Influence of *Wasta* within Human Resource Practices in Lebanese Universities

by

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School of Business and Law
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Statement of Originality of Work

I, Elizabeth Kassab, do acknowledge that the work contained in this research is solely my work and has not been submitted either in whole or in part of a degree at CQUniversity or any other tertiary institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the material presented in this research is original except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed: Elizabeth Kassab
Date: 01/04/2016
Dedication

Every man contemplates an angel in his future self ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

This research has come to fruition because of my angel, Yvonne Kassab, who was the inspiration on the path of this project. She sat across from me those many years ago and, as we spoke about my dreams, I dared to mention that I would like to do my PhD. She said, “You will do it and you are going to do it, promise me you will”. As I remember our conversation – the last before she left us – a feeling of great joy comes over me, for I know that I ‘did it’ because of my angel.

Of course, Andrew Kassab, my silent supporter, who took care of Mom with such devotion, said, “Whatever you need”, and so it was. Andrew Kassab has been my pillar all these years. He keeps me standing wherever I am. I dedicate this research to you both – my pillar and my angel.

I also dedicate this research to my family. Without their support I could not have made it. This is to Hares, Daniel, Teresa and Rafael, who all played an integral role in keeping me on my feet. I hope that I will be able to support you as you have done for me. I love you all.
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Preface

Why Lebanon and why Wasta?

As I stepped off the plane the first time in 1993, I was bewildered at the country that my parents called home. The civil war had left the country exhausted and demolished. People were building again. As we drove through the streets, I remember an old man, lost, crying out for his family. I was told that this was his daily ritual. He had lost his memory and no one knew if he had family and no one claimed to be a family member. Most people told me that he had lost his family in the tragic war and searched for them on a daily basis thinking that they were still alive. I cried for weeks, feeling horrible that he was not getting any help and maybe did not know how to ask for it.

Beirut is a beautiful city in a glorious land. Even through all the ruins, I could hear the whisperings of the mountains telling me to stay. Driving around the city, with buildings torn apart, bullet holes through its entirety, all I could think about was how each hole was searing through my mind, replaying the news flashes and the video clips that we saw during the war.

Lebanon was known as the ‘Paris of the Middle East’, the ‘Pearl of the Orient’ and even the ‘second Switzerland’. The people have long fought to stay in existence, people that have been around since the Phoenicians, the amazing negotiators and business people that we all know about. This land pulls you, it calls out to you and all any person wants to do is make a change for those that cannot, or cannot speak out, or do not have the means to do so.

Why would a person want to research this small and insignificant country? Well it is not insignificant; it is significant in magnitude and in stature. There are issues to be examined, problems to be solved, buildings to be built and people to rise above the terror and difficulties of the past.
Canadian-born and living some amazing university years in Australia, it has always troubled me that I looked different and felt different. Moving to Lebanon was a terrifying experience; the mix of culture and religion in a patriarchal society makes things a little difficult for an ambitious female. But I found myself. In so many ways, I was able to look around and see the potential, the excitement in a country that fights so hard for its existence that I wanted to somehow make a difference.

*Wasta* has been an issue for eons, and the poor get poorer and the rich get richer. When I first tried to get a job in Lebanon, it was all about ‘who you know’ and not ‘what you know’. I thought that my experience and years working in Australia would count for something. Yet I was wrong, and sitting back and watching how people connected made me think that *Wasta* was nowhere near networking. It made me feel sick. As I looked and turned to see those that, with a hit of a button, got accepted and those who did not know anyone get left behind, it made me think of the inequality of the world we live in. So *Wasta* it is. And *Wasta* is what I wanted to find out more about, until I was able to get an answer.

After eventually getting a job at a university, where I had applied many times in person, I finally got the chance to see, in real life, the issues and problems that people had. I listened on a daily basis to people’s concerns. Whenever I asked them to talk about their issues with management, I was told that it would get them nowhere. So I made it my goal in life to continue my studies, become a Human Resources consultant and see if I could contribute something to a country that had given me knowledge, experience and survival skills.

I chose Lebanese universities, as this is where, after many years of changing jobs, I finally got to a place that I call home, a young private university. From here, the quest for knowledge began and the plight to fight against *Wasta* started.

I hope that each person who reads this research will think of a young, struggling female in a patriarchal society, trying to challenge this entrenched societal norm known as ‘*Wasta*’, trying to make those that live near and far understand the
complexities of this rich country. I hope they will understand that there are people like me who want to make a change somehow. I believe it starts here with this research, ‘Influence of Wasta within HR practices in Lebanese universities’.
Abstract

The following PhD research discusses the influence that Wasta has on Human Resource (HR) practices in the Middle East, and in particular within universities in Lebanon. There is currently limited research in the Human Resource Management (HRM) area, as it applies to the Middle East. The region is a prosperous and dynamic area due to its shifting political and religious history, as well as the rich oil reserves for which the area is known; hence, further investigation of the processes of influence and related HR practices is imperative. This research project focuses on the use of the process of influence called Wasta, which is defined by Mohamed and Mohamed (2011) as the “intervention of a patron in favor of a client in an attempt to obtain privileges or resources through a third party” (p.412).

This research thoroughly examines the implications of Wasta in a new Wasta-HR model that depicts this influential process in the HR practices of recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and benefits, as well as career development. A triangulation method was used in the research methods, involving a survey distributed among 349 employees, observations taken from various campuses and interviews with 20 individuals in administrative and academic positions in a number of local universities in Lebanon. Social Network Analysis (SNA) was also used in order to show the relationships between various positions. This research project has shown that Wasta is used widely and affects HR practices, as well as the organizational culture, within universities. The new Wasta model and its attendant research contribute to new knowledge within the field of HRM in the Middle East, and provides a base on which further researchers will build. Hence, this research will support and give added value to the minimal research that is available on HR practices in Lebanon and the Middle East.

Keywords: Wasta, HR practices, Organizational Culture, HRM, Middle East, Lebanon
## List of Acronyms

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<td>Psychological Contract Breach</td>
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<td>CSR</td>
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Introductory remarks

“The way to do research is to attack the facts at the point of greatest astonishment.”

Celia Green

Human beings are amazing creatures and, in spite of the best efforts, no research has succeeded in fully explaining the intricacies of human behavior. As our world has become ever more diverse and multicultural, understanding human behavior has become one of the most important aspects in both personal and professional life. Kipkebut (2010) states, “various studies have stressed the benefits to organizations of a loyal and committed workforce.” Therefore, any organization that wishes to maintain a healthy organizational culture must understand the human capital that works within it.

The central role that HR plays in an organization lies in the fact that the latter’s success is based on the efficiency and effectiveness of its employees. Hence, the proper development of an organization’s culture must begin with the correct HRM. Jain (2014) states that “human resource management is the process of bringing people and organizations together so that the goals of each are met“ (p.199). The author further explains that HR is the section of the management process that looks at how humans are managed within an organization. The goal of this process should be to bring the best out of the employee through obtaining their understanding and cooperation in the organization. Thus, HRM can be defined as the art “of procuring, developing and maintaining a competent workforce to achieve the goals of an organization in an effective and efficient manner”.

A review of the literature shows that, with the increasing impact of western culture as a result of globalization, business practices, no matter where they are, must recognize that HRM practices are now an international phenomenon (Robbins and Judge, 2015) and that HRM practices are becoming important to any multinational company. In order to focus on internal systems to gain a competitive advantage in
the local and international market place, businesses should ensure that they conform to globally adapted HR practices (Morris et al. 2009).

The focus of the present research is on current HR practices and HRM within Lebanon’s higher education institutions, namely universities; in particular, it explores the extent to which the Middle Eastern cultural phenomenon known as Wasta influences these practices. The concept of Wasta refers to the ‘intervention of a patron in favor of a client in an attempt to obtain privileges or resources through a third party (Mohamed and Mohamed, 2011, p.412). Those that live in the Middle East use the term ‘Wasta’ most frequently to define what is known as ‘social networks or connections’. Tlaiss and Kauser (2011) cite the Arab Human Development Report to demonstrate that Wasta plays a considerable role in how decisions are actually made “Given the considerable role that wasta plays in the decision-making process in the Arab world, the strong impact of wasta and strong family connections in general on the business world in the Arab region.p.471” Feghali (2014) views the dynamic of Wasta as having transformed over time from its generally reputable origins to a form of self-interested preferment.

While Wasta may have a positive side whereby it humanises bureaucracy … it also hampers economic development and impacts business by providing unfair advantage, yielding decisions based on connections instead of merit and reducing productivity p.1

This dynamic is very much alive in the region, as witnessed by the welter of items appearing on social media and in reputable business publications, such as the Wall Street Journal; Wasta is even mentioned in the same breath as corruption, nepotism and croyenism (Feghali, 2014). Tlaiss and Kauser further support the notion that gaining a systematic understanding of Wasta in the Arab world is a worthwhile objective, given that Wasta is an important component of Middle Eastern culture and is reflected strongly in the influence of social and family connections – an influence that carries over to the workplace (p.468). Thus, understanding in what way and to what extent Wasta is an important aspect in HRM in the higher education sector in Lebanon forms the core of this study.
Cultural practices in the context of HR and HRM have clear ramifications for the adoption of globally recognised and ratified management practices in any sector. Thus, the identification of such global practices is central to the present study. In this context, the HR practices cited in the Cranet Project in International Human Resource Management have been adopted for this research. Cranet is a large network of universities and business schools worldwide, including Europe, Australia, Canada, Japan, South Korea, South Africa and the USA, that corroborate to collect data on HRM practices and policies (Steinmetz, Schwens, Wehner and Kabst, 2011). The central purpose of the Cranet Project is to attempt to standardize these procedures worldwide. For the purposes of this research, HRM practices are seen to include the following features: recruitment and selection; training and development; compensation and benefits; performance appraisals; and, career development.

The literature, including empirical research and case studies, relating to HRM in the Middle Eastern region, and HR practices in Lebanon in particular, evidences a dearth of information, inviting closer and more extensive investigation (Dirani, 2006). According to Budhwar and Mellahi (2006), the Middle East, and particularly Lebanon, is currently in the process of making changes and improvements in strategies and in the implementation of practices and procedures. Organizations, including those in the Middle Eastern region, have seen that in order to sustain a competitive advantage, they need to pursue the evaluation and development of HRM towards a more globally recognised standard, and that organizational culture plays a significant role in the HR practices of an organization. Leigh (2009) comments that, after the global financial crisis, the Middle East is at a new stage regarding international relationships with international partners; there is a realization that an increase in transparency and the ability to access information are imperative facets in achieving competitiveness, especially if there is a desire to be part of the global economy. Leigh further explains that, as the Ottoman Empire was in power for so long, its reign over the area resulted in a lack of transparency and top-heavy bureaucratic management; a word often used by Europeans to label this type of difficult and impenetrable organization is ‘Byzantine’. This concept is developed and explained in order to
present a cultural background to the current study

Notwithstanding these influences, in order to achieve organizational and personal success in the Middle East, one must understand the foundations of the culture that individuals live and work in (Mohamed and Singh, 2010). Although there is a growing body of research on various aspects of Lebanese culture and society, limited research exists on the intersections of HR practices and culture in the country. The pressing need for Middle Eastern countries to realize the importance of HR has been stated by El-Jardali, Tchaghchagian and Jamal (2009, p. 85), who note that “few studies have been conducted to assess recruitment and selection practices and strategies in the Eastern Mediterranean region (EMR). The literature that is available on HR development in this region (Dirani, 2006; Dirani, 2008; Afiouni 2007; Tlaiss, 2013) focuses merely on the existence of basic personnel practices, culture, work values, and the lack of real HR development practices. The latter research examines, variously, such issues as: organizational and socio-cultural factors that affect HRD practices in Lebanon (Dirani, 2006); the HRM practices that are applied in banks in Lebanon and their alignment with bank’s strategies (Afiouni, 2007); the learning culture in the Lebanese business context – that is, the relationships between organizational culture, organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Dirani, 2009) and job satisfaction amongst women managers in the Lebanese health sector (Tlaiss, 2013). Specifically, Dirani (2009) notes that one of Lebanon’s largest service sectors – the banking industry – holds 40% of the country’s gross domestic product and is also, a significant income generator, thus making it imperative to maximize HR practices so as to ensure competitiveness. Further, Afiouni examines the technical and strategic efficiency of the HRM of ten banks in Lebanon, demonstrating that seven out of ten banks do not play a strategic HR role; rather, it is observed that the focus in the banks is more administrative and bureaucratic in terms of the management of its workforce. Additionally, explorations conducted by Tlaiss into HR within the Lebanese health industry stress the pivotal importance of appropriate HR practices in the successful management of hospitals, going some way to illustrating this lack of HR implementation in Lebanon. Thus, as the concept of standardised appropriate HR practices is generally still new in the service sector in Lebanon,
and indeed, in Lebanese universities, their needs to be a greater willingness to examine current HR practices. The following section will introduce the problem and the significance of this research, as well as the relevant contribution to knowledge.

1.1 Rationale and significance

A review of the literature has established that there are a large number of articles that examine, exclusively, HR strategies or issues in higher education institutions across the world, particularly the western world. However, the literature in this research area does not extend to HR strategies in Lebanese universities, or Middle Eastern universities generally. It is generally recognised that university administrations as well as private enterprises in the Middle East have all, at some time, used the process of Wasta in order to advance the career opportunities of certain people (Tlaiss and Kauser, 2011). Mohamad and Mohamad (2011) believe it is important to understand what effects, whether positive or negative, Wasta has on employees when the Wasta ‘procedure’ is followed; they argue that, should the Wasta element propose negative effects in situations where it can be eliminated, then HR practices can be standardised and thus be considered fair for all employees. However, beyond this general recognition, the literature does not offer in-depth investigations of the effects of this entrenched cultural practice on HR practices in this important service industry.

As noted above, the literature that is available recognises the general lack of HR processes and procedures in the Middle East in comparison to western counterparts; in this context, there is a general consensus that western HR processes are more advanced than those within the Middle East. Generally, the information that is currently available places HR practices, comparatively, in the pre-stages of HRM structures developed in the western world. A framework that has been developed for a Middle Eastern style of HRM (Iles, Almhedie and Baruch (2012) only recognizes the social, cultural, institutional and political diversity of the region’s economic development. The latter note that there is a lot of interest from the business world in the Middle East, including questions as to the cultural and religious influence of Islam. The cultural norms of a society are
integral to societal structures such as the business, education and health industries. The university sector is one of a number of service sectors and, as such, is prey to the norms established in the wider Middle Eastern and Lebanese business and service sector culture. Thus, the significant focus of this research is its investigation of how the widespread and longstanding cultural norm of Wasta affects specific HR practices in the higher education industry in Lebanon – importantly, recruitment and selection, training, compensation, career development and performance appraisal.

Thus, this research has the potential to assist in identifying specific factors inhibiting the implementation of global HR strategies in Lebanese universities and, as a consequence, to contribute to the implementation of appropriate HR strategies. More specifically, it targets the issues that employers have in relation to current HR practices operating under the effects of Wasta. Tlaiss and Kauser (2011) assert that it is crucial to understand to what degree Wasta takes place within organizations in order to combat any issues that may arise because of Wasta, such as any discrimination that is felt in the processes of recruitment and selection, compensation and even in the promotion of staff. Has the correct person been selected for the job based on their abilities, or on ‘who’ they know? The problem to be identified will be the level to which Wasta is concerned in each HR practice – that is, the influence that Wasta has on various HR practices. Failure to deal with such a corrosive influence has the potential to create a domino effect across the whole organization, which then creates a certain organizational culture, affecting employees in their job. This flow-on effect means that the university’s HR strategies are not aligned with its organizational strategy, thereby leading to less than optimal outcomes. It is expected that this research will contribute new knowledge in relation to Wasta and its effects on current HR practices in universities in the Middle East and Lebanon. Thus, this research is a unique study that aims to assist in the realignment of HR practices with organizational strategy, providing ways of addressing Wasta at the higher educational level in Lebanon.

In summary:

- In comparison with western literature, there is preliminary, but not extensive research, on HR practices in Lebanon and the Middle East.
• The research to date does not expand on the role of Wasta in HR practices and organizational culture.
• There is limited research on the consequences of Wasta on HR practices in Lebanon or the Middle East.
• There is limited research on the effects of Wasta on employees regarding the effects that interpersonal influences have on employees.
• More specifically, there is little information regarding HR practices in Lebanese universities.

Wasta needs to be examined much more closely within the context of HR practices and HRM in order to assess its effects, whether positive or negative on the personnel and the the organization culture of universities in Lebanon.

1.2 Research Aims, Objectives and Hypotheses

Research aims

The overall aim of the research is to examine the HR strategies and practices used in Lebanese universities and the effect that Wasta has on these practices. Specific aims are as follows:

1. To examine the background, possible skills, perceptions and motivation of administrative employees in universities.
2. To examine, through responses of the employees, the HR practices and procedures applied by HR departments in Lebanese universities.
3. To identify and describe the consequences of Wasta for HR practices in Lebanese universities.
4. To identify and describe the consequences of Wasta for the organizational culture and subsequent effects on the employees of the organization.
5. To examine, through the responses of the employees, the clarity of the HR strategies of each university.
Research objectives

The following objectives are identified in pursuit of answers to the research questions:

1. To interview university administrative staff to identify individual experiences of Wasta and its consequences.
2. To interview the university administrative staff to identify the HR strategies of the university.
3. To use the survey approach to collect data regarding the Wasta-related HR practices used within the university.
4. To use the survey approach in order to collect data regarding the HR strategies within the university.
5. To use observations in order to collect information regarding individual employee reactions to various stimuli.

Connections between aims, research questions and objectives.
Table 3 below outlines the research questions and how they will be answered via various data-gathering instruments. The table below describes the research aim with the corresponding research question, followed by the research objectives and then the methodology, in order to clarify how the data will be gathered.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Aims</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Research Methodology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To examine the HR practices and procedures of HR departments in Lebanese universities. To identify and describe the consequences of <em>Wasta</em> on HR practices in Lebanese universities.</td>
<td>RQ.1 How does <em>Wasta</em> influence the HR practices of the university?</td>
<td>Written survey with ranking questions and open-ended questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews containing questions about HR practices – the interaction between employer and employee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To examine practices, background, skills, perceptions and motivation of administrative employees in universities.</td>
<td>RQ.2 How has <em>Wasta</em> affected individual employees in their career paths?</td>
<td>Written survey with ranking questions and open-ended questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews containing questions about HR practices – specifically, the interaction between employer and employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To identify and describe the consequences of <em>Wasta</em> for the organizational culture and subsequent effects on the employees of the organization.</td>
<td>RQ.3 How does <em>Wasta</em> affect the organizational culture of the university?</td>
<td>Written survey with ranking questions and open-ended questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interview questions specifically related to the culture of the university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To examine through the responses of the employees the clarity of the HR strategies of each university.</td>
<td>RQ.4 What tools do universities need in order to improve their Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) focus?</td>
<td>Written survey with ranking questions and open-ended questions regarding HR availability and administrative planning. Interview questions that examine the HR strategies of the university.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research questions

The research questions below have been deduced through the researcher’s expectations of receiving data that would help uncover the use of Wasta within HR practice. The first two questions are related to the influences and effects of Wasta on HR practices and individual employees in their career paths. The third research question is related to the influence that Wasta has on the organizational culture. The last research question will be answered by the data analyzed from the first three questions.

The projected examination of this research problem generates the following research questions:

Research question 1

*How does Wasta influence the HR practices of the university?*

Research question 2

*How has Wasta affected individual employees in their career paths?*

Research question 3

*How does Wasta affect the organizational culture of the university?*

Research Question 4

*What tools do universities need in order to improve their Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) focus?*

The information supplied by pursuing answers to these questions will provide the data necessary to demonstrate the influences of Wasta on HR and HRM practices; that is, the responses to how Wasta influences HR practices will allow the researcher to formulate recommendations regarding appropriate HR practices. Moreover, uncovering the effects of Wasta on individual employees in their career paths allows detailed individualised appraisal within an organization. Furthermore, the third research questions then looks at the effects of Wasta on organizational culture. Hence, the last research question will explore the first three
questions within the context of SHRM and examine all the areas of the individual organization and discuss the tools needed to improve.

*Research hypotheses*

The following hypotheses have been written to test a regression analysis of the statistics obtained through the questionnaire:

- $H_0$: *Wasta* and training have no relationship
- $H_1$: *Wasta* and training have a relationship

- $H_0$: *Wasta* and compensation have no relationship
- $H_1$: *Wasta* and compensation have a relationship

- $H_0$: *Wasta* and career development have no relationship
- $H_1$: *Wasta* and career development have a relationship

Recruitment and selection, one of the HR practices being investigated, will be examined through one question that is asked in the survey, that being “how were you employed”. This direct question provides the answer that will be used as the independent variable against the other variables of training; compensation and career development – the latter being the HR practices that are examined within this research project.

Figure 1 below shows the relationship between the research questions and hypotheses and *Wasta*. 
1.3 Contribution to knowledge and expected outcomes

It is expected that this research will show the impact of *Wasta* on HR practices, including: recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and benefits, performance appraisals and career development. Moreover, the research will enable the creation of a framework for university administrators following *Cranet*, a project that examines International Strategic Human Resource Management (Steinmetz et al. 2011). This approach is expected to provide insights about the feelings and behaviors of the staff with regard to the impact of *Wasta* on the organizational culture of Lebanese universities. This research will illustrate the difficulties employees face in voicing related internal problems and, consequently, in obtaining positions that fit their abilities.

The expected outcome of this research is to illustrate the consequences, both positive and negative, of *Wasta* on employees and employers.

The outcomes of this study will be to:

1. present data that will illustrate individual responses to *Wasta* in the HR practices of the university
2. document the perceptions of employees and real cases of individuals in their work life and work culture through interviews that investigate the effects *Wasta* and organizational culture have on individuals
3. document the framework of HR practices and strategies suitable for Lebanese universities
4. expose the dilemmas that are encountered when *Wasta* is used in negative ways

This information will provide data that will expose, explain and provide essential data for researchers.

**1.4 Research methodology**

This section will briefly introduce the methodology and data collection analysis for this research project. It will discuss the instruments used for this research.

This research has been positioned in a post-positivist paradigm, as discussed in Chapter Three. McKenna et al. (2008) state that the post-positivist paradigm is significant to HRM theory and practice. As the relative influence of *Wasta* in HR practices is a new area of research, the mixed methods approach is the best way to define the problem and understand the causal relationships (Kiessling and Harvey, 2005). HRM is an area that is based on people. Human capital is an important asset in any organization; hence, this research needs to be based both on quantitative and qualitative data (Robbins and Judge, 2015). This approach will enable the researcher to listen to respondents and focus on the main issues.

The first instrument for data collection that has been administered is the survey. It will be distributed via paper copy to the campuses and returned by pre-paid envelopes to the researcher through Aramex postage services. As permission has been granted to distribute the surveys at four universities, a main contact person has been organized to help in ensuring successful distribution and collection of the surveys. The surveys will be given to each employee and then picked up by the same person allocated for each university campus. The survey is a combination of
direct questions and statements where a Likert scale is introduced and is a reliable source that will create a baseline of information for the researcher. The survey is a quantitative method that is based on gathering statistics (Burns and Grove, 2005). It will be coded to collect the statistics needing to be analyzed for this research and a regression analysis will be used in order to test the three hypotheses mentioned in section 1.4 with regard to the influence of Wasta.

Based on the data that will be collected through the survey, the interview questions are then formed. The qualitative methods to be used are interviews, observations (Johnson et al, 2007) and social network analysis (Parise, 2007). The interviews are semi-structured interviews and the observations will provide pertinent information on employees’ perspectives, thoughts and feelings with regard to the effects of Wasta on individual employees (Qu and Dumay, 2011; Kiessling and Harvey, 2005).

Amaratunga et al. (2002) state that observations are best suited to research projects, which focus on the importance of the person with regard to interpretations and interactions; this enables full interpretation of the phenomena in focus. These are issues that are normally not within the public view (as Wasta is not an issue that is spoken about). Unstructured non-participant observations (Kothari, 2004) were used for this exploratory study.

In addition, this research also used the Social Network Analysis, which illustrates, graphically, the relationships and communication patterns of the employees at work (Hatala, 2006). More specifically, it examines the networks occurring in groups working together and demonstrates the sort of miscommunication that may occur when individuals collaborate. That is, it shows in a figure the network of employees and the connections between each other, as indicated by arrows. It examines the network and groups that they work in (Parise, 2007). This is the last method to be used.
1.5 Outline of this research

Figure 2 below, presents an overview of chapters in this dissertation:

![Diagram of dissertation chapters]

Figure 2 Outline of the thesis developed for this research
The research is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter explains the foundation of the research. It states four main research questions and provides direction for this research by including research aims and objectives. It introduces the hypotheses for this research project as well as introduces the contribution that this research will have. It discusses the methodology that will be used and provides the reasoning and logic behind using mixed methods research.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This chapter examines theoretical information that is currently available regarding HRM and HR practices. It discusses human capital, HR and universities, Psychological Contract and Employee Engagement and Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM). The literature review also covers other important processes of influences operating in environments outside the Middle East, such as Guanxi, Jeitinho, pulling strings and Svyazi. It reviews HR and HRM practices as they are currently occurring in the Middle East and Lebanon. It also defines and provides the information relating to Wasta and its role in the Middle East. This chapter reviews the literature relating to HR practices in the Middle East and Lebanon within the context of higher education. It provides information regarding Lebanon during the civil war, an economic overview of Lebanon, and looks at its higher education system in order to understand the country under study.

Chapter 3 – Methodology and Research Design

This chapter presents, in detail, the research methodology used to examine the stated research questions. It explains the philosophical paradigms and research methodologies that were considered as possible options to address the research questions. It further presents reasons with regard to where the research is located, and discusses the mixed methods that are to be used for this research. It also identifies the instruments that will be used for this research, and how their combination will create valid and reliable data. In addition, this chapter presents
details of the design, development and administration of the survey instrument, interviews and the social network analysis used in this research. Furthermore, this chapter details the qualitative data collection methods used for data collection.

Chapter 4 – Results

This chapter displays the data that has been obtained from this research. It displays data charts from the survey data. It shows the results of the regression analysis and discusses the SPSS results of the data. This chapter also discusses the qualitative information from the interviews, observations and social network analysis. The results provide, in combination, important issues for discussion.

Chapter 5 – Contribution to Knowledge

This chapter discusses the data collected through the survey, interviews, observations and social network analysis. It provides answers to the research questions research and concluding remarks for the chapter. It also links the data to the theory detailed in Chapter Three. It illustrates where this research has provided new information and identifies implications for future research. This chapter gives the results of the data in the form of new knowledge that is being contributed. It displays the Wasta framework and resulting Wasta organizational culture that is new to research. It also provides an extension to the Psychological Contract and Employee Engagement diagram showing that Wasta has an effect on the Human Resource Practices within. It provides conclusions from the research, considers recommendations for addressing the findings and makes suggestions for further research.

1.6 Definitions of terms

A collection of key terms and definitions utilized for this research topic are used throughout this study. These definitions aid in the avoidance of ambiguity and allow for a clear understanding of the context of the research. The most commonly employed terms are defined below:
**Human resource management (HRM):** ‘design of formal systems in an organization to ensure the effective and efficient use of human talent to accomplish organizational goals’ (Dessler, 2003, p.4)

**Human resource practices:** the processes of recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and benefits, career development and performance management (Dessler, 2003).

**Strategic human resource management (SHRM):** devising and implementing of HR policies and practices that the institution needs in to achieve its strategic purpose (Dessler & Al Ariss, 2013).

**Wasta:** ‘the intervention of a patron in favor of a client in an attempt to obtain privileges or resources through a third part (Mohamed & Mohamed, 2011, p.412).

**Guanxi:** ‘connections, has multiple meanings … concern, affect, matter, relation, relationship and backdoor connections. (Torres, Alfinto, Galvao & Tse, 2015, p.81).

**Jeitinho:** ‘a little way, which is described as a personality practice that involves cajoling or seducing in order to achieve certain outcomes’ (Duarte, 2011, p.35)

**Svyazi:** ‘a neutral term for blat’ said to be similar to Guanxi; svyazi networks are less personalistic than Guanxi and the relations are not as intense as the Chinese Guanxi (Smith et al. 2012, p.336)

**Pulling strings:** the British idiomatic term used for ‘obtaining favours particularly through links with influential persons’ (Smith et al. 2012, p.337).

The above definitions aim to provide a foundation for the literature review, which elucidates these concepts and ideas in greater depth.
1.7 Summary

This chapter has laid the foundations for this research. It has introduced the topic, the research problem, and the research questions and hypotheses. It has presented the rationale and significance, as well as the contribution to knowledge of this research undertaking. The definitions have been introduced, the methodology briefly presented and limitations given. Based on these foundations, this research can proceed with a review of the literature in this research area and detailed chapters describing the research undertaken.
Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

“The measure of greatness in a scientific idea is the extent to which it stimulates thought and opens up new lines of research.”
Paul A.M. Dirac

Research in the area of HRM and HR practices in the Middle East is of importance due to the strategic positioning of this region. It is known casually as the ‘sleeping giant’ and has a fund of resources in fuel and oil reserves. This research, which investigates the pivotal role Wasta plays in HR practices and management in Lebanese universities, attempts to uncover the influence it has on individuals and their career paths within the work environment. This research is based in four research questions, which are explored in order to open the doors to new knowledge and provide a path for further research.

The literature review undertaken for the purposes of this research provides an overview of a number of key areas and contextualizes the main research objectives; these areas of investigation comprise Wasta, HR practices and HR strategies. Specifically, the review of the literature attempts to provide a framework for the delineated research questions, which probe, variously, into: the influences of Wasta on HR practices of universities in the Middle East and, particularly, in Lebanon; the effect of Wasta on individuals and on organizational culture; and, the SHRM focus of universities. Thus, the literature review aims to delineate the specific contribution this study can make to the body of research into HR practices and HRM, with a particular focus on the Middle Eastern tertiary education sector.

An advanced search of the terms, ‘Wasta’ and ‘Lebanon’ yields the following list of publications as shown in Table 2.
Table 2 List of publications relating terms ‘wasta’ & ‘Lebanon’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publication Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Makhoul, Jihad Harrison, Lindsey</td>
<td>Intercessory Wasta and village development in Lebanon.</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tlaiss, Hayfia; Kauser, Saleema</td>
<td>The Importance of Wasta in the Career Success of Middle Eastern Managers.</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Khakhar, Priyan Rammal, Hussain Gulzar</td>
<td>Culture and business networks: International business negotiations with Arab managers</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jihad Makhoul Lindsey Harrison</td>
<td>Development Perspectives: Views from Rural Lebanon</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An advanced search of the terms, ‘Wasta’ and the ‘Middle East’ yields the following list of journal articles as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 List of journal articles relating to the terms ‘Wasta’ & the ‘Middle East’.

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<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Iles, Paul, Almhedie, Abdoul, Baruch, Yehuda</td>
<td>Managing HR in the MiddleEast: Challenges in the Public Sector.</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bailey, Deborah C.</td>
<td>Women and Wasta: The Use of Focus Groups for Understanding Social Capital and Middle Eastern Women</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Barnett, Andy, Yandle, Bruce, Naufal, George</td>
<td>Regulation, trust, and cronyism in Middle Eastern societies: The simple economics of “Wasta”</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hawkins, Timothy G., Randall, Wesley S., Coyne, Adam V. Baitalmal, Mohammad H.</td>
<td>Sustainable integrity: how reverse auctions can benefit suppliers in emerging markets</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Weir, David</td>
<td>Cultural theory and the Diwan.</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hutchings, Kate, Weir, David</td>
<td>Understanding networking in China and the Arab World: Lessons for international managers</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Whiteoak, John W., Crawford, Norman G., Mapstone, Richard H.</td>
<td>Impact of gender and generational differences in work values and attitudes in an Arab culture.</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, when searching the above mentioned topics in relation to HR, HRM and HR practices, there is a dearth of research. This research area is still relatively new, even though there is existing research that dates back to 2002. Unfortunately, many of the articles that are listed above do not have the HRM approach; rather, the literature approaches the subject from a focus on culture and the examination of work values.

The chapter begins by probing the theoretical bases of HRM, HR practices, HRM and universities, interpersonal processes, human and social capital and the psychological contract. It then continues by focusing on: Middle Eastern and Lebanese culture in general; HRM and organizational culture in the Middle East and Lebanon (the country of study); the particular interpersonal process of Wasta; and HRM in universities in the Middle East and in the higher education sector in Lebanon. The literature in each area is explored to establish its relevance to, and limitations on, the research questions.

### 2.1 Evolution of HRM

This section defines Human Resource Management (HRM) in the Western context and shows its value to the global business sector. In order to illustrate the need for more information regarding current HRM practices in Lebanon, it is important to understand the value of HRM in organizations and how its effects create success for the organization.

There are many definitions of HRM. Mathis and Jackson (2010) define HRM as ‘designing management systems to ensure that human talent is used effectively and efficiently to accomplish organizational goals’ (p.4). Hence, it does not matter whether the company has thousands of employees or is simply a small nonprofit business; managing people is not just about pay programs, designing training or avoiding lawsuits. Mathis and Jackson point out that a different level of thinking is required; in order for people to be productive and creative, they need to work in a flexible and effective organization that rewards individuals for work completed. This is important for managers to understand, according to Mathis & Jackson, as it means that people in companies can be viewed as the ‘core competency’ of the
organization. Iles et al (2012) state that Arab management face challenges in keeping up with western practices of HRM. El Jardali et al (2009) reiterate that poor work environments and absence of good recruitment practices are issues. They also state that few studies have been conducted to examine the recruitment practices and strategies in the ME region.

Mondy (2010) defines HRM as the “utilization of individuals to achieve organizational objectives” (p.4). Although it is important to clarify the importance of HR and reiterate that it began as an area of interest many years ago, evolving into a well-recognized and important strand of business acumen, there is, unfortunately, little information regarding HR in the Middle East and Lebanon. That which is available is still in a relatively primitive form in comparison to the wealth of information and data available in the western world. Thus, the literature review below aims to demonstrate the knowledge that is currently available and the gap that needs to be filled by this research.

HRM has gone through various changes over the years. Cohen (2015) discusses the evolution of HRM and states that it was formally recognised in the early 1800s. HRM goes back to when all levels of business organizations – employers and employees, skilled tradesmen and apprentices, supervisors and managers, companies and the people who work for them – were first recognized; this was a time when the “welfare secretary” started to appear. These ‘secretaries’ oversaw the hiring, paying, disciplining and developing of the employees. Hence, Cohen shows that the HR process actually began when the first person agreed to be paid for work completed. This author further explains that ‘personnel’, which was the term previously used before ‘HR’, began in the Industrial Revolution and in the era of scientific management. Thus, the long-standing recognition in the literature of the importance of HRM in western business institutions creates a pathway for turning the focus on this aspect of employment and business management in the Middle East. The literature issuing from the Middle East is more anecdotal (Zahra, 2011) and case-study based. Budhwar & Mellahi (2007) give some interesting insights about HR in the Middle East, however they are still only ‘insights’. These insights are the changes in the level of ownership in several Middle Eastern
countries due to privatization; identifying key differences in HRM practices between large and small firms in public and private sectors; the change in the role of the government towards HRM policies; GCC countries investing in HR however they are finding difficulties in meeting the demands of the labour market and the employment of locals (Emiratization etc.) Afiouni et al (2014) note that most of the HR research being conducted in the Middle East increased in 2007 and the quality also improved. Literature started to move from being purely descriptive and conceptual, gaining more depth and methodology. The latter authors note that the hub of HR research occupies a position in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), while other countries like Syria, Yemen and Iraq have very little. Currently, Afiouni et al (2014) note that HR practices are being looked at in terms of the differences between practices across various countries. The writers note that the observed differences are largely related to cultural factors and employment policies. The research that is found in the western counterpart is far more extensive in terms of developed HR strategies and management. The transformation of HR has gone from the administrative function to being viewed as a core business function that contributes to organizational effectiveness (Ulrich & Dulebohn, 2015). The authors illustrate that HRM has transformed through four different waves, HR administrative wave (traditional administrative functions), HR practices (hiring, training, career management), HR strategy (HR practices being aligned with the business strategy) and the HR and context (HR working for individuals, organizational and leadership) that is the HR investments or specifically where the resources need to be targeted (Ulrich & Dulebohn, 2015).

As can be seen by the various literature on the ME and HRM, HR is still in the first wave (HR administrative wave) and a little of the second wave (HR practices), but there is still a long way to go, hence the importance of this research.

All the definitions of HR have concepts in common, linking the idea that it is the role of the organization to maintain and manage the human ‘asset’ within an organization in order to achieve organizational goals (Mathis and Jackson, 2010; Mondy (2010); Dessler and Al Ariss (2013); Cohen (2015); Stone and Deadrick (2015); Feodor, Kolesnikova and Salyakhov (2014). An organization without employees cannot achieve its final goal of producing products and services. It
needs the ‘human element’ in order to do so, hence making sure that the right systems are in place to achieve these goals is imperative (citation).

Working with people’s personalities, characters and attitudes is a field that has developed as one of utmost interest and importance to HRM. The evolution of HRM has been a continuous phenomenon, which has gone through various stages (Renteria, 2011). It has developed and evolved alongside “the rise of the personnel function during the 20th century” (Wright, cited in Renteria, 2011) towards the fight for employees’ rights and general administration.

Dessler and Al Ariss (2013) discuss the state of HRM in Arab countries, where most of the countries and companies have mixed approaches to their HR practices. The latter concede that culture, history, economy, political, legal and local issues, as well as ethics and religion, all play a role in influencing management practices. However, at an organizational level, these authors state that Arab management practices have displayed more of an administrative role; “little attention has so far been given to the real value of people at work” (p.5). This statement is significant as it epitomizes the need to clarify basic HR practices and the effects they might have on the work roles of people in the Middle East, and in particular, Lebanon. Iles et al (2012) state “there is a clear neglect of investigation and reporting of Arab cases and examples in textbooks of “management”, “HRM” and “International Business.” p. 465. They state that there has been an increased interest in the Middle East of late. Recent articles in Saudi Arabia in the banking industry show that there is failure in many areas due to the lack of organization of the human element, which is capable of investing in these resources in an appropriate manner, thereby achieving the organizational goals (Fawzi & Almarshed, 2014). These statements support this research project in its investigation of new approaches to HRM in the Middle East.

HR is a field that has changed into a profession of much importance and one that is critical to the success of an organization (Cohen, 2015). This is in line with the assertions of Dessler and Al Ariss (2013), who bemoan the scant attention that the Arab management sector has given to HRM, maintaining it as a personnel environment rather than a human resources environment. Where the value of HR
is recognised, it is viewed as a strategic partner where HR professionals are well-respected. El-Jardali et al. (2009) state that “poor work environments and the absence of sound recruitment and retention practices are some of the key health human resource challenges that are facing many Middle Easters hospitals “ p.85. Cohen states that, in some organizations, HR, or the proper management of the human aspect of the company, is considered as an important administrative function, which keeps the company moving smoothly. Hence, it is important to understand the mechanics of the way in which recruitment is carried out in Lebanon and its effects on other HR practices; such understanding serves to contextualize the investigation of the first research question ‘How does Wasta influence HR practices of the university?’.

Times have changed and globalization is a clear goal for many organizations. Stone and Deadrick (2015) discuss the major challenges that are facing HR and how the change has transpired from the manufacturing industry to the knowledge-based industry. This view is important in highlighting the vitality of service industries such as higher education, and the challenges that they are facing. The latter state that the economy has shown a decline in the manufacturing industry, and a growth in the services or knowledge industry, this being, more recently, the core of the economic base. Stone and Deadrick cite the Oxford dictionary (2014a) in defining a service economy as ‘a system that is based on buying and selling services’. The Business Dictionary (2014a) defines a ‘knowledge economy’ as the use of information or knowledge to generate tangible and intangible value (cited in Stone and Deadrick, 2015). The authors attest that there are those economists that state that service activities are dominating the economies of the industrialized nations. Also, knowledge-intensive services are part of the overall service economy Anderson & Corley, 2003 cited in (Stone and Deadrick, 2015). The current research is based in the education sector in Lebanon, an important service and knowledge-based industry and thus global trends in managing this sector are pertinent for this study.

Feodor et al (2014) also show HR to be a social system that is complex to manage, and one, which has a unique ability to self-regulate and self-develop. Feodor et al. describe this system as being able to change the social behavior, where you can
select and set specific goals, stating that it is very important to be sensitive to the
method of managerial influence. Should the HR system be carried out in an
appropriate manner, and then production increases and investments are produced.
So this means that HRM is a key strategy for developing companies. The ME is
facing numerous challenges like high unemployment, low female labour force
participation, low levels of private sector business development; weak public and
corporate governance, bloated public sectors, corruption and limited competition
(O’Sullivan et al 2011) cited in Afionui (2014). Hence the degree to which HR
practices and HRM plays a role will allow for improvement and effectiveness in
the management of organizations. Thus, the notion of investigating the
effectiveness and efficiency of employees plays an important role in Research
Question Two, which looks at the effects that Wasta has on individual employees
and their career paths, and which indicates their productivity and the investment
that they make within an organization.

HR needs to be considered when trying to identify the issues in service delivery or
when trying to redesign processes. This often requires a change in the culture,
styles of leadership and the HRM policies and practices of an organization. In
order for a company to be successful and accomplish these goals, they must
understand that HR activities are interlinked. It is also important to consider the
environmental forces that play a major role in the success of the organization.
These factors, according to Mondy (2010) and Dessler (2003) are legal, political,
economic, social, cultural and technological, and are especially important when
working and managing organizations internationally. Employees do not work in
isolation; they work within an organizational culture. Thus, this aspect of HRM
relates to Research Question Three, which examines the role that Wasta has and
its effects on the organizational culture of the university.

Environmental forces are not the only consideration; it is also important to
comprehend where global economies are moving. Stone and Deadrick (2015) also
assert that this new knowledge economy has put pressures on organizations to
make changes to organizational goals and HR practices. HR processes may need
to be changed to suit the new style economy, stressing that the employee’s
knowledge and skills have a major impact on the organization’s success. Stone
and Deadrick also infer that knowledge organizations allow for innovation, autonomy, continuous improvement and participation in decision-making. This makes talent retention imperative. Organizations do not want employees to walk out the door. This approach wisely indicates the importance of the employee within a knowledge and service industry.

Figure 3 below (Mathis & Jackson, 2010, p.36) depicts the key focus areas of HR activities. It details the goals, HR activities, organization and environment that the management needs to address in order to ensure effective HRM practices. For this particular research, it was necessary to delimit several areas for close attention due to the enormous amount of data that now relates to HR practices in general; the areas selected as a focus were recruitment and selection, training and development, career development and compensation. However, for the purposes of providing a consistent framework of knowledge, all HR activities are depicted to give the importance of HR within any organization.
This overview model shows a typical form of HRM activities and processes. The following HR activities are the subject of frequent attention in the literature relating to HR and HRM. They are seen as necessary to HRM because the management of the organization directly affects employees.

**Strategic Human Resource Management**

HR planning is a large area that encompasses the management’s trials in anticipating forces that will influence the future supply and demand of employees. Mondy (2010) explains that HR planning is a system of ensuring that both internal and external supply of people are matched well within the organization’s job openings over a long period of time. Ensuring that management has the right Human Resources Information System (HRIS) is important in order to institute the appropriate management practices; by analyzing and assessing the information that is needed, this system helps in ensuring HR effectiveness. HR planning and analysis is a tool that seems largely unavailable in Middle Eastern literature regarding HRM processes. Schwind, Das, Wagar, Fassina and Bulmash (2013) discuss the importance of planning and analyzing jobs and the required specifications that are needed to complete the job. It is important to collect the right information about various jobs to include which behavior and performance standards are required. This is an important area, as it will help Lebanese universities in creating and implementing strategic HRM processes. Hence discussion about SHRM is an important part of this literature review, highlighting the lack of such information and data relating to the Middle East. The fourth research question will respond to the tools needed in order to ensure improved SHRM within university organizations. Hence, there will be data available to provide grounds for further research in the area of SHRM in Lebanon and the Middle East. Dirani (2006) investigates the list of organizational factors and sociocultural factors that affect HRD practices in Lebanon, stressing the importance of understanding global ambiguity and the need to increase employees and employer’s skills to pursue organizational and governmental channels aimed at improving policies designed to encourage the global economy. There are many
challenges facing the Middle East aiming to help restore the economic growth in the region (de Soto, 2011; Karam and Jamali, 2013) cited in Afiouni et al (2014). The challenges are numerous as stated above including corruption, corporate and public governance and high unemployment. These are just a few.

*Equal employment opportunity*

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) addresses the need for regulations and laws to cover the HR activities of the organization. Schwind et al. (2013) discuss the various legal and social issues that are in legislation and are requirements of the organizations in order to meet EEO. These issues include laws on minimum wages, employment equity programs (equal pay for equal work completed). Schwind et al. give an example of EEO action:

“every individual is equal before law and under the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination … without discrimination based on race, nationality or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability” (p.130).

Thus, a sufficient availability of a diversity of individuals is maintained in order to meet affirmative action necessities (Dessler, 2013). EEO is popular in western practices and must be adhered to due to legal ramifications; however, this concept is not discussed yet in the current literature on HRM in the Middle East. Dirani (2006) indicates that the Arab world has lowest rate of utilization of Women’s capabilities in economics and politics. The author indicates that the state of Lebanese women today is equivalent to women of the US in the 1970s. Whitestone et al (2006) also infer that due to the patriarchal society of the ME, there is not a lot know of the attitudes towards women at work. There are of course the traditional views, even though there has been a general push to increase the number of females. However it is still not enough. This research examines the effects of recruiting through *Wasta* connections; necessarily, such a practice does not support EEO issues.

In any attempt to develop sound HR practice for the tertiary education sector in
Lebanon, it is important to show that western practitioners consider this area to be imperative. It goes without saying that the push towards concrete reforms is aimed at allowing educated youth to find decent employment. Young people are asking for their voices to be heard (Zahra, 2011 & Whiteoak et al (2006). Lebanon shares the Arabic language with other countries in the area; even though it is multicultural it is home to various religions, including Islam (Dirani, 2006). The multi-religious community has had a real impact on the political system and consequently on employment in the region and this bias has been reflected in the distribution of public sector positions (Dirani, 2006). Other researchers have noted that should females continue to further their educational qualifications, this may harden the attitudes of men in the UAE.

**Staffing**

Mondy (2010) states that staffing forms a major part of HR practices; it is an important element in the development of the organization. Its main objective is to supply the adequate number of employees needed in order to get the job done at the right time. In order to understand what this comprises, a proper job analysis is required in order to lay the foundation of the staff functions (Mathis & Jackson, 2010). Mondy explains that job analysis is an imperative yet systematic approach to determining what type of skills and duties are needed for an individual to perform the job. Once this has been done, job descriptions and specifications can be prepared in order to recruit the appropriate person for the job. Thus, the proper selection of the most qualified individual becomes of key concern in the HRM context; moreover, ensuring that the job description is clear and specifications are straightforward becomes a necessary and important component of management practice in order that the selection process is optimal.

Robbins and Judge (2015) state that staffing is the most important HR function. Hiring the right people (recruitment) is the first important step; when the employee is not chosen correctly (selection), employee performance and satisfaction suffer. Consequently, the need to examine recruitment and selection in Lebanon is critical to the advancement of knowledge in HR within this area. As Iles et al (2012)
points out, ‘*wasta* often influences recruitment, selection, compensation and promotion in public sector organizations in the ME’ p.473 Other authors also point out that examining the antecedents and consequences of the use of *wasta* would be beneficial (Whiteoak et al, 2006). They further note that it is important to examine *wasta* in the workplace to understand the policies of equity and how they are enforced in the workplace. Recruitment and selection is an important area to begin with, when understanding how equitable it is to obtain a position within an organization. Research Question One will respond to the request for data regarding recruitment and selection.

*Talent Management*

HR development includes the orientation of new employees to their training and development. It also includes re-training as jobs evolve and grow. Employees need to keep up with innovations in technology and updates to work practices. Mondy (2010) indicates that HR development also involves career development, organizational development and performance management of the individual within the organization – more of a long-term focus. This is done through training and re-training. Encouraging employee development means the preparing of employees for future challenges (Dessler, 2003). It is also very important that the employees feel that there is a clear indication of pathways of career development that will allow them to develop within the organization. Measuring the performance of employees is the goal of performance management. Robbins and Judge (2015) infer that people’s skills deteriorate over time if not trained; their skills become obsolete and then new skills are needed in order to continue working.

The development of employees is imperative in order for them to be able to give more and be a part of the knowledge management process. There are various types of training, ranging from basic reading skills to advanced courses in leadership. Training and development is one of the areas that is being tested within one of the hypotheses, seeking to answer the first two research questions. The literature review shows the distinct importance of employees being trained and the result of
proper training leading to better organizational efficiency. The Middle East faces problems regarding talent retention. Iles et al. (2012) are scathing in detailing the areas where HRM systems are failing to meet globally recognised standards, seeing them as outdated and not effective, and compounded by

- low salaries,
- the inability to fire ‘poor performers’,
- an absence of performance standards,
- no rewards for performance,
- inability to attract talented people,
- promotion based on seniority or patronage,
- ineffective leadership and underemployment (p.475).

Thus, there are many issues that need to be faced and structural reforms that need to take place within HRM in the Middle East region. Unfortunately, the literature lacks detailed studies of the key areas requiring restructuring and major improvement. Hence, the current research will provide important data and knowledge in the HRM field in the Middle East.

**Total Rewards**

In referring to well-functioning HR systems, Mondy (2010) defines compensation as the “total of all rewards provided employees in return for their services” (p.7). Mathis and Jackson (2010) and Dessler (2003) define compensation as the means in which the organization rewards people for performing organizational work through providing pay, incentives, and benefits. Through globalization and competition, there is an increase in the costs of benefits, especially health-care benefits, an issue that continues to generate controversy; in addition, Robbins and Judge (2015) state that, in order to retain the best talent, a range of benefits are required in order to recruit who is needed for the job. The benefits program can also be organized in order to suit the organizational culture. Unfortunately in the Middle East, favoritism plays a role in performance ratings, salary recommendations and training places. It is important to note that job is an imperative priority in the ME (Afiouni, 2014).

The statistics show the suffering unemployment issues and research on the HRM front has just begun in the challenge to address the job creation (Afiouni, 2014).
and retention challenge. There are issues such as national employment policies, women’s entrepreneurship, career aspirations, leadership development as well as HR practices needing to be standardized/localized and the trade-offs that need to be made (Afiouni, 2014). The discrimination in compensation leads to conflict and is based on personal or political factors (Iles et al, 2012). The latter further state that, without the appropriate control systems, there may even be “ghost employees”, which includes bribery and corruption. Hence, there is a need for a well-structured compensation system in Lebanon and the Middle East in order to combat corruption and to help in transparency. These policies and procedures that will be created and then followed will be used as a benchmarking tool for organizations help in creating a standardized and equitable system. Furthermore, tehre will need to be a system of accountability in order to ensure that organizations are following through on best practices.

*Risk Management and Worker Protection*

Dessler and Al Ariss (2013) highlight the issues of physical and mental health and their interconnectivity with the safety of the employee. These are imperative concerns. Following the creation of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) of 1970 in the United States, organizations have become aware of the health and safety concerns of employees. Safety is a key issue, and accidents and injuries at work need to be eliminated (Robbins & Judge, 2015). There are also further concerns when it comes to the health of employees, especially when dealing with chemicals and new technologies that might affect the employee. Mathis and Jackson (2010) add that disaster and recovery planning is an important element that needs to be considered under employee safety. Moreover, HR managers can help employees with substance abuse and other problems through programs such as the US initiative known as Employee Assistance Programs (EAP). There are also wellness programs that promote health and exercise and de-stress programs. Also workplace security is becoming an ever-increasing issue, with the rise in the number of workplace deviants.
Mathis and Jackson (2010) explain that organizations that care about their workers need to consider risk management. Risk management entails the responsibilities involved in considering the physical, human and financial factors that are involved in protecting the organization and individual. It is important that the organization always consider the employee’s health – that is, the physical, mental and emotional well being of the employee (Robbins & Judge, 2015). There is currently minimal information regarding risk management and worker protection in Lebanon and the Middle East. This issue is beginning to be heard through the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Health, where the 2nd Annual conference on Worker health protection has been held to discuss the main concerns. There has been a need for urgently where there have been many issues and accidents with migrant and worker accidents. The current focus of the discussion around worker protection and risk management is in response to the dire situation regarding migrant worker accidents, rather than the implementation of appropriate HR practices in professional employment, rather than the implementation of appropriate HR practices in professional employment. There is not enough detail in the literature to form a comprehensive picture regarding risk management and worker safety for Middle Eastern employees.

2.1.1 HRM: roles, functions and strategies

Beltran-Martin and Roca-Puig (2013) applied the concept of human resources as being the organization’s intellectual capital; that is, the human resources, the employees, are the highly skilled and motivated workforce that are considered to be the source of competitive advantage (Buller & McEvoy, 2012), a valuable and rare commodity that cannot be substituted. This information is important for this research as it supports the idea that the ‘human resource’ is an important asset within the organization and thus needs to be taken care of.

Beltran-Martin and Roca-Puig discuss the issue of HR practices leading to employee flexibility. Their study shows that a ‘supportive’ HR practice constitutes an approach that tries to show how employee commitment to organizational goals
and the employee’s involvement becomes self regulated and controlled by the organization due to rules and regulations or pressures from the management.

Beltran-Martin and Roca-Puig associate laudable HR practices with improving the management style in such a way as to enhance the firm’s human capital. Human capital theory states that people who possess the right skills, experiences and knowledge are of economic value to the organization; that is, the organization makes an investment when hiring new employees and develops them within the firm, ensuring human capital.

Human resource practices (HRPs) are part of the global system of HRM. Stirpe, Bonache and Trullen (2015) explain that there are numerous studies, which prove that HR practices enhance the organizational performance by making positive influences on the employees’ attitudes and behaviour. Moreover, the authors also state that low acceptance of HR practices within the organization will be costly for the organization, as it leads to negative work attitudes and increased stress. This then results in lower employee output. Thus, the relationship established in the literature between employee productivity and efficiency is an important area for consideration when examining this aspect of the workplace in Lebanese universities. Current articles provide studies from the banking and health industry. As previously stated the banking industry is over 40% of the countries GDP and there are a number of studies that examine the HR practices within, Afiouni (2007) investigated the strategic nature of the HRM function and sheds light on the current issues within HR departments from implementing its own practices. The article showed that the Banks HR practices are disconnected from their HR strategies. Other researchers like Dirani (2006) examine the level of job satisfaction, organizational commitment and learning culture within the banking industry. Consequently this research will provide information regarding HR practices within Lebanese Universities, which has yet been published.

2.2 Global HR and the external environment

It is crucial to study the macro-environmental factors that affect HRM within an
organization. For the purposes of this research study, it is important that we understand these various influential factors, including political and legal factors (Dessler, 2013). Management of HR in different cultures, economies and legal systems presents some challenges in these diverse times. Mathis and Jackson (2010) discuss international issues, including the sort of conflicts that are created by politics, religion and ethnicity and seen widely in Africa and the Middle East. These issues are imperative for HR managers to understand as there is also global competition for human resource talent.

The global environment is dynamic and constantly changing. Muscalu and Muntean (2014) discuss the facts that the changes to the global economy accompanying the new millennium are due to globalization and the modern concept of company practices; these two traits outline the new configuration of the 21st century. This new global economy is based on knowledge, which comprises current and future technological and informational processes, allowing modern organizations to achieve maximum performance and creating value. Muscalu and Muntean also state that globalization and information technology are imperative in order to obtain high managerial efficiency. Thus, the beginning of this millennium signified a shift; new significant decisions about the performance of national and multinational organizations will dictate improvements to HRM. Obviously, as part of the global economy, these are important considerations for the knowledge industry in Lebanon and the Middle East. Job creation is an important element in the MENA region. The area suffers from long-term unemployment (Afiouni et al, 2014) and due to the Arab spring the mix of hope and fear has placed MNCs in difficult situations. As the authors point out there needs to be further research to help organizations understand the ways that companies can align their HR practices to their business strategies, at the same time realizing the external institutional realities. Questions including what extent can HR practices be standardized/and or localized and what type of trade-offs need to be made to ensure survival (Afiouni et al, 2014).

Stone and Deadrick (2015) also focus on three pillars to understanding the issues that come up in a global environment, these being: international, comparative and
cross-cultural HR. The international approach focuses on the HR strategies, systems and practices that exist in different socio-cultural contexts and different geographic areas (Schwind et al, 2013). This means that there are various HR issues that also occur in these different contexts. Stone and Deadrick (2015) also point out that there are many factors that affect HR practices in global environments, these being: contextual variables (like legal systems, cultural distances; firm-specific issues (like industry, strategy and structure); and situational variables (like staff availability, decision making and the need for control).

These commentators on important HR issues discuss the second pillar, comparative HR, which relates to the context, systems and various national patterns in HR according to country (Stone & Deadrick, 2015). It also looks at the various institutions and economic environments. The authors indicate that most of the research on comparative HR discusses HR practices across different nations. This is linked with national cultures. The research originally conducted by Hofstede plays an important role in this area. His research focused on how national culture plays an important role within organizations in various countries.

The last pillar, cross-cultural HR, looks at the degree to which each person’s cultural values influence the acceptance of the effectiveness of HR practices. Stone and Deadrick (2015) state that most of the theories regarding HR and organizational behavior are based on western principles, where cultural values of individuals are not different to others. In contrast, it is quite clear that an employee’s cultural values in the US and those of employees in other nations display significant differences. This means that companies need to look at aligning their HR processes with the relevant cultural values in mind (Robbins & Judge, 2015). The authors provide many examples of how the cultural values of individuals shape what they believe they should receive as a reward, as well as their reaction to feedback. The work of these researchers provides an interesting background for the present research, showing how culture should have an impact on HR processes in Lebanon. Lebanese culture is known to be “open and modern” yet is different to that of the Western countries (Dirani, 2006). The organizational
culture provides very little support to HR development in Lebanon, to knowledge management and to a rich working environment (Dirani, 2009). This shows the need to understand further the cultural dimensions and their effect on the working environment thus understanding employee’s level of satisfaction and productivity.

2.3 HRM and its internal role

Giauque, Resenterra, and Siggen (2010) agree on the importance of HRM within organizations, and particularly on appropriate information sharing. Information is part of the decision-making process; hence, when information is distributed appropriately, then the proper support is implemented within the organization. These practices play an important role within the organization. Firstly, they allow the employees to use their skills and become more involved. Secondly, the employees will feel that the organization is listening to their perspectives and concerns; hence their recommendations will be considered and they will make the effort to respond. All of these show the importance of internal success, which will then create overall success and productivity. Giauque et al. (2010) point out that these steps are all aimed at the emergence of a climate filled with confidence and respect, and that such an organizational culture is in a healthy and supportive state.

2.4 Human resource practices (HRPs) within organizations

This next section examines the literature relating to the HR practices of: recruitment and selection; training and development; compensation and benefits; career development; and, performance management. These HR practices are examined for this research where the researcher will try to show the relationship between Wasta and HR practices (RQ.1). Below is a description of each HR practice in turn.

2.4.1 Human Resource Recruitment process

Recruitment and selection is an important HR practice – that is, hiring the right person for the job (Robbins & Judge, 2015). As the authors state, with continuing unemployment issues, there are numerous candidates that apply for open jobs. Organizations are turning to their own HR professionals in order to recruit the right
people. Dessler and Al Ariss (2013) state that the recruitment process starts with employee planning. Mathis and Jackson (2010) state that as labor markets are shifting recruiting is becoming more important. The cost of unfilled jobs is also costly to the organization. Hence the recruitment process is a central process to the organizations success. In simple terms the recruiting function’s mission is to employ talented people in order contribute to the organization’s strategies so they can achieve or sustain a competitive advantage (Phillips & Gully, 2015).

The recruitment process is an empirical process, which requires fairness as well (Phillips & Gully, 2015). It is important for applicants to feel that they have been treated fairly during the actual recruitment process. There are three types of fairness that are involved when individuals seek employment (Phillips & Gully, 2015). Distributive fairness, which means that the individual perceives that there, was fairness in the hiring process. This instrumental statement is important when it comes to Wasta. Procedural fairness is about the individual’s belief that the policies and procedures for recruitment decisions within the organization were fair. Finally there is interactional fairness, which means that there was fairness in the interpersonal contact and the amount of information that was given to the individual during the hiring process (Phillips & Gully, 2015). These points provide this research with empirical evidence of the vital role that recruitment has within the organization. The first research question tests the hypothesis of Wasta and recruitment. The concept of fairness is vital in business practices and is also linked with the individual’s psychological contract. The use of Wasta connection to obtain employment does not indicate fairness. This is good, but needs further development. Iles et al (2012) infer that the study of wasfa has not been studied adequately. They also assert that Wasta is intrinsic to the social operations and transmission of knowledge. They give the example of Tunisia, where recruitment is carried out through word of mouth and that the wasfa phenomenon is prevalent to this very day. Iles et al (2012) do state that even though it may promote positive working conditions it also denies equal opportunities, as well as in Jordan. The authors explain that wasfa influences recruitment, selection, compensation, promotion in the public sector within the ME. However they do not state “how”. Consequently this research will fill in the gap by providing further details
regarding the affects that *Wasta* has on employees.

It is important that organizations examine their recruiting processes in order to ensure effectiveness. Mathis and Jackson (2010) explain that using the right tools like evaluation data for proper HR measurement can increase recruiting effectiveness. This entails making a decision regarding what jobs the organization needs to fill and what ways they will fill them (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Employee planning begins from the lowest to the highest position within the organization. Strategic planning is essential when ensuring which positions are needed and which essentially should be filled (Buller & McEvoy, 2012). There are many ways of forecasting needs. The various techniques that can be used include; trend analysis (studying previous years in order to look at what is needed in the future); ratio analysis (using ratios to determine staff needs, for example, sales volume and number of employees needed), scatter plot (graphical method that identifies relationships between two variables); and, computerized forecasts (using software packages to determine staff needs through sales, volume production and staff required) (Buller & McEvoy, 2012; Mathis & Jackson, 2010). The literature states that proper recruitment and selection leads to effective employee planning. There is currently minimal information regarding HRM in Lebanese Universities. Authors Yahchouchi and Bouldoukian (2014) examine the impact of managerial practices in academic HRM on job performance. This article discusses the Lebanese Universities move towards managerialism. The authors look to examine the impact of this change. Thus far there has not been enough data on recruitment policies in Lebanese Universities.

The literature on *wasta* indicates that individuals use their personal connections in order to get employed however there has not been quantified data gathered to show the influence that *Wasta* has on the recruitment and selection. This research will aim to show that *Wasta* has an effect on recruitment and selection and will show furthermore the influence that is it has on employees within an organization. These statements support that testing hypotheses regarding *Wasta* and HR practices will provide business practitioners with the basic skills in HR activities. The data will be able to provide a baseline to understanding the depth of the use of *Wasta* in these day-to-day practices.
Stone, Romero and Lukaszewski (2007) discuss the impact of cultural influences on recruitment processes and practices. They explain that there are a number of recruitment factors that attract people to the organization. They illustrate that individual values influence the acceptance and effectiveness of many HR processes. Hence, values influence the recruitment process in a number of ways. These ways include the recruitment sources and the effectiveness of recruiters. This article shows the influence of culture on specific recruitment strategies. According to Stone et al. (2007), culture plays a role in affecting the recruitment sources. Additional research is needed in this area; however it provides an interesting background in the influences of culture on HR practices.

2.4.2 Human Resource Selection process

Selection is being able to choose the right person with the correct qualifications in order to fill the job in an organization (Mathis & Jackson, 2010). Selection and placement of the individual depends on the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA’s) of the applicant. Dessler and Al Ariss (2013) state that, once the application pool is ready; careful selection is required in order to screen the individuals for appropriate fit into the organization. Various tools can be used to make the system simpler, including tests, assessment centers, background checks and references. Once these screening methods are exhausted, interviewing is the next step in order to decide whom to hire. Selecting is another HR practice that needs to follow clear procedures. Also the concept of choosing the right person with the correct qualification indicates proper accountability and transparency. When an employee is selected through a Wasta and does not have the appropriate qualifications, this will cause issues with other employees. Research questions one two and three will provide information regarding the influence that Wasta has on this process.

The critical importance of correct selection of employees dually has effects on organizational performance. The legal and ethical aspects of the selection process are particularly relevant in the context of the present study on interpersonal influence and Wasta in HRM.
Depending on the nature of the job, appropriate testing must be carefully selected and chosen in order to select the appropriate person for the job and thus achieve the satisfactory completion of the job (Mathis & Jackson, 2010). The precise nature of such tests will later provide a point of comparison with the process undertaken when Wasta underpins the employee selection process.

Selection interviews need to be administered and planned properly in order to reflect the needs of the organization and the position. It is imperative that the structure of the interview, the content and its administration is clear and free of bias (Mathis & Jackson, 2010 and Schwind et al, 2013).

Stone et al (2007) describe the idea that cultural influences also affect the selection process in that applicants often vary due to their skills, knowledge and abilities. These types of differences also affect their job performance. Hence it is important to understand that various cultures use different selection techniques. In the Middle East, it would seem to this researcher to be advantageous to adopt certain western practices in order to standardize and create quality procedures in selection.

2.4.3 Training & Development

Training and development is the next important HR practice. Training and retraining are vital processes within organizations as competition forces business to change and adapt in order to sustain a competitive advantage (Mathis & Jackson, 2010). Training and development is defined as the process “whereby people acquire capabilities to perform jobs” (Mathis & Jackson, 2010, p. 250).

The purpose of training and development is to ensure that the new employee is given valid information and is given the right tools in order to complete their jobs. The first step is orienting the new employee. Orientation programs provide them with basic information that is required for the job. These days, orientation sessions explain the mission and vision of the company and the employees’ roles in the mission of the organization (Schwind et al, 2013). Information regarding policies
and rules as well as procedures is very important in orienting the new employee. Without the basics the employee will not understand how the organization works and on what basis (Dessler, 2013). Orientation can range between 10 minutes to a weeklong program. This is where policies and printed information are given to them as well as orientation around the organization’s website for any need to know information. The first research question, tests three different hypotheses and one of them is training. The results of the test will shed information regarding the vital processes of the organization. As written above giving the employee the right tools allows for improved production and efficiency.

Thus, examples from literature show the importance of training and the effects that culture may have, providing an important link for the study of HR practices in the Middle East.

2.4.4 Performance Management

Dessler and Al Ariss (2013) define performance management as “a process that unites goal setting, performance appraisal (PA), and development into a single, common system whose aim is to ensure that the employee’s performance is supporting the company’s strategic aims” (p.223). Hence, performance management is not just about creating a PA system (PAS) and meeting once or twice a year; it is about goal setting and ensuring that these goals meet the strategic aims of the organization. It also means meeting weekly to ensure that the employee is performing to the set standards, and that the employee is getting the training that they need in order to get the job done. PA is a procedure that defines the employee’s goals, sets work standards, assesses the actual performance against the standards set, and receives feedback on the work done in order to filter through any issues (Jordão & Novas, 2013).

Moreover, performance appraisal and management involves evaluating the employee’s performance according to the organization’s pre-set standards (Abu-Doleh and Weir, 2007). Performance management plays a significant role in impacting salaries, feedback, promotions, training, development and
understanding individual's strengths and weaknesses. The impact of the information that will be sought from the research questions provides data that will prove the role that Wasta has on the performance of the individual.

The balance scorecard (BSC) is another system of helping the company aligns its strategies. According to researchers like Kaplan and Norton (1992, 1993, 1996) the BSC helps guide the organization’s strategic planning through the various levels, in order to guide people towards future performance improvement (Jordão & Novas, 2013). Other researchers like Atkinson et al (2000) explain that performance evaluation is a critical step in planning, identifying and developing the strategies for the organization’s achievement (Jordão & Novas, 2013).

Private as well as public sector organizations need to demonstrate that there have been improvements in performance and that goals and objectives are being achieved (Wisniewski and Stewart, 2004). Abu-Doleh and Weir (2007) Giangreco, Carugati, Pilati and Sebastian (2010) state that the main objective of a PAS is to allow, on a regular basis, a type of comparison between the expected performance from the company and what was achieved by the individual in the organization. These evaluations would be grounded on objective and subjective factors. What does this mean? Very simply, the performance appraisal system can be linked to the following notion: “where performance is measured, performance improves” (p.155).

Giangreco et al. (2010) infer that the PAS is a tool used to create a systematic evaluation of people’s performance to ensure fairness, comparability and clearness of the performance of both the manager and the employee. This system gathers information on the policies, procedures and strategies of the organization in order to set the main standards. Should the system be set up well, the outputs and the HRM will improve; it also helps in policy revision and the setting of objectives for the future.

Giangreco et al. (2010) explain that, in the Middle East, there is a need for control in terms of performance appraisals. Hofstede (cited in Giangreco et al. 2010) maintains that organizations in this region have more of a bureaucratic approach.
In Western organizations, there is a focus on individual performance, in contrast to a focus on collective performance in the Middle East.

Giangreco et al. also infer that there are issues and limitations when applying a PAS in the Middle East. These limitations are primarily a result of cultural differences, contextual constraints and lack of financing. They attest that the PAS should be adapted accordingly in order to be effective; thus, customizing the system to suit the current environmental forces that affect the institution is necessary. Abu Doleh and Weir (2007) also confirm that much work needs to be completed in the Middle East. Their research confirmed that in Jordan a more systematic and detailed approach is needed in performance appraisals.

Dirani (2006) also infers that in efforts to delineate HR development in Lebanon, the author recommends that individuals must take into account contradictions between eastern and western culture; that is, spiritual, material, ritual and modern aspects of both sides of the world should be taken into account. One particular concern is, when implementing HR models and practices, organizations experience the pressure of paternalistic relationships that take over to a greater or lesser degree, and certain employees receive preferential treatment, regardless of their performance. This research aims to provide information for researchers to build models regarding HRM.

2.4.5 Career development

Career development consists of a number of activities that add to the employee’s career path, success and gratification. Hence, career management is a system of developing employee’s skills and their interests. There are three players in the career management system of the individual; they are the employee, employer and the manager. They all play a role in guiding, planning and developing the employee (Dessler & Al Ariss, 2013).

Talent Retention also begins with career development. Mathis and Jackson (2010) discuss the perspectives that organizations need to make a more concentrated effort in career training and development in order to keep their talent. Armstrong (2009) also states that career development also leads to a positive psychological
contract. Baruch (2003) inferred that the employee can be seen as the only stakeholder in their career development. The author also asserts that careers are still to a certain extent the responsibility of the organization and it is managed by the HRM system of the company. Normally organizations provide a wide set of career practices, for example, career management techniques, activities, programs and associated practices within HRM. The author also states that these types of areas are powerful management tools with regard to people’s careers. However, these tools need to be refined and brought up to a twenty-first century standard. Baruch notes that it is important, for example, to examine how these organizations can utilize these practices for the future. These activities should not just be provided as stand-alone activities, but as part of an integrative career system. However, it is not very clear how these practices relate to each other and what makes them different. Certain models should replicate the difficulty and multi-dimensional nature of career systems, and they need to also be adapted to this global and dynamic environment. Research question two examines the affects of Wasta on career development, being able to provide distinct data regarding the position of the individual within the organization. This information is pivotal in understanding the individual employee’s point of view, perceptions and motivations towards their work. Afiouni (2007) offers the example of various banks in Lebanon where there is a lack of coherence in the HRM practices that are applied, including no human resource planning, and no career paths for employees, even though there are performance appraisals conducted, but not taken seriously, by the line managers. The data from this article shows the immense need to transform the ideas and practices of HR into global and professional processes in order to help with the current challenges in Lebanon.

2.4.6 Compensation & Benefits

Compensation is any form of reward given to an employee for their employment. It can be divided into direct financial payments and indirect financial payments (Dessler & Al Ariss, 2013). Examples of direct financial payments are wages, salaries, incentives, commission and bonuses. Indirect financial payments include insurance and holiday benefits. Financial payments can be made based on
increments of time or on performance. Time-based pay is a common method that employers use as a method of payment, for example, hourly or daily wages, and/or a weekly or monthly salary. Performance-based pay is based on the amount of production that the employee produces. When compensation is properly administered, it is effective in its outcomes with productivity, motivation and satisfaction (Schwind et al, 2013).

Dessler and Al Ariss (2013) point out that the reward system should be aligned with corporate strategy. It is the organization’s task to create a total reward package, allowing the institution to aim at prompt employee behavior that the firm needs to support and accomplish its competitive strategy. The authors also deduce that employers need to pay for performance – that is, money and motivation work together to create greater success. Financial incentives are rewards that are paid to the employee for production that goes past the expected standard. As companies are moving globally, competition is the daily outcome, and pay incentives become very important when dealing with improved production. Schwind et al (2013) also state that a mismanaged program can be costly to the organization to include high absenteeism, turnover, poor performance and grievances.

Dessler and Al Ariss (2013) indicate that motivation and incentives are an important element and do go hand-in-hand. As the authors illustrate, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, a popular observation, states that people’s needs fall into five basic categories, including: physiological (food, water, housing); security (a secure income, knowing that you have a job); social (friendships); self-esteem (respect for themselves); and self-actualization (becoming who you think you can become). This means that individuals need to actualize their basic needs first and move their way up the hierarchy.

The added ‘benefits’ that have developed in modern times have recently seen some major changes and now include the following: pay for time not worked (holidays, vacations, funeral leave, military duty etc.); sick leave (not working due to illness), Insurance benefits (medical and work related accident insurance); retirement benefits (pension plans, financial programs) which include a fixed sum; personal
services (counseling, legal services, child-care facilities, etc.), employee assistance programs (personal legal and financial services, child and elder care, adoption assistance, mental health counseling) (Dessler, 2013; Mathis & Jackson, 2010; Armstrong, 2010). There are many more benefits that can be listed, such as, dental and optical plans, educational subsidies and tuition fee assistance.

The above HR practices that are relevant to this research have appeared in the literature to a greater of lesser degree. This lack of literature needs to be taken into consideration in some areas; in particular, the literature investigated above is, essentially, a Western view. In the Lebanese context, managers in the health industry are trying to improve this area by providing financial incentives to retain staff however it is not combined with improved working conditions, hence employee motivation (El-Jardali et al. 2009). To begin the process of examining the application of HRP and HRM to the Middle East, it is necessary to draw on the current literature available on HR in the latter context, and the effects of Middle Eastern culture on HR practices. The HR practice of compensation is also being examined within this research, in research question one.

2.5 Organizational Culture

Dutch (2013) states that organizational culture is defined are people’s attitudes, values and ways of making decisions within an organization. These qualities tend to be in the distinct manners that are specific to individual concerns, which are said to be a part of the organization. The literature presents a two-way focus on the relationship between organizational culture and HRM; that is, HRM is influenced by organizational culture and, in turn, influences organizational culture. This can be seen by the fact that HRM communicates the organizational values, which is a main driver of organizational culture. The author refers to the relationship between culture and HRM as ‘symbiotic’.

Chow and Liu (2009) discuss the issues of strategic alignment between organizational culture and business strategy. They say that it is imperative in integrating knowledge from SHRM and design for HR practices. The authors state
that an organization needs to plan HR practices carefully within the organization in order to improve its competitive position and hence achieve its business strategy. This notion is fundamental to the present research as it builds on the cornerstone of the importance of HR practices within any organization, and argues for a much-needed increase in research into HR practices in the Middle East.

Chow and Liu (2009) further state that HR systems help shape the behavior of individuals, and thus become the pathway by which cultures are created and sustained. Having a strong culture within an organization has many advantages in that it creates strong associations between people. There is a respect for people, innovation and stability. There is also a creation of organizational commitment and job satisfaction. It helps in information-sharing and improved communication. This strong culture can assist in the organization obtaining a competitive advantage. The authors explain that creating norms within the organization’s business strategy depends on how well the HR practices are designed. It is important to understand that the organizational culture, business strategy and HR strategy all have a firm impact on the organization’s performance.

Chow and Liu (2009) further define organizational culture as symbols, rituals, social patterns and shared understanding of the behavior within the organization. These norms and behaviors determine how things are completed within the company. It also provides a standard way of behaving for each individual. As the authors infer, having a strong organizational culture makes an organization more efficient. Wallach (cited in Chow & Liu, 2009) indicates that there are three distinct cultures – bureaucratic, supportive, and innovative. The authors define the term ‘bureaucratic’ as power-oriented, procedural and possessing a hierarchy. Within this culture, the work is organized and very systematic. It is a culture that is appropriate for staff that is well trained, but it does not attract creative and ambitious people; it does not create a culture of commitment from the employee’s perspective.

Moreover, a supportive culture creates a trusting atmosphere that enjoys encouragement, and a relationship-oriented and collaborative environment.
Supportive cultures provide an honest, open and harmonious place to work. People are normally friendly and helpful. Those that work in a supportive environment have more satisfaction and have a greater degree of organizational commitment. An innovative culture is a very dynamic and exciting place in which to work. It provides a place to express creativity and is filled with challenges and risks. Innovative cultures encourage competition and develop the entrepreneurial spirit (Chow & Liu, 2009). More importantly, this research investigates the effects of *Wasta* on the organizational culture of the university. It will show the effects on workplace efficiency and effectiveness and should individual employees be motivated or not. This information is currently not clear within the extensive literature available. Berger, Silbiger, Herstein and Barnes (2015) explain that *Wasta* plays an important role in decision-making within Arab countries and note the unfortunately small amount of literature that focusses on *Wasta* and its influence on business management strategy. They further note that knowledge regarding *Wasta* would help many businesses to tap into the potential of the region. Berger et al (2015) concede that there needs to be more research available regarding *Wasta* in order to assess its strengths and dimensions. Furthermore, it is noted that various cultures have different business systems and that this has a significant impact on business practices and outcomes. Specifically, where “western cultures are principally rule-based, much of the world’s business culture is relationship-based. Social networks are a widespread phenomenon in the Arab world” (p.456).

Thus the importance of understanding the culture in general and the effects of *wasta* on the organizational culture is pillar to this research, which will provide pertinent information to business practices.

### 2.6 Human Resource Management within a university context

One of the research questions examines the SHRM tools that universities have within their organizations. Thus it is essential to review the literature that examines aspects of HR in higher education institutions. This will help to clarify a strong framework that should be aspired to within HR and universities. As globalization
affects all institutions, and in particular, academia, it is important that connections are made when there are global changes and innovations in HR, in order to benchmark one country’s practices to that of others. Smeenk et al. (2009) studied employees in European universities and the organizational strategies adopted by the universities under study. They conducted a web survey and reached 18 universities over six European countries; thus, a very large sample of staff was covered in this study. The six countries were chosen on the basis of their managerial style. The authors tested the relationship between managerialism and job performance, and examined issues such as departmental segregation and organizational commitment. This study provides insights into the factors that improve job performance, and can be used to compare what is currently being done in some institutions and what constitutes ‘best practice’. It can also be used as a tool of comparison in order to benchmark ideas and concepts that relate to certain elements of the research objectives. It also provides interesting points of comparison between Europe and the Middle East.

Specifically, this study states “there is consensus among higher education leaders that the core functions of higher education — to educate (knowledge transfer), to do research (knowledge production) and to provide in community service (outreach, emanating from the knowledge base) — must be preserved, reinforced, and expanded” (p.590). The authors discuss managerialism in three contexts: firstly, broad policy development; secondly, the university as a professional organization that necessitates output control; and thirdly, context the HR point of view, emphasizing the relationship between HRM practices and quality of performances, and thus influencing individual employees within the organization.

These views of university administration in the western context are important for universities in the Middle East in order to benchmark ideas and practices. As Budhwar and Mellahi (2007) state, the challenge is now greater than before in that it takes years to train and develop good HRM managers; unfortunately, they see that the “dearth of HRM courses (and) the low prestige of the HRM function in the region (means that) the lack of skilled HRM staff is set to continue” (p.298). The higher education sector as a growing industry of providers of education in Lebanon and the Middle East generally, has a key responsibility to upgrade its HR
and HRM profile to achieve globally recognised standards.

Arabaci’s (2010) study illustrates that humans are, by nature, social beings and are affected by their organizational climate. This study discusses the effects of organizational climate on employees’ perceptions and their organizational efficiency. The importance of this article to the present research is that it provides background information on the perceptions of academic and administrative personnel in a university setting. Arabaci’s (2010) research answers two questions: the first relates to the perceptions of academic and administrative personnel vis-a-vis organizational climate; and the second is concerned with the differences between the perceptions of this climate of employees and employers. The limitations of this article lie in the fact that the literature has not been used effectively through relating it to the practical implications; the focus is only on the results of the questionnaire. Also, the research of Arabaci et al. (2010) only involves one education faculty in one university, and therefore its scope is limited. However, this information is useful for the purposes of the current research project, in particular in terms of the ideas that it generates regarding organizational climate and its effects. The current project is extensive in its exploration of HR and HRM and thus, a more extensive examination of the literature relating to HR practices and delivery is needed.

The research of Rahimi et al. (2011) provides an exploratory analysis of a university in Iran by examining successful indicators of productivity. Their data collection methods include interviews, library studies and questionnaires. They grouped the staff according to highest degree obtained. The results that were analyzed included organizational culture, environment, empowerment, motivational factors and leadership styles. This study provides the current research project with important elements that delineate useful determinants of staff productivity and of organizational culture. It provides connections to what motivates an employee to work, and thus will provide appropriate insights as to how organizational culture indirectly affects employees. The results of the study showed that there are five factors that improve productivity: organizational culture; environmental conditions; factor empowerment; motivation; and
leadership style (Rahimi et al. 2010). These are interesting indicators for Lebanon, where there are similar conditions and working environments, as well as cultural issues.

2.7 Employee engagement and psychological contract

There is little literature regarding employee engagement and psychological contract in the Middle East. In terms of the present study, examining the literature relating to the relationship between employee engagement, psychological contract and HR practices is seen as imperative. The aim is to show how these concepts relate to the effects of HRM decision-making in a diverse cultural setting where Wasta has an impact.

Most human resource departments consider employee engagement and commitment high on the agenda (Bal, Kooji & De Jong, 2013). Most research has shown that having a committed workforce can lead to a decrease in turnover and increase organizational performance. Bal et al, 2013, state that due to the aging workforce and the difficulties in retaining talent, it is important to attract and sustain the levels of engagement of staff members.

Aggarwal et al. (2007) explain that an organization must examine the challenges that face an organization in managing talent. Exclusively as the global environment is evolving and the challenges are increasing. In order for an organization to become its most effective, to innovate and make a significant difference to revenue, it’s important to examine the ‘talent’, the ‘human resources’, that is, the ‘employee’ pool that it has. Ryde (2010) states that staff motivation are no longer the popular words, but employee engagement is. Focusing on positive energy and moving away from deficit thinking is a must.

Aggarwal et al. (2007) examine research that suggests that HR practices have an impact on the employee’s attitudes and their behavior at work. They delineate two psychological concepts that have been said to achieve outcomes, which are known as employee engagement (EE) and psychological contract (PC). The similarities
between the two are that they are both mechanisms for motivation. They are both considered constructs of employment relationships. As *Wasta* is an interpersonal influence, it indicates a relationship between the individual and the organization, and it is thus relevant to examine how EE and PC might play a part in HR practices in the Middle East. Chang, Hsu, Liou and Tsai, (2013), explain that there are two types of psychological contracts, being, transactional and relational. They are on the opposite end of the continuum, hence the impact of these types of contracts affect innovative behavior. Aggarwal et al. (2007) state that the construct PC refers to the “employee expectation from and towards his/her job/organization”; “employee engagement also operates in the context of employee and his/her role and the organization”(p.317).

Aggarwal et al. 2007 cited in Rousseau (cited in) defines PC as a “set of expectations held by the individual employee that specifies what the individual and the organization expect to give and receive in the working relationship” (p.314). The authors infer that EE and PC are social exchanges. They are duly explained by the social exchange theory (SET) that suggests that, although formal contracts and economic issues drive the relationship in an organization, there is a social element that evolves. Aggarwal (2014) state that psychological contracts involve many unspecified obligations that cannot be talked about in courts of law, as psychological contracts is a social exchange relationship.

Social exchange theory (SET) is a known framework that discusses the psychological contract process. In a simple formula, where an individual does someone a favor, there is an expectation of something in return in the future. It is an explanatory theory and has direct applications in predicting employee and employer relationships; that is, when an employee receives economic and/or socio-economic resources from a company, they feel that they need to repay it. The concepts of trust and reciprocity are, thus, the main features of SET. So, this theoretical approach is also the foundation for employee engagement (Aggarwal et al, 2007, Aggarwal, 2014), whereby one of the ways that employees can repay is through having an increased level of engagement.
Psychological contract breach (PCB) has significant results at the individual, group, and organisational levels according to Ahmed and Muchiri (2013). They also state that PCB also has links to job satisfaction, job neglect, organizational citizenship behaviours and the intention to leave and also well-being of the employee. Ahmed and Muchiri (2013) explain that researchers over the last twenty years have become increasingly interested in PC and its impact on employees. PC is negatively related to employee’s trust in management, job satisfaction, talent retention, performance of employees, citizenship behavior and employee commitment.

Arrowsmith and Parker (2013) state that ‘employee engagement’ (EE) is an important element of human resource management (HRM). They explain that the EE involves the enthusiasm that the employee has for the organization and for what more the job involves. Arrowsmith and Parker (2013) explain that an engaged employee has a high degree of affective and cognitive commitment. This means that ‘they go the extra mile’ in exercising discretionary effort, Daniels (cited in Arrowsmith & Parker, 2013). Rayton and Yalbik (2014) highlight the fact that, when employers take employee engagement into account, it allows them to see that a disengaged workforce costs the organization money.

Bal, Cooman and Mol (2013) describe the study of psychological contracts as a way of understanding job attitudes and work behaviours. It has been found that employees who believe that their employer has fulfilled their obligations are likely to be more engaged and will not leave the organization so quickly.

Kahn (cited in Aggarwal et al. 2007) defines EE as the “physical, cognitive and affective involvement of an employee and the harnessing of organisation members’ selves to their work roles” (p.316). It can be further noted that EE is the degree to which individuals are active and absorbed in their roles. It is the emotional involvement of an employee in his work role. Bhatnagar and Biswas (2010) state that Employee Engagement is the key to retaining talent. They also state that those employees who experience wellbeing within an organization have a lower intention to quit. This factor provides a competitive advantage to the
organization. The information provided by Bhatnagar and Biswas (2010) is essential knowledge regarding relationships and social exchanges in the workplace, and thus, it is highly relevant in the current examination of Wasta and its influence on individuals. There is currently no literature regarding employee engagement in Lebanon. This is an essential area to explore in order to understand the influences that affect employees’ psychological engagement to their work. This research will provide data that can elucidate employee perceptions of work and engagement in professional life.

This leads us to the HR processes and practices that play a significant and pivotal role in relationships between employee and employer. They also play an important role in shaping employee perceptions of the psychological contract and employee engagement. Aggarwal et al (2013) and Aggarwal (2014) confer that there have been a great number of studies that link HR practices (HRP) and PC. This statement is pivotal to this research. Wasta, as stated before, is a relationship between the patron and the individual, where there is an attempt to gain privileges or resources.

This ‘exchange’ process between HRP and PC begins at the recruitment and selection process level and continues through the life of the employee in the organization. The authors state that these studies have shown how the various HRPs of recruitment, training, performance appraisal and compensation can encourage and help form a strong PC. A common issue found when studying HRP and PC is that an organization’s HRP can change the PC of the individual and influence overall outcomes (Aggarwal et al, 2007).

2.7.1 The link between psychological contract and recruitment

Aggarwal et al. (2007), state that the recruitment and selection process is about finding the right employee, offering them a job and persuading them to accept the job. The basis of the PC begins in this recruitment process (Chang et al, 2013). During this process, the employer makes promises regarding the work process, contracts and other issues that they may see as convenient. The employee expects the employer to uphold these promises. Now, should the employer not fulfill these
promises, the employee will feel that their PC has been violated (Ahmed & Muchir, 2013). Hence the employee will react in a way that the employer may not like.

2.7.2 Psychological contract and performance

Aggarwal et al. (2007), also explain that, when an employer gives feedback to the employee regarding their performance, it signifies to the employee whether they are contributing to the business relationship. It is also a vice-versa relationship. The performance appraisal also allows the employer to know if the employee is satisfied with the incentives that are provided and can thus fix the situation if need be (Chang et al, 2013). Hence, this stage is an important part of the reciprocal fulfillment of the PC.

An employee’s wellbeing and personal state affects their work performance. According to Ahmed and Muchiri (2013) an employee’s well-being is an important factor should organizations are to achieve their goals. When there is a stressful workplace there are negative consequences. Ahmed and Muchiri (2013) further state that there is much evidence showing that other people at work also affect the way that a person feels at work, how they feel about oneself. The authors state that employees psychological contract breach influence an employee’s well-being.

2.7.3 Psychological contract and training

Training and development, another HRP, is the next important factor exploring the concept of PC. It is an area that supports employees in attaining specific skills that allow them to maintain their commitment to the organization; this is where the employer can secure a competitive advantage (Chang et al, 2013). As the employees are gaining and building specific skills, they become highly trained and an important asset to the organization; thus, a competitive advantage is sustained (Aggarwal et al, 2007). Should the employees feel that they have had their rights violated with regards to receiving training and obtaining skills for further career
development, which are an organization’s obligation, they will be less satisfied.

2.7.4 Psychological contract and reward management

The benefits that employees receive for work undertaken is an important part of the PC in defining the relationship between employers and employees. When the organization rewards the employee according to what they believe they deserve, it can motivate them more, so the rewards system has a great influence on employee behavior. Once could even say that it has the most influence on the employee (Aggarwal et al. 2007).

These authors state that HRP notably impacts the employee in their development and as well in the PC that they fulfill (Bal et al. 2013). Through all the steps of being recruited, having a performance appraisal, reviewing their benefits package, or receiving recognition for what they have done, the employee will interpret all these and this will then influence how he/she reacts within the organization (Chang et al. 2013). Should the company fail to do so, that is, fulfill their obligations (what the employee perceives), this will detract from the employment relationship and employee changing what they feel they are obligated to offer to the employer.

These authors have been able to conclude that HRP is an important factor in influencing the PC. There still needs to be more work done on the PC and EE and their relationship. Aggarwal et al. (2007) state that, even though there is research on the impact of HRP on organizational outcomes, there is very limited information on the impact of HRP on individual employees.

Figure 4 below shows the relationship between HRPs, PC and EE. It first indicates the proposed relationships between HRPs and the PC. It then shows that EE is also linked to the PC. There is also a link between PC and EE, and attitude, behavior, talent utilization and retention.
Rayton and Yalabik (2014) discuss the concept of PC breach (PCB), which means the impact of feelings of resource loss. PCB takes place when the individual recognizes that the company did not fulfill one or more of their promises that were made. Much of the research on PCB discusses how employees react to employer breach and what is found is that employees react negatively. This decreases job satisfaction, which in turn reduces an employee’s contribution to the context of the exchange and effectively rebalances the relationship. Rayton and Yalabik (2014) infer that this work engagement is less likely to occur when employees feel that their firm is meeting their obligations and when the employees are happy with their jobs. It is an extension of PC that is officially entitled PCB.

### 2.8 Human capital

Dessler (2003) defines human capital as the “total value of human resources to the organization” (p.18). It is also known as intellectual capital. These terms represent the people within an organization and the capability they have and can use to get the job done. It is important to understand why human capital is important in the HR arena. In the context of this study, it is especially important to look at the literature linking human capital to HR practices in the Middle East, to describe these concepts and their effects. Khasawneh (2011) illustrates human capital planning in higher education institutions in Jordan. This study examines whether...
or not people are in the right jobs, as well as stresses the importance of attracting the right people to the right job. Moreover, it illustrates the importance of each individual to the organization in the Middle Eastern context. This is very important in order to reflect on the lack of concern regarding employees.

This article gives a range of examples from which the researcher can select the most relevant; moreover, Khawsaneh (2011) demonstrates the reactions of employees in the Middle East in their workplace environment and how they feel about their place of work. Further, this article indicates how the embedded culture actually affects the decision-making, and recruitment and selection in Middle Eastern organisations. Khawsaneh’s (2011) study illustrates the need for further training and development of staff members in order to retain talent. This study encourages further strategic planning by creating units that would actively deal with human capital planning. By indicating the importance of human capital planning, training and development and retention of employees, Khawsaneh provides the example needed in order to benchmark thoughts and ideas within the same cultural region. In its focus on the Middle Eastern higher education sector and the deep effects of culture on individual behavior, this study provides useful information for the current research on human capital planning needs in the Middle Eastern region. The suggestion to expand such studies to a greater number of universities is wholeheartedly supported here and gives strength to the rationale of the present undertaking.

Shahzad et al (2010) examine closely the effects of HR practices and leadership styles in the university context in Pakistan. They state that HR practices are “investments in human capital management” (p.420). This study is important to the research project because it shows that the implementation of HR practices is imperative to the management of human capital. The authors refer to the theorist, Katz (1964), to support their findings. Their work covers three private and three public sector universities in Pakistan, where they obtained a useable sample of 122 responses from the academic sector. The limitation of this research is that it sampled academic staff only and did not include administrative staff. While it is important to establish the effects on academic staff, it is, however, more important to establish the effects on the administrative staff. The administrative staff are the
people who work on a day-to-day basis. This article provides interesting substance in terms of establishing the importance of investing in human capital, especially in the context of the Middle East. It draws what this researcher sees as the right conclusions regarding support of employees in different areas. Rahimi (2011) illustrated the need for further training at Islamic Azad University in Iran, and state that there is importance in human capital retention. Theoretically, the right ideas are being written; however, practically, there does not seem to be any real data that shows the retention rate and satisfaction of employees within the university sector in Iran. Hence the importance of this study to provide a triangulation method that covers four important HR practices.

Lepak et al. (2005) provide comprehensive coverage on the various methods of delivery of HR practices within organizations. They examine the factors that may influence HR practices and their strategies, as well as the current environmental and operating factors. Their work looks at a number of propositions in both the delivery and categorizing of HR practices, and will provide the current project with the background literature needed to support ideas and motivating factors for HR practices. It will also help in examining strategic HR management for private Lebanese universities. It will show how the limited HR strategies being implemented in the sector. This literature is extensive and rich, especially in terms of theory; the only limitation to the work of these authors is the lack of the practical component, which could have provided more support to the theoretical background. It would have also been more extensive and useful if recommendations had been made.

Dess, Lumpkin and Eisner (2007) discuss the foundation of intellectual capital as being the human capital of the organization. That is, in order for an organization to be successful, they must recruit talented people, and by ‘talented’, it means employees at various levels with the right set of skills and capabilities coupled with the right values and attitudes. It is the organization that helps in sustaining such skills and attitudes through continually developing, strengthening and reinforcing individual employees with the goal of motivating them in their efforts to achieve organizational goals and objectives. As the authors infer, the
“knowledge worker” is becoming a vital source of competitive advantage, which helps change the balance of power within the organization.

Dess et al (2007) further illustrate human capital as having three important processes, as shown by the image below, these being: attracting human capital, developing human capital and retaining human capital. These activities are interrelated. The first step is to attract human capital in order to engage and build the organization’s employee ‘capital’. The next step is to develop their talent to maximize the contributions of all the employees in a talent pool. In order to retain the human capital, the organization must ensure a proper working environment in order to obtain the best outcomes. Should a person that is selected be a weak element, then the cycle gets broken as the weaker individual cannot be developed in order to be retained. As Dess et al. (2207) point out, it is imperative that the first step is correct – that is, that the right person is picked in the beginning. The selection processes often differ in various organizations. There are those that job-fit select, where they fit a job candidate into a job, whereas the other approaches could be looking at major skills and approaches to work tasks and ensuring that the person has the right skills and abilities to master any job.

Figure 5 below shows human capital encompassing three processes that are interrelated, attracting, developing and retaining.
2.9 Social Capital

After human capital has been retained, the process must continue in order to maintain what has been created within the organization. Dess et al (2007) move the discussion to the next step, which comprises the relationships and friendships that are gained when human capital work together; that is, it is the knowledge that is gained through social relationships. Thus, the organization must look at ways of “tying” their knowledge workers together. It is important to understand that healthy relationships among the staff allow for better communication processes and improved effectiveness. The author attests further that social networks also provide potential ways of obtaining resources and information from individuals and organizations.

Bailey (2012) defines social capital as being imperative to community development and improving the economic health of the population. Social capital is also defined as a resource coming out of civic responsibility, as this builds community alliances allowing people to establish a sense of connection and build membership as well as share work on civic projects. Once trust is built between members, favours are exchanged, thereby confirming that each person will do for
the other what is needed. As Bailey states, “true social capital is a dialectical exercise built on trust and reciprocity” (p.2).

The concept of *Wasta* in the context of social capital assumes a negative aspect. In the United Arab Emirates, “*Wasta* has come to be recognized as the predominant factor in how many receive desirable jobs, which in turn generates controversy and disdain” Cunningham and Sarayah (1993) and Zahrat (2011), (cited in Bailey, 2012, p.1). This statement is not based on quantitative data but is written as theoretical information. *Wasta*, according to Bailey (2011), is seen as belonging only to males and not to females. This statement also raises the gender equality issue, as well as the corruption perspective. This data provides concrete proof and information regarding the negative aspects that *wasta* creates when used in HR practices and day-to-day business negotiations. Bailey (2011) (cites Edgerton, Peter, & Roberts 2008) in stating that, even though social capital is deemed to be a helpful practice, there has been some questioning if it can be used in societies where power and wealth is maintained within oppressive cultural norms (p.2). Through Hofstede’s study of cultural dimensions, it can be clearly seen that, given the collectivist norm operating within Lebanese society, the issue of social capital is a paradigm.

### 2.10 HR development and restructuring

It is assumed that, when there is further exploration in the area of HR practices, ideas and concepts will be dismantled in order to re-organize organizational procedures and policies. To further support this concept, Schultz (2010) observes the restructuring processes of the higher education system in South Africa. Restructuring processes create change and an atmosphere of instability for employees. This article examines the changes that evolved during the restructuring phase. The authors implemented Kaplan and Norton’s (2001) balanced scorecard approach. This study is very interesting in that the writers depicted HR as ‘DNA’ – that is to say, HR is an integral element of any organization’s system. This research used a sample of 1363 staff, including both academic and administrative staff. The analysis of the data was explicit and used a variety of methods. The limitation of this research study is that only one university campus was surveyed.
It would have widened the scope of the study by including other universities in the sample population. This article contributes to the current research in clarifying how change and restructuring affects employees. It also shows the HR competencies needed in order for an organization to align its HR strategies. The findings include terms such as: ‘business knowledge’ and ‘knowledge of HR practices’; ‘managing change’; ‘managing culture’; and ‘relationship management’. All the above-mentioned elements are pertinent to the present study in delineating and illustrating the challenges of HR strategy implementation and practices in a university context.

Xing’s (2009) article examines university HRM development and the role it plays in helping to enhance an organization’s performance and its activities. The authors of this study took a sample of 700 staff across seven universities in China. The theoretical part of the study enriches ideas concerning HR strategy and implementation, as well as the systems needed for the university to be performing optimally. This helps to illustrate the relevance and urgency of implementing HR strategies in private Lebanese universities. Xing’s study methodology and sampling encompasses a large number of universities and employees, thus providing a framework for a vital element in the present study – that is, providing the right background for university structures. The author’s concluding remarks include reference to the positive and negative influences that staff recruitment and selection have on satisfaction. There are many other hypotheses that are detailed and researched in the study, such as: the impact of staff recruitment and allocation on organizational performance; the impact of motive mechanism on organizational performance; the impact of participation on organizational performance; and the impact of performance management on organizational performance. Thus, this study is instructive in providing benchmarks for HR practices in Lebanese universities.

Smeenk et al (2006) discuss the various changes in management styles at universities and faculties in Europe. They discuss the impact of the low incidence of managerialism (low-managerialism) in countries like Germany, Greece, Spain, Switzerland, Japan and Turkey. They also direct attention to the situation in the Netherlands, France, Denmark, Norway and Ireland, which all show a number of
changes in terms of managerialism. This study is important when showing the existing education services, as well as the need to improve management styles in order to create customer value and improved quality services, both internally and externally. The countries exhibiting high-managerialism are the United Kingdom, Sweden, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

University management needs to make certain changes in their way of dealing with staff. Stiles (cited in Smeenk et al. 2006) differentiates that there are three different theoretical perspectives in the identity of academic institutions in relation to managerial options – separatist, integrationist, and hegemonist perspectives. The author states that, when explaining the low-managerialist view, the academic identity is considered to be cohesive and collegial. When examining the strategic goals they are “centred on promoting common values such as ‘the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake freedom of expression; and working with colleagues”(p. 161). From a middle-managerialist perspective, the academic identity is seen as “more fragmented and conflictual, since traditional collegial values are not so widely shared” (p.161). In the high-managerialist hegemonist view, the academic identity is “dependent and subservient” and “rational-economic managerial values dominate, including those emphasizing administrative effectiveness, career advancement, financial reward and customer-orientation”(p.162).

Jain (2014) points out that HRM is an all-inclusive and deep-rooted discipline, even more so than training and development. The approach that HRM takes is multi-disciplinary. It is a process that allows the employee, through a scientific process, to improve their capabilities and to play their roles in both the present and future state, fulfilling the goals of the organization. Also, the needs of the employee are met.

Thus, strategy is the direction that the organization takes within their environment. It involves the strategic intent (that is defining the intentions) and resource-based strategy (examining the needs and matching the resources), enabling the organization to reach a strategic fit between them (Jain, 2014). The business strategy is about achieving a competitive advantage. Therefore, efficient and
effective implementation of the strategy is referred back to the abilities of the organization, which means being able to formulate goals and implement strategic plans through what is called ‘strategic management’ It is noted by Jain that strategy is about implementation, which includes the management of change. Below is Jain’s conception of the various levels of management:

Organizational level
At an organizational level, HRM can help an organization effectively achieve its goals – that is, reach a Strategic HRM fit:

1. Drawing and maintaining the required human capital through effective HR practices, which include the recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and benefits and performance management.
2. Ensuring that there is a development of the appropriate skills and behavior among employees through the appropriate training and development and performance appraisals.
3. Using the organization’s human capital appropriately
4. Creating the right environment for employees to be willing to cooperate through the right motivation, participation and handling of any grievances.
5. Creating organizational loyalty, ensuring that the enterprise has a competent and dedicated team.

Individual level
At an individual level, proper SHRM helps in the effective management of human resources:

1. HRM will help in promoting team-work and team spirit among the staff
2. HRM also allows individuals to work with commitment
3. HRM also helps with growth opportunities, providing individuals with career development, another HR practice

Jain sees that SHRM plays an important role in the organization through ensuring that the enterprise’s most important asset – employees – are coached and given the appropriate skills and training to complete their jobs.
2.11 Strategic Human Resource Management

SHRM is a growing area of research and one that has been getting attention over the past ten years, due to its impact on how an organization functions (Darwish, Singh & Mohamed, 2013). There is growing attention to human capital with regard to competitive advantage and organizational performance. The authors state that, should organizations want to survive in this diverse world, they need to develop appropriate HR competencies and resources in order to manage. The practices that are linked to SHRM in terms of their ability to increase productivity and profitability are training, promotion, participation and employment, as well as information-sharing. These help the organization achieve a competitive advantage.

Banks and Kepes (2015) also state that HRM activities can affect the competitive advantage of the firm. This draws upon the resource-based view of the firm, which encourages employers to make sure they seek the right resources in order to sustain the competitive advantage of the firm. The way in which a company sustains a competitive advantage is through earning profits that exceed the average for its industry. The authors state that an organization can only achieve a sustained competitive advantage “when it is implementing a value creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential competitors, and when these other firms are unable to duplicate the benefits of this strategy” (Barney, cited in Banks & Kepes, 2015). The authors describe the chain between HRM and the individual, unit and firm-level outcomes as the ‘black box.’ This is an area of much research and knowledge-sharing.

The right systems that work together to form an HRM system can be a source that leads a company to a sustainable competitive advantage. This system is considered rare and very valuable. It would be difficult for competitors to copy, if not impossible. Hence, the HRM element plays a major role within the resource-based view. This provides the company with an economic foundation that leads to a sustainable competitive advantage.

Banks and Kepes (2015) describe HRM systems in a new style. That is, the authors state that HRM activities happen within HRM architecture. “A HRM architecture is the overarching framework that can include multiple HRM systems of HRM
activities within one firm “(p.2). They divide HRM systems into: HRM philosophy (at the highest level); HRM policies; and, HRM practices and processes (as seen below in Figure 12). HRM philosophy is defined as “guiding principles that define the values of the organization with regard to its human resources within a particular system” (Kepes & Delery, 2006, pp. 59–61, cited in Banks et al. 2015). HRM policies are the guidelines that develop and implement the various HR practices within the organization. These help the organization achieve outcomes that can be employed to summarize the approach used by the firm in their HRM system, and can be used in different HR practices. It is worth noting that HR policies are the guidelines that the firm uses with their HR systems. It does not state how they accomplish their goals. Hence, they are very general, not specific and do not discuss implementation procedures.

Banks and Keps (2015) explain that HR practices (HRP) are the activities that put the HRM policies in place. They help realize the goals to be achieved and objectives that are desired. They may use a variety of practices in order to attain the given results and proceed in keeping with the policy. The HRP are specific in describing how the organization will achieve their goals.

The HRM processes as discussed by Banks and Keps (2015) are defined as the employee’s experiences of the HR practices. It is important that the HRM policies and practices are implemented appropriately through the right HRM processes. As the authors state, there are often gaps between what is official and what is real; that is, policies are, normally, official standards and written for follow-through, but what actually happens within the organization sometimes does not always conform to standards.

In Figure 6 below, the HRM processes are in box 3, which are in close proximity to the ‘black box’. It is within the HRM processes that one can see human capital resources and other individual and unit level phenomena and outcomes that are related to motivation and opportunities (Banks & Keps, 2015).
The theory behind the concept of the ‘black box’ suggests that appropriate HR practices will lead to higher firm performance. It is also a source of sustained competitive advantage. As noted previously, these practices will be hard to imitate and are unique to the organization. Banks and Keps (2015) state that HRPs can be an excellent source for competitive advantage only if they support the resources or competencies that provide value to the firm. So, in essence, SHRM should be able to identify the necessary resources that are needed for this advantage in a competitive notion, as well as the HRPs that are needed to build and support the end goal. Banks and Keps, 2015, duly note that HRPs can enhance the organization’s performance when the goals are internally aligned in order to manage the employees to obtain the right outcome – that is, they can help sustain that competitive advantage.

It is also important to point out that the series of HRPs that the organization sets up is dependent on the competency on which the firm is trying to focus. When the individual practices are aligned to help develop critical resources, then these HR practices can help in creating value (Banks & Keps, 2015).

The HR areas detailed above are seen as crucial for ensuring the proper
management of human resources within organizations. They serve to provide a blueprint for the restructuring of the tertiary education sector in Lebanon, and are instructive in providing points of comparison between HR practices in western and Middle Eastern organizations, and in the present research context, for the improvement of HR practices in universities in Lebanon.

2.12 Interpersonal influences

The area of social/business features has become an important arena for scholars to research in order to understand the way of business in emerging cultures (Velez-Calle, Robledo-Ardila & Rodrigos-Rios (2015). The areas of Guanxi, wasta, jeitinho, blat (svyazi) have been under scrutiny in the disciplines of anthropology, sociology and ethnology. However, due to international business, the growth of the major economies and expansion of multinational companies in various regions, the importance of understanding and engaging in studies including cultural features have become a must (Velez-Calle et al, 2015). Even though there have been cultural studies on business practices, this research is introducing a new argument linking the effects of interpersonal influence on HR studies, which is a core foundation within any business/organization.

It is imperative to conceptualize the importance of interpersonal influences on over business settings. As Velez-Calle et al, (2015) infer that even though business practices are motivated by economic interests, it is naïve and inappropriate of the business practitioner to dismiss the influence that culture has on determining certain business practices, decision making processes and outcomes of business relationships and negotiations. Hence this idea places this research in the forefront of business practices and shows the current need of understanding how interpersonal influences affect business practices.

Interpersonal influence in the context of HRM is a necessary object of study for this review, particularly with regard to its effects on HRM in Middle Eastern, and particularly, Lebanese, institutions. There is a lack of information regarding this issue and this research will provide the ‘stepping stones’ to understanding the foundations of Wasta and its effects.
Smith et al. (2012) discuss the interpersonal influences within organizations of Guanxi, Wasta, Jeitno and Svyazi as important and culturally distinctive. These four principal modes of interpersonal influence are very important to discuss in order to understand the effects of influence in HR processes generally; in more specifically, the comparison of interpersonal influences from a range of other cultures with the phenomenon of Wasta will also be instructive. Scholars are interested in making comparison exclusively within individualism-collectivism dimensions of cultural variations, Torres et al (2015). It is particularly important to examine the interpersonal influences due to the shift in global power. This is one of many reasons to examine the influential processes in order to understand management practices.

There is little literature regarding jeitinho, svyazi and Wasta. The literature that is available is examined below in order to show the similarities and differences between similar yet different cultural phenomena. There is little more information regarding Guanxi, which is not surprising due to the global competition that China presents in our business environment.

2.12.1 Guanxi

Guanxi, which is Chinese for ‘connections’, is deemed important for interpersonal relationships within the Chinese culture (Smith et al, 2012). It is known as an informal personal connection between two people. Studies by Hutchings and Weir (2006) describe Guanxi as Chinese personal connections based on strong family networks and grounded in Confucian ethics. Hutchings and Weir (2006) describe Guanxi as a relationship between two people that encourages individuals “to give as good as they get” (p.143). A Chinese national turns to his/her Guanxiwang, or network, as such, for help. Trust, which is central to Guanxi, is called xinyong and this is core to business activity, with the ‘consultation’ being the central focus.

Guanxi refers to an individual ‘drawing on connections’ in order to secure favours within personal relationships. It is an exclusive network where the Chinese propagate with energy and imagination, Torres et al, 2015. The authors attest that
Guanxi is about mutual obligation, understanding and assurances. It also governs the attitudes of Chinese people in long term social and business relationships. So basically it is the interpersonal linkages with ramifications of continued exchange for favours. Torres et al (2015) ascertain that Guanxi has a practical application in management. In establishing Guanxi, a number of characteristics arise, including, direction of power relations (whether vertical or horizontal), the level of intimacy, the uniformity of goals, and the willingness to maintain harmony, Hwang, 1997 cited in Torres et al, 2015. Nitsch and Diebel (2007) discuss that the individual who is unable to achieve their goal directly and needs a third party involved, this third person who shares a guanxi with both sides, can be a mediator for the person requesting. The authors describe five steps that are used being; first they gain face, second they draw connections, third they estimate their own benefit, fourth they see how much emotion is involved and lastly decision making. Once this is done a certain rule of conduct is established between the parties. Yin (cited in Torres et al, 2015) also infers that there are three type of Guanxi; the family Guanxi (this follows the need rule); the helper Guanxi (follows the friendship rule- which requires repayment of the favour) and the bad Guanxi (which involves business and organized crime in China- still negative even if corruption is not implicated).

Guanxi involves Confucian ethics infer Nitsch & Diebel (cited in Torres et al. 2015), where individuals respect their superiors, favor an intimate person and maintain harmony. According to Confucian ethics ‘everything will be accomplished smoothly in a harmonious family’ (Torres et al. 2015, p.83). Yin (cited in Torres et al, 2015) elucidates that the person’s Guanxi network is personal property and not the organization’s property. This is different to the Arab’s Wasta which involves a patron who provides favors to the person seeking help (Makhoul & Harrison, 2004; Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011; Mohamed & Mohamed, 2011). As Hutchings and Weir (2006) concede Wasta heightens prestige for the individual

2.12.2 Jeitinho

The Brazilians use what is known as Jeitinho, which is defined as “little way out or adroitness” (Smith et al, 2012, p.336). This term is used frequently by
Brazilians, in both social settings, as well as business organizations; it was originally used primarily with football players and refers to the application of creative ingenuity in achieving quick results to problems – in other words, working around bureaucratic rules or trying to avoid potential issues with superiors in high positions. Duarte (2011) expounds the concept of *jeitinho* through charm, defined as the ‘power to attract, please and fascinate which creates positive rapport in social interaction’ p. 29. Within the Brazilian society, charm is highly valued. It is socially intertwined with *simpatia* which is the ability to empathize and work towards harmony in interpersonal relations. As noted previously *jeitinho* is known as ‘cajoling or seducing’ in trying to receive the desired outcomes. The effectiveness of a person’s *jeitinho* depends on how good their *simpatia* is. That is the person when asking for something must have a gentle tone and the right smile, Duarte (2011).

*Jeitinho* is a strong behavioural characteristic in many business organizations. Torres et al (2015) state that is short-term solutions to problems. *Jeitinho* is a strong characteristic that does not require previous relationships between the parties. They are usually anonymous figures that are only needed depending on one’s necessity and the other individual’s power to grant it. Torres et al (2015) explain that the way of achieving *jeitinho* includes ‘ways of circumventing bureaucratic rules or ways of handling potential difficulties with superiors in a strong hierarchical context, p. 80.

Within the Brazilian society, Barbosa (cited in Torres et al, 2015) describes the *jeitinho* on a continuum with both extremes of positive and negative, where the positive extreme approaches constitute a favor-like action and the negative extreme gives the idea of corruption. There are two types of *jeitinho* being *dar um jeitinho* which means having an out and *jeitinho brasileiro* meaning the Brazilian little way. The first type suggests there can be a solution to the problem no matter what the situation is and the second type has a negative connotation where it is close to corruption. This second term uses creativity more and is a part of everyday
Brazilian life. This type of phenomenon is explicit and real and is used by everyone. Torres et al (2015) explains that the use of jeitinho is used at different organizational levels, which more of magnitude than of incidence. Jeitinho either opens up to corruption or establishes social justice. How effective jeitinho is, is based on the opposite of a bureaucratic system. It is more of an intrinsic appeal to the emotional, instead of the rational side of people. As Torres et al (2015) explains jeitinho is a social procedure that is learned within, it does not have a certain system of learning. It is embedded within the actual culture. It is passed on, on a daily basis through experiences, stories through the generations.

In contrast to Wasta, Jeitinho has a seductive appeal. There is a more creative process in the use of Jeitinho, where is it socially at every level and can be anonymous, whereas the Wasta is not anonymous and means that a favour needs to be returned or the Wasta patron is taken care of, by ensuring loyalty to that person (Makhoul & Harrison, 2004; Mohamed & Mohamed, 2011).

2.12.3 Svyazi or Blat

Svyazi or Blat is a Russian term similar to Guanxi attest Batjargal and Liu (cited in Smith et al, 2012). A more widely used procedure, additionally informal, is called blat. This is known to be the overt use of corruption states Ledevena, (cited in Smith et al, 2012). The authors state that blat is a specific form of Svyazi. They infer that it became more frequent in the period of the Soviet command economy. The Svyazi network is less personalistic than Guanxi. The ‘dark side’ of job recruitment is known as ‘blat’ (Onoshchenko & Williams, 2013). The authors discuss blat during the soviet command economy, where having friends was strategic and imperative, as the issues were not about money, but the shortage of goods and services. Access to these goods and services was through personal connections. So the wide variety of connections was important in times of need. A common phrase during that time was ‘it is better to have a hundred friends than a hundred rubles’ (Onoshchenko & Williams, 2013, p. 256).
Blat is used to negotiate many aspects of life including requiring foods, holidays, schools and universities to medical services. This type of influence is looked upon favourably as it helps to cope with the difficulties in life. This is in the Soviet world, where there is no need for direct compensation (Onoshchenko & Williams, 2013). Ideas and perspectives have changed regarding personal networks. It seems that making a living and getting a good job is now very important to the individual and it is more important in the market place. It now seems that these connections are used to get access to jobs, loans and educational places, Ledeneva (2013) cited in (Onoshchenko & Williams, 2013). Hence the concept remains that the idea is the access to assets is not to just give about giving friendly help but being reimbursed in the form of money. Al Rahami (cited in Onoshchenko & Williams, 2013) also infer that this is also the case with Wasta. Consequently, blat is now considered more ‘materialized’ losing the human warmth and has more of a negative meaning. This is especially the case with the younger generations. Onoshchenko & Williams (2013) infer that blat is a form of corruption, where public office is used for private advantage. The authors also attest that personal connections are vital to getting good employment. However the authors note that there is minimal research on job recruitment.

Svyazi and blat has more of a monetary perspective (Onoshchenko & Williams, 2013), in comparison to Wasta. In both interpersonal influences, it is important to sustain connections and friendships, however Svyazi is also used to gain access to basic social rights (Onoshchenko & Williams, 2013).

2.12.4 ‘Pulling strings’

Pulling strings is a British concept that is an idiomatic phrase. Smith et al. (2012, p. 337), state that it refers to “obtaining favors, particularly through links with influential persons.” These ‘links’ are from time-honored relationships that come from family connections or shared schooling (in the American context, Ivy League, or, in British terms, the Old Boys’ Club), or are developed from short term, ‘by chance’, contacts. Through researching the topic online, there are very few scholarly articles written on the topic, except for the comparison with Guanxi and Wasta. With regards to getting employment this concept is widely disapproved
of in Western circles, where formal procedures are seen as more equitable and fair. Onoschchenko & Williams (2013) also retreat the lack of information regarding ‘pulling strings’ which they state is widely used in the English-speaking world. They state that there is no empirical research has been conducted on the influence of this practice. However the authors do cite Smith et al (2012) that reveal the English people’s attitude towards pulling strings is more positive than the Arab, Chinese, Brazilian or Russian world.

2.13 Wasta

The element of Wasta is an influential and intrinsic part of the study, relating as it does to all four research Questions, where the responses of RQ 1, 2 and 3 provide the final response to RQ four Thus, the literature relating to this subject will be closely examined. Iles et al (2012) explicitly point out that there is not enough research regarding Wasta, nor is there any considerable literature, unlike the Chinese Guanxi, which has received considerable attention. The author explains that ‘Wasta involves a social network of interpersonal connections rooted in family and kinship ties and the exercise of power, influence and information-sharing through social and political-business networks’ (p. 472). Smith et al. (2012) position Wasta as an interpersonal influence.

The term Wasta is known in the Middle Eastern countries as a type of social capital however spoken about in a negative way (Bailey, 2012). As the author states, in the United Arab Emirates, Wasta implies that a person obtains or provides favors to another person. Authors like Bailey (cites Cummingham & Sarayah (1993) and Zahrat (2011)) in discussing Wasta as being the predominant factor in receiving a job, which then creates disdain and much controversy. This is a very important statement as it supports Research Question 3, which examines the effects of Wasta on organizational culture. Religions like Islam play a role in Wasta, where it is seen to be negative and it is condemned and is known to be socially unfair.

Bailey’s research was conducted with female university students from the United Arab Emirates within a focus group, where a number of questions were asked regarding Wasta. Of the 37 women, 16 had a high Wasta and were believed to be
highly influential. They were able to secure favours from the University administration through family connections. One of their parents was either in government positions or had wealth. Eleven women were considered having a low Wasta, which meant that they had no or very little influential abilities in attaining favors from the administration. Their fathers were classified as being from the working class and in employment of another family. This article clearly showed the issues in speaking about Wasta, which is considered unfavorable. The research showed the insecurity of people talking about Wasta and normal spoke about “stories they have heard” and not personal experiences.

This research shows the need to illustrate the effects that Wasta has on individuals as it showed that people are affected by speaking about it and understand its implications. Hence, it is important to show the weight that wasta has on human resource practices and individuals within an organization.

Barnett et al. (2013) have pointed out in their literature review that economists have addressed the role of Wasta. It is this researcher’s goal to show what wasta is all about. As the author further clarifies, the literature that is available is basically small and anecdotal. Hence the reason and value of this research places Wasta in the academic arena.

Figure 7 shows WASTA within the context of the research. It illustrates the various areas that will be examined within the area of Wasta beginning with the definition of Wasta.
This section is divided into four parts: the first part, which will define *Wasta*, provides the current definitions that can be found and anecdotes relating to the phenomenon; the second part will discuss the role of *Wasta*; the third section discusses *Wasta* within Arab culture; and the fourth part examines *Wasta* in Arab management practices. This research is entitled ‘The Influence of *Wasta* on HR Practices in Lebanese Universities’. Hence, this next section aims to provide a foundation regarding *Wasta*, and the theories and literature that are currently available regarding it and its application to the Middle East and Lebanon, with a view to assessing its role in HRM within the Lebanese higher education sector.

2.13.1 Definitions of ‘*Wasta*’

There are varying definitions of *Wasta*, delineating some differences and many similarities in interpretations of the term. Mohamad and Mohamad (2011) state that there have been limited empirical studies on *Wasta* and that further research is needed, an imperative statement that supports the pursuit of the present research study. They state that it is important to understand the role of *Wasta*; however, in their view, concrete material has yet to materialize. They reiterate that *Wasta* is a management issue in the region and that it requires specific studies. Their
definition of *Wasta* is the “intervention of a patron in favor of a client in an attempt to obtain privileges or resources through a third party” (p.412). In layman’s terms, such a definition denotes a form of favoritism, providing a person with an ‘edge’ on another person. This advantage is not based on knowledge that a person may have, but on who they know. They equally illustrate that *Wasta* is filtered through various aspects of Arab culture.

Mohamed and Mohamad (2011) further explore how *Wasta* plays a very important role in hiring and selecting employees, as well as in promotion in many businesses in the Arab world. They assert that it goes without saying that a person who has very few qualifications, but who has a strong *Wasta* will get the job over someone who has great qualifications but a weak or non-existent *Wasta*; hence, the wrong person may be picked for the job based on who they know, not what they know. These authors clarify even further that this cycle makes the weak person weaker and the strong stronger, creating unequal employment opportunities.

Further in this literature review, the concept and history of *Wasta* is explored and reviewed through its social context. Mohamad and Mohamad (2011) explain the position of leaders of the past in retaining people that they know in order to keep close confidants, thus creating highly centralized administrations. This provides an excellent explanation as to why, to this day, bureaucratic institutions are still heavily recruited. These authors further explain the position of the leader who tries to keep control in society by sustaining their authority; keeping *Wasta* alive allows people in various positions of power to retain this ‘power’. This article does not, however, specifically examine HR issues and the effects of *Wasta* on HRM.

Cunningham and Sarayrah (1993) are quoted in Barnett et al. (2013) as cleverly rooting the word *Wasta* to the Arabic work ‘waseet’, which means ‘the middleman’. These authors illustrate that the middleman’s role is to act as the mediator between two parties. Moreover, depict *Wasta* as dependent on the type of mediation required, and state that *Wasta* is not just confined to the family and/or tribal network, but may include friends.

It is also advocated here that *Wasta* is not just limited to the one sector. It expands into government, education, health services and businesses. Barnett et al. (cited in
Ezzedeen and Sweircz, 2001), found that there were over 65% of employees who were hired due to *Wasta*. The authors further illustrate that in Jordan, *Wasta* has affected the business environment by making the administrative procedures exhausting and thus creating injustice in administrative decision-making.

Barnett et al (2013) support the concept that *Wasta* creates issues among qualified and skilled workers when unqualified employees are given positions via *Wasta*. These authors state that *Wasta* is practiced throughout the Arab countries and is not seen as a form of corruption there. They contend that *Wasta* is embedded in the pillars of society, and that individuals do not feel shame nor guilt for having been the beneficiaries of the influence of *Wasta*; on the contrary, the authors attest that individuals welcome the influence of *Wasta*, as it also heightens prestige. *Wasta* is comparable to *Guanxi* in China where they practice similar ideas (ibid; Hutchings and Weir, 2006).

Bellow (cited in Barnett et al, 2013) defines *Wasta* as an interceding resolution based on a person’s influence, and that sometimes this influence is tied to family or friends who are of assistance. Bellow asserts that labeling *Wasta* as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ is actually an external cultural construct.

In terms of traditional norms of behavior, Barnett et al. (2013) delineate *Wasta* as being a way of resolving conflict between families; the ‘waseet’ is there to mediate the conflict between groups or clans. In this way, the authors point out that *Wasta* has traditionally been used to help congeal and sustain the unity of the tribe or clan. They extrapolate that this would necessarily then spread out to the society at large.

Another feature of *Wasta* noted by Barnett et al. (2013) is that those individuals who had their *Wasta* were able to by-pass the middleman or the *waseet*, thereby saving the potential transaction costs required in business arrangements. They also note a number of differences between the ‘old’ and ‘new’ *Wasta*. The old *Wasta* saw the tribal leader gaining an advantage on behalf of their society; hence *Wasta* worked from the top of the hierarchy down. However, these authors further state that the new *Wasta* works from the bottom of the hierarchy in an upward direction. That is, the person who is seeking a *Wasta*, in order to get a position or favours is
the person who gains the advantage, not the person who actually helps them. Hence, the new Wasta is not for the leader’s gain but for the person that needs to gain something in order to better their current position.

The current limited research is from a cultural point of view rather than a business point of view. Barnett et al. support the idea that their needs to be further research into Wasta in order to understand how this mechanism really works. Once this is understood, the framework that it works under can then be understood. This can then be applied in the present study to developing an understanding of the results of using Wasta in business and HR practices.

2.13.2 The role of ‘Wasta’

In order to fully grasp the meaning of Wasta it is also essential to clarify Wasta’s role in Middle Eastern culture. Kowske and Foldes (2007) further illustrate the definition and role of Wasta as being the ‘clout’ or connections an individual possesses within local customs in the Middle Eastern region. This article supports the importance of understanding what Wasta is and how it duly affects both the individual and the organization. It also cleverly reflects on the term Wasta and points out that it is imperative to understand the integration of Wasta into the culture. This literature provides information supportive to the current research project, as it discusses why Wasta plays an important role and how it creates challenges in the work culture. One of the limitations here is that the authors do not explain the source of their information – that is, whether it is based on primary data or interviews.

The current research project attempts to provide this primary data for future researchers. It is felt that, when interviewing employees, it is important to be able to draw out the information that is needed and to allow people to describe exactly to what extent Wasta has played a significant role in all areas of management and their lives. Thus, the current project will attempt to expand calls for further research into the influences of Wasta, and set a foundation which provides of the personalities and inclinations of employers, as well as how employees react to the latter’s HRM decision-making.
Table 4 below provides a clear description of how *Wasta* is expressed or can be expressed in the Middle East. These proverbs date back to previous historical times, but are still used today in modern Middle Eastern society. As discussed before, the culture is embedded, as are these statements, and they provide clear examples of how *Wasta* is expressed in Lebanon.

Table 4 Proverbial Statements of *Wasta* and their meanings (Mohamad & Mohamad, 2011, p.415)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Proverb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>He who has a back will not be hit on his stomach (p.56)</td>
<td>Those who are supported by strong others will not be put down or rejected. Only the unconnected or unsupported are punished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>Lucky is the person who the governor is his uncle (p.505)</td>
<td>People who are related to important others (especially in government) are fortunate, as they will have their demands or needs fulfilled. People serve those that are related to important people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>Seek who you know, so that your needs will be fulfilled (p.32)</td>
<td>People tend to serve those that they know. Without knowing anybody, you will have difficulty getting the service you want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>If you have a turban, you will have a safe trip (p.106)</td>
<td>The turban symbolizes a senior respected person. If you know a senior person, your demands will be met. Similar to the second proverb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>No once can escalate except those who have a ladder (p.107)</td>
<td>Rising to high levels requires important connections. Receiving important privileges or benefits is contingent upon using the right connections.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To further support the research project, the study of Tlaiss and Kauser (2011) was also considered. It describes the importance of *Wasta* and its uses in Middle Eastern business practices and in day-to-day life. This article provides an essential foundation for the present research, allowing the reader to understand the concept of *Wasta* and how it is applied in a business environment. The authors compare
the concepts of *Wasta*, networking and mentoring, showing the differences and similarities. Their research findings derive from the questioning of 200 managers across various organizations and countries in the Middle East. They also conducted in-depth interviews with 18 Lebanese female managers and eight HR managers in order to explore their perceptions of and perspectives on diversity management. The authors clearly explain how *Wasta* is specifically being used and to what extent. This very useful and relevant article also examines why understanding this concept is important, and how it affects HR management practices, in that it supports the present argument regarding the effects that *Wasta* has on HR practices within higher education in Lebanon. It provides important information to clarify the differences between Western and Eastern business practices. The limitations of this article are that it does not identify measures aimed at reducing *Wasta*, nor does it, in the view of the present researcher, identify the real effects of *Wasta* in HR practices.

To further support, define and conceptualise the concept of *Wasta*, Makhoul and Harrison’s (2004) study was considered. This study looks historically at the use of *Wasta* in the Middle Eastern region and how it has developed over time. The authors discuss both the economic and social state of Lebanon, as well as in what way and for what reason *Wasta* has been integrated into the country’s economic and social life. This is an ethnographic study that uses informal interviewing and observation as methods of data collection. The information gathered is interesting as it was taken from village people who were illiterate and who were able to provide historical and personal experiences. This article will provide important insights into the topic of *Wasta* and its implications in the Lebanese context. It allows understanding of the significance of *Wasta* in Lebanese society, and provides significant background information on the why and how *Wasta* was used in the past.

Ahmed and Hadia (2008) discuss the use of *Wasta* in Arab countries, where they see that it is present in many aspects of life in the Arab world. They further explain that, in most Arab countries, even getting a driving license without *Wasta* can be frustrating: “*Wasta* makes people powerful, hence the nickname Vitamin WAW “(p.1). The authors also state that *Wasta* plays an important role in hiring and
promoting individuals. Many people, before they apply for a position, seek a Wasta to ensure that they have a better chance of getting the job. As noted previously, qualifications are not the determining factor. As there would be many people that would apply with a Wasta, the person that has the most prominent or important Wasta will often get the job. The best way to show who the Wasta is, according to this literature, would be to attach the Wasta’s or patron’s business card to their application to make sure that it gets seen and not forgotten.

Of course, Wasta has been compared to the Chinese Guanxi – as previously stated, a social network based on Confucian ethics. Chinese Guanxi’s emphasis is on strengthening the relationships, while both Wasta and Guanxi both look at influencing the distribution of advantages and resources. The author states that Guanxi may be beneficial for an organization’s competitiveness and performance. However, this does not necessarily apply to the situation vis-à-vis Wasta. Many have put the blame on Wasta for the Arab World’s poor economic performance and draining of both financial and human capital. They also state that Wasta has become an issue for those seeking it, those granting it and the government. Ahmed and Hadia (2008) cite Makhoul and Harrison (2004) who characterize Wasta as being inefficient and have warned that it could lead to poor job performance and economic decline. They also suggest that having Wasta will feed the feelings of injustice and frustration with those who are qualified for the job, but do not have Wasta.

Ahmed and Hadia (2008) state that Wasta is also different from ‘cronyism’ and ‘nepotism’ where nepotism is when you hire family or friends and Wasta does not have these restrictions; it is open to all. Hence, nepotism is only one part of Wasta. The earliest studies of Wasta, were conducted by two researchers, Cunningham and Sarayah (1993), who identified Wasta as being two types– intermediary and intercessory. The intermediary Wasta is used to solve problems within groups or interpersonal relationships. This system helps improve human relations and helps to reinforce the social norms. The second type of Wasta, intercessory, involves “intervening on behalf of a client to obtain an advantage or overcome a barrier from an authority figure. It is this type of Wasta that affects hiring decisions,” cited in Ahmed and Hadia, 2008, p.2.
The actual use of Wasta through a study that was done by Kilani and Sakija (2002) in Jordan explained that 90% of the respondents who participated in their studies said that they would use Wasta in the future (Ahmed & Hadia, 2008). Another study conducted by Whiteoak, Crawford and Mapstone (2006) illustrates that, in the UAE, young citizens, in comparison to older citizens, believe that Wasta is useful, which might imply that Wasta is part of the strength of the Arab countries, meaning that it is a positive influence.

The Whiteoak, Crawford and Mapstone (2006) study showed that, in Egypt, a senior official had stated that 25% of his staff were employed based only on their Wasta. Ahmed and Hadia (2008) indicate that a number of reasons may have caused the spread of Wasta. Arab political regimes, in order to take authoritative control, use close confidants that are in key positions, even if they do not have the qualification for the positions that they hold. In many of the Arab countries, the top positions within the government are actually reserved for family members.

Ahmed and Hadia (2008) have indicated that over time, these practices have worked to weaken the “top positions” and relationships. This has created nepotism. The authors have also stated that the latter has become the norm in university admission programs and even in school admission programs. Another example is that the sons of police and military officers are given admission to the Egyptian academy or military college based on whom they are related to. This means that possessing Wasta or being well connected is very important in order to get the desired position. Being fearful of being disadvantaged has encouraged people to use Wasta, create or seek out Wasta.

The article written by Ahmed and Hadia (2008) mentioned that most of the Arab countries, where finding a good job is rare, suffer from high unemployment. So this means that applicants are motivated to use any way they can to improve their chances of getting the job. Anything that will allow them better chances at getting employment is a motivator. Hence, HR departments in the Arab world depend on the subjective tools of unstructured interviews. In the media, Wasta and nepotism are painted negatively in that people criticize it. Ahmed and Hadia (2008) cite the
work of Kilani and Sakija (2002), who conducted a Jordanian survey where 87% of those that responded wanted to eliminate Wasta. Generally, Arabs talk about Wasta negatively. Some suggestions for eradicating Wasta focus on administrative reforms and greater quality control functions (Cunningham & Sarayah, cited in Ahmed & Hadia, 2008). Other suggestions for ways of reducing Wasta are to make it unattractive, by publicizing it and its impact as harmful. It is thought that if people start to believe and recognize that Wasta can harm their employer and their friends and colleagues, then they may reconsider resorting to Wasta. This article has provided support to the context of Wasta and its relevance and importance in the Arab work life. It also shows examples of how it is being used. However it does not show the relevance of Wasta within specific business negotiations and human resource practices.

2.13.3 ‘Wasta’ within Arab culture

According to Khakhar and Rammal (2013), Wasta is an accepted business practice in Arab countries, especially in business negotiations. They infer that it is used as a bargaining tool when negotiating with other parties. The authors confirm that Wasta is used in Lebanon, especially when influencing decision-making; however, they note that it is not discussed in open forums. Sawalha (cited in Khakhar & Rammal, 2013) see it as quite influential in Arab countries and especially in Lebanon. Khakkar and Rammal (2013) quote many researchers that state how there is a lack of understanding of Wasta and the way that it is used and applied in business. Whiteoak, Crawford, and Mapston (cited in Khakhar & Rammal, 2013) advocate further research in the area of Wasta. They attest that Wasta is used in recruitment, as well as in issues of trust in business relationships.

An article written by Kilani, Al Junidi and Al Rizik (2015) discuss nepotism and more specifically Wasta and the role that it plays within conflict and conflict management within private organizations. The authors infer that Wasta is par of the institutional part of Jordanian society since the beginning. As per Cunninham and Sarayah (1994) cited in Kilani et al (2015) Wasta has tribal origins, centered around the intermediary role that it plays within conflict both interpersonal and inter-group. It is also discussed that Wasta is “the practice of giving someone the
advantage they did not deserve, and that with its favoring someone with no direct expectation in return from the other party” Kilani et al (2015) p.80. This article shows the importance of answering research questions one, two and three, where the effects within the organization are examined. The answers will provide a base of information for future research.

Velez-Calle et al. (2015) states that Wasta and interpersonal influences can be seen from four different perspectives. These perspectives are corruption; a different path to weak institutionalism; a form of social capital or derived from certain cultural dimensions (p. 284). The author asserts that the first dimension distinguishes itself by the emotional decision-making that it has, where decision are made through emotions and not logic. This would lead to economic weaknesses and inappropriate allocation of resources and or choice of adequate partners, Velez-Calle et al. (2015). The second perspective focuses on a descriptive explanation of networking where this used to surmount the level of institutionalization that is weak within a country. That is when there is instability in the legal framework of the country and very little formal support from formal institutions; businesses would eventually look at establishing certain connections in order to facilitate the operation of their businesses, Velez-Calle et al (2015). According to authors Velez-Calle et al (2015) the third perspective looks at these type of practices as social capital. This means that developing business opportunities which is based on personal connections in not within one society but is a widespread practice around the globe. The last perspective as explained by the authors indicate that networking is the process of certain cultural dimensions, where they are related to Hofstede’s dimensions of collectivism and power distance like the Chinese guanxi. Figure 8 below shows a cultural comparison between Hofstede’s cultural dimensions between Latin America, the Arab World and China.
Figure 8 Cultural Comparison between Latin America, the Arab world and China using selected Cultural dimensions, Velez-Calle et al (2015) p. 287

2.13.4 ‘Wasta’ in Arab management practices

Wasta is important to social processes and is imperative to the communication of knowledge and the establishment of opportunity. Wasta in the Arab world has created issues for those that try to work within the legitimate framework. Wasta often sways the situation for those that are trying to gain positions in the workplace, receive better compensation and/or be promoted in public sector organizations. In this way, it is also similar to ‘piston’ in North Africa, as pointed out by Iles et al (2012).

Iles et al. (2012) further point out that, in the Arab world, selection of people is highly dependable on contacts, family name, and nepotism, where it is most common to engage people they know, like friends and family members of those that are already employed. Thus, it is a very subjective process. The authors also
highlight motivation as a necessary consideration. Iles et al. note that motivation techniques that may be used in Western practices may not work in the Middle East as well as incentives and leadership are quite primitive concepts in the Middle East. In the Middle East, Arab managers may resist sending employees to be trained as they still believe in the concept learning of the job is the best way to prepare a manager. It is also important to note that those with age (senior) will most often be considered leaders. Thus, preferential treatment is based on seniority (age), not qualifications.

Although the authors discuss the effects of Wasta, they only do so through a focus on cultural context. Their research is not based on quantitative data. Hence there is an impetus on the current researcher to extend the availability of research on the effects of Wasta on HR practices. Iles et al (2012) further discuss performance appraisals that are conducted in a group format and not individually, in order to save face. Disciplinary action is taken in private on an individual basis, in order to maintain the good reputations of employees. The authors further point out: “worker satisfaction, and hence performance, is likely to be increased when recognition is given to the tacit communication styles used in these nations, and efforts made to use less direct communication strategies” (p.474). The use of the word ‘likely’ reinforces the impression that the information is not based on raw data, but on hearsay from the public sector.

Iles et al. (2012) state that government employment is highly personnel-intensive. Their research explores the notion that, in the GCC countries, training and development, for example in Qatar, is given more in government services. The public sectors in many of the developing countries of the Middle East have a number of challenges including; lower incomes, political interference, unsuitable working conditions, and poor management. These are seen as leading to demotivation and ethical issues. There are also problems of job turnover and corruption.

Giangreco et al. (2010) state that Wasta implies mutuality in terms of influence; thus, influence remains in society as a wheel that keeps on turning, and this affects how HR practices are applied within institutions. These authors affirm that Wasta
affects the hiring and promoting processes so that certain positions go to people that have friendships and family connections, instead of going to the individual that has the right qualification. The authors attest that globalization and Western business practices are spreading to areas such as the Middle East. Consequently, Middle Eastern organizations are trying to modernize and adopt practices such as performance appraisal systems. It is felt that, in this way, Wasta and its effects can slowly diminish. Unfortunately, as yet, there are no conclusive results of such a trend.

2.13.5 Comparison of interpersonal processes of influence

In the context of the present study, it is seen as important to explore more widely the area of interpersonal influences in an attempt to understand more clearly the effects that Wasta has on businesses practices in the Middle East.

Each of the interpersonal processes of influence that have been discussed above – Wasta, Guanxi, Jeitnho, Svyazi and ‘pulling strings’ (Smith et al. 2012) – have a common base, in that they are based on interpersonal linkages that are not formal in nature. The differences between them are in the hierarchical nature of the relationship and how intense and how long the relationship may last. As the abovementioned authors note, Guanxi is based in Chinese business and social activities, whereas Wasta is used in every important business decision. In terms of similarities, Guanxi and Wasta occur in a more hierarchical relationship that comprises a long-term and emotional commitment. Obtaining Wasta means that there has to be loyalty given to that person who has helped get the ‘position or favour’ for another (Mohamad & Mohamad, 2011). So, in other words, power is given to that person who has been successful in helping the other. It means that the person is ‘beholden” to the person who is their Wasta. In Chinese culture, the failure to sustain a Guanxi relationship means a loss of face; in a similar vein, when a person receives a favor through Wasta, it involves the continuing obligation to uphold the honor of the person granting the privilege. Wasta has a social influence in the person’s relationship at work – hence the notion of ‘the weak get weaker and the strong get stronger’.
2.14 The Middle East

Al-Husan, Al-Hussan and Perkins (2014) highlight that, in spite of the increase in the body of literature regarding the Middle East, and in Multi-National Companies (MNCs) in the region, the current literature available does not fully capture the issues and challenges that are facing the MNCs in the area (Mellahi, Demirbag & Riddle, 2011). The authors also discuss the minimal information available regarding the knowledge transfer of HR practices and policies. This is particularly so in relation to how organizations control the influence of knowledge transfer and how it is integrated within the organization. This is important in order to understand how managers have the knowledge needed in order to regulate HRM practices in various operations within the organization.

Al Husan et al. (2014) point to the fact that that there is an urgent need for international HRM literature on non-relational and relational information with regard to control strategies that ensure certain behaviours and outcomes within the organization. The consideration of knowledge management is a vital and relevant aspect of HRM. Given the intensity of global competition, the availability of information on detailed knowledge transfer management has become imperative to ensure the success of MNCs; transfer of knowledge is not only imperative, but also crucial for any company’s success. This is where the transfer of proper HRM practices and policies to ensure transition and transfer of relative and imperative information within the organization is located.

Al-Husan et al. (2014) state that HR information, from the employer to the organization workforce, can be examined managerially in different ways. There is, of course, the use of basic information, administrative tools, as well as important rules and procedures, like coordinating, monitoring and accounting for the costs and compliance of employment. HR information is then used to help make ‘informative’ strategic decisions within the organization in order to help managers change or envision new activities to transform current organizational trends and to capitalize on current human resources. This then allows the organization to get involved in HR planning from the strategic point of view, hence the SHRM activities. Al Husan et al (2014) stress that, if human resources are
looked upon as ‘assets’, then the information from and about these assets takes on a strategic importance. Finally, given the presence of the above processes, HR information can take on a theoretical foundation within the company, allowing the organization to then participate in the planning process, and becoming the SHRM of the organization (Schwind et al, 2013).

Budhwar and Mellahi (2007) define the phrase ‘Middle East’ as a cultural area, without definite borders. Different versions of the Middle East are presented – depending on which media outlet one is wanting to endorse – with the minimum borders covering, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan. Other versions include, Cyprus, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt. A broader version of the Middle East includes Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman and Yemen. There is also what is known as the MENA region, which is the Middle East and North Africa, which includes countries such as Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia. The MENA region is situated physically on two continents, namely Asia and Africa (Kabasakal, Dastmalchian, Karacay and Bayraktar, 2012). This area has operated as a connection between Africa and Eurasia.

Budhwar and Mellahi (2007) further explain that Islam is the main religion in the Middle East, with approximately 95% of the total population following it. However, it is also the birthplace of Christianity and Judaism, and is considered to have some of the oldest civilizations in the world, such as those of Phoenicia, Babylon and Egypt. The dominating languages are Arabic, Persian, Turkish and English and several other languages (Encyclopedia of the Orient, cited in Budhwar & Mellahi, 2006). According to Kabasakal et al, 2012, the MENA region have some common societal norms, “they have also some differing socioeconomic, demographic and ethnic dynamics which may also differentiate their cultural norms and related preferences” p. 2.

Iles et al. (2012) state that there is minimal information regarding the reporting of Arab cases and examples of ‘management’, ‘HRM’ and ‘international business’. Some textbooks do not even recognize the Arab world at all in their examples. Consequently, in the past number of years there has been an increasing interest in
HRM in the Middle East. Iles et al. (2012) describe the region as containing areas of extreme wealth and poverty, as well as instability and continuity. There are also, at one and the same time, high levels of illiteracy and educational achievement. The Middle East region is also very diverse in religion, for example Sunni, Shia, Islam, Alawite, Druze, Christianity and Judaism.

Budhwar and Mellahi (2007) also attest to the fact that the Middle East has over 65% of the world’s known oil reserves and has taken a primary position of strategic importance ever since WWII. Modern history has shown us that, up until the 1950s, the Middle East showed slow economic development. Times changed in the 1960s and 1970s, where it experienced strong economic growth, exclusively in countries where oil was discovered. In the 1990s, the GDP growth per worker in the region (excluding countries like Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon and Palestine) was approximately one percent per year; there was also a regular decline in factor productivity (World Bank, 2005, cited in Budhwar & Mellahi, 2006). The result of these activities showed a slower rate of development. In comparison with other countries in the area, it only grew at half the rate. Of course, a number of factors were involved in the slow economic growth; the instability of the region generated issues relating to structural imbalances, deficient political systems, war conditions and conflict, as well as religious and cultural matters.

Iles et al (2012) assert that HRM is intertwined with international and national politics, legal, cultural, social and economic dynamics, gender and ethnicity. They also conclude that there is an impact from ‘Western’ HRM knowledge flowing from the rise of foreign investment and the role of expatriates in key roles in MNCs. There is also a lack of support for gender career development and inequalities are profound.

2.14.1 Middle Eastern culture and values

This next section examines Middle Eastern culture and its respective values. An understanding of the culture is pivotal in business practice. It also allows one to tease out the reasons behind certain behavior, and acknowledges the context that the people live in – that is, to evaluate the concepts through a wider lens.
The Middle East (ME) is least well-known and least researched in terms of management systems and areas of leadership according to Kabasakal, et al. 2012. It is also well known that the general leadership theories that are practiced in the west are not valid for this area of the world.

Fegahli, E. (cited in Khakhar & Rammal, 2013) attest that there are three values that are common in Arab culture and communication – collectivism, hospitality and honour. Khakkar & Rammal (2013) also reiterate statements by Hall (1996) concerning whether cultures are ‘low-context’ or ‘high-context’. People that hail from a low-context culture are seen as being more focused and articulate in communicating their message; conversely, in a high-context culture, individuals place stress on building relationships and the message is communicated in an implicit manner. Hall places the various Arab cultures in the high-context culture zone. Khakhar and Rammal (2013) follow the work of Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988), who describe the phenomenon of ‘musayara’, the Arabic term for keeping a state of harmony in relationships between individuals by being obliging.

Giangreco et al. (2010) state that cultural characteristics are prevalent within an organization and are subject sometimes to specific organizational policies where an attempt is made to create a culture-free environment. Companies attempt to create their own employee culture even though they have to take into consideration the country culture as well (Dutch, 2013). That is, companies attempt to create a standardized environment where employees follow the same norms and values that the business sets, making this a culture-free environment. In the Middle East, the phenomenon of Wasta, which is examined in closer detail later in this review, is pervasive, affecting business life. As Wasta denotes exchange, it remains closely intertwined in the workings of business society and this, of course, affects HR practices (Iles et al, 2012).

2.14.2 Hofstede’s dimensions

The following section discusses Hofstede’s well-known Model of Cultural Dimensions (1980). This model introduces parameters that are important to analysis that involves people from various cultures. It is a widely used model and
is based on a large sample of employees from 40 countries in the large multinational, IBM, which Hofstede studied from the 1960s to the 1980s (Baah, 2013). His model consists of five cultural dimensions, these being: power distance (PDI); uncertainty and avoidance (UAI); individualism (IDV); masculinity (MAS); and long-term orientation (LTO) (Hofstede, cited in Khanum et al. 2012).

Power distance, or Power Distance Index (PDI), refers to when a society assents to the unequal distribution of power within an organization. The PDI ranges from zero to 100, with 50 being the mid-point. A score of over 50 means that there is a large power distance, which denotes the extent to which the less powerful members expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (Baah, 2013).

The Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) refers to the point where people feel threatened by vague situations. It also refers to the extent to which people try to avoid these situations, where people try to find more stability by introducing more formal rules, where they reject the deviant behavior and accept people’s achievement of expertise (Hofstede, cited in Khanum et al, 2012). The difference in enduring uncertain situations has varying consequences at the macro and micro level (Baah, 2013). At the macro level, the tolerance of uncertainty is imperative for innovation, as it requires risk-taking. However, on the other hand, at the micro-level in high uncertainty avoidance societies, they have many formal regulations to control the internal work processes (Baah, 2013).

Figure 9 illustrates the Middle East and North African region differences in the societal practices and values according to Hofstede’s cultural dimensions.
The individualism and collectivism indices (IDV) refer to the extent to which people prefer to look after themselves and their immediate family, in other words, to what extent there is a tendency to individualism, which results in a more separated society; collectivism, on the other hand, occurs when there is a disposition of individuals towards taking care of each other within a society in exchange for more loyalty, thus creating a more tightly unified society. This unified society can be seen as clans, relatives and organizations, where individuals distinguish between so-called ‘in-groups’ and ‘out-groups’ (Hofstede, cited in Kahul, 2012).

The individualism index, like the PDI, ranges from zero to 100 with 50 being the mid-point average. In the context of the Middle East, the IDV score for the Gulf was 38, (Hofstede, 1980). This means that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, which consist of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and the Sultanate of Oman are collectivist by nature. Oman has a score of 52, which is higher, and Kuwait has the lowest at 31. These results mean that, even though there have been some changes to lifestyle, there are some values that do not change. One of these values is individualism, which means that people still feel an association to a group or family or clan. In general, the Middle East scored around 38. At-Twaijri and Al-Muhaiza (1996) refer to Hofstede’s confirmation of the Law of Conservation – “old values do not disappear overnight, and often
survive in new settings."

The masculinity index (MAS) is the extent to which the main values among a group of people are success, money and materialistic things; the femininity index is the extent to which the main values are caring for others, or for quality of life (Bah, 2013). The range is the same as the other indices where it ranges from 0 to 100, and fifty being the mid-range. According to Hofstede’s study, the MAS index in Arab countries was around the fifty mid-point, which is 52.

Hofstede’s 1980 study (cited in Khakhar & Rammal, 2013) examined the ‘Arab countries’, which included Lebanon, Libya, Kuwait, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Republic. Hofstede's dimensions (Hofstede et al. 2010, cited in Khakhar & Rammal, 2013) state that the scores were high on the power distance and collectivism indices. High scores were also displayed for masculinity and lower scores were evident on the long-term orientation (LTO). In essence what do these scores mean? They mean that, individuals in the Arab world respect authority and hence, they follow orders well. They also focus on building relationships, trust and fostering collectivism, and are seen to be more traditionalist than their western counterparts.

Figure 10 below illustrates Hofstede’s dimensions, exclusively, power distance and uncertainty avoidance with the uses of power of delegation, use of team and empowerment. Navahandi, 2012 explains that power distribution is also affected by culture. The perceptions of power and egalitarianism vary by culture and genders. Various cultures react differently power. Cultural factors like paternalism, delegation and power sharing may not be so effective in Middle Eastern cultures (Navahandi, 2012).
It is important to state at this point that Lebanon is part of the Arab league. Khakhar and Rammal (2013) point out that the Lebanese culture generally, and business culture in particular, shares similar characteristics to the Arab countries. For the purposes of the present study, it is necessary and instructive to review some of the vast amount of literature relating to Lebanon, in terms of the major geo-political and economic influences that influence business culture and trends in education in that country.

2.15 About Lebanon

Lebanon is a small republic of 10,452 square kilometers, with the main cities being the capital, Beirut, and Tripoli, Saida, Jounieh, Zahlel, and Sour. According to the UNDP Millennial Development Program, the resident population was 3.76 million in 2007, plus an additional 260,000 Palestinians living in camps, as well as other migrant workers. The report also states that around 85% of the residents live in cities and that many Lebanese live abroad. The society is made up of a number of religious communities and sects, and the political system is based on a power-sharing balance between these various communities. However there has been much political tension, which has triggered a number of internal conflicts. These have been fuelled by the region’s geo-political developments.
Figure 11 below is a geographical map of Lebanon showing the country at a glance and its borders being Syria and Israel.

In more modern history, specifically after World War 1, the French colonized Lebanon, introducing Western values and ideas and influencing the character of the people and the country (Coleman, 2015). In 1943, Lebanon received its independence and adopted a democratic form of government that supported an open society. Before the civil war in 1975, Lebanon was enjoying prosperity, with a very successful banking sector. The result of this prosperous time attracted much money and tourism; hence, Lebanon was labeled the ‘Switzerland of the Middle East’ (Pheraon, 1993; Hitti, 1962, cited in Dirani, 2006).
The civil war took a toll on the country where Lebanon’s ranking on the human development index (HDI) was higher than other Middle Eastern countries. This ranking indicates the life expectancy, per capita income and educational achievement of the people. The civil war between 1975 and 1990 had an enormous impact, politically and economically, on the country. The service and tourism sector were badly affected, and the public sector was damaged as well (Dirani, 2006; Coleman, 2015).

The civil war saw the Lebanese lira drop from 2.50LL to 1500LL for every 1 USD. As well, levels of confidence in Lebanon, an aspiring country, quickly disappeared globally. Moreover, since the war stopped in 1990, there have been many social, political and economic challenges that have faced the country. The ‘return back’ after such a long civil war has certainly taken a toll on the people and the nation (Coleman, 2015). Various political parties continue to try and take hold after a long and unforgettable war, and people, to this day, still focuses on what happened and not where they should be going (Dirani, 2006). The country and its people are trying to move past the issues that took hold of the country years ago. The advantage that Lebanon once had before the war has been destroyed and trying to get it back has become impossible. In 2001, Lebanon was dealing with a deficit of US$25 billion. The past 14 years have seen many political changes, with two changes of president. The economic climate for the last 50 years has been highly unstable, and the political afflictions in neighbouring countries have taken a toll on Lebanon. This has resulted in continuous internal political and security turmoil, and these instabilities have extended out into social and economic domains (Dirani, 2006).

Lebanon does not have any natural resources to depend on. It's most attractive options are its geographical location, agricultural capacity and water sources. The Lebanese people work by rendering services to others. The banking service industry comprises 40% of the country’s GDP, (Association of Banks in Lebanon, cited in Dirani, 2006).

The education industry has become a key factor in generating the people power for the management of the country. With Western-style education taking the lead
in Lebanon’s education sector, the country’s earning power has been enhanced. The Lebanese work force is well known to be overeducated for the needs of the local market. With the current recession, this has led the young people to emigrate more and more, month by month. Unfortunately, the lack of employment is leading Lebanon’s youth to seek out opportunities in other countries, where the influx of refugees are depleting the country’s working resources (UNDP, 2013).

As per the UNDP report (2013) there are over one (1) million Syrian nationals in Lebanon as a result of the current political and security turmoil in Syria. Only half of the Syrian refuges have been registered by the UN refugee agency (UNHCR). This amount is one-quarter of the Lebanese native population.

According to UNDP (2013) the influx of Syrian refugees has taken a toll on the basic services in Lebanon. These basic services are insufficient and inefficient. The public service is unable to provide quality basic services especially for the very poor and the people with disabilities. Consequently the situation is getting worse to the massive influx of Syrians into the country. This is putting an additional burden on the Lebanese government.

Moreover UNDP (2013) report that this influx of Syrian refugees is a concern for the Lebanese people as not only are the basic services being depleted but at well the stability and security of the country. This refugee influx due to the critical situation in Syria is creating a wide divergence in wage scales between the current Lebanese work force and the unskilled labour from neighbouring countries. The latter are prepared to accept cheaper wages than the Lebanese workforce, causing increases in unemployment figures and the amount of money leaving the country. There are various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like ESCWA, UNDP and the World Bank that are working in line with the private sector, small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) and the government to present a new vision for business and HR development in Lebanon (UNDP, 2013).

The International Labor Organization [ILO] (2014) states that there is a high economic rate among the Syrians, which shows that they need an income in order to live. They are poorly educated, highly vulnerable and unprotected; they cannot afford to stay unemployed and will take any available job. The International
Monetary Fund (2014) also states that the conflict in Syria “is overshadowing Lebanon”. The crisis is impacting Lebanon and it is being felt throughout the economy. Data is insufficient and unreliable. When the Syrian conflict began in 2011, there already were issues emerging. The Lebanese people have yet to see the full effects of the situations at hand. Lebanon has been welcoming and generous to have the influx of Syrians. It has taken a toll, economically, socially and politically. The costs of having refugees have become very obvious.

Global challenges and competition are unavoidable, and the Lebanese people have become aware of the issues that need to be addressed, hence, in 2002, the Lebanese government took a large step in economic reform and signed the EU-Lebanon Interim agreement on Trade and Commercial Issues (2004). This was a positive step towards opening new markets for Lebanon and becoming a part of the European Neighbourhood policy (UNDP, 2013).

Dirani (2006) asserts that the war mentality has significantly impacted upon and corrupted the Lebanese workforce. This is quite clear in the minimal productivity and motivation in the public sector; understandably, negativity has increased among the general climate and population in the Middle East in light of the recent and on-going conflict, and it is not hard to see the flow-on effect to the business and services sector Dirani (2006) also explains that significant barriers to business reform remain, and present one side of the challenging issues in human resources development (HRD) in Lebanon that needs to be addressed. The country finds itself possibly more divided than ever before, along economic, political and social lines; thus, a societal environment exists in which HRD needs to be adept, and alert to the significant challenges facing it (Dirani, 2006).

The ILO (2014) asserts that the conflict in Syria and the internal political instability have had major effects on the labour market and on the economy. There has been a decline in growth from eight percent (8%) per year in the 2007-2019 period, to three percent (3%) in 2011 to two percent (2%) in 2012. Lower rates have been estimated for 2013, and with the current fragility of the country and the security situation – namely, the closure of the Syrian borders, the only trade route for Lebanon, private investments have had a slump and the trade deficit has
expanded. There has been an increase in government expenditures in order to meet the high demands on public services, which include health, electricity, education, water supply, solid waste management and transportation.

2.16 Economic overview of Lebanon

Lebanon is a medium-income, free-market economy, with many links to the developed world in most economic activities. This can be seen in Table 1 below. The private sector is placed in an imperative role in a liberal environment, as it contributes over eighty (80) percent of the GDP, which includes agriculture, manufacturing, construction, trade and tourism; however, it is dominated by the services sector, such as banking and finance, hotels, restaurants and media and advertising (UNDP report, 2013).

Table 5 shows the GDP of Lebanon from 2009 to 2013 according to the Lebanon Millennial development goals report.

Table 5 Overview of GDP in Lebanon (Lebanon Millennial Development Goals [LMDG] Report, 2103-2014, p.13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lebanon</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP (US$ billion)</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real GDP Growth</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNI per Capita (US$)</td>
<td>7,720</td>
<td>8,440</td>
<td>9,020</td>
<td>9,520</td>
<td>9,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Price Inflation</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>10.1% *</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade deficit / (GDP)</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Debt / (GDP)</td>
<td>146%</td>
<td>138%</td>
<td>134%</td>
<td>134%</td>
<td>140%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy, and World Bank estimates. * Subject to one-time adjustment of housing cost component, which makes year-on-year comparison not indicative. (GDP = gross domestic product; GNI = gross national income).


The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report (2013), entitled The
Lebanon We Want: Post-2015 National Consultations in Lebanon, defined a number of issues that need to be raised. These issues are key to the challenges that are part of Lebanon’s sustainability. They are:

- sectarianism, feudalism and clientelism, which relate to the lack of accountability and political will;
- poor basic services and lack of safety networks;
- weak governance, rule of law, and institutions;
- large-scale corruption;
- deep centralization, population and economic density in Beirut and other cities; and,
- weak culture of citizenship.

Unfortunately, Transparency International’s 2014 corruption index measured the level of corruption in Lebanon as 27/100, where a grade of 100 is the cleanest and 0 is not clean at all. Unfortunately, Lebanon is ranked 136 out of 175 countries. According to Transparency International, 84% of countries score below 50/100. In comparison to the EU and Western countries, 16% of the non-western and non-EU countries score below 50 out of 100. These indicators show the issues in corruption that Lebanon currently has to deal with. Considering in total the political, social and economic issues, Lebanon is not in an easy or enviable situation.

2.17 HRM in the Middle East

As mentioned previously, there is little information on HRM and the Middle East. Afiouni et al. (2013) have examined various HR models that would suit Middle Eastern business practices. Lately, these researchers have looked at new directions for HR and are seeking a shift in paradigm, which attempts to foresee the impact that HR functions have on an organization’s performance.

This new paradigm translates into the creation of added value relationships, not only within the organization but also outside the organization, so as to serve the shareholders, customers and the general public. In the Western world, business practitioners have begun to embrace and develop this paradigm; however, the Arab Middle East (AME) region has yet to adopt these new practices. It is still a very
grey area with the AME (Afiouni et al. 2013).

The authors refer to the 2009 report of the World Bank (as cited in Afiouni et al. 2013) in describing the emerging economies of the AME – specifically, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine (Gaza Strip and West Bank), Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Yemen.

This area is of utmost importance and its success or failure is due to many global factors. The reasons for a lagging economic growth in this region are due to socioeconomic factors such as: slow political reforms; dominant political sectors; undersized financial markets; high trade restrictiveness; and, inappropriate exchange regimes (Abed, as cited in Afiouni et al. 2013).

The author takes the view that one of the many reasons that the region has not been evolving could be due to the failure to assimilate and participate in the global economy. Of course, the impact of these issues and other macroeconomic challenges is unclear (Afiouni et al. 2013). Hence the authors state that a more specific HR model – one which pays heed to an understanding of the cultural and socioeconomic forces, and the political factors that all play a major role in the region – would be more appropriate and effective.

Afiouni et al. (2013) identify the main elements and core perspectives that can comprise an appropriate set of HR values. They cite Ulrich and Brockbank, who propose that these perspectives form an HR blueprint for value-added HR contributions. These core fundamentals include: (1) understanding external business realities; (2) serving the needs of internal and external stakeholders; (3) crafting HR practices; (4) building HRs; and, (5) ensuring HR professionalism (see Figure 7 below, which details the various perspectives, noting under ‘Organizational Realities’ the importance of the ‘Prevalence of Wasta’).

Figure 12 below shows the Arab Middle East model according to Afiouni et al. (2013) showing three realities (external, organizational and HR) which affect HR practices and three flows (people, performance and work) that are a result of these affects.
It is important to understand that, even though there are many common features within the region, each country also has its own set of socio-economic components; also, each country is different to the other in terms of social interactions, which are more or less unique behavioral sets in themselves. Henceforth, it is necessary to see the portents of management as political, social, economical, cultural and institutional systems distinctive to each country in the region (Morishima, 1995, cited in Budhwar & Mellahi, 2006). The latter also find it significant to point out that various countries in the Middle Eastern region are at different stages of growth and maturity in both industrialization and economic development. Thus, there are a host of geographical, economic and cultural scopes. This is very important to remember when analyzing the HRM systems of the various countries within the region.

As noted previously, HRM is not a new field. In the Middle East, globalization has caused Western practices to come to the region, and, as a result, an HR model
exists within each country and each organization, which can be particular to different institutions and individual national cultures (Budhwar et al. 2006). These various models refer to the management of all employment relationships, including the management of managers and non-management labour. The latter authors further discuss three level factors and variables that are known to impact HRM policies and practices. They have extensively analyzed these concepts and have proposed the following perspectives in relation to HR functions and the respective internal labour markets: national factor (see Table 6 below), and business environment); contingent variables (which include age, size, nature, ownership, life cycle stage of organization); and, organizational strategies and other policies.

Table 6 Details of national factors determining cross-national HRM (Budhwar & Mellahi, 2006, p.29)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Culture</th>
<th>Socialization process, common values, norms of behavior and customs, influence of pressure groups, assumptions that shape managers perceptions, insights and mindset, management style, meaning of work and values, personal dispositions, attitudes and manners, approaches to cultural diversity, match to the organization culture.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>National labor laws, trade unions, politics, educational and vocational training set-up, labor market, professional bodies, international institutions, industry by itself, employers’ federation, consulting organizations, placement organizations, trade bodies, government institutions, local authorities, voluntary bodies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial sector</td>
<td>Common strategies, business logic and goals, regulations and standards, sector-specific knowledge, informal and formal bench-marking, cross sector co-operation, common developments in business operations, labor or skill requirements, merger activity, workforce mobility, capital mobility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic business environment</td>
<td>Competition, business alliances, changing composition of workforce, restructuring, focus on total customer satisfaction, facility of information, technological change, globalization of business.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.18 Human resource (HR) practices in Lebanon

As stated, there has been little attention given to HR practices and human capital
investment in Lebanon (Dirani, 2006; Budhwar & Mellahi, 2006). This is a problem when it comes to research and data availability for the country and the region. Most of the research that has been previously written about the area has been about economic and societal problems. This author presents some basic facts relating to human capital development in the region; in this regard, it is noted that there is basic research on training and development in the area, but not on HRM as such. Hence, there is a need to expand and publish material that will aid new HR managers in their businesses in the country. Dirani (2006) further explores the problems of unclear boundaries between HR management and HR development, and delineates the Western influences and research on HRM as well, external and internal contextual factors like structure, size, technology and social and political environments are investigated.

2.18.1 Effects of culture on HR practices

Dirani (2006) notes that Lebanese society places emphasis on ‘social conformity’ instead of innovation and creativity, citing the work of Hofstede (1984) to display a comparison of work-related values, collectivism, individualism, and authority. Thus, it is noted that the Lebanese are prominent in obedience to authority and control. In the same way, the patriarchal nature of Lebanese culture is highlighted as being very important; it is the basis of their culture (Sharabi, cited in Dirani, 2006). This view of family and social life includes the facet of a domino effect that inserts itself into a person’s work life. Lebanese people tend to give up their own ambition and independence and give in to the father’s rule and what their responsibility holds in the family; that is, Lebanese people take their role in the family seriously and provide the support that is needed. This is a very important feature *vis-a-vis* how individuals work within organizations and with regards to authority and submission.

Dirani (2006) also states how important education is for the training of people and how this is needed desperately in the region, but does not go further to explore the educational institutions and the presence of quality programs and services. However, it is clearly stated that the Anglo-Saxon and European style universities operating in Lebanon have created a prestigious aura among the Lebanese
population. Discussion on the Lebanese education sector later in this review will pinpoint key areas of missing information central to the present research that require further clarification.

Dirani (2006) notes that the labour force in Lebanon is considered to be overeducated for the needs of the area. However, that article that was written does not explore the problems centered in the service industries. Lebanese people are well aware that globalization has taken over the business world and it is important that they are competitive with regard to accepted best HR and HRM practice.

Dirani’s research (2006) is critical towards and supportive of the present study in terms of the links it draws between family and gender and Lebanese society in general; the significance of family as an important social structure within Lebanese society is reiterated. The latter societal structure is a patriarchal one, where Lebanese find it hard to leave family and consider that they have certain responsibilities to uphold. This attitude has important links to the approach to work in Lebanon, where the dependent lifestyle is mirrored. Employees shy away from creative thinking and do not exert the confidence to take the initiative or make judgments. This leads to a submissive work persona and tends to cause employees to take the easy way out of doing what superiors request. It is also worth noting that, in terms of Hofstede’s (1984) need for achievement, Lebanese people show less need for achievement. It is not an internal need. Even though there seems to be a wave of change with regards to accepting new ideas or readiness to take challenges, the family system is still embedded within the Lebanese psyche. Loyalty towards family is much more significant than towards work, organization or country. Khalaf (cited in Dirani, 2006) noted that the Lebanese family system is based on kinship, which underpins the Lebanese social unit.

Although Dirani (2006) does not illustrate primary research data based on statistics or thoughts of actual people, this article provides insight into the embedded cultural aspects of Lebanese society, particularly with regards to how these translate into the working environment. Although recommendations are made for developing HR practices, these are not based on quantitative data. However, it does clearly identify the need to focus on the human capital of the country in order
to engage with the current process of globalization; additionally, added value is
given in the theoretical framework of culture and values, based on Lebanese
society and its way of thinking. It shows that there is a direct link between the way
people work and how they were raised in such a culture.

Kowske and Foldes (2007) describe the ethical dilemmas in Middle Eastern
countries, for example, hiring practices, worker’s rights, and women’s role in the
workplace, internet access and child labor. It is well known that business practices
differ according to country, state and religion. The Middle East has always seen
itself to be in the spotlight because of the cultural differences in conducting
business. In order to sustain a competitive advantage, business practitioners need
to understand and engage with a whole new world.

2.18.2 Macro-environmental and micro-environmental factors

Jamali, Abdallah, and Hmaidan’s (2010) study was also considered as important
to this research because of the important insights it provides. The findings, which
are derived from structured interviews with HR managers in banks and staff in
higher education institutions in Lebanon, provide interesting points on diversity
management in the Middle East in the micro, meso and macro levels of
organizations. It examines diversity in terms of demographic, ethnic and
individual factors. Taking into consideration that the Middle Eastern school of
thought is quite infamous for its patriarchal bent, the findings of this article are
interesting, as the female managers’ perspective is presented as well. This paper
provides background information for the current research, which also investigates
both diversity and Middle Eastern managerial concepts. Jamali et al. provide a
range of diverse concepts, illustrating the need for employees to be trained in
diversity management. The limitation of this research is that the sample was small
and not diversified; better scope would have been provided if a larger sample from
various areas had been taken. Thus, it is envisaged that the present project will be
able to investigate a larger sample than the aforementioned 2010 study.

Budhwar and Mellahi, (2006) provide a more rhetorical account in their country-
by-country descriptive analysis of HR & HRM in various countries across the
Middle East. The book also refers to *Wasta* and the use of these connections in recruitment and selection practices. The way in which Middle Eastern countries differ, particularly with regard to HR practices and policies are further discussed, providing the current study with the necessary theoretical components. The limitation to the work of these authors is that Lebanon is not among the Middle Eastern countries covered. However, it provides an excellent source for comparison and benchmarking HR practices across Middle Eastern cultures.

Iles et al. (2012) examine issues relating to HRM in the public sector in the Middle East. This article supports the investigation into *Wasta* provided by the present study. However, its focus is in the public sector, including in the domains of government and public administration. The author’s focus is on the Levant region, which includes Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel and Jordan, as well as the GCC of Saudi Arabia, Iraq and the Gulf States. The research is based on secondary data, and includes a case study on Libya.

Iles et al (2012) highlight the way in which careers in the Middle East are affected by international and national politics. The micro and macro environments, including the cultural, social, and legal domains as well as the aspects of gender and ethnicity, also play an important role in the careers of individuals. Moreover, the authors argue that the Middle East is being affected by the impact of the Western higher education system.

These authors discuss a framework developed to assist the analysis of HRM in the Middle East. It examines social, cultural, political and economical stages as well as institutional factors. Iles et al (2012) explain that it is imperative to remember that in dealing with HRM, we are dealing with the influence of culture on management practices. It is well known that HRM is associated with social activities. Each country will have significant factors that affect the HRM processes within it. The distinguishing factors between countries are relative and have an effect on international HRM standards. Iles et al. state that the “factors include: the economic, political legal and historical environments and the socio-cultural characteristics of the work force and society. The impact of culture in the public sector may be even more prominent, as globalization may speed up the diffusion
of business practices to the private sector” (p. 469).

2.18.3 Arab business management practices

Iles et al (2012) point out some interesting aspects on HRM that they see as the basis for understanding HRM in the Middle East. They state that culture is the basis of human performance, and that HRM is affected by each country’s national culture. They infer that the words ‘human resources’ comes from the cultural context where the 'human resource' is the individual that works, produces or is a part of the financial, creative, technical and administrative network in Western terms. Hence, Iles et al. state that a human resource is the “most crucial resource or key asset of any organization” (p.469).

A key difference provided by the work of the abovementioned authors is that, while they agree that there are various views about management practices in the Arab region they believe there is much research on Arab management. In this they refute the view that there is no such thing as Arab Management. Iles et al (2012 p. 470) illustrates that 'Arab Management" constitutes a fourth management paradigm, alongside the Anglo-American (free-market), the European (corporatist, social market) and the Japanese; others might also include paradigms such as the Korean family-based ‘chaebol’ or the Chinese family firm. Iles et al (2012) clarify that HRM is seen in Eastern cultures as a simple concept, which is set up as the first paradigm.

The Arab practice of ‘being hired’ is seen as a ‘curse’. The goals and cultures of the Arab Middle East certainly affect the business management practices of businesses in the region. It is pointed out that the Arab paradigm is illustrated by the family business; although autocratic in nature, it enjoys the consultative aspect of working with others. The authors focus on interpersonal relationships in an ethical framework; however, they attest that there is no real Middle Eastern HRM model. That is, there is no current research on a specific Middle Eastern HRM model with specific characteristics. Some organizations use a variety of policies and procedures taken from various historical contexts. For example, countries in Northern Africa are more influenced by their European counterparts, especially France. The authors confirm that the main theme in discussions of HR in the
Middle East, where religion and tradition play a key role, is the way that culture impacts HRM, the work values and management practices.

2.19 Universities in the Middle East

According to the World Bank report, Jaramillo (2013), entitled *Benchmarking governance as a tool for promoting change: 100 Universities in MENA paving the way*, the authors discuss the need for transparency and openness as being the essential elements in the development and sustainability of universities. With the current events in the MENA region (Middle East and North African countries), there is a greater need for openness and transparency in the government processes, decisions and expenditure. Public scrutiny has become worldwide and can no longer be hidden from the eyes of the people. Citizens now feel the need to vocalize their concerns and try to affect the decisions made on basic services. This applies just as much to the higher education sector as well as to social and financial institutions.

The research conducted through this report provided details on benchmarking university governance as one of the key elements to starting the reform process. The report states that university governance is one of the important foundations in terms of change. The way in which the institution is managed is one of the most decisive factors in how successful they will be in attaining their goals. The report states that there are many types of models dealing with governance. It may vary depending on the national context, the type of institution, and their historical legacy and of course the macroeconomic factors including cultural, political and economic factors. Each model will be different; depending on the organizational factors, hence there is no single model to be adapted to each university. The model that is chosen should be a clear and thought-out decision.

Following this, the World Bank MENA Regional Program on Higher Education, based on the Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI), 2009 developed what is called a University Governance Screening Card (UGSC). This UGSC evaluates the magnitude to which the universities are following governance practices in parallel with their institutional goals and international trends, and oversees how well they are doing.
This allows the MENA universities to compare themselves with universities around the world in order to ensure that their own practices and progress are in alignment with their stated goals. Below is a list of the five dimensions that are adhered to by the UGSC:

- **Global Context, Mission, and Goals:** An important element in evaluating the university is examining the framework the HE system and its interaction between the state and the institution. One part of governance is ensuring that the institution is able to carry out their mission and goals and have the resources needed as well as examine the performance of the said institution.

- **Management Orientation:** This refers to the day to day decisions of the organization, including admission, registration, degree certifications for students, recruitment and selection, remuneration and promotion of academic and other staff; facilities maintenance as well. It also includes the governing board, and how they are selected and their roles and responsibilities.

- **Autonomy:** In both the academic and financial areas, financial; meaning the extent to which they set their own tuition fees, carry surplus, their reserves, borrow money, invest money in assets, etc… The academic autonomy refers to their ability to set their own curricula, introduce or cancel degree programs, determine academic structures, evaluate programs and learning outcomes as well as teaching methodologies.

- **Accountability:** Autonomy is linked to accountability, and as governments are granting more autonomy to public universities this definitely makes them more accountable hence it needs to be measured in the form of achievements and progress by the universities goals. Staff, including academic, managerial and administrative, are accountable in completing institutional goals. This is done through the dissemination of information, evaluation of student performance and teaching methods, financial auditing; risk management and dealing with misconduct.

- **Participation in decision-making:** This is seen through the level of decision making made the various stakeholders of the institution. It looks at the extent to which the levels of stakeholder’s decisions are taken into consideration and whether or not they play a role in the process of decision making. The stakeholders of any given university are normally the students, academic staff, the administrative staff, government, industry, community, donors, unions and
As there are moves being made towards improving governance and transparency within MENA universities, this current research undertaking plays an important role in illustrating the impact of *Wasta* on the organizational culture within the university sector. The abovementioned report illustrates the impact of benchmarking and its importance in improving performance. It also engages stakeholders to understand how they do things, how others do the same things and then compares the relative outcomes. This is captured well by Epper (1999): “benchmarking involves first examining and understanding your own internal work procedures, then searching for ‘best practices’ in other organizations ... and finally adapting those practices ... to improve performance” (p.26)

Benchmarking refers to a “process of measurement using an external standard to measure internal and external tasks” (Weeks, 2000; p.60) and to “systematically making comparisons to ... make improvements and to accomplish change” Achtemeier and Simpson (2005, p.117, cited in UNDP report, 2013).

The report highlights six main benefits of benchmarking being that it: develops an organizational culture committed to quality improvement, involving the stakeholders; uses a systematic approach to assessing the competition and allows the organization to look at the parts individually, and then in a summative approach; aids in strategic planning by examining the policies and procedures that may be adopted in the future; looks at how they may or may not have worked; becomes a source of new ideas and leads to new goals; examines the innovation and looks at best practices, instead of looking at the way the best universities do things; focuses on data collection concepts to allow for analysis and inquiry, which creates a systems approach to problem-solving; and, lastly, it creates a model for getting things together by having an action plan on how other organizations have improved their performance.

### 2.20 Higher education in Lebanon

Higher education in Lebanon is divided into two separate categories – vocational tertiary education and general higher education. The Directorate General manages
the tertiary vocational posts for Vocational and Technical Education (DGVTE). This section is not considered to be a part of the higher education sector, as technical public and private schools deliver the courses. Nahas (2013) quoted the Economic Forum of 2008 as stating “financing of higher education in the MENA region is becoming increasingly difficult under the current set of policies and increasing scarcity of government resources, let alone the misallocation of such resources” p.70.

The Ministry of Higher Education (MEHE) governs the student population in non-vocational higher education (also known as ‘Higher Education’). The student population in this sector is around 195000 (2007-2008), where 43% are enrolled in the only public university – the Lebanese University (LU). It is also interesting to note that 54% of the student population is female. It is worth noting that the education expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP in 2013 was 2.57%, in 2102 it was 2.189% and in 2011 it was 1.646%. These figures are according to the World Development Indicators 2014, World Bank (2014) from their website.

Hasrouny (2011) states that there has been a fifty percent increase in enrolment in the past 10 years, as well as a rise of fifty-four percent in the number of people who are able to go to university. In parallel, the reputation of Lebanese universities is at risk, as is the standing of the Lebanese higher education system. Even though there has been a steady increase in international student enrolments since 2000, the numbers are still lower when compared to pre-1975. As Nahas (2011) indicates, the Lebanese public sector accommodates only 37% of the students that are enrolled in the education. Most of the control is by the private institutions. Nahas (2011) indicates that the number of students enrolled in public education varies from 22% in kindergarten, 32% primary, 42% intermediate, 53% secondary and close to 50% at university level.

Hasrouny (2011) also states that there is a need for reforms in order to ensure better quality provision. There needs to be an improvement in old and new institutions as well as accreditation mechanisms. This can only be done when standards are placed and the data is shared on both an institutional and national level. The author attests that the Syrian Evangelical College (which has since been renamed the
American University of Beirut [AUB]) was founded in 1866, followed by Saint Joseph University (USJ) in 1883. The Lebanese American University (LAU) began in 1924, where it started to provide college-level education for girls. The universities to follow in the mid-20th century were Beirut Arab University (BAU) and Lebanese University (LU), which allowed further access and participation by people.

Moreover, Hasrouny (2011) infers that, later in the mid-20th century, the establishment of the Beirut Arab University and the Lebanese University furthered access and participation to education. The reputation precedes itself where Lebanon has always provided quality education to the region, before the 1975-90 civil war and sustained itself in such turbulent times.

The author notes that, even though higher education is evolving and changing, it now faces danger, and standards and services are joining a downward trend. The region is now opening new universities and global competition is growing (Nahas, 2011) Hence, there are many issues in terms of changing higher education in the region. The main difficulties are in finding local people that can work in these modern facilities. Moreover, Lebanese universities are not able to communicate the advantages that the higher education sector has to offer in a region where competition is rising quickly.

Hasrouny (2011) also notes that there are issues with quality assurance and the lack of strategies at a national level. Lebanon has yet to create an association at this level and there would be issues of how accreditation of this association. There have been an increasing number of new licenses given to private universities in the decade. As the Lebanese University has been unable to accommodate the student demand for education, private business owners and family have taken to establishing their own institutions for profit. These relatively new institutions have been offering lower-tuition fees to low-income families. All of these factors have affected the level of quality of the education that is being provided.

Hasrouny (2011) states that there is urgent need for reform in order to ensure that there is adequate quality, participation and affordability within universities. The
business approach in Lebanese private universities is becoming costly and unsustainable. As the government has been weak, private organizations have enjoyed a certain level of autonomy in providing educational services. However there are issues in accountability and transparency. Hasrouny (2011) also states that self-regulation is almost non-existent. Buckner (cited in El Hassan, 2013) states that there are three types of reforms being Neoliberal model, quality assurance and imported internationalization.

The neo-liberal model tries to give access to consumers through off setting costs. This is based on the establishment of universities that offer “open learning” and “parallel learning” (El Hassan, 2013). This is where students pay small fees to study programs where academic standing alone is insufficient qualification. The quality assurance model follows the Bologna process- being Bachelors, Masters and PhD system. This process strengthens the internal and external efficiency of tertiary education (El Hassan, 2013). It also allows the alignment of the higher education model with the European model to allow mobility and labor cross nationally. The imported internationalization model brings “prestige” and “acclaim” by taking on the “Americanization” model. This system privatizes higher education in order to arrange and obtain extensive international partnerships with American and British universities (El Hassan, 2013).

Hasrouny (2011) indicates that many old and new universities are seeking to undertake major reforms in terms of their quality assurance and accreditation and strategic planning. The issue is, currently, how to implement the changes without increasing tuition fees. Older universities within the country that have strong legacies and sufficient resources are implementing widespread reforms in order to sustain themselves in the market. The older universities, such as AUB, LAU and USJ have brought in quality assurance and accreditation while they have been undertaking their strategic planning. As El Hassan (2013) has indicated, Lebanon’s higher education system is following the Bologna Process, hence the quality assurance model.

Hasrouny (2011) further states that it is about time local institutions started sharing their experiences and examples of best practice. There are some success stories
and other universities should know about them. For the newer institutions, reforms may seem problematic, mainly because their only resources come from fees, whereas the older universities appear to have funding from many resources including alumni, grants and donations.

Hasrouny (2011) and Nahas (2011) suggest that not all institutions take on the same classification of a university. It should be dependent on the input and output, on the process of outcomes and performances. It is suggested that they could also create mergers as a larger part of the restructuring process to ensure better quality education and better use of resources. This issue is controversial and will face some political opposition; however economic rationale for reform could very well be unstoppable. This author indicates that for the reforms to be successful, they cannot be measured without a reliable national database on all higher education institutions in Lebanon. Also, performance indicators cannot be recognized without up-to-date and valid data. Once this data is available, it will provide a clearer picture as to how well the education sector is doing and will allow for appropriate strategic planning. The only way proper reforms can be affected is through reliable and valid data.

Furthermore the interactions between the institutions and national data will give a clearer picture of how the sector is doing and will enable serious strategic planning. Lebanon has previously been a pillar of modern education in the Middle East and to maintain this, it must look towards meeting the challenges that it faces in order to have sustainable development in the education sector (Nahas, 2011). This sector must provide stability, leadership, knowledge and mobilization for the country and the region as a whole (Hasrouny, 2011).

Should there be a passing of the draft law of higher education, presenting a framework for quality assurance, this will create the stakes for reform in Lebanese higher education institutions. It will make these institutions accountable, transparent and reliable in ensuring that Lebanon sustains its educational development programs (El Hassan, 2013). In doing so, it will ensure that future educational ratings and classifications are maintained and will continue to market
Lebanon as a highly educated population that focuses on providing quality standards (Hasrouny, 2011).

2.21 Summary

This chapter introduced the concepts of HRM and its importance in business organizations. In reviewing the available literature, the internal role of HRM and HR practices was discussed. The HR practices conceptualized as the pillars of this research, and identified as necessary to be tested, were recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management and career development. These practices are the all-important aspects of the foundations of an organization’s HRM system. The concepts of social and human capital and their influences were also presented. The central aspects of employee engagement and the psychological contract were explored in terms of the link between HRPs and individuals, which demonstrated the importance of understanding the role that HRPs have within organizations.

This literature review extended its investigation of global trends in influential processes in terms of business practice and human resource management: the phenomenon of Wasta was compared with the Chinese interpersonal dynamic of Guanxi; Jeinho, or the Brazilian ‘way of doing things’ was considered, alongside the Russian phenomenon of Svyazi and ‘Pulling strings’, which in common British/American parlance indicates ‘secretly using the influence you have over important people in order to get something’.

The chapter also dealt with the Middle East and Lebanon. It also dealt with the definition and role of Wasta in exploring the concepts for Research Questions One and Two. The discussions on HRM practices in Lebanon also help identify critical components for Research Questions Two and Three.

The literature located on Lebanon and Middle Eastern culture provides a firm contrast when detecting the problems that are evident in such a complex culture. The various areas that have been summarized illustrate key facets of Middle Eastern culture as they relate to the overall aim of this research, and how these
facets affect the decision-making and recruitment and selection in organizations. The review explores the literature on the basic attributes of *Wasta*, providing definitions and the role *Wasta* previously occupied in a more social sense. This is important in order to later construct the appropriate framework for the effects of *Wasta* on HR practices in the tertiary education sector. Moreover, depicting the link between the employees as an asset in a culture that still has gender and religious issues sheds light on the fact that the employee is still taken for granted, and that much more needs to be done in terms of restructuring and developing the HR profile of organizations, including universities, before globally recognised HR practices can be seen to be operating in Lebanon and, indeed, in the wider Middle Eastern region.

The literature review has shown the following:

1. *Wasta* is only defined in the context of culture and general business practices, but not in terms of HRM specifically and HR practices.
2. The consequences of *Wasta* on individual employees are not currently widely available in the research literature.
3. The effects of *Wasta* on HR practices have not been dealt with previously. There is very limited research regarding this area.
4. The effects of HR practices in Lebanon are very poorly understood.
5. The role of HRM and HR practices in Lebanese universities is not widely available.
6. Information regarding organizational culture in the context of universities in the Middle East, specifically in Lebanon, is limited, prompting the need for in-depth research of this aspect of the Lebanese tertiary education sector.
7. SHRM is not widely discussed in the Lebanese context.
8. SHRM is not widely discussed at the university level in Lebanon.

Considering the literature review that has been undertaken here, there is very limited information for the objectives of this research. After considering the information that is available regarding *Wasta*, the research questions pose important pillars in advancing *Wasta* to the next stage on business practices. The HR practices are considered, beginning with recruitment and selection, which is
mentioned is various articles regarding Wasta; however, the articles are not based on quantitative data. Through the questionnaire employed in this research study, quantitative statistics will provide important information in order to formulate further clarity of the Wasta phenomena. The testing of the following aspects of the work environment in the Lebanese tertiary education sector – compensation and benefits, training and development, performance management and career development – also provides information regarding employee development and the effects that Wasta has on the individual within the organization,

An understanding of Wasta in HR practices is essential to achieve the purposes of this research. It will also provide a framework in which to see the effects that Wasta has on employment practices and HR. This literature review has proven to be important in assessing and illustrating the importance of Wasta, as well as the urgency of understanding Wasta within organizational complexities. This literature review provides a sufficient background in order for the research to proceed with its research methodologies. The articles that have been reviewed have all shown the lack of quantitative and qualitative data regarding Wasta. Other articles have given the cultural perspective, but have not provided the necessary details in relation to the business sector, including tertiary education institutions in Lebanon. The mixed methods research will ensure more reliable data regarding the Wasta phenomena. It will provide a more rounded perspective by achieving statistics, interviews and observations. It will also examine the communication patterns within the organization through social network analysis. The combination or triangulation of the methods provide support should the quantitative data be weak. The qualitative data provides the human perspective, and will validate the data. Thus, the literature review has shown that this research will provide a significant contribution to knowledge and open further options for future research.

The fourth research question regarding SHRM will be answered through the responses of the first three research questions. The literature review has shown a lack of detail regarding SHRM – a vital component in terms of business practices. Through the results of the research conducted on the influence of Wasta on HR practices – specifically, the effect it has on the individuals and on organizational
culture – the way forward for the restructuring of HR practices in the Lebanese higher education sector will be made accessible.
Chapter 3 – Methodology and Research Design

“I think that the thing I most want you to remember is that research is a ceremony. And so is life. Everything that we do shares in the ongoing creation of our universe.”

Shawn Wilson

3.0 Introduction

This chapter details the methodological approach and design used for this research project. Firstly, it will examine the philosophical assumptions that form the framework for the research. It will define and examine the philosophical schools of thought that define paradigms. Then, it will explore the positivist, interpretivist and so-called post-positivist paradigms. Moreover, it will position the research in the latter paradigm and reveal the justification for doing so. Furthermore, this chapter will define and explain the research methodologies of qualitative and quantitative research. It will explore the relative merits of using a mixed-method design in order achieve a successful result. It will define the use of surveys, interviews and observations. Finally, the research design of the survey, selection of the research sample, its characteristics and the procedural ethics involved will be discussed.

3.1 Philosophical framework

3.1.1 Overview

When beginning the research process, researchers first need to identify the philosophical framework that they intend to work in. The researcher needs to identify the choice of paradigm that reflects their research. This theoretical framework or choice of paradigm outlines the direction, motivation and opportunities for the research, placing the latter within certain patterns and arguments. Hence a paradigm can also be considered as a position or perspective depending on the opinion of the writer's choice of paradigm (de Kock, 2015). Scotland (2014) identifies that knowledge cannot just be expressed as a series of facts of what is out there in the world. The reason is that the human being is not separate from the mechanisms used to make sense of the world. Brandom (2000,
cited in Scotland, 2014) explained that it is important that knowledge is placed within an area of reason.

The theoretical framework can be divided into three areas, Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology.

3.2 Epistemology, ontology and methodology

This section will define the epistemological, ontological and methodological paradigms on which the research stands. It is often difficult to understand the underpinnings of research and where ideas have actually started, so these paradigms place research within certain contexts in order to clarify the objectivity/subjectivity of the researcher. It delineates the perspectives the researcher has chosen. According to Scotland (2012) a paradigm entails ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods. Below, each component is explained, and the interrelations between them are clarified.

3.2.1 Ontology

The word ‘ontology’ can be elucidated as suppositions that the researcher and their team make about the nature of reality – that is ‘why do I go there?’ Simply, this means that each embraces their own reality that establishes ‘the way things are’ (de Kock, 2015).

Weber (1997) describes ontology in the following way; ontology has a functional approach whereby the human being is seen as existing independently of the world. This realist point of view states that the world is there and it is in co-existence with humans. In essence, humans do create the world around them; however, this paradigm extends this notion by conceptualizing the world as separate to the human element. In spite of the inevitable questioning of this philosophical stance, ontology reflects the realist philosophy.

Crotty (cited in Scotland, 2012, p.10) states that ontology is the study of being. It looks at the assumption of what makes up reality – that is, it answers the question
of ‘What is … ?’. It is further explained that a researcher needs to “take a position regarding their perceptions of how things really are and how things really work” (Scotland, 2012, p.9).

3.2.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is closely related to ontology in what is seen as reality; it discovers other ways or looks at the most suitable way of knowing, ‘of enquiring into the nature of the world’ (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2008) cited in de Kock, 2015. The principle is that one goes beyond ‘what they know’ meaning personal knowledge and experience to know what is unknown. Hence it is the amalgamation between the researchers beliefs and values, and their attachment or non-attachment to specific methodologies.

The most common ontological positions where mixed method epistemologies are developed are those of positivism, critical theory, constructivism and realism/post-positivism. These are explained individually below (de Kock, 2015).

‘Epistemology’ discusses the nature and forms of knowledge (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 7). This paradigm allows for assumptions to be made as to how knowledge is created, obtained and expressed. That is, it looks at what it means to know (Scotland, 2012, p.9). Each paradigm is grounded in its own epistemological and ontological assumptions; that is to say, that the philosophical foundation of each paradigm cannot be proven first hand. Various paradigms contain different assumptions and views; they have different views of reality and knowledge and this is illustrated in their methodologies and methods (Scotland, 2012).

3.2.3 Methodology

Methodology is basically the plan of action and the choices that are used in order to answer the research question. Scotland (2012) infers that it involves why, what, where, when and how the data is going to be collected and examined. Guba and Lincoln (1994, p.108) explain that methodology asks the question: how can the inquirer go about finding out whatever they believe can be known?
This research seeks to identify whether or not Wasta is used in HR practices in Lebanon. In doing so, the researcher needs to seek the individual’s opinions and personal beliefs. Hence, from an ontological point of view, this research is trying to make assumptions about the way Wasta works within organizations, particularly Lebanese universities. The epistemological angle of this research lies in the examination of the relationship between Wasta and its effects on HR practices, and examines the stances adopted by employees on the HR practices of the said universities.

3.3 The research paradigm

According to Bassey (1990, p.40), a research paradigm is “a network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and of the functions of researchers (that) conditions the pattern of their thinking and underpins their research actions.” In simple terms, a paradigm, according to Webster’s dictionary, is a theoretical or philosophical framework. Moreover, it is a way of viewing research thoughts, objectives and collaborations.

Literature covers many perspectives regarding mixed methods research. In order to place this research in the appropriate frame, it is important to discuss the various axes and then state why this method is the best one for this particular research study. Scott(2014) debates that there are three types of arguments that support mixed methods research. The first of these arguments is that the various paradigms discussed above have been connected with qualitative and quantitative research approaches relating to knowledge. These paradigms have little to do with collection and analysis of data. Scott (2014) points out that empirical data collection is a practical activity and needs to be distinguished from philosophical logicality.

Bassey (1990) cleverly points out that sometimes the researcher attaches him or herself to one particular paradigm or way of thinking, and denies other paradigms.
This is why it is very important for the researcher to define all possibilities and evaluate which paradigm/s they wish to conform to.

Individuals in societies have their own different views of life. These views are then used on a day-to-day basis. These views can be categorized in order to explain the different ways of thinking of various individuals. Guba and Lincoln (1994) offer simple definitions of the philosophical basis of each paradigm. These paradigms or beliefs are *positivism, constructivism, critical theory and realism/post positivism*; the literature evinces various terms for these paradigms, but for clarity in the present study, the abovementioned terms will be used. The appropriate philosophical base for the current research topic will emerge on closer examination of the characteristics of each paradigm.

Scotland (2012) attests that the selection of the appropriate paradigm is based on the influence of the parameters of the research problem and the questions that are identified; it is also dependent on the research problem and questions that are devised to guide the investigation, and the research approach and methodologies selected. Hence, the choice of paradigm is ultimately influenced by what type of contribution the researcher anticipates will be made, as well as the desired results.

3.3.1 Positivism

Guba and Lincoln (1994) envisage positivism as the conservative paradigm. The positivist approach deals with positive facts and is quantitative, as it draws on evidence that is measured. It is tested and does not inject the human element (Healy and Perry, 2000). Positivist researchers believe that there is a world out there, irrespective of people (Bassey, 1990). Ideas utilized are facts that are rational and make sense, which are given enough time and effort in order to understand the research project that is evolving. Researchers working in this paradigm also believe that these ideas have no attachment to the researcher; thus, the ‘I’ is not involved, as it is not relevant. The research is viewed in one way only and therefore a positivist approach is not appropriate when a human element is being examined. Thus, Bassey (1990) sees that HRM strategies cannot be measured solely by the positivist approach, as ‘the human element’ must be examined as well; the positivist only examines data or statistics, not human
behavior. Thus, in not allowing for the more behavioral component of a study, it relates best to data that will be collected from questionnaires.

The positivist paradigm is associated with quantitative data collection methods and analysis. The positivist stance fosters the function of methods that are used in the natural sciences to conduct social reality studies (Bryman and Bell, 2011, cited in de Kock, 2015). This type of objective-regulated paradigm allows for the use of pragmatic thinking for organizational research. Hence, the researcher looks at modifying past experiences to conduct the research and to test the pragmatic values of involvement in the research (Lessem & Schieffer, 2008, cited in de Kock, 2015).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that it is difficult to separate the researcher from the research; that is, the positivist researcher has a bias, as do all researchers, and must state this bias. In other paradigms, this distinction does not exist, as the researcher molds the research accordingly to accommodate any bias. Positivists also express themselves in general statements. They are systematic and are critical and explain situations that they believe to be a part of reality. Thus there is the tendency to believe that others think the same way as they do and reach the same conclusions (Bassey, 1990).

Kuchinke (2001) illustrates the theory of HR development and applies three different approaches, describes activities in three ways: organizationally focused; involving people; and relating to production and problem-solving. Logically, this shows HR as encompassing a range of theories, schools of thought and models that truly show the way in which the nature of human beings is also linked intricately with the nature of organizations and their societal contexts. Thus, it is important to understand how HR is related to both people and to data; it needs both to be comprehensible. Kuchinke (2001) allows the researcher to further ponder what type of question is being asked in the research and why it is being asked; that is, in the philosophical quest for knowledge, asking where will this search begin and end. Throughout the literature, various authors have illustrated that positivism—a widely used paradigm—is not the only and best school of thought; they believe it is time to break the standards and create a new strategy.
3.3.2 Critical theory

Where the positivist stance does not include human behavior or the social element, the next three paradigms involve the social phenomena, and thus, necessarily, must involve qualitative measures (Healy & Perry, 2000). Critical theory investigates social, political, cultural, economic, and ethnic and gender concepts. This paradigm looks at transformation and the freedom of concepts (Healy & Perry, 2000). This approach looks to deeply investigate the social conditions of the society, and thus attempts to make a true change (Orlikoski & Baroudi, 2002). This concept is not appropriate for the investigation of the functioning of HRM, as critical theory looks at making changes to the emotional and social structure of the evolving world that we live in (Healy & Perry, 2000). As HR managers work in dynamic business environments, this paradigm does not suit the mode of theoretical investigation required. Changes are looked at as desirable, but not in the essence of freedom of concepts or freedom of opinion; rather, the focus for change in HR is about processes and procedures for continual improvement.

The transformativist paradigm involves social inquiry where the research involves politics and political agendas (Cresswell, 2003, cited in de Kock, 2015) in order to address any social problems that are tied to social impartiality and fairness (Mertens, 2005, cited in de Kock, 2015). This means that they want change. They foresee transformation, where the agenda will transform the lives of the participants and the world around them. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used for collection and analysis. It is also mentioned that using the mixed methods approach provides a larger picture of the social realm, where there are multiple lenses and views.

3.3.3 Constructivism

The constructivism/interpretivist is an individual researcher who believes that reality is relative and multiple. This means that there are a number of realities and
more than one type of structure to access these realities (de Kock, 2015). Burrell and Morgan (1979) explained that this type of researcher is a person who aims to find an explanation for the stability of behaviour from the person’s viewpoint. When a researcher is collecting data, they are interdependent with the respondents and are equally interactive creating a collaborative account of perceived reality. This type of research allows the individual to work within the realms of being open to new ideas whilst obtaining help from the respondents (Hudson and Ozanee, 1988, cited in de Kock, 2015). Thus the researcher has no fixed design, in spite of having an insight into the research topic, as the topic is complex, varied and capricious in nature, of what is really anticipated as reality. This type of method is more supported by the qualitative methodologies and can be supported by a limited amount of quantitative data. As de Kock (2015) states "The epistemology followed in this case is that of a transactional or subjectivist which means the researcher and phenomenon or object of investigation are linked in such a way that who we are and how we understand the world depend on how we understand ourselves, others and the world” (p. 172).

3.3.4 Realism/Post-Positivism

Realism or post-positivism deals with the reality of a situation. Post-positivism, which takes its elements from the positivist and constructivist paradigms, was created to improve on positivist theory (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). People’s perception of the world is not a reality, but is part of the larger picture that includes other people’s perceptions. Guba and Lincoln (1994) share various meanings of post-positivism; they illustrate that the research that will be conducted will show a variety of perspectives, in order to show some sense of reality. As this construct combines both the positivist and interpretivist paradigms, it illustrates how those involved try to improve their surroundings (Bassey, 1990). Simply put, it is ‘research designed to improve action’ (Bassey, 1990, p.43). The idea is to continue the process, not complete it or conclude it at the end of the research project.

Figure 13 below is a diagram that illustrates the various methodologies and the paradigms that are related to the methodologies listed, on a linear scale regarding emphasis on meaning and on measurement.
As can be seen from Fig. 13 above, positivism involves surveys and other multi-faceted techniques. This ensures that the researcher is working towards the emphasizing of measurements, theory testing as well as building meaning at the same time.

The post-positivist paradigm thus shares two different schools of thought. This dynamic paradigm suits the study of HRM, complementing this area of business that deals with human capital. Dealing with people on a day-to-day basis means that improvements need to be made in order to keep the standards high and sustain a competitive advantage. In order for businesses to do so, they must be aware of the policies and procedures of the organization that they work in. Hence, using both ‘hard and soft’ measures that is, a mixture of non-human and human data, will allow perspectives on the research question in focus to unfold. Therefore, this research project utilizes the post-positivist paradigm, as per the diagram above. It specifically details where the use of surveys and other multivariate techniques are appropriate for this project.

McKenna et al (2008) agree that a mix of both positivist and interpretive paradigms – that is, a post-positivist approach – will be significant to HRM theory and practice. The authors ask for the utilization of both paradigms in a useful and supportive manner, thereby underlining the notion that the use of the positivist
paradigm by itself is not effective. Thus, it is the view here that HR theory needs a positive collaboration both paradigms.

3.4 Quantitative and qualitative methods

3.4.1 Introduction

Due to the complexity of research problems that are emerging to date and the fact that a number of interpretations are often possible, researchers must examine the various choices in methodology available to them (Wheeldon, 2010). In the previous section, the various research paradigms were explored. The post-positivist paradigm is being used for this particular project. Therefore, both hard data is needed alongside the ‘human touch’, which aims to understand how employees feel and what their opinions are.

Jogulu and Pansiri (2011) indicate that management research is very complex and is becoming very convoluted. Hence, smart techniques are required in order to create more intricate results. The past management practices saw the use of either qualitative or quantitative methods exclusively. However, what is currently required is a mixed methods approach in order to attain sophisticated results. In the sub-sections to follow there will be explanations of the quantitative and qualitative methods.

3.4.2 Quantitative and qualitative methods

This section will discuss simple definitions of the methods and examine which methods are best suited to the HRM field.

Johnson et al. (2007) state that quantitative methods involve the use of numbers, statistics and data, which are then accumulated and analyzed. This method focuses on the statistics and hard copy of data that can be analyzed without personal communication. Moreover, quantitative methods are a formal, detached and systematical method, where numerical data is used to get information about a particular project. This type of method is used to describe certain variables, to examine relationships between various variables and to define the relationships
between the variable (Burns & Grove, 2005). The authors further state that surveys are one of the more popular forms of quantitative methods.

Figure 14 introduces the quantitative methods that are used in this research. The survey was selected and this diagram shows interpretations and final conclusions.

![Figure 14: Quantitative Methods research](image)

However, HRM deals with human interaction. This, in itself, is a complex process, as dealing with people means dealing with complex behavior and situations. The use of only quantitative measures gives limited data based only on facts. Thus, HRM needs qualitative measures in order to provide the behavioral and situational aspects (Kiessling & Harvey, 2005).

Quantitative methods sometimes do not work well in the study of global management, due to the complexity and unstructured nature of the problems, and due to multiple important interactive relationships that cannot be studied in a quick or easy fashion (Wright, 1996 cited in Kiessling & Harvey, 2005, p. 25).

Qualitative research methods involve the collection of people’s thoughts and opinions and observations, as stated by Johnson et al. (2007). Qualitative methods focus on the information received from people via interviews or focus groups.
Therefore it is the ‘people method’. Qualitative research helps measure individual cultures where values and morals will be different. This type of research focuses on what people experience and their normative processes. It focuses on their natural environment and settings in order to investigate the day-to-day processes. This is imperative to this present research as it examines individual behavior, how people react and how they make their decisions.

Figure 15 illustrates diagramatically the qualitative methods that were selected for this research proposal in order to validate the quantitative methods and provide a triangulation of methods. The methods selected were the interview, social network analysis and observations that are then discussed and explained in order to show the relationships and provide insights into this cultural phenomenon.

Qualitative researchers examine ideas in their natural environment, trying to make order, and to deduce facts in terms of the meanings that people bring to them (Denzin, 1994, cited in Johnson et al. 2007). The author continues to infer that qualitative research is proposed to infiltrate the project at hand at a more noteworthy level. It involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter and gives priority to what the data contribute to important research questions or existing information.
Kiessling and Harvey (2005) further claim that the path to global HRM is increasingly difficult when trying to research only through quantitative methods. Researchers have proven that qualitative methods are needed in order to support or create that competitive advantage that businesses aspire to. Kiessling & Harvey (2005) clarify that an implementation of both quantitative and qualitative methods (mixed-method approach) is needed. The use of both qualitative and quantitative research provides a fully rounded perspective in today’s business environment (Kiessling & Harvey, 2005).

### 3.5 Mixed methods design

Mixed methods research is defined as “the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17).

Figure 16 below, brings together the two methods of quantitative and qualitative methods, illustrating the mixed methods design for this research.

![Figure 16 Mixed Methods research design for this research](image-url)
As *Wasta* in HR practices is a relatively new research area, both qualitative and quantitative methods have been used to gather the data that is needed. The data being sought after comprises information from employees of universities in Lebanon. Using both methods allows the definition of the problem of the research proposal – the effects of *Wasta* – in such a way as to reflect an external validity that is going to be situational and cultural. This will allow for explanations that will aid the desired outcomes (Kiessling & Harvey, 2005). The authors further explain that the mixed methods approach to research is used in attempting to define the problem and understand the various causal relationships, starting out broadly and then focusing more closely during the research process.

Johnson et al. (2007) define mixed methods research as follows:

> Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (p. 123).

Quantitative methods alone will only examine the data that is received and then analyzed. In this particular research proposal, not all research questions can be answered by quantitative methods. Moreover, Kiessling and Harvey (2005) state that the qualitative component completes the quantitative method by allowing the researcher to immediately respond to context-specific difficulties. There needs to be a willingness on the part of the researcher to be open to listen to the respondents. Thus, the interview approach used here will allow the researcher to delve deeper into the underlying issues that are not observable in quantitative analysis.

Thus, an investigation has been conducted relating to the effects of *Wasta* on institutions and employees; this has been carried out via a survey and interviews, observations and a social network analysis (SNA) of employees in a mixed methods research design. As stated before, HRM requires both the human interaction of understanding behaviours, as well the concrete data to also support
or complement human behavior. Hence, the mixed methods approach is the best approach for this project.

Sieber (cited in Johnson et al. 2007) points out the following vital reasons why combining methods is important:

1. At the research design stage, the quantitative data helps the qualitative component by identifying sample members
2. Moreover, qualitative data can help the quantitative data with conceptual and instrumental development
3. During the data collection stage, quantitative data can provide the basic information and help avoid any “elite” biases (talking to only important people)
4. Moreover, the data collection stage will involve the qualitative data, helping in the data collection process
5. In the data analysis stage, the quantitative data can aid in the ease of assessing the generalizations of the qualitative data
6. It can also shed new light on the results of the qualitative findings
7. Lastly, in the data analysis stage, qualitative data can play a vital role in helping to interpret, clarify, describe and validate the quantitative results, as well as modifying any aspects

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (200) illustrate that the mixed methods system is logical in that it follows a certain pattern – that is, it uses induction, or discovering patterns, deduction, or testing the theory, and abduction, or trying to discover the best way of understanding the results. Hence, this practical study will be able to define the positions that individuals take. It will allow for the measurement of motivation, job satisfaction and involvement levels of employees.

The mixture of both methods (triangulation) will provide the research with data that will enable the researcher to examine the principles and procedures behind the research proposal (Amaratunga et al. 2002). This mixed-method approach is becoming increasingly recognized as a major approach to research (Johnson et al, 2007). Denzin (cited in Johnson et al. 2007) says that:
“the bias inherent in any particular data source, investigators, and particularly method will be canceled out when used in conjunction with other data sources, investigators, and methods” (p.114).

Johnson et al (2007) attest that mixed methods research has become a strategic method in today’s research. As HRM requires both quantitative and qualitative methods, the researcher will be in alignment with the post-positivist theoretical stance, thereby providing the foundations necessary for the said project.

The design and development of the instruments are dependent on the research questions and the data that is going to be collected. As the research investigation is reliant on a number of mixed methods, the data that is collected from each method will be used to notify the next method.

The mixed methods design is the choice of the researcher for this research project. Other forms of instruments were not used, as it is believed that the survey can fulfill the magnitude of the project in order to collect the data that is needed. The interview and observations will integrate the data with the personal experiences and insights of the employees. As the research is the examination of the influences of Wasta on HR practices within Lebanese universities, it is the opinion of the researcher that the case study method is not appropriate, as the research will examine a number of aspects within various universities, and will not be confined to a particular case.

3.6 Case Study Research

Case study research (CSR) is defined as both a design and research method Cronin (2014). All three terms – case study, case study method and case method – appear frequently (Hamel et al, 1993; Yin, 2009, cited in Cronin, 2014). However, CSR is used when focusing on a specific situation. The idea is that the researcher focuses on everything regarding a specific situation, which includes, individuals, groups, activities or a specific phenomenon. Cronin (2014) clarifies that CSR is used to investigate a single case. Hence the idea behind CSR is an in-depth analysis focusing on a single phenomenon. This is not the case for Wasta in that, even though it may be a cultural phenomenon, it is being examined against HR practices
within four different universities. Consequently case study research is not the appropriate method for this research study.

Case study research can be used as a design and a research method (Cronin, 2014). Case study research is distinguished for either the number of cases, which may be small, or even one case, with the number of variables being large. It might also indicate the method as being qualitative, with a small number of participants; it can be ethnographic, clinical and could involve observation of participants (Yin, 2009); the steps are easily followed (George and Bennett, 2005) and it can investigate a single case or single phenomenon (Cronin, 2014). Case study research was not used in this research project due to the fact that the present study is not based on a single case or single phenomenon. Stake, 1995, cited in Tight, 2010 states: ” A case study is expected to catch the complexity of a single case ... Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances.” p.331.

This research examines the effects of a phenomenon known as Wasta on four recognised HR practices at four universities. The sample is large and it is not based on one single place. Hence the case study method was rejected for this research project.

For Wasta the focus group may not allow individuals to state what they would like to say in front of others. A focus group is between six and twelve participants, where they talk and share their thoughts (Fosch & Ness, 2015). It is a large enough group to create diversity. However, the negative side of a focus group is the pressure that is involved by others to conform to a consensus (Dimitroff, Schmidt & Bond, 2005, cited in Fosch & Ness, 2015). The focus group is also used in order to get a number of perspectives on a certain topic in order to obtain data saturation and when one would like to get a group perspective about the phenomenon (Fosch & Ness, 2015).

It is the perspective of the researcher, developed through personal experience living in the Middle East, that interviews allow the participant to speak freely and
express opinions about the *Wasta* phenomenon, which is not widely spoken about nor well-researched in the Lebanese management area.

3.7 Ethnographic Research

As *Wasta* is seen as a cultural phenomenon, the natural question to ask is why this would not be an ethnographic study. As Fusch and Ness (2015) explain, ethnography involves a great deal of data saturation. It is a lengthy process that requires the researcher to constantly study cultural norms and be involved in the process by submerging themselves in order to understand context, processes and behaviours. As this research is examining human resource practices as business tools to support organizational and employee development, an ethnographic study is too lengthy.

Ethnography is the art and science used to describe a group or culture (Fetterman, 1998, cited in Sangasubana, 2011). This type of research examines and searches for patterns within cultures. Therefore the researchers carefully observe and participate in the day-to-day lives of the participants. Ethnography is conducted on-site or in a naturalistic setting in which real people live. It is also personalized, since the researcher is both observer and participant in the lives of those people (Sangasubana, 2011).

In order to be clearer it is important that the researcher works within multiple worlds and still be involved in the research; hence the researcher is involved in the cultural world of study of the participants and their own perspective. Moreover, the research must be representative of the participant’s perspective and not that of the researcher (Fusch and Ness, 2015). It is quite a predicament when listening and understanding to others’ perspectives and being able to decipher one’s own view and others view. Hence, the better the researcher is able to recognize their own personal view of the world to distinguish the existence of a personal lens, the better it becomes when hearing and interpreting the behaviour and thoughts of others (Bibley, 2011; Fields & Kafai, 2009, cited in Fusch & Ness, 2015).
3.8 Grounded Research Theory

Grounded research theory began in sociology in the 1960s (Johnson, McGowan and Turner, 2010). This theory is based on the concept that the way to generate a theory is to systematically gather and analyze data and work back and forth between data and theory. The idea is "that the theory be grounded in and emerge from empirical data" (Johnson et al, 2010) p. 70. This type of research includes continual data collection through interviews and field notes; interim analysis; memo-writing; theoretical sampling; theoretical sensitivity; theoretical saturation and always comparing data to any emerging theories while analyzing and writing. Seeing that this research combines both a ‘phenomenon’ and business practices and tries to find answers to the effects of this ‘phenomenon’ on these particular business practices, the project would be more successful using the mixed methods research in comparison (Johnson et al, 2010).

The features of this methodology of ‘grounded theory’ sees the following as imperative: “…grounding of theory upon data through data theory interplay, the making of constant comparisons, the asking of theoretically oriented questions, theoretical coding and the development of theory” (Johnson et al, 2010, p. 71).

3.9 Reliability and validity

Kiessling and Harvey (2005) argue that it is important to ensure that the research design is both valid and reliable, hence selecting the appropriate sample and individuals in order to conduct the research. Due to the Middle Eastern culture being very patriarchal and family-based (Dirani, 2006), it is very important, when designing the survey, that the questions are correctly translated back and forth from the native Arabic language to English, in order to capture the whole meaning. Issues and concepts could be misconstrued if not planned and designed appropriately. Kiessling and Harvey (2005) further illustrate that it is important to avoid using cultural symbols in order to establish appropriate support. It will be very important to phrase the questions appropriately in order to systematically obtain results regarding the effects of Wasta on the HR practices of the university. Hence, the design and the development of the survey play an important role in the
research phase. Basic, non-emotive questions that are both objective and clear will be asked.

Validation must come from the combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches for assessing the reliability and validity of the actual instruments, (Daigneault and Jacob, 2013). The authors cite the work of Campbell and Fiske (1959) who attest to the use of multiple research methods for validation purposes. Also by mixing the data by ‘qualitizing’ quantitative data and ‘quantitizing’ qualitative data, this allows for data integrity. Also the use of qualititative techniques is aimed at understanding and detailing the context and human interaction that is associated with test development (Daigneault and Jacob, 2013).

3.10 Design and development of instruments

There are various instruments available to be used. They will be explained below and, finally, the choice of surveys, interviews and observations will be discussed for this research project.

3.10.1 Survey

The survey has been chosen as a reliable source, capable of creating baseline data to filter the information that is received in order to then conduct interviews. First, the survey will provide the reliable data that is based on a variety of objective questions. It will provide the quantitative data that is needed to create a simple foundation on which to build the data to its form. – that is, data that is testable and able to be input for analyses. The survey will be used to answer the four research questions, as detailed in Table 3, p.29.

The first step was to design the survey according to the research objectives and questions. A set of open- and closed-ended questions, as well as ranking questions, was used for the purpose of the survey. Harness (2009) infers that surveys are well used in descriptive research where it is important to see the pattern of the responses regarding particular variables. The author further claims that the survey allows the researcher to see the relationship between the variables to be clarified and measured, in order to see if the relationship is of a strong or weak nature. This
forms a part of the quantitative measures of the research project. The research questions proposed regarding HR practices, organizational culture and the SHRM of the university can be asked in question format in a survey. The response rate has provided the data that is required to answer the research questions. Hence, this has fulfilled the data collection objectives and allowed the analysis of numbers to provide a sustainable foundation in the research proposal.

A draft form of the survey was tested among a sample of employees in order to ensure that the survey was working properly and that the questions could be answered efficiently. Once the testing is complete and the results read, the survey will be ready for distribution among 4 private universities, as well as the Lebanese University, which is the only public university in Lebanon.

The survey has a number of strengths (Bhattacherjee, 2012):

- survey is an excellent method for observing various types of data, such as: people’s preferences (political orientation); traits (like self esteem); attitudes; beliefs and behaviour
- excellent for a large population that is too difficult to observe directly (mail, internet and telephone)
- Due to its unobtrusive nature and the ability to respond, people prefer to use the survey
- Large sample surveys can show the small effects in multi variable surveys
- Economical for the researcher as it is a cheaper way to collect data

The instrument development and construct validation process, illustrated below by Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009, p. 62,), shows the steps involved in validating the instruments being used by the researcher.

3.10.2 Construct of Interest

The first phase is to conceptualize the Construct of Interest, that being the development stage. Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009) infer that this stage is where the researcher must be aware of their own personal beliefs. That is, they need to relate to three (3) dimensions of belief: (a) overall worldview; (b) research philosophy; and c) discipline-specific philosophy. Hence, it is important that the researcher
understands how these views affect their instruments. It is especially important that they are conscious of their worldview, the lens through which they see everything and interpret the world. As mentioned above, once the researcher has a full understanding of their own research belief system, they will be able to begin the analysis.

Table 7 below shows the various research approaches and the instruments to be used for this research.
Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009) state that the second step involves the stepping-stones of developing the construct, by first conducting an extensive literature review. This provides the theoretical framework (previously written, phenomena, relationships etc.) or conceptual framework that is important for the investigated research phase.

According to these authors, the third phase is where the researcher is able to start writing. Once the behaviours have been set and examined, the questions can be formulated. They point out that the researcher has set the theoretical stance and viewpoint from phase 1 and phase 2, ensuring that an extensive literature review has been completed and the baseline has been set. The questions should then be
written, with feedback being sought afterwards from local experts and key people involved.

Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009) attest that the fourth phase is where the questionnaire is pilot-tested. It is imperative that a field test is conducted in order to ensure that mistakes are minimized. The questions need to be tested for relevance, clarity, length of time needed to answer and cultural issues. In the fifth phase, once information is received in the form of both quantitative and qualitative data on the first instrument, then any problems that may have arisen can be solved. A final field test is then conducted to ensure that there are no further issues with the questionnaire (Onwuegbuzie et al. 2009).

Table 3 illustrates the research questions and how the survey is divided into various HR practices. It also shows which survey questions are linked to the HR practices imposed in the research.

3.10.3 Question development

The survey consists of 70 questions, which begins with a basic profile including personal and educational. Questions 1-5 ask about the basic profile of gender, age, etc. Questions 6-8 cover the educational profile. This information is important when discussing the variables in the cross analysis. Questions 9-25 cover current and past work experience. This format allows the interviewee to provide information in a very informative and easy way. Questions 26-69 are based on the Likert scale, using 1-5 as ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’. The questions cover areas related to training and development, compensation and benefits, performance management and motivation, thus covering the basic HR practices.

The survey determined the following areas:

- the employee’s individual profile – age, marital status etc.
- educational background – level of education achieved and details of where educated
- recruitment and selection – how they applied to the university and the process that was taken
• training and development – training that was achieved or not achieved and future developments
• compensation and benefits – details of compensation, packages and promotions
• performance appraisal – how staff are appraised for work done
• organizational strategies – university strategies

3.10.3.1 Measurement scale (Likert scale)

Wakita et al (2012) describe the Likert scale as a commonly known psychometric scale measurement that assists in self-reporting. The author further explains that should the distance between each scale be equal, then the measurements will be exact for each psychological trait. Moreover, this concept is the most important idea regarding the Likert scale. The author attests that there has been no real conclusion regarding whether or not a different number of options make a difference. The author further states that there has been no previous research on the impact of the number of options. Likert scales begin with four to seven categories. As Wakita et al (2012) assert, the use of ‘agree’ or ‘disagree’ is introduced when the researcher is attempting to deduce an opinion or an attitude from the participant. This is imperative for the present research topic – Wasta and its effects on HR practices. The researcher needs to elicit what the participant believes to be true from the latter’s own opinions.

Furthermore, Sekaran & Bougi (2010) attests that using the Likert scale assesses if the individual has either a favourable or unfavourable attitude towards the given statement. The individual either responds with agreement or disagreement. Each response is given a number, indicating a positive or negative score. This score indicates if they agree or disagree with the statement. The scores are then totaled to measure the person’s response. The overall score will tell the researcher if the respondent is in favor or not.

The Likert scale is where the individual is asked to respond to the statements through several degrees of agreement and disagreement; the norm is five, but sometimes three to seven may also be used. For example, when a person is asked to express how they feel about their holiday leave, the person may choose one of
the following: i) strongly agree; ii) agree; iii) neutral; iv) disagree v); or, strongly disagree. This is known as a five-point scale. These five-point scales are on a continuum, as seen in Figure 17 below (Sekaran & Bougi, 2010).

![Likert Scale](image)

Figure 17 Likert Scale (Sekaran & Bougi 2010, p.172)

Each of the scales seen in the above figure carries a score. For example, on a continuum, ‘strongly agree’ is designated with a score of one (1) – indicating the most favourable – and the least favourable, ‘strongly disagree’ is given a score of five (5).

### 3.10.3.2 Regression analysis

Once the data has been inputted into a statistical program, SPSS or survey monkey, the researcher needs to examine the relationships between the variables. According to Beins & McCarthy (2012), regression analysis has the purpose of examining the statistical relationship between two or more variables. Simple regression has two variables only, where one variable is labelled ‘independent’ and is the cause of the behavior of another one, which is defined as the ‘dependent’ variable. A regression analysis interprets what actually physically exists. So it examines the relationship between X and Y which given by,

$$\hat{Y} = a + bX$$

This equation is called the regression equation of Y on X; this means that each change in X produces a change of b in Y, which is positive for direct and negative for opposite relationships (Kotahri, 2004). So the regression analysis is a statistical method that uses a mathematical model to look at the relationship between both independent and dependent variables.
3.10.3.3 Bias

Research is a social affair – that is, when people participate together in a research study it is important that the communication is not compromised (Beins and McCarthy, 2012). Both the participant and the experimenter bring their own individual thoughts and social tendencies, hence it is not only experimenter bias but also participant bias.

It is important to minimize bias in any form of research and to maximize the data collection. Therefore the design of an instrument that minimizes bias and maximizes the reliability of the data that is collected is considered a good design. As well, the way the researcher interacts with the participant can also affect the outcome of the study (Beins and McCarthy, 2012). So it is very important to take adequate measures in order to ensure that there is no bias and unreliability. The questions need to be examined properly and made unambiguous, and the interviewers need to be instructed not to express their own opinion; observers need to be told that they must record all items in the same way and following the same procedure. Then, after pre-testing the data instruments, they can be used for the purposes of the study. In this way, the researcher is using ‘structured instruments’.

3.10.4 Interview

The interview has been chosen over other forms of qualitative methods, as it can cover both the factual and interpretative level with the participant in a meeting format. It allows the researcher to reach the story behind the participant’s experiences. It also allows the pursuit of in-depth information. The interview instrument adds the human interaction needed in HRM research; it allows for probing and follow-up questioning (Kiessling & Harvey, 2005).

Harness (2009) discusses the impact of interviews in terms of their ability to increase the validity of the information through the use of the triangulation. Conducting interviews also allows for support of the information that has been collected through the survey method. As Kvale (cited in Amaratunga et al. 2002) observe, the purpose of an interview “is to gather descriptions of the life-world of
the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena.”

Harness (2009) infers that the goal of the interview is to see the research through the eyes of the interviewee, to try and comprehend how they got to the particular perspective that they are giving the researcher. Wasta is a complex issue and the interview will play a pivotal role in understanding the effects and consequences it may have on employees. It will allow employees to express their opinions and state the issues confronted. The interview, by asking a number of aligned questions, will also provide support to the survey data.

With the quantitative data completed (survey in question) and the qualitative data received (interview), the researcher is able to create the appropriate framework for the research questions (Amaratunga et al. 2002). Harness (2009) adds that the basic aim of the interview is to show the ‘why’ and the ‘how’ of the way things occur. The interview technique allows the flexibility to include issues that are found to be more individual, and these can be followed through in greater depth.

The interviews that have been used for this research project are semi-structured interviews. Qu and Dumay (2011) state that semi-structured interviews are created to guide the questioning using set themes. These themes are used in order to drive the researcher to the topic needed for discussion, thus guiding the questions towards the topics and issues that the researcher wants to learn about. As Qu and Dumay (2011) point out, semi-structured interviews are very popular as they are flexible, accessible and able to obtain the important and hidden facets of the human behavior. As Wasta is a topic that is quite intricate and not normally spoken about in public, this style of interview is well suited to the topic.

The interview format plays an integral role in understanding human behavior. Qu and Dumay (2011) suggest that, even when the interviewer and the interviewee are speaking the same language, there may be different culturally determined inferences. Hence, it becomes more difficult when people have different worldviews. Qu and Dumay (2011) point out that, even so, with a well-planned interview, rich data can be the result.
Qu and Dumay (cited in Shensul et al. 1999, p. 141) suggest that the quality of an interview can be maintained by paying careful attention to the following three principles:

1. maintaining the flow of the interviewee’s story
2. maintaining a positive relationship with the interviewee; and
3. avoiding interviewer bias

The author further intimates that the interviewer can sometimes disrupt the interview by interrupting the interviewee or making them speed up with their answer. Not interrupting the person as they are speaking, nor providing any verbal or non-verbal cues in agreement or disagreement can attain a positive relationship with the interviewee with what is being spoken about.

Figure 18 below shows the types of questions, the purpose of them and some examples when conducting interviews for research.
Figure 18 Types of Interview questions

3.10.5 Input of interview data

As statistical programs are used for quantitative data input and analysis, so are qualitative data. The use of NVivo, qualitative statistical software, allows researchers to measure in numbers the “qualitative data”. Sotiriadou, Brouwers and Le (2014) state that NVivo has been the most used software for qualitative measurement. As the authors indicate NVivo helps the researcher manage the data that they have collected through, analyzing, managing and organizing data, identifying themes and developing conclusions. Sotiriadou et al (2014) explain that the NVivo program requires the researcher to code the data and develop themes. Data analysis through NVivo means that coding is required into themes.
So, the researcher must choose “nodes” or “codes” that are words that the program will count and provide a statistical response Sotiriadou et al (2014). For the case of this research project the interview transcripts are inputted into the program and the nodes are set by the researcher in order to quantify the words.

3.10.6 Observations

Observations can only be recorded through a triangulation of the methods being used. Amaratunga et al. (cited in Waddington, 1994) state that observations are “best suited to research projects which emphasize the importance of human meanings, interpretations and interactions; where the phenomenon under investigation is often obscured from public view” (p.25). Observations will be a very important element in the research process and will add value. This aspect will definitely enhance the current track of knowledge that is being sought out.

Using observation, according to Wadsworth (2012), means moving out of the ‘square’ of the normal repeated actions and looking at a new journey of inquiry. Examples of observation are “what is happening? Who is doing what, when, where and how? What do you see, observe, hear, know, believe, value, think etc.?” (p.93). Hearing what is not being said is an important aspect in the Wasta phenomena. As the literature review exposed, Wasta is not easily spoken about, hence the quantitative data will need to be supported by qualitative data that will show the right perspectives.

As Amaratunga et al. (2002) state, this use of more than one method of data collection is important when observing human activity. The observations can be in a form of discussion, interviews and surveys. The author further infers that this approach is particularly appropriate where: importance is attached to human intentions, interpretations and interactions, this phenomenon is not under direct view; it is controversial; and, where little is understood. This is where the ‘insider’ perspective provides new information to existing knowledge.
The researcher will need to ensure within the data collection that they are able to make the respondents feel comfortable enough to answer without feeling uneasy. Seeing the Wasta phenomena is a concept within Middle Eastern culture that is not really spoken about, and due to the collectivist nature of the Middle Eastern culture, qualitative measures are imperative. As Wadsworth (2012) states, many people prefer to stay with what they know, even if they have to live with feelings of unease. However the respondent would move forward when knowing that there are no expectations when they are aiding the research process.

If these characteristics are not observed and the observation process is not thought out in advance, this is called ‘unstructured observation’. The decision must then be made to use one or other observation method. The structured observation is used with more descriptive studies, whereas an exploratory study uses the more unstructured observation (Kothari, 2004).

There are other types of observations used in the social sciences that are used, such as ‘participant’ and ‘non-participant’. The difference between the two is the observer either shares the life of the group or not. In the former approach, the observer makes themselves a member of the group, experiencing what the others are experiencing, and thereby able to closely observe the experiences of the group. On the other hand, when the observer is not attached the group and does not participate in the group’s experience, this describes the latter approach to the observation process. When the observer is observing without others feeling his presence or is unknown to them, this is called ‘disguised observation’ (Kumar, 2011).

There are some advantages to participant observation, in that the researcher can: write down natural behavior; gather information more easily if the participant is not interested; and, verify what is being said in the context of a questionnaire or a schedule, Kumar (2011); Kothari (2004). The author notes that the disadvantages are that the researcher: may lose their objectivity, should they get involved emotionally; must self-monitor if observation-control is not taken care of; must be experientially removed from the process (Kumar, 2011; Kothari, 2004).
There are two types of conditions that observations occur under, these being controlled and uncontrolled/natural observation. If the observations take place in a natural setting, the process is known as ‘uncontrolled or natural observation’ (Kumar, 2011). However, when the observation takes place according to arrangements made and according to a defined plan, this is called ‘controlled observation. That is when a stimulus is introduced in order to get a reaction and observe the said reaction (Kumar, 2011). In the non-controlled observation, there is no attempt to use instruments. The author infers that the main goal of this type of observation is to get a true picture of a particular life and person experiencing that life. This type of observation allows for naturalness and completeness of behavior. In controlled observation, the use of instruments helps to establish accuracy and to standardize things.

In summary, as stated above, this research project is based on uncontrolled and unstructured observations. While interviewing the employee, it will be important to record all that is not only seen, but also heard; reactions to various situations are imperative to the investigation of the research questions. Thus, in the questioning of Wasta and its effects on individuals lives, observations can be well noted. Additionally, once the researcher is on a university campus, it will be well worth noting the dynamics in the relationships between colleagues and the hierarchy.

### 3.11 Social network analysis (SNA)

According to Hatala (2006) and Hollenbeck and Jamieson (2015), Social Network Theory began in the early 1930s, within three disciplines – psychology, anthropology and mathematics. Moreno (1934) created ‘sociograms’ which represented relationships between individuals where they were connected geometrically. These sociograms were created to identify group leaders, isolates, ties and friendships. This new format was graphed by mathematical measurements, using points and lines. They used original symbols, such as, + means ‘likes’ and – means ‘dislikes’. Cartwright and Harary created this new approach in 1956. The authors state that these network theories are not only concerned with quantitative studies, but also with the process in which it was
established, as well as the linkage and context effects. According to Yamkovenko and Hatala (2015), ‘a sociogram consists of nodes (actors) and ties between them (also called edges). A sociogram is a basic depiction of the connection of the nodes we have in any given sample’ (p. 42).

Through this approach, a number of theories were introduced, one of them being ‘social capital’. The social capital theory states: “unlike other forms of capital, social capital inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors. It is lodged neither in the actors themselves nor in physical implements of production” (Coleman, 1988, p.16, cited in Hatala, 2006).

Yamkovenko and Hatala (2015) explain that social network analysis plays a key role in examining HRD – that is, in examining the actor within his/her workplace and network. SNA employs a unique approach, where it uses structural tests to understand theories. It provides formal definitions of the elements within the networks – such as, actors, sub-groups or groups. Hatala (2006) attests that this process allows the core concepts to be translated into formal definitions. Thus, SNA looks at the dynamics of the interaction between actors and the way that information is exchanged between members in that social business network. It is important to measure these relationships that help define the behaviors that exist, as this will have an impact on the functionality of the people within working groups.

The concept is further explained simply by Parise (2007), who states that SNA is a different way of viewing the structure of the workplace networks. It looks at barriers between groups and individuals, at where there may be hindrances in communication or collaboration. Parise also explains that a way of deciphering the networks is by introducing a number of questions to the survey that ask about people who hold important positions in the organization. Parise sees that HRM managers can truly benefit from SNA through understanding the processes and practices of the organization.

This SNA approach works smoothly alongside the current research project – specifically, hand-in-hand with the research questions that examine the HR
practices of Lebanese universities and the HR culture of those institutions. Transfer of knowledge and services is imperative in the higher education service industry; thus, the networks between departments and faculties and the central administration play a vital role in the success of HR practices and strategies within the university. The SNA perspective to be followed here allows for a clearer perspective on the qualitative assessment of the research data. These new insights on the networks of the institutions under study will help in recommendations for future actions and interventions needed to improve the relationships and the overall HRM in those institutions.

The next step is to define the relationships within the networks in question. Hatala (2006) states that there are different types of relationships that can be measured for the same group of individuals. The decision as to which relationships to measure depends on the research itself. The latter gives examples as to the different types of relationships that can be measured, these being: communication relations (who speaks to who?); instrumental relations (who asks whom for help?); power relations (who follows who?); and interpersonal relations (who likes who?). Depending on the type of research, the researcher may wish to look at one or more type of relationship, whether there is sufficient support and a sense of wellbeing, or if there is rigidity in the relationships. This type of research allows the person to investigate how people work together to achieve the best performance (Hatala, 2006).

The research on SNA shows that it is a key methodology in understanding and developing network theory (Yamkovenko and Hatala, 2015). This type of methodology allows HRD researchers to use a tool to study the interactions between actors in an organization. Moreover it can help understand what affects these interactions. With regard to HRM, the network actors will be key stakeholders, employees, organizational members, customers or even part-time contractors (Hatala, 2006). The HR specialist will be in favor of obtaining information regarding the relational patterns of the front-line workers, how they interact with each other; how decisions are made; influences; communication flows between managers and workers, and even information regarding the opinion
leaders. This will allow the employer to understand the training needs that are required and meet the needs of both the employee and the employer (Hatala, 2006).

The specific SNA method in collecting the data will depend on the type of research and what is required. It depends on the type of data that will need to be collected. Hatala (2006) points out that the researcher may collect data such as interviews, observations and surveys, or maybe historical documents, in order to have a complete picture of the social network. Yamkovenko and Hatala (2015) infer that the SNA method helps strengthen the quantitative research in areas like organizational development, organizational learning, leadership development, organizational change, and training and development. Hence, this method will provide a clearer picture of the effects that Wasta has on the organization. It will provide further support to quantitative data, should it be weak. The use of this method examines the human relationship further, which is imperative to this type of study, based as it is on the Wasta phenomenon.

3.12.1 The method

The SNA method is mapped out as a diagram showing the relationship between ‘nodes’ of employees and the way that they link together (Parise (2007). These nodes are also known as ‘actors’ (Hollenbeck and Jamieson, 2015). The ‘node’ or ‘actor’ can be a person, an organization or IT system (such as a database or application). The connections that exist between the employees are shown as arrows that reflect the direction of the relationship. According to Hollenbeck and Jamieson (2015), the social link between the ‘actors’ is known as a ‘relational tie’. The relational tie can come in many forms, and is dependent on the researcher. The authors state that there could be a friendship tie, a communication tie, a work tie, etc. Hence it depends on the type of relationship the actors have. This is an essential element in studies of HRM, which investigate the behaviours and reactions of both employers and employees.
Figure 19 Social Network Analysis (Parise, 2007, p.364)

Figure 19 above takes a snapshot view of the networks in two divisions. These employee networks are for the circulation of information – that is, who goes to whom?. In Division 1, the diagram illustrates person C as going to F, but F does not go to C. The question that would be asked here is ‘Do you go to this person for information – Yes or No?’. Below is an example of one faculty network in a private Lebanese university.

Figure 20 introduces a staff network in a private Lebanese university that was taken as a sample for the pilot study.

Figure 20 Faculty staff network in a private Lebanese University
This network illustrates where there are communication gaps. Certain employee nodes get information from others and some do not. For example, node A is depicted as the dean of the faculty, where B, C and D are assistants to the faculty, being general secretary and administrative assistant. C goes to B and D; however, B does not go to C or D for information, only to A – the dean. These links cause miscommunication and issues within the team relationship.

This is a small example of what will be illustrated in the research study. Hence, it is very important to explore and map this concept according to the qualitative results that are received. This will aid the various universities under study in appropriate decision-making, and thus help to answer the last research question regarding SHRM. The SNA will support the research questions according to HR practices in the context of Wasta (how the relationships have developed), as well as the organizational culture (examining the environment) and the SHRM (the connections between staff).

An important use of SNA Hatala (2006) examines the groups and networks involved as representations that are important in illustrating the nature of their environment and the effect on the individuals who form the relationships within that environment; “these patterns can typically be represented as graphs or diagrams illustrating the dynamics of the various connections and relationships within a group” (p.50) Seven steps are identified by which to conduct a SNA, as follows:

(a) ascertain what type of analysis is required
(b) outline the relationships in the network by using appropriate measurements
(c) gather the network data
(d) quantify the relationships
(e) define whether to include ‘employee’ traits
(f) evaluate the network data
(g) generate types of measures to be used and
(h) present the network data

Once these steps have been followed, a ‘map’ of the network connections is drawn in order to illustrate the relationships in real form. The descriptive matter and data
is taken from the survey where descriptive questions are asked about the relationships between colleagues and managers.

The SNA will be able to identify the social structures within the organization. It will help in reaching an understanding of why individuals react and respond to various contexts in the way they do (Hatala, 2006). The latter further proposes that understanding the relationship will help the researcher examine the individual within their group and the larger group. The focus on identifying the pressure that is existent and the communication patterns will help form an understanding of how the networks around them affect individual performance. In the current study, SNA will help answer research questions RQ.3 and RQ.4, regarding the effects of *Wasta* on the organizational culture of a university, as well as suggest an improvement of the SHRM focus of the university. Understanding the larger picture of the organization helps to fulfill the organizational objectives, including SHRM.

Through survey questions, observations and interview questions, the present researcher will be able to identify the SNA of the faculty or division within each university. Talking with the staff and observing their interaction will allow the researcher to create a SHRM model for the networks in question that are more effective and efficient.

The following sections will discuss the target population to be contacted for research purposes and the sampling to be completed.

**3.13 Target population**

The target population of this research is both the administrative staff (non-academic) and the academic staff of a number of universities in Lebanon. Most university campuses have as little as 20 to 150 administrative staff members and a larger academic population. The target was to capture samples from at least four private universities and one public university – the Lebanese University. The researcher was able to obtain 300 questionnaires.
Table 8 below shows various instruments to be used and the number of respondents and participants to be targeted.

Table 8 Target Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>SNA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>20 interviews</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>Various departments and faculties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.13 Pilot testing and sample

Pilot testing is a requirement of the research design; it is a preliminary test of the data collection. It allows feedback to ensure that the survey actually works and can be responded to with ease. It allows for adjustments to be made by the researcher in order to then target larger groups of people.

Pilot testing began with one university that has 50 employees currently working between three campuses. The employees that were surveyed were all received from the administrative staff of the university.

Table 9 below illustrates the various instruments and the number of participants and respondents to be sampled.

Table 9 Pilot Testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>SNA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 staff</td>
<td>5 staff</td>
<td>5 staff</td>
<td>A department or faculty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sampling took place between September and November 2012. The survey is composed of 70 questions and captures the HR practices that the university uses within the organization, as listed above. There were minimal rectifications to be made. The concept behind testing this survey is to ensure that it is understood and there are no barriers to filling in the survey. Sample interviews took place also to
ensure the comfort of the staff members and if the questions were adequate or if other questions needed to be added. Observations were taken at the same time. Also an example of SNA was conducted of a faculty to see if the results were what were expected. The results of all the instruments proved to be positive with an excellent return rate from the surveys. Willing participants in the interviews proved to be enriching for the research process. Also the design of the SNA illustrated the first communication network within a faculty. The results encouraged the researcher to move to the proper fieldwork.

3.14 Ethical clearance

A low-risk application was submitted and approved by four (4) universities and a checklist completed for ethical clearance. The researcher submitted a clearance letter stating the intent of the researcher, as well as the purpose of the study. A meeting was conducted with each person responsible and clarification was given as to the current fieldwork that was sought. A letter was sent to universities to introduce the researcher and the area of her interest. This letter asked for consent in order to conduct the survey on campus and to interview staff members. All issues have been implemented in order to comply with the guidelines of the Human Research Ethics Committee of Central Queensland University. This committee approved ethical clearance on 28 October, 2014.

Ethical clearance is a requirement for every researcher to go through. It is important to point out that the information that is gathered from the interviewee is obtained in such a way as not to harm any person. Every researcher must follow a certain professional code of ethics. When an interviewer begins to work with an interviewee, this sets up a relationship, which is held under certain obligations. Ethically speaking, the interviewer should provide a brief outline to the interviewee before or after the interview to provide a type of closure on the meeting.

3.15 Data treatment

The data will be treated as per CQU policies and procedures for research. The data will be secured on a separate hard disk and the questionnaires placed in secured
sealed envelopes. Data will be stored electronically on a password-protected server at CQU, according to the university’s policy. The data will be kept for 5 years in accordance with CQU’s code of conduct for research. Data documents will be deleted from the server after the expiry of data-keeping period allowed by CQU. Any data will disposed of as per CQU’s research policies and procedures.

3.16 Summary

This chapter explained the philosophical schools of thought and paradigms on which this research is based. It also discussed the methodology to be used – that being the mixed methods research design. The survey method was selected as the best quantitative measurement. Interviews were also discussed as being a support to the survey in obtaining the triangulation of the research. Furthermore, to ensure a more precise focus and minimalizing the bias, SNA was also introduced. Further, in this chapter, the constructs of the instruments were explained, as well as the steps taken to pilot testing. The pilot testing and ethical clearance that form the underpinning of the research presented were then discussed.
Chapter 4 – Results

“When a truth is necessary, the reason for it can be found by analysis, that is, by resolving it into simpler ideas and truths until the primary ones are reached.”

Gottfried Leibniz

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results from the administration of the survey instrument (quantitative), regression analysis and the interviews, observations and social network analysis (qualitative) data that was collected for this research. The end of the chapter provides a summary of the results.

A mixed methods approach was used in order to examine the effects of Wasta on HR practices. This chapter will display the data that was collected through a survey comprised of 70 questions; interviews with various staff members where fifteen questions were asked of each; observations taken on all four campus sites; as well as social network analysis which maps out the communication patterns of staff. The survey responses are presented in Tables 9 to 55 below, accompanied by descriptive analysis for each table. This chapter also displays the findings of the interviews, and the observations are discussed in detail. The findings of this chapter will be discussed in the following chapter within the context of the literature displaying the contribution to knowledge that this research has discovered.

4.1 Survey data

The number of surveys distributed amongst staff of universities amounted to a total of 466. Of this number, 349 surveys were returned and used for this research. This created a response rate of 75%. In Table 10 below are the number of universities and the surveys returned to the researcher.
The survey was developed in English (See appendix A). The participating universities provided distribution lists, which included emails as to where to send the questionnaire. Any employee of the university was able to fill in the questionnaire. It was an anonymous and voluntary questionnaire; that is, administrative assistants, supervisors, managers or dean’s assistants were able to participate, as well as any full-time or part-time instructors. The participants were able to return the questionnaire survey by postage pre-paid envelopes. The front page of the questionnaire contained a participation request and provided a clarification of the contents and purpose of the survey. Therefore, respondents who answered the questionnaire thereby indicated that they consented and agreed to participate. Completed questionnaires were mailed back anonymously.

The survey was divided into three sections: employee profile, education profile and work experience. The data will be displayed, accordingly, under these stated sections for clarity.

### 4.2 Research questions and methodology

The methodology used is mixed methods, as detailed in Chapter 3. According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), mixed methods research is where the researcher combines both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to complete the study in question. This chapter will display the results of the survey, interviews, observations and social network analysis.
The research questions that were proposed, as seen in the Introduction and Methodology chapters were as follows:

RQ.1. How does *Wasta* influence the HR practices of the university?
RQ.2. How has *Wasta* affected individual employees in their career paths?
RQ.3. How does *Wasta* effect the organizational culture of the university?
RQ.4 What tools do universities need in order to improve their Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) focus?

The following hypotheses below were tested in order to answer the above research questions. Research Question One asks participants whether *Wasta* influences HR practices or not, hence the following hypotheses will help in answering this question. The second research question will also be answered by the third hypothesis below, being whether or not *Wasta* and career development have a relationship. The remaining two questions have been answered by the interviews conducted with twenty individuals.

- **H<sub>0</sub>** *Wasta* and training has no relationship
- **H<sub>1</sub>** *Wasta* and training has a relationship

- **H<sub>0</sub>** *Wasta* and compensation has no relationship
- **H<sub>1</sub>** *Wasta* and compensation has a relationship

- **H<sub>0</sub>** *Wasta* and career development has no relationship
- **H<sub>1</sub>** *Wasta* and career development has a relationship

The hypotheses were tested and the results shown later in this chapter, displaying rejection or otherwise of the null hypotheses.

### 4.3 Procedures and measures

The research instrument – that is, the questionnaire – was self-administered by the researcher. It consisted of 70 questions (see Appendix A). A cover letter explaining the objectives of the study was attached to the survey. It also stated there that participation was anonymous and that the results would be used solely for the
purposes of this study. Participants were also informed that the overall results would be shared with them upon request.

This instrument was tested previously in a sample with 50 employees (Chapter 4). It was then refined to include what was needed in the questionnaire. The participants were also asked to identify any issues or ambiguities in the questionnaire and it was then modified and finalized based on their feedback. Participants also reported that 70 questions took approximately between 5-8 minutes to fill in.

4.3.1 Survey

The first part of the survey – the employee profile – asks for basic demographic characteristics of gender, age and location. The second part is the education profile followed by the third part, detailing work experience. This part of the survey contains statements regarding the HR practices of compensation and benefits, recruitment and selection, training and development and performance. There are also a number of statements regarding motivation and employee engagement. The Likert scale is used to ask whether participants ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, are ‘neutral’, ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’. A 5-point scale was used to preserve simplicity and firmness in the responses and to avoid neutral statements (Wakita et al, 2013).

Data Preparation for survey monkey and SPSS

Below is figure 21 that illustrates the steps taken in order to prepare and input the statistical data for both reliability and validity. It also allows a clear path to explore the relationship between Wasta and HR practices.
Chapter 4 discussed the design, development and administration of the survey to collect data in order to show how the research questions will be answered. The research questions were presented in Chapter 1. This chapter however, is concerned with the analysis of the data collected. For this it uses the statistics package SPSS and survey monkey.

The data survey was manually entered by manual data entry into survey monkey once the survey results were received. This software automatically creates an ID for each survey that is being inputted.

In preparation for testing the hypothesis, the survey questions used for this research, as detailed in chapter 4, were inputted into the statistical software SPSS in order create the regression analysis.

**Preparation for SPSS**

Preparation of the actual survey data begins by creating a codebook and screening the actual data for any errors as well as noting if there are any missing responses. Coding of the data happened before entering the data into SPSS and afterwards the data was examined for any errors.
Create a codebook

The codebook was created, by converting the data that was received by each respondent into a format that SPSS could read. The process includes:

- Assigning an ID to each survey
- Assigning a unique variable name to each item or questions
- Assigning a numerical code for each response

When creating a codebook, it begins with allocating an ID for each survey respondent. The ID matches a research participant, which allows the researcher to go back and check for any errors in data entry or for any missing responses.

The answers being tested for the hypotheses were pre-coded responses (e.g. 1- strongly agree, 2- agree, 3- neutral, 4- disagree, 5- strongly disagree).

Data cleaning and screening

Data cleaning and screening is used in order to check for any missing responses or any type of errors. As stated before certain questions were tested for the three hypotheses that were proposed. There were 69 incomplete responses to the questions that were tested.

The next section displays the data that was collected and testing of the hypotheses.

4.4 Data

The following sections will illustrate the demographics, including education profile and work experience statements. The data is displayed in charts and tables for ease of reading.

4.4.1 Demographic Statistics
The employee profile section consisted of five questions. The following data will display them in cross-analysis form. The first question asks whether participants are male or female. Figure 21 below displays the data. The response shows that a large number (over 60%) of respondents are female and male respondents only number over 35%.

Figure 21: Cross Analysis of Female/Male with age

Figure 22 shows the number of female and male respondents according to the area in which they live. These are the responses for Questions One and Two of the survey. The table shows that most of the respondents are female, and live in either Beirut City (19.76%) or Mount Lebanon (23.30%). The north, south and Bekaa valley area have a smaller distribution of respondents (6.49%, 7.08% and 3.24%, respectively). The responses of male respondents show that the greater amount reside in Mount Lebanon (19.70%) and the second largest group are found in Beirut City (10.32%). This shows that most of the participants reside in the more heavily populated area(s) of Lebanon. Figure 24 shows that most of the respondents live in Beirut, which is the capital city of Lebanon. Of course this indicates that, as it is a city, this is where there will be employment opportunities.
Question Four displayed in Figure 23 below, asks the respondent if he/she is the primary wage earner in the household. The table below shows the number of male and female respondents according to primary wage earner status. Over forty-seven percent (47%) of females stated that they were not the primary wage earners and only fourteen (14%) of males said that they were not the primary wage earners. The larger percentage rate of males (24.78%) indicated that males were mostly the primary wage earners, even though the number of female(s) in the survey is greater than the number of males. This corroborates with the fact that Lebanon is a patriarchal society. The fourteen percent (14%) of males that stated they were not the primary wage earners would be explained by the fact that they are single and not married.

Figure 23 shows that the numbers of female respondents although greater are not the primary wage earner. This conforms to the Lebanese society, which sees the male as the primary wage earner, and the statistics do present this.
4.4.2 Education profile

Questions six, seven and eight ask the respondents about their education profile. Figure 24 below answers question six, which looks at the type of school from which the respondents graduated. There are a greater number of students who graduated from private schools than from public schools. The greater number (over 60%) are females and the lesser number (39%) are males, where 35% of the females and 22% of males graduated from a private school, respectively. The Lebanese public school system lacks the necessary funding in order to attract students. The private school system has a greater number of enrollments due to the quality of education provided.

Figure 24 shows how private education has greater enrolment than the public school education due to the lack of funds given to the public school sector.
Question Seven asks which type of university the respondents attended – that is, whether public or private. The results are shown in figure 26 below. In general, more than half (51%) of respondents went to private universities, whereas less than half (34%) went to public universities. It should be noted that a minimal amount (1.47%) went to a technical school. This is the result of the lack of vocational schools in Lebanon and the level of education offered in these institutions. Currently, the higher education system has over 40 private universities and only one public university. This would explain the larger number of respondents in the private sector.

Figure 25 shows how private university education is heavily enrolled due to the number of private universities in Lebanon. There are currently over 40 private universities and one public university. Technical schools are not heavily enrolled in as its social status is not welcomed like university education.
It is also well noted that the technical school system in Lebanon is not popular and this can be seen by the statistics, which show that a total of 1.47% attended a technical school.

The next table (table 11) shows a cross-analysis of students that graduated from both public and/or private universities, and whether or not they came from a private or public school. The table shows us that 36% of the students that graduated from a private school went to a private university. Over 14% of students that graduated from a private school went to the public university. Of the numbers of students that went to a public school, 7% of them went to a private university, whereas 15% that had attended a public school went to the public university.

Table 11 further supports the fact that private education is very strong in Lebanon and those students that begin in private school education continue to private higher education institutions.
Table 11 Respondents according to private & public schools vs. universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I graduated from a …</th>
<th>Private University</th>
<th>Public University</th>
<th>Technical School (TAFE)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private school</td>
<td>36.58%</td>
<td>14.75%</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>57.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public school</td>
<td>7.08%</td>
<td>15.04%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>27.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(blank)</td>
<td>7.96%</td>
<td>5.01%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>15.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51.62%</td>
<td>34.81%</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions Six and Seven are combined in a cross-analysis. It shows an analysis of the number of students that graduated from a private or public school and the highest level of education they achieved. These are shown in table 12 below. It can be seen that respondents with a completed Bachelor’s degree numbered 25.6%, and over 48% of the respondent graduated with a Master’s degree. There were 13% of respondents that currently have a doctoral degree. It should be noted that the largest contingency of respondents that went to a private school had the highest percentage (27.73%) of Master’s degrees. The result was much less (13.57%) for the students that went to a public school. It is also worth noting that the results for Bachelor’s degree respondents is 12.98% who went to a private school and 7.96% who went to a public school.

Table 12 showed the various education levels in Lebanon and this supports the concept that Lebanese people have high education levels. Those students that have graduated from private schools continued further in their education. Highest percentage of graduates from private school obtained their doctoral degree.
This next table (table 13) shows the highest level of education according to which type of university the respondents attended. It is a cross-analysis of Questions Six and Seven, to include universities as well. The respondents indicated that 27% that had a Master’s degree graduated from a private university, whereas 18% graduated from a public university. The percentages also showed that 14% received a Bachelor’s degree and graduated from a private university, whereas 8% went to a public university. These statistics provide the background information regarding the employees working within the Lebanese university sector.

Table 13 supports the concept even further that private higher education graduates a higher level of bachelor's, masters and doctoral students.
Table 13 Highest education level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I graduated from a</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My highest education level</td>
<td>Private University</td>
<td>Public University</td>
<td>Technical School (TAFE)</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>14.45%</td>
<td>8.26%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>25.66%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brevet (gr.9)</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>7.67%</td>
<td>5.01%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>13.27%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>27.14%</td>
<td>18.29%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>48.67%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Certificate (TAFE)</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminal (gr.12)</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
<td>2.36%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>7.67%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(blank)</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>3.24%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51.62%</td>
<td>34.81%</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results show that the only public university in existence in Lebanon does not have the highest share of students. The private system (due to quality, improvements and modern facilities) has higher enrolments than the public system of education.

The next table (table 14) shows a cross-analysis of Questions One and Seven, the number of female and male respondents according to their level of education. The numbers show that more females in comparison to males, (30%) and (18%), respectively, have a Master’s degree. This, of course, is due to the fact that 60% of the respondents are female; however, the number for females in higher education is overall greater than the figures for their male counterparts. At the Bachelor degree level, we also see that 15% of females and 11% of males, respectively, have a Bachelor’s degree.

Table 14 supports the statistics that there are higher percentages of females that have a higher education degree than males, exclusively the bachelors and masters degree.
Table 14 Males & females according to highest education level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I am</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My highest education level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.75%</td>
<td>10.91%</td>
<td>25.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brevet (gr.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.90%</td>
<td>7.37%</td>
<td>13.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td></td>
<td>30.38%</td>
<td>17.99%</td>
<td>48.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Certificate (TAFE)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminal (gr.12)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.90%</td>
<td>1.77%</td>
<td>7.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(blank)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.36%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>3.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>60.47%</td>
<td>39.23%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table (table 15) presents the age distribution of the respondents according to level of education. We can see that the respondents are mostly distributed between 18-49 years of age. This reveals that respondents between 30-39 years of age have a Master’s degree (19.7%). The next highest level is between the ages of 16 and 29, where 14.75% have a Master’s degree. This indicates an educated young population for such small country.

Table 15 shows the participants by age and the highest education level that was ascertained at the university level.

Table 15 Highest education level & age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>My age is (in years)</th>
<th>60</th>
<th>16-29</th>
<th>30-39</th>
<th>40-49</th>
<th>50-59</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest education level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>10.62%</td>
<td>7.96%</td>
<td>5.60%</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
<td>25.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brevet (gr.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>2.36%</td>
<td>6.49%</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
<td>13.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>14.75%</td>
<td>19.76%</td>
<td>10.03%</td>
<td>3.24%</td>
<td>48.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Certificate (TAFE)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminal (gr.12)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
<td>2.95%</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
<td>7.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(blank)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
<td>3.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>28.32%</td>
<td>38.64%</td>
<td>21.83%</td>
<td>9.73%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next section discusses the following questions in the survey being the respondents work experience.

4.4.2.1 Work experience

Question 9 asks the type of position held by the respondents, whether in administration or in academia. Table 16 below shows a cross analyses of the number of respondents that work within a public or private university and in which position. The greater number of respondents, 41.30%, works in a private university in the administration section, and 27.43% work in the academic section. In the public universities, 13.57% work in the administration section and 5.60% work in the public section.

Table 16 shows that the participants came from the private sector universities than the public sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents?</th>
<th>Public private</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I currently hold a position in</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>27.43%</td>
<td>5.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>41.30%</td>
<td>13.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>7.08%</td>
<td>1.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(blank)</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>78.47%</td>
<td>21.24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 11 asks what type of contract the respondents signed with their organization. The percentages in figure 27 show that there are more full-time contracts (46.02%) than part-time contracts (15.63%). Tenured contracts are at a minimum (13.57%), that is, tenured contracts are not offered as much as the normal full-time contracts. These contracts can be easily renewable or not easily renewable.

It is worth noting that part time contractors are not officially registered in the social security benefits. It is only permissible for full time staff, that is, those individuals that work 40.5 hours per week.
Figure 26 shows that full time contracts are what are permissible as per the current Lebanese Labor Law that only permits officially full time workers to have benefits and be allowed to have rights within the law.

The following table examines the percentage of the type of contract and which type of university the respondents attended. The table illustrates that most of the full time contracts (over 20%) had a private university education and those with public university education (over 16%) have full time contracts. The tenured contracts are split almost equally between both the private and public university with 5.90% and 5.31% respectively. These results further provide a strong foundation into the attendance at private university versus public university.

Table 16 illustrates that most of the respondents have a full time contract and are employed in private universities. This shows the importance of private sector education.
Question 11 displayed in figure 27 below analyses the hours worked per week depending on whether the respondent is are or female. The statistics compare, in terms of gender, respondents who work less than twenty hours per week with those that work more than 40 hours per work – female (9.44%) and male (7.37%), and females (26.55%) and males (12.39%), respectively. There are a significant number of females (22.42%) and males (15.93%) that work between 20-39 hours per week. It is worth noting that set working hours in Lebanon are currently over 40 hours per week, which is not equivalent to global standards. It is worth noting that long working hours may affect an individual’s motivational levels; this is to be examined further.

The number of working hours is an important factor in that it shows that most of the employees work a full time schedule, which is greater than 40 hours. This is illustrated in figure 28 below.
Figure 27  Number of working hours according to gender

Figure 28 shows the responses to the query as to the salary range that respondents occupy. Those individuals that earn less than $650 per month number 9.73%. There are almost half (48.08%) that earn between $650 and $1200. There are 25.66% of respondents that earn between $1200 and $2300. These wages are based on monthly salaries.

The current base wage in Lebanon is approximately $500-$600 per month depending on the industry. This is according to the salary scales in Lebanon published by the council of ministries (2013). Wages are paid on a monthly basis and employees are registered in the national social security association after a three-month trial period. Many of the respondents indicated that they are in the average salary starting from $650.

Figure 28 statistics align with the current minimum salary wage in Lebanon, which is between $500-700. Most of the employees are in this range with a maximum of $1200.
Table 18 shows the positions that are held by the respondents and for how many years has been held. The positions display a range: administrative assistant; assistant to the Dean; student advisor; instructor/tutor; head of department; dean; and, other. The first row of the table shows how many years the person has been in the position. It should be noted that 169 respondents hold the position of administrative assistant, whereas 16.88% have been in the same position for over nine years. The majority of the administrative assistants have been in their current position over 44.38% – between two to five years, and 26.88% of the respondents have been in their position less than two years. Those that hold the position of assistant to the dean number forty-nine (49) respondents, where 44.90% have been in their position between two and five years. There are nineteen (19) respondents who have been in their position for less than two years. Student advisers make up for seventy-eight (78) respondents, where 12.82% have been in their position for more than nine years. There are twenty-two (or 43.59%) of the respondents that have held their position between two and five years.

There were seven individuals who indicated that they hold the position of Dean, where only two have been in this position for the last nine years. Three individuals
have been in the position between five and nine years, one has held the position for less than two years, and one has held this position between two and five years.

Table 18 Positions held & length of time held

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position/Years</th>
<th>&lt;2</th>
<th>2-5</th>
<th>5-9</th>
<th>&gt;9</th>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative assistant</td>
<td>26.88%</td>
<td>44.38%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>16.88%</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant to the dean</td>
<td>38.78%</td>
<td>44.90%</td>
<td>12.24%</td>
<td>4.08%</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student adviser</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>43.59%</td>
<td>10.26%</td>
<td>12.82%</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor/Tutor</td>
<td>26.09%</td>
<td>43.59%</td>
<td>10.26%</td>
<td>12.82%</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>26.67%</td>
<td>28.89%</td>
<td>26.67%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other …</td>
<td>18.29%</td>
<td>24.39%</td>
<td>24.39%</td>
<td>32.93%</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The compensation packages shown in Table 19 indicate that the types of packages that are given to the employees are: the basic salary (83.22%), and social security (56.38%). Out of 298 respondents who answered this question, only 93 responded that they have insurance. This makes a percentage of 31.21%. Retirement is at a low percentage – 17.11% – and only 51 of the 298 respondents have a retirement fund. Very few receive bonuses (5.70%), only 17 individuals, and overtime is worked by 11.07% of the respondents, being 33 out of the 298 respondents. Note that 51 respondents did not answer this question.

Compensation packages are very minimal as seen in Table 18, where participants indicated that the basic salary is what they receive. The statistics show the weaknesses in the compensation system if the universities.
Table 19 Compensation packages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Salary</td>
<td>83.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
<td>56.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>31.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement</td>
<td>17.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonuses</td>
<td>5.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtime</td>
<td>11.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Respondents:</strong> 298</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 14 asks the question: ‘How did you apply to the university?’ The responses to this question are in figure 30 below, where 29% of females got their job through knowing someone, or *Wasta*. Of the male respondents, over 18% got their jobs through knowing someone. The overall percentage of respondents that obtained their jobs through knowing someone is 47%. Word-of-mouth is also a way of ‘knowing someone’ and the amount of respondents that received their job through this channel is 5.9% for females and 5.01% for males. That makes a total of over 58% of respondents that got their jobs through *Wasta*. This is a significant percentage of respondents that got their job through knowing someone. The first research question asks, ‘How does *Wasta* influence HR practices of the University?’ This question tests the recruitment and selection procedures of the university. As the percentage is significant, it shows a relationship between *Wasta* and recruitment and selection. This will be analyzed further in the next chapter.

Figure 29 clearly shows the significance of this research and displays important statistics to be published.
The tables to follow will examine the process following in getting the job through knowing someone or *Wasta*, with various variables to ensure that each statistic is looked at separately (tables 20-26). In further displaying the data, the next table shows statistics according to region (table 20). It can be seen that those that received their job through *Wasta* live in the areas of Mount Lebanon (20.35%) and Beirut city (14.45%). It is worth noting that 14.16% of those living in Mount Lebanon applied directly to the university.

Table 20 shows that most of the respondents that get their job through knowing someone work in the heavily populated areas of Beirut City and the outskirts of Beirut, Mount Lebanon.
Table 20 How respondents applied via region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I applied to the university</td>
<td>Directly to the university</td>
<td>10.03%</td>
<td>2.36%</td>
<td>14.16%</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
<td>32.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know someone in university</td>
<td>14.45%</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
<td>20.35%</td>
<td>3.54%</td>
<td>6.49%</td>
<td></td>
<td>47.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responded to advertisement</td>
<td>1.77%</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>1.77%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>1.77%</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word of mouth</td>
<td>3.54%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>5.31%</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(blank)</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30.09%</td>
<td>4.72%</td>
<td>42.77%</td>
<td>8.85%</td>
<td>12.39%</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table below (table 21) shows the average age group of the respondents that applied through Wasta. It is well noted that the averages are distributed between 16-29 years of age, with a 14.16% response rate. Between the ages of 30-39, over 17% obtained their job through Wasta, and between 40-49, above 10% of respondents received their jobs through knowing someone.

Table 21 shows that Wasta has no age limits, the younger participants also obtained their job through Wasta.

Table 21 How respondents applied vs. age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of Respondents</th>
<th>My age is (in years)</th>
<th>16-29</th>
<th>30-39</th>
<th>40-49</th>
<th>50-59</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I applied to the university</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>14.16%</td>
<td>17.40%</td>
<td>3.24%</td>
<td>32.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directly to the university</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>13.86%</td>
<td>6.78%</td>
<td>3.83%</td>
<td>47.79%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know someone in university</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>2.36%</td>
<td>2.36%</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responded to advertisement</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
<td>4.42%</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
<td>10.91%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word of mouth</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(blank)</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>28.32%</td>
<td>38.64%</td>
<td>21.83%</td>
<td>9.73%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next table (table 22) below shows the percentage of respondents who got their job through Wasta and whether they graduated from a private school (28.02%) or public school (11.50%). It is noteworthy to see that only 5% of individuals responded to an advertisement. This can be looked at in two ways; either the
institution does not advertise, or the advertisement has not been seen by many people.

Table 22 How respondents applied vs. private or public school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondent</th>
<th>I graduated from a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I applied to the university</td>
<td>19.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directly to the university</td>
<td>28.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know someone in university</td>
<td>3.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responded to advertisement</td>
<td>5.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(blank)</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>57.23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also, when looking at what university they went to, the number of respondents that received their jobs through Wasta and went to a private university was 25.3%, and those that went through a public university was 15.9%. These percentages clarify further that the larger percentage that used Wasta to get their job at the university they currently work at went through the private school system. These results are seen in table 22 below.

Table 23 below shows the results of how respondents applied to the university versus if they graduated through a public or private university. These statistics show from which education system the respondents graduated.

Table 23 How respondents applied vs. public/private University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I graduated from a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I applied to the university</td>
<td>17.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directly to the university</td>
<td>25.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know someone in university</td>
<td>3.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responded to advertisement</td>
<td>4.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(blank)</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51.62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table below (table 24) shows after cross-analysis, the number of respondents that received their job through Wasta versus highest education level achieved – Bachelors degree (15%) and Masters degree (19.76%). It is also worthy to note that 6.19% of doctorate holders stated that they also got their job through Wasta. It is not the lesser-educated individuals that got their job through Wasta, but those with tertiary-level education.

Table 24 below shows the respondents highest diploma received in comparison to how they applied to the university.

Table 24 How respondents applied vs. highest school diploma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>My highest education level</th>
<th>Bachelor</th>
<th>Brevet (gr.9)</th>
<th>Doctoral</th>
<th>Masters</th>
<th>Technical Certificate (TAFE)</th>
<th>Terminal (gr.12)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I applied to the university</td>
<td>Directly to the university</td>
<td>7.37%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>4.42%</td>
<td>17.11%</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
<td>32.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know someone in university</td>
<td>15.04%</td>
<td>6.19%</td>
<td>4.72%</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>47.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responded to advertisement</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>4.72%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>6.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word of mouth</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
<td>6.19%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>10.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(blank)</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25.66%</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>13.27%</td>
<td>48.67%</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
<td>7.67%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In looking at the division between respondents in the administration and academic sectors (in table 25), 29% of positions in the administrative sector were attained through knowing someone. In terms of academic positions, 13.27% of respondents attained their job through Wasta. This information provides the researcher with important information as where most of the Wasta recruited jobs is being placed. Those that applied directly to the university were at a lower percentage for 16.22% in administrative positions and 12.98% in academic positions. It is worth noting that the normal western practice of responding to an advertisement for a position vacant (Armstrong, 2009, Robbins & Judge, 2015) was at a very low 3.83% (administrative position) that responded to an advertisement and 1.77% (academic position).
Table 25 Process of application to university vs. area of work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I currently hold a position in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I applied to the university</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directly to the university</td>
<td>12.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know someone in university</td>
<td>13.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responded to advertisement</td>
<td>1.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word of mouth</td>
<td>4.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(blank)</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33.04%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table below (table 26) illustrates the types of contracts that were taken by the respondents versus the process of application to the university. It can be seen that the highest percentage (23.6%) of those that got their jobs through Wasta also received a full-time contract. There are 6.78% of respondents that got tenured contracts through Wasta. This displays a higher percentage than those that received a tenured contract when applying directly to the university (2.95%) and when responding to an advertisement (1.18%). The overall lowest percentage was through responding to an advertisement, which gave only a 6.49% response. Word-of-mouth is also considered a type of Wasta, where you get important information through knowing someone. Interestingly, those respondents that got their job through word-of-mouth also received a higher proportion of full-time contracts – 4.42% of the 10.91% that got jobs.

Table 26: Process of application vs. type of contract held

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>Type of contract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I applied to the university</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directly to the university</td>
<td>15.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know someone in university</td>
<td>23.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responded to advertisement</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word of mouth</td>
<td>4.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(blank)</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46.02%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 40 asks the respondents if they were satisfied with their retirement fund. Table 27 shows the statistics of the level of satisfaction. The statistics showed that of the females, 14.16% disagreed and 9.73% strongly disagreed. The statistics for the males showed that 9.14% disagreed and 5.01% strongly disagreed. This makes a total of 38% who were not satisfied. Conversely, in evaluating the satisfaction level, over 29% of females are satisfied, in comparison to only 20% of males who are satisfied. As Lebanon is a patriarchal society, these statistics show that the female is not as concerned with their retirement fund as the man; this would be due to the fact that the male is known to be the ‘breadwinner’.

Table 27 Level of satisfaction with retirement fund

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am satisfied with my retirement fund.</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>7.08%</td>
<td>3.54%</td>
<td>10.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>21.53%</td>
<td>17.11%</td>
<td>38.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>7.96%</td>
<td>4.42%</td>
<td>12.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>14.16%</td>
<td>9.14%</td>
<td>23.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>9.73%</td>
<td>5.01%</td>
<td>14.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
<td>39.23%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next section illustrates the data that was collected regarding training and development.

4.5 Training and Development

Question 28 asked whether respondents felt they received proper training on taking up their current position (table 28). The combination of the percentages showed that 51.56% disagreed and 46% agreed. It is unfortunate that, at universities in Lebanon, there is a lack of training for staff when they take up their position. It is an important HR practice that contributes to the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. In the realm of higher education, it is reasonable to expect that staff receive proper training. The differences between male and females that disagreed – over 19% and 22% respectively – show that there are more females that are dissatisfied with this aspect of their work. However, this is an expected outcome of the results, as there were more female than male respondents who filled in the
survey. Training and development is how employees learn what to do on the job and how to do their job. When the organization does not offer training and development it means that employees have not been given the set of skills needed to complete their tasks. They are certainly selected having certain knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs), however these KSAs need to be worked on by the organization aligning their objectives and goals to increase the productivity and efficiency of the organization.

Table 28 shows the responses to the statement regarding satisfaction with training.

Table 28 Satisfaction with training on taking up position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When I first began my job I received proper training.</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>10.32%</td>
<td>4.72%</td>
<td>15.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>16.81%</td>
<td>15.04%</td>
<td>31.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>18.29%</td>
<td>12.98%</td>
<td>31.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>13.86%</td>
<td>6.19%</td>
<td>20.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
<td>39.23%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next questions/statement asked the respondent to indicate whether or not the duties that they perform actually match their job description. Table 29 below shows the extent to which work duties match job description. The statistics show that the combined percentages of males and females who agreed and disagreed was 59% and 36%, respectively. The job description is an essential part of the person’s package and must be clear. The fact that there are 36% that disagreed indicates that there are a number of issues that need to be raised, including: the reasons that the job description changed; if the staff member in question was involved in the change; was the change communicated; and has the system of job descriptions always been that way or were there changes made.
Table 29 Extent to which work duties match job description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The duties that I perform actually match the duties indicated in the job description</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>11.80%</td>
<td>6.78%</td>
<td>18.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>23.01%</td>
<td>17.70%</td>
<td>41.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
<td>2.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>17.99%</td>
<td>10.62%</td>
<td>28.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>6.19%</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
<td>8.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
<td>39.23%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 36 asks whether or not the respondents were satisfied with their chances for promotion. Table 30 below showed that less then half (49%) stated that they were not satisfied and a little less than 46% were satisfied. Promotion is an HR practice that allows people to measure how well they are doing, receive feedback and ensure that goals that align with the organizational plan are met. With almost half (50%) of respondents expressing dissatisfaction, it clearly shows that people do not feel that they will advance in their career. It shows that employees are not setting goals that align with the university objectives nor are they receiving feedback. This also means that employees would not be able to envision where they are going within the organization and this leads to job dissatisfaction and demotivation. This is a significant HR issue for the institution.

Table 30 Satisfied with chances for promotion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with my chances for promotion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>11.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>35.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>6.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>31.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>15.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 44 asks respondents to indicate if their supervisor is consistent when administering policies and procedures. These results are seen in table 31 below.
The combined total of males and females (62%) agreed on this point, while over 32% disagreed. This indicates that there are some issues to correct in terms of incorrect administration of policies on the part of employers. The percentage is higher than is advisable for an institution with regard to this particular issue. It is important that the policies and procedures are adhered to at all levels of management.

Table 31 Supervisor consistency in policy administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I am</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor is consistent when administering policies concerning employees.</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>9.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>27.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>15.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>4.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alternative work schedules, investigated via Survey Question 45 (shown in table 32), refers to flexible timing, a compressed workweek and job sharing; these are currently seen in HR terms as part of an organization’s willingness to be flexible with their employees, resulting in decreased absences and turnover rates. In overall terms, almost 40% of respondents stated that they disagreed that their workplace offered adequate alternative work schedules; on the other hand, 52% agreed that their workplace did offer these schedules. When differentiating for gender, more than 29% of females agreed with the statement and 24% disagreed. When these figures are compared with the statistics for male respondents, it can be seen that under 14% felt that the flexibility of work schedules was inadequate. By way of explanation for this discrepancy, it is suggested that, due to the patriarchal nature of Lebanese society, it is the social norm that females in Lebanon are the caretakers of the family; they are the homemakers and if they do work, they must often search for flexibility in their careers at some point. Thus, the statistics do not show, particularly in the case of females, a significant positive percentage enjoying the availability of flexible work arrangements.
Table 32 Availability of alternative work schedules by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I am</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When possible alternative work schedules (flex-time, compressed work weeks, job sharing, telecommuting) are offered to employees.</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>6.78%</td>
<td>6.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>23.60%</td>
<td>15.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5.31%</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>17.11%</td>
<td>10.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>7.67%</td>
<td>3.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
<td>39.23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 47 asks the respondents if they believe that their benefits package is equitable (seen in table 33 below). Slightly more female than male respondents stated that they agreed – 27% versus less than 22%, respectively. In comparison, over 29% of females stated that they disagreed and 13% of males disagreed. The cumulative response is that over 50% agreed that their benefits package was equitable, whereas 44% disagreed. This percentage break up clearly shows that, with such a high rate of disagreement, the compensation and benefits package in many workplaces is not satisfactory.

Table 33 Extent of equitability of benefit package

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I am</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The benefit package we have is equitable.</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>5.01%</td>
<td>4.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>22.42%</td>
<td>18.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3.24%</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>23.30%</td>
<td>10.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>6.49%</td>
<td>3.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
<td>39.23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 48 asked the respondent if they had received the training they need to do their job well. The table below (table 34) illustrates the cumulative percentages
between female and male show that 49% agree and 46.8% disagree. Training is fundamental to ensure that employees understand their roles and what is expected of them. Should they not get the appropriate training, then the organization’s objectives are in danger of remaining unfulfilled.

Table 34 Extent of appropriate and adequate training to perform job well

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I am</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I got the training I need to do my job well.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>7.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>19.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>1.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>23.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>9.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next analysis compares the training needed to do the job well and the level of education of respondents (shown in table 35 below). The number of respondents holding a Master’s degree who agreed and disagreed was roughly the same – 22% and 24%. At the Bachelor degree level, 15% of respondents felt that they got the training they needed in comparison with 9% who responded negatively to this question. The responses at the PhD level showed less of a difference, with 6.7% responding positively and 5.8% responding negatively.
Table 35 Adequacy of job training according to level of education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>My highest education level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor (gr.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I got the training I need to do my job well.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>13.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>7.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25.66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 49 asked the respondents if there was further training made available for the employees in order to develop their personal and professional skills further. Table 36 below shows that 50.6% respondents disagreed and 45% agreed. When examining the statistics by gender, 30% of females and 19% of males disagreed, in comparison, respectively, to 25% and 18% who agreed.

Table 36 Extent of additional training for growth and development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I am</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training is made available to us for personal growth &amp; development.</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>8.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>17.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>21.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>9.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 50 asked if training was made available for the employees to perform their work roles better. These results are seen in table 37 below. Over 50% agreed that training was made available and 44% disagreed. These results are shown in table 45 below. In comparing the two questions, 49 and 50, one can see that there
is not a lot of difference in the percentages. It can be concluded that institutions do not seem to provide any further training that would lead to job satisfaction; thus, employees can feel that they are not updating or improving their skills. This aspect of the responses can also be linked to performance management, where the employee is not being measured for their performance; nor are they getting trained. Hence, the employee is unable to improve him or herself.

Table 37 Provision of training to improve employee performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I am</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training is made available to us so that we can do our jobs better.</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>7.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>21.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>19.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>8.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 51 asks the respondents if they had access to information about job conferences and workshops (table 38). The responses show that 44% disagree. They do not have access to information or conferences and 50% of them agree that they do. Continuous training and development leads to career development. Organizations need to ensure that they are giving their employees opportunities to improve their KSAs. In doing so they are improving individual effectiveness and efficiency, which will lead to an increase in organizational productivity. This percentage of respondents that indicated that they do not have access to further training is over 44%, which is a high amount, and shows that the organizations are will be facing many issues.

Table 38 shows the respondents answers to access to information for professional development.
Table 38 Access to information for professional development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I am</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every employee is valued.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>9.14%</td>
<td>7.67%</td>
<td>16.81%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>19.47%</td>
<td>14.75%</td>
<td>34.22%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2.36%</td>
<td>1.77%</td>
<td>4.13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>18.58%</td>
<td>10.91%</td>
<td>29.79%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>10.91%</td>
<td>4.13%</td>
<td>15.04%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
<td>39.23%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 54 asks the respondent if they feel that every employee is valued (table 39 below). The responses indicate that 52% of employees agreed, whereas 42% of the respondents disagreed. This is a high percentage of individuals that feel employees are undervalued. Being valued is a part of the motivation process, which is, in turn, linked to job satisfaction. Almost half of the respondents do not feel that they are valued. The significance of this in HR terms will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Table 39 Extent to which employees feel valued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I am</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every employee is valued.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>4.72%</td>
<td>4.42%</td>
<td>9.14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>24.78%</td>
<td>18.58%</td>
<td>43.66%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
<td>3.54%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>23.01%</td>
<td>11.80%</td>
<td>34.81%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>5.90%</td>
<td>2.95%</td>
<td>8.85%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
<td>39.23%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following tables will correspond with the analysis for the social networks. The respondents were asked in Question 55 if the right information gets to the right people at the right time (in table 40). In combination, 44.23% disagreed and strongly disagreed, whereas over 50% were positive in total. The statement asks if the ‘right’ information gets to the ‘right’ people. Unfortunately, the
communication networks do not appear to be strong, with over 44% of employees feeling that they do not get the right information. This is a high amount, which indicates that there are major problems in the communication patterns and links within the universities. The communication process is imperative. Proper and clear lines of communication ensure effectiveness within organization. The right information allows for informative decision-making. The statement was quite clear when asking if the right information gets the right person. Theoretically when the right information gets the right person, clearer decisions are made and it allows for proper teamwork.

Table 40 Communication channels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I am</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The right information gets to the right people at the right time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>7.67%</td>
<td>5.31%</td>
<td>12.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>21.53%</td>
<td>16.22%</td>
<td>37.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2.95%</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
<td>5.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>20.65%</td>
<td>13.27%</td>
<td>34.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>7.67%</td>
<td>2.36%</td>
<td>10.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
<td>39.23%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 56 asks the respondents whether the work atmosphere encourages open and honest communication. Table 41 below shows that in total, over 34% disagree and 62% agree. These percentages show that, although there is a more positive response with regard to open and honest communication, there is still a lack of total openness and honesty.
Table 41 Honest communication in the workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I am</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The work atmosphere encourages open and honest communication.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.44%</td>
<td>7.67%</td>
<td>17.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td>28.02%</td>
<td>16.81%</td>
<td>45.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.06%</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
<td>3.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td>17.40%</td>
<td>10.03%</td>
<td>27.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.54%</td>
<td>3.54%</td>
<td>7.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>60.47%</td>
<td>39.23%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 57 asks respondents to state whether or not there is basic trust among employees and supervisors (table 42 shown below). Females seem to feel that there is basic trust among staff members, with 38% responding positively, whereas only 23.6% of males agree. Over 20% of females and 14% of males disagree, obviously feeling a lack of basic trust.

Table 42 Trust among employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I am</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is a basic trust among employees and supervisors.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.85%</td>
<td>5.90%</td>
<td>14.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td>29.20%</td>
<td>17.70%</td>
<td>47.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.06%</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
<td>3.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.81%</td>
<td>11.80%</td>
<td>28.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.54%</td>
<td>2.36%</td>
<td>5.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>60.47%</td>
<td>39.23%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 59 asks the respondents to indicate if there is a real feeling of teamwork. In table 43 below the statistics show that a minimal amount of respondents strongly agree (16.81%) while about half agree (46.90%). Through a re-examination of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions in the next chapter, this researcher notes the dimension of collectivism, which explains the position of employees on teamwork (Kabasakal, 2015)
Table 43 Feeling of teamwork

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I am</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a real feeling of teamwork.</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>10.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>28.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>16.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 60 asks the respondent to indicate if the environment supports a balance between work and personal life (as seen in table 44 below). The majority of the respondents (51.92%) agreed that it does. Less than half (28.61%) believes that it does not provide a good balance.

Table 44 Work in a supportive environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I am</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The environment supports a balance between work and personal life.</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>7.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>32.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>14.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When applying the two variables of marital status and gender type to questions relating to work/life balance, the results show that 19.17% of married women agree, in comparison to 7.37% that disagree (shown in table 45 below). Of the married men, 15.03% indicated that they agree and 6% disagree. Only 9.14% of single males agreed that there was a balance between work and personal life, in comparison with single females (18.29%) who indicated that there was a good balance. It is worth noting that the higher percentage of single females who agreed is almost equal to that of the married women. Even though the overall percentage...
seems to indicate that at least half of the respondents agree, the averages are not high enough to assume that there is a proper balance.

Table 45  Environment supports work and personal life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of responses</th>
<th>The environment supports a balance between work and personal life.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>divorced</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>married</td>
<td>2.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>single</td>
<td>4.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Total</td>
<td>7.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>divorced</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>married</td>
<td>3.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>single</td>
<td>3.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Total</td>
<td>6.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14.16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 61 asks the respondents to indicate if their job meets their expectations. The results are displayed in table 46 below. The combined results of females and males show that over 66% say that their job does meet their expectations. However, over 37% of respondents disagree. When taking into consideration other results relating to training (which showed that not a great deal of training was given to the employees), the scores can be compared to reflect that, without training and development, there will be some dissatisfaction amongst the employees.
### Table 46 Job meets employee expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I am</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My job meets my expectations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>7.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>25.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>21.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 62 focuses on whether respondents feel that they are balancing a focus on both long- and short-term goals. Table 47 below shows the responses. Of the female respondents 31.27% agree that there is a balance and 5.9% strongly agree whereas 15.34% of females disagree and 3.24% strongly disagree. The male responses indicate that 21.83% agree and only 3.83% strongly agree. The balance of long and short-term goal is a part of the career development and performance management processes. The statistics show that there is still a relatively high amount of respondents that do not balance their goals.

### Table 47 Balance of long and short-term goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I am</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We balance our focus on both long-term and short-term goals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>5.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>31.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>15.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 63 examines the status quo and whether people who challenge it are valued or not (shown in table 48 below). The responses indicated that over 65% of the respondents felt that people who challenge the status quo are valued,
whereas over 35% do not feel that they are valued. This is a high percentage of respondents that do not feel they will be valued by their organization should they challenge the status quo. Challenging the status quo shows the innovativeness of the individuals within the organizations. The statistics indicate that there is still a relatively high amount of individuals that are not valued. Not valuing an individual, leads to de-motivation and dissatisfaction of the employee, which can lead to increased absenteeism and turnover.

Table 48  Employees challenging the status quo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I am</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People who challenge the status quo are valued.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>7.37%</td>
<td>4.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>24.48%</td>
<td>19.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>6.19%</td>
<td>2.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>17.11%</td>
<td>9.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>5.31%</td>
<td>3.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
<td>39.23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 64 asks the respondent to estimate to what extent work groups are actively involved in making work processes more effective (shown in table 49 below). The total of male and females that agreed were 67% and 29% disagreed. Work groups and teams are a part of everyday organizations. Over 29% disagree that work groups are actively involved in making work processes more effective. Effectiveness and efficiency begins with groups and teams working well together for the better of the organization. Through increased competition, organizations needs to ensure alignment of strategies and improved communication skills in order to sustain a competitive advantage.
Table 49 Work groups make work processes more effective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
<th>I am</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work groups are actively involved in making work processes more effective.</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>9.73%</td>
<td>7.67%</td>
<td>17.40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>29.20%</td>
<td>19.76%</td>
<td>49.26%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>3.54%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>13.27%</td>
<td>8.85%</td>
<td>22.12%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>5.60%</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
<td>7.67%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
<td>39.23%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data that was displayed above are summaries of the survey that was undertaken and covers the various HRPs within the universities. The next section tests the hypotheses through a regressions analysis in order to answer the research questions.

4.6 Regression Analysis

The regression analysis below has tested the impact of Wasta on three HR practices. Below are the question numbers in the survey that was distributed. The total added results of the responses to selected questions were used for the regression analysis (please see the appendix for surveys).

Question 14 as the dependent variable
Question 17 (for performance)
Question 23 (for compensation)
Question 28 (for training)

Below are three models testing the three hypotheses set for this research. The first test is that Wasta and training has no relationship in comparison to H₁, which states that Wasta and training has a relationship.

H₀ Wasta and training has no relationship
H₁ Wasta and training has a relationship
The second set of tests states the H₀, where *Wasta* and compensation has no relationship and H₁, where *Wasta* and compensation has a relationship.

H₀ *Wasta* and compensation has no relationship  
H₁ *Wasta* and compensation has a relationship

The third set of hypotheses states, variously, the H₀ that *Wasta* and career development has a no relationship and H₁, where *Wasta* and career development has a relationship.

H₀ *Wasta* and career development has no relationship  
H₁ *Wasta* and career development has a relationship

Below are three models that have been developed in order to test the above hypotheses. The first model examines the influence of *Wasta* on compensation. The Independent variable that was entered was *Wasta* and the dependent variable was *compensation*. The following table of results shows a regression analysis regarding the first test, derived from entering the data from the survey regarding compensation. The three regression models examine the influence of *Wasta* on compensation, training and career, respectively. The dependent variable is *compensation* in Model 1; *training* in Model 2 and *career* in Model 3 and the independent variable is *Wasta*. Each model shows that the independent variable has, to a certain extent, an influence on the dependent variable. The effect of *Wasta* appeared not to be the same on all the dependent variables.

4.6.1 Model 1: Influence of *Wasta* on compensation

The first model below is the influence of *Wasta* on compensation. The table below 50 and 51 shows the results of the SPSS input of data, where the Independent variable is *Wasta* and the dependent variable is *compensation*. This model tests if *Wasta* and compensation have or don’t have a relationship.
Table 50 Variables – Compensation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Variables Entered</th>
<th>Variables Removed</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wasta*</td>
<td></td>
<td>Enter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. All requested variables entered.

b. Dependent variable: compensation

The next table, 51, shows the summary of the model of hypothesis being tested for Wasta and compensation. It gives the R and R Square calculation.

Table 51 Model 1 Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.254*</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>.771</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Wasta

Table 52 Anova

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>14.185</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.185</td>
<td>23.889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>206.039</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>.594</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>220.223</td>
<td>348</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Wasta

b. Dependent variable: compensation

The ANOVA table is the analysis of variance (Kothari, 2004). In the table above (52) the important figure to concentrate on is the Sig. which indicates the exact significance level of ANOVA. If the numbers here are less than the critical value of alpha, then it is said to be significant (Kothari, 2004). This value is normally set at 0.5. Should the value in the Sig. column be less than that, then it is said to be
significant. Note that even though the Sig. is noted at .000 it is not really zero, however the number is too small to show up in the number of decimals. Being significant denotes that the ‘means’ differ more than what is expected by chance alone.

Table 53 Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.345</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>35.884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wasta</td>
<td>.412</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>.254</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the influence of Wasta on compensation, there is a positive relationship and the correlation coefficient is 0.25. Based on the regression equation and the t-test results, there is a significant relationship between Wasta and compensation at a 95% confidence level. However, it appears from the ANOVA table that R² is limited and equal to 6.4%. So the variation of the independent variable explains only 6.4% of the variation of the dependent variable; this can be explained by the fact that other factors than Wasta contribute in the explanation regarding compensation.

The histogram below in figure 30 shows the dependent variable of compensation. As can be seen by the curve it is almost normal. Factor 2 could be a little higher in order to make the curve closer to normal in shape. Answers are higher than the mean; the answers are around the mean. The curve shows a negative skewness towards the right. Skewness studies the way the answers are clustered around the average (Kothari, 2004).
Figure 30 Histogram of compensation variable from regression analysis

The normal Q-Q plot of compensation in figure 31 below also shows that it is almost normal. That is, the variables are along the line, some above and some below however closer to the line. The distribution is close to normal.
4.6.2 Model 2: Influence of Wasta on training

The second model tests the influence of Wasta on training. The data was entered into SPSS in order to examine this model. The independent variable is Wasta and the dependent variable is training. This model tests if Wasta and training have a relationship or not.

Table 54 Variable - training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables Entered/Removed&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Variables Entered</th>
<th>Variables Removed</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>Wasta</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. All requested variables entered.

b. Dependent variable: training

The next table, 55, shows the summary of the model of hypothesis being tested for Wasta and training giving the R and R Square calculation.
Table 55: Model Summary - training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.152&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.822</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Wasta

Table 56 Anova

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.492</td>
<td>8.138</td>
<td>.005&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>.675</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>236.997</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Wasta

b. Dependent variable: training

The ANOVA for training in table 56 above shows a Sig. of .005, which is still below the 0.5. This makes it significant.

Table 57 Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.507</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>35.592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wasta</td>
<td>.258</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>.152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent variable: training

Regarding the influence of Wasta on training, there is also a positive relationship but the correlation coefficient is 0.15. Apparently, training and Wasta have a
weaker correlation than the one that exists between compensation and Wasta. Based on the regression equation and the t-test results, there is also a significant relationship between Wasta and training at a 95% confidence level. Again, it appears from the ANOVA table that R² is limited and equal to 2.3%. So the variation of the independent variable explains only 2.3% of the variation of the dependent variable; this can be explained by the fact that other factors than Wasta contribute in the explanation of the training. However, we can say that there is a positive relationship, which is shown by the confidence level of 95%. Hence, H₁

Wasta and training have a relationship

The histogram below in figure 33 on training shows a more normal curve. It looks normal. Around greater than 120 observations around the mean, this indicates that they almost have the same perception of the impact of training on Wasta. Over 250 think the same way.

Figure 32: Histogram for training from regression analysis
The normal Q-Q plot of training in figure 33 below illustrates also a near-normal relationship. It’s an increasing linear trend.

![Normal Q-Q Plot of Training](image)

**Figure 33 Q-Q plot for training from regression analysis**

The next section looks at the last model, model 3, and the results of the regression analysis

4.6.3 Model 3: Influence of Wasta on career

The third model examines the influence of Wasta on career development. The data was entered into SPSS and the results are below, where, the independent variable is Wasta and the dependent variable is career.

This test will tell us if there is a relationship between Wasta and career.
Table 58 Variable- Career

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Variables Entered</th>
<th>Variables Removed</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wasta</td>
<td></td>
<td>Enter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. All requested variables entered.

b. Dependent variable: career

Table 59, shows the summary of the model of hypothesis being tested for Wasta and career giving the R and R Square calculation.

Table 59 Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.175a</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.840</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Wasta

Table 60 Anova

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>7.688</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.688</td>
<td>10.894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>242.752</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>.706</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>250.439</td>
<td>345</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Wasta

b. Dependent variable: career
The significance in the ANOVA table in table 60 shows a figure of .001 which is also still below the .005. This indicates that it is significant.

Table 61 Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.485</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>34.502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wasta</td>
<td>.305</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>.175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent variable: career

In the third model, the results are similar to the first two models. There is a positive relationship between Wasta and career, and the correlation between these two variables is 0.17. The relationship is significant at a 95% confidence level, but the explanatory power of the model given by $R^2$ is limited to 3.1%. These results suggest that Wasta has a significant influence on the different variables considered, but it is not the only factor. As the relationship shows a confidence level of 95%, it can be deduced that $H_1$ Wasta and career have a relationship.

The histogram below in figure 34, for career indicates that the curve is almost normal. Most of the answers are around the average, which is 2.67. This also indicates that people have the perceptions or reactions regarding the impact of Wasta.
Figure 34: Histogram for career from regression analysis

Figure 35 below shows the Q-Q plot for career. This is a normal plot, which suggest that the line is upward and the values are around the line and not scattered. This Q-Q plot is considered normal.
These three regression models were able to explain the following: that Wasta is related to training, compensation and career development. Each one alone is not that strong in correlation. It seems that there are different factors that are also involved. However, it is the researcher’s opinion that this opens further avenues for more specific research into each area, in order to identify what other factors may be involved. Moreover, these three models have been able to prove a positive relationship between three HR practices and Wasta which have not been tested before.

Descriptive analysis of the statistics

From the descriptive statistics tables shown, one notices that none of the compensation, training and career data is exactly normally distributed. The mean and the median of each data set are different, which proves that there is certain skewness. In fact, from the skewness figure, the three data sets are skewed to the
left. But compensation data shows the most important skewness relative to the other two.

*Normality*

In order to test for normality, there are a number of tests, which include, Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests (Razali & Wah, 2011). Given that the dataset considered is less than 2000 observations, Shapiro-Wilk test is used. The Shapiro-Wilk test is a powerful test to be used and seeing that the sample size is less than 2000 and one independent variable, this can show that even though the normality is examined below it does not indicate that the data is as weak as it seems (Razali & Wah, 2011).

- The null hypothesis is: The distribution is normal
- The alternative hypothesis is: The distribution is not normal

The Shapiro-Wilk test is for testing when there is one independent variable as per this research, where *Wasta* is the independent variable.

For the compensation, training, career and *Wasta*, and according to the p-value shown in the table of Shapiro-Wilk test, one can reject the null hypotheses for all the datasets and conclude that the data comes from a non-normal distribution (Razali & Wah, 2011).

Regarding Cronbach’s alpha, that is a measure of internal consistency, it shows how closely related a set of items are as a group (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). It is considered to be a measure of scale reliability. The Cronbach’s alpha in the research is 0.5. It indicates weak internal consistency, which is shown in table 62 below, p. 246.
When alpha is high, this means that respondents who tended to select high scores for one item also tended to select high scores for the others; similarly, respondents who selected a low score for one item tended to select low scores for the others.

Literature shows that a low Cronbach’s alpha does not mean that it is negated or not used. Schmitt (1996) stated, “There is no sacred level of acceptable or unacceptable level of alpha. In some cases, measures with (by conventional standards) low levels of alpha may still be quite useful p.353”. Other authors like Cho and Kim (2015) proved in their studies that there are many misconceptions when using Cronbach’s alpha. They listed a number of misconceptions some of them being that; a high value of alpha is an indication of internal consistency; and that alpha should be equal to or higher than 0.7. Cho and Kim’s (2015) research proved that other variables must be considered when examining Cronbach’s alpha and that it is a relatively inferior method despite being used worldwide. They even state that “they may fear penalties incurred from not using the alpha coefficient in their studies because dissertation committees and editors are likely familiar with alpha but may not be familiar with its alternatives. In the perspective of network externality, substituting alpha with a superior alternative is not merely a matter of personal choice but a matter of academia consciously responding to the issue, Cho and Kim (2015) p.225.”

In the research, some respondents answered that *Wasta* affects training and not compensation and career. So by taking one respondent at a time, it is difficult to predict his/her answer on a question even if one knows his/her answer on another question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.500</td>
<td>.511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 62 Reliability statistics
**Factor Analysis**

Factor analysis is defined as “a multivariate technique that confirms the dimensions of the concept that have been operationally defined, as well as indicating which of the items are most appropriate for each dimension (establishing construct validity)” (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010, p.181).

The correlation matrix in table 63 below, can be interpreted to see that *Wasta* is 1.000 which signifies a perfect positive linear relationship, with *Wasta and Wasta*. The correlation between *Wasta* and compensation .265 indicates a weak positive relationship. Between *Wasta* and Training, .137 also a weak positive relationship as does the correlation between *Wasta* and career. The table above shows that most of the figures are between 0 and 0.265 which indicates weak positive relationships. There are few correlations above 0.3

Table 63 Correlation Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wasta</th>
<th>Compensation</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Career</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wasta</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.265</td>
<td>.137</td>
<td>.179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>.265</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.257</td>
<td>.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>.137</td>
<td>.257</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>.179</td>
<td>.174</td>
<td>.230</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, the measurement turned out to be 0.634 (see table 64, p.245 below). Theory on KMO suggests that when the measurement is greater than > 0.5 than it is acceptable. The Bartlett’s test of Sphericity also suggests that the significance is less than 0.05, in fact it is 0.000 which means that the significance is small enough to reject the null hypothesis.
Table 64 KMO and Bartlett’s test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KMO and Bartlett’s Test</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Meas of Sampling Adequacy</td>
<td>.634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square</td>
<td>79.169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The communalities in Table 65 below show the percentage of variance explained. The communalities explain how well the model is working for the individual variables. The communalities are below 0.5 which indicate that the factor analysis needs to re-run or they need to be excluded.

Table 65 Communalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communalities</th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>Extraction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wasta</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.365</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

In the Pearson’s correlation one can note that the correlations between the variable are not very strong (in table 66). According to Kothari (2004) when the r value is closer to the value of 1 that it is a strong relationship. As can be seen by the table above, the Pearson for each correlation is weak with values of .269, .146 and .176

The sig (2 tailed) value is less than 0.5 it shows a statistically significant correlation between the variables.
Table 66 Pearson Correlation Mix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wasta</th>
<th>Compensation</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Career</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Correlations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasta</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.269**</td>
<td>.146**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.269**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.267**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.146**</td>
<td>.267**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.176**</td>
<td>.176**</td>
<td>.230**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The scree plot below in figure 36 shows the eigenvalues and the component numbers. This graph is used to determine how many factors to retain. The point of interest will be where the curve begins to flatten. The curve begins to flatten from factor 2 and 3. Hence the factors that should be retained is component number 1.
As noted in the literature review chapter and research context chapter, Hofstede’s cultural values for Lebanon discuss the prominence of obedience to authority and control. It also discusses the view of importance of family life, where people give up their independence (Dirani, 2006; Kabasakal, 2015). When it comes to personal questions, Lebanese fear disappointing the hierarchy, so it is believed that not all the questions were filled in. Noting this, 69 surveys were not completed properly. According to Hofsetede as well, Lebanese loyalty is quite prominent (Dirani, 2006) and this is also another factor in the data having a weaker correlation. Consequently as this research is exploratory, it is imperative that qualitative data are obtained in order to validate the information collected, and even provides a clearer picture on the said phenomenon of Wasta.

The section to follow discusses the interview questions that were asked in the qualitative data.
4.7 Interview Data

The following section details the questions and answers of the interviews conducted with 21 individuals. The first section will detail the demographics then followed by the NVivo statistics and details regarding the questions and answers. Finally, a detailed interview with an individual occupying a senior position with a university in Lebanon, who is also an education consultant, is presented.

4.7.1 Demographics

The researcher conducted 20 interviews among various employees in 4 universities in Lebanon. The duration of each interview was a minimum of 30 minutes. The information was inputted into NVivo.

The staff members were a mix of both male and females, but the majority was female; sixteen out of the twenty were female and four were male. Their ages ranged from 25 to 45 years old. The universities in question were a mix of the public university in Lebanon and three private universities.

The researcher used NVivo in order to quantify details of the interviews. Below is a table that states the frequency of words like ‘Wasta’ or ‘know someone’ during the interviews.

Table 67 shows the frequency of coded words that were used for the NVivo program in order to quantify the interviews that were taken for this research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviews (respondent) and Frequency of Words used in Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freq.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The frequency of the words used within the interviews shows the importance of this aspect within HR practices. When a person uses words or phrases such as ‘Wasta’, ‘know someone’, ‘someone I know’, ‘a friend’, ‘family friend’ and ‘personal friend who introduced me’, it shows the degree of frequency of the presence of Wasta and the extent of its influence in people’s daily lives.

The interviews proved to be a noteworthy process, where the respondents felt comfortable for the duration. As the interviewer is of Lebanese descent, the interviewer was able to communicate with them and make them feel relaxed. They were able to answer all questions within the interviews. In some instances they added more information or the interview went for longer than 30 minutes.

The twenty questions that were asked started with “How long have you been in your current position?” and continued by covering the HR practices under examination for the purposes of this research. The questions allowed for more discussion regarding the topic and the individuals felt confident enough to discuss the topic freely with the researcher. Out of the 20 respondents, the responses to the first question varied ‘from 3 months’ to ‘20 years’. Seventeen out of the twenty respondents knew about their current job through knowing someone within the organization.

4.7.2 Wasta and ‘knowing someone’

When asked whether they knew someone within the institution, they used a number of different words and phrases, such as, ‘a friend I know’, ‘someone I know’ and ‘knowing someone’. The greater number, being 17 out of the 20 interviewees all knew someone or someone had told them about the job. They did not get the job through an advertisement, or via the Internet.

They all responded positively to the third question that asked, “Did it help if they knew someone within the organization?” All the respondents answered that it was a positive feature of the job application process if they knew someone, as it provided them with more leverage within the University. One respondent stated that it would be different if they knew someone. They stated that many people that began possessing a Wasta connection received higher salaries. They also stated
that these people are given special treatment covertly. They expressed their belief that *Wasta* plays a key role and that some people’s *Wasta* connections may be stronger than others (chapter 5). They even stated that there were clear differences between people. Another respondent stated, “When you know someone, and use a *Wasta*, you get better paid and you get better promoted. It means you are well taken care of.” They illustrated that over the number of years that they had been working at their workplace, they had often seen people that entered the organization with great confidence and often name-dropped, indicating that they knew someone within the institution (chapter 5). They reported that these people tried to use this as leverage with other employees in something like an attempt to intimidate others.

Respondent C stated that they knew someone within to get the position; however they felt that knowing someone in the upper management would have been very helpful. They said that they often saw people that knew members of the upper management and they received job descriptions that suited their profiles. The respondent made the statement “After working here for a while, you find that things really do make a change when you know someone or if you have a *Wasta*.” They made the observation that if you know someone and you do not have the capabilities for the job, then it is possible to get the job through your *Wasta* connections. They made the general statement that this is endemic across Lebanon. They made an interesting statement that if you want to purchase a basic need, such as bread, if you know someone, you would get to the head of the queue more quickly.

Respondent D stated that having a *Wasta* connection was natural and definitely affected how you enter and work within an organization. Respondent D inferred that, even if a person had three PhD’s, and the other person only had a Master’s degree, but also knew someone, the person with the Master’s degree would get the position; that is, that person with lower qualifications has someone behind them pushing them to the front. They attested that it is not just the qualifications that you have. There are in the views of the interviews only a small percentage of companies where people get positions based on their qualifications.
This question was very interesting in that the responses from all the interviewees were all positive. Respondent E inferred that the “Wasta” was the way recruitment was happening in Lebanon and in universities generally. The respondent stated that they knew someone within the university, and so they received one phone call and were asked to come and start work straight away.

One respondent even stated that people who have a Wasta connection get better wages, even when they are in the same position as other people who are on different wages. They said that those that are hard workers and doing a good job do not get recognized. This is because they do not know anyone, or do not have anyone’s personal support. This makes the environment difficult to work in for the disadvantaged employee. The respondent stated that people get better positions when they have a Wasta connection; conversely, people that do not have a Wasta do not get anywhere.

The various statements that were made by the respondents thus showed the importance of Wasta in the workplace. The respondents were able to express how they felt regarding these issues and felt confident speaking about them.

The second question that was asked regarding knowing someone was “How did you come to know about the job that you currently hold?” The first respondent said that they knew someone that worked in the university and this person had told them about the job. Respondent B said that they were moved from department to department without being asked, just by being told to move. They stated that they were not able to give their opinion. Another respondent stated that they were also transferred without being asked and told to fill that position. Respondent C said that they knew about the job from someone else. They were searching for a job and were told to apply at the university by a friend. Respondent D stated that “in Lebanon, qualifications are not enough, you need to know someone”. Respondent E indicated that they got their job at the university due to a person that knew them. They were able to shift their schedule through the person that employed them at the university. Three other respondents indicated, variously, that their fiancé told them about the job, a friend who worked at the same university notified them, or their partner applied with them to the University for a Position.
Another question was asked regarding *Wasta*, this being, “Does it make a difference if you know someone in the organization or not?”. The first respondent stated that it always makes a difference if you know someone. Another respondent said that there was a significant difference between a person that enters the organization through *Wasta* and one that does not have a *Wasta* connection. The person that enters via *Wasta* gets treated differently from the way that they are selected, to what wages they get or packages, and even how they are treated within the organization. They stated that this affects all the other employees. They further stated that there was no motivation to do anything and that they could not afford to leave the organization. There is nowhere else to go and they are in Lebanon, with all the difficulties that that entails. This means that they need to use *Wasta* connections.

Respondent C indicated that it does make a difference and that wherever you go it is the same thing. Even in the banks, there is no career development unless you ‘play up’ to the manager to get a better position. They stated that *Wasta* plays a big role. Respondent D stated that if you have a *Wasta* connection, you could get to your target in five years. Without, it could take between ten and fifteen years to get anywhere that is if you, indeed, ever get anywhere. All twenty respondents said that it would certainly make a difference to have *Wasta* connections.

When asked how it would make a difference, respondents indicated that it allows a person to move further in their position. Respondent B in one university said that a person brought in fifteen new people that he knew and gave them positions, with better wages than others. They stated that it certainly makes a difference; if someone knows someone, they get a position. It makes a difference at all stages and in all workplace contexts. Another respondent stated that people move on in their position especially if they are ‘whitewashed’. Whitewashing is a term that is used where people are very nice to others and let them hear what they want to hear instead of the truth that is, being more positive than usual, even though it may be a negative situation. Respondent C mentioned that in having a *Wasta* connection, it allows them to ask for what they want and have the confidence that something will actually be done about it.
4.7.3 Training and Development

When asked a question regarding whether or not they received or participated in an orientation session, they all answered negatively. One respondent stated that they were not given any training, nor did they participate in an orientation session. The next respondent stated that they were not given any official training by the main administration. Someone in the faculty coached them for a week and then left by themselves, to get the job done. Some respondents stated that they had to discover everything by themselves. Others said that another administrative assistant tried to give them only a little training on the basics of the job.

When asked if the organization provided further training and development, nineteen out of the twenty respondents answered negatively. One respondent said that they were once sent to a conference regarding higher education, but not more than that. Seventeen of the respondents indicated that they did not receive any training and development when they first got their job. Two of the respondents indicated that they had another assistant who spent two to three days with them on the job telling them what to do. Another staff member from another faculty trained one respondent.

One respondent mentioned that it was a “very difficult time and I wanted to leave because I felt very lost, but I couldn’t because I needed the money”. Another respondent stated that they felt that it was the responsibility of the university to provide them with what they needed to know. Respondent D mentioned that they felt it was like a “conspiracy theory” that people did not do well.

When asked what type of training they were given, if any, the respondents stated that they were asked to learn on the job and to ask questions. A respondent stated that it was a very difficult time in the beginning; if someone made a mistake they were yelled at and told to do their job well. They questioned how they could do that when they did not know what to do from the beginning.

Another interview question that was asked of the respondents was “Do you believe that staff require further training and development? Do employees receive further
One respondent stated “No it does not. Maybe to those with better Wasta.” Another respondent said that they did not receive further training. They said the institution only gives to those who they want to give to or to those whose Wasta is better than one’s own. Another respondent said that it is important for people to learn and said that it would be better and would help people in their jobs. They stated “But they seem to forget us. They do not seem to care at all for their employees.”

One person said that one of the staff went on a training session. They said that they would also have liked to have gone on a training session. Another employee said that the employer had not provided any training and development since 2003. There had been no new training sessions regarding computer skills or the Internet. They said that some people were given extra training due to the people that they knew within the institution.

4.7.4 Recruitment procedures

One of the questions in the interview was “When you accepted your job, were you given a contract to sign and/or a job description?” Seventeen out of the twenty respondents were not given contracts to sign; only three were given contracts to sign. When discussing job descriptions, sixteen out of the twenty respondents were not given a job description. One respondent was told orally what their job was about. Two other respondents said that there was a “type of job description” where there was the list of “other” tasks, where most of what they do goes under this heading. The last respondent stated that they were given a formal job description; however, they do not currently perform the tasks that are included in this job description.

When asked if there was an interview process, not all of them had participated in an interview process. Three respondents stated that they were called in to meet with the administrator to begin their job. One person had a panel interview with four people. They said that it was strange as it was only for an assistant’s position. When they asked other colleagues, the others told them that it was not the normal procedure. Twelve other respondents had a short interview with the responsible person in the unit that they were going to work in and then were told to visit the
administration to finalize the paperwork. The other four respondents were given computer tests by administrative staff in the main administration.

When asked how the recruitment and selection process takes place in their university, they made the following statements; “they do not advertise”; “there is nothing on the website”; “they normally ask if you know anybody that might like to work”; or “we are looking for this particular profile, if you know someone”. Thus, the process is mostly by word-of-mouth.

Another respondent stated that the institution never places an advertisement. They ask employees if they know anyone and, if so, to bring them to the campus. They also mentioned that there is no real recruitment process. The institution does not advertise in the newspaper nor on the Internet. If they know someone they are asked to bring them in to meet the supervisor. One respondent said that most people get employed through Wasta. They said that people talk in front of others to see if they know anyone. They even said that the person could have no qualifications, but still get employed due to knowing someone within the organization. The second respondent said that those that have a Wasta get a position. The third respondent inferred that they do not recruit through advertising, that it is through word-of-mouth or if you know someone. A fourth respondent said that there was nothing on the website. The organization normally asks if they know anybody that might like to work. Sometimes they also state that they are looking for a certain profile and if they knew anyone that would fit that profile.

A fifth respondent said that some people apply by themselves, not knowing if there are positions open or not. Another respondent even said that people are asked if they know anyone.

4.7.5 Career development

One of the interview questions that were asked was “How do people advance in their career? Is it based on merit or on who you know?”. Out of the twenty interviews, fourteen people said that it was who you know, four of the interviews stated that you need merit and the last two stated that you needed both merit and Wasta. One respondent stated that people do not advance if they do not have a
Wasta connection. They spoke about their particular situation where they told their supervisor that they deserved more. The HR officer said that they could not give them more money, as they were overqualified for the job. They told the person that if they were in that position, they would not have taken the job. Another respondent stated that a person was not accountable at the university, as there is no performance appraisal. They gave an example that “assistants that have been here for a long time think that they are in the place of the Dean”.

Five of the twenty respondents mentioned that there was no performance appraisal system. They felt that they were going nowhere and they did not know what they could do to improve.

One respondent said that if you know someone on the inside, your career advances. They said that there are very few people who do a good job and get promoted due to their abilities or skills. They stated it is ‘who you know, not what you know’. Another respondent said that there are people that do the minimal amount of work and there are those few that work hard. Some people get posted to other positions, as they know someone.

One person said, “People do not advance if they do not have a Wasta.” A respondent said that it depended on the case; sometimes it can be based on the two influences. It depends because sometimes you need merit to match the job. There was a respondent that said that it depended on the organization; the organization either has or doesn’t have a system in place for promotion.

4.7.6 Motivation

When asked the question, “How do you feel about your job? Are you motivated? Why or why not?” seventeen out of the twenty respondents were not motivated at all. Three out of the twenty respondents were not concerned with others and did not get affected by those around them. They made statements like “I am not motivated, but I am not affected by anyone as I do not have anyone that supports me. I know myself. “Some of them made statements like “I am not motivated at all”. One respondent said “It's alright, I am not happy and I am not sad. I am just
there.” Another respondent stated that those around them affected them and the organizational culture certainly affected them.

4.7.7 Remarks

The interviews provided the researcher with pivotal information for this research. This data will be further analyzed in the next chapter; however, it is important to state that the interviews provided pertinent information regarding the effects and impact of Wasta on employees within the organizations studied. It provides this research with an important foundation from which to create a database of information to be used for future knowledge.

The next section will examine the observations that were obtained in the qualitative data methods.

4.8 Observations

This researcher further pursued observations taken on four university campus sites when interviewing respondents for this project. The researcher was able to meet with various staff members and sit in various staff areas observing and listening to staff as they spoke together. Also the results of the interviews with staff members provided pertinent information regarding some employees and how they obtained their positions. The time taken on each campus allowed the researcher to understand the relationships within. These observations were stated as facts. This researcher was even asked if she knew anyone that would like a position within a faculty.

While the researcher was interviewing staff members, they were also asked if they knew anyone that might need a job and a profile was given of the type of person that they were looking for. Table 66 below lists the observations that were taken at the campuses. University A is known as U_A, University B as U_B, University C as U_C and University D as U_D.

Table 68 Observations at universities
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Observation</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| University A | Sister of Employee A is recruited  
Employee B knows person, asks Employer to recruit, jobs not advertised internally nor externally  
Employer asks employees if they know anyone for a certain position  
Employee C education qualification does not fit job description therefore job description is changed |
| University B | Husband-Wife teams employed  
President of University employs assistant(s) gives them different wages to other assistants already employed. Assistant has lower qualification than others but gets paid more |
| University C | Family members in hierarchy employed in high positions of power  
Friend of “person in hierarchy” gets employed in high position, compensation based on relationship not on qualification |
| University D | Depending on political & religious affiliation individual gets employed  
All positions are given through a Wasta |

Through the number of visits on campus, the researcher was able to build relationships with various members of staff. As seen in the table above, there are various forms of nepotism and favoritism, which in Lebanon is seen as Wasta. The status quo at most of the universities sees the placement of recruitment and selection processes at the lower end of university policy, where there is a lack of both official internal or external advertisement. The universities that have been examined all lack a section on the website that details employment opportunities within the institution.

University A had four observations noted. One of the employees within the faculty was able to get their sibling a position as an assistant. This position was never advertised informally or formally on any websites, newspaper or even stated within electronic mail. They were able to get them a position without having to go through an interview process. The second observation showed how individuals were able to create positions for people that they knew in the hope that they could get to be a part of the organization. The end result was that they became a member of the staff. The third observation of University A is where the employer asks those
around him/her if they know anyone who might suit the position or need a job and would fit into the culture.

The last observation in $U_A$ is where job descriptions are changed, exclusively the educational requirement in order to fit the job to the person, not finding the right person for the job description. The educational qualification was sometimes removed in order to allow a certain person without qualifications to be awarded the position.

In University B, two particular observations have been noted. The first observation is that husband and wife teams are employed. At least two couples were noted to have been employed at that same university. The second observation that is notably interesting is that the President of the university employs assistants and gives them salaries different to other assistants in similar positions with similar tasks. The educational qualifications are also lower than the norm for these positions and others that are in similar positions were given lower salaries than these assistants.

In University C, the researcher has made two remarkable observations. Family members of people in high positions are employed in important positions within the university. They are given both title and salaries to match their jobs. The second observation is also that a friend of a “person at the highest rank” was given a high position and salary, even though their educational qualification were less than others in the same rank and position.

University D is known for its political and religious affiliations. Individuals are given jobs according to their political and religious affiliations. They must know someone with high-ranking positions within the country and institutions. The positions are given through Wasta and only through Wasta.

In the section to follow details of an interview with an independent consultant and senior director within the upper management of a university will be discussed.
4.9 Interview with consultant

The interview with the consultant to the Ministry of Higher Education, is a PhD in Economics, and is also currently in a high position within one of the four universities. This person is also an Education Consultant to one of the GCC countries council of ministries. When the question was asked regarding how Wasta plays a role in higher education institutions, the response was that “Wasta plays a bigger role in the hiring of administrative personnel, than with the academic staff. It depends on the institution. The effect of Wasta on personnel/administrative staff is much bigger than on other staff.”

The person continued to say that Wasta had an effect on the job description, salary and promotion. They continued to say that Wasta certainly had a bigger effect than originally thought. The person also stated that “Wasta increases with poverty and political instability” and “Once you have electoral laws based on religious sects, the religious dominancy plays a role’. These two statements are imperative indicators as to how Wasta is affected by macro-environmental factors.

When asked about the effects on the only public university in Lebanon, the person, emphatically stated that recruitment is based on “pure Wasta – with no qualifications, administrative staff 100%, and academic staff have to have Wasta plus the degree, the religious affiliation also plays a huge role’. They also inferred that ‘administrative roles have political affiliations’. It was clear from the interview that the macro-environmental indicators have an enormous effect on the presence and influence of Wasta. The respondent said that the “public sector has huge Wasta role, and poverty plays a huge role.”

When asked about Wasta in Lebanon and the Middle East, the respondent indicated that the Wasta phenomenon is alive in different ways. They stated that Egypt had its own version of Wasta, with poverty being a huge problem. Jordan and Syria are similar in environmental terms; poverty is playing a large role and once the government is not democratic, Wasta will play an even greater role. Hence, there are still many problems. The GCC countries have less Wasta, as poverty is not a problem; however it is still there as it is general within Middle Eastern culture.
The interviewer asked about the issues that Lebanon is facing in higher education. The consultant stated that there is a big problem in Lebanon, being the law of Higher Education, which dates back to 1961. It is very old and has not changed since then. This law does not allow for internal or external control of each institution, or for number of staff, or qualifications and performance of staff. This is the main reason that Wasta is able to play a significant role. Should the law be more detailed with internal and external control this will minimize the Wasta influence.

The consultant further stated that a new law has been written recently that includes many new procedures relating to quality control of teaching and the qualification of the personnel inside each institution. It is also based on periodical performance reviews. This new law also states that the education programs needs to be reviewed every three years by the technical committee in the Ministry of Higher Education. This will diminish the effects of Wasta. It means that the institutions will need to abide by the new laws. The relation between the new law and the content will allow a certain margin be given to Wasta in the institution. Wasta will be minimized but will not be removed.

When asked what type of role does Wasta have on administrative staff, the response was that Wasta plays a bigger role in terms of the administrative personnel than for the academic staff. This also depends on the institution. The interviewee noted that the new law would have an impact on academic and not administrative personnel. The person noted that Wasta has an effect on the job description, the salary, the promotion and a lot more.

When asked if there were new laws pertaining to the administrative staff, the answer was that there was nothing forthcoming regarding the administrative personnel. The interviewee noted that “Wasta has a domino effect; once a person enters the organization, better wages, and better training (come via Wasta)”. They also stated that a “person with Wasta, it has a larger (beneficial) effect on the person, than without a Wasta”
When asked about further details regarding the Higher Education law, the response was that it helps the *Wasta* connection – that is, that *Wasta* may play a role when two people have the same qualification and try for the position. It will not be like previously where one person with a lower qualification gets chosen over the person with the right qualification. With the new law, this will not be the case. Thus, this phenomenon remains a problem within the society.

The interviewee indicated that within years to come there will be more changes coming in the area of quality assurance and accreditation. This will have an impact on the administrative staff. This new law in HE relating to quality assurance will be voted in within the next year. In order for them to achieve better quality of education, it means that better qualified staff will be needed in order to understand the role they have within a university. The effects of HR practices within universities are directly related to the administrative staff more than the academic staff.

The interviewee concluded with the view that the challenge is not to eliminate the *Wasta* phenomenon, but to reduce its impact and implications. Introducing professional HR practices may help to reduce the impact it will have. Reputable universities, not family-owned ones (as is popular in Lebanon) will be focusing on this. The new changes will urge universities to take on administrative reforms and review qualifications of staff in order to achieve quality and accreditation.

The next section details and illustrates the final qualitative method of social network analysis (SNA) of the four universities that were observed.

### 4.10 Social Network Analysis

Social Network Analysis (SNA) is an important process that allows us to improve employee performance and effectiveness, as noted earlier by Parise (2012), who clarifies that one of the challenges in HRM is the transfer of knowledge among employees, teams, departments and divisions.

SNA has been examined at each university campus that was visited through the observations made when the interviews were recorded. SNA illustrates the reason
why knowledge retention is important. Normally, organizations have a retention strategy, which involves capturing the documents, and processes, even if an employee leaves (Parise, 2012). However, it is stated that often this information becomes stale and ‘ineffective’ without further communication with the source of knowledge or the individual with the expertise. Hence, the author further illustrates that SNA is a lens where a network is mapped that shows that, if a person leaves, they take with them the critical relationships. This type of analysis also shows whether the level of knowledge sharing within and between the groups is sufficient.

As noted earlier in this section, Parise (2012) demonstrates how to analyze the relationships among the actors in a network. This next section illustrates the SNA of each university that was visited during the survey collection. The arrows indicate the communication patterns that are participated in between employees. For this research, an example was taken from each campus to include one faculty in each diagram.

Figure 37 is an illustration of the social network analysis of University, showing the connections between various employees.
The diagram is split into two, parts, showing the division between upper and middle management within this university. The diagram illustrates seven actors, within two divisions and the communication patterns within the divisions and between them. As can be seen by the diagram, the most important position is at G where the individual obtains information from F, D, C, B, E and A. This indicates that G has the most information and understands what is taking place on campus. This actor makes it their business to understand what surrounds them. The other actors, like C and B, only communicate with G. They receive information from A, as it is only a one-way communication pattern. They communicate with G in order to communicate with A. They do not communicate with D, E or F. This indicates the importance of the two positions of A and G. Actor D only communicates with A, E and F, however this communication is only one-way. The communication with G is two-way. Actors E and F receive information from D and communicate with G only. This particular SNA shows the various breakdown in relationships between the various nodes. The actors A, B and C work within the same division; however, the relationships are not conducive to open networking and better communication patterns.
Figure 38 is the social network analysis for University B, where there are two divisions and the inter-connections between them.

University B (U_b) illustrates two divisions within the administration of the university that shows actor A node, who communicates with B, occupying the highest position. The actor B does not share the information or communicate with other nodes in Division Two, where A communicates with C and C communicates then to D, E, F, G. There are no two-way communication patterns; thus, information is only given but not taken from the others. This of course shows weaknesses in a communication process where there are not many two-way communications between actors.

Figure 39 is the social network analysis of University C, which also shows the two divisions within the administrations and the inter-relationships.
Figure 39: SNA of University C

Figure 39 shows the SNA for University C ($U_C$). In this diagram, actor at node K distributes information to E, F and G. The two divisions in this diagram illustrate two different administrations working together. Division 1 represents one administrative sector and division 2 another administration sectors within the same university. The situation recorded at the above university illustrated the importance of actor K, who gets the information from I and circulates the information to the other divisions.

The above diagram illustrates the communicative process between the main administration and basic faculties. As can be seen from the diagram, this university has either one-way or two-way communication between nodes. That is, where I gives information to all three J, K, L, however K has the two-way pattern. It is also seen by the diagram that K distributes or has a relationship with the other nodes; however it is not two-way. Information is also exchanged between the A and D nodes, while for the others it is more of a one-way distribution. These barriers
create issues in getting the right information to the right person, particularly as certain people have certain information while others do not.

Figure 40 illustrates the social network analysis for University D showing different connections and relationships with other nodes.

![Social Network Analysis for University D](image)

**Figure 40: SNA University D**

University D (U₀) shows the positions A and E on either scale. A has two-way communication patterns with B, C and D. Nodes B, C and D then communicate to E. E does not have a direct link with A, nor does A have a link with E. The central position seems to be C, where B and D also communicate to this link. There is no two-way communication with E. The tables displayed above labeled SNA 1, SNA2, SNA3 and SNA 4, provided the statistics to support the SNA models for the four campus sites. The interviews also proved to be important where the respondents were asked about their faculty or unit and the communication processes within.

According to Kadushin (2002), SNA theories can be applied to various levels of interest, including the pattern of links of an individual to the group to the organization and finally, to an entire society. This network structure can similarly
be applied to “a structure of friendships between people or a structure of trading relations between nations” p.77.

Hatala (2006) further adds to the discussion of HRD that individual behavior is important to be analyzed within the context in which they function. Hence, it is very important to understand the interpersonal relationships that occur within the organization. It also has an effect on the individual’s responses to the work environment. Hence Hatala (2006) further states that it is important to create a balance between the interpersonal dynamics and the working environment. This is why the SNA needs to be examined in more detail, as it illustrates the complexities of the relationships within each section, area or group. This in turn affects the organizational culture of the institution. Furthermore, SNA is a “methodology for examining the structure among actors, groups, and organizations that works to explain the variations in beliefs, behaviors and outcomes p.47.”

4.11 Mixing the methods

This chapter began with introducing the data that was gathered via both quantitative and qualitative methods. A mixed methods approach was used in order to capture the influences of Wasta on HR practices. Hence, a survey was distributed to 466 staff members, where 349 staff responded, creating a success rate of 75%. A regression analysis tested three hypotheses where $H_0$ was rejected. Even though the regression analysis, showed a weak correlation, there are various reasons that could contribute to its weakness being:

- Individuals may have been worried that the said university would see the results, even though they understood and agreed to participate. This indicates a cultural phenomenon that is also mentioned within Hofstede’s cultural dimensions
- Some may have felt that the survey questions were too long
- Repetition is some of the questions, did not allow them to answer correctly

Hence in order to validate the information and create depth in research, interviews were taken with twenty individuals, that is, a sample taken from each university campus. The results were very interesting, where the respondents provided further details that were needed for the discussion in this research. A further analysis will be discussed in the next and final chapter linking all the points of view.
Observations were also listed giving further examples as to how *Wasta* is being used within the institutions. Lastly, social network analysis of all four campuses was drawn to provide a complete mixed method analysis for this research project. The mix of both the quantitative and qualitative methods has provided support for all methods used.

### 4.12 Summary

The objective of this chapter was to show all the data that was collected during the data process. A mixed methods approach was used in order to ensure that the data is reliable and valid. As stated in the methodology chapter, the researcher has placed this research in the post-positivist paradigm, which makes it significant to HRM theory and practice. The use of the post-positivist paradigm is supportive (McKenna et al, 2008). Hence a mixture of both methods via triangulation allowed the researcher to examine the principles and procedures behind this project. As Johnson et al (2007) stated, the researcher’s bias is cancelled out when various methods are used to ensure reliability and validity.

The next chapter will discuss the data presented in relation to the literature regarding this topic. It will analyze the data further using the literature as a strong foundation, as well as discuss the perceived contribution to knowledge. As there is limited research on *Wasta* in Lebanon and limited research on HRM in the Middle East, the data and information related to this topic, recorded in this research, provide significant outcomes to be addressed in future research on this important topic.
Chapter 5- Contribution to Knowledge

“Success is not a function of the size of your title but the richness of your contribution.”
Robin S. Sharma

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the particular contribution to knowledge that this research has given to HR practices in Lebanon through discussing the outcomes of the data that was illustrated in chapter 4. The discussions in this chapter will clearly show the creation of the foundation for future contributed by this research. It will also show its significance for HR practices and HRM in Lebanon, and in the wider Middle East; thus, it also establishes links to a global body of knowledge relating to HRM.

This chapter will discuss each research question and hypothesis, as well as, summarizing the salient details of the responses to each, and reiterating the link to theoretical background provided in the literature review. The next chapter will illustrate the new contribution to knowledge that this research has provided through the results that have been obtained.

It will illustrate the outcome of the present study through a model and a framework newly created by this researcher and as yet unpublished – the Wasta Organizational Culture Model and the Wasta Framework. It will also show an extension to a model by the researcher that was created by Aggarwal et al (2007) to include Wasta.

The paucity of research conducted in the Middle East regarding management issues has been well documented (Budhwar & Mellhai, 2006; Dirani, 2006; Giangreco et al, 2010; Al-Husan et al, 2014), and previous researchers (Budhwar & Mellhai, 2006; Iles et al, 2012; Dessler & Al Ariss, 2013) have noted that HRM is a relatively new area of investigation and development in the Middle East. The literature review identified the existence of Wasta as a phenomenon that has not been explored in its entirety, nor understood in its context. It defined and
delineated the concept and practice of *Wasta* and showed its role in terms of the surrounding culture. Smith et al (2012) compared various influences on organizations, including *Wasta*, and stated that there needs to be further investigation in the area of *Wasta* in the context of organizational management. It was also clearly shown that previous research has not yet provided the link between *Wasta* and the practice of human resource management. Some researchers stated that a HRP framework particular to the Middle East is needed in order to understand Arab business practices (Budhwar & Mellhai, 2006; Afiouni et al (2013). The context for all this heightened concern is the issue of globalization, which has now reached all developed and developing countries; it was highlighted as a necessary concern due to the need for both local and multinational companies to make sure that they are within the global market in order to sustain a competitive advantage. Thus, best practice, in terms of the strategic management of an organization, through benchmarking roles and functions within the organization, is seen as crucial. Equally as crucial is the need to understand the impact of *Wasta* on the organizational culture and on HRM practice.

As the literature review indicated, *Wasta* is an interpersonal process of influence operating in the Middle East that needs to be better understood, particularly as it relates to human resource management. It also indicated that there is limited information regarding HR practices in Lebanon and the Middle East and demonstrated a dearth of empirical studies of the effects of *Wasta* in a business context. This research thus undertook to elucidate this area of study into HR practices, focusing on the higher education sector in Lebanon. In doing so, it has set the groundwork for future researchers to continue important research into an area of HRM. This continuing scrutiny has the potential to positively affect the lives of personnel employed by organizations and institutions in the Middle East by assisting in the process of organizational reform. This research has set a pillar in order to continue the path of uncovering the effects of *Wasta* in other industries in Lebanon.

Statements that were summarized after reviewing the current literature, showing the gaps in knowledge are listed below. With each gap that is pointed out, below is the knowledge that is acquired and attained from this research hence diminishing
the gaps in current knowledge and providing new knowledge.

- *Wasta* is only defined in the context of culture and general practices
  Mohamed & Mohamed (2011)

This research has defined *Wasta* within the HR practices and duly within HRM. Through the data analysis, including the regression analysis and the provision of qualitative data, this project has been able to prove that *Wasta* does have an effect on HR practices and HRM.

- The consequences of *Wasta* on individual employees are not widely available in the research. (Mohamed & Mohamed, 2011; Kowske & Foldes, 2007; Barnett et al, 2013)

This research has written about the effects of *Wasta* on employees, including on motivation. Through surveys and interviews, this research has been able to capture individual’s thoughts and experiences, as well as feelings, with regards to *Wasta*.

- The effects of *Wasta* on HR practices have not been dealt with previously. There is very limited research regarding this area (Budhwar & Mellhai, 2007; Tlauss & Kauser, 2011)

This research has defined the effects of *Wasta* on HR practices and created a framework as a foundation for future research.

- The effects of HR practices in Lebanon are very limited (Dirani, 2006, Iles et al, 2102; Khakkar & Rammal, 2013)

This research has examined the effects of HR practices within four universities based on the responses of 349 employees in universities in Lebanon. The response rate was high and provided this research with important data to prove that there is a significant relationship between *Wasta* and HR practices. Observations and SNA also provided the researcher with imperative and insightful information regarding *Wasta*. 
The role of HRM and HR practices in Lebanese universities is not widely available (Khakkar & Rammal, 2013; Whiteoak et al. (2012); Iles et al, 2012, Afiouni et al, 2014)

This research has examined the HR practices of four well-known universities in Lebanon, including a public university. As HR practices are not well researched in the Middle East, this research provides important information for other researchers to build from or to use as examples.

Very limited research on organizational culture in the context of universities in the Middle East, specifically in Lebanon (Budhwar & Mellhai, 2006; Iles et al, 2012, Afiouni et al, 2014)

The effects of Wasta on organizational culture have been examined and the Wasta Organizational Culture(WOC) framework has been illustrated for future research purposes.

SHRM is not widely discussed in the Lebanese context (Iles et al, 2012, El-Hassan, 2013; Afiouni et al, 2014)

Through the examination of HR practices and questions with regards to SHRM in the questionnaire, quantitative and qualitative measures have allowed this research to discuss the current situation regarding SHRM in Lebanon.

SHRM is not widely discussed at the University level in Lebanon (Hasrouny, 2011; Nahas, 2011; Jamarillo, 2013; UNDP, 2013; El Hassan, 2013)

The interviews with the consultant to the Ministry of Higher Education and with a large number of respondents have given further written evidence to support the placement of SHRM in a theoretical framework.

The following sections will discuss the research questions by analyzing the data and linking it to the theoretical framework established.
5.1 The research questions and hypotheses

This section will examine both theory and data that has been collected to examine, empirically, the influences of Wasta on HR practices in Lebanese universities. It will briefly review the theory that is currently trending for Wasta, as well as HR practices and HRM in Lebanon and the Middle East.

An examination of the research questions follows in terms of the efficacy of the current study in providing answers to them.

David Ulrich cited in Dessler, 2003, stated that, ‘HR should be defined not what by what it does, but what it delivers’ p. 4. In referring to the definition of HRM, we understand it to be, the design of formal systems in a company in order to ensure the effective and efficient use of human talent to accomplish organizational goals Dessler (2013). The authors state that a person must be recruited, trained, developed and compensated during their time in the organization.

As seen in the literature review in chapter two, of this research, the authors Dessler & Al Ariss (2012) discussed an important concept of Arab management. They inferred that there is much work to be done at an organizational level, as Arab management practices have more of an administrative role. They also state that there has been little attention given to what the “employee” value is at work. This research’s goal was to show the concept of “Wasta”, a cultural phenomenon and how most recruitment is still taking place through a “Wasta”.

The various methods that were taken in order to ‘capture’ this phenomenon proved to be important. Wasta is a concept that has been around for many years and has been studied culturally not within business contexts (Mohamed & Mohamed, 2011). In finally doing so, individuals are able to understand how people get their jobs, how they get to where they want to go and how people feel about the internal structures. Not only were quantitative methods, so were qualitative and in both cases, data systems were used in order to create numerical data that can be viewed with reason and to take out the subjectivity (Johnson et al, 2007).
The survey that was conducted was very detailed in its statements, which captured the five HR practices that are to be tested (Appendix A). The literature review has previously revealed that there is little research undertaken on Wasta and its effects on HR Practices in Lebanon (Chapter 2). The specific HR practices in question are Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Compensation & Benefits career development and performance management. The literature review also noted that HRM is relatively a new area in the Middle East region. There is very little research on HR practices within Universities in Lebanon (Chapter 2). An AME model was displayed that showed the weaknesses and prevalence of Wasta (Afiouni et al, 2013 in chapter 2).

Wasta is important in the social processes (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011). It has created many issues for those who try to work within a legitimate framework (Smith et al, 2012). Wasta has also been compared to Guanxi in China, Jeitnho in Brazil, Svyazi in Russia and Pulling strings in Britain. There is also piston in North America (Smith et al, 2012). Iles et al (2012) point out that the ‘Arab World’ selection of people is highly dependent on family, contacts and nepotism. It is a very subjective process. The authors also point out that concepts like motivation, incentives and leadership are quite primitive in the Middle East. Iles et al (2012) discuss the issues of performance appraisals that are given in group format and not individually to save face. They move on to say that performance and worker satisfaction is likely to be increased should recognition be given and proper communication styles.

Iles et al (2012) indicate that there has been much attention given to Guanxi, but not to the Arab world’s Wasta. It has not been researched enough nor is there adequate literature regarding the similarities and differences. Mohamed and Mohamed, 2011, attest to the fact that Wasta is intrinsic to the way things work and to the social processes. The data displayed in chapter 4 shows explicitly the effects of Wasta on the Human resource practices of the organization and the respondents shared their opinions with regards to how they feel about Wasta and the effects of it on their employment status.

Authors Iles et al, 2012; Mohamed and Mohamed, 2011; Tlaiss and Kauser, 2007 discuss that Wasta was originally based on family loyalty. Wasta relationships
have expanded to include the larger community. *Wasta*-based recruitment and the way benefits are allocated help family ties, connecting the person to the community and to the government.

It has become important that research be uncovered in this field in order to understand how much this phenomenon affects HRM. Iles et al (2012) also say that *Wasta* influences recruitment, selection, compensation and promotion in the public sector. The data in chapter 4 illustrate the influences of *Wasta* on the Human resource practices.

*Demographic Information*

The demographic information is very interesting about Lebanon. The data showed that over 60% of the respondents were female (figure 23, p.192). It also showed that the greater number of respondents live within Beirut and Mount Lebanon. These are the largest counties in the country. When asked if they were the primary wage earners, as the greater number of respondents were female, over 47% stated that they were not the primary wage earner (figure 24, p.193). Only 14% of males said that they were not the primary wage earners. Lebanon is a patriarchal society hence these statistics are not surprising at all. Most of the respondents went to a private school, over 35% of females and 22% of males went to private school (figure 26, p.195). Over 29% of females went to a private university and 22% went to a public university, whereas 22.4% of males went to private university and 12.0% (figure 27, p.196).

The data is interesting in that you see over 60% of the respondents are female. The positions they hold are mostly in administration and few in academia (table 15, p.201). The education profile of our respondent’s show that over 57% went to a private school and over 27% indicated that they went to a public school. There were 15% of the respondents kept this answer blank. The university profile also shows 51% went to a private university and 34% went to a public university. The statistics also show a highly educated population sample with 25.66% graduated with a Bachelor’s degree, 48.67% graduated with a Master’s degree, 13.27% with a doctoral degree and only 7.67% had the grade 12 certificate (table 13, p.190 and table 14, p.190). The respondents are also of a younger age, distributed between
the ages of 18-49.

According to theory, Dirani (2006) cites the work of Hofstede (1984) who discussed the work-related values, which resulted in noting that the Lebanese are prominent in the obedience to authority and control. Lebanese are also distinguished by their patriarchal nature in the Lebanese culture. This is very important and is the foundation of their culture stated by Sharabi (1988) cited in Dirani (2006). This view of what family life is like also is channeled through to their work life. Lebanese people tend to give up their own ambition and independence and give in to the father’s rule and want their responsibility holds in the family. This is a very important factor to how individuals work within organization and with regards to authority and submission.

5.1.1 Research question 1

R.Q.1 How does *Wasta* influence the HR practices of the university?

In order to answer this question, three hypotheses were tested and explained below. Current theory has established that little attention has been given to HR practices and human capital investment in Lebanon and that previous research has focused more on sociological and economic problems (Dirani, 2006; Dessler & Al Ariss, 2013). This is a problem when it comes to data availability for the country and for the region. However, it is felt that the size of the sample in the current study and the readiness of respondents to participate in the formation of a body of data, as it relates to the issue of HRM in the Lebanese university sector, is encouraging for future research in this area. Dirani (2006) notes that there is basic research on training and development in the area, but not on HRM as such. Thus, there is a need to expand and publish material that will help HR managers.

The findings have established that *Wasta* influences recruitment, selection, compensation and promotion in the public sector. The present research therefore identified the effect of *Wasta* on these aspects of organisational management in universities in Lebanon, as follows:
5.1.2 Recruitment and selection

The survey that was administered to 349 staff members asked a number of questions. This first question looks at the HR practice, recruitment and selection. The answers to this question (figure 3, p. 208) showed that 47.79% of respondents got their job through knowing someone and 10.91% through word of mouth. This makes a total percentage of over 58.6% of people getting their jobs through knowing someone. The other options were applying directly to the university with a total of 32.15% and responded to an advertisement with 6.49%.

Word of mouth is also known in Lebanon as being a form of Wasta as it is not a formal channel for advertising job vacancies. This makes it over 58.6% that get their job through indirect channels. This information has not been available previously and it proves that Wasta is one of the most important ways of recruiting and selecting employees in Lebanese Universities. This statistic has shown a positive relationship between Wasta and recruitment and selection.

Current literature and management practices indicate that recruitment and selection processes are standardized and written within policies and procedures (Mathis & Jackson, 2010). There are many avenues to recruit individuals for employment, both through print and Internet media as well as internal recruitment. Whichever process is chosen is done through objectives processes. The literature also indicates the importance of this HRP, which allows organizations to concentrate on proper talent recruitment and retention (Armstrong, 2009).

Hence, the data that has been collected (chapter 5) strongly shows the effects of Wasta on recruitment. The high percentage of individuals that got their job through the Wasta process is over 50%, indicating a significant relationship between Wasta and recruitment.

The idea of knowing someone, or using a ‘waseet’, ‘middle man’, ‘patron’ to get an individual a job places the HRPs at risk (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011; Mohamad & Mohamad, 2011). With such a high percentage at the first HRP that is used within the organization, creates that domino effect to the other HRPs. Also this ‘patron’ who has asked for a favor affects the person’s psychological contract and
employee engagement. Also when tying together Lebanese culture, where loyalty and collectivism is high, (Kabasakal, 2015) a person will not like to disappoint their Wasta and always trying to please them is what happens. As noted previously, Hofstede 1984 cited in Kabasakal, 2015, classified the Arab culture in having respect for authority hence they follow orders well. They also focus on building relationships, trust and collectivism as well as are seen to be more traditionalist than their western counterparts. Lebanon is part of the Arab league and its’ culture is very similar and with similar ratings as its counterparts (Dirani, 2006).

Thus, the evidence for the presence of Wasta in the organizational management of universities in Lebanon is strong across a number of respondent categories. Suggestions as to ways to improve this worrying aspect of HRM in higher education in Lebanon were sought, and recommendations provided in the final chapter in Implication for theory and practice.

5.1.2.1 Hypothesis 1: Wasta and training

The results with regard to Hypothesis 1, relating to Wasta and training, shows the regression analysis (Table 53-56 in chapter 4) which tested the hypothesis – H₀ Wasta and training have no relationship, H₁Wasta and Training have a relationship, and the null hypothesis was rejected. With regard to the influence of Wasta on training, there is a positive relationship, but the correlation coefficient is 0.15. Hence, training and Wasta have a weaker correlation than the one that exists between the next feature of HR practice in Lebanon discussed here – compensation and Wasta. Based on the regression equation and the t-test results, there is also a significant relationship between Wasta and training at a 95% confidence level. Even though it is a weaker correlation, there is still a positive relationship between Wasta and training. Thus, this test proved that Wasta has a relationship with training, even though there may be other factors that might be involved.

Thus, it is fair to assume that institutions disregarding the rights of its employees can expect to encounter serious issues regarding its HRM. This constitutes a major issue for HRM in the institutions studied and, given that cultural similarities and value systems exist across the Middle East region, the latter conclusion can be
extrapolated to state that training in Middle Eastern universities requires urgent attention to ensure that correct HRM procedures are being followed.

The findings in chapter 4 clearly show that there is a problem with the level of the training and development received within the institutions. It is unfortunate that, at university institutions that teach the primary skills, staff has not been trained properly. The statistics that have been gathered in this research will play a primary role in paving the way for HRM in Lebanon. The results of the regression analysis play a pivotal role in beginning the road to discovery regarding HR practices in Lebanon. As researchers like Dessler and Al Ariss (2012); Al Hussan et al (2014) and Dirani (2006) have all stated that there are many challenges facing companies in the Middle East. They have all stated that there is minimal knowledge regarding Human Resource practices in the Middle East.

Human Resource practice ‘Training and development’, is an important factor in Psychological contract (Ahmed & Muchiri, 2013). This area supports employees to attain specific skills allowing them to maintain their commitment to the organization and where the employer secures competitive advantage. Once the gain and build specific skills they become highly trained and an important asset to the organization, hence competitive advantage is sustained (Aggarwal et al, 2007).

Consequently, the data in chapter 4 has shown the weaknesses in the HRP of training and development, where the employees have not been given the opportunity to learn and improve their KSAs. The improvement of KSAs helps the organization reach its objectives and goals (Mathis & Jackson, 2010). This in turn affects the overall strategies of the organization. Hence, for an organization to sustain its competitive advantage it must work on the basic HRPs within in order to create a quality work culture (Cohen, 2015). The respondent’s lack of training also effects their individual motivation and satisfaction. The organization needs to invest in their employees in order to gain the value that is needed to take the organization one step ahead.
5.1.2.2 Hypothesis: Wasta and compensation

The second hypothesis that was tested was the relationship between Wasta and compensation. The regression analysis (Table 49-52 in chapter 4) tested the hypothesis $H_0$ Wasta and compensation have no relationship and $H_1$ Wasta and compensation have a relationship. After testing the variables, it was proven that Wasta and compensation have a positive relationship and that the correlation coefficient is 0.25. Based on the regression equation and the t-test results, there is a significant relationship between Wasta and compensation at a 95% confidence level. While this regression analysis has been able to tell us that there is a relationship between Wasta and compensation, it has also been able to tell us that there are other factors that contribute to compensation.

The research shows quite explicitly the lower levels of benefits that are being given and the lack of benefits that are also not given in the university education sector (Chapter 4). It is unfortunate that none of the sections were fully receiving the compensation that they deserve. As well, most of the respondents receive one type of package, salary and the social security. Not all the universities offer their staff medical insurance (Data results in Chapter 4). The resulting insecurity and feelings of being undervalued in their workplace is of real concern for a majority of the respondents studied (Interviews in chapter 4). The incentive to perform to their full potential was found to be lacking across the study sites and this has important implications for the organisations in terms of their HRM.

In the interviews the respondents (in chapter 4) have stated in their answers that almost half of them are unhappy with their package. These statements are the first of its kind as results that have been measured in HR practices within Lebanon. As the regression showed that Wasta and compensation have a relationship, this indicates that those people with a Wasta have a better chance of getting better compensation (interviews in chapter 4).

Table 18 in chapter 4 shows the different types of benefits that are offered to the respondents of the survey. Almost 83.22% of the respondents have the basic wage, which in Lebanon is paid on a monthly basis at the beginning of the month. Only 56.38% have social security called the CNSS in Lebanon, which are scheduled
medical benefits. Insurance is only received by 31.21% of the respondents. The retirement fund is only received by 17.11%. Bonuses and overtime have only been given to 5.70% and 11.67% respectively. The research shows quite explicitly the lower levels of benefits that are being given and the lack of benefits that are also not given in this sector. It is unfortunate that none of the sections were 100% fully receiving the compensation that they deserve. As well, most of the respondents receive one type of package which, salary and the social security. These are the basics that they are given to begin working. Not all the universities offer their staff medical insurance.

Aggarwal et al (2007), infer that regarding the psychological contract, compensation and rewards are very important to the employee. Authors Dessler & Al Ariss (2012) and Dessler (2003) discuss the impact of the benefits that the employee receives for the work that is done, is a crucial point between the employer and the employee. It defines the relationship between the two parties. When the organization gives an employee a reward because they feel that they deserve this for the work they have done, this becomes a motivation for the employee. Hence the rewards system makes a difference when it comes to employee behavior.

5.1.2.3 Hypothesis 3: Wasta and career

The third hypothesis– H₀ Wasta and career development has no relationship; H₁ Wasta and career development has a relationship – was tested, with similar results to the first two models (in chapter 4). That is, Wasta and career demonstrated a positive relationship, with a correlation between these two variables of 0.17.

These results suggest that Wasta has a significant influence on the different variables considered, but it is not the only factor. As the relationship shows a confidence level of 95%, then H₁ Wasta and career have a relationship.

It is important to reiterate that this is the first time Wasta is being tested with other variables in order to measure its impact. There is no previous literature that examines the impact or influence of Wasta on HR practices (Tlaiss & Kauser.
More questions relating to career development were asked in the interviews in order for the researcher to understand the employee’s point of view.

In the interviews, fourteen out of the twenty respondents indicated that it was ‘who you know’ that allowed you to advance; that is 70% of the respondents have indicated it is the *Wasta* that counts and not ‘what you know’ that makes a difference (interviews in chapter 4). Other respondents indicated that advancing in your career is based on the individuals that you know.

According to the data in chapter 4, only around 52% of respondents agree that they access to information, workshops and training to better themselves. It is unfortunate that over 46% disagree. This is a large amount of respondents that have not been able to complete the next step in HRP.

The literature indicates that it is when employees have the chance of being a part of a system that they are encouraged to develop their own interests and paths (Schwind et al, 2013). As it has been shown that *Wasta* has a relationship with career development, it means that those with a *Wasta* have better chances of having career development within the organization than those without a *Wasta*.

In response to the question ‘how does *Wasta* influence the HR practices of the university?’, it was seen that, where there is a *Wasta* involved, the individual has increased chances of recruitment, compensation, training and career development (interviews in chapter 5). As a result, the *Wasta* framework was developed to assist in identification of problems stemming from this indirect means of influencing one’s position within the university.

*Wasta* does not allow the HR practices within the organization to work properly (Interviews in Chapter 4). That is, *Wasta* affects the HR practices system and hence the person with a *Wasta* does not go through the proper channels that they should in order to be recruited and selected (Data results in chapter 4). This will be discussed in details in the next chapter.
5.1.3 Research Question 2

The second research question is RQ 2: How has Wasta affected individual employees in their career paths? This question has been answered using both quantitative and qualitative measurements. The quantitative methods have been examined above in the third hypothesis, Wasta and career. The hypothesis has been proved – Wasta and career have a relationship.

In the interviews with 20 respondents (chapter 4 p. 264-255), the researcher asked how individuals advance in their career and if it was based on merit or if a Wasta was needed (section 4.7.5, p.254). Fourteen of the twenty individuals said that it was whom you know that was important in order to advance in a company. Only four out of twenty respondents said that a person needed merit and that it was important. The last two respondents said that both were needed. Hence, sixteen out of the twenty respondents said that a Wasta was needed. Comments were made like “people do not advance without a Wasta”; “if you know someone within, your career advances”; “it is whom you know not what you know” (chapter 4, section 4.7).

In a sample of twenty respondents, more than 75% stated that you need a Wasta in order to have a better career (section 4.7.5, p.254). Thus, it has been shown that Wasta has a clear effect on career development within universities. This is an important aspect of the current research that has not been investigated elsewhere and which is significant in the context of HRM in the higher education sector and, more widely, in the Lebanese and Middle Eastern business world.

The findings in chapter 4 have been able to show that HR practices in Lebanon are still in the development stage and have not come to full evolution within the Middle East. This research has thus provided a benchmark that illustrates the information necessary for future research.

The literature review examined authors like Aggarwal et al (2007); Ahmed and Muchiri (2013); Chang et el (2013) who explain that when the job characteristics comprise of challenges, diversity and autonomy, this type of job would create psychological meaningfulness, this is a condition of employee engagement.
Managers are getting trained on how to keep and foster employee growth in order to keep talented members of staff. Setting goals and moving forward, advancing their career provides a higher level of engagement and improved psychological contract (Chang et al, 2013; Bal et al, 2013). Talent retention has become a priority for organizations. This needs to be the priority in Lebanon and in the Middle East. Currently the data shown in chapter 5 shows that obtaining a job is through a Wasta and being able to advance their career is also through a Wasta (section 4.7.2 p.247 & section 4.7.4 p.252). This indicates the difficulty in advancing an individual’s career.

5.1.4 Research Question 3

The third research question asks how Wasta affect the organizational culture of the university?

The findings in chapter 5 show that a large percentage of employees felt that there was lack of trust, that is a total of 34% do not agree that there is basic trust. This is still a high rate of trust issues although not surprising according to the theory. When asked if there was a feeling of teamwork, only 46.9% agreed and 16.81% disagreed. The current theory states that the family is an important unit in Lebanon. The collectivist nature places the family unit before itself, which also can create inconsistencies between work and home (Baah, 2013). The current work pressures and daily goals can be affected by the imbalance between the home and work.

The findings also showed in the interviews (chapter 4), how the employees felt about the issue of Wasta. One question that was pertinent was how they felt about their job and did others affect them. The answers showed that seventeen out of the twenty were not motivated at all and were affected by those around them (section 4.7.6, p.255). This is a high percentage of employees, being 80%, of the respondents that are unhappy and are affected by their environment.

By proving that Wasta has affected the basic HR practices within an organization and when employees state that they are unhappy and not motivated as a result means that Wasta has created issues within the organizations. The comments from the employees regarding Wasta and knowing someone documented in the previous
chapter have provided this research with a basis to show how Wasta also affects interrelationships (section 4.7.2, p.247). This research was not able to focus on this specific area and has thus opened a new avenue for future research. Refer to the interview.

The data displayed in chapter 5 has proven that Wasta is a main part of the organizational culture of the universities studied and as the employees freely discuss Wasta in open forums, it demonstrates that Wasta has an “influence” and an “impact” (section 4.7.6, p.255 & section 4.7.2 p. 247). The data shows in chapter, clearly that Wasta has affected and impacted employees and how they feel about their workplace environment. Their motivation has been affected and the environment that surrounds them will be affected by how they feel. This of course leads to job satisfaction (section 4.7.6, p.255). This research has paved the way for future research on employee motivation factors and the effects of Wasta.

Consequently, when the data shows that Wasta plays a role in affecting individuals within an organization, it infers that Wasta does not help maintain a healthy organizational culture (section 4.7.5, p.254). People become bitter and do not know whom to trust. The data showed that the people around them affect the respondents (section 4.7.2 & 4.7.5 p. 246-254). It has been demonstrated that, when the other person gets a job through a Wasta and has been promoted and another individual does not get a chance, this creates a difficult culture within the organization (section 4.7.5 p. 254).

5.1.5 Research Question 4

The fourth question asks what tools do universities need in order to improve their SHRM focus?

The survey is a sum of all five HR practices within an organization. The interviews also discuss all HRPs, supporting the quantitative data that has been collected. The data that has been obtained and analyzed has proved that Wasta affects HR practices within the Universities.
The findings have shown in chapter 4 that the HRPs of the universities under study are not working well and need further support and formulation in order to achieve the competitive advantage referred to in the literature review. This research has shown, for the first time, the five (5) HRPs that are important to an organization’s success and that further reform is needed in Lebanese universities in order to get the pillars of the organization to the right stage.

Seeing that the hypotheses (p.228-236) have been proven to be correct and that Wasta has a relationship to training, compensation and career, and that it also has a relationship with recruitment and promotion, then we can verify that there is an impact from this phenomenon on HRPs. The fact that there is an impact means that the SHRM of the universities have been affected. Given the theory and the data together, the dissatisfaction of the employees and the responses to the statements (chapter 4, section 4.7), there are still many unresolved issues, many of which can be traced back to Wasta.

5.2 Conclusions about the research problems

This next section examines the qualitative instruments that were used for this research – these being interviews, observations and social network analysis. These measurements proved to be useful tools in validating the survey data that was obtained. They supported the outcomes – that Wasta has a significant relationship with the HRPs of the University.

5.2.1 Interviews

Wasta is a complex issue (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011), and to understand its effects, including the consequences on employees, in their entirety, interviews play a vital role (Johnson et al, 2007). Interviews allow people to express their opinions and state what they have seen or felt or heard. It also provides support to the survey data that is collected. It aligns the research in order to obtain a clearer picture.

The interviews covered all the HR practices as per the survey, which also covered the HR practices. The interview statements that were made by the respondents all
confirmed how *Wasta* is being used in order to get positions (section 4.7.2 & 4.7.4 p. 250, 252). The statements were pertinent in discussing the effects of *Wasta*. The magnitude of how the respondents felt about *Wasta* made it very clear, as written in the theory of *Wasta*, that the weak get weaker and the strong get stronger (Mohamad & Mohamad, 2011). The literature review also shows that it is not limited to one sector. It expands into all sectors, government, education, health services and businesses (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011). Respondents also stated that even if a person had a number of degrees and qualifications, the person with the lesser degree or qualification would get the position (section 4.7.4 p.252). They attested that it is not just the qualifications that you have. As stated in the literature review and methodology chapters, interviews play a pivotal role in HRM and especially with *Wasta*.

The results in the data analysis chapter regarding the interviews discuss the various questions and answers. It is very clear after reading the comments and the statements that were made; *Wasta* has an impact on organizations. The interviewees also made mention of the difficulties within the environment and brought up points relating to job dissatisfaction, de-motivation and ethical concerns (section 4.7 p. 246). These all helped the researcher place their research in a new framework and have opened up future axes that should be and must be worked on for the clarification and sustainability of organizations within Lebanon.

### 5.2.2 Interview with Consultant

The interview with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Higher Education Consultant proved to be pertinent to this research (section 4.9, p.258). The interviewee noted that the “*Wasta* has a domino effect once a person enters the organization, (in the form) better wages, better training”. They also stated that a “person with the *Wasta*, has a larger effect on the person, without a *Wasta*. When asked what type of role *Wasta* has on administrative staff, the response was that *Wasta* plays a big role in the administrative personnel, more than the academic staff. This also depends on the institution. *Wasta* affects the personnel much more than others. The interviewee noted that the new law would have an impact on academic and not the administrative personnel (section 4.9, p.258). The person
noted that the *Wasta* has an effect on the job description, the salary, the promotion and a lot more (section 4.9 p. 258).

5.2.3 Observations

The observations that were made and also provided further support of how *Wasta* plays a major role in Lebanon. Table (69) in the data analysis chapter lists the various types of *Wasta* that were encountered (section 4.8, p.258). Nepotism and favoritism played an equally astounding role in job recruitment, selection and compensation. The interesting fact is that employees know the facts and speak about them freely with the researcher, yet feel the inequality of the situation indicates that, due to the economic situation, it was not feasible to go anywhere else (Interviews, section 4.7, Chapter 4).

Observations are suitable for research projects that focus on the importance of the person with regards to interpretations and interactions (Kothari, 2004). They actually give full meaning to the phenomena that are being focused on. In this case the phenomenon that is being focused on is *Wasta*.

The observations were taken in and around the interview times with the various respondents that agreed to undertake the interview. It was very important to ensure that the information that was given was accurate and it was important to validate the information through asking the appropriate questions and receiving the correct data (Kothari, 2004; Amaratunga et al, 2002).

According to the literature there are various types of observations. The researcher of this research was able to be a part of both the non-participant and participant cycle (Kothari, 2004). These types of observations are used in the social sciences and it was important throughout that the researcher was deemed to be part of the group in order to gain the trust of the interviewees. The respondents were very willing to provide information and were pleased that they were anonymous and part of a project that was going to uncover more about *Wasta* than was currently available.
Wasta was a significant issue for the respondents; one that they believe cannot be solved easily. They all agreed that it would be easier if someone knew someone within the organization.

5.2.4 Social Network Analysis

The SNA was the last method that was used in the triangulation methodology in order to validate this research. The nodes played an equally important role in illustrating the relationships between actors and also the difficulties when the communication was one-way and not two-way (Parise, 2007). This is an essential element in HRM studies, as studying the behaviours and reactions of employees as well (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Communication in HRM plays a central role in aiding strategies, planning, training, goals and objectives (Armstrong, 2009; Robbins & Judge, 2015). If the communication tools are not working then there will be a breakdown in job effectiveness and efficiency (Robbins & Judge, 2015). The lack of communication also causes problems in working relationships. The SNA is displayed in the data analysis chapter and shows the divisions in communications between administrative staff.

The SNA’s that were captured for this research show different types of relationships and the direction of the communication. The one common thread between all the SNA’s is that there is always one node “actor” “employee” that has the knowledge to be given to others. (section, 4.10 p. 260). As the saying goes “knowledge is power”. In University A, the person in node ‘G’ is a very powerful person, yet their position is low in the hierarchy. This person has been employed with the university for many years and works from locking the classroom doors to assisting the Dean with paperwork. They seem to know the intricacies of the university and can seem to answer almost any question that a student, instructor, administrative assistant or dean may have (section 5.10, p. 244).

In University B, there is also one person that gets told information but does not share what they are told, in position B (section 4.10, p.260). Position A communicates with two positions mostly being B and C, where C communicates to the others on A’s behalf. This shows a certain balance of power, when
individuals cannot get to A, but only through C. There are also minimal communication patterns (section 4.10, p.260).

In University C, there are two splits in the divisions, which show that two main positions do not communicate with each other, being A and I. They communicate with relevant staff members however not all of them have the two way communication. There is one node “k” that seems to take information from one division to another division (section 4.10, p.260).

In University D, there is a central person who communicates with the other nodes, however, E does not communicate with A. There is no direct link except through C (section 4.10, p.260).

Communication is the most important quality that keeps the team together (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Unfortunately, there is a lack of proper communication channels within these universities. Not all the information gets to the right people at the right time. Wasta plays a role here as well, in that, only certain positions have access to information. Other positions do not. It also depends where you are in the chain of command. The lack of communication with the higher-level management is also disconcerting in that they do not share the information. Wasta is at every level and affects people’s relationships with others.

5.3 The basis for development of an innovative model and framework.

Researchers have indicated that there has yet to be found a Middle Eastern model that describes the management activity in the region (Budhwar & Mellahi, 2006; Dirani, 2006; Iles et al. 2012; Khakkar & Rammal, 2013). A critical aspect of this model is recognized, necessarily, as a deeper understanding of Wasta in order to appreciate its effects on HRPs and its role in business (Mohamed & Mohamed, 2011; Dirani, 2006; Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011; Hutchings & Weir, 2006). Although there is wide acknowledgement of the entrenched nature of Wasta within Middle Eastern culture, this researcher also recognizes the great need to understand the effects of Wasta, not only from a cultural aspect, but also from a business aspect. The literature contains no indication of a framework or a model
to depict the relationship and impact that Wasta has on individual employees and
the organizational culture as a whole. Thus, the development by this researcher of
the Wasta Organizational Culture Model and the Wasta Framework has been
brought about through the identification of a need for reform in the area of HRM
in Lebanon, and the necessity of confronting the reality of the role that Wasta plays
in HRM issues. The Wasta Organizational Culture Model and Wasta Framework
illustrate the impact of Wasta on HRPs within an organization, and are a valuable
aid to understanding the impact that Wasta has on individuals and organizations.
It is envisaged that these two innovations will provide a pillar for future
researchers to build on, as well as a tool for HR managers to consider in their role
in their respective workforces.

5.4 Implications for Theory

This research has made a significant contribution to knowledge through the data
that was collected and the theory that was examined. The researcher was able to
prove that Wasta and HRP have a relationship and was able to provide insights
regarding Wasta in the workplace. These insights provided the rationale for the
development of a theoretical model and a theoretical framework that will
contribute to knowledge regarding HRM and HRPs in the Middle East; these
innovations will be described in the following sections. The Wasta Organizational
Culture Model looks at the organizational culture within a company and the effects
of Wasta on the culture. The Wasta Framework illustrates the effects that Wasta
has on HRPs within organizations.

5.5 The Wasta Organizational Culture Model

Dessler (2003) states that organizational culture is a form of shared values and
beliefs that gives the individuals of the organization meaning; it also provides them
with rules for their behavior. The Wasta Organizational Culture Model (figure 41)
below allows students, researchers and individuals to understand that there are
other issues, besides values and beliefs that affect an organization’s culture. It
shows the relationships between employees within an organization. It is a very
simple model to build on that starts with basic terminology and concepts. For
example, within the diagram below, the reader will see ‘Wasta employed’ and, simply, ‘employed’, indicating a crucial differentiation in the process by which an employee gains employment.

Organizational culture plays a very important role (Mohamed & Singh, 2010; Dutch, 2013; Dessler, 2003). As personality shapes an individual, organizational culture shapes the way its members react and outlines what an organization is willing to do. An organization that wants to maintain a healthy organizational culture must understand the human capital that works within it. The central role that HR plays in an organization lies in the fact that the latter’s success is based on the efficiency and effectiveness of its employees. Hence, the proper development of an organization’s culture must begin with the correct HRM.

The literature review provided a rich background regarding organisational culture and the Lebanese culture. Hence this has helped in drawing a simplified model that reflects relationships between employees when a Wasta is involved. This is very important in Lebanon and within the Middle East. This understanding is critical when dealing with many cultures and subcultures, religions and great diversity in ways of doing business and interacting with each other.

The respondents in this study shared their thoughts and feelings with regard to how they feel about Wasta-employed individuals. Thus, this model provides insights about the feelings and behaviors of the staff with regard to the impact of Wasta on the organizational culture of the Lebanese universities under study. Giauque et al (2010) point out that a new climate filled with confidence and respect is imperative. Should this be realized, then the organizational culture will be in a healthy and supportive state. This is where the Wasta Organizational Culture Model begins to illustrate the impact that Wasta has internally on employees. This is vital for management to plan and foresee in order to achieve the building of a successful organizational culture. Hence this ensures further efficiency and effectiveness of the employees and production within the organization.
Figure 41 below is the *Wasta* Organizational Culture model that has been illustrated as a result of the research conducted. It is a positive outcome to the data that has been analyzed.

![Organizational Culture Model](image)

**Figure 41 Wasta Organizational Culture model developed for this research**

The *Wasta* Organizational Culture Model in figure 41 explains the effects of *Wasta* on employees within the organization. As stated above, the domino effect of *Wasta* on HR practices affects the culture within. The interviews proved to provide pertinent information regarding the emotions felt in response to the presence of *Wasta* in the organizational culture. The SNA also diagrammed the issues in communication and relationships when one person has more information than the others. The limited interactions between nodes create tension and issues when trying to get work done on a daily basis. When one person has the information and the others do not, it lessens the efficiency of the staff members involved. It makes their job more difficult and a feeling of dissatisfaction is engendered. Employees find it very difficult to socialize harmoniously with individuals who possess *Wasta*. The observations also showed the difficulties when people are being employed through favoritism and nepotism, creating *Wasta* from the upper management to the lower management.
Some statements that were made by the respondents include; “I am not motivated, but I am not affected by anyone, as I do not have anyone that supports me. I know myself “ or “I am not motivated at all”. One respondent even said “It’s alright, I am not happy and I am not sad. I am just there.” Another respondent stated that those around them affected them and the organizational culture certainly affected them.

Figure 41 above is an example of an organization. In the middle is the main culture of an organization; the smaller circles around the main circle are employed individuals labeled ‘employed’ and those employed through Wasta are labeled ‘Wasta-employed’. This can be explained as a ‘typical team’ or ‘working group’ or even a “division”. The circles are placed around the main culture of the organization indicating the whole organization including the employees. There are two types of arrows. The thin arrows that are linked between each circle, or each employee, indicate a working relationship. It also indicates that they are linked to the organization as a team.

Figure 41 (p.294) above shows that within an organization, the relationship between one Wasta-employed individual and a normally employed individual is negative. The arrow and the minus (-) sign depict the negativity before the arrow that link the employed and Wasta-employed individuals. This shows a negative relationship. The arrow and the plus (+) sign) before the arrow, depict a positive relationship between two Wasta-employed individuals. Wasta-employed individuals have a better interrelationship than those that are employed without Wasta.

This model shows that the individual relationships between people that work with each other are based on either negative or positive relationships. The individuals that have not been employed via a Wasta do not feel as confident in their positions and do not feel that they are listened to/or accounted for within the organization. They feel that they are a “weaker link” to other individuals that have been employed based on a Wasta.
Individuals that are employed through a Wasta are more confident. They believe that they have the full support of their Wasta and are able to interact and act with others based on greater power and often use their Wasta as leverage. Hence this creates negative relationships between the person that was Wasta-employed and those that were employed on the basis of their qualifications and skills. Individuals that are employed without a Wasta tend to communicate and socialize with other employees that have been employed as they have, thus creating more positive relationships between each other.

The larger arrow that surrounds the main organization and smaller circles indicates the continuous cycle that is within the organization. That is, the influence of recruiting through Wasta is continuous. The relationships that are a result of this Wasta environment affect the culture as a whole.

Consequently as a whole, the Wasta impact creates negative influences within the organizational culture where other employees are employed without a Wasta. Organizational culture is part of the vital core of the business where synergy and proper communication channels are essential.

This diagram forms a basis on which to begin future research. There is currently no information regarding Wasta culture within an organization and this model provides a starting point for other researchers to begin, expand, change and argue about this model.

5.6 The Wasta Framework

This framework is the first of its kind. When searching for information on Wasta, a person will not find anything illustrated or displayed. That is, there is neither framework nor model that has been worked on, to the date of writing this research.

The implication of this framework (figure 42, p.298) is to provide individuals, managers, strategic planners, employees, students and researchers a place to start. It is a benchmark to build on and improve. The added value is that finally there is a frame in which to see the whole Wasta picture. The weak points in the HRPs of the organization will be able to be mapped out. It allows managers to ask there are
issues or a difficulty in a person’s recruiting strategies. This framework allows us to examine each factor individually and to see that Wasta is an important element in Middle Eastern HR practices and HRM. Thus, pillars have been created on which to build a stronger HRM structure.

The framework
The Wasta framework below (figure 42) illustrates the outer frame labeled the macro-environment. This includes social, political, culture and economical aspects that affect the human resource practices of the organisation. In the theoretical information that has been obtained, Budhwar & Mellahi (2006) and Iles et al. (2012) both state that the micro and macro environment play a role in the careers of individuals – culturally, socially and legally. They discuss a framework that has been developed to analyze HRM in the Middle East. It also examines the economical and institutional factors. Also Hofstede’s dimensions which discuss the various indexes regarding culture denotes that culture plays a significant role. These factors have allowed for the outer frame to be drawn indicating that political, legal, social and cultural factors all play a role in the HR practices of the organization.

The political environment plays an integral role in the Middle East (Hasrouny, 2012; UNDP report, 2013; Dessler, 2003). Lebanon is an under-developed country and has continuously been going through political instability for the last 40 years. It is currently still undergoing political strife due to the surrounding politics, both external and internal to the country. The social factors include the society at large, social values and family factors, as well as the socioeconomic status and educational background of the individuals (Dessler, 2003, Dutch, 2013; Afiouni et al. 2013)
The economic factors, which include currency fluctuations, import and export businesses, international trade and foreign policies and investments, also play a role, (Dessler, 2003; UNDP, 2013). These factors of course play a role for any organization in understanding and trying to sustain itself in any economic crisis within Lebanon.

Culture is another important factor within the framework as it contains issues like cultural differences between countries (between neighboring countries) as well as religious and ethnic issues. Also sub-cultures within regional areas and within organizations. As researchers have pointed out like Dirani, 2006; Iles et al, 2012, Jamali et al, 2010, that the family plays a pivotal role and its effects on the employees are very important to understand for any Lebanese organization. The effects on employees are imperative for any manager to understand in order to be help in the motivation and development of employees as well as employee retention.

Figure 42 Wasta framework developed for this research
These factors surround the organization and have a daily influence on the goals and objectives of the organization. The organization lives within the society and must work on a daily basis with the environmental factors that surround them. The organization needs to ensure that it understands the environment in order to plan objectively how to have a competitive advantage. As many researchers have noted that a framework is needed to understand the specific perspectives that concern the region in order for western business practices to fathom the various variables that are at stake and of concern when dealing with Middle East business partners.

Within the middle of the framework (figure 42) are the HR practices of: recruitment and selection; training and development; compensation and benefits; performance management; and career development. These are HRPs that affect each individual from within the organization. Recruitment and selection as stated previously is the procedure of applying to an organization and being selected (Mathis & Jackson, 2010). Training and development is the process of being given orientation and training sessions in order to have the skills to get the job done (Armstrong, 2009). Compensation and benefits is the package that a person receives, including base salary plus any other benefits like insurance, retirement and so on, in exchange for work completed (Schwind et al, 2013). Performance Management is the process of getting appraised through evaluations by setting goals and objectives and getting feedback and career development is the opportunity to enhance oneself and get promoted to another position due to hard work or promotion (Dessler, 2013).

Table 69 introduces the abbreviations for the Wasta framework to be used as a legend when discussing the framework.
As can be seen in the framework there are arrows that connect that macro-environment showing that each factor is also affected by the other. The macro environment certainly impacts the organization and its success within the organization and within society. In the middle of the framework are the HRPs labeled denoting the HRPs of any organization. Within the framework, the reader will see the word *Wasta* reflected by the letter (W) and (+) meaning ‘with *Wasta*’ on the left side of the framework and (−) meaning ‘without *Wasta*’ on the right side of the framework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+W</td>
<td>With the use of a <em>Wasta</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−W</td>
<td>Without the use of a <em>Wasta</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&gt;</td>
<td>Greater chance of recruitment/or positively recruited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&lt;</td>
<td>Less chance of recruitment/not recruited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T=</td>
<td>Received training &amp; development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T−</td>
<td>No training received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB&gt;</td>
<td>Improved compensation &amp; Benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB&lt;</td>
<td>Declining Compensation &amp; Benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD&gt;</td>
<td>Promotion in career development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD&lt;</td>
<td>No further/minimal career development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The framework (figure 42) begins at the top with recruitment and selection. As in any organization this is the first step in entering a company. Most recruitment, according to Robbins and Judge (2015), Phillips and Gully (2015), and Dessler, (2013), is done through various channels where applicants apply for advertised positions. Hence the recruitment process begins objectively through accepting applications and then selecting according to selection procedures. Consequently, the data from this research project has shown that applicants did not apply through the normal means of responding to an advertisement. They received a job through *Wasta*. Hence, should an individual get a job through *Wasta*, they are in the ‘with *Wasta* (W+)’ section of the framework. According to the research data, over 58% of individuals got their job through knowing someone. This supports the fact that there are individuals who have begun their job with *Wasta* and it follows throughout the HRPs. The interviews also gave this indication. Once a person enters via *Wasta* ‘W+’, the *Wasta* follows them throughout the other HRPs. This
means that with a Wasta ‘W+’ a person gets training at the organization (=TD). This follows through compensation, which means that with ‘W+’, the person gets better compensation and benefits. This is denoted by the symbol ≥ CB. The person with Wasta also gets an actual performance appraisal or a better performance appraisal, this denoted by the symbol ↑ within the Wasta chain, when a person has a Wasta, they also have better chances at further advancing their career with the following symbol >CD. The regression analysis, although showed a weak correlation, indicated that there was a relationship between the HRPs and Wasta. The interviews in section 4.7 also indicated strongly that once an individual had a Wasta within the organization, it made things much easier when completing the employment cycle.

The concept is that should a person have Wasta (W+), then the HR practices to follow shall have a greater chance of being affected. Should the person not have Wasta (W-), the HR practices to follow will have a lesser chance of being affected by Wasta.

If a person is recruited without a Wasta (W) –, then they are recruited as ≤R, so then, when it comes to training and development, they do not always get any training (–TD). They also do not have a chance of getting better compensation (≤ CB), hence they get less compensation than the others. Without Wasta also means that the individual does not get a performance appraisal, which is denoted by the symbol ↓ in the Wasta framework. The individual also has less chance of getting a better career or being promoted to another job is denoted by the symbol <CD.

This framework is based on the data that was received through the three hypotheses that were tested, where it was found that:

- $H_1$: Wasta and training have a relationship
- $H_1$: Wasta and compensation have a relationship
- $H_1$: Wasta and career development have a relationship

It was also found through both the survey and interviews that;

- Wasta and recruitment have a relationship
- Wasta and performance management have a relationship.
This framework (p.298) has shown that *Wasta* has an impact on the HRPs of the organization and it has a domino effect on all the HRPs. When a person enters the organization via *Wasta*, they are seen to be strong and confident. They are a ‘force’ to be reckoned with, in that they have someone supporting them throughout their career. They will always have this *Wasta*, this relationship that they need to support and be supported by. A person that does not have *Wasta* and by chance gets recruited by the organisation, enters without support and finds the situation difficult within the organization. That is, they do not have the support of *Wasta* and find that whatever needs to get done, gets done in a difficult manner, as there is no support.

Through the interviews that were taken (interviews in Chapter 4), the researcher was able to support the *Wasta* Framework with specific details of difficulties employees encountered and their opinions on that topic. Various individuals within their interviews discussed their frustrations with the fact that they did not have *Wasta* and/or did not know someone within the organization and that this made their job dissatisfying due to the difficulties in getting proper employment. It also led to the fact that if an individual did not have *Wasta* it made it more difficult to get employed. This is transcribed to less chance of recruitment (<R), without *Wasta*; it also means in terms of compensation that the individual who does not have *Wasta* will not receive the right compensation or equitable compensation (<C). Many individuals stated that as they did not know anyone within the organization it was difficult to obtain the wages that they deemed fair and equitable for their position. Others indicated that, for the same position across the university, different people were on different wage levels and it was not dependent on their educational qualification. One person even indicated that there were those individuals that did not have the appropriate educational qualifications, but were earning much more than the individuals who had the proper qualifications (Interview in Chapter 4). The arrows within the model indicate the interchangeable effects that each HR practice has on the other or following HR practice. The *Wasta* Framework supports the concept “ the weak get weaker and the strong get stronger”. 

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The Wasta Framework (figure 42 p.298) is the beginning in understanding how Wasta plays a role in the HR practices within any organization. It is imperative that this beginning has been made in order to open doors for future research. The Wasta Framework is the first of its kind and it is the hope of the researcher that it is the beginning of finding a solution to the negative effects that Wasta has on employee motivation and organizational behavior.

5.7 Psychological contract, employee engagement and Wasta

Through the research that was conducted (data analysis Chapter 4), and based on the current literature (chapter 2), the researcher has been able to link the effects of Wasta on the psychological contract and employee engagement. The data has shown the dissatisfaction caused and the impact that Wasta has had on employees (data in chapter 4). It is a high percentage. Hence the link between Wasta and PC and EE is very real. When a person believes that they should receive certain benefits and does not, this creates misalignment and it is very difficult for the employee’s state of mind. This affects their PC and their EE within the organization.

Seeing that the HRPs are affected by the culture, and Wasta influence this makes the working conditions at risk. These authors have been able to conclude that HRP is an important factor in influencing the psychological contract (Aggarwal et al, 2007; Ahmed & Muchiri, 2013). There still needs to be more work done on the PC and EE and their relationship. This research has been able to open new paths in the PC and EE with regards to the impact of Wasta on HRPs.

As written in the literature review, recruitment and psychological contract have a relationship where, during the recruitment process, the employer makes promises to the new candidate. Should the employer fail to fulfill their promises some candidates will feel that their psychological contract has been violated (Aggarwal et al, 2007). That is, being promised one thing and having something else be given, will be difficult for the candidate. This is the same for Wasta. When a candidate is promised a position due to their Wasta and is supported by them, their
psychological contract is focused on this and expects the outcome that has been promised to them.

Psychological contract and performance also have a relationship where the employer and employee set expectations and goals. They wait for the performance appraisal to ensure feedback about their level of performance. There are many features of performance management, which include job role, fair, timely, and accurate evaluation of their performance, fair pay and the development of opportunities with provision of feedback to the employees. Wasta plays a role here, in that, the research has found that there is a relationship between Wasta and performance. As such, Wasta patrons promise candidates further benefits and career development. As well they are “untouchable” in the sense that they have a Wasta patron, protecting them. This also affects the psychological contract of the individual. When a person is promised something and it is not delivered this creates negativity and their psychological contract is affected (Aggarwal et al. 2007; Ahmed & Muchiri, 2013).

There is also a relationship between psychological contract and training and development. Individuals have definite ideas of how they are to progress in their skills and in their employability. Training is an important aspect of the make-up of the psychological contract. Training acts as an incentive for an individual to maintain their commitment to the organization (Aggarwal et al, 2007). With a Wasta a person is offered training and those without a Wasta are not given appropriate training. The framework above illustrates that being Wasta-connected, allows the employee more privileges than a normally employed individual.

Relationships relating to rewards and psychological contracts are based on the paid recognition of getting tasks done. The compensation and benefits that the employer provides is an incentive for employees. Hence, when you reward an employee based on their own needs and expectations, you can motivate them better, Consequently, compensation and benefits have a real effect on employees and influence their behavior (Aggarwal et al, 2007). Wasta plays a role in the HRP
compensation. It has been proven that there is a relationship between the two – Wasta and compensation.

Figure 43 Middle Eastern employee engagement & psychological contract with *wasta*
Figure updated by researcher: adapted from: Aggarwal et al. (2007, p. 322)

Figure 43 is an extension of the Human Resource Practices: Employee and Psychological contract and Employee Engagement: An integrative Framework. In this framework, *Wasta* has been placed as a node within it, indicating that it also affects the HRPs, which in turn affect the psychological contract of the employee. In order to ensure that this represents a Middle Eastern framework, the researcher has added the micro- and macro-environmental factors that also have an effect. All of these factors have an influence on PC and EE.

Through the interviews, the employees indicated their disappointment in HRPs within the university and their de-motivation. Hence the figure above shows that should there be a *Wasta* involved within the HRPs of the organization, indicated by the arrow connecting from the box *Wasta* to HRPs, then HRPs also affect the PC of the employee. As per the literature on PC and EE, it is very important to
understand that what is being told and promised to the employee is taken seriously and in turn affects the employee’s engagement to the organization. The figure also shows at the bottom the microenvironment and macro environment that are also involved within the HRPs regarding the social, legal, technological and cultural phenomenon’s not only the organizational culture within the micro environment. From the PC and EE the employees, motivation and satisfaction are also measured which in turn affects their attitudes and behavior as well as their retention within the organization. The addition of the Wasta is important to understand within a ME model that shows its dual affect on both the organizational culture and individual employee. Hence this model’s addition is an important avenue to pursue within PC and EE and the affects that Wasta has on individuals.

5.8 Summary

This chapter provided the highlights of this research, which are the new contributions to knowledge in the form of two innovations – the Wasta Organizational Culture Model (figure 41, p.294) and the Wasta Framework (figure 42, p.298) as well as an addition to a current model on Psychological Contract and Employee Engagement. The two innovations both focus on an important area that should be highlighted in order to understand the recruitment and development of employees, which is the core of organizations. The human asset is vital to the success of the organization. In understanding the HRPs of the organizations, it will allow managers, directors and CEOs to make the necessary changes to ensure retention and development of talent. The Wasta Organizational Culture Model (p.294) depicts the organization within, when Wasta plays a role in the recruitment and the effects on other employees. It shows that negative relationships are formed which, according to theorists, does not create a healthy working environment. This needs to be noted and displayed in order to educate our businesses in ensuring that their organizational culture becomes healthy and that it is an important internal element.

Employee engagement and psychological contract are two areas that should be further explored within the Middle East. The addition of the Wasta to this model
shows the effects on the individual’s motivation and attitude which is vital to the success of the organization and its talent retention.

The *Wasta* Framework on p. 298 (figure 42), if published, will undoubtedly have a significant impact within organizations in Lebanon. It will open up information about an element that has been under cover, yet is well known and well-used by people within the society. This is just the beginning of future research on the concept of *Wasta* and its impact. The implications for HR practices and HRM are enormous. This research has outlined groundwork that was not available before with regard to HR practices in Lebanon and HRM in the Middle East. The *Wasta* Framework and *Wasta* Organizational Culture Model have given researchers a place to start.

### 5.9 Essential role of this research

As outlined in Chapter 1, this research has taken a pivotal role in examining the topic of *Wasta* and HR practices. After an extensive literature review, the pursuit to find out the effects of *Wasta* became greater. The literature reviewed the concepts of HR, its evolution and HR practices. It discussed the current major theories that are available in HRM. Moreover, the section labeled ‘Research in context’ was able to provide the current information regarding Lebanon and the Middle East and where this research will fill the current gaps.

The subsequent chapters provided the data and analyzed the data and innovative management theory to place *Wasta* in the correct framework. This demonstrated its considerable impact and importance in Lebanese and Middle Eastern society. The contribution to knowledge thus has important potential to impact on HRM in Lebanon and the Middle East. Continuous work and research on *Wasta* will prove to bring on the changes that are needed in order to advance HRM into a new revolution in the Middle East. The contribution to knowledge of this research introduced the first of its kind, “*Wasta* Framework” and “*Wasta* Organizational Culture” model.
This chapter also considers the limitations of this research and provides conclusions drawn from the results presented in Chapter 4. Recommendations arising out of this research are then presented and finally areas for further research.

5.10 Consideration of the research limitations

This research has a number of limitations that are listed below. These limitations are considered below as they may have had an impact on the conclusions of this research.

1. Disadvantage of time limit, in spite of the creation of an appropriate timeframe
   Due to the nature of communications within Lebanon, time delay in order to get responses or approval, there was a time limit in order to complete the data collection within a certain timeframe.

2. Challenge of exploratory research
   As this is an exploratory research by nature, it was more considered with the phenomenon of Wasta and its effects on the respondents.

3. Sample of 4 of 43 universities in Lebanon
   It was a large sample of surveys that were obtained, however from only 4 universities. The current number of universities in Lebanon is 43.

4. Political & social issues in the country
   The constant political and social issues in Lebanon have made it difficult for the researcher to always reach the destination to conduct the research. This created a time delay in getting the results needed as scheduled in the research plan.
5.11 Conclusions from the research

Dealing with individuals is a complex task. Managing the most expensive resource in the organization – the ‘human asset’ and ‘human capital’ – is not an easy task. The field of HRM is evolving in this dynamic environment and from where it began it has definitely made many leaps towards new areas of human resource management (Cohen, 2015). Understanding human behavior, how people interact and the psychological contracts of each individual are intricate and complex (Chang et al, 2013). Without a doubt, dealing with the most expensive ‘treasure’ is rewarding in itself.

This research proved to be a long journey that was both rewarding and inspiring. As Lebanon, a small country in the Middle East, continually goes through turmoil, this journey became all the more important. The quest for knowledge is always invigorating. Kofi Anan was right when saying that “education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.” There needs to be a beginning in order to progress to something more positive.

The quest for more knowledge about Wasta began as an empty page and ended with statistics, facts and interesting stories. This research has begun a new pursuit for knowledge in Human Resource practices (HRPs), Human Resource Management (HRM) and Human Resource (HR) development in Lebanon and the Middle East.

The research project’s main question was to discover to what extent Wasta influences HR practices in Lebanese universities. It was split into four research questions aimed at discovering, variously: in what way Wasta influences HR practices in the university; in what way(s) Wasta affects individual employees in their career path; the nature of Wasta’s effect on the organizational culture of the university; and which tools universities need in order to improve their SHRM focus.

In the beginning of this research, the outcomes of the study were listed as follows:

1. Present data that will illustrate individual’s responses to Wasta in the HR practices of the University.
2. Document the perceptions of employees and real cases of individuals in their work life and work culture through individual interviews regarding the individual effects of Wasta and organizational culture.
3. Document framework of the HR practices and strategies suitable for Lebanese Universities
4. Expose the dilemmas that are encountered when Wasta is used in negative ways

This research has been able to present data based on individual responses (n=349) on Wasta in HR practices of four Lebanese universities. The interviews allowed the researcher to document the employee’s perceptions and thoughts regarding the current situation that they occupy. This was done through individual interviews.

This research has also documented two theoretical frameworks that depict the effects of Wasta on HRPs. It has also discussed, through the interviews, how Wasta has been used in negative ways.

The chapters that have been written include the Introduction, which outlined the research, its aims and objectives, as well as the research questions. It gave basic directions as to where this research began.

Then an extensive Literature Review followed that took in research in the HRM field from 1983, with Hofstede’s dimensions, to the year 2015. It was able to display the information available regarding the following topics: HRM; HR practices; the Middle East; Lebanon; HR practices in Lebanon; the definition and role of Wasta; employee engagement and psychological contract; influential processes; human capital; and restructuring.

The Methodology chapter placed this research in the post-positivism paradigm, showing the importance of mixed methods research for HRM. The triangulation method was used in order to cover both quantitative and qualitative methods, achieving valid and reliable data. A survey was conducted, dispersed among 349 individuals that work in universities, interviews with 21 individuals, five observations and a social network analysis. The mix of all these methods allowed the researcher to create a solid foundation to continue with the research project.
The Data Analysis chapter displayed all the statistics and regression analysis to answer the research questions. The interviews were discussed as well as observations listed and SNA drawn for further discussion. The researcher conducted 20 different interviews with both academic and administration staff, including an interview with the consultant to the Ministry of Higher Education in Lebanon. Through both the quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher was able create a framework that described the effects of *Wasta* on HR within the university organizations. Examples were given of the privileges that employees selected for positions through *Wasta* enjoy, such as better pay, better working conditions, and an enhanced relationship with their employer. It was demonstrated that this process of preference has negative consequences for the motivation of employees and their ability to function as team members.

The interpersonal process of influence known as *Wasta* will take its time to ‘weed out’. The literature review revealed that *Wasta* is a part of Middle Eastern culture and will always be there in some form. However, it is up to future research to seek to educate and allow this phenomenon to take a new form. Thus, the frameworks developed here will allow researchers and future contributors to understand the depth and impact of *Wasta* on employees. It will lead us to further studies on employee engagement and psychological contract.

The *Wasta* framework (p.298) and model chapter linked all the data with the theoretical underpinning of the research in order to summarize and conclude the journey of research, and present the findings and implications for theory.

The *Wasta* Framework has been created as a product of the research undertaken for this project, and the resulting data analysis performed. The latter framework shows clearly the effects that *Wasta* has on HR practices within Lebanese universities. It is the first framework of its kind and is an original contribution to knowledge. It can now be understood how *Wasta* affects each HR practice and the pernicious tracks that it creates are able to be followed. This has not been known before and as a result of this research, the effects of *Wasta* are now understood. Additionally, the *Wasta* Organizational Culture model (p.294) displays the basic environment that is created between employees, including the negative and
positive relationships that are set up as result of a combination of factors, including the presence of *Wasta* in the organizational culture. These two models represent a number of important preliminary steps in understanding HR practices in Lebanon and the Middle East; they open exciting new avenues for future research in HRM in the Middle East.

Furthermore, this research has provided an important addition to the accepted features of HR practice, namely the Psychological Contract and Employee Engagement paradigm, where *Wasta* has been added to show that it negatively affects the individual psychological contract, which in turn affects the employee engagement (p.306).

*Wasta* is a pervasive and pernicious feature of the culture of the Middle East and its effect on performance and standards within organizations in the region is unfortunate. Though it may never be totally eliminated, being so endemic to the culture, it presents a challenge to future researchers to find ways to counter and negotiate it, while introducing new and healthier HR practices in order to ensure optimum performance in workplaces across the region, particularly in the university sector in Lebanon, from which the future leaders of this troubled country will emerge.

### 5.12 Recommendations

The conclusions from this research considered above indicate a need for recommendations that could help university administrations, private and public companies, Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Labour. The implications for both the private and public sector are numerous. With the current political and economic situation in Lebanon and the Middle East, there is great need for clearer policies and procedures in order to sustain local and international businesses in a turbulent area. With globalization at the door, Lebanon needs to ensure that there is internal stability and a focus on quality control and standardization. Below are recommendations in how to appease the issues at hand with HRM after having analyzed the data that has been obtained through this research.
Organizations should create an HR blueprint that focuses on all practices to tighten policies and procedures. This would allow a clearer strategic HRM focus. A number of recommendations presented below address this matter. The recommendations are divided into three areas; recommendations for higher education institutions, Ministry of Higher Education and for the Ministry of Labour.

Figure 44 below shows that the research has been able to give recommendations to three different publics being higher education institutions, Ministry of Higher Education and Ministry of Labour in Lebanon.

5.12.1 Recommendations for Higher Education institutions

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that Higher Education institutions:

Create job descriptions and job specifications standards for all jobs within the organizations.
Job descriptions list what the job is about, that is the functions and the essentials of what needs to get done. Job specifications are the required qualifications for that job, so what knowledge is needed and what skills for example, technical, physical and emotional need to be specified. So in doing this, standardized descriptions to help the organization ‘get organized’ are created. When it is clear as to what is needed, it makes recruitment easier and selection possible according to what is listed. This is one way of ensuring that Wasta is minimized.

**Recommendation 2:**

It is recommended that Higher Education institutions:

*Create standardized recruitment policies and procedures, which allow for greater transparency and accountability.*

Policies and procedures help guide the organization. They also help to align goals and objectives with the strategies of the organization. What needs to be identified refers to what type of strategies the organization has set for itself; that is, does the organization have a rule, for example within universities, such as, for every 30 students, one full-time faculty member and personnel member is needed.

Then writing policies and procedures for recruitment will entail how the organization will recruit, what measures will be taken, and what steps need to be fulfilled by HR and the organization to ensure transparency and accountability. Therefore, it is important to create a recruitment procedure that states for example, how positions are advertised internally and externally, and provides all the necessary information on how to apply. Such a document would make sure there is a standard guideline, for example, that a resume is required, with all documents relating to education and work experience. This document can also state how long the recruitment will stay open. All information needs to be advertised and communicated to the applicant in this way to ensure that every person has been treated the same way.

**Recommendation 3:**
It is recommended that Higher Education institutions:

*Create standardized selection procedures to include testing and analysis to ensure job fit.*

It is important to ensure that there are also selection procedures that may involve testing, for example, IQ tests, emotional intelligence tests, and/or skills test. There needs to be an appropriate interview process and these procedures must be written down. For example, certain positions may require individual interviews and there may be those positions that require a panel interview. All these need to be clear procedures and advertised to the various departments in question.

**Recommendation 4:**

It is recommended that Higher Education institutions:

*Create interview processes that are standardized.*

The organization should have available a standard interview question format, containing both a mixture of open and closed ended questions, that should be asked of all interviewees. The interview process should also an objective individual that is available in case there is bias involved. This will ensure that the process is transparent and without bias either way.

**Recommendation 5:**

It is recommended that Higher Education institutions:

*Create orientation and training and development programs for employees.*

The organizations that were visited by the researcher do not have formal orientation or training programs. All organizations small or large should have an adopted orientation session, which is the preliminary step before providing the employee with appropriate training. The training packages must all be similar and standardised to ensure that everyone receives the proper training and development. Training should be catered depending on the type of job description and what is involved.
Recommendation 6:

It is recommended that Higher Education institutions:

*Set compensation and benefits packages according to Ministry of Labour and Higher Education, and according to job descriptions.*

Organizations should ensure that they are within the limits of the labour and higher education laws. They should also benchmark their compensation and benefits package with other universities. These need to be based on job description and specifications. Standards need to be set with the organization to provide standardized packages for each level in the organization, for example, within a university for both academic and administrative positions. Everyone must sign a standardized contract and accept the same salary for the same positions as others. In adhering to these policies and procedures, standardization and transparency within the workplace is being ensured. This also leads to quality control.

Recommendation 7:

It is recommended that Higher Education institutions:

*Create echelons in compensation rates and benefits for promotion.*

Employers need to develop their basic wage salary systems. They should be standard and aligned with the strategies of the organization. The compensation system also needs to align foremost with the performance appraisal system. This will help the HR development decisions. In doing so, HR costs can be lowered when proper planning is done so that management can anticipate should there be any imbalances that become unmanageable and expensive.

Recommendation 8:

It is recommended that Higher Education institutions:

*Integrate a professional performance appraisal system to help ensure goal setting, strategic objectives and career development.*

Each organization must have a performance appraisal system that allows the management to compare what an employee is supposed to do with what they
actually have done. The supervisor can determine the performance level. It must be noted that the performance appraisal is tied to the job description and performance standards of the organization. Management needs to create clear and realistic performance goals and standards. This helps reduce communication problems between the managers, supervisors and employees. In order to decrease the subjectivity and bias, the performance appraisal system should be a 360º system, where performance should be measured in a process that involves the customer, fellow employee, manager and vice versa.

**Recommendation 9:**

It is recommended that Higher Education institutions:

> conduct an internal audit of the organization where clearer details and processes are created.

An internal audit is imperative in assessing the internal strengths and weaknesses of the organization. The organization gathers information from all of the main departments of the organization in order to provide a vehicle for understanding the nature and effects of the decisions in these functional areas. The resource-based view is an approach to competitive advantage and it looks internally at the resources that are important. It encompasses three categories, these being: physical, human resources, and organizational resources. It makes processes clear by ensuring that a list is made of the most important strengths and weaknesses to focus on in order to improve or correct any issues that might be outstanding. It also allows a company to see which way to innovate and grow and grasp on to their strengths and make their weaknesses ‘stronger’ in order to diminish them as soon as possible.

**Recommendation 10:**

It is recommended that Higher Education institutions:

> show, through an internal audit of the organization, exactly where there are gaps within the organizations HR framework
It will evaluate the jobs that are currently being done in the organization. This internal assessment helps the organization position itself and helps it develop a competitive advantage. In doing an internal audit, the organization also assesses all the current jobs that will be needed for the future. Data can be obtained through the organization’s database and existing staff would have a wealth of knowledge. Working hand in hand with HR it allows delineation of the gaps with SHRM and to feel the gaps to ensure that a competitive advantage is sustained.

**Recommendation 11:**

It is recommended that Higher Education institutions:

*Conduct an external audit of the university which will allow the organization to sustain its competitive edge.*

The external audit examines and evaluates the factors that are beyond the control of a company. For example, it would examine increased foreign competition, population shifts, aging society and other economic factors. The purpose of this external audit is to identify and develop the opportunities that could be beneficial to the company and to examine the threats that need to be avoided. Once the organization gathers competitive intelligence and assimilates the information, it can evaluate the key external factors. This is imperative for universities in Lebanon that are almost all private, except for one public university. The competition is high and the market is open to all. Better preparation and research are important to an organization in order to prepare themselves against any future issues.

**Recommendation 12:**

It is recommended that Higher Education institutions:

*Work on Strategic Human Resource Management, aligning them with corporate strategies and planning*

Universities need to align their strategies to include SHRM, emphasizing the need for HR plans and strategies to be formulated in the context of the whole organizational strategies. Thus, they will become responsive to the changing
nature of the organization’s external environment. SHRM theory states that HR plans and strategies should be developed in order to take into account changes in society and economic conditions, legislation, global and technological issues. The challenge of managing human resources is to ensure that all activities are focused on business needs. All human resource activities should fit together as a system and be aligned with human resource strategies. These strategies, in turn, should be aligned with the business strategy. Each university must align its corporate strategy with its SHRM strategy to ensure, that they sustain a competitive advantage.

Recommendations for Ministry of Higher Education

 Recommendation 13:

It is recommended that:

*Enacting and passing national laws and guidelines through the Ministry of Higher Education and Ministry of Labour to control the recruitment, selection, compensation and benefits laws.*

There needs to be the creation of national laws and guidelines through the Ministry of Higher Education. In order to ensure quality control and assurance, there needs to be standards that are set for Lebanese universities. They need to be able to comply with regulations that will be based on qualifications, positions, job descriptions, standards of positions, curriculum quality standards, quality service, customer service, among others. Quality control checks on higher education institutions should be mandatory, ensuring compliance with regulations and standards that are set by the law. The current labour law needs to be changed to include part-time contracts and indemnity procedures. There needs to be laws that support the ‘worker’, ‘employee’ and ‘manager’ or employer. When an employee understands their rights and has laws to protect them, it changes the circumstances. Also, follow-up from the Ministry with all universities to ensure that best practices are instilled within would be very beneficial. There needs to more accountability and transparency of information. This way one can ensure less corruption is involved. Should the Ministry make visits during the year, this would certainly allow people to make sure that they are working in line with the law.
Recommendation 14:

It is recommended that:

*The Ministry of Higher Education should play a conducive role in controlling and sustaining transparency and governance*

The Ministry needs to play an important role in quality assurance and accreditation. They should enforce quality standards to be met, ensuring that the minimum requirements are implemented. Lebanon has many links with overseas countries with regards to cooperation and exchange programs. The ministry needs to ensure that all universities need to sustain that competitive advantage.

Recommendations for Ministry of Labour

Recommendation 15:

It is recommended that:

*Lebanese government update its labour law from 1943 and institute higher education reforms, creating new standards and objectives for higher education institutions.*

The Labour Law needs to be updated to reflect the current needs of the community. Best practices should be taken from similar cultures and Western practices to ensure that benchmarking is occurring to the best standards. The labour law should reflect the current times. The law is over 70 years old and of course, the times have changed, but individuals need to ask that their rights be fulfilled.

The recommendations above detail the minimum requirements for both public sector and organizations in order to improve their HRM policies and procedures.

5.13 Implications for further research

This research has opened new avenues in HRM and HR practices in Lebanon. As Lebanon is part of the Middle East, any research that is undertaken is also adding to the contribution to knowledge in the Middle East, in particular when the focus
is on a cultural norm as pervasive as *Wasta* and on its relationship to HR practices. Researchers can develop each HR practice by itself and examine the consequences in further detail. Research into organizational culture can also be developed to create new models within companies in the Middle East. This shall prove to be insightful for international companies and institutions that look to deal with businesses in the Middle East and Lebanon.

There can be avenues in research regarding:

- Individual HR practices in relation to *Wasta* that is, examine each HR practice individually with *Wasta*.
- HR development that is, examine the development of HR practices and management
- Social Network analysis that is, examine the SNA of individual universities in further detail
- Employee engagement and psychological contract in Lebanon and the Middle East. That is, examine in further detail the EE and PC of individuals in Lebanon and the Middle East, and further analyze the effects of HR practices with regard to psychological contract and employee engagement, as well as the effects of culture on EE and PC.
- HR practices and effects of culture that is, discuss of the effects of culture, Lebanese and Middle East on HR practices.
- Organizational Behavior in Lebanon that is, illustrate organizational behavior in Lebanon and provide details regarding motivation, job satisfaction and job involvement.
- Examine positive effects of *Wasta*
- Middle Eastern Leadership that is, examine leadership theories and the effects of Middle Eastern culture on leadership theories.
- Compensation incentives that is, examine compensation incentives in Lebanon, to provide further case studies.
- Labour Law and HRM in Lebanon that is, research the current issues in Labour Law and HRM within Lebanon
- Public Sector Management and HRM in Lebanon that is, examine issues in dealing with public sector management in HRM and in Lebanon.

The literature review showed that there is minimal information regarding HRM and the Middle East. Afiouni et el. (2013) have written about trying to find HR
models that would suit Middle Eastern business practices. They are trying to see the impact that HR functions have on the organization’s performance, and this research has attempted to shed light on a significant aspect of HR to assist in the quest of raising performance standards within Lebanese universities. It is hoped that the indications for future research opened by this research will find fertile ground.

5.14 Further research

The research that has been presented can be taken further. As mentioned in the limitations in section 5.10 a sample of four universities out of 43 were taken. As such it is important this study is extended to other universities in order to explore the following aspects in detail:

- *Wasta* recruitment and selection and its effects on other Human Resource Practices
- Effects of *Wasta* on motivation
- Effects of *Wasta* on turnover
- Effects of *Wasta* on talent retention
- Effects of *Wasta* on organizational culture
- Effects of *Wasta* on SHRM
- Psychological contract and employee engagement

Expanding this research will allow a more comprehensive understanding of the research questions that were presented in this project.

5.15 Concluding remarks

“Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family”.

Kofi Anan

This research is one of only a small number of research studies about *Wasta* in the Middle East. This research is considered important because it provided an insight
into the impact of *Wasta* on the HRM practices in the Middle East and other regions. A major conclusion is that research has just begun on *Wasta* and its effects on HR and HRM. The importance of *Wasta* within a culture like Lebanon must be discussed further. The impact of *Wasta* on individuals is greater than what has been illustrated or displayed in this research. Through the researcher’s personal opinion, young and old believe that everything is attainable through *Wasta*. In talking with individuals, students and employees, the answers seem to be the same; those that have a *Wasta* can get somewhere faster and with better results.

It is imperative that the foundations that have been begun with this research continue further. It is believed that *Wasta* is both within the public and private sector and it is a growing phenomenon that needs to be controlled through proper education and quality control systems. *Wasta* could have positive effects if curbed by the more western philosophies of connections, and proper controls could allow the attainment of better processes.

As *Wasta* is based within a culture, Hofsetede’s research was important in pointing out the effects of culture on people and their way of life. Each country has its own way of conducting business and further studies have proved the effects that culture has. This research was able to place *Wasta* in two different models. The first one is the *Wasta* Organizational Culture model, which shows how the internal relationships between employees are effected by individuals that are recruited through a *Wasta*. Studies in organizational culture are vast and as the literature review has proved that there are gaps in knowledge when trying to understand the effects that culture has. This model is a milestone in placing *Wasta* in a diagram to be further debated.

The *Wasta* Framework is the second contribution that helps the western community understand how HR practices are conducted in a small country like Lebanon, within the context of Middle Eastern culture. This framework is a pillar to mapping the ‘real’ HR in Lebanon and the Middle East. Even though the quantitative data showed various weaknesses, the triangulation method of combining qualitative and quantitative proved to give support to the use of *Wasta*. The comments made by the interviewees proved to be crucial information that
must be published. They provide accurate data that illustrates and tells the true story of Wasta.

The pursuit of knowledge on Wasta has just begun and the future holds more for this researcher. There is a wealth of data that needs to be sourced and published and it is in the dearth of this information that the true story of Wasta and the Middle East will be told. The information retrieved from the ‘sleeping giant’, otherwise known as the Middle East, will provide western practitioners with pertinent information on international relations, business and HRM in the world context.

“Knowledge has to be improved, challenged and increased constantly, or it vanishes.”

Peter Drucker

The great aim of education is not knowledge but action.

Herbert Spencer
6.0 Reference List


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Yahchouchi, G., & Bouloukian, N. (2014). Empowerment, job insecurity and


# 7.0 Appendix A - Questionnaire

This questionnaire is intended solely for research, it aims to analyze the relationship between employees and Human resource management strategies. All information collected will remain anonymous and will provide data for the objective in the development of research on the Difficulties in implementing HR strategies in Lebanese universities. Attached you will find a detailed information sheet for your perusal. Should you wish to participate in the research study, kindly fill in this questionnaire. This will be deemed as consent in participating. So thank you for kindly responding honestly to these questions.

## Employee Profile
1. I am:
   - □ Female
   - □ Male
   - □ Berut
   - □ Mount Leb.
   - □ North Leb.
   - □ South Leb.
   - □ Bekaa
   
   City Please specify: ____________________________

2. My age is [in years]:
   - □ 16-29
   - □ 30-39
   - □ 40-49
   - □ 50-59
   - □ 60+

3. I am the primary wage earner in the household:
   - □ Yes
   - □ No

4. What is your marital status?
   - □ Married
   - □ Single
   - □ Divorced
   - □ Widowed

## Education Profile
6. I graduated from as:
   - □ Public School
   - □ Private School
   - □ Public University
   - □ Private University

   Please name which school? ____________________________

7. My highest education level:
   - □ Brevet (Gr.9)
   - □ Terminal (Gr.12)
   - □ Bachelors
   - □ Masters
   - □ Doctoral

   Other: ____________________________

8. My area of Specialization is:
   - □ Business
   - □ Science
   - □ Literature
   - □ Engineering
   - □ Law
   - □ Human Sciences
   - □ Other: ____________________________

## Work Experience
9. I hold the position of:
   - □ Administration
   - □ Academic

   Please specify: ____________________________

10. List of positions held during professional experience (you can choose more than one):
   - Administrative assistant: □ <2 □ 2-3 □ 3-5 □ 5-10 □ >10
   - Assistant to the dean: □ <2 □ 2-3 □ 3-5 □ 5-10 □ >10
   - Student adviser: □ <2 □ 2-3 □ 3-5 □ 5-10 □ >10
   - Head of department: □ <2 □ 2-3 □ 3-5 □ 5-10 □ >10
   - Dean: □ <2 □ 2-3 □ 3-5 □ 5-10 □ >10
   - Others: □ <2 □ 2-3 □ 3-5 □ 5-10 □ >10

11. Type of contract:
   - □ Yearly contract
   - □ Tenure contract
   - □ Part-time job
   - □ Full-time job

12. Hours per week employed:
   - □ <20
   - □ 20-39
   - □ 40+

13. Years of service with this organization:
   - □ <2
   - □ 2-3
   - □ 3-5
   - □ 5-10
   - □ >10

14. I applied to the university:
   - □ Responded to advertisement
   - □ Know someone in University

15. I signed a contract for my job that details all the duties that I must perform
   - □ Yes
   - □ No

16. I received a promotion during the last two years
   - □ Yes
   - □ No

17. Performance appraisal programs are implemented in your organization
   - □ Yes
   - □ No

18. Who completes the performance appraisal? (you can choose more than one)
   - □ External
   - □ HR department
   - □ Supervisor
   - □ Employee
   - □ Other: ____________________________

19. I am in the following salary range (USD):
   - □ <500
   - □ 500-1200
   - □ 1200-2300
   - □ >2300

20. The remuneration package includes:
   - □ Basic salary
   - □ Social Security
   - □ Insurance
   - □ Retirement
   - □ Bonuses
   - □ Other: ____________________________

21. The employee can be promoted on basis of (you can choose more than one):
   - □ Vacant position to be filled
   - □ Evaluation by supervisor
   - □ External evaluation

22. The employee gets a raise on basis of (you can choose more than one):
   - □ Seniority
   - □ New laws
   - □ Performance appraisal
   - □ Other: ____________________________

23. I received an increase in wages during the last two years
   - □ Yes
   - □ No

24. I have been on the same wage since I began working for the organization
   - □ Yes
   - □ No

25. I plan to be working for this organization in two years
   - □ Yes
   - □ No
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please tick the number</th>
<th>1: Strongly agree</th>
<th>2: Agree</th>
<th>3: Neutral</th>
<th>4: Disagree</th>
<th>5: Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26. I received all the relevant information about my job before I was employed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. It takes too long to hire someone when a position becomes vacant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. When I first began my job I received proper training</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. I was told all the duties that I was to perform in the beginning of my job</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. The duties that I perform actually match the duties indicated in the job description</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. I was told about the policies and procedures of the institution:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Salaries are competitive with similar jobs in the community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Benefits are comparable to those offered in other jobs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. People get ahead as fast as they do in other places</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. I am satisfied with my chances for promotion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. There are benefits we do not have which we should have</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. I am satisfied with my sick leave</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. I am satisfied with my vacation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. I am satisfied with my retirement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. I meet with my supervisor to discuss my performance during the last phase at work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. My performance is evaluated fairly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. I receive constructive criticism from my supervisor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. My supervisor is consistent when administering policies concerning employees</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Alternative work schedules (flex-time, compressed work weeks, job sharing, telecommuting) are offered to employees</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. I like doing the things I do at work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. The benefit package we have is equitable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. I got the training I need to do my job well.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Training is made available to us for personal growth and development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Training is made available to us so that we can do our jobs better</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. We have access to information about job opportunities, conferences, workshops, &amp; training</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. Our team is well matched</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. I sometimes feel my job is routine</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. Every employee is valued</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. The right information gets to the right people at the right time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. The work atmosphere encourages open and honest communication</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. There is a basic trust among employees and supervisors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. The amount of work I am asked to do is reasonable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. There is a real feeling of teamwork</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. The environment supports a balance between work and personal life</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. My job meets my expectations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. We balance our focus on both long range and short term goals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. People who challenge the status quo are valued</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64. Work groups are actively involved in making work processes more effective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65. The people I work with treat each other with respect</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66. Our employees are generally ethical in the workplace</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67. We work well with other organizations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68. We feel a sense of pride when we tell people that we work for this organization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69. Would you recommend others to work in your organization?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

70. What are the reasons you would/wouldn't recommend others to work for your organization?
Appendix B – Information Sheet

Human Resource practices in Lebanese Universities

INFORMATION SHEET

Project Overview

The overall aim of the research is to examine the Human Resource (HR) strategies and practices used in Lebanese Universities. Specific aims are as follows:

1- To examine the approaches, practices, procedures, background, skills, perceptions and motivation of employees in Lebanese Universities.
2- To examine the HR strategies of each Lebanese Universities.
3- To identify and describe the implications of Wasta has on HR practices in Lebanese Universities.
4- To identify and describe the implications of Wasta on the organizational culture and subsequent effects on the employees of the organization.

Participation Procedure

Part of this research requires your responses on the attached questionnaire. It should take you approximately 5-7 minutes only to complete the questionnaire. Please ensure that you answer on the answer sheet. Please also note that should you participate in the questionnaire or decide not to participate, it will have no affect on your employment.

Benefits and Risks

This research is intended to improve the Human Resource Practices, employment culture and progress. It will help in creating and improving Human Resource strategies.

Confidentiality / Anonymity

Questionnaire does not require any personal information. Completed questionnaires to be mailed back anonymously. The data will be secured on a separate hard disk and the questionnaires placed in secured sealed envelopes. Data will be stored electronically on a password-protected server at CQU according to the university’s policy. Data will be securely stored for five (5) years after the publication date of the last publication based upon the data in accordance with the CQU University policy.

Outcome / Publication of Results (if applicable)

The results will be disseminated in the form of a PhD thesis. It will be submitted to CQU and Antonine University libraries. A brief finding of the research will be sent to the
participating Universities for their feedback as well as the participants that were involved in the questionnaire.

Consent
The front page of the questionnaire contains participation request and provides a clarification of the contents and purpose of the survey. Therefore, if they answered the questionnaire this will indicate that they have consented and agreed to participate.

Questions/ Further Information

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Tel: +961 3 923 580

Concerns / Complaints
Please contact CQUniversity’s Office of Research should there be any concerns about the nature and/or conduct of this research project.

Tel: 07 4923 2603;
E-mail: ethics@cqu.edu.au;
Mailing address: Building 32, CQUniversity, Rockhampton QLD 4702)
Appendix C – Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

I consent to participation in this research project and agree that:

1. An Information Sheet has been provided to me that I have read and understood;

2. I have had any questions I had about the project answered to my satisfaction by the Information Sheet and any further verbal explanation provided;

3. I understand that my participation or non-participation in the research project will not affect my employment.

4. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time without penalty;

5. I understand the research findings will be included in the researcher’s publication(s) on the project and this may include conferences and articles written for journals and other methods of dissemination stated in the Information Sheet;

6. I understand that to preserve anonymity and maintain confidentiality of participants that fictitious names may be used any publication(s)<<unless I have expressly granted permission as outlined below>>;

7. I am aware that a Plain English statement of results will be available on the web address provided in the Information Sheet;

8. I agree that I am providing informed consent to participate in this project.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________

Name (please print): ______________________________________________________

Where relevant to the research project, please check the box below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. I wish to have a Plain English statement of results posted to me at the address I provide below.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I am prepared to be named in any publication(s).</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Postal Address: ____________________________________________________________

E-mail Address: ____________________________________________________________