

# A Proposed Conceptual Framework to Increase the Capacity of Saudi Universities

Etidal bint Abd Alrahman Hijazi<sup>1 +</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Faculty of Education at King Faisal University, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**Abstract.** The aim of this study is to examine the issue of the educational gap caused by the weak capacity of Saudi universities, and how it leads to aspects of waste beside other negative consequences that have their own influences on students (of secondary outcomes), their families and the labor market. The study conducts a descriptive method style to deal with the gap issue and determine its nature and evolution. Also, it analyzes the status to the current relationship between the outputs of secondary education and the capacity of Saudi universities. The study uses the systems approach to develop its own perspective on how to bridge the gap between the outputs of secondary education and the capacity of Saudi universities through making a modification to the system of higher education and recognizing its relation to the system of secondary education and the labor market. In this regard, the study presents a number of alternatives that provide practical solutions serve to increase the capacity of Saudi universities and of which are applicable to the conditions and circumstances of the Saudi society.

**Keywords:** Educational Gap, Capacity, Waste.

## 1. Introduction

The world is constantly going through a process of changing that affects the economic, social, technical, and scientific structures. The societies of the developing countries, particularly the Saudi society always try to keep in touch with these changes by: benefiting from them; providing them; trying to bridge the gap between them and the developed countries; and finally catching up with them in fields of industry, commerce, and science. The international experts classify the changes occurred in the world over the past two decades as global revolutions - examples are: communications revolution; knowledge revolution; globalization ; social revolution; and economic revolution.

Undoubtedly, the Saudi society has been influenced by these revolutions beside other factors and influences within the society itself. For example, there have been development and modernization in the field of education, an increase in the capacity rates in all levels of education represented by an increase in the quantity of the outputs and the number of high school graduates although universities and other institutions of international education are unable to accommodate more applicants at present(The Comprehensive Project for the Development of Education, 1420 AH, 12, 13). Educational development with its implications and effects on students, society and the labor market has in most cases led to a waste that infected human development programs in particular and development in general.

Great efforts are carried out by rulers, education leaders, and policy makers in the Kingdom to develop and improve education, particularly improving school and university curriculums and increasing the capacity of universities by opening new ten universities (Ministry of Higher Education, New Ten Universities, 1428AH). In order to comply with these efforts and help decision makers, educational research becomes a must. Due to this, this study provides some alternatives to the issue of the weak capacity of Saudi universities and how to make coordination and integration between the systems of secondary and university education. In addition, the study attempts to achieve the goal endorsed by the majority of development plans in the Kingdom - more recently is "The Eight Development Plan" (1425-1429 AH). One of the Comprehensive Project's goals in the Kingdom in 1419-1420 AH was to "raise the level of secondary education and diversify its tracks to achieve more compatibility between the outputs of the educational process to the secondary stage and the requirements recommended to meet college admission."

---

<sup>+</sup> Corresponding author. Tel.: + (0096650390429); fax: +(966135812412).  
E-mail address: e\_hajazy2006@yahoo.com.

## **1.1. The Problem and the Study Questions**

Results of a number of recent studies and evidence of the present situation to the outputs of secondary education in the kingdom indicate an educational gap between the secondary education outputs and university education reflected the inability of Saudi universities to accommodate the applicants in spite of meeting admission requirements. A final study shows that the percentage of the non-admitted in university education was between a minimum range of 68% and a maximum range of 83% during the period (1416/ 141 AH- 1425/1426 AH). During the same period, the annual average growth rate of high school graduates was about 8, 85 % in contrast to the annual average growth rate of the admitted in higher education which was 4.60% and a gap growth rate of 10, 49 % (Riyadh Economic Forum, 1428 AH, 54). There is no doubt that this educational gap has psychological, social, and economic consequences on secondary education graduates and society. Due to this, it necessary to develop and find alternatives to bridge it.

## **2. The General Framework of the Study**

### **2.1.Importance of the Study**

The importance of the study subject is defined through the seriousness of the educational gap issue and its implications on the Saudi society reflected in the waste of human elements and the inability of Saudi universities to accommodate graduates of secondary schools (General Secondary in particular) despite possessing the requirements of university study.

### **2.2.Objectives of the Study**

The present study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- Understanding the nature of the gap issue between the outputs of secondary education and the admission and the capacity of undergraduate education.
- Stating the implications and the consequences caused by the gap issue on the present situation of the Saudi society.
- Developing a proposed conceptual framework to bridge the gap issue.

### **2.3.Limits of the Study**

The study tracks the following determiners. The relationship between the outcomes of general secondary education and the capacity opportunities available in higher education particularly in universities. The outputs of secondary education for males and females. The time domain of the study beginning from the year 1420 AH till the present.

### **2.4.Scientific Methodology**

The study conducts the "Descriptive Approach" with its methods and techniques to examine the issue and answer the questions proposed by it. This is obvious in the sources, documents and findings of previous studies examined the relationship between secondary and higher education in the Kingdom. The study also extracts the actual size to the current educational gap issue and its statistical evolution during the recent years.

The study also conducts the "System Analysis Approach" as a method to define its perspective and determine how to bridge the gap between the (outputs) of secondary education and the admission and capacity of the higher education system considering the quality of these outputs as (inputs) to the university system, and how to make some changes to the university system that help in increasing the number of capacity rates at the present time.

## **3. The Nature of the Gap between High School Graduates and the Capacity of Saudi Universities and its Implications.**

On reading the objectives of development plans in the Kingdom, specifically the last plan (Eight Development Plan, 1425-1429 AH, the Ministry of Economy and Planning), you will find it tackle the issue of human development, and the role of education in developing the Saudi person. Some goals by the Eight Development Plan aim at "Developing the manpower, raising its efficiency, and increasing its

participation to meet the requirements of the national economy," and " Developing the education and training system with all its elements and standards and concerning about their outputs to enable them to meet the changing needs of the society, labor market, development requirements, and keep pace with modern knowledge and techniques and spread culture."

The Kingdom has given a priority to education with all its stages- that is through providing it with financial allocations, human and material resources. Rulers, and education stakeholders believe that educational progress is basic for any economic or social advance, and that the different stages of education are essential for implementing development programs and projects.

The current situation to the outputs of secondary education indicates that the gap issue has recently worsened. Recent statistics show that there is an increase in graduation rates at a time when universities cannot meet the desires of secondary graduates to enroll in higher education. The following points can best express this gap issue:

- Universities are potentially unable to receive all the outputs of secondary education although they are willing to pursue college education.
- There is an annual backward with a large proportion in the outputs of secondary education and their accumulation and equipment with certain skills that qualify them to engage in the labor market as an alternative to their failure in attending college education.
- The current situation causes a waste in human potential to the outputs of secondary education and leads to an accumulation and increase in the rates of disguised unemployment or the so called learners unemployment.
- This waste leads to different psychological, social, and economic consequences that have their influence on individuals, education system, and rates of social development. Table (1) explains the size of the gap evolution between high school graduates and regular university admitted graduates.
- Waste in human and energy capabilities

#### **4. Analysis to the Status of the Current Relationship between the Outputs of Secondary Education and the Capacity Opportunities in Saudi Universities (Human Resources Development Fund, 1425 AH, Saegh Abdul Rahman Ahmad, Convenience between the Outputs of Higher Education and the Labor Market, 2004)**

It is important to identify the internal efficiency of secondary education before displaying the actual situation to its outputs. Results of a number of recent studies (Haya Al-Rawaf, 1403 AH), (Library of Arab Education, 1400 AH) indicate a decrease in the efficiency of secondary education reflected in an increase in the number of repetition and dropout rates and the years of schooling. Some studies show that the average number of education years for every graduate in public education reached to 18 schooling years for boys and nearly about 15 schooling years for girls (Mustafa Muhammad Metwally, 1417 AH). Other studies conducted on the waste side of the education system in the Kingdom explained that the cumulative dropout total rate reached about 17% accompanied by a large number of students absences, which in most cases led to a lack in the ability of the education system to pursue the students or help them benefit from school curriculums (Noor Al-Din Abdel Gawad, 1417AH). The Fifth Development Plan had already indicated that the system of public education in the Kingdom operated with low efficiency of about 50% of its capacity in case of boys, and 75% in case of girls (Ministry of Economy and Planning, the Fifth Development Plan, 1410-1415AH). The low internal efficiency of public education in general, and secondary education in particular indicates weakness in the outputs of secondary education (males and females) that causes the low levels of the inputs of university education.

#### **5. Alternatives to Bridge the Gap between the Outputs of Secondary Education and the Capacity Opportunities in Saudi Universities (A Proposed Conceptual Framework)**

The institutions of higher education face major challenges calling for serious thinking to find adequate solutions that enable them to deal with the rapid growth in the number of high school graduates,

and the issue of the capacity of Saudi universities to receive a larger possible number of these graduates. One of the strategic objectives indicated by the majority of development plans in the Kingdom is the dramatic increase in the percentage of those enrolled in high education in relation to the number of the population at the age of higher education (18-23 years). At present, this ratio is nearly about 14% according to the census of the population in 1992 (Al-Manea Mohammed Abdullah, the Relationship between Education and the Comprehensive Development Achievements, 1420 AH). Recently, this ratio increases in some countries of the modest economic performance as its records are 39.9 % in Argentina, 37.7 % in Korea, and 33.1% in Peru.

In order for the enrollment rates of higher education to reach the global averages, they must be doubled by increasing the capacity of Saudi universities and endorsing flexible procedures for the participation of the private sector in expanding the higher education capacity within principles and practical standards that can achieve quality and quantity and comply with the international standards. On reading some of the international experiences and examining the actual situation to the outputs of secondary education in the Kingdom and the conditions of admission in Saudi universities, the current study offers its view and perspective on how to bridge the gap issue and increase the capacity opportunities in Saudi universities before the outputs of secondary education (Saegh, Abdurrahman Ahmad, the Compatibility between the Outputs of Higher Education and the Labor Market, 2004), (Al-Shammari Eid Abdel Samie, A National Strategic Comprehensive Project, 1424 AH), (Arab Bureau of Education, Coordination, Cooperation and Integration, 1425 AH)(William S, V. 1989, School & Their Communities).

- An Increase in Direct Admission Rates

There is an increase in the direct admission rates of high schools outputs within the system of higher education with its different branches including.

It is necessary to expand these branches, and consider the significance of private university education and its role in reducing the burden on public universities. Also, it is important to increase the capacity of higher technical and professional institutes to receive secondary education graduates after they get (high qualification junior year), and enable them to continue in such fields of study.

Opportunities of university study are available with all its different disciplines such as open higher education system or open university, distance education techniques (Bergs, W.G.d Ef. David, 1989), and E. Learning systems. It is realized that these patterns of undergraduate study suit the circumstances of Saudi young people, especially of secondary education female outputs. Such kind of education is beyond the traditional way of university education in terms of the absence of face to face attendance and the provision of the material, financial, human, and physical resources.

- Recurrent E: It is sometimes called "Cooperative Learning" (Saegh Abdulrahman (& others), 1425AH/ 276).
- Transformations Training

This concept has become popular in many countries, particularly in Southeast Asian countries. It relies on opening technical and vocational training centers that receive part of high schools outputs (males and females)and provide them with a specialized training that enables them to acquire skills and competencies that have a direct connection to some professions of production and services sectors. Such training takes from one to two years. It's outcomes help the secondary outputs join the labor market, and later have the opportunity to university study available through recurrent education system.

## **6. Recommendations for the Activation of the Proposed Conceptual Framework**

- The necessity to integrate all higher education institutions under the dominance of the Ministry of Education to avoid the multiplicity of views on education supervision.
- Widening the base of higher education vertically and horizontally by creating new ways and patterns of education systems such as open university, and distance education.
- Opening more new community colleges throughout various regions in Kingdom and increasing their admission rates, in addition to providing them with material and human resources.

- Promoting the concept and the culture of "recurrent education", or "cooperative education" among young people by providing more transformative training opportunities, and opportunities for direct graduation and enrollment in the jobs of the labor market, and then enrollment in university education, and at the same time alternating between study, training and work. This needs to educate the outputs of the secondary education system through "counseling and guidance" programs.
- Encouraging the private sector to open educational institutes and new civil universities added to the balance of the public universities where partnerships between these universities and the original public universities in the areas where they are located is a condition.
- Improving the internal efficiency of high schools in order to enable the new students to acquire skills and competencies that qualify them to study in university and work in the labor market at the same time. This requires launching new programs in secondary education such as vocational education, and life skills programs to achieve apprenticeship.
- Promoting cooperation and integration between the educational institutions and universities and the labor market represented by chambers of commerce and industry in the Kingdom.
- Improving and developing the existing systems of admission in the Saudi universities presided by the standards of fairness and objectivity, efficiency and mental ability, in addition to using the objective standards of tests conducted by university and the independent centers of evaluation and measurement.
- The need to a legislative reformation that considers the laws and rules which govern the admission to higher education and that organize the role of the private universities and sectors, especially in recruiting more investment within the two fields of education and training.

## 7. References

- [1] Al- Manea, Mohammad Abdullah, *Clarification and evaluation of the Relationship between the Achievements of University Education and the Comprehensive Development in the Kingdom*, presented to the major symposium at King Saud University, held on the occasion of the passing a century to the establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia between the period 9/7/1420 to 10/7/1420 AH.
- [2] Al- Shammari, Eid Abdulla, *The Long- term Comprehensive National Strategic Project for Applied Education and Technical Training 1425-1450 AH, 1424 AH*.
- [3] Saegh, Abdel Rahman Ahmad, *The Appropriate between the Outputs of Higher Education and the Labor Market in the Arab Gulf States, the Most Important Problems and Issues and Some of the Solutions Proposed*, the Gulf Research Forum Center for Social and Human Sciences, entitled Higher Education and Future Perspectives, Dubai 2004.
- [4] Saegh, Abdel Rahman Ahmad and (others), *Coordination, Cooperation and Integration between Education Institutions and Business and Production (experiences of some developed countries, the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, Riyadh, 1425)*.
- [5] Riyadh Economic Forum, Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Riyadh, a study entitled: Towards a Sustainable Economic Development (a vision for human resources development), 22-24 / 11/ 1417 AH.
- [6] King Abdul Aziz Center for National Dialogue, a prospective study on the issues of public education, 1428.
- [7] Noor Al-Din Mohammed Abdel Gawad and (others), *the Education System in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, Al-Khrejji Publishing House, Riyadh, 1417 AH.
- [8] Haya Al-Rawaf, *Some Difficulties Faced by the Management of Schools Higher than the Elementary Stage in the City of Riyadh*. Unpublished master paper, King Saud University, the Faculty of Education, 1403 AH.
- [9] The Ministry of Economy and Planning, *the Eight Development Plan, 1425 / 1429 AH*.
- [10] The Ministry of Knowledge, the General Administration of curriculums, *The Comprehensive Project for the Development of Education Curricula, 1419 / 1420 AH*.
- [11] Bergs, W.G.&E.F. David, 1989, *New Trends in Distant Education*, Little Ron:Unites Libraries Inc.