest positive contribution to explaining the employers' perceptions which include a lack of graduate skills and motivation. This suggests that the reasons for the employers' dissatisfaction with the graduates' quality of education are a lack of graduate skills and motivation, as well as a lack of higher educational institutions' communication with the labour market.

Factors influencing graduates' attitudes to the quality of education they have received from universities (which thus address question four) were investigated through an analysis of the questionnaires using the SPSS software application. Firstly, the beliefs of graduates currently working regarding their qualifications were investigated using preliminary analysis. Almost a third of graduates believed that they have received a low quality of education using different statements (for issues of being competent and preparation, see Table 6.16 for more details).

Secondly, the study employed stepwise regression to examine the contribution of the different factors to graduates' attitudes towards the quality of education they have received at university. Based on the regression results from eight different factors, graduates' perceptions of the quality of their education are affected negatively by learning as source of skills and social science as area of study. On the other hand, they are positively affected by the expected job privileges. Hence, learning as source of skills makes the strongest negative contribution to explaining graduates' perceptions and includes skills acquired from education and company training courses. This suggests that the reasons for graduates' dissatisfaction with the quality of their education are mainly to do with not being able to acquire the skills needed for the jobs in their education and from field training. Also, it seems that social science graduates are more satisfied with the quality of their education. However, graduates were disappointed with the job's material privileges as their dissatisfaction with the quality of education increases when their expected job privileges increase.

Factors influencing graduates' job satisfaction, which address question five, were investigated through an analysis of the questionnaires using the SPSS software application. Firstly, the job satisfaction levels of graduates currently working were investigated using preliminary analysis. Almost a third of respondents were not satisfied with their current job (27%). However, the overall satisfaction with what was considered as expected opportunities from employers was (32%). It implies that the majority of graduates were not satisfied in terms of what they were expecting from their employers.

Secondly, the study employed stepwise regression to examine the contribution of the different factors to graduates' job satisfaction level. Based on the regression results from thirteen different factors, graduates' satisfaction with their career development is affected positively by perceptions on education, career development expectations, and the expected job privileges. Hence, perceptions on education make the strongest positive contribution to explaining their sense of satisfaction with career development and include issues such as the low quality of education (see Table 6.26 for more details). This suggests that the low quality of education is the main reason for graduates' dissatisfaction with their career development. Also, the positive relation with career development expectations and the expected job privileges implies that graduates are disappointed with what their jobs actually provide in terms of their career development and job's material privileges.

On the other hand, graduates' satisfaction with career development is affected negatively by experience as source of skills, learning as source of skills, private sector, and social science. This suggests that graduates believe that by gaining skills from education, company training courses and experience, this would increase the level of satisfaction with career development, which seems logical as gaining skills boosts career development. Moreover, it appears that graduates who work in the private sector are more satisfied with their career development. Lastly, it also appears that social science graduates are more satisfied with their career development and that their area of study allows them to be well prepared for their future career.

Besides, based on the regression results from thirteen different factors, graduates' level of satisfaction is affected positively by the expected job privileges, perception of education, and business area of study. This suggests that the expected job privileges were not met in the actual job and that the disappointment with the job's material privileges is the main reason for graduates' sense of dissatisfaction. In addition, it seems graduates believe that their low quality of education had resulted in their dissatisfaction with the job's material privileges. On the other hand, graduates' satisfaction with the job's material privileges is affected negatively by gender (females) and experience as source of skills. This suggests that women are more satisfied with their job's material privileges. It also appears that gaining skills from doing the job reduces the dissatisfaction level with the job's material privileges, perhaps because they realise that they have yet to earn it.

CHAPTER SEVEN: INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews. The interviews were aimed at collecting qualitative data in order to supplement the quantitative data already obtained through the questionnaires. This would make it possible to explore the points of view among policy makers and higher educational personnel if and when needed. The primary objective of personal interviews conducted with higher education institutions is to gauge their perception regarding education, knowledge, educational objectives, quality of their graduates, as well as the nature of the relationship with the labour market. On the other hand, the prime objective of interviews with policy makers is to identify their perception of graduates' potentials and education policies in general.

7.2 Characteristics of interviewees

A total of 14 respondents (3 policy makers, 9 teaching staffs, and 2 top-university management personnel) were interviewed. The policy maker respondents were 2 members of parliament involved with labour market issues; the first being the head of the Kuwaiti national assembly, while the other is the head of an important committee on education. The third policy maker was a former minister and member of parliament. The 9 teaching staffs were picked to equally represent the three colleges of business administration, education, and social sciences. Of the two top university management personnel, one is a dean and the other a member of the university council. All of them showed willingness to participate in the interviews.

7.3 Organization of Data

The themes that emerged are divided into four main sections. The first section presents the perceptions of policy makers and educators in relation to university graduates' potentials. The second section shows the beliefs and attitudes of policy makers and educators on the role of universities in terms of the provision of knowledge and skills. The third section investigates the communications between higher educational institutions and graduates with the labour market. Lastly, the fourth section explores the problems that exist in the Kuwaiti labour market.

7.4 The perceptions of employers, policy makers, and educators in relation to university graduates' potentials

There is a need to investigate the perceptions in the labour market with regard to university graduates' potentials. This will explore whether any skills-shortage exists in the Kuwaiti labour market. Policy makers' and educators perceptions were examined using quantitative analysis of interviews.

7.4.1 Policy Makers' Perceptions

The researcher first clarified to the interviewee the topic and aims of the research before each of the policy makers' interviews started. Also, policy makers were asked if they would agree to have their names mentioned or prefer to remain anonymous; all of them agreed to be mentioned by name. However, only 20 minutes were allowed for the researcher to conduct each interview, as these policy makers were very busy people.

The respondents were asked about their perceptions of university graduates and if they think that Kuwait university graduates are ready for the labour market. The response of the former Minister and former Member of Parliament, Mr. Ahmad Al-Kulaib, seems to have amounted to a sense of disappointment in the graduates' potentials. He stated that graduates' potentials and their readiness for the labour market do not seem to matter much for the Kuwaiti labour market. The graduates are motivated to study certain programs to win selected government jobs, which have lots of advantages regardless of the quality of their skills. Hence, in Kuwait, according to the Kuwaiti Constitution, Article 41, jobs in the government sector for Kuwaitis are guaranteed (Chapter three, Section 3.7: Politics and Labour Market Rules). This is how Mr. Al-Kulaib put it:

Kuwait University graduates' abilities and their readiness for the labour market is not really the matter anymore. Today, in Kuwait, the government sector has many privileges and rewards, which motivate graduates to study certain programs to get these advantages instead of focusing on the real labour market skills that are needed. So, we see a high demand for specific jobs due to the advantages they hold which thus creates a surplus, while other jobs, which are more important and needed by the labour market, tend to be neglected.

The response of the head of the Kuwait National Assembly was more diplomatic. Mr. Jasem al-Khorafy indirectly pointed out that Kuwait University graduates need more skills and training, and that there is a skills-gap in the Kuwaiti labour market. Hence, he mentioned that while Kuwait University produced qualified human resources, they should focus more on labour market needs, skills training, and field study programs, or as he put it:

The capabilities at Kuwait University are considerable and could produce qualified human resources for the labour market, but it needs good planning. Kuwait University must focus on three areas: the specializations that the labour market needs, skills training, and field study programs. This will reduce or perhaps even close the skills gap.

However, Dr. Salwa Al-Jassar, the head of the National Education Committee in Kuwait, responded somewhat diplomatically that there are individual differences among graduates, and that she could not pass judgment on graduates in general:

I can't answer this question in general; there are individual differences among graduates; graduates' potentials depend on each personality and ability. However, Kuwait University has played an important role in securing the number of employees and specializations required for the labour market.

The researcher asked if those graduates who secure the specialization required by the labour market were good enough in terms of graduates' potentials. The answer was also diplomatic. She did not mention graduates' potential in her answer again, but she stated that the concept of human development and training is lacking in Kuwait and there is a need to adopt 'qualifying' and 'training' concepts, which indicates that there is a lack in graduates' training and qualifications. It would seem that Dr. Al-Jassar does not want to place the blame on students as she thinks it is a university policy issue. She said:

Human development and training do not have a basic role in this country as a whole. I believe that Kuwait University should adopt the concepts of "qualifying" and "training". Also, I believe that Kuwait University ought to reconsider some programs and specializations, as there is no need for such specialization in the labour market. Also, the university should reconsider the faculty building itself in terms of technologies and electronic education.

According to the responses, the two policy makers' responses bring up the need for more training at Kuwait University. Also, all of them believed that there is a need to focus on the specializations needed by the labour market. Overall, all three policy makers confirmed that the labour market is facing a skill-related problem

7.4.2 Educators' perceptions

The researcher clarified to the interviewee the topic and aims of the research before each of the educators' interviews started. Also, the educators were asked if they agree to have their names mentioned or prefer to remain anonymous. Most of them preferred to remain anonymous.

The respondents were asked about their perceptions of university graduates and if they think that Kuwaiti university graduates are ready to enter the labour market. All of the respondents believed that Kuwaiti graduates are of very good quality; two of them even mentioned that they are excellent and top class graduates. However, all of the respondents indicated that the readiness of Kuwaiti graduates varies from one individual to another depending on personal qualities and training.

Most of the respondents stated that training is the most important factor needed in order to be ready for the labour market. Some of them indicated that graduates' readiness for the labour market depends on the training program being offered, which is, in the case of Kuwait University, only offered in limited programs. One educator stated thus:

Kuwaiti graduates are above average. Yet, their readiness for the labour market depends on their specialization. If graduates attend a program that includes field training, which is limited in Kuwait, then they will be more qualified than others and ready for the labour market because they have had some practicum in the real world.

Another educator said:

Kuwaiti graduates are very good and their readiness for the labour market depends on the programs attended. Most colleges in Kuwait University produced graduates with theoretical training. The practical aspects of training are really rare. They need more training to be fully ready for the labour market.

Another educator mentioned:

They are top class graduates; nevertheless, they are not completely ready for the labour market as they need extra training. They have acquired only the knowledge but they need to apply this knowledge in order to be ready for the labour market.

Also, one educator indicated that Kuwaiti graduates for the most part are good, but they need more training just as the other educators suggested. However, he assumed that training is not only limited to Kuwait University as mentioned earlier, but even if the program contains training, the graduates themselves were not happy with it as it concerns more with the general issues and not the details. He stated it this way:

To me, I'm satisfied with Kuwait University graduates since they are generally good. I'm not comparing our graduates with European graduates, as they are ahead us, more developed than us, and are more related to the labour market. But, in relation to the Arabic countries, Kuwait University is a prestigious university with qualified graduates. However, only a limited number of colleges at Kuwait University offer training. So, they offer only one subject for field training. In our college, it was introduced ten years ago. From the students' point of view, they were not fully satisfied with the field training. It aims only to give students a picture of what to expect in the future, the kinds of jobs available, and problems they might face in the future. So, the students have always complained that they only share general issues with them and not the details.

One educator indicated that graduates' readiness for the labour market depends on personal qualities such as ambition, energy, and seriousness. She stated thus:

Kuwaiti graduates are on average good graduates. However, their readiness for the labour market depends on personal qualities such as ambition, energy, and seriousness.

Then, the respondents were asked about the way Kuwaiti graduates are perceived in the employment market and the reason(s) for such perceptions. The majority of educators indicated that there is only a low level of dissatisfaction with graduates' skills. However, when they were asked for the reason behind such a view from the labour market, they all believed that this is not an educational fault. The majority of respondents mentioned that there are many social aspects that influence the level of satisfaction regarding graduates' skills within the Kuwaiti labour market. Some of them mentioned that social relations and cultural ties or the so-called "Wasta" could enable individuals to get specific jobs they do not deserve and/or not qualified for in terms of the needed skills. This creates such dissatisfaction among graduates within the labour market. In other words, the value of family relations created what is commonly called "Wasta" which is the use of social or personal relations to obtain something that is difficult to get, for example, a prestigious job. This was not a surprise when taking into consideration Kuwait as a country with a high context culture that appreciates social and family relations (Chapter Three, Section, 3.3.1 Kuwaiti Culture). One educator stated:

The labour market in Kuwait is slightly dissatisfied with our graduates' skills. There are many reasons for that but "wasta" comes first and foremost; many of my students inform me that their jobs are waiting for them even before graduation and in the best place in Kuwait regardless of their abilities.

Another educated said:

Yes, there is dissatisfaction within the labour market in relation to graduates' potentials. This is because of the social interference in Kuwait or "wasta", which has had a very bad influence on the Kuwaiti labour market. Qualified people can't get the job they deserve and put their motivation down because others with good social relations have been able to reserve the best seats.

Another educator mentioned:

"Wasta" plays a key role in the skills-gap within the Kuwaiti labour market. Let me explain: it enables individuals with high relations, most of whom have low skills, to get jobs they are very much unqualified for. While at the same time, other individuals with high skills and potential are doing jobs that they are overqualified for. This creates the skills-gap. In short, "the right person is not always in the right place in Kuwait".

The other reason mentioned for the dissatisfaction regarding graduates' skills was the social influence on graduates' choice of job and/or even on the area of study. This has an effect on graduates' performance, some of whom end up with careers they do not like, thus killing their career aspiration and ambition to work. One educator said:

There is a low dissatisfaction level with graduates' potentials in Kuwait; this is maybe because most parents think that they know what is best for their children. Therefore, parents force their children to work only in certain places or forbid them to work in others. This enforcement has a bad influence on their performance and motivation to work. There is also here the issue of "wasta".

Another educator said:

Yes, the labour market is not fully satisfied with graduates' potentials, but it is not their fault. Most of the girls I have taught in the college of education are forced by their families to do so because they want them to work in girls' schools after graduation where they would be guaranteed to face no men. They killed their ambition.

Conversely, only two respondents indicated that the labour market is happy with graduates' skills and abilities and that there is a good level of satisfaction with their potentials. A dean at Kuwait University stated it this way:

The majority of Kuwait University graduates are filling jobs that match their basic job requirements. The labour market is happy with what we offer.

Overall, the educators were convinced that Kuwaiti graduates are considered to be very good graduates. However, they indicated that the readiness of Kuwaiti graduates varies from one to another, depending on personal qualities and training. Most of the respondents stated that training is the most important factor needed to be ready for the labour market. Nevertheless, training is very rare at Kuwait University and is only offered in limited programs. This makes them not completely ready for the labour market, as they still need extra training. Moreover, the majority of educators indicated that there is a low dissatisfaction level with graduates' skills. They all agree that this is not an educational fault but there are many social aspects leading to such dissatisfaction. The first that most educators mentioned was "wasta". "Wasta" enables the employment of people in jobs they do not deserve or are not able to fulfill its requirements and needs. The other social reason for the dissatisfaction was parents' interference in their children's choice of job, which prevent them from building real careers according to their wish. However, only two respondents indicated that the labour market is happy with graduates' abilities and there is a good level of satisfaction with their potentials.

7.5 Policy makers' and educators' beliefs about the role of universities with regard to the provision of knowledge and skills

Policy makers' and educators' beliefs were investigated using qualitative analysis of interviews. Investigating the beliefs of policy makers and educators about the role of universities with regard to the provision of knowledge and skills is very important. This will aid in exploring who is responsible for providing skills and knowledge in the labour market at least from the standpoint of policy makers and educators.

7.5.1 Policy makers' beliefs

All the policy maker respondents had the same views and beliefs about the role of universities with regard to the provision of knowledge and skills. They all believed that it is the responsibility of universities to prepare graduates for the labour market.

Mr. Al-Kulaib stated that universities hold a direct responsibility to prepare graduates to match the labour market needs and requirements by first identifying those needs. Moreover, he emphasized the participation of the labour market in educational decisions before preparing the curriculum. He said:

In my opinion, higher education institutions have a direct responsibility to prepare students for the work place. I believe that they should prepare students to meet the labour market's real needs and requirements based on data collection and statistics from the labour market. I also believe that the labour market should participate in educational decisions before preparing human resources for the market.

He also put emphasis on the universities' responsibilities to produce training programs for students' degree studies and after graduation as well. He had this to say:

Higher educational institutions should hold training programs by the end of the students' degree studies, which help prepare those graduates with skills that match the labour market needs and requirements. They should also participate even after graduation in producing training programs that form employees to better match the labour market requirements in both sectors, government and private.

However, Mr. Al-Khorafy also declared that the responsibility of universities is not only to identify labour market skills needed and prepare graduates to fit those needs. He also mentioned that universities should identify the specializations needed by the labour market and start offering them instead of the ones that the market is already saturated with. He said:

Higher educational institutions are responsible for preparing students for the labour market. Thus, higher educational institutions should identify the labour market skill-needs and produce output that fits and matches the needs and requirements of the labour market. It should focus on the specialization that Kuwait needs now and in the future for its development. It should also stop producing specializations that the labour market is already saturated with and doesn't need anymore.

Dr. Al-Jassar agreed with her colleagues and mentioned clearly that preparing graduates for jobs in the labour market is a general policy in all countries around the world. She said:

It is a general policy of education in any country around the world; educational institutions are liable to prepare individuals for the labour market.

She confirmed that it is the responsibility of educational institutions to prepare graduates that can match the needs of the labour market in quantitative and qualitative terms. Not only that, she also stated that higher educational institutions should provide training courses as well for the employees themselves. This will enable them to update their knowledge and together with new student recruits, it will provide the opportunity to exchange employees' experiences with students' fresh thoughts and insights. She said:

I believe that Kuwait University has a great responsibility to prepare students for the labour market. It should also train employees who are already in the labour market and involve them in training courses with students (in and out). This allows for the opportunity to exchange experiences and thoughts, which is considered as a pioneering step in the USA.

Overall, all policy makers agreed that it is the responsibility of higher educational institutions to prepare graduates for the labour market. One of them mentioned that higher educational institutions should determine the skills needed through collecting data and statistics from the labour market. He also emphasizes that the labour market should participate in creating the curriculums. This indicates the importance of labour market involvement in educational decisions. This was supported by another member of parliament who declared that universities should identify the specializations that are needed by the labour market and start offering them instead of the ones with which the market is already saturated.

7.5.2 Educators' beliefs

Overall, all of the educator respondents argue that the basic role of higher educational institutions is to provide the essential basic knowledge. It was surprising that even though most educator respondents revealed that their graduates were not ready for the labour market because of the lack of training, most of them stressed at the same time that it is not necessarily their responsibility. The educators in that sense were divided into two groups. Most of them argue that the basic role of higher educational institutions is to provide the essential knowledge for the labour market only, while training is the role of employers to ensure that graduates satisfy their job requirements. One educator stated:

The main responsibility of a university is to produce high quality higher education with the essential and basic knowledge. At Kuwait University, we produced individuals with only the theoretical level needed for the job. Training is the responsibility of the employers themselves. It is not reasonable to expect that the university would churn out people who know details of their work from day one! Employers should prepare graduates according to their needs. Hence, human resource development exists in all of the country's institutions.

Another educator mentioned:

The universities' job is about producing graduates with basic knowledge according to the area of specialization. Thus, it's normal for graduates to lack some skills needed for jobs. It's the labour market's job to prepare graduates with the skills needed for each position they may hold and offer them the training that enables them to do their jobs.

A dean of Kuwait University stated:

The main goal of university is to spread knowledge. Thus, each workplace should take up their responsibilities in preparing their employees with the skills that match their own specific requirements.

The second group argues that the basic role of higher educational institutions is to provide the essential knowledge for the labour market. However, they assumed that higher educational institutions are required to partly prepare graduates for labour market requirements or to "enable the graduates to taste the labour market" as one of them put it. An educator stated:

The main aim of universities is to produce knowledgeable graduates. Also, one of the other responsibilities of universities is to implement outcome-based learning academic program models in order to respond to the societal and market needs of the country. To me, I consider higher educational institutions as partly responsible for preparing their graduates to meet labour market needs.

Another educator mentioned:

Generally speaking, universities' main responsibility is to promote the application of contemporary knowledge and noble humanitarian values. However, one of the other responsibilities of universities is to prepare graduates with the labour market's needed skills.

The university is supposed to take into account the needs of the labour market but need not be an accurate vocational preparation. This is the responsibility of the employer himself. We offer simple subjects for senior fourth year students in some colleges at Kuwait University just to 'enable the graduates to taste the labour market'. For example, they visit the labour market to acquaint themselves with the different departments.

However, the second group was asked: what should higher educational institutions do in order to better prepare graduates for the labour market's needs? They mentioned issues such as introducing more field training, practical subjects, workshops, and communication with the labour market so as to get feedback on performance and recommendations for better preparation. One educator mentioned:

We should introduce more practical learning and field training rather than the theoretical ones that had been introduced. This will enable the better preparation of graduates for the labour market's needs. Not only that but introducing new practical learning and training programs after graduation for those who want to acquire more skills related to the labour market should be a priority.

Another educator stated that:

We need to continuously explore and evaluate the market's needs and change the curriculum to correspond with the changes needed by the labour market, which would enable growth in the country's development plans. Moreover, more practical training must be introduced within the students' curriculum such as workshops and case studies. Also, introducing the fieldwork subject to all colleges should be made mandatory; and lastly, communicating with the labour market through personal visits and statistics in order to know the number of graduates needed for each discipline, thereby matching the needs of the labour market.

Overall, the majority of educator respondents agreed that the basic role of higher educational institutions is to provide students with the essential basic knowledge. Hence, the majority of respondents argue that training is also the role of employers for their graduates. It was interesting that although most educator respondents revealed that their graduates were not ready for the labour market, most of them also stressed that it is not necessarily their responsibility.

However, some of the respondents argue that they are required to partly prepare graduates for labour market requirements. This group explains that universities should introduce more field training, practical subjects, workshops, as well as communicating with the labour market to get feedback on performance and recommendations for the better preparation of graduates.

7.6 Communications between higher educational institutions and graduates with the labour market

Communication between the stakeholders of the labour market is vital in order to communicate needs, requirements, and feedback to/from each group. This section explores the communication between the stakeholders of the Kuwaiti labour market. Policy makers' and educators' perceptions regarding communication were explored using one form of quantitative analysis: interviews.

7.6.1 Communications from Policy Makers' Point of View

The respondents were asked about their opinions and perceptions with regard to communication within the Kuwaiti labour market. Mr. AlKulaib and Mr. AlKhorafy both agreed that communication between labour market stakeholders is vital and that the lack of such communication is the main problem in the Kuwaiti labour market. Mr. AlKhorafy said that there is a gap in the Kuwaiti labour market due to the lack of communication between educational institutions and the labour market. This deficiency in communication results in graduates that do not match the needs of the labour market, or as he stated:

The main reason for the gap is the absence of any organizing and planning between educational institutions and the labour market. The gap now is very big between the high number of graduates that do not match the needs of the labour market. This is because graduates are specialized in programs that the labour market doesn't need. The university should focus on specializations that the labour market needs such as scientific and technical specialization to carry out development requirements.

Mr. AlKulaib also agreed on the role of communication between the key parties in the labour market, employers and higher educational institutions, in creating mutual understanding and solving labour market problems. He stated:

Communication is absent within the Kuwaiti labour market. However, it is the key to solve the labour market problems and to understand more about labour market needs; then, to evaluate and repair the previous programs and curriculum in all disciplines to match those needs.

Dr. Al-Jassar agreed with her colleagues as to the significance of communication between educational institutions and the labour market. However, she stated that communication exists within the Kuwaiti labour market. As the head of the higher education council in Kuwait, she confirmed that the higher council of Kuwait University is obliged by law to appoint two representatives from the public and private sectors to attend all the meetings. She declared:

By all means, communication is important and exists between higher educational institutions and the labour market. There are many existent and enforceable acts regarding the relationship between higher educational institutions and the labour market. For example, the law stipulates on the necessity to appoint two representatives on behalf of the public sector against two representatives on behalf of the private sector to attend all meetings held by the higher council of Kuwait University.

She also mentioned that there is an “internship” that exists in a limited way between the university and the labour market. This memorandum of understanding allows final year students in some colleges to attend a field study in the Kuwaiti labour market. She said:

The "internship" is also another type of communication among educational institutions and the labour market, which exists in a limited way within Kuwait. It is considered as a memorandum of understanding, which enables final university students to attend a field experience in the labour market.

Then, the respondents were asked if there is a need to implement new legislation in the future in order to link educational institutions to the labour market. The responses of the policy makers vary. Mr. AlKharafy indicated that government legislations and regulations are important to ensure communication in the labour market. He stated:

There should be rules and regulation to connect higher educational institutions and the labour market. This is about our youths and their future.

Nevertheless, Mr. AlKulaib suggested that rules and regulations would not be effective. He brought up the example of the “kuwaitization” rule, which forces private companies to employ a specific percentage of Kuwaiti employees (Chapter Three, Section 3.6.2 Privatization and the Kuwaiti Labour Market). He mentioned that this law was neglected by private companies and is applied on paper only as is the case with many laws in Kuwait. He stated:

I don't think any regulation in this field will be effective for it is applied only on paper as is usual in Kuwait. For example, there is a labour law that forces private companies to employ Kuwaitis in their companies and apply fines for not obeying. However, in reality companies only fake the contract with Kuwaitis.

Dr. Al-Jassar also indicated that there is no need for rules and regulations but another perspective. She declared that rules and regulations already exist but need to be reinforced. She stated:

I think there is no need for new legislations; we just need to implement what we already have in a more effective way.

Overall, policy makers all agreed on the importance of communication in creating an understanding within the labour market and to solve problems. However, their perceptions regarding the existence of communication within the labour market varied. Two of them had stressed that there is a lack of communication within the Kuwaiti labour market. However, the third policy maker disagreed and declared that communication exists in a limited way through attendance by graduates of some programs such as field experience, and through the obligatory attendance of labour market representatives at the university higher council meetings. However, another policy maker suggested that laws do exist regarding the labour market. The problem is that they have not been applied in reality.

7.6.2 Communications from Educators' Point of View

The interviews with higher education personnel show their perspective on communication with the labour market. All of the educators agreed that communication with the labour market is important. They all consider communication as the only way in which they could be able to retain feedback on the quality of graduates' knowledge and education.

One educator mentioned:

The communication with the labour market is essential as it's the only way that we could attain feedback on our graduate's knowledge.

It was noticeable what one educator respondent mentioned that what he meant by feedback is the quality of the graduates' theoretical part and basic knowledge, not on skills that they should attain from experience. He said:

Of course, communication is important to get our hands on our graduates' achievements and drawbacks. However, we are looking for feedback on the theoretical part and basic knowledge, not the skills that they should gain through doing their jobs.

Also, most of the respondents including the dean and the member of the university council declared that they need the feedback to recognize the specializations needed by the labour market in the right quantity. The dean in Kuwait University stated:

We need to communicate with the labour market. The aim for such communication is to understand what specializations they need in the right quantity.

A member of the University council said:

It's important to understand what is needed in the labour market. This will enable us to decide on the number of students we should accept in each area.

Regarding their communication with the labour market, most of the respondents state that communication with the labour market is weak and pointed to field training (which is limited in Kuwait), rarely campus visits, and recruitment fairs in some universities. One educator stated:

The communication with the labour market somehow exists through field training and limited campus visits.

Another educator said:

Yes, there is weak communication with the labour market through field training. Also, some colleges in Kuwait University hold recruitment fairs once a year. This depends on the college administration if they are interested in such fairs. Yet, three colleges at Kuwait University have such recruitment fairs.

However, some educators indicate that there is a strong form of formal communication with the labour market. The member of university council ensured that there is a communication with the labour market through appointing representatives from both private and public sectors to the faculty and university council to acquire their feedback. He stated:

Yes, we do communicate with the labour market through appointing members from the labour market to the faculty council and university council to get direct feedback.

Nevertheless, two educators state that these committees do not work effectively at all times. One educator mentioned an incident that happened about 7 years ago when a major company in the country asks for more graduates of specific knowledge but at the end of the day, it did not recruit any of them and no one could force them to do so. He stated:

The committees in colleges include major employers in the country to identify their needs. But it doesn't work all the time. 7 years ago, a major company in the country asks for more graduates with specific knowledge, and the college did provide them. Later, the company stopped recruiting our graduates without any excuse or notice and no one can force them to do so, most likely because they were able to recruit cheaper employees from abroad.

Another educator declared that colleges' committees do meet twice a year. But at most times, the labour market representatives do not appear. He stated:

The college higher committee meeting is held twice a year and two representatives of the labour market are supposed to attend, but at most times they simply don't appear!

Overall, the educators all agree that communication is essential for attaining feedback on graduates' education and knowledge. They all consider communication as the only way to retain feedback on the quality of their graduates' knowledge and education. Also, they appreciate communication as it enables them to recognize specializations that are needed by the labour market and in the right quantity.

However, most of the respondents state that communication with the labour market is weak and point to field training (which is limited in Kuwait), rarely campus visits, and recruitment fairs in some universities. Nevertheless, one educator declared that there is a strong form of formal communication with the labour market through the appointing of labour market representatives to their faculty council and university council. However, other educators revealed that these committees do hold meetings but they do not work effectively all the time.

7.7 Problems that affect the Kuwaiti Labour Market

There is a need to investigate the problems that affect the Kuwaiti labour market in order to recognize if there is a skills-gap within the labour market and the reasons for such a gap. Policy makers' and educators' points of view were explored using quantitative analysis with interviews.

7.7.1 Problems from Policy Makers' Point of View

The respondents were asked if there are any problems facing the Kuwaiti labour market. All the policy makers indicated that there are many. Mr. Alkulaib mentioned that the main problem in the Kuwaiti labour market is the growth of the gap between the output of higher education in terms of quality and quantity on the one hand and labour market needs on the other. He suggested that the main reasons for the gap are poor planning for educational programs, which creates a surplus in some jobs and deficit in others, as well as poor education policies with poorer implementation, resulting in low quality graduates. He said:

There is an increasing mismatch between the output of higher education and labour market needs. In the one hand, there is an emphasis on some programs that would lead to surplus in certain jobs. On the other hand, it will create deficit in other jobs needed by the labour market. There are poor education policies and poorer implementation, which generate a negative influence on education and curriculums leading to lower quality output from the educational institutions.

Mr. Alkhorafy also revealed that there are many problems facing the labour market in Kuwait. Most of the problems he mentioned were education-related problems such as the graduate's specializations that may not be needed by the labour market (implies poor planning), absence of field experience for the fresh graduates, education style in Kuwait which depends on listening and memorizing rather than practical issues, and the high number of graduates without the job that fits them.

He also mentioned another problem such as the big number of expatriates in Kuwait and the tendency of Kuwaitis to work in the public sector rather than the private sector. He said:

Yes, there are problems facing the labour market. First, there is a high number of graduates while jobs that do not really fit them. Second, there are many specializations that are not needed by the labour market. Third, there is a lack of field experience for the fresh graduates. Fourth, the advantages of working in the government sector reduce the willingness to work in the private sector, which is therefore filled with expatriates. Fifth, there is a big number of expatriates in the private sector, which amounts to 70%. Sixth, the education style in Kuwait overly depends on listening and memorizing.

Dr Al-Jassar also agreed with her colleagues as to the mismatch between the specializations required for the labour market and what is offered by the labour market. She stated:

There is a lack of students who had graduated and studied in rare specializations required for the labour market, whereas the Kuwaiti market still depends on non-Kuwaitis in many specializations such as Medicine, Engineering, and Technology. We need to extend such specializations and to encourage the youth to study in such specializations.

Overall, all the policy makers agreed on the problem of mismatch between the specializations needed by the labour market and what is offered by educational institutions. This implies that there is poor planning for such programs and specializations, especially where they are not demanded by the labour market but are still taught and offered by universities. It appeared that the lack of communication mentioned earlier had resulted in poor planning for the programs, which creates a surplus in some jobs and deficit in others. This imbalance creates the need for expatriates to cover for the needed jobs, which was mentioned by one policy maker as another problem.

Also, there is the problem of the quality of education. Two policy makers mentioned that in Kuwait there is a lack of field experience for new graduates. Hence, field experience is vital as it is the only way to enable graduates to connect directly with the labour market. Also, one policy maker mentioned that the education style in Kuwait is based more on listening and memorizing rather than practical issues. The graduates only know the theoretical part but not the practical part when they find a job. However, one policy maker indicated that some programs include field experience in the senior year before graduation.

7.7.2 Problems from Educators' Point of View

The respondents were asked if there are any problems facing the Kuwaiti labour market. All of the educators indicated that there are many. They all agreed on the problem of social interference or “wasta”. Most educators ranked it as the number one disease in the labour market. One educator stated:

Yes, there is a lot. However, the social interference in Kuwait or “wasta” has the worst influence on the Kuwaiti labour market. Qualified people can't get the job they deserve because others with good social relations have the good seats reserved for them.

Another educator said:

The Kuwait labour market suffers from the same old problems of many years ago, with the most important being social interference in employment.

The dean mentioned:

In Kuwait, you will always find the wrong person in the wrong place because of “Wasta” or social relations.

Another educator said:

It is very obvious that there are many qualified graduates who have jobs that don't match their qualifications because the people who have social relations get those jobs.

Many educators also mentioned the problem of the mismatch between the specialization needed by the labour market and what is offered at university level. One educator stated:

Yes, there are graduates with certain specializations who face difficulties in finding suitable places for them in the labour market according to their specializations. Therefore, they work in places that are not suitable to their fields and ambition. This will lead them to be less productive and creative.

Another educator said:

Yes, it is very obvious that there are many qualified graduates who cannot find a suitable job mostly because there are more than enough people with the same specialization like what happened to the pilots who graduated three years ago and yet they haven't found jobs that fit their training. There are pilots who do administrative jobs!

Furthermore, some educators mentioned that there is a problem with regard to the implementation of educational plans. They agreed that those plans are well planned, but only on paper, while the resources are plenty but unutilized. It's very rare to produce results because of long routine, unapproachable regulation, committee limitation, and with the most negative feature being the wrong person in the wrong place. One educator stated:

There are many educational plans and plenty of resources but it is very rare to get results. There is the long routine, remote regulation, committee limitation, with the most negative feature being the wrong person is sitting in the wrong place.

Another educator mentioned:

Most of the labour market plans, including communication plans, are written on paper and kept on the shelf!! There is no seriousness when it comes to implementation.

It is noteworthy that one educator mentioned the subject of the quality of education. He mentioned that there is a problem with the teaching style in Kuwait, which depends for the most part on theories rather than practical studies, which lead to graduates who are low in practical skills. She stated it this way:

Kuwaiti graduates are low in their practical skills quality because of the old-fashioned way of teaching where most of the curriculum depends on theories rather than practical issues.

There were other problems mentioned by another educator such as low productivity and the reliance on expatriates. He mentioned that there is a need to integrate all the key parts in the labour market including employers in the first place because they represent the demand side for educational institutions, and the graduates themselves who are to fix these problems. He stated:

The Kuwaiti labour market suffers from problems of many years ago, summarized by the following points: social interference in employment, low productivity, dependence on expatriates. These problems should be fixed by integrating all the key parts in the labour market including labour market in the first place because they are the demand side for education institutions, and of course the graduates themselves.

Overall, all educators agreed that there are many problems facing the Kuwaiti labour market. Most educators ranked “wasta” or the interference from social relations as the number one disease in the labour market. Also, most of them mentioned the problem of the mismatch between the specialization needed by the labour market and what is offered at universities.

It seems that the weak communication mentioned earlier has lowered the coordination between the labour market and higher educational institutions resulting in the mismatch between supply and demand in the labour market. Moreover, some educators mentioned problems related to the implementation of the educational plans which very rarely get results. It was also striking that one educator mentioned the subject of the quality of education and skill shortage as one of the labour market problems. Other problems were also mentioned such as low productivity and dependence on expatriates.

7.8 Conclusion

Overall, all policy makers indirectly pointed out that Kuwait University graduates need more skills and that there is a skills-gap in the Kuwait labour market. On the contrary, all the educators were convinced that Kuwaiti graduates should be considered as very good graduates. However, the majority of educators indicate that their graduates are not ready for the labour market and agree with policy makers that training is the most important factor to be ready for the labour market. Hence, it turns out that practical training is very rare at Kuwait University and is only offered in limited programs, and even if it is offered, it only deals with general issues. In addition, all policy makers confirmed that the labour market is not satisfied with graduates’ skills and that the labour market is facing a skills-related problem. Equally, the majority of educators indicated that there is only a low dissatisfaction with graduates’ skills. However, from their point of view, this is not an educational fault as they provide good knowledge for their graduates. It is the influence of many social aspects such as “Wasta” that enables the employment of people in jobs they do not deserve or are able to fulfill its requirements, not to mention parents’ interference in their children’s choice of job.

The debate over the responsibilities of higher education with regard to the provision of knowledge and skills has been introduced in the literature for some time now. This debate also exists in Kuwait. All of the policy makers agreed that it is the responsibility of higher educational institutions to prepare graduates for the labour market. However, the majority of educators argue that the basic role of higher educational institutions is to provide the essential and basic knowledge while training is the role of employers. It was interesting that although the majority of educator respondents revealed that their graduates were not ready for the labour market as mentioned earlier, most of them stressed that it is not necessarily their responsibility. However, a fewer number of educators indicated that they are required to partly prepare graduates to meet labour market requirements.

Both policy makers and educators seem to treasure the importance of communication within the labour market. Policy makers appreciate communication, as it is the only way to create understanding within the labour market and solve problems. Equally, educators appreciate communication, as it is the only way to attain feedback on graduates' education and to determine the specializations needed by the labour market in the right quantity, thereby creating a sense of mutual understanding. However, their perceptions with regard to the existence of communication within the labour market varied. To most policy makers, there is a lack of communication within the Kuwaiti labour market. On the same track, another policy maker and most educators agreed that there is only weak communication within the Kuwaiti labour market. Hence, most educators revealed that communication leads to field training (which is limited in Kuwait), campus visits, and recruitment fairs in some universities. However, one educator declared that there is an ideal form of formal communication with the labour market through appointing labour market representatives to their faculty council and university council. A policy maker who preferred that there is an obligatory attendance for labour market representatives at university higher council meetings supported this. However, other educators revealed that these committees do hold meetings but do not work effectively all the time. This only confirmed what another policy maker suggested that laws do exist in the labour market but they have not been applied in reality.

Most educators ranked "wasta" or the interference from social relations as the number one disease in the labour market. However, policy makers and educators agreed on the problem of mismatch between the specialization needed by the labour market and what is offered at university. This implies that there is poor planning for such programs and specializations which are not demanded by the labour market but still taught and offered at university. It appeared that the weak communication mentioned earlier has resulted in the lack of information needed for planning, leading to inadequate planning for programs, which creates a surplus in some jobs and deficit in others.

The area of poor planning was mentioned also by some educators who indicated that there are problems related to the implementation of educational plans which rarely produce results. Also, some policy makers mentioned issues regarding the quality of education and that graduates only know the theoretical part but not the practical part. This is due to the lack if not absence of field experience with new graduates and one educator supported this.

CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a complete evaluation and discussion of the responses acquired from the questionnaires and interviews reported in the previous chapters. The findings are grouped in terms of the research questions presented in Chapter One, and each of the questions is answered on the basis of the research findings and in relation to the literature reviewed in an earlier chapter.

8.2 Universities' Beliefs in Terms of the Role They Should Play with Regard to the Provision of Knowledge and Skills

Question 1: The first research question investigates the role universities believe they should play with regard to the provision of knowledge and skills. The analysis of the data indicates that *overall, the majority of educators agreed that the basic role of higher educational institutions is to provide the essential basic knowledge. However, a smaller number argued that besides providing the basic knowledge, they are required to partly prepare graduates for labour market requirements.*

The universities in Kuwait believed that their job revolves around providing the basic knowledge to their students and that it is the employers' job to prepare graduates with the desirable skills for each specific job. The educators in that sense were divided into two groups. The majority argues that the basic role of higher educational institutions is to provide the essential knowledge for the labour market alone, while training is indeed the role of employers to ensure that graduates satisfy their job requirements.

"The main goal of any university is to spread knowledge. Thus, each workplace should take up the responsibilities of preparing their employees with the skills that match their own specific requirements."

The second group also agreed that the basic role of higher educational institutions is to provide the essential knowledge for the labour market. However, they assumed that higher educational institutions are required to partly prepare graduates for labour market requirements or to “enable the graduates to taste the labour market”. They mentioned issues such as introducing more field training, practical subjects, workshops, and communication with the labour market so as to get feedback on performance and recommendations for a better preparation.

This is part of the famous and old debate regarding the role of universities. This debate has been evolving in the literature over the years (See chapter Two Section 2.5: Higher Education and the Labour Market Debate). A number of studies have argued that the main role of higher educational institutions is to prepare students for employment, and this is their responsibility, especially to prevent the risk of skills gap within the labour market. On the other hand, others have argued that it is not the educational institutions’ job to provide employable graduates. It is obvious that Kuwaiti educators are more likely to take the side of the second group.

However, the relevant literature reviewed in chapters one and two have demonstrated that there is a strong relationship between education, labour market, economic, and social development; see, for example: Mincer (1970), Card (1990), Ashenfelter and Card (2000), Heckman et al. (2000), Hanushek and Welch (2006). In summary, it was proven that an adequate education boosts an employee's level of productivity and skills, while helping individuals obtain suitable jobs. This naturally leads to a higher income and an enhanced social status. This indicates clearly that there is a strong relationship between economic wellbeing, an adequate education, and the labour market. Hence, all the educator-respondents agreed that their graduates are of very good quality. Yet, they also indicated that their graduates’ readiness for the labour market varies from one individual to another depending on personal qualities and the training program being offered. Hence, most respondents stated that training is the most important factor for the labour market. Nevertheless, this is still a vague answer as educators themselves admit that training is very rare at Kuwait University and is only offered in limited programs. This makes them not completely ready for the labour market, as they still need extra training. It was also surprising that educators admit to the importance of training for graduates and that training programs are very rare at Kuwait University, even though most of them stressed that providing such programs is not their responsibility.

“Most colleges in Kuwait University produced graduates with theoretical training. The practical aspects of training are really lacking. They need more training to be fully ready for the labour market.”

Moreover, one educator indicated that training is not only limited at Kuwait University, but even if such a program contains training, the graduates themselves were not happy with it as it concerns more with general issues and not the details. This may give an indication that graduates are not fully ready for the labour market as they rarely attend training programs and even if they attend them, they were not satisfied with what they got. Hence, this theoretical education (that lacks training and produces graduates who are not ready for the labour market) does not match the new international trend where an adequate education is what produces graduates with employability skills.

This latest international trend mentioned above emphasizes the responsibility of universities to produce employable graduates. This trend understands that key employability skills provide a bridge between education and jobs. As such, it will be easier to manage the graduate labour market, solve problems, and bridge the gap in the market. A number of countries in the world had taken serious steps in an effort to close or reduce the skills gap in the labour market (Chapter Two, Section 2.8: Relationship between Higher Education Institution and the Labour Market). Evidence in the literature suggests that in the mid-1990s labour market stakeholders in many countries worldwide started to reappraise the problem within the market and called for change (see Chapter Two, Section 2.7.2: Link between Employability and Education). This trend believes that the primary objective of higher education is to promote sustainable growth and development by matching graduates with labour market needs.

Developed countries such as the UK, Canada, USA, and Australia follow it (Chapter Two, Section 2.8: Relationship between Higher Educational Institutions and the Labour Market). The main logic for this trend is that studies have found a significant correlation between education, productivity and earning. Evidence in the literature also shows that the appropriate education for human resources, with the required knowledge and skills, and a set of personal competences, is seen as vital to effective functioning and progress in the long run (see Chapter Two, Section 2.4: Education and Human Resource Development).

All in all, the new international trend reckons that universities have the responsibility to prepare their students with the knowledge, abilities, talent, and skills that are demanded by employers (employability skills), thereby helping to sustain national development and stability let alone bridging the skills gap. Contrary to the new international trend of higher education providing employable graduates to the market, most educators in Kuwait seem not to support the employability trend and stressed that it is not their responsibility to do so.

However, there are other benefits associated with education other than economic and social rewards. There is also a connection between education and improving human resource development (World Bank, 2008; Barro, 2000). There is abundant literature offering indications on the value of investing in education to improve human resources and thereby influence economic development and progress (see, for example, Hanushek and Kimko, 2000; Krueger and Lindahl, 2000; Hanushek and Woessmann, 2007). For example, the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE) claimed that producing developed human resources that meet labour market needs should lead to a successful and effective competition in the international market (Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe, 2000). Also, the World Bank (2008) states that education is a vital catalyst for improving the livelihood of individuals. Human Resource Development (HRD) is defined as the development of skills, knowledge and abilities of individuals so that they can contribute to the economic and social development of a country (Barro, 2000:16). This definition implies that HRD is a result of education and suggests the importance of education towards HRD. Hence, HRD is a vital issue as Munro and Ranbird (2002) argued, for nations will be trapped in a low-skills and low-wages economy unless there is investment in human resource development.

However, HRD literature had always emphasized enhancing individual performance throughout training. It had placed great importance on the need for education providers to survey and study the labour market requirements when developing training and skills acquisition programs (Barrington et al., 2004; Garavan and McGuire, 2001; Rehman, 2008). Thus, HRD introduces the term 'Systematic Training Cycle' (STC) (Chapter Two Section 2.10: Labour Market and HRD). Higher education institutions can adopt the same logic of "Training Needs Cycle" in developing their programs and curriculum. No wonder, the literature suggests that training needs must to be determined before training itself can be suitably undertaken. This is also applicable to higher educational institutions if they are to produce useful graduates.

Therefore, higher educational institutions should establish their key objectives in relation to national development plans. And then, it should identify skills, needs and requirements of employers in both the public and private sector using techniques such as management information system. Next, it should specify employers' needs in order to understand precisely the skills gap in the labour market using methods such as investigating labour market stakeholders (e.g. ministers, member of parliaments, employers, and potential graduates) as well as acquiring data related to required skills such as direct observation and expert interviews. Later, higher educational institutions should translate skills requirements and needs into action and prepare their programs and curriculum in conjunction with the required skills. Afterwards, it should start with one or two programs and monitor those plans in order to evaluate and investigate if they are effective in meeting the skills needed by employers. Communicating with labour market stakeholders to acquire their reaction and feedback can do this in addition to being able to better prepare individuals to fit labour market needs and close the skills gap, if any. This was supported in the literature. The literature suggests that in an effort to close the gap and adjust the balance and understanding between labour supply and demand, the relationships between the labour market and education system ought to be reinforced and supported.

To sum up, educators revealed that their graduates are of good quality, but their programs lack training. Moreover, they are of the opinion that they are not responsible for providing skills needed for the labour market. This gives the signal that the quality of education lacking training and skills needed by the market is responsible for the skills gap in the Kuwaiti labour market.

8.3 The Role that Players in the Labour Market Expect Universities to Play regarding the Provision of Knowledge and Skills

Question 2. The second research question is as follows: what role do players in the labour market expect universities to play regarding the provision of knowledge and skills?. The analysis of the data presented in the previous chapter suggests that *the majority of employers think that universities should prepare graduates for the labour market, even as Kuwait University is encountering problems regarding its role in the provision of knowledge and skills. These problems include the quality of education and lack of communication with the labour market.*

Part one: The majority of employers (86%) stated that higher educational institutions should prepare graduates for the needs of the labour market (with a mean value of 3.95), indicating that the average response was affirmative. Hence, based on the regression results in Chapter Six, employers' perceptions of higher education's role are affected by one factor out of twelve. The Beta Coefficient is 0.498 of higher education-related problems, meaning that it makes a positive and unique contribution to explaining employers' perceptions of higher education. This implies that employers consider higher educational institutions to have problems regarding their role in the provision of knowledge and skills. These problems include issues such as the quality of education and communication with the labour market.

- **Quality of education**

Higher education in Kuwait is generally considered vital to the country's future and critical to any socioeconomic consideration (see Chapter Three, Section 3.5: Educational Trends in Kuwait). The literature agrees that there are positive correlations between an adequate education and the economic and social development of countries worldwide. However, employers believe that Kuwait University is encountering problems in their role of providing knowledge and skills in terms of the quality of education. The discussion in question one supports this. Educators in Kuwait insist that theoretical education lacks practical issues and training. As mentioned earlier, the lack of training means graduates are not ready for the market. They even admit that it is not their responsibility to do so. As mentioned earlier, this is part of the old and famous debate in the literature regarding the role of universities where each view has its own support. However, keeping in mind that we are now living in a global village, most developed countries in recent years follow the employability trend and focus on practical education and training to prepare well skilled graduates who are ready for the labour market with the aim of boosting the local economic and social development. This leads to Kuwait providing education that lacks training on practical issues. This keeps Kuwait out of the global race which emphasizes the value of effective human resources. Therefore, in relation to those countries while keeping in mind that we are now living in a so-called global village, it seems that Kuwait does have issues with the quality of education.

However, while educators revealed that their role is to provide only the theoretical education, which in reality lacks any training and practical issues, they hereby contradict the Kuwaiti education improvement plan mentioned by the International Bureau of Education (2003) which stressed that the role of education in Kuwait is to prepare citizens to meet changes in the country at both the local and international level, i.e. to provide expertise, to train Kuwaitis to be able to handle technological developments, and to prepare its students for a practical future life (Chapter Three, Section 3.5: Educational Trends in Kuwait).

This shows that in Kuwait, part of education's role is to train Kuwaitis and to prepare them for a practical future life. Therefore, this also supports the notion that the theoretical education presented at Kuwait University is not matching the country's plans and not up to the standard or quality that it should have. It was also noteworthy that one educator mentioned the subject of the quality of education. He reckoned that there is a problem with the teaching style in Kuwait, which depends for the most part on theories rather than practical studies, thus leading to graduates who are low in practical skills.

The issue of the quality of education in developing countries has been dealt with in the literature. Many studies suggest that in developing countries this dilemma of education quality for the labour market is a key issue. For example, the World Economic Forum (WEF) released a report which revealed that seven of the thirteen Arab nations had complained that an 'inadequately educated workforce' is the major sobering obstacle to their development (See Chapter Three, Section 3.9.1: Quality of Education in Kuwait). Moreover, the World Bank (2008) indicated that the education system of most developing countries still lacks the capacity to develop core competency skills among graduates, creating a very real albeit worrying skills-mismatch (World Bank, 2008).

In Kuwait, there are also signals indicating that the quality of education is a significant issue. Although Chapter Three shows that in the early years Kuwait suffers from a low level of education, the economic developments resulting from the discovery of oil encourage the government to spend more on education. By 2008, only 1.2% of the Kuwaiti labour force was still illiterate (Chapter Three, Section 3.6.3: Educational Status of Kuwaiti Labour Force). However, evidence suggests that the quality of education among the Kuwaiti labour force is still low which has been discussed in public through newspapers and in the media. The literature suggests that organizations in Kuwait still lack qualified human resources with the appropriate competencies, who can take up key managerial and professional roles in areas of information and knowledge (Chapter Three, Section 3.9.1: Quality of Education in Kuwait). For example, Al-Wehaib (2008), a journalist for the *Altalia* newspaper indicated that the need of the economy for a well-educated and skilled labour force has yet to be met by the output from educational institutions. Also, Al-Marry (2007) indicated that there is no correlation between the qualifications of Kuwaiti graduates and the jobs they occupy (Chapter Three, Section 3.9.1: Quality of Education in Kuwait).

There is other evidence in the literature over the issue of quality of education in Kuwait. For example, the composition of the labour market relies heavily on migrant labour. In 2008, expatriates represent more than 70 % of the total labour force, which is a huge number. The literature suggests that the current structure of the labour force in Kuwait is not idyllic, and that is due mostly to such issues as the quality of education, nature of available jobs, required skills, and so forth (Chapter Three, Section 3.6.1: Composition of Kuwait's Labour Force). Even the private sector prefers to employ expatriates as they are seen to be more productive, fully skilled, cheap, and patient (Al-Nafasi, 1998). Furthermore, in 2007, 19,000 citizens were out of work in Kuwait because they were simply unsuitable for the specific needs and requirements of the labour market (Chapter Three, Section 3.9.1: Quality of Education in Kuwait).

In addition, it was interesting to note that 93% of Kuwaitis work in the government sector, which is being overstaffed, leaving only 7 % to work in the private sector. This is mainly because government sector jobs are offered after graduation as the constitution stated, with worthy salaries and suitable working hours (Chapter Three, Section 3.7: Politics and Labour Market Rules). This indicates that the government sector does not require quality of education as graduates will be able to occupy comfortable jobs with a high salary no matter how employable they are. Keeping in mind what was mentioned earlier regarding the issue of education quality in Kuwait, this explains why there are a large number of Kuwaitis (93%) working in the government sector since the quality of education does not seem to be a serious requirement. Whereas, in the private sector, graduates will have to go through the normal process of finding a job, which means that they ought to be employable with the required education. However, educators in Kuwait are not interested in producing employable skilled graduates as mentioned earlier. This explains why there are only 7 % of Kuwaitis who are employed in the private sector, as the sector relies more on expatriates for their higher education quality and employability skills. Hence, it is widely known internationally that the main reason for the skills gap in the labour market has to do with the quality of education (see e.g. Fitzgerald and McLaren, 2006; Brown et al., 2002; Vaughn, 2005; World Bank, 2007; Bennell and Al-Samarrai, 2007; Livanos, 2009). The gap between supply and demand in the labour market is suggested to be a result of 'skill shortages' (ACCI, 2004). This skill shortage happens when business owners struggle considerably to fill vacancies because there are only unsatisfactory job seekers without the required skills (Fitzgerald and McLaren, 2006). McLaren and Spoonley (2005) have highlighted that skill shortages contributed to the misalignment and mismatch of supply and demand in the labour market. Further, Brown et al. (2002) also argued that incompetence among graduates is a major issue challenging employers who regularly report that university graduates lack the required business acumen and are inadequately prepared for work.

All in all, the literature suggests that in the Arab world, the quality of education dilemma within the labour market is a key issue (Chapter Three, Section 3.9.1: Quality of Education in Kuwait). This was also supported by the research findings and the relevant literature regarding the quality of education in Kuwait. This proves that the supply side of the market is weak and is unable to meet the demand side of the Kuwaiti labour market. Therefore, Kuwait is suffering from a disequilibrium within its labour market, and the first reason being that the outputs of higher education are below the needs and requirements of employers.

Therefore, the needs and requirements of employers should be matched with the needed skills in order to balance the labour market in Kuwait. The studies discussed earlier in Chapter Two (Section 2.9.1: Employers' Expectations) suggest that the demand side of the market has specific requirements that ought to be met by the supply side; graduates must mirror competency criteria so as to be able to handle global competition. There is an essential need to meet the ever-growing demands of employers depending on what employability actually constitutes (Goffman, 2004). Curtis and McKenzie (2001) stated that "employers are clearly a key stakeholder group in identifying the skills people need to obtain, hold and develop in employment, and to create new employment opportunities for others" (Curtis and McKenzie, 2001:3). Hence, many researchers had argued that there ought to be a connection between employability skills expected by employers and the education system at least in the long run (Law and Watts, 1977; Watts, 1999; Patton and McMahon, 1999). Thus, it is important to recognize employers' expectations and needs because this will guide educational institutions in better preparing their graduates with job related skills and/or to be fully 'employable'.

The literature also suggests that Kuwait has suffered from a low quality of education, which led to a low-skilled national workforce and the reliance for years on expatriates. In 2008, expatriates represent more than 70 % of the total labour force, while native Kuwaitis accounted for around 30 % (Ministry of Planning, 2009). For that reason, expatriates still outnumber Kuwaitis in most sectors of the labour force. This exemplifies the most dramatic division in Kuwait's population in terms of a minority of native Kuwaitis and a majority of foreign workers (65 % of the total population, for more details see Appendix 3). This overwhelming dependency on expatriates has also raised some concern over their possible impact on society. The presence of expatriates leads naturally to a drain on Kuwaiti resources, a slowing down of national human resources, and an unwarranted entitlement to various subsidies for expatriates (Al-Ghaith, 2000). Being the minority in one's own country is unique by any standard. In this context, higher education in Kuwait clearly needs to improve the quality of education in order to provide employers in both public and private sectors with well-qualified graduates compatible with labour market needs.

- **Lack of communication**

As mentioned earlier, the regression analysis has shown that from the employers' point of view, there are two problems regarding higher education institutions' role in the provision of knowledge and skills: the quality of education (which was discussed above), and the lack of communication.

The regression analysis revealed that one of the downfalls in education at Kuwait University is the lack of communication and mutual understanding with the labour market. This finding is critical, as there is evidence in the literature over the role of communication in closing the skills gap in the labour markets (Chapter Two, Section 2.8: Relationship between Higher Educational Institutions and the Labour Market). Hence, taking into consideration what has been shown earlier regarding the quality of education in Kuwait which is the main reason behind the skills gap as mentioned earlier, the lack of communication makes the labour market problem in Kuwait harder to handle.

The literature had always valued communication in the labour market and urged that relationships between the labour market and education system should be strengthened and sustained. Evidence suggests that communication and feedback between the key parties (higher education institutions, labour market, and university graduates) have the potential of closing the gap in the market through mutual understanding. For example, Graf (1997) stated that "it is important for the academic community to foster relationships and develop open lines of communication with both students and the business community". In addition, Gabrich et al. (2001) are certain that communication and interaction should flow not only between the academic society and students, and between the academic society and business community, but also between the business community and students.

Both employers and educators in Kuwait also supported the importance of communication. The majority of employer respondents (65%) agreed that communication with higher educational institutions would ensure that graduates would meet the labour market needs. This supports the literature reviewed earlier, which suggests that communication and feedback between the key parties in the labour market have the potential of closing the gap in the market through mutual understanding (Chapter Two, Section 2.8: Relationship between Higher Educational Institutions and the Labour Market). Also, all educators appreciate communication so as to obtain feedback on graduates' knowledge and to recognize specializations that are needed by the labour market and with the right quantity.

However, one educator mentioned that what they mean by feedback is only at the level of theoretical knowledge. Hence, this shows that each side has a different objective for communicating. This is normal as each side can only look at communication from its own perspective. But, at the end of the day, the mutual understanding that communication reinforces will provide each side with the objectives they are seeking from communication. This is the whole idea behind communication: to satisfy each side, match their needs and, at the end of the day, close the gap.

It was interesting that while both educators and employers recognized the importance of communication, they have also ascertained the lack of communication within the Kuwaiti labour market. Employers believe that there is a lack of communication between higher educational institutions and employers, which, as mentioned earlier, creates issues regarding graduates' quality of education in the labour market. Hence, almost half of employers (46%) indicated that their organizations do not communicate with Kuwait University at all, while roughly a quarter of employers (27%) declared that their organizations received invitations for campus visits and recruitment fairs at universities. Even worse was that less than a quarter of employers (18%) received invitations for meetings with universities to create curriculums. Hence, it indicates that there is a very weak line of communication between the labour market and higher educational institutions in Kuwait.

Educators themselves recognized that communication with the labour market is weak and pointed to limited field training at Kuwait University as mentioned earlier, rare campus visits and attending recruitment fairs in some universities. No wonder, only one educator declared that there is a strong formal communication with the labour market through the appointing of labour market representatives to their faculty council and university council. However, other educators reject this stating that these committees do not work effectively at all times. One educator mentioned an incident that happened about 7 years ago when a major company in the country asked for more graduates of some specific knowledge but at the end of the day, it did not recruit any of them and no one could force them to do so. This indicates that even if there is weak communication in Kuwait, it does not work effectively at all mainly because there is no shared understanding or commitment between educators and employers as the example has shown. This lack of shared understanding, as Curtis and McKenzie (2001) mentioned, will make it difficult to build a broad coalition of government, employers and educators needed for substantial reform (Chapter Two, Section 2.8: Relationship between Higher Educational Institutions and the Labour Market). So, it seems that communication between the labour market and higher educational institutions still leaves a lot to be desired.

Part two: *All policy makers agreed that it is the responsibility of universities to prepare graduates for the labour market.*

Contrasting what educators believe regarding their role in the provision of knowledge and skills, and in favor of employers who believe that higher educational institutions should prepare graduates for the needs of the labour market, all policy makers agreed that it is the responsibility of higher educational institutions to prepare graduates for the labour market. The former Minister and former Member of Parliament, Mr. Al-Kulaib, stated that universities hold a direct responsibility for preparing graduates to match the labour market needs and requirements. He even mentioned that higher educational institutions should produce training programs for students' degree studies and even for the period after graduation, by determining the skills needed through collecting data and statistics from the labour market.

This is in line with the HRD literature mentioned earlier regarding "Training Needs Cycle" which indicates that needs must to be determined before training itself can be suitably undertaken. Hence, this supports the notion that the logic of "Training Needs Cycle" should be applied in developing education programs and curriculum. Even so, Mr. Al-Kulaib also emphasizes that the labour market should participate in creating the curriculums. Hence, this indicates the importance of labour market involvement in educational decisions. The head of the Kuwaiti National Assembly, Mr. Al-kharafy, once declared that universities should identify the specializations needed by the labour market and start offering them instead of those with which the market is already saturated. Therefore, this is further evidence of policy makers' belief that mutual involvement should be reinforced between both sides of the labour market; or in a word: communication. As mentioned earlier, communication is vital within the labour market in order to understand the needs, requirements, and feedback to/from each group. Accordingly, all policy makers also supported this and stressed that communication is significant in creating mutual understanding within the labour market and helps solve problems as well.

- **Lack of Communication from Policy Makers Point of View**

The literature reviewed earlier in the discussion on question two agreed that communication between the stakeholders of the labour market is vital to communicate needs, requirements, and feedback to/from each group. All educators and the majority of employers also agreed with this. What is more, all policy makers supported this as well and stressed that communication is significant in creating mutual understanding within the labour market, thereby solving problems as well.

In terms of communication in the Kuwaiti labour market, policy makers supported the regression analysis and admitted that there is weak communication within Kuwait's labour market. Mr. Al-Kulaib and Mr. Al-khorafy stressed that there is weak communication within the market and that this weak communication is the main problem with the Kuwaiti labour market. Mr. Al-khorafy even mentioned that this deficiency in communication results in graduates who do not match the needs of the labour market and thus creating a gap.

Consequently, the lack of communication had resulted in poor program planning. Educators themselves supported this. Many educators mentioned the problem of mismatch between the specializations needed by the labour market and what they offered at university level. The result is that graduates with certain specializations face difficulties in finding suitable places for them in the labour market. In the end, they work in places that are not suitable to their fields and ambition. This will lead them to become less productive and creative. It was interesting that educators also acknowledge the poor planning at Kuwait University. Some educators revealed that there is a problem with regard to the implementation of educational plans. They agreed that those plans are well organized, but only on paper, and while resources are plenty, they are unutilized. It is very difficult to produce results due to long routines, unapproachable regulations, committee limitations, and with the most negative feature being the wrong person in the wrong place.

However, Dr. Al-Jassar, the head of the National Education Committee in Kuwait, disagreed that communication does not exist in the Kuwaiti labour market. As the head of the higher education council in Kuwait, she confirmed that the higher council of Kuwait University is obliged by law to appoint two representatives from the public and private sectors to attend all meetings. Nevertheless, Mr. Al-Kulaib advised that laws do exist regarding the labour market but with the big dilemma that they have not been applied in reality. He brought up the example of the "kuwaitization" rule, which forces private companies to employ a specific percentage of Kuwaiti employees (for more details regarding "kuwaitization", please see Chapter Three, Section 3.6.2: Privatization and the Kuwaiti Labour Market).

Mr. Al-Kulaib mentioned that this law is generally neglected by private companies and is applied on paper only, as is the case with many laws in Kuwait. This is supported by the labour force composition in Kuwait where in 2008 only 7% of Kuwaitis worked in the private sector. It is obvious that this rule was not applied. This was also corroborated by the educator mentioned earlier who revealed that these rules exist but do not work effectively at all times. Hence, even if there is a form of communication around Kuwait's labour market, it does not work effectively mainly because rules are not always applied.

Dr. Al-Jassar admits that another form of communication also exists but in a limited way (or in other words: weak) - through allowing final year students to attend a field study in the Kuwaiti labour market. Educators acknowledged that field study is rare and limited at Kuwait University. Therefore, communication within the labour market is weak and even if it exists, it may be insufficient.

Nevertheless, in an effort to link educational institutions to the labour market, Mr. Al-Kharafy indicated that government legislations and regulations are important to ensure communication in the labour market. Likewise, Dr. Al-Jassar indicated that government legislations and regulations are vital, but they need to be reinforced. However, Mr. Ahamd Al-Kulaib was disappointed and warned that there is no need for rules and regulations as it would not be effective.

- **Quality of education from Policy Makers Point of View**

Policy makers also agreed that the labour market is facing issues regarding the quality of education. Mr. Alkulaib mentioned that the main problem in the Kuwaiti labour market is the growth of the gap between the output of higher education in terms of quality and quantity on the one hand, and labour market needs on the other (Chapter Three, Section 3.7: Politics and Labour Market Rules). Mr. al-Khorafy also indirectly pointed out that Kuwait University graduates are low in quality and that they need more skills and training to close the skills-gap in the Kuwaiti labour market. Moreover, Dr. Al-Jassar stated that the concept of human development and training is lacking in Kuwait and there is a need to adopt 'qualifying' and 'training' concepts. This indicates that something is lacking in graduates' training, qualifications and eventually issues regarding quality of education from policy makers' point of view. Hence, this clarifies that employers, graduates, and policy makers all agree with the literature regarding Kuwaiti graduates' skills. They all believe that there is a mismatch between what employers need and what higher education is offering.

8.4 Factors that Influence Employers' Attitudes to Graduates' Quality of Education.

Question 3: The third research question investigates the factors influence employers' attitudes to graduates' quality of education. The analysis of the data indicates that *employers believe that the lack of graduate skills, the lack of graduate motivation and the lack of communication with higher educational institutions affect graduates' quality of education.*

Based on the regression results in Chapter Six, the employers' perception on graduates' quality of education has a relationship that is affected by two effects out of twelve. The largest Beta Coefficient is 0.317 of graduates' potential-related problems, meaning that this factor makes the strongest positive and unique contribution to explaining employers' perception of graduates' quality of education. Employers thus believe that in Kuwait University there are issues to be resolved regarding the quality of education. These problems include issues regarding graduates' skills and lack of motivation. Also, communication comes in second place as a positive contribution to explaining employers' perceptions. This implies that employers also believe that the lack of communication with higher educational institutions affects graduates' quality of education as well. Hence, this question complements the findings in question two. The discussion in question two indicated that universities are not carrying out their role in producing quality education, while question three clarified those factors that influence employers' and policy makers' attitudes to graduates' quality of education.

- **Lack of graduate skills**

The regression analysis indicated that there is a lack of graduates' skills, which affects graduates' quality of education in Kuwait from the employers' point of view. The issues with graduates' skills were supported in the literature mentioned earlier. These issues consequently affect the quality of education in Kuwait, and have been discussed in newspapers and the media for some time now. Employers in Kuwait have always perceived graduates as low-quality "spoiled" graduates with only theoretical background and limited skills. They indicate that one of the most important negative influences on graduates is the inadequate skills that do not match labour market needs. This was proven in the literature. For example, Al-Marri (2007) mentioned that currently, there is no correlation between the qualification of Kuwaiti graduates and the jobs they occupy.

Also, a survey by Arabia Inform in 2008 has shown that the majority of organizations in Kuwait suffer from gaps in skills. This means that the skill level of employees is simply not up to standard, which consequently affects their quality of education and thus supports the claim that there is a gap between the skills supplied by universities and employers' needs and requirements (Chapter Three, Section 3.9.1: Quality of Education in Kuwait). Moreover, the majority of graduates (89%) in this study agreed that the source of their skills comes from actually doing the job or work experience. Less than half (44%) indicated that they gained skills needed for their job from studying at university.

Employers themselves supported this as a majority of them (82%) also agreed that the source of graduates' skills comes from doing the job or work experience and less than half (45%) indicated that graduates gained the skills needed for their job from studying at university. Furthermore, the majority of employer respondents (64%) agreed that their organizations recruit new graduates because of government legislations. This is a very high percentage and suggests that a large number of employers may have been forced to recruit graduates and not because of their skills and knowledge. Therefore, this clarifies that the majority of both graduates and employers agree that university education was not enough to prepare graduates with the skills required by their jobs. Also, in order to acquire a clearer view of employers' satisfaction with graduates' skills, the cross tabulation analysis in Chapter Six indicates that employers' overall satisfaction with what may be considered as important skills was 55%. It implies that almost half of employers were not satisfied with graduates' significant skills.

Moreover, policy makers also believed that the labour market is facing a skill-related problem. Mr. al-Khorafy emphasized that graduates in Kuwait need more skills and training to close the skills-gap in the Kuwaiti labour market. Also, Dr. Al-Jassar stated that the concept of human development and training is lacking in Kuwait and there is a need to adopt 'qualifying' and 'training' concepts. Hence, policy makers tied the lack of skills with the need for more training. This supports what has been suggested in question one regarding the importance of training in higher educational institutions, for it was found the training was very weak at Kuwait University. To sum up, this clarifies that employers, graduates, and policy makers seem to agree with the literature regarding Kuwaiti graduates' skills. They all believe that there is a mismatch between what employers need and the skills that Kuwait University offers.

- **Lack of graduate motivation**

The regression analysis also indicated that there is a lack of graduate motivation, which affects graduates' quality of education in Kuwait, at least from the employers' point of view. Regarding graduate motivation, there is a clear relation between culture in Kuwait and the lack of motivation among Kuwaiti graduates. Hence, culture is the main source of a wide range of influences on graduate behaviour. Thus, Kuwaiti culture has had a major influence on graduates' choices and decisions regarding their future career.

The most distinctive aspect of Kuwait's high context culture as mentioned earlier in Chapter Three is the importance of personal and social relationships in terms of family values, and may be extended as the basis of the social structure and individual identity. The research findings indicate that almost a third of students (36%) suffer from family influences on their choice of job and career. This negatively affects the individual's motivation to work, thereby creating a lack of motivation.

The literature suggests that social and personal relations heavily influence the labour market in Kuwait (Al-Jassar, 2007). The State of Kuwait enjoys a high context culture. The most distinctive aspect of that kind of culture is the personal and social relationships, which are shared according to family values. Hence, family values have a significant influence on family members and the choices that each has to make. In a country like Kuwait where family relation is very strong, graduates cannot ignore their family's wishes (Chapter Three, Section 3. Therefore, graduates are forced to accept family wishes or they will be isolated from society. The social influence on graduates' choice of job prevents them from building real careers according to their wishes and affects their motivation. Some educators acknowledged parental influences on graduates' motivation. One educator pointed to parents who think they know what is best for their children. The research findings supported this, as 19% of graduates indicated that their families influenced their choice of job with the notion that they know better. Therefore, parents force their children to work only in certain places or forbid them to work in others. This enforcement has had a bad influence on their performance and motivation as they get to work in places or jobs they do not like. Another educator mentioned that families' interference in their children's choice of job 'killed' their ambition.

The value of family relations has created what is commonly called "wasta" which is the use of social or personal relations to obtain favours that are difficult to get, for example, a prestigious job (Chapter Three, Section 3.9.2: Personal Relationships in Kuwait). The literature acknowledges that social and personal relations or "alwasta" as Kuwaitis call it, deeply impact the labour market in Kuwait (Chapter Three, Section 3.9.2: Personal Relationships in Kuwait). For example, Bager (2007) states that the labour market in Kuwait largely depends on "alwasta", for if a graduate has good relations, s/he would likely get the best job; otherwise, they will soak in disappointment. In other words, it is not what one knows but whom one knows. This was not a surprise when taking into consideration Kuwait as a country with a high context culture that appreciates social and family relations (Chapter Three, Section 3.3.1: Kuwaiti Culture).

Also, this connection between social elites and employability is not limited to Kuwait alone. Some researchers have also found that social elites with the proper cultural capital are often the ones allocated the best jobs worldwide (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1964; Collins, 1979; See also Chapter Three, Section 3.9.2: Personal Relationships in Kuwait). However, as mentioned earlier, Bager (2007) reckons that if graduates do not have “wasta” they will soak in disappointment. It implies that there are negative aspects to “wasta”. The literature also agrees with this and suggests that for people who do not have “wasta, there is a negative impact on their job satisfaction, performance, while creating a lack of motivation. For example, Al-Shaigy, (2011), indicated that “wasta” influences negatively on individuals who do not have it. It affects job satisfaction, performance and motivation to work. Also, al-Jassar (2007) indicated that people who do not have or use “wasta” would lose their appetite to work when they see people less qualified taking up position that is much better and bigger than theirs.

This was supported by the findings, as it is clear that “wasta” favours some over others. Hence, almost a third of graduates (32%) indicated that they had used their family relationships to get the job they want. One of the graduates wrote in the questionnaire that “my job was waiting for me even before graduation, it’s the wish of each graduate, and thanks to my relations it’s for me”. The majority of educators also acknowledged the effect of social relations. In terms of “wasta”, one educator indicated that many of his students told him that their jobs are waiting for them even before graduation regardless of their abilities. Another educator mentioned that due to “wasta”, qualified people could not get the job they deserve which discourage them as others with good social relations have been able to reserve the best seats. Thus, “wasta” does affect graduates’ motivation especially when they see others with less abilities taking up jobs they are not qualified for.

As mentioned above, Kuwait as a country with a high context culture values family relations and influences. This influence has an effect on graduates’ performance, some of whom end up with careers they do not like because of either “wasta” or parent interference on graduates’ choice of jobs, thereby spoiling their career aspiration and ambition to work, which creates a lack of motivation. Therefore, this lack of motivation as the regression analysis discovers influences the level of education quality among graduates of Kuwait University.

- **Lack of communication**

The regression analysis indicated that there is a lack of communication among higher educational institutions, which negatively affects graduates' quality of education at Kuwait University. The issue of a lack of communication among higher educational institutions was discussed in the previous question and this complements and supports it. The discussion in the previous question revealed that from the employers' point of view, there are two problems regarding higher educational institutions' role in the provision of knowledge and skills. One of them is the lack of communication. Therefore, this is evidence that a lack of communication is not only one shortcoming at Kuwait University but it also influences negatively on graduates' quality of education, which was mentioned earlier as the main reason for the gap. It appears that this lack of communication on the part of higher educational institutions with the labour market influences graduates' quality of education.

While it is widely known internationally that the main reason for the skills-gap in the labour market may have to do with the quality of education (see e.g. Fitzgerald and McLaren, 2006; Brown et al., 2002; Vaughn, 2005; World Bank, 2007; Bennell and Al-Samarrai, 2007; Livanos, 2009), the regression analysis in question two revealed that Kuwait university is not playing its role to the effect that it has so far produced graduates with a low-quality education. This was supported in the discussion in question three where the lack of graduates' skills and motivation influences graduates' quality of education. Therefore, this is clear evidence that Kuwait suffers from a skills-gap in its labour market.

Also, while it's widely known that communication within the labour market has the potential to close the skills-gap through mutual understanding and preparing graduates that match labour market needs (Graf 1997; Gabrich et al. 2001; Brown et al. 2002), the regression analysis in question two identifies the issue of lack of communication as one shortcoming with the university's role. The majority of educators and policy makers acknowledge a weak level of communication. Therefore, it appears that the low quality of education is creating the skills-gap in the Kuwaiti labour market, while the solution for the problem (i.e. communication) is weak or even lacking which makes the skills-gap even worse. Consequently, the lack of communication is influencing the quality of education by not producing graduates that match labour market needs.

As mentioned above, the lack of communication and understanding between employers and educators results in graduates that are not ready for the labour market as the labour market perceives them as low in quality, thus creating a skills-gap even dissatisfaction over those graduates' performance. This coincides with the regression analysis where this lack of communication negatively influences the graduates' quality of education. However, researchers and governments around the world have always argued that there is a need for both businesses and educators to work together more effectively, and to learn from each other in order to provide a framework that helps clarify employers' views (Confederation of British Industry, 1998; 1999; 2000a; 200b; ACCI, 2004). Hence, the key factor in the relationship between educational institutions and the labour market is being able to deliver qualified graduates with high employability skills (Al-Marry, 2007). A number of countries in the world had taken serious steps to reinforce such communication in an effort to close or reduce the gap in the labour market. For example, in the UK, higher education has recently been more oriented towards communicating with the labour market to prepare students for the needs of the marketplace (Watts, 2006).

A similar case to Kuwait's situation happened in Canada 12 years ago. In Canada during the 1990s, the country realized that it lacks a strong practice of close engagement between educational institutions and employers, which resulted in a gap for the market (OECD, 1998). Therefore, the country has taken serious steps to connect educational institutions' aims with those of the labour market. For that reason, the National Business and Education Center organized the Conference Board of Canada in the early 1990s. This project endeavors to answer the key question among educators: "What are employers looking for?" (Conference Board of Canada, 1992). The conference established an "Employability Skills Profile" (ESP) to identify the generic academic, personal management, and teamwork skills in an effort to inform government, business and educational leaders, and the community (Conference Board of Canada, 1992). Moreover, in 1998, the Canadian industry took major initiatives to bridge this gap by adopting the "Employability Skills Profile" (ESP) in an effort to reconnect educational institutions' goals with the labour market (OECD, 1998). This explains how communication is essential for the two parties to the labour market if they are to solve the existing mismatch between the demand and supply sides, for as Ghaneimat (2006) argues, "to solve the imbalance, there must be a harmonious communication between the educational system and the labour market to converse the skills and requirements needed". Hence, the lack of communication is a significant issue within the Kuwait labour market as the literature indicated and supported by the research findings. Therefore, Kuwait should start a similar if not the same program in order to overcome the skills gap in the country as it strives to accommodate the country's economic and social development.

8.5 Factors that Influence Graduates' Attitudes to the Quality of Education They Have received from University.

Question 4: The fourth research question is as follows: what factors influence graduates' attitudes to the quality of education they have received from university? The analysis of the data presented in the previous chapter suggests that *graduates currently working believe that the quality of education is affected negatively by the source of skills and area of study (social science). On the other hand, the quality of education is affected positively by expected job privileges.*

Needless to say, graduates do believe that certain qualifications would lead them to achieve their career aspirations (Chapter Two, Section 2.11.2: Graduates' Expectations). However, it appears that almost a third of graduates currently working in Kuwait agreed that they have achieved only a low qualification or a low-quality education (for issues of being competent and preparation, see Chapter Six, Table 6.16, for more details). For example, more than a third of graduates currently working (37%) agreed that there is no relation between what they have studied and the skills they need for their current job. Also, around a third of them (33%) indicated that the university curriculum did not prepare them optimally for the job. Therefore, it is important to understand the factors that affect graduates' perceptions. This will help in understanding the reason(s) for such perceptions.

Factors influencing graduates' attitudes to the quality of education they have received from universities (which thus address question four) were investigated through an analysis of the questionnaires using the SPSS software application. Based on the regression results, graduates' perceptions of the quality of their education are affected by three independent variables (out of eight). The largest Beta Coefficient is -.413 from learning as source of skills, meaning that this variable makes the strongest negative and unique contribution to explaining graduates' perceptions of their education. Learning as source of skills includes skills that graduates gained from education and field training. Hence, the social science as an area of study also makes a negative contribution to explaining graduates' perceptions of their education. On the other hand, the expected job privileges have a significant positive impact on graduates' perceptions of their education. It includes graduates' expectations of a high salary, flexible working hours, fitting well with family expectations, and opportunity to travel.

According to regression analysis, graduates currently working, whose skills came from either university or field training, make the strongest negative and unique contribution to explaining their attitudes towards the low quality of education they have received from university. It seems graduates believe that the more skills they gain from university the less likely they will end up with a low quality of education. This suggests that the main reasons for graduates perceiving their education to be low in quality are mainly to do with not being able to acquire the skills needed for the job from their education and field training. The majority of employers also recognized this lack of skills from university studies. The majority of employer respondents (82%) declared that graduates currently working gained the skills needed for their jobs from actually doing the job itself (work experience). On the other hand, less than half (45%) indicated that graduates currently working gained the skills needed for their jobs from university. This confirms that the main source of graduates' skills is work experience and not the education received at Kuwait University. Therefore, it appears that graduates perceived their education as low in quality mainly because it lacks the skills needed by employers.

The issue of lack of skills from university education has an effect on graduates' quality of education as confirmed in the regression analysis in question three. It indicated that there is a lack of graduate skills, which thus affects graduates' quality of education in Kuwait from the employers' point of view. Also, this was supported by the literature where in Kuwait; employers have always perceived graduates as low quality "spoiled" graduates with only theoretical background and limited skills (Chapter Three, Section 3.9.1: Quality of Education in Kuwait). Moreover, all policy makers agreed that the labour market is facing a skill-related problem. Therefore, this strongly supports the beliefs among graduates currently working as to the negative influence of the source of their skills (university and field training) on their quality of education.

In addition, according to the regression analysis, graduates currently working from one area of study (social science) make a negative contribution to explaining their attitudes towards the low quality of education they have received from university. Nevertheless, the focus is on three study areas as mentioned in Chapter Four: business, education, and social science (Chapter Four, Section 4.6.2: Graduates of Higher Education). Therefore, it appears that graduates of the social science school at Kuwait University are more satisfied with the quality of their education than the graduates from business and education schools. This finding needs further investigation so as to understand what the social science school is offering their graduates.

According to the regression analysis, graduates currently working with expected job privileges make a positive contribution to explaining their attitudes towards the low quality of education they received at university. Hence, expected job privileges include: high salary, flexible working hours (balanced lifestyle), fitting in well with family expectations, and opportunity to travel. The analysis indicates that working graduates' perception of the low quality of education increases when their expected job privileges increase. The literature has suggested that graduates have a variety of expectations regarding their jobs and careers (Chapter Two, Section 2.11.2: Graduates' Expectations). In other words, it can be argued that graduates currently working do believe that certain qualifications would lead them to achieve their career aspirations. However, some researchers have argued that expectations could affect, either positively or negatively, employees' job satisfaction level (Ferguson and Cheyne, 1995; Nelson and Cooper, 1995; Howard and Frink, 1996). In other words, when these expectations are not met, it creates dissatisfaction among employees.

It appears that this is also the case in Kuwait. In Kuwait, graduates were disappointed and/or deeply dissatisfied with the job privileges they have attained from their jobs. The cross tabulation mentioned earlier in Chapter Six supports this (Chapter Six, Section 6.8.1: Satisfaction Level of Graduates Currently Working). The cross tabulation indicated that the overall satisfaction of Kuwaiti graduates currently working with what was considered to be expected opportunities from employers was only 32%. This implies that the majority of graduates were not satisfied with what they were expecting from their employers. Graduates indicate that the opportunities to work with people they like ranked first in their sense of satisfaction. However, only 45% of them agreed that it was met (expected and satisfied). This was followed in second place by opportunities to acquire more experience with 40%.

Most importantly, in terms of satisfaction with expected job privileges, the level of satisfaction with a suitable salary and a balanced lifestyle was 37% and 33% respectively. Hence, it was interesting to note that the opportunities to travel and being able to fit in with family expectations were considered to be the least met by 16% and 26% respectively. This means that expected job privileges were those least met by employers. That is, graduates were not satisfied with what they got from employers in terms of job privileges, and some ended up blaming their quality of education for such disappointment. Hence, as mentioned earlier, graduates currently working do believe that certain qualifications would lead them to realize their career aspirations. This explains why they perceived their education as low in quality while their expectations increase, as they blamed their qualification for not achieving expected job privileges from their jobs. The relationship between graduates' level of satisfaction and the quality of education will be discussed further in the next section.

Thus, to recruit and retain the best graduates for Kuwaiti employers, it is vital to satisfy graduates' expectations. The literature seems to suggest that there is an increased demand for graduates in the labour market due to a highly competitive marketplace (Branine, 1999; AGR, 2006). Thus, it is crucial to understand the expectations of graduates from their potential employers especially if one is to attract and employ the best in the process of graduate recruitment. In the UK for example, around two-thirds of graduate vacancies are for graduates in just about every subject (Graduate Prospects, 2005/6, p. 17). Thus, understanding graduates' expectations and reasons for job satisfaction certainly helps when making decisions about employment and job design (Al-Enezi et al., 2009). Consequently, employers in Kuwait should investigate graduates' expectations or at least attempt to match them in order to attract, recruit, and retain the best.

8.6 Factors that Affect Job Satisfaction from the Standpoint of Graduates Currently Working.

Question 5: The Fifth research question investigates the factors that affect job satisfaction from the standpoint of graduates currently working. The analysis of the data indicates that *graduates currently working believe that their dissatisfaction with their career development is affected positively by three variables: perceptions on the quality of their education, career development expectations, and expected job privileges. On the other hand, it is affected negatively by four variables: experience as source of skills, learning as source of skills, area of study (social science), and sector (private). Also, they believe that their dissatisfaction with job privileges is affected positively by three variables: expected job privileges, perceptions on the quality of their education, and area of study (business). On the other hand, it is affected negatively by gender (female) and experience as source of skills.*

It is argued that satisfying graduates is vital, for it is widely known that a satisfied employee generally stays longer in a particular job (Schmidt-Hoffman and Radius, 1995). However, dissatisfaction with a job is often the reason for high employee turnover (Lucas et al., 1993; Stagnitti et al., 2006; Blau et al., 2006). (See Chapter Two, Section 2.9: The Process of Recruiting Graduates). This is the case in Kuwait. The overall level of satisfaction among graduates currently working with what was considered as expected opportunities from employers was only 32%. This implies that the majority of graduates were not satisfied with what they were expecting from their employers. Not surprisingly, it affected the employee turnover in Kuwait; for in 2006, 19,000 citizens changed their work because they were not suitable for the specific needs and requirements of the labour market (Hossam, 2007).

Consequently, it is important to understand the factors that affect graduates' sense of satisfaction. This will help us understand the reason(s) for such perceptions and solve them accordingly. Al-Enezi et al., (2009) indicated that understanding graduates' reasons for job satisfaction certainly helps when making decisions about employment and job design. Thus, this study made use of stepwise regression to examine the contribution of the different variables to the level of job satisfaction from the standpoint of graduates currently working.

- **Dissatisfaction with graduates' career development**

Based on the regression results, satisfaction with career development is affected by seven factors (out of thirteen). Career development includes allowing graduates to seek career aspirations, use their talents, acquire more skills, acquire more experience, and work with people they like. The largest Beta Coefficient is 0.243 for perceptions on education, meaning that this variable makes the strongest positive unique contribution to explaining satisfaction with career development. Perceptions on education include different statements on how graduates currently working in Kuwait only received a low qualification or a low-quality education using different statements (for issues of being competent and preparation, see Chapter Six, Table 6.16, for more details). Also, career development expectations and expected job privileges make a positive contribution to explaining the level of satisfaction with career development. Moreover, experience as source of skills, learning as source of skills, sector (private), and area of study (social science) all have a significant negative impact on satisfaction with career development.

As the regression results indicate, perceptions on the quality of graduates' own education make the strongest positive contribution to explaining their sense of dissatisfaction with career development, and include issues such as the low quality of education. It indicates that a low-quality education is the main reason for graduates' dissatisfaction with their career development.

This issue of low-quality education in Kuwait was also acknowledged in the discussion in questions one, two, three, and four as well as the literature reviewed earlier. Therefore, it appears that the low quality of education at Kuwait University is a major issue. Hence, the observable influence of a low-quality education on graduates' dissatisfaction is in line with the discussion in question four wherein graduates tend to blame their low qualification for their sense of dissatisfaction.

Also, from the regression results, career development expectations and expected job privileges make a positive contribution to explaining graduates' sense of dissatisfaction with their career development. This implies that graduates in Kuwait are disappointed and dissatisfied with what their jobs actually provide in terms of their career development and expected job privileges. This is a major issue as mentioned earlier. Dissatisfaction with one's job is often the reason for high employee turnover. Nevertheless, the literature suggests that graduate recruitment has become one of the major challenging issues because a good number of employers have come to realize that the future of their business is contingent upon the recruitment and selection of the finest from among a growing number of graduates in different disciplines and from a wide range of higher educational institutions (Branine, 1999). Thus, to recruit and retain the best out there, it is vital to satisfy graduates' expectations (Schmidt-Hoffman and Radius, 1995).

However, graduates' satisfaction with career development is affected negatively by four variables: experience as source of skills, learning as source of skills (from both education and field training), private sector, and social science. Graduates believe that by gaining skills from education, field training and experience, this would increase the level of satisfaction with career development, which seems logical as gaining skills boosts career development. This is supported by a study of school students in the UK where the main personal motives cited for heading to university revolved around career development: 'to study a subject that really suits me', 'to have a professional career', 'to improve my job prospects', 'to gain entrance to a well-paid career'. These four reasons for career development were valued by around four-fifths as extremely important (Connor et al., 1999, p. 12).

Moreover, it appears that graduates who work in the private sector are more satisfied with their career development. The literature suggests that although the government sector allows graduates to occupy respectable even comfortable jobs with a relatively decent salary, the private sector provides better career opportunities (Al-Marry, 2007). This suggests that graduates who work in the private sector are more satisfied with their career development. However, expatriates made up 94% of the private sector workforce in Kuwait (Federation of International Trade Associations, 2006). The private sector prefers to employ expatriates because they are seen as more productive, fully skilled, cheap, and patient (Al-Nafasi, 1998). That leaves only six % for Kuwaiti nationals to be employed within the private sector.

Lastly, it also appears that social science graduates are more satisfied with their career development and that their area of study allows them to be well prepared for their future career. This supports the finding in question four, in which graduates of social science at Kuwait University are more satisfied with the quality of their education than those from either business or education school.

- **Dissatisfaction with job privileges**

Based on the regression results, satisfaction with the job's privileges is affected by five independent variables (out of thirteen). The largest Beta Coefficient is 0.464 for expected job privileges, meaning that this variable makes the strongest positive unique contribution to explaining the satisfaction with job privileges. Besides, the perceptions of education and area of study (business) also make a positive contribution to explaining satisfaction with job privileges. Moreover, gender (female) and experience as source of skills have a significant negative impact on satisfaction with job privileges.

As the regression results indicate, expected job privileges make the strongest positive contribution to explaining the sense of dissatisfaction with job privileges. It also indicates that expected job privileges are the main reason for graduates' dissatisfaction with such privileges. This suggests that expected job privileges were not met in the actual job and that the disappointment graduates have with their job privileges is indeed the main reason for their sense of dissatisfaction.

Also, based on the regression results, graduates' perceptions of a low-quality education and area of study (business) seem to make a positive contribution to explaining the level of satisfaction with job privileges. It indicates that the issue of a low-quality education again affects graduates' dissatisfaction with their job privileges. That is, graduates believe that their low-quality education had resulted in their dissatisfaction with job privileges. This finding supports the discussion in question four wherein graduates blame their (low) quality of education for their dissatisfaction with job privileges. Moreover, it appeared that graduates of business are the least satisfied with their job privileges. Maybe, as business students, they tend to seek after a more lucrative career that pays a windfall of job privileges. However, graduates' level of satisfaction with job privileges is affected negatively by two variables: gender (females) and experience as source of skills. This suggests that women are more satisfied with their job privileges than men. It is also apparent that gaining skills from actually doing the job reduces the dissatisfaction level with job privileges, perhaps because graduates have come to realize that they first have to earn it.

8.7 Conclusion

The imbalance between demand and supply within Kuwait's labour market has its roots in the country's past. After the discovery of oil, there was an increasing need for sophisticated workers to manage its huge economic and social development. However, in the early years, especially with the low level of education among its people, Kuwait relied on expatriates to cover for development requirements. However, the country invested in education to cover the growth requirements of its own people. Nevertheless, the literature suggests that graduates in Kuwait have not been able to satisfy or match its labour market needs and requirements. This study has explored the issue of imbalance and found that a number of factors have contributed to this problem. One of the main factors that has contributed to this problem is higher education's perceptions regarding its role in the provision of knowledge and skills. The majority of Kuwaiti educators revealed that the basic role of higher educational institutions is only to provide the essential basic knowledge. Still, the minority argued that besides providing basic knowledge, higher education is also required to partly prepare graduates for labour market requirements. Moreover, they even indicated that education in Kuwait is set more on a theoretical level while practical issues and training are quite limited. This might lead to Kuwaiti graduates who are not ready for the labour market. This was supported by most educators who indicated that it is not their responsibility to prepare graduates for the labour market. However, this is part of the ongoing debate regarding the exact nature and role of education.

Nevertheless, the latest international trend stressed that higher educational institutions should produce employable graduates who are ready for the market. This is because many studies have shown that there is a strong correlation between the production of employable fully-skilled graduates and the economic and social development of countries. Therefore, keeping the vision of theoretically-based knowledge in Kuwait's higher education would sustain Kuwait way beyond the global competition. Therefore, this perception among educators regarding their role in the provision of knowledge and skills had created complications for the labour market, at least from the standpoint of employers and policy makers. The regression analysis in this study indicates that employers consider Kuwait University to have problems regarding its role in the provision of knowledge and skills, for it seems to be producing low-quality education and running weak communication with the labour market. Hence, the majority of policy makers in this study are in agreement that while universities should prepare graduates for the labour market, Kuwait University itself is encountering problems regarding its role in the provision of knowledge and skills, for it seems to be providing low-quality education and weak communication.

In terms of the low quality of education in Kuwait, there is evidence in the literature that highlights this issue. The literature suggests that the current structure of the labour force in Kuwait is not idyllic due mostly to such issues as the quality of education, nature of available jobs, required skills, and so forth. Moreover, it was interesting to notice that the majority of Kuwaitis work in the government sector which is being overstaffed mainly because it does not require high quality of education (jobs are granted after graduation as the constitution stated, with good salaries and suitable working hours). Besides, the literature suggests that organizations in Kuwait still lack qualified human resources with the appropriate competencies who can take up key managerial and professional positions in areas of information and knowledge.

However, the quality of education is a significant concern worldwide. Many studies argued that even in developing countries this dilemma over the quality of education in the labour market is a key issue. Hence, it is considered by many studies as the main reason for the skills-gap (See Fitzgerald and McLaren, 2006; Brown et al., 2002; Vaughn, 2005; World Bank, 2007; Bennell and Al-Samarrai, 2007; Livanos, 2009). Therefore, it appears that the low quality of education in Kuwait has contributed to the imbalance within its labour market.

The lack of communication is considered as the second major problem regarding the universities' role in the provision of knowledge and skills according to employers and policy makers in Kuwait. Nevertheless, educators agreed with this and revealed that communication with the labour market is weak and ineffective. This lack of communication, which all policy makers and many educators indicated, has resulted in a mismatch between the specializations needed by the labour market and what Kuwait University offers. This implies that there is poor planning for such programs and specializations, especially those that are not demanded by the labour market but are still taught and offered by universities. The result of such poor planning obviously comes from weak communication.

However, the literature emphasized the importance of communication within the labour market. It suggested that communication between the stakeholders of the labour market is vital in order to communicate needs, requirements, and feedback to/from each group. Therefore, this lack of communication within the labour market reduces the understanding between supply and demand and may aggravate the imbalance within the labour market.

Consequently, higher educational institutions can adopt the same logic of the HRD literature which emphasized enhancing individual performance throughout training. It can adopt the same logic of "Training Needs Cycle" in developing their programs and curriculum with the most important step being surveying and studying the needs of the labour market. For as the literature suggests, training needs must first be determined before training itself can be suitably undertaken.

Employers in Kuwait support the issue of the quality of education within the Kuwaiti labour market. The regression analysis indicated that employers believe that the lack of graduate skills, motivation, and communication with higher educational institutions affects graduates' quality of education, which could only contribute to the imbalance problem. Firstly, in terms of the lack in graduate skills, the majority of both graduates and employers agree that university education is not enough to prepare graduates with the skills needed by the job market. The literature also supports this and suggests that employers in Kuwait have always perceived graduates as low-quality "spoiled" graduates with only theoretical background and limited skills. It indicates that one of the most important negative influences on the labour market is inadequate graduate skills that do not match with the labour market needs. Moreover, policy makers also agreed that the labour market is facing a skill-related problem.

Secondly, the regression analysis indicated that the lack of motivation was another factor that affected the quality of education and might have contributed to the imbalance problem. It seems that Kuwaiti culture has had a big influence on the graduates' choices and decisions regarding their future career. They are working in jobs they either do not like, do not deserve, not qualified or even over-qualified for. These social relationships have had negative influences on the labour market. "Wasta" allows for the employment of people in jobs they do not deserve or able to fulfill. This may leave more qualified individuals in places beneath their qualification, thereby discouraging them to work, while parents' interference in their children's choices of job might prevent them from building real careers according to their wish. Either way, this could end up 'killing' their career aspiration and ambition to work, hence the lack of motivation. Therefore, this lack of motivation from the employers' point of view influences their perception of Kuwaiti university graduates' quality of education. Moreover, educators also agreed with this and mentioned that families' use of social relations to obtain jobs for their children or family interference in their children's choice of job are among the most important problems creating the imbalance. They emphasized that graduates may end up taking jobs that they are over-qualified for or losing their ambition, which at the end of the day affects their performance and hence the employers' dissatisfaction with their performance.

Thirdly, the regression analysis indicated that employers consider the lack of communication as not only in short supply at Kuwait University as mentioned earlier, but also this lack of communication influences negatively graduates' quality of education. It appears that the weak communication within the Kuwaiti labour market, producing poor planning and little feedback, influences graduates' quality of education, which can only reinforce the need for better communication within the Kuwaiti labour market.

The issue of quality of education was also admitted to by Kuwaiti graduates as well. The regression analysis indicates that the main reason for graduates perceiving their education as low in quality is because they lack the skills needed by employers. Hence, the majority of employers agreed with this lack of skills, while almost a third of graduates currently working in Kuwait agreed that they have received a low-quality education. Also, it was found that graduates' perception of their low-quality education increases when their expectation of job privileges increases. The literature has suggested that graduates have a variety of expectations regarding their jobs and careers. However, some researchers had argued that those expectations could affect, either positively or negatively, the employees' job satisfaction (Ferguson and Cheyne, 1995; Nelson and Cooper, 1995; Howard and Frink, 1996).

In other words, when these expectations are not met, it creates dissatisfaction among employees. This explains why they perceive their education as low in quality as their expectations increase, for they seem to blame their qualification for not achieving their expected privileges from their jobs. However, the regression analysis indicated that graduates of the social science school at Kuwait University are more satisfied with the quality of their education than graduates from the business and education school. This finding needs further investigation in future studies in order to understand what the social science school is offering their graduates in view of such positive perception.

Graduates' satisfaction with their job was important for this study, especially to see if it affects their performance and their notion of education quality. The analysis implies that the majority of graduates were not satisfied with what they were expecting from their employers. Further, the literature suggests that dissatisfaction with a job is often a reason for high employee turnover. This was supported in the literature, for in 2006, 19,000 Kuwaiti citizens changed their work because they were not fit for the specific needs and requirements of the labour market (Hossam, 2007).

However, the regression analysis indicated that the low-quality education is again the main reason for graduates' dissatisfaction with their career development. It appears that the low-quality education in Kuwait is a major issue and supports the notion that graduates blame their qualification for their dissatisfaction. Also, graduates in Kuwait are dissatisfied with what their jobs actually provide in terms of their career development and expected job privileges. The literature suggests that graduate recruitment has become one of the major challenging issues because a good number of employers have realized that the future of their business is contingent upon the recruitment and selection of the finest from among a growing number of graduates in different disciplines and from a wide range of higher educational institutions (Branine, 1999). Thus, for Kuwait's labour market to recruit and retain the best graduates, it is vital that graduates' expectations are met.

However, graduates believe that gaining skills from education, field training and experience, would increase their satisfaction level with career development. This seems logical as gaining skills from education boosts future career development in being competent for the job. Also, it appears that graduates who work in the private sector are more satisfied with their career development. This is agreed to in the literature, that although the government sector allows graduates to occupy respectable even comfortable jobs with a relatively decent salary, the private sector provides better career opportunities.

However, there are only a limited number of Kuwaiti workers (7%) who are being employed in the private sector. Also, it appears that social science graduates are more satisfied with their career development and that their area of study allows them to be well prepared for their future career. This supports the earlier finding that graduates of social science at Kuwait University are more satisfied with the quality of their education than graduates from the business and education school.

In terms of job privileges, those expected job privileges are the main reason for graduates' dissatisfaction. This suggests that expected job privileges were not met in the actual job and that the disappointment with job privileges that graduates have not attained is the main reason for graduates' sense of dissatisfaction. Therefore, employers should take into account these expectations if they are to retain the best graduates. Also, graduates' perception of low-quality education affects their dissatisfaction with job privileges. It seems that graduates consider their low-quality education as the cause of their dissatisfaction with job privileges. This supports the earlier finding that graduates blame their quality of education for their dissatisfaction with job privileges.

Moreover, it appeared that business graduates are less satisfied with their job privileges. Maybe, as business students, they imagine a lucrative career that pays a windfall of job privileges. However, female graduates seem to be more satisfied with their job privileges. It also appears that gaining skills from doing the job reduces the dissatisfaction level with job privileges, perhaps because graduates realize that they have yet to earn it.

The discussion of the above findings is expected to make a major contribution towards understanding the mismatch between the supply of university graduates on the one hand and the demand from Kuwait's labour market on the other. This will concern us next.

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the mismatch between supply of university graduates on the one hand and demand from Kuwait's graduate labour market on the other. Accordingly, stakeholders in the Kuwaiti labour market were canvassed for their opinions, as were their employers in public and private sectors, policy makers, educators, as well as university graduates. The study also seeks to critically analyze the expectations of the labour market vis-à-vis the provision of workforce from universities in Kuwait. In addition, the study also aims to critically analyze the perceptions at universities vis-à-vis their role in the provision of knowledge and skills. Furthermore, the study tries to determine the extent to which employers are satisfied with the quality of education that universities supply. The study explores graduates' perceptions of the relevance and appropriateness of their education to their current job. The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the findings of the study as well as draw implications for research, policy and practice that may help in the development of Kuwait's labour market. Finally, the chapter discusses an agenda for further research.

9.2 Summary of Findings

In the early years after the discovery of oil in Kuwait, the labour market was mostly comprised of expatriates. The most important cause was the small size of the native population and the low level of education. Spurred by revenues from oil, the government of Kuwait increased its spending on educational development with the objective of producing highly educated and skilled Kuwaitis, thereby making significant improvements in the educational level of the Kuwaiti labour force. It was hoped that this would ultimately facilitate development of the social and economic life of its citizens. However, despite huge progress in education, there remains the major problem of mismatch between higher education outputs and the labour market needs and requirements. The study found that most employers in Kuwait's labour market perceive graduates as of poor quality with limited skills. Furthermore, the study found that the relationship between higher education institutions and the labour market is considered to be very weak. This increases the imbalance problem. Moreover, the effect of social and personal relationships in a high context culture like Kuwait makes the imbalance even worse. Another finding from the study relating to the mismatch within the market is graduates' dissatisfaction with their jobs, as employers fail to satisfy graduates' expectations. As a result, Kuwait experiences a high employee turnover. Hence, this is a very important issue as the future of any business depends on retaining the best from among an increasingly demanding number of graduates in various disciplines.

As pointed out earlier, the main purpose of this research was to investigate the mismatch between supply of university graduates and demand from Kuwait's graduate labour market. Therefore, the first objective of the research was to critically analyze the expectations of the labour market vis-à-vis the provision of workforce from universities in Kuwait. The study found that the majority of employers think that universities should prepare graduates for the labour market, even as Kuwait University is encountering problems regarding its role in the provision of knowledge and skills. These problems include the quality of education and lack of communication with the labour market. Besides, every policy maker agreed that it is the responsibility of universities to prepare graduates for the labour market.

Another objective of the research was to examine the perceptions at universities vis-à-vis their role in the provision of knowledge and skills. Here, the study found that, overall, the majority of educators were in agreement that the basic role of higher educational institutions is to provide essential basic knowledge. However, a smaller number had argued that besides providing such basic knowledge, they are also required to partly prepare graduates for labour market requirements.

The third objective was to determine the extent to which employers are (dis)satisfied with the quality of education that universities supply. The analyses of the data revealed a general belief among employers that there is a lack of skills and motivation among graduates. Also, employers indicated that a lack of communication between higher educational institutions and the market affects graduates' quality of education.

The fourth objective was to explore graduates' perceptions on the relevance and appropriateness of their education to their current job. The analyses of the data revealed that graduates currently working believe that the quality of their education is affected negatively by the source of their skills and area of study (social science). Additionally, they believe that the quality of their education is affected positively by expected job privileges. Here, the study found that the majority of graduates currently working are dissatisfied with their current jobs. Thereby, graduates also indicated that their dissatisfaction with their career development is affected positively by three variables: perceptions on the quality of their education, career development expectations, and expected job privileges. They believe that dissatisfaction with their career development is affected negatively by four variables: experience as source of skills, learning as source of skills, area of study (social science), and sector (private).

Even more, graduates also indicated that their dissatisfaction with job privileges is affected positively by three variables: expected job privileges, perceptions on the quality of their education, and area of study (business). They believe that dissatisfaction with their job privileges is affected negatively by gender (female) and experience as source of skills.

9.3 Research Implications

In light of what has been discussed above, the following section will highlight their significance. The study also contributes to knowledge in terms of both theory and practice.

9.3.1 Theoretical Implications

With regard to the theoretical contributions, most importantly, this study has found that there is an imbalance within the Kuwaiti labour market. It confirms previous research in the Middle East, Europe and North America. In addition, there is a lack of information regarding the skills-gap in developing countries and particularly in Kuwait. Hence, no study at Kuwait University has investigated the views of stakeholders and education providers vis-à-vis the needs of the labour market. However, this important issue of graduate employment had been discussed by a number of researchers in other industrialized countries, for example: Barnett (1994), Brown, Hesketh and Williams (2004) from the UK; and Allen, Boezerooy, de Weert, van der Velden (2000) from the Netherlands. Consequently, most of the research in that area has been conducted in western developed countries. Therefore, research focusing on developing countries is very much needed in order to identify appropriate alternatives and solutions for the skills-gap. Accordingly, the findings of this study will advance theoretical knowledge in terms of managing Kuwait's labour market. Hence, the outcomes have important implications even for a broader audience beyond Kuwait by improving knowledge and discovering ways to compete in the global village using its human power-base successfully. It should also benefit the Arabian Gulf countries because they share with Kuwait similar economic, political, social, religious and cultural heritage.

The study also contributes to the ongoing debate over the relationship between higher education and the labour market. This debate concentrates on the role and responsibilities of higher education towards preparing graduates for jobs in the labour market. Hence, a number of studies have argued that the main role of higher educational institutions is to prepare students for employment, and this is their primary responsibility, especially to prevent the risk of skills-gap within the labour market. Others have argued that it is not the educational institutions' job to provide employable graduates.

This study has found that the majority of employers and all policy makers in Kuwait are in agreement that it is the responsibility of universities to prepare graduates for the labour market. The study findings also provided a deeper understanding of and support for the first group in the debate, emphasizing that it is vital to take into consideration labour market needs in higher educational curriculums. At the base of this argument is the abundant literature on the need for a strong relationship between education, labour market, economic and social development; see, for example: Mincer (1970), Card (1990), Ashenfelter and Card (2000), Heckman et al. (2000), Hanushek and Welch (2006). In summary, it has shown that an adequate education boosts employees' level of productivity and skills, thereby helping them obtain suitable jobs. Accordingly, many developed countries such as the UK, Canada, USA, and Australia have emphasized the responsibility of universities to produce employable graduates. This trend understands that key employability skills provide a bridge between education and jobs (see for example: Australian ACCI's General Council, 2004; Curtis and Mackenzie, 2001; Watts, 2006; Confederation of British Industry, 1999; 2000a; 2000b; Conference Board of Canada, 1992).

In addition, this study found that communication is essential to solving labour market problems. No wonder, all policy makers and educators as well as the majority of employers agreed on the importance of communication in creating an understanding in the labour market towards solving market-related problems. This provided a deeper understanding of the role of communication in bridging the skills-gap in the labour market. Hence, many studies are in agreement that communication within the labour market has the potential to close the skills-gap through mutual understanding and preparation of graduates that match labour market needs (See, Graf 1997; Gabrich et al. 2001; Brown et al. 2002). Evidence suggests that communication and feedback between the key parties (higher educational institutions, labour market, and university graduates) have the potential of closing any gap in the market through mutual understanding. For example, Graf (1997) stressed that "it is important for the academic community to foster relationships and develop open lines of communication with both students and the business community". Furthermore, this study adopts an attitudinal and perceptual investigation rather than secondary data analyses or policy analyses. As such, many studies have found that it would be most rewarding to use a mixture of data collection methods when exploring human behavior and attitudes in social science (Patton, 1990; Cohen, 1988; Sandelowski, 2000). In fact, to make a comprehensive judgment on the adequacy and appropriateness of higher education outputs, one needs to explore the opinions and experience of higher education users. Therefore, this study investigated the labour market stakeholders' views using a mixed approach involving both quantitative and qualitative methods.

This study interviewed educators as the supply side of the labour market, and policy makers as the labour market controller. Moreover, the study has also surveyed labour market consumers of employers and graduates. According to Vulliamy (1990), the qualitative research method emphasizes the validity of the research because it is better at answering the 'why' questions than the quantitative method. Also, the quantitative research method is stronger than the qualitative research method in terms of the reliability and generalizability of the research findings. Therefore, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods will enhance the validity, reliability, and generalizability of the findings.

9.3.2 Practical Implications

With regard to practical contribution, the research can benefit the Kuwaiti labour market in a significant way. It addresses the most vital components affecting the country's prosperity, namely, graduates, higher educational institutions, as well as private and public employers, particularly in the areas of gaining a competitive advantage, economic and social development, and creating a successful society with young, ambitious, and well-educated citizens. First of all, the study will benefit the whole country's economic and social development, for the literature has always emphasized a positive correlation between competent education and economic and social development of countries worldwide. Therefore, the findings and recommendations should associate Kuwait with higher economic and social gains. The relevant literature reviewed in chapters one and two have demonstrated that there is a strong connection between education, labour market, economic and social development.

Moreover, this study could work as a guide for educators. The study had emphasized that higher educational institutions should prepare graduates for the labour market. All policy makers and the majority of employers agreed on that point. This allows higher educational institutions to acknowledge their vital role of supplying skilled and talented graduates that match the needs and requirements of the labour market. Therefore, market needs could be articulated by universities in a manner that could be translated into sets of needed competencies and academic curricula. This matches the international trend emphasizing the responsibility of universities to produce employable graduates (see, Curtis and Mackenzie, 2001; ACCI, 2004; Australian Education Council, 1992a). This trend had started back in the 1990s with the notion that key employability skills provide a bridge between education and jobs (Curtis and Mackenzie, 2001). As such, it should be easier to manage the graduate labour market, solve problems, and bridge the gap in the market.

Furthermore, this study could work as a guide for employers. As mentioned earlier, in today's global economic and social environment, there is aggressive competition among organizations hoping to gain the competitive advantage through effective utilization of scarce resources. Thus, a large number of employers have realized that the future of their business depends on the recruitment and selection of the best from among an increasing number of graduates from higher educational institutions (Branine, 1999). Understanding the factors related to job satisfaction would help them enormously when making decisions about staffing and job design.

Accordingly, this study has found that graduates are not satisfied with what they were expecting. Some researchers had argued that expectations could affect, either positively or negatively, employees' level of job satisfaction (Ferguson & Cheyne, 1995; Nelson & Cooper, 1995; Howard & Frink, 1996). Thus, to recruit and retain the best graduates, it is important to satisfy graduates' expectations; for it is widely known that a satisfied employee generally stays longer in a particular job (Schmidt-Hoffman & Radius, 1995). Therefore, the finding should inform employers on what graduates are expecting from them. When these expectations are taken into account when designating their recruitment campaigns, it will help in the effort to retain the most competent and qualified graduates.

In addition, this study could work as a guide to students of higher education. The study has found that graduates of Kuwait university lack the skills needed for jobs. However, the literature increasingly explores the important topic of employability skills and what employers expect from their potential employees (see e.g. Bailey, 1997; Packer, 1998; Overtom, 2000; Murnane and Levy, 1996). These skills are necessary for career success at all levels of employment and at all levels of education.

Therefore, the findings should benefit students in understanding the skills they may lack in order to make up for them and thereby gain career success at any level of employment. They could push higher educational institutions to provide them with the opportunities to acquire such skills. This study also provides students with an overview of employers' requirements. Students will find this study useful as it helps them to be better prepared for those requirements. Hence, the results of the study will provide students with guidance in preparing resumes as well as identifying skills and qualities to be highlighted during interviews with potential employers, especially in the private sector.

In light of the above discussion, the following recommendations can be duly made:

9.3.2.1 Enhancing Communication

The country needs to design an articulate scheme to empower communication with the labour market. Communication ought to take place between higher educational institutions and employers under a mechanism of policies that supports positive interaction and feedback on graduate performance. This could aid universities in their effort to supply well-trained graduates to every sector, graduates who are well trained and ultimately successful in being able to handle labour market requirements and needs.

Communication should also be encouraged between employers and graduates through recruitment fairs, arranged visits, surveys, and so forth. This would benefit employers in understanding graduate expectations, which should be taken into account when designing recruitment campaign if they are to attract the best candidates. On the other hand, this would benefit graduates in understanding the nature of available jobs and offers in order to prevent any unnecessary disappointment, which could affect their level of satisfaction and motivation to work.

9.3.2.2 Skills Improvement

There is a greater need to reconsider the educational system in Kuwait, which currently adopts theoretical style. In effect, employers' needs and requirements should be matched with the needed skills in order to balance the labour market. In other words, graduates must mirror competency criteria so as to be able to handle global competition. Thus, there is a need to urgently put in place policies regarding practical training and fieldwork courses for higher education's final year students.

This practical training and field work could allow students to become more aware of what is practically required and offered by the labour market, as well as gaining real life skills and practical knowledge. In addition, students could be advised to use online tutorials on the skills needed by employers. This would ensure that students have the level of skills required by the labour market.

9.3.2.3 Revising Educational Policies

There is a need to streamline education policies so that the supply of skills matches demands from the labour market. Therefore, higher education programs and courses have to be revised and reformed to mirror recent economic and social development, and to be coherent with labour market needs, requirements, and changes. Policies should focus on improving the quality of education; for example, providing motivated and well-trained educators as well as adequate instructive resources and textbooks. Courses could also be deleted/changed/merged into more labour market oriented courses or practical work placement training. Thus, universities can change/add new courses according to the needs of the job market. This can improve skills, enhance training, and consolidate curriculum development.

9.3.2.4 Building Broad Coalition in the Labour Market

It is vital that higher educational institutions, private and public employers, and policy makers take immediate action and are involved together in the process of educating students. It is also essential that the students themselves get involved in that coalition. Higher educational institutions should be aware of the needs of the job market, in order to provide what is needed in terms of training, teaching methods, resources, collaboration, and curriculum revision. Employers should be aware of graduates' needs in relation to the job market, so as to be able to offer them what is needed in terms of job privileges and career opportunities in the hope of recruiting the best graduates. This should be reinforced and controlled by policy makers to ensure the effectiveness of the coalition. Regular evaluation and survey of these issues should ensure a better-skilled generation in the Kuwaiti labour market.

9.3.2.5 Development of Teaching Methods

The study findings indicated that education in Kuwait is based on theoretical training. However, HRD literature has placed great importance on the need for education providers to survey and study labour market requirements when developing training and skills acquisition programs. Therefore, training as a teaching method should be involved in the learning process. Accordingly, higher educational institutions should cooperate closely with the labour market to evaluate curriculums and to get feedback from employers on the skills and training required. As mentioned earlier, HRD had introduced the term 'Systematic Training Cycle' (STC) (Chapter Two, Section 2.10: Labour Market and HRD). Higher educational institutions in Kuwait can adopt the same logic behind "Training Needs Cycle" as a teaching method when developing their programs and curriculums.

9.3.2.6 Awareness Programs

The country should set up highly-designed and constant awareness programs to enhance citizens' knowledge on the value of skills, and to make them aware of the significant contribution of a highly skilled workforce towards achieving better economic and social development for the country. These programs should also highlight the negative influences of either "WASTA" or parent interference in choice of job on graduates' careers. There must be an emphasis on the importance of providing equal opportunities and justice to all in society.

9.3.2.7 Eliminating the Influence of Social Relations

The process of selecting graduates should only be done through official boards and committees of no less than three members from both public and private sectors. This will ensure equal opportunities for all graduates, and more importantly it will help eliminate the negative effect of "wasta". These committees must have more than three members selected by the head of each organization. They must provide an automated selective range of criteria that must be prepared in advance, and conduct its working under certain regulations. Therefore, the decision over which candidates to employ would be under the control of at least three persons who are to make use of a set of arranged criteria checklist to ensure equal opportunity for all.

9.3.2.8 Motivating Students

Students must be encouraged during their higher education studies to improve on those basic skills needed by employers. Therefore, educators should heighten interest among students as a way of encouraging them to improve on their skills. They could link their learned skills to their grades.

Also, planned conferences and recruitment fairs may be held to inform graduates about the importance of such skills to their future career. This will motivate students to obtain those skills required by the labour market as a way towards improving their future career opportunities. This is in conjunction with the awareness programs and recruitment policies meant to eliminate the effect of social relations while aiding motivated graduates to acquire more skills and perform better at work.

9.4 Limitations of the Research

In the process of addressing the research problems, answering the research questions, and fulfilling the research aims and objectives, several limitations may be pointed out. They are as follows:

- Most of the official documents in Kuwait are written in Arabic. Therefore, the translation process into English might inadvertently result in an inaccurate interpretation of the content.
- No recent updates for some of the official data were available, and these were 5 years old.
- The study used social networks (“wasta”) during the collection of data. This could influence some of the results. However, if “wasta” wasn’t used, it wouldn’t have been possible to collect such data.

9.5 Proposal for Further Research

The current study has examined the skills-gap or labour market imbalance vis-à-vis higher education in the state of Kuwait. However, further studies are needed to investigate if there is a labour market imbalance within the GCC countries as they share similar economic, political, social, religious and cultural heritage. The literature suggests that gulf countries are aware of the key economic and social challenges facing the countries, which require focusing on ensuring educational quality and excellence. Also there is the need to nurture the youth with the abilities and skills required to find jobs in an increasingly integrated and competitive global economy. Therefore, comparative study is needed to explore the skills gap between the state of Kuwait and other GCC countries.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Top Ten Competences as Listed by European and Japanese Graduates:

UK	Europe	Japan
1- Learning abilities 2-Working independently 3- Written communication skills 4- Working in a team 5- Working under pressure 6- Accuracy, attention to detail 7- Power of concentration 8- Oral communication skills 9- Problem-solving ability 10=Initiative, 10=Adaptability 10 = Tolerance	1- Learning abilities 2- Power of concentration 3- Working independently 4- Written communication skills 5- Loyalty, integrity 6- Field-specific theoretical knowledge 7- Getting personally involved 8- Critical thinking 9- Adaptability 10- Tolerance	1- Loyalty, integrity 2- Power of concentration 3- Adaptability 4- Getting personally involved 5- Learning abilities 6- Field-specific theoretical knowledge 7- Fitness for work 8- Initiative 9- Tolerance 10- Working in a team

Source: Brenda Little et al, "The international perspectives on employability" A briefing paper. (2003) P.6

Appendix. 2: Major Indicators of Kuwait's Population:

Population	3,441,813 Note: includes 2,354,261 non-nationals
Age structure	0-14 years: 26.9% (male 331,768/female 319,896)
Median age	25.9 years
Growth rate	3.52% <i>note: this rate reflects a return to pre-Gulf crisis immigration of expatriates</i>
Fertility rate:	2.91 children born/woman
Life expectancy at birth:	<i>Total population: 77.2 years</i> <i>male: 76.13 years</i> <i>female: 78.31 years</i>
Religions:	Muslim 85% (Sunni 70%, Shi'a 30%), Christian, Hindu, Parsi, and other 15%
Languages:	Arabic (official), English widely spoken

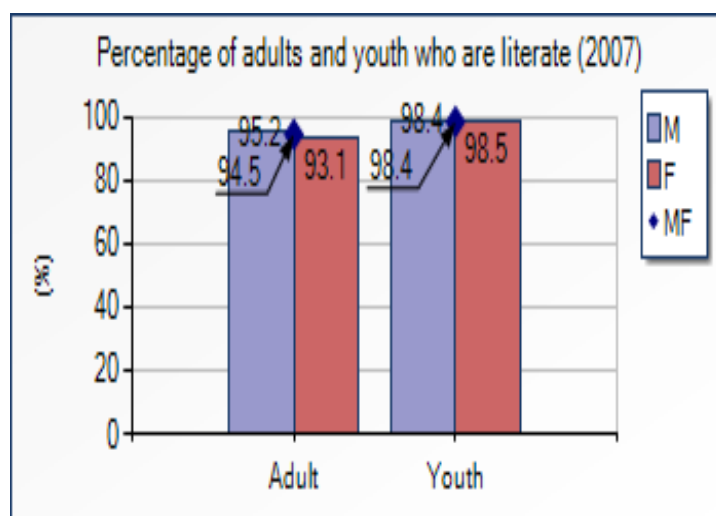
Source: Central Intelligence Agency (2007)

Appendix. 3: Adult literacy rates in the Arab States:

Adult literacy rate (%). Total - 2007		
Kuwait	94.5	
Palestinian	93.8	
Qatar	93.1	
Lebanon	89.6	
Bahrain	88.8 (**)	
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	86.8 (**)	
Saudi Arabia	85.0 (**)	
Oman	84.4 (**)	
Syrian Arab Republic	83.1 (**)	
Tunisia	77.7 (**)	
Algeria	75.4 (**)	
Yemen	58.9 (**)	
Mauritania	55.8 (**)	
Morocco	55.6 (**)	
Djibouti	...	
Egypt	...	
Iraq	...	
Jordan	...	
Sudan	...	
United Arab Emirates	...	
... Data not available		
** UIS estimation		

Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, (2009)

Appendix. 4: Literate adults and youth in Kuwait:



Source: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia 2007

Appendix. 5: Amount Paid by Kuwaiti Government to Send Students to Study Abroad:

Year	Amount
2004/2003	5,573,238 KD
2004/2005	4,925,195 KD
2005/2006	5,200,000 KD
2006/2007	10,810,000 KD
2007/2008	10,760,000 KD
2008/2009	10,718,000 KD
2009/2010	11,130,000 KD
2010/2011	10,872,000 KD

Source: CSC, 2010

Appendix. 6: Employers questionnaires:

Please complete the following questionnaire by ticking the boxes as appropriate. Thank you

Section 1 - Company Information

- 1- In which sector does your company operate? ☐ Private ☐ Public
- 2- What is your position?
☐ Ministry under Secretary ☐ CEO ☐ Line Manager ☐ Other, Please Specify _____
- 3- How many employees do you have in your organization?
☐ 10 - 30 ☐ 40 - 70 ☐ 80 - 100 ☐ more than 100
- 4- In the last five years how many employees were recruited at your company?
☐ 10 -20 ☐ 30 – 40 ☐ 50 – 60 ☐ more than 60
- 5- In the last five years considering the employees you have recruited at your company, what percentage would you say are Kuwait University graduates? **(If your answer is 0% please proceed to section D)**
☐ 0% ☐ 1% - 20% ☐ 21%–40% ☐ more than 40%

Section 2 - Graduate Education, Training and Background

- 1- What were the main fields of study of those new graduates recruited in the last 5 years?
☐ Business ☐ Education ☐ Social Science
- 2- How did the graduates gain skills needed for their jobs? (Please tick the appropriate box)

Sources	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1- Graduates gain skills needed for their jobs from doing their job (work experience)					
2- Graduates gain skills needed for their jobs from learning in University (education)					

- 3- Regard training, answer the following statement

Training	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1- Graduates gain skills needed for their jobs from field training courses					

- 4- The following statements relates to why you recruits new graduates instead of non-graduates or graduates with relevant work experience? (Please tick the appropriate box)

Reasons	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1- This organization recruits new graduates because they got new competency skills.					
2- This organization recruits new graduates because they are hard working with higher career aspiration.					

Section 3 –government interference:

Reasons	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1- This organization recruits new graduates because of Government legislations.					

Section 4 – Importance:

- 1- How important are the following skills to your organization when you are recruiting graduates? (Please tick the appropriate box)

Skills	NA (1)	Not Important (2)	Less Important (3)	Neither Important or Not Important (4)	Important (5)	Most Important (6)
1- Competency in graduate area of specialization						
2- Thinking Creatively						
3- Learning abilities						
4- Reading Skills						
5- Written Communication Skills						
6- Speaking and listening skills						
7- Leadership skills						
8- Negotiation skills						
9- Time Management						
10- Problem-solving ability						
11- Career aspiration						

- 2- How would you rate on average the new graduates' performance on the following skills? (Please tick the appropriate box) (**satisfaction**)

Skills	NA (1)	Poor (2)	Bad (3)	Good (4)	Very Good (5)	Excellent (6)
1- Competency in graduate area of specialization						
2- Thinking Creatively						
3- Learning abilities						
4- Reading Skills						
5- Written Communication Skills						
6- Speaking and listening skills						
7- Leadership skills						
8- Negotiation skills						
9- Time Management						
10- Problem-solving ability						
11- Career aspiration						

Section 5 – Communication:

Regarding communication with higher education institutions please read the following statements and tick the box as appropriate:

Statements	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1- communication with higher education would ensure that graduates match the labour market needs.					
2- This organization does not communicate with higher education institutions.					
3- This organization does not receive invitations for campus visits and recruitment fairs in universities.					
4- This organization does not receive invitations for meetings with universities to create curriculums.					

Section 6- (perceptions of graduates potentials)

Regarding the satisfaction with graduates performance please read the following statements and tick the box as appropriate:

Statements	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1- Overall, this organization is not satisfied with performance.					
2- Overall, graduates have skills deficiencies.					
3- Overall, graduates in this organization were not suitable for the position they hold.					

Section 7 – (perceptions of higher education role)

Regarding the satisfaction with graduates performance please read the following statements and tick the box as appropriate:

Statements	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
4- Higher education institutions are doing a bad job in preparing graduates for the labour market needs.					
5- Higher education institutions should prepare graduates for the labour market needs.					

Section 8 – Problems:

What are the major problems that affect the Kuwaiti labour market? (Please tick the appropriate box)

Problems	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1- Quality of education.					
2- Lack of communication with labour market.					
3- Skills obsolesce due to technological changes.					
4- Family social relationships that ensure reaching favorable jobs.					
5- Family influence on career choice.					
6- Lack of graduate's skills.					
7- Lack of graduate's motivation.					

Section 9 – Solutions:

What are your suggestions to solve/ minimize the labour market problems? (Please tick the appropriate box)

Solutions	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1- Enhancing the University quality of education.					
2- Government legislation to facilitates communication channels with universities.					
3- Lowering family impact on career choice.					
4- Lowering the impact of family social relationships on reaching favorable jobs.					
5- Sending students to study abroad.					
6- Rewriting/Improving the curriculum.					

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. Your assistance is greatly appreciated

Appendix. 7: Graduates currently working questionnaires:

Please complete the following questionnaire by ticking the boxes as appropriate. Thank you

Section A – Background Information

1- Are you?

☐ Male

☐ Female

2- What is your area of study?

☐ Business

☐ Education

☐ Social science

Section B – Employment Information

1- What type of job are you doing now _____

2- Which type of employer you are working for?

☐ Public Sector

☐ Private Sector

Section C – Education

Regarding your education at University please read the following statements and ticks the box as appropriate:

Statements	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1- I feel that my education doesn't allow me to be competent at my job.					
2- I feel that the university curriculum didn't prepared me optimally for the job.					
3- There is no relation between what I have studied and skills I need to do my current job properly.					
4- I feel that I'm not suitable for the position I hold.					
5- Others, please Specify					

Section D - Performance Information

Regarding your performance at your current job please read the following statements and ticks the box as appropriate:

Statements	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1- I have gained skills needed for my job from doing it (work experience)					
2- I have gained skills needed for my job from learning in University (education)					
3- I have gained skills needed for my job from field training.					
4- Others, Please Specify					

Section E – Graduates Expectations

1- What were your expectations from any employer when you undergoing your studies? (Please tick the appropriate box)

Expectations	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1- I expect to work with employer who provides me with higher salary.					
2- I expect to work with employer who provides me with flexible working hours (balanced life style).					
3- I expect to work with employer who provides me with career opportunities.					
4- I expect to work with employer that fits with my family expectations.					
5- I expect to work with employer who provides me with opportunity to travel.					
6- I expect to work with employer who provides me with opportunity to use my talent.					
7- I expect to work with employer who provides me with opportunity to acquire more skills.					
8- I expect to work with employer who provides me with opportunity to acquire more experience.					
9- I expect to work with employer who provides me with opportunity to work with people I like.					
10- Other, Please specify					

Section F – Satisfaction

1- Regarding the satisfaction with your current job please read the following statements and ticks the box as appropriate:

Statements	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1- Overall, I'm not satisfied with my current job.					
2- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't pay me suitable salary.					
3- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't provide me a balanced life style.					
4- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't aid my career aspiration.					
5 - I'm not satisfied with my current job because my family affect on my job selection decision.					
6- - I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to travel.					
7- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to use my talent.					
8- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to acquire more skills.					
9- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to acquire more experience.					
10- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to work with people I like.					
11- Other, Please specify					

Section G – Importance

In your opinion, how important are the following skills to your organization when they are recruiting graduates? (Please tick the appropriate box)

Skills	NA (1)	Not Important (2)	Less Important (3)	Neither Important or Not Important (4)	Important (5)	Most Important (6)
1- Thinking Creatively						
2- Learning abilities						
3- Reading Skills						
4- Written Communication Skills						
5- Speaking and listening skills						
6- Leadership						
7- Team Work						
8- Negotiation skills						
9- Time Management						
10- Problem-solving ability						
11- Career aspiration						

Section H – Family Influences

Regarding family influences on your choice of job, please read the following statements and tick the appropriate box:

Statements	NA (1)	Strongly Disagree (2)	Disagree (3)	Neither Agree or Disagree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
1- My family had an impact on my choice of job.						
2- My family affect on my choice of job because of conservative reasons.						
3- My family affect on my choice of job because they own the organization I'm working in.						
4- My family affect on my choice of job because they think they know better.						
5- I used my family relationships to get the job that I want.						
6- Others, Please Specify						

Please use the following space if you wish to add any suggestions about how education institutions in Kuwait can be better prepared to meet the requirements and needs of the labour market?

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire.

Appendix. 8: Interview Questions:

Research Question	Interview Question	Group
1- What role do universities believe they should play with regard to the provision of knowledge and skills?	<p>1- What is the university mission and main objectives?</p> <p>2- Do they have the strategy for next 10, 20, 50 years?</p> <p>3- What is the position of Kuwait University graduates?</p> <p>4- Do you think that your graduates are ready to enter the labour market? Why or why not?</p> <p>5- In which way the university graduates are perceived in the employment market? (Are they attractive?)</p> <p>6- To what extent the higher education institutions held a responsibility to prepare students for the work place?</p> <p>7- Do you think that the curriculum of Kuwait's higher education need to be conceived in terms of market needs and employer perceptions?</p> <p>8- What should higher education institutions do in order to better prepare graduates for the labor market needs?</p> <p>9- Is there any kind of communication with the labour market? Explain?</p> <p>10- In your opinion is there any problems facing the in Kuwaiti labour market? What is it?</p> <p>11- In relation to the previous question what are your suggestions to solve/ minimizes the labor market problems?</p>	<u>Deans and academics</u>
2- What role do players in the labour market expect universities to play regarding the provision of knowledge and skills?	<p>1- Would you clarify and highlight the general policies regarding education and the labour market?</p> <p>2- To what extent the higher education institutions held a responsibility to prepare students for the work place?</p> <p>3- What should high education institutions do in order to better prepare graduates for the labor market needs?</p> <p>4- Do you thing that there is a need to implement legislation in the future in order to link educational institutions to the labour market?</p>	<u>Policy Makers</u> (<u>plus questionnairees for employers</u>)
3- What are the perceptions of the players in labour market in relation to university graduates' potentials?	<p>1- Do you think that Kuwait University graduates are ready to enter the labour market? Why or why not?</p> <p>2- In your opinion is there any problems facing the in Kuwaiti labor market? What is it?</p> <p>3- In relation to the previous question what are your suggestions to solve/ minimizes the labor market problem</p>	<u>Policy Makers</u> (<u>Plus questionnairees for employers</u>)

Appendix.9: Total Variance Explained for the independent variables of employers perceptions on higher education role:

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8.234	30.495	30.495	8.234	30.495	30.495	7.787	28.840	28.840
2	3.015	11.165	41.660	3.015	11.165	41.660	2.389	8.847	37.686
3	2.596	9.614	51.274	2.596	9.614	51.274	1.918	7.103	44.790
4	1.830	6.779	58.053	1.830	6.779	58.053	1.838	6.807	51.597
5	1.296	4.799	62.852	1.296	4.799	62.852	1.800	6.665	58.262
6	1.224	4.533	67.385	1.224	4.533	67.385	1.735	6.427	64.689
7	1.098	4.066	71.450	1.098	4.066	71.450	1.557	5.765	70.454
8	1.015	3.760	75.210	1.015	3.760	75.210	1.284	4.756	75.210
9	.787	2.917	78.127						
10	.728	2.695	80.821						
11	.715	2.650	83.471						
12	.600	2.224	85.695						
13	.552	2.043	87.738						
14	.503	1.862	89.600						
15	.451	1.669	91.269						
16	.378	1.399	92.668						
17	.349	1.292	93.960						
18	.311	1.152	95.112						
19	.256	.949	96.061						
20	.211	.781	96.842						
21	.188	.695	97.537						
22	.168	.624	98.161						
23	.136	.504	98.665						
24	.129	.478	99.143						
25	.097	.358	99.501						
26	.076	.281	99.782						
27	.059	.218	100.000						

Appendix.10: Factor Load for the independent variables of employers' perception on higher education role:

Rotated Component Matrix^a								
	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1- Graduates gain skills needed for their jobs from doing their job (work experience)	.255	-.124	.095	.081	-.103	.365	.585	.039
2- Graduates gain skills needed for their jobs from learning in University (education)	.044	.001	.304	-.138	.205	-.223	.654	.088
3- Graduates gain skills needed for their jobs from company training courses	.255	.139	.283	.269	-.314	-.232	.230	.445
1- This organization recruits new graduates because they got new competency skills.	.039	.030	.830	.050	.015	.101	.139	.014
2- This organization recruits new graduates because they are hard working with higher career aspiration.	.253	.056	.809	-.090	.032	.081	.071	-.103
3- This organization recruits new graduates because of Government legislations.	.071	-.138	-.112	.071	.139	.126	.025	.876
1- Competency in graduate area of specialization	.707	.020	-.004	.042	-.397	.007	.265	-.166
2- Thinking Creatively	.854	.032	.014	.036	.074	.015	.144	.052
3- Learning abilities	.860	-.110	.077	.006	.059	.113	.181	-.033
4- Reading Skills	.744	-.011	-.028	.057	.171	.168	.380	-.075
5- Written Communication Skills	.784	-.031	.104	.152	.192	.059	.357	-.088
6- Speaking and listening skills	.872	-.003	.012	.030	.124	-.044	.113	.133
7- Leadership skills	.870	-.044	.126	.016	.175	.063	.033	.059
9- Time Management	.873	-.088	.067	.062	.175	.063	.044	.051
10- Problem-solving ability	.867	-.022	.086	.028	.166	.014	.128	.107
11- Career aspiration	.905	-.047	.131	.007	.100	.078	.081	.040
Q3212	.741	-.035	.298	.062	.062	.147	.131	.144
1- communication with higher education would ensure that graduates match the labour market needs.	.122	.275	.404	.174	-.151	.106	.382	.366
2- This organization does not communicate with higher education institutions.	-.044	.813	.147	.065	.089	.061	.128	.046
3- This organization does not receive invitations for campus visits and recruitment fairs in universities.	-.112	.911	.001	-.061	.020	.041	.090	-.067
4- This organization does not receive invitations for meetings with universities to create curriculums.	-.041	.829	-.027	-.146	.073	.074	.187	-.061
1- Quality of education.	-.014	.092	.081	.212	.158	.723	.070	.052
2- Lack of communication with labour market.	-.026	.097	.050	.114	.148	.787	.059	.036
4- Family social relationships that ensure reaching favorable jobs.	.113	.117	-.157	.223	.707	.322	.113	.212
5- Family influence on career choice.	.033	-.023	.095	.234	.786	.133	.025	-.057
6- Lack of graduate's skills.	.043	-.128	.006	.848	.129	.288	.134	-.005
7- Lack of graduate's motivation.	.029	-.030	-.006	.862	.245	.121	.107	-.002

Appendix. 11: Excluded variables Perception of role of Higher education role:

Excluded Variables ^b						
Model		Beta In	T	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics
						Tolerance
1	DIM1	.032 ^a	.362	.718	.037	1.000
	DIM2	.003 ^a	.033	.973	.003	.856
	DIM3	.106 ^a	1.185	.239	.121	.981
	DIM4	.008 ^a	.088	.930	.009	.999
	DIM5	.079 ^a	.823	.412	.084	.850
	DIM7	.075 ^a	.849	.398	.087	1.000

a. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), DIM6

b. Dependent Variable: PERC2

Appendix.12: Total Variance Explained for the independent variables of employers perceptions on graduates potentials:

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8.234	30.495	30.495	8.234	30.495	30.495	7.787	28.840	28.840
2	3.015	11.165	41.660	3.015	11.165	41.660	2.389	8.847	37.686
3	2.596	9.614	51.274	2.596	9.614	51.274	1.918	7.103	44.790
4	1.830	6.779	58.053	1.830	6.779	58.053	1.838	6.807	51.597
5	1.296	4.799	62.852	1.296	4.799	62.852	1.800	6.665	58.262
6	1.224	4.533	67.385	1.224	4.533	67.385	1.735	6.427	64.689
7	1.098	4.066	71.450	1.098	4.066	71.450	1.557	5.765	70.454
8	1.015	3.760	75.210	1.015	3.760	75.210	1.284	4.756	75.210
9	.787	2.917	78.127						
10	.728	2.695	80.821						
11	.715	2.650	83.471						
12	.600	2.224	85.695						
13	.552	2.043	87.738						
14	.503	1.862	89.600						
15	.451	1.669	91.269						
16	.378	1.399	92.668						
17	.349	1.292	93.960						
18	.311	1.152	95.112						
19	.256	.949	96.061						
20	.211	.781	96.842						
21	.188	.695	97.537						
22	.168	.624	98.161						
23	.136	.504	98.665						
24	.129	.478	99.143						
25	.097	.358	99.501						
26	.076	.281	99.782						

Appendix.13: Factor Load for the independent variables of employers' perception on graduates' potentials:

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1- Graduates gain skills needed for their jobs from doing their job (work experience)	.255	-.124	.095	.081	-.103	.365	.585	.039
2- Graduates gain skills needed for their jobs from learning in University (education)	.044	.001	.304	-.138	.205	-.223	.654	.088
3- Graduates gain skills needed for their jobs from company training courses	.255	.139	.283	.269	-.314	-.232	.230	.445
1- This organization recruits new graduates because they got new competency skills.	.039	.030	.830	.050	.015	.101	.139	.014
2- This organization recruits new graduates because they are hard working with higher career aspiration.	.253	.056	.809	-.090	.032	.081	.071	-.103
3- This organization recruits new graduates because of Government legislations.	.071	-.138	-.112	-.071	.139	.126	.025	.876
1- Competency in graduate area of specialization	.707	.020	.004	.042	-.397	.007	.265	-.166
2- Thinking Creatively	.854	.032	.014	-.036	-.074	.015	.144	.052
3- Learning abilities	.860	-.110	.077	.006	-.059	.113	.181	-.033
4- Reading Skills	.744	-.011	-.028	.057	.171	-.168	.380	-.075
5- Written Communication Skills	.784	-.031	.104	.152	.192	.059	.357	-.088
6- Speaking and listening skills	.872	-.003	.012	.030	.124	-.044	.113	.133
7- Leadership skills	.870	-.044	.126	.016	.175	.063	.033	.059
9- Time Management	.873	-.088	.067	.062	.175	.063	.044	.051
10- Problem-solving ability	.867	-.022	.086	.028	-.166	.014	-.128	.107
11- Career aspiration	.905	-.047	.131	-.007	.100	.078	.081	.040
Q3212	.741	-.035	.298	-.062	-.062	.147	-.131	.144
1- communication with higher education would ensure that graduates match the labour market needs.	.122	.275	.404	.174	-.151	.106	.382	.366
2- This organization does not communicate with higher education institutions.	-.044	.813	.147	.065	.089	.061	-.128	.046
3- This organization does not receive invitations for campus visits and recruitment fairs in universities.	-.112	.911	.001	-.061	.020	.041	.090	-.067
4- This organization does not receive invitations for meetings with universities to create curriculums.	-.041	.829	-.027	-.146	.073	.074	.187	-.061
1- Quality of education.	-.014	.092	-.081	.212	.158	.723	-.070	.052
2- Lack of communication with labour market.	-.026	.097	.050	.114	.148	.787	.059	.036
4- Family social relationships that ensure reaching favorable jobs.	.113	.117	-.157	.223	.707	.322	.113	.212
5- Family influence on career choice.	.033	-.023	.095	.234	.786	.133	.025	-.057
6- Lack of graduate's skills.	.043	-.128	-.006	.848	.129	.288	-.134	-.005
7- Lack of graduate's motivation.	.029	-.030	-.006	.862	.245	.121	.107	-.002

Appendix. 14: Total Variance Explained for the dependent variables of employers perceptions on graduates potentials:

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.628	65.695	65.695	2.628	65.695	65.695
2	.666	16.645	82.340			
3	.439	10.968	93.308			
4	.268	6.692	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Appendix. 15: Factor Load for the dependent variables of employers' perception on graduates' potentials:

	Component
	1
1- Overall, this organization is not satisfied with performance.	.890
2- Overall, graduates have skills deficiencies.	.794
3- Overall, graduates in this organization were not suitable for the position they hold.	.818
4- Higher education institutions are doing a bad job in preparing graduates for the labour market needs.	.733

Appendix. 16: Excluded variables for employers Perception of graduates' potentials:

Excluded Variables ^c						
Model		Beta In	T	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics
						Tolerance
2	DIM1	.069 ^b	.708	.481	.074	.979
	DIM4	-.068- ^b	-.695-	.489	-.072-	.996
	DIM5	.033 ^b	.307	.759	.032	.823
	DIM6	-.026- ^b	-.246-	.806	-.026-	.829
	DIM7	-.148- ^b	-1.533-	.129	-.158-	.996
	PRIVATE	-.010- ^b	-.100-	.921	-.010-	.973
	PUBLIC	.010 ^b	.100	.921	.010	.973
	BELOW80	-.098- ^b	-.996-	.322	-.103-	.966
	ABOVE80	.098 ^b	.996	.322	.103	.966
	ABOVE20	.115 ^b	1.166	.247	.121	.960
	BELOW20	-.115- ^b	-1.166-	.247	-.121-	.960
	BUSINESS	-.067- ^b	-.681-	.497	-.071-	.981
	EDUCATION	-.051- ^b	-.521-	.603	-.054-	.990
	SOCIAL	.120 ^b	1.238	.219	.128	.994

a. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), DIM2

b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), DIM2, DIM3

c. Dependent Variable: PERC1

**Appendix. 17: Explained variance for the independent variables of the Graduates
Currently in Work Believes of their Qualifications:**

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.731	21.945	21.945	3.731	21.945	21.945	3.022	17.776	17.776
2	2.786	16.388	38.333	2.786	16.388	38.333	2.703	15.901	33.677
3	1.378	8.108	46.441	1.378	8.108	46.441	2.128	12.516	46.194
4	1.334	7.846	54.287	1.334	7.846	54.287	1.349	7.935	54.129
5	1.041	6.124	60.412	1.041	6.124	60.412	1.068	6.283	60.412
6	.879	5.171	65.583						
7	.806	4.741	70.324						
8	.731	4.297	74.621						
9	.704	4.138	78.759						
10	.601	3.534	82.294						
11	.577	3.397	85.691						
12	.493	2.901	88.591						
13	.471	2.768	91.359						
14	.448	2.634	93.993						
15	.405	2.382	96.375						
16	.347	2.042	98.418						
17	.269	1.582	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Appendix. 18: Factor load for independent variables of the Graduates Currently in Work Believes of their Qualifications:

Rotated Component Matrix^a					
	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
1- I have gained skills needed for my job from doing it (work experience)	.074	-.095	.007	.020	.933
2- I have gained skills needed for my job from learning in University (education)	-.029	-.014	-.005	.820	-.169
3- I have gained skills needed for my job from company training courses	.011	.090	.044	.776	.199
1- I expect to work with employer who provides me with higher salary.	.321	-.104	.643	.097	.013
2- I expect to work with employer who provides me with flexible working hours (balanced life style).	.095	.007	.797	-.053	.122
3- I expect to work with employer who provides me with career opportunities.	.696	-.064	.263	.080	.111
4- I expect to work with employer that fits with my family expectations.	.163	.356	.583	-.052	.065
5- I expect to work with employer who provides me with opportunity to travel.	.144	.063	.709	.066	-.157
6- I expect to work with employer who provides me with opportunity to use my talent.	.703	-.015	.248	-.042	.068
7- I expect to work with employer who provides me with opportunity to acquire more skills.	.870	.006	.009	.038	-.022
8- I expect to work with employer who provides me with opportunity to acquire more experience.	.888	-.043	.024	-.003	-.007
9- I expect to work with employer who provides me with opportunity to work with people I like.	.568	.061	.287	-.113	-.023
1- My family had an impact on my choice of job.	.019	.789	.075	.079	.080
2- My family affect on my choice of job because of conservative reasons.	-.060	.759	.085	-.016	.122
3- My family affect on my choice of job because they own the organization I'm working in.	-.060	.647	-.017	.101	-.154
4- My family affect on my choice of job because they think they know better.	.026	.798	.072	.054	-.012
5- I used my family relationships to get the job that I want.	.001	.529	-.028	-.109	-.151

Appendix. 19: Explained variance for the dependent variable of Graduates Currently in Work Believes of their Qualifications:

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.441	61.025	61.025	2.441	61.025	61.025
2	.755	18.866	79.892			
3	.471	11.772	91.663			
4	.333	8.337	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Appendix. 20: Factor load for dependent variable of Graduates Currently in Work Believes of their Qualifications:

Component Matrix ^a	
	Component
	1
1- I feel that my education doesn't allow me to be competent at my job.	.822
2- I feel that the university curriculum didn't prepared me optimally for the job.	.834
3- There is no relation between what I have studied and skills I need to do my current job properly.	.817
4- I feel that I'm not suitable for the position I hold.	.634

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

Appendix. 21: Excluded variables of the Graduates Currently in Work Believes of their Qualifications:

Excluded Variables ^d						
Model		Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics
						Tolerance
3	FAC1	-.067 ^c	-1.654	.099	-.067	.810
	FAC2	.051 ^c	1.382	.168	.056	.967
	FAC5	-.051 ^c	-1.393	.164	-.057	.997
	MALE	-.029 ^c	-.770	.442	-.031	.953
	FEMALE	.029 ^c	.770	.442	.031	.953
	PUBLIC	.023 ^c	.618	.537	.025	.993
	PRIVATE	-.023 ^c	-.618	.537	-.025	.993
	BUSINESS	-.037 ^c	-.856	.393	-.035	.726
	EDUCATION	.034 ^c	.856	.393	.035	.845

a. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), FAC4

b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), FAC4, FAC3

c. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), FAC4, FAC3, SOCIAL

d. Dependent Variable: Section3

Appendix. 22: Principal Component Analysis for the Independent Variables of Satisfaction:

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.812	18.154	18.154	3.812	18.154	18.154	3.048	14.513	14.513
2	2.924	13.926	32.079	2.924	13.926	32.079	2.730	13.000	27.513
3	2.706	12.887	44.966	2.706	12.887	44.966	2.704	12.878	40.391
4	1.385	6.595	51.561	1.385	6.595	51.561	2.129	10.139	50.529
5	1.094	5.210	56.771	1.094	5.210	56.771	1.206	5.745	56.274
6	1.009	4.803	61.575	1.009	4.803	61.575	1.113	5.300	61.575
7	.881	4.195	65.769						
8	.858	4.088	69.857						
9	.724	3.450	73.307						
10	.708	3.373	76.679						
11	.665	3.166	79.845						
12	.576	2.743	82.588						
13	.565	2.691	85.280						
14	.492	2.341	87.621						
15	.460	2.191	89.812						
16	.449	2.139	91.952						
17	.402	1.916	93.867						
18	.380	1.812	95.679						
19	.339	1.615	97.294						
20	.306	1.457	98.751						
21	.262	1.249	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Appendix. 23: Factor load for questionnaire one – Independent Variables
(satisfaction):**

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1- I feel that my education doesn't allow me to be competent at my job.	-.059	.797	.057	.074	-.016	-.044
2- I feel that the university curriculum didn't prepared me optimally for the job.	-.019	.845	-.029	.091	.071	.066
3- There is no relation between what I have studied and skills I need to do my current job properly.	.089	.821	.013	.049	-.070	.041
4- I feel that I'm not suitable for the position I hold.	-.012	.570	.079	.101	-.208	-.308
1- I have gained skills needed for my job from doing it (work experience)	.072	-.002	-.075	.015	.044	.901
2- I have gained skills needed for my job from learning in University (education)	-.057	-.563	.001	.090	.528	-.173
3- I have gained skills needed for my job from company training courses	.012	-.102	.090	.051	.848	.116
1- I expect to work with employer who provides me with higher salary.	.328	.078	-.106	.624	.151	.047
2- I expect to work with employer who provides me with flexible working hours (balanced life style).	.104	.121	.006	.781	-.023	.146
3- I expect to work with employer who provides me with career opportunities.	.695	-.056	-.056	.263	.067	.158
4- I expect to work with employer that fits with my family expectations.	.168	.029	.356	.593	-.120	-.004
5- I expect to work with employer who provides me with opportunity to travel.	.152	.053	.054	.701	.088	-.171
6- I expect to work with employer who provides me with opportunity to use my talent.	.703	.019	-.012	.254	-.076	.025
7- I expect to work with employer who provides me with opportunity to acquire more skills.	.870	.065	.005	-.005	.092	-.029
8- I expect to work with employer who provides me with opportunity to acquire more experience.	.889	-.013	-.040	.015	.016	.002
9- I expect to work with employer who provides me with opportunity to work with people I like.	.570	-.005	.063	.287	-.145	-.027
1- My family had an impact on my choice of job.	.006	-.083	.797	.103	-.011	.098
2- My family affect on my choice of job because of conservative reasons.	-.068	-.017	.762	.105	-.071	.096
3- My family affect on my choice of job because they own the organization I'm working in.	-.054	.102	.634	-.047	.245	-.187
4- My family affect on my choice of job because they think they know better.	.021	.033	.799	.075	.044	-.005
5- I used my family relationships to get the job that I want.	.014	.062	.524	-.061	-.018	-.145

Appendix. 24: Principal Component Analyses for the Dependent Variables of Satisfaction:

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.257	52.571	52.571	5.257	52.571	52.571	3.639	36.388	36.388
2	1.069	10.691	63.262	1.069	10.691	63.262	2.687	26.874	63.262
3	.718	7.180	70.443						
4	.633	6.329	76.771						
5	.548	5.478	82.249						
6	.500	4.996	87.245						
7	.442	4.422	91.667						
8	.344	3.438	95.105						
9	.298	2.984	98.089						
10	.191	1.911	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Appendix. 25: Factor load for questionnaire one satisfaction:

Rotated Component Matrix ^a		
	Component	
	1	2
1- Overall, I'm not satisfied with my current job.	.551	.488
2- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't pay me suitable salary.	.356	.656
3- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't provide me a balanced life style.	.142	.810
4- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't aid my career aspiration.	.731	.343
5 - I'm not satisfied with my current job because my family affect on my job selection decision.	.197	.777
6- - I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to travel.	.382	.545
7- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to use my talent.	.831	.245
8- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to acquire more skills.	.892	.189
9- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to acquire more experience.	.844	.254
10- I'm not satisfied with my current job because it doesn't allow me to work with people I like.	.521	.427

Appendix. 26: Excluded Variables satisfaction with Career Development (sig. > 0.05):

Excluded Variables						
Model		Beta In	T	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics
						Tolerance
7	DIM3	.070 ^g	1.905	.057	.078	.926
	MALE	.060 ^g	1.591	.112	.065	.880
	FEMALE	-.060 ^{-g}	-1.591-	.112	-.065-	.880
	PUBLIC	. ^g000
	BUSINESS	.046 ^g	1.118	.264	.046	.720
	EDUCATION	-.043 ^{-g}	-1.118-	.264	-.046-	.835

Appendix. 27: Excluded Variables for Satisfaction with Job material Privileges:

Excluded Variables						
Model		Beta In	T	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics
						Tolerance
5	DIM1	.018 ^e	.491	.624	.020	.803
	DIM3	.056 ^e	1.641	.101	.067	.937
	DIM5	-.023 ^{-e}	-.620-	.535	-.025-	.829
	MALE	. ^e000
	PUBLIC	-.029 ^{-e}	-.823-	.411	-.033-	.898
	PRIVATE	.029 ^e	.823	.411	.033	.898
	EDUCATION	-.021 ^{-e}	-.510-	.610	-.021-	.645
	SOCIAL	.020 ^e	.510	.610	.021	.722

Appendix. 28: Table Correlation between variables

		RP	GP	Com	RRG	FIP	HIP	SS	PGP	PRHI	I	O S	HI S
RP	Pearson Correlation	1	.066	-.106	.258 ^{**}	.108	-.029	.295 ^{**}	.011	-.012	.316 ^{**}	.066	-.051
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.506	.286	.008	.270	.767	.002	.911	.901	.002	.501	.600
	N	108	104	103	106	107	107	107	106	108	98	108	107
GP	Pearson Correlation	.066	1	-.086	.019	.409 ^{**}	.410 ^{**}	.095	.284 ^{**}	.233 ^{**}	.157	.290 ^{**}	.306 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.506		.351	.835	.000	.000	.294	.002	.009	.113	.001	.001
	N	104	124	119	121	124	123	123	122	124	103	124	123
Com	Pearson Correlation	-.106	-.086	1	.067	-.036	.168	-.059	.168	.170	-.023	-.029	.012
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.286	.351		.470	.696	.064	.518	.065	.060	.822	.747	.894
	N	103	119	123	120	123	122	122	121	123	101	123	122
RRG	Pearson Correlation	.258 ^{**}	.019	.067	1	-.031	-.098	.376 ^{**}	-.131	-.020	.515 ^{**}	.012	-.015
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.835	.470		.733	.277	.000	.147	.823	.000	.898	.871
	N	106	121	120	126	125	124	126	124	126	104	126	125
FIP	Pearson Correlation	.108	.409 ^{**}	-.036	-.031	1	.305 ^{**}	.148	.138	.293 ^{**}	.037	.511 ^{**}	.149
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.270	.000	.696	.733		.000	.097	.122	.001	.707	.000	.094
	N	107	124	123	125	128	127	127	126	128	105	128	127
HIP	Pearson Correlation	-.029	.410 ^{**}	.168	-.098	.305 ^{**}	1	.052	.245 ^{**}	.490 ^{**}	.123	.141	.394 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.767	.000	.064	.277	.000		.567	.006	.000	.213	.113	.000
	N	107	123	122	124	127	127	126	125	127	105	127	126
SS	Pearson Correlation	.295 ^{**}	.095	-.059	.376 ^{**}	.148	.052	1	-.101	.117	.318 ^{**}	.190 [*]	.178 [*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.294	.518	.000	.097	.567		.263	.189	.001	.032	.046
	N	107	123	122	126	127	126	128	126	128	105	128	127
PGP	Pearson Correlation	.011	.284 ^{**}	.168	-.131	.138	.245 ^{**}	-.101	1	.151	-.094	.112	-.009
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.911	.002	.065	.147	.122	.006	.263		.089	.344	.210	.923
	N	106	122	121	124	126	125	126	127	127	104	127	126
PRHI	Pearson Correlation	-.012	.233 ^{**}	.170	-.020	.293 ^{**}	.490 ^{**}	.117	.151	1	.216	.169	.394 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.901	.009	.060	.823	.001	.000	.189	.089		.026	.056	.000
	N	108	124	123	126	128	127	128	127	129	106	129	128
I	Pearson Correlation	.316	.157	-.023	.515 ^{**}	.037	.123	.318 ^{**}	-.094	.216	1	.060	.175
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.113	.822	.000	.707	.213	.001	.344	.026		.543	.074
	N	98	103	101	104	105	105	105	104	106	106	106	105
O S	Pearson Correlation	.066	.290 ^{**}	-.029	.012	.511 ^{**}	.141	.190	.112	.169	.060	1	.327 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.501	.001	.747	.898	.000	.113	.032	.210	.056	.543		.000
	N	108	124	123	126	128	127	128	127	129	106	129	128
HI S	Pearson Correlation	-.051	.306 ^{**}	.012	-.015	.149	.394 ^{**}	.178 [*]	-.009	.394 ^{**}	.175	.327 ^{**}	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.600	.001	.894	.871	.094	.000	.046	.923	.000	.074	.000	
	N	107	123	122	125	127	126	127	126	128	105	128	128

Appendix. 29: Cross tabulation for employers expectations by rate of graduates performance

1- Competency in graduate area of specialization * 1- Competency in graduate area of specialization Cross tabulation

Count

		1- Competency in graduate area of specialization					Total
		Not Important	Less Important	Neither Important Or Not Important	Important	Most Important	
Competency in graduate area of specialization	Poor	0	4	1	1	1	7
	Bad	1	5	1	6	3	16
	Good	2	4	5	25	9	45
	Very Good	1	5	2	21	8	37
	Excellent	0	0	0	1	13	14
Total		4	18	9	54	34	119

2- Thinking Creatively * 2- Thinking Creatively Cross tabulation

Count

		2- Thinking Creatively					Total
		Not Important	Less Important	Neither Important Or Not Important	Important	Most Important	
2- Thinking Creatively	Poor	3	1	1	2	1	8
	Bad	4	7	4	5	2	22
	Good	3	5	2	20	10	40
	Very Good	0	2	3	23	9	37
	Excellent	0	2	0	3	5	10
Total		10	17	10	53	27	117

3- Learning abilities * 3- Learning abilities Cross tabulation

Count

		3- Learning abilities					Total
		Not Important	Less Important	Neither Important Or Not Important	Important	Most Important	
3- Learning abilities	Poor	3	1	0	1	0	5
	Bad	0	6	2	7	6	21
	Good	2	4	4	11	12	33
	Very Good	2	3	4	24	11	44
	Excellent	0	2	0	6	10	18
Total		7	16	10	49	39	121

4- Reading Skills * 4- Reading Skills Cross tabulation

Count

		4- Reading Skills					Total
		Not Important	Less Important	Neither Important Or Not Important	Important	Most Important	
4- Reading Skills	Poor	2	1	1	1	3	8
	Bad	1	6	2	6	3	18
	Good	2	3	9	17	9	40
	Very Good	2	3	1	27	7	40
	Excellent	0	0	1	4	5	10
Total		7	13	14	55	27	116

5- Written Communication Skills * 5- Written Communication Skills Cross tabulation

Count

		5- Written Communication Skills					Total
		Not Important	Less Important	Neither Important Or Not Important	Important	Most Important	
5- Written Communication Skills	Poor	2	1	0	2	1	6
	Bad	0	4	4	8	5	21
	Good	3	2	7	13	10	35
	Very Good	2	3	3	30	6	44
	Excellent	0	0	1	2	7	10
Total		7	10	15	55	29	116

6- Speaking and listening skills * 6- Speaking and listening skills Cross tabulation

Count

		6- Speaking and listening skills					Total
		Not Important	Less Important	Neither Important Or Not Important	Important	Most Important	
6- Speaking and listening skills	Poor	3	3	1	0	1	8
	Bad	2	2	2	8	5	19
	Good	4	2	7	17	8	38
	Very Good	2	3	5	25	9	44
	Excellent	0	0	1	2	6	9
Total		11	10	16	52	29	118

7- Leadership skills * 7- Leadership skills Cross tabulation

Count		7- Leadership skills					Total
		Not Important	Less Important	Neither Important Or Not Important	Important	Most Important	
7- Leadership skills	Poor	4	3	0	0	3	10
	Bad	1	6	8	6	6	27
	Good	4	2	9	12	8	35
	Very Good	0	2	4	16	3	25
	Excellent	2	0	2	3	8	15
Total		11	13	23	37	28	112

8- Negotiation skills * 8- Negotiation skills Cross tabulation

Count		8- Negotiation skills					Total
		Not Important	Less Important	Neither Important Or Not Important	Important	Most Important	
8- Negotiation skills	Poor	2	3	0	1	3	9
	Bad	1	3	5	6	9	24
	Good	5	4	11	7	11	38
	Very Good	0	6	2	15	7	30
	Excellent	0	0	0	3	10	13
Total		8	16	18	32	40	114

9- Time Management * 9- Time Management Cross tabulation

Count		10- Time Management					Total
		Not Important	Less Important	Neither Important Or Not Important	Important	Most Important	
9- Time Management	Poor	3	2	0	5	3	13
	Bad	4	3	5	6	7	25
	Good	1	3	6	12	8	30
	Very Good	1	0	2	14	11	28
	Excellent	0	2	3	2	11	18
Total		9	10	16	39	40	114

10- Problem-solving ability * 10- Problem-solving ability Cross tabulation

Count

		10- Problem-solving ability					Total
		Not Important	Less Important	Neither Important Or Not Important	Important	Most Important	
10- Problem-solving ability	Poor	3	2	0	5	3	13
	Bad	4	3	5	6	7	25
	Good	1	3	6	12	8	30
	Very Good	1	0	2	14	11	28
	Excellent	0	2	3	2	11	18
Total		9	10	16	39	40	114