

The Relationship between Organisational Culture and Individual Behaviour in Saudi Arabia

By

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Dedication

In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

This Thesis is Dedicated to

my Loving Parents

Abdulaziz & Norah

and

my Loving Grandparents

Suliman & Sarah

Abstract

Although the concepts of organisational culture (OC) and individual behaviour (IB) have attracted considerable interests from both academics and practitioners, there are few studies that examine the relationship between them directly (which were conducted under person-culture fit research (see Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016)). While these few existing studies have made an overall contribution to the culture-behaviour relationship, they have critical limitations and gaps in knowledge. Specifically, they primarily adopt functional and quantitative approaches for examining the relationship between the two concepts, and consequently, they neglect alternative non-functional perspectives of OC (opposition and ambiguity) and their relationship with IB. Also, most of these studies were conducted in organisations from countries that have strict separation between religion and state (e.g. the UK and USA), with very few studies located in countries where people at work actively engage in religious and social practices, particularly Saudi Arabia.

This study explores the relationship between OC and IB through an ethnographic case study in a single Saudi Arabian organisation that operates in a vital industry, i.e. financial industry. It adopts a three-perspective theoretical framework (see Martin, 1992), to explore the relationship between OC and IB in a country that is renowned to be highly attached to ancient social norms and religious traditions. The findings of the study lead to the development of a range of insights into the integrated, differentiated, and fragmented nature of OC and how organisational members interact (i.e. perceive and behave) with such cultural components. The empirical evidence suggests that examining the interaction between OC elements (values, beliefs, and underlying assumptions) and individual traits, including psychology/ social (e.g. values and beliefs), social category (e.g. age and gender), and other subjective characteristics (e.g. education and work experience) is important to understand the relationship between OC and IB. Accordingly, this study develops a conceptual analysis that explains the relationship between OC and IB and considers the dynamic and multidimensional aspects of the two concepts. It also offers contributions to knowledge on organisational literature in general, and Saudi literature in particular, by revealing alternative contingencies that affect the behaviour of organisations and individuals.

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List of Abbreviations

OC: Organisational Culture

IB: Individual Behaviour

PE: Person-environment

PO: Person-organisation

PJ: Person-job

PG: Person-group

PS: Person-supervisor

PV: Person-vocation

SO: Saudi Organisation (the organisation of which the data of this thesis collected from)

R&S: Recruitment and selection

HR: Human Resource

OCP: Organisational Culture Profile

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

Various organisations in the modern era are considered a significant part of people's lives. Every day, individuals associate with at least one organisation, especially so with their place of work, for example. Scholars and practitioners therefore place considerable effort to study and understand organisations. In general, they argue that understanding organisations is both engaging and challenging; it involves complex interrelationships between social and work aspects. Many researchers have developed diverse theories in order to examine the attitudes and actions of employees, and develop the appropriate support system to ensure a business-focused solution (e.g. Taylor, 1914; Weber and Parsons, 1964; Collins, 2001; Welch, 2014). One of the most effective theories developed in recent decades is the concept of organisational culture (OC) (Schein, 1984, 2010; Alvesson, 2013, 2016). Scholars and practitioners claim that OC has a powerful impact on individual behaviour (IB), as well as on other work outcomes, especially performance and effectiveness (Peters and Waterman, 1982). However, there has been no real attention on how the two concepts (OC and IB) directly interact with each other, excepting a few studies under the person-environment research (see Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). However, some studies argue that IB is the result of direct interaction between OC elements and individual personalities (see Chatman, 1989; O'Reilly et al., 1991). Although these studies have made significant contributions to the culture-behaviour relations literature, they signify considerable limitations and theoretical gaps in knowledge (see Martin et al., 2011). These limitations and gaps serve as the foundation for the aims and research design adopted in this study. These issues will be given focus in the following sections.

1.2 Rational for this study

The review of the literature reveals critical limitations in the existing culture-behaviour relations studies (see Martin and Frost, 2011; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). Most importantly, scholars criticise the conceptualisation and research philosophy approach that such studies adopt. They define OC as a system of controlled values or norms, and such definitions do not consider other effective elements of OC (especially the relationship between underlying assumptions and IB, see Schein, 1984, 2010). Also, this conceptualisation suggests that previous culture-behaviour relations studies adopt functionalist approach, and thus, other non-functionalist perspectives of culture are excluded from the analysis. Indeed, the current culture-behaviour studies tend to focus on an "integration" perspective (IP) of OC in

examining the relationship between OC and IB (see Martin and Frost, 2011). This neglects other perspectives of OC, e.g. differentiation perspective (DP) and fragmentation perspective (FP). Accordingly, the contemporary culture-behaviour relations studies have not thoroughly covered opposition or ambiguity in examining the relationship between OC and IB. This might ground upon which key OC scholars argue that the findings of such culture-behaviour studies are inadequate (see Martin and Frost, 2011).

This point leads to a further criticism that OC scholars express on the methodology elected, that a number of existing culture-behaviour relations studies adopt. They mostly apply quantitative methodology, which is argued to be unable to capture effective elements of resistance and ambiguities (see Martin et al., 2006). Further, culture-behaviour relations studies tend to focus on the match between OC values and psychological characteristics of individuals to explain IB. Consequently, other demographic aspects (e.g. gender, age, social background, etc.) and subjective characteristics (e.g. work experience and education level) have been generally neglected in their research analysis. Finally, most of these studies were conducted on organisations from countries that have few people who actively engage with religion or who are attached to strong social norms (e.g. O'Reilly et al., 1991; O'Reilly et al., 2014). However, researchers emphasise that organisations that operate in countries that have no strict separation between religion and state usually present different and alternative findings, e.g. Saudi Arabia (Deresky, 2014; Peng and Meyer, 2016). Based on this discussion, this thesis is an exploratory study that aims to address the following:

- (a) To conduct a qualitative study that attempts to analyse all aspects of organisational life in depth and explore documents in a way that captures aspects of harmony (integration), inconsistency (differentiation), and ambiguity and contradiction (fragmentation) contemporaneously (i.e. the three-perspective framework) in a Saudi Arabian organisation;
- (b) To analyse the individual characteristics¹ comprehensively, i.e. psychology/ social (e.g. values and beliefs), social category (e.g. age and gender), and other subjective characteristics (e.g. work experience) and examine how they interact and interrelate with OC aspects (i.e. consistencies, conflicts and ambiguities) within the context of a single organisation, and;

¹ The term individual 'personalities' and individual 'traits' are used as synonyms for individual 'characteristics' in this thesis.

- (c) To explore the consequences that may arise from the interactions between OC and IB in depth, and analyse the nature, dynamics, and extent of their relationship. Most interestingly, this study aims to explore the individual qualities that were more active in interacting with one of the OC perspective (either integration, differentiation, or fragmentation).

1.3 The research method, design, scope, and analysis

This study adopted ethnography approaches for examining the relationship between OC and IB (e.g. interview, observation, and document analysis). The fieldwork took place in a Saudi Arabian organisation (which will be referred to as Saudi organisation (SO)), where the researcher obtained a full access (unpaid full-time position) between May–September 2015. This approach allowed the researcher to engage with the organisational setting closely and effectively (see Martin, 1992; Kunda, 1992; Mathew and Ogbonna, 2009).

Corresponding to the study aims, the study targeted employees of SO in different work levels (high, middle, and low) and across several departments. It also targeted different employees who seemed to have different individual characteristics (e.g. age, gender, and work experience.) In general, this study conducted 48 interviews and included many informal discussions with different organisational members. Most of these interviews were audio-recorded and were transcribed verbatim. Notes were conducted from the other interviews that were not audio-recorded. The study also collected and analysed several organisational documents (such as annual reports, resignation files, and HR manuals), which were important to the findings. Finally, many observations (participant and non-participant) were done in the workplace (e.g. during official meetings, extended social gathering, and celebrations).

All data were gathered in a single notebook in which over 600 pages of archival data analysed. The data was coded manually into theoretically derived themes, drawing from and adopting the grounded theory approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Langley, 1999). The codes specified were arranged into key categories, linkages, and associations (integration, differentiation, and fragmentation), and these major themes were further subdivided into theoretically coherent sets. Overall, they were arranged based on the interaction between individual characteristics and the different aspects of OC (i.e. contradictions, perceived dichotomies in behaviour, and incongruence between actual and espoused behaviour). Each of these major themes was analysed in a separate chapter, as will be outlined shortly. The data analysis reveals insightful

findings that make important contributions. These will be explored in the following subsections.

1.4 The importance of the study

Considering the aims of this thesis, and assuming the potential significance of its findings, this study provides different empirical, conceptual, context, methodological, and practical contributions to the literatures on OC, culture-behaviour relations, and Saudi Arabian work literature. The data findings offer a rich and distinct contextualised account of the relationship between OC and IB in the Saudi Arabian workplace. Also, through integrating the empirical context with theoretical foundations, novel insights uncover crucial explanations of how work and socio-cultural context interacts with individual personalities and influences employees behaviour and self-understanding. This study makes the following contributions:

- (a) The adaptation of the three-perspective framework in exploring OC to a single organisation. While many scholars (e.g. Martin, 1992; Alvesson, 2013) have called for researchers to adopt a border range of views in discovering OC (especially to adopt the three-perspective framework in analysing the culture of a single organisation), only few have taken this recommendation forward (e.g. Mathew and Ogbonna, 2009). This study finds general support for Martin's (1992) framework and concludes that elements of congruence, disagreement, and ambiguity may occur synchronously. The findings also suggest some aspects that would improve the framework.
- (b) The findings extended the understanding of culture-behaviour relations (following Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016) and provide a conceptual analysis that can explore the relationship between OC and IB. Significantly, they suggest that employees behaviour is the result of the interactions between OC elements and individual traits. Instead of restricting the analysis between OC values and employees' values (O'Reilly et al., 1991), this study considered a wide range of OC elements (e.g. harmony, opposition, and contradiction) and different individual personalities to explain IB. The research provides empirical evidence of the processes of these interactions and shows that the relationship between the two concepts is dynamic and multidimensional.
- (c) This is an exploratory study and it is the first of its kind that examine OC and IB in a knowledge-intensive organisation in a developing economy, i.e. Saudi Arabia. While similar existing studies on culture-behaviour relations were mainly conducted in organisations from countries that have strict separation between religion and state (e.g.

- O'Reilly et al., 1991; Martin, 1992), theorists have called for more organisational researchers to explore alternative contexts, which is argued to lead to alternative research outcomes (Johns, 2006), especially in Saudi Arabia (see Deresky, 2014). The findings of this study have made interesting contributions to the organisational literature in general and Saudi literature and HR management practices in particular.
- (d) Finally, most of the existing culture-behaviour relations studies adopt a quantitative approach, which is argued incapable for capturing key OC aspects, such as the nature of resistance and contradiction (see Martin and Frost, 2011). By following an ethnographic approach, this study uncovers the complications involved in OC and IB relations, which are generally overlooked in similar research. This study also provides reflexivity on the work field and data analysis, summarised in Appendix 1.

1.5 The thesis outline

Excluding this chapter, the thesis is divided into eight key chapters, as follows:

Chapter two provides a review on the OC literature, considering the in-depth exploration of the various theoretical positions on OC, which generally appeared to be complicated and sometimes conflicting. Based on a critical discussion of the OC literature, this chapter provides a rationale for why this thesis adopts the three-perspective framework and ethnographic approach to explore the relationship between OC and IB.

Chapter three presents a discussion on the culture-behaviour relations literature. This chapter illustrates the ways in which such studies define, conceptualise, and analysis the concept of OC and IB. These studies are important; they belong to a small number of studies which examine the relationship between OC and IB in a direct way (exploring the 'fit' between OC values and individual's values). However, they have been criticised on different grounds (as outlined above). These limitations will be discussed at the end of this chapter, when the research rationale is presented.

Chapter four presents an overview about Saudi Arabia, considering its social, economic, politics and geographic characteristics. It also presents insightful issues associated with Saudi Arabian organisational work. The review shows that Saudi people are highly influenced by ancient social and religious traditions, which guide their attitudes and behaviours. These traditions also affect the behaviour of Saudi Arabian organisations. This has led many researchers to highlight the importance of conducting further research on Saudi Arabian

workplaces to understand the nature of their interaction. Other reasons are also discussed in the subsection, ‘Why Saudi Arabia?’

Chapter five outlines the methodology elected for this study. It discusses the key themes: the research problems and objectives, research strategy and process adopted, research methods applied, and data analysis used within this study. This chapter also includes a discussion about the practical, political, and pragmatic rationales behind the choice of the field of study, and insights about the researcher’s experiences in fieldwork.

Chapter six is the first of three data analysis chapters. This chapter provides an overview of the research setting with details on its work nature and structure. It also provides critical insights in the relationship between OC and IB from an IP. It uncovers the portrayal of the lived life of SO members, showing evidence of shared values, beliefs, elements of consensus, and harmony. It also explains the employees’ choice to avoid ambiguity and to show a clear demonstration of SO life. Essentially, this chapter uncovers certain individual characteristics that seem to influence their “integration”, interpretations and behaviour.

Chapter seven presents the relationship between OC and IB from a DP. The analysis of the data in this chapter provides valid evidence for disagreement about “integration” claims (outlined in Chapter 6) by employees highlighting conflicts and absence of authenticity. Importantly, this chapter uncovers four different subgroups. The in-depth investigation finds different motives and other individual personalities that are suggested to influence their “differentiating” interaction with the overall OC.

Chapter eight is the last data analysis chapter, exploring the relationship between OC and IB from a FP. This chapter examines the claim that the depiction of SO life is also characterised by widespread contradictions, ambiguity, dichotomies, and ironies. The data in this chapter highlights some organisation members who express an anxiety about different work realities, and uncovers other members whose attitude and behaviour was a factor in the increasing “ambiguity” in work. These employees signify unusual personalities that the data suggest impacted their “fragmentation” views and behaviour.

Chapter nine is the finale chapter of the thesis that discusses key findings in relation to the literature. It presents a summary of the study aims and objectives, and provides further details of its contributions and implications for the organisational and Saudi management literature. It also concludes with a discussion of the study limitations and suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2. Organisational culture

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will review the concept of OC through a discussion of the main studies conducted in this field. It will analyse the conceptual development of OC constructs and examine the philosophical underpinnings of OC researches. The review shows that regardless of the enormous amount of research into this concept (see Hartnell et al., 2011), OC appears to be a broad concept and – to some extent – remains elusive (see Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013, 2016; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016).

This chapter is divided into seven main sections. Each section provides a critical discussion of the reasons underlying the complexity of OC concepts and attempts to address them. The first section provides a brief overview of the evolution and growth of the concept of OC. It demonstrates that due to the varying interests of managers and academics who study OC from different perspectives, there is no unity of definition of OC in the literature, nor of approach to analyse it. The second section explains the different definitions of culture that previous studies have adopted and the causal reasons behind their differences. Through the discussion in this section, certain issues will be raised in order to clarify confusion regarding the concept. Most importantly, it will emphasise the need to address overlapping concepts (i.e. organisational climate and power), which are outlined in the third section. Secondly, it will be argued that different cultural paradigms are necessary in order to understand the underlying assumptions of the variance in views of OC. In general, there are two main paradigms that have dominated OC studies: culture as a critical value, and culture as a metaphor. Each of these paradigms will be discussed critically in the fourth section. The other issue that has been highlighted for reducing confusion over the concept of OC is addressing the different approaches that have been applied to evaluate cultures in organisations. Interestingly, the kind of cultural manifestations that have been argued to explain culture, and the debate over the methodological tools that should be applied to uncover them (i.e. qualitative versus quantitative), appear to be extensive. Therefore, a detailed investigation will be provided in the fifth section, which will introduce the three-perspective framework. In a separate section, the significance of the three-perspective framework for exploring OC will be highlighted. Finally, a conclusion will highlight some of the key concepts that this thesis has adopted, and introduce the steps following this chapter.

2.2 The evolution of organisational culture as a research area

Culture reviews show many distinct approaches to outlining the evolution of OC (e.g. Smircich, 1983a; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013; Schneider et al., 2013; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). Some authors argue that OC is a relatively new concept in organisational theory (e.g. Hofstede et al., 1990); however, a review of the literature shows that the conceptualisations of earlier organisation theories contained different elements of culture construct. Barley et al. (1988: 31) argue that the basis of OC research can be traced back to the work of a group of authors influenced by the Chicago School of sociologists, e.g. Schein (1971) and Van Maanen (1976), who stressed an understanding of “*local interpretive structures and ritualised practices*” as necessary for an inclusive analysis of organisational dynamics. Interestingly, although these theorists did not specifically discuss OC, culture was evidently an underlying concept. The work of these researchers has influenced several theorists working on the theme of OC specifically, over the last few decades.

In general, the extant OC literature indicates that academics and managers became attracted to the topic of OC in the late 1970s and early 1980s (see Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013, 2016; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). A series of academic conferences, special issues of academic journals (e.g. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 1979, 1983; *Journal of Management Studies*, 1982; *Journal of Management*, 1985), books (e.g. Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Schein, 1985) and business publications (e.g. a section in *Fortune Magazine* captioned as “*Corporate Cultures*”, *Fortune Magazine*, March 22, 1982) began highlighting the roles of OC for understanding how individuals in an organisation interact and how organisations work to accomplish their explicit and implicit aims. However, it is observed that the perceptions of OC by both parties (academics and managers) varied.

One of the early pioneer studies of OC was carried out by Andrew Pettigrew in 1979. By this time, cultural anthropologists had established a creative paradigm derived from case studies for analysing beliefs and norms within diverse cultures (see Smircich, 1983a; Martin and Frost, 2011; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). According to Hofstede et al. (1990), it appears that Pettigrew used the term ‘OC’ for the first time in US literature in an article published in *Administrative Science Quarterly* in 1979. He also introduced the anthropological concept of culture and showed how associated notions of myth, symbolism, and other manifestations constructed in individuals’ minds can be applied in organisational analysis. Conversely, the practitioner-oriented perspective argued that by paying more consideration to an organisation’s values, norms and ideals (instead of the rational strategies), the organisation

can effectively improve its performance (e.g. Ouchi and Price, 1978; Peters, 1978). The underlying interest in this perspective was fuelled, to a certain extent, by the outstanding performance of Japan's economy, compared to the US's, which inspired researchers to analyse Japanese management practices as a possible cause of their national economic performance (Ouchi, 1981; Pascale and Athos, 1981). This perspective created what was termed a 'strong culture', a debatable concept that this chapter will discuss in more detail (see Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Alvesson, 2013, 2016; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016).

However, despite (or perhaps due to) the interests of both practitioners and academics, the literature indicates no unified definition of OC or any approach to analysing it (see the debates addressed by Smircich, 1983a; Martin et al., 2006; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013, 2016; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). The extant reviews show significant variance in critical and pivotal aspects of culture that cannot be overlooked, especially in its definition, important manifestations, and methodological approaches. Many reviews assume that there are two main reasons behind the gap in theoretical clarity: (a) managerial interest in OC created profitable consulting opportunities, which argued to have undersized efforts in the academic field to develop a specific, inclusive and strong theory of OC (see Schneider et al., 2011; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016), and (b), arguments about how to define and analyse culture have become generative and incompatible. This has led many scholars to state that culture research has been constrained to accumulating and advancing an integrated and inclusive theory of culture (see Martin and Frost, 2011; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). Based on this brief argument, this research has attempted to address the most critical issues of culture to accomplish the purpose and aims of this thesis. The next section will discuss one of the central issues of OC literature.

2.3 Organisational culture definition

A quick scan of just a few works that include the term 'OC' will show major and significant disparities in its meaning, even more so in the use of the term 'culture' (Alvesson, 2016). Previous and recent culture reviews show that characteristics identifying the concept of OC have not been agreed upon yet (e.g. Smircich, 1983a; Ogbonna and Wilkinson, 1990; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013; Denison et al., 2014; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). Smircich (1983a: 339) shows that the conflict in OC definitions has emerged from anthropology literature, from which the concept of OC derives, where there is no consensus regarding the meaning of culture. This is evident in Kroeber and Kluckhohn's (1952) research, which lists

164 definitions of culture. Smircich also notes that the multiplicity and variance of OC definitions is due to the variations in the basic assumptions that academics have established about the concept of ‘organisation’ and ‘culture’. This is also underlined and discussed in contemporary OC reviews (e.g. Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013, 2016; Schneider et al., 2013; Chatman and O’Reilly, 2016; Pratt et al., 2016).

Observing the discussions of previous reviews, it seems that the number of definitions of culture that Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) listed has increased during recent decades due to the growth of interest in examining culture and in theoretical developments. For example, Verbeke et al. (1998) list 54 definitions of the term ‘OC’, whereas Cameron and Ettington (1988) show 18. Table 2-1 provides an illustration of the variation of cultural definitions and shows how culture definition reflects the philosophical view of the author:

#	Definition of culture	Scholar
1	A family of symbols, language, ideologies, rituals and myths	Pettigrew, 1979
2	The philosophy that guides the organisation’s policy	Ouchi, 1981; Pascale and Athos, 1981
3	The glue that holds everything together through shared patterns of meaning	Martin and Siehl, 1983
4	Patterns of cognitive processes	Weick, 1979
5	Physical arrangements	Edelman, 1971; Steele and Jencks, 1977
6	Shared perceptions of organisational work practices	Van der Berg and Wilderom, 2004
7	Shared attitudes and practices	Tellis et al., 2009
8	A pattern of basic assumption – invented, discovered and developed by a given group	Schein, 1984, 2010; Trice and Beyer, 1993
9	Core values that determine the organisational philosophy or mission	Selznick, 1957
10	Organisational climate, attitudes toward work, degree of personal responsibility for work	Tagiuri and Litwin, 1968; Lippitt et al., 1985
11	The institutionalised power of the dominant interests of the organisation	Pfeffer, 1981

Table 2-1: Examples of different definitions of culture, adopted from Harris (1997: 75).

Conducting a comprehensive examination of the differences of culture definition is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, it has been observed that regardless of the lack of consensus on what culture is, and how it should be examined, different academics emphasise three main components for understanding culture: the underlying beliefs, values and assumptions (see Pettigrew, 1979; Sathe, 1983; Schein, 1984, 2010; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013, 2016; Chatman and O’Reilly, 2016). Schein’s (1984, 1985) definition of culture is the most widely-cited, offering a comprehensive account of how culture develops in organisations. Schein (2010:18) defines culture as:

“A pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solves its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.”

This definition covers essential cultural manifestations that are evident in different forms and many researchers conceptualise culture in a similar vein (e.g. Sathe, 1983; Wilkins, 1983; Martin, 1992; Hatch, 1993; Zohar and Hofmann, 2012; Schneider et al., 2013; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). These cultural elements are considered critical in its conceptualisation, because they are aspects which enable 'culture' to be observed, felt and deciphered (Schein, 1984, 2010). This thesis, therefore, will adopt Schein's definition and defines OC as the beliefs, values, and assumptions of employees that are expressed and can be observed through diverse methods, and that have substantial implications for the working lives of members of the organisation.

Nevertheless, given that culture combines beliefs, values and underlying assumptions, the questions remain on what the issues are that make the conceptualisation of OC varied, and what types of approaches should be applied to conceptualise and examine culture? Taking into consideration the arguments found in some key culture reviews (e.g. Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Smircich, 1983a; Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984; Schein, 1984, 2010; Martin and Frost, 2011; Schneider et al., 2013; Alvesson, 2013; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016) and the different approaches that contemporary OC researchers adopt (e.g. O'Reilly et al., 1991; Harrison and Corley, 2011; Mathew et al., 2012; Fine and Hallett, 2014; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015), it seems that the differences inherent in culture definitions reflect the variation of authors' ontological, epistemological and methodological preferences in examining culture and its relationship with other aspects of organisations, e.g. IB.

In order to clarify the concept of culture and how it should be examined, different reviews suggest addressing certain pivotal issues related to OC. Firstly, the extant literature shows that the notion of OC is confused with other concepts, particularly climate (see Denison, 1996; Schein, 2000; Zohar and Hofmann, 2012; Schneider et al., 2013), and power (see Martin, 1985; Krefting and Frost, 1985; Legge, 1994; Alvesson, 2013; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015). It has also been observed that reviews of OC place considerable importance on culture paradigms (see Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Smircich, 1983a; Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984; Ogbonna, 1993; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). Another important issue that this chapter will discuss is the debate on how cultural components are shared among

organisational members. Finally, this chapter will cover a debate on the methodologies that scholars adopt to analyse OC.

2.4 Overlapping concepts within the concept of organisational culture

2.4.1 Organisational culture and climate

Reviews on culture and climate show that the two concepts are multi-parented constructs. While there have been recent attempts to integrate research and theory on culture and climate (see Kuenzi and Schminke, 2009; Schneider et al., 2011; Ehrhart et al., 2014; Kummerow and Kirby, 2014), other academics draw key differences between them and argue that they are different and should be distinguished (e.g. Graves, 1985; Denison, 1996; Schein, 2000; Zohar and Hofmann, 2012; Schneider et al., 2013).

Most interestingly, Denison (1996: 626) provides a key analysis of the concept of culture and climate. It indicates that although the concepts of culture and climate draw distinct perspectives on organisational environments, it is not so obvious whether they examine different organisational phenomena. In brief, it shows that both concepts emphasise the social context: *“both perspectives attempt to address the problem of social contexts simultaneously being the product of individual interaction and a powerful influence on individual interaction.”* Consistent with Denison’s analysis, more recent reviews on climate and culture reveal that both concepts are based on the notion of shared meanings, e.g. shared perceptions of some aspects of the organisational context. Furthermore, these reviews observe that both concepts emphasise the influence of organisational leadership. In terms of the level of analysis, these reviews cite the multilayered nature of culture and climate and the necessity of applying meta-analytic methods to examining them (see Ashkanasy et al., 2000a; Ostroff et al., 2012; Schneider et al., 2013; Chatman and O’Reilly, 2016).

However, Denison’s analysis underlines that in the early days of climate research, researchers were more concerned about the effects of organisational systems on individuals and groups (Joyce and Slocum, 1984; Ekvall, 1987; Koyes and DeCotiis, 1991), while in contrast, culture researchers were concerned about the development of social systems over time (e.g. Schein, 1971; Van Maanen, 1976; Pettigrew, 1979; Schein, 1984). Also, while culture research tended to obtain an in-depth understanding of key aspects of culture, such as individual meaning (Geertz, 1973; Pondy et al., 1983) and underlying assumptions (Schein, 1985, 1990), climate research tended to highlight the perceptions of organisational members, of procedures and practices that are closer to the ‘surface’ of organisational life (Guion, 1973).

Another significant observation that Denison's analysis highlights is that climate in the traditional literature required quantitative research, while culture required qualitative research (see Ashkanasy et al., 2000a; Martin and Frost, 2011). He showed that culture researchers generally adopted ethnography to examine OC, which emerged from the conceptual and methodological basis of anthropology. The climate view, on the other hand, was based on Lewin's (1951) research of experimentally created qualitative observation and social climates of organisational settings. The analysis of Denison, therefore, indicates that climate is perceived by individuals at a superficial level, while culture refers to the underlying processes that create those perceptions. The following table presents a summary of Denison's (1996) analysis:

#	Differences	Culture literature	Climate literature
1	Epistemology	Contextualised and idiographic	Comparative and nomothetic
2	Point of view	Emic (native point of view)	Etic (researcher's point of view)
3	Methodology	Qualitative field observation	Quantitative survey data
4	Level of analysis	Underlying values and assumptions	Surface-level manifestations
5	Temporal orientation	Historical evolution	Ahistorical snapshot
6	Theoretical foundations	Social construction; critical theory	Lewinian field theory
7	Discipline	Sociology and anthropology	Psychology

Table 2-2: Contrasting OC and organisational climate research perspectives, adopted from Denison (1996: 625).

However, it has been observed that recent analyses of culture-climate indicate shifts in the culture and climate literatures, which can explain (or perhaps have increased) the confusion in 'culture' definitions, as well as the variance of ontological, epistemological and methodological approaches that previous culture researches adopted. Interestingly, they show that cultural research has recently shifted towards more quantitative methodologies (see Ashkanasy et al., 2000a; Ostroff et al., 2012; Schneider et al., 2013; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016).

What appears from the literature of culture is that most quantitative studies adopted similar conceptualisations and approaches to those applied by organisational climate research over the last several decades. For instance, like a lot of climate research, which commonly concentrates on phenomena that are close to the surface, cultural studies that adopted quantitative methodologies tended to focus on one – or a maximum two – manifestations (mostly artefacts or values) and assume that a singular manifestation could represent OC as a

whole (see Martin et al., 2006; Martin and Frost, 2011; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). In contrast, although traditional OC research distinguishes between overt, surface manifestations of a culture – artefacts, symbols, and rituals – and underlying values – the beliefs and assumptions that those manifestations epitomise – it has been argued that evaluating the ‘reality’ of OC supposedly considers ‘all’ of these manifestations (see Schein, 1984, 2010; Martin, 2002; Alvesson, 2013). This type of analysis creates some confusion between the two concepts. Schein (2010: 13) indicates that those cultural studies that applied ‘culture’ to the exploration of the practices and norms that organisations develop around their treatment of the espoused values or individuals and credo of an organisation, confused the concept of culture with the concept of climate (as in, what *is* culture, and what ought it to be).

Hence, it is observed that studies that examined the relationship between OC and IB appeared to be inspired by certain conceptualisations and methodologies that organisational climate study advocates. The inspired model of Chatman (1989) of PO fit (or person-culture fit) and the analysis of O'Reilly et al. (1991) of the ‘Organisational Culture Profile’ (OCP) can be taken as examples. This type of culture research will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

2.4.2 Culture and power

The debate on culture-power is, to some extent, an extension of the culture-climate debate. Past and present reviews on culture highlight that a key point of confusion in its conceptualisation has emerged from the debate on whether ‘culture’ is a source of strategic control, and if so, how it should be managed and manipulated (see Smircich, 1983a; Ogbonna, 1993; Willmott, 1993; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Alvesson, 2013, 2016; Fleming, 2013; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015). Notably, reviews observe that the debate can be traced to the ontological and epistemological viewpoints of culture advocates (i.e. ‘has’ and ‘is’ assumptions of culture) as suitably framed in Smircich’s (1983a) classification of the approaches in which culture is theorised. While some cultural scholars emphasise that ‘culture’ is supposed to be perceived in material terms, and, therefore, is liable to manipulation (see Peters and Waterman, 1982), others (who take a more social position) argue that culture is better viewed as a cognitive part of organisations and stress that it cannot be manipulated by conscious management action (see Legge, 1994). With relevance to this debate, three views have emerged on the arguments: (a) scholars who assume that leaders/managers can manage culture so that it is consistent with their requirements (e.g. Peters and Waterman, 1982); (b)

those who claim that leaders/ managers may be able to attain culture change under specific and rare organisational contingencies, however (see Martin, 1985); and (c), those who completely disagree with this assumption and emphasise that culture cannot be managed or manipulated (see Krefting and Frost, 1985). Given this, it should be stated that as in the culture-climate discussion, this section does not aim to provide a comprehensive discussion of the culture-power debate, but does aim to highlight the key issues of the debate, which are related to the definition that this thesis adopts.

In general, the most critical issue that has increased disagreement over definitions of culture is the number of early cultural theorists tending to equate culture with power. Academics and practitioners have tended to perceive ‘culture’ as a strategic variable, thereby assuming it could be controlled to increase the effectiveness of organisations. This view assumes that culture is a ‘variable’ and that cultural management is simply a process of controlling or using ‘power’ to establish the desired ‘strong’ and ‘integrated’ culture. Among the pioneers who provided guidance for such a process were Peters and Waterman (1982) in their debatable work, *In Search of Excellence*, in which power-culture is frequently mentioned. Also, Deal and Kennedy’s (1982) work on management of symbols pitted against ‘rational’ management; Kanter’s (1983) *Changemasters*; and Piercy (1989a, 1989b), who emphasised that accomplishing cultural change is essentially reliant on the success of manipulating the political reality of the organisation, a view that appeared to be consistent with Ouchi (1981) and many other ‘has’ advocates who mostly favor quantitative methodology for evaluating culture. In short, this view may, to some extent, reflect the unequivocal perspective of Pfeffer (1981: 298) that culture is a mere representation of “*institutionalised power*.”

On the other hand, a significant number of OC scholars (who adopt a more social stance on the concept of culture and tend to study culture from a metaphorical perspective) argue strongly that regardless of some of the advantages of culture management research, such research exhibits a number of serious limitations (see Riley, 1983; Willmott, 1993; Schein, 2010; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Alvesson, 2013, 2016; Fleming, 2013). Furthermore, these scholars argue that management culture research is generally constructed on a snapshot basis (see Harrison and Carroll, 1991), the key limitation of which is that such research generally focuses on self-evident manifestations, rather than on hidden and deeper levels of manifestation. Indeed, as previously illustrated in the culture-climate debate, these cultural scholars are concerned with the in-depth aspects of culture (i.e. the

underlying values, beliefs and assumptions) and argue strongly that politics and power should be considered a ‘manifestation’ of culture, rather than constituting culture itself (e.g. Riley, 1983; Schein, 1984, 2010; Turner, 1986; Schultz, 1991; DiBella, 1993; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Alvesson, 2013, 2016). Several scholars also questioned the use of culture as a source of control on ethical grounds. Hochschild (1985), for example, claims that this assumption is equivalent to manipulating the emotions of employees. Ogbonna and Wilkinson (1988) and Ogbonna (1992), who provide evidence from the retail sector, show that many attempts at behavioural change are equivalent to control, and indicate that aspects of control are involved in employee training programmes, e.g. starting a ‘smile campaign’. Willmott (1993) maintains that culture management is an extreme form of dominating the affective spheres of individuals.

It is realised, however, that, regardless of the considerable number of discussions and the significant limitations that the extant reviews highlight in culture management research (see Willmott, 1993; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Alvesson, 2013, 2016; Fleming, 2013), studies continue to conceptualise culture as a manageable strategic variable (e.g. Hopkins et al., 2005; Cameron and Quinn, 2011; Krisher, 2012). Scholars have observed that executive efforts to manage culture have become more advanced, partly due to acknowledgment of limitations, which were described previously, and partly in recognition of the constant restrictions of alternative methods of control, e.g. bureaucracy (see Fleming and Sturdy, 2009, 2011). Nevertheless, while these new methods of culture management are receiving observable recognition in the literature on recent developments of OC, scholars have maintained that they remain problematic in many respects, most interestingly because they give limited insight into the subcultural issues of organisations, which is an issue that will be further discussed in the differentiation perspective (DP) of a culture.²

In short, taking into consideration previous discussions on the culture-climate and culture-power debates, this thesis considers the assumption that ‘culture’ cannot be equated to climate (which mostly emphasises visible manifestations) or power (power perceived as one of OC’s manifestations, rather than constituting culture itself). These views are consistent with different cultural reviews, such as Riley, 1983; Schein, 1986; Denison, 1996; Martin, 2002; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Alvesson, 2013, 2016, and many other cultural studies like Mathew and Ogbonna, 2009.

² See Ogbonna and Harris (2015) for further discussion on the limitations of new approaches to culture control.

2.5 Culture in organisations: culture paradigms

Existing debates in OC literature identify two major paradigms that have been dominant in OC research: (a) functionalist, and (b) non-functionalist (see Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Smircich, 1983a; Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984; Ott, 1989; Chia, 2000; Martin et al., 2006; Alvesson, 2013). While the first believes in the notion of real, objective and functionalist ‘out there’ phenomena (e.g. exploring the importance of transforming the organisation into a ‘family’ to increase organisational performance) (see Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Denison and Mishra, 1995), the non-functionalist paradigm concerns the social world or social reality in organisations (by adopting analytical and more anthropological approaches to investigate how values affect work) (see Smircich, 1983b, 1985; Alvesson, 1987, 2013; Van Maanen, 1991; Kunda, 1992; Smircich and Calas, 1995). As will be outlined shortly, the divisions of these two perspectives are reflected in the definition of OC, as well as the methodologies applied to studying it. However, it should be noted that the outcomes of these two paradigms (especially the functionalist paradigm) have provoked considerable criticism (as partly outlined in the culture-power debate). Some academics have questioned different aspects that cultural researchers have argued as being ‘vital’ for evaluating OC and its relationship with other organisational aspects. Their research and reviews have become well-known as ‘critical management studies’ (e.g. Ogbonna, 1993; Willmott, 1993; Fleming and Spicer, 2003; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Fleming, 2013) or ‘postmodernism studies’ (see Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013). Therefore, the postmodernist view will be highlighted in this section.

Among the different key reviews that analyse the varied approaches to OC (which can be viewed in works such as Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984; Ott, 1989; Chia, 2000; Martin et al., 2006; Alvesson, 2013), the existing literature on culture indicates Smircich’s (1983a) analysis as one of the best for differentiating between the definitional and methodological approaches to culture (see Schneider et al., 2013; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015; Alvesson, 2016). Smircich (1983a) provides an inclusive analysis of the concept of ‘culture’ applied to organisational analysis, which has influenced OC research for many decades. Her work (which is based on Burrell and Morgan’s (1979) paradigmatic framework) indicates two fundamental conceptualisations, by which culture and organisations are linked: (1) as a critical variable (either dependent or independent, and external or internal); and, (2) as a root metaphor. Drawing on many scholars, she traces the variances in these approaches to the

“ontological status of social reality – the objective – subjective question and a range of assumptions about human nature – the determinist – voluntarist question.” (Smircich, 1983a: 340). In this regard, and considering the discussions highlighted in previous sections, Smircich (1983a: 354) notes that while some cultural researchers *“give high priority to the principles of prediction, generalizability, causality, and control”* (e.g. Ouchi, 1981; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Chatman et al., 2014; O’Reilly et al., 2014), other researchers *“are concerned by what appear to them to be more fundamental issues of meaning and the process by which organisational life is possible.”* (e.g. Smircich, 1983b, 1985; Alvesson, 1987; Martin and Siehl, 1983; Van Maanen, 1991; Kunda, 1992; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015). Interestingly, the divisions of these two perspectives are also reflected in the methodological approaches of OC. This will be briefly covered in this section, and discussed in more detail in the section on qualitative versus quantitative methodologies of culture.

In brief, Smircich’s analysis outlines five content areas that represent the diverse perceptions of organisations and cultures: corporate culture, organisational cognition, comparative management, organisational symbolism, and subconscious processes and organisations. Based on her argument, the comparative management and corporate culture areas consider culture as a variable under the functionalism paradigm, and the organisational symbolism and subconscious processes and organisations areas view culture as a root metaphor.

2.5.1 Culture as a critical variable: functionalism and structural functionalism perspectives

Studies that consider culture as a variable believe in the assumption that “the social world expresses itself in terms of general and contingent relationships among its more stable and clear-cut elements, referred to as ‘variable’” (Morgan and Smircich, 1980, quoted in Smircich, 1983a: 347). Accordingly, studies that adopt this view rely upon a traditional functionalist framing of social reality, which articulates patterns of contingent relationships among collections of variables through a systematic model: e.g. leadership patterns, size, structure and technology (Woodward, 1965; Fiedler, 1967; Pugh and Hickson, 1976). In concurrence with this view, Smircich (1983a) shows that an additional subjective variable (i.e. culture) has been added to the model.

Smircich’s (1983a) analysis shows that the corporate culture and comparative management content themes treat culture as something an organisation ‘has’; something that organisational leaders can shape, manage, and modify, and try to link to organisational success. This view

fits with the functional paradigm, which implies a causal relationship. However, while these two content themes view organisations as organism, and the social world as “*expressing itself in general and contingent relationships among its more stable and clear cut elements*” (Smircich, 1983a: 347), culture is perceived as the former, as a ‘determining force’, and in the corporate culture as ‘a result of human enactment’. Nevertheless, fundamental to both themes is the necessity for management and control of culture, and accordingly, causality is considered to be significant in both themes. Smircich (1983a) also shows that in comparative management research, two views have been taken: (a) culture is viewed as a variable that impacts on development and the strengthening of values, and (b) culture is perceived as an independent variable impacting on the actions and attitudes of employees of an organisation. However, she indicates that the research aims of these studies is to find the similarities and differences in culture and how they influence organisational performance.

In terms of the corporate culture content theme (which Smircich, (1983a), as well as Allaire and Firsirotu, (1984), characterised as structural functionalism in the functionalist paradigm), organisations are considered to produce not only services and goods, but also culture as by-product with legends, rituals, and ceremonies as artefacts. The focus of this research is on the socio-cultural characteristics that develop within organisations, which then function in a broader cultural context, emphasising that the operations of organisations are embedded in systems of cultural symbols, such as norms, values and rituals (e.g. Pfeffer, 1981; Meyer, 1981; Chatman, 1989; O’Reilly et al. 1991; Hartnell et al., 2016; Chatman and O’Reilly, 2016), and that changes of organisational outcomes can be achieved through the modification of members’ behaviours. The aim of this approach, therefore, is to encourage organisational managers to make concerted efforts to ensure that the ‘right’ values, beliefs and norms are shared by most – if not all – employees. These ‘positive’ behaviours, attitudes and virtues are believed to be essential for accomplishing corporate goals and the manipulation of these dynamics can, and should be, effected for the sake of organisational success (examples of pioneers of this view are Ouchi, 1981; Deal and Kennedy, 1982). Accordingly, culture here is defined as the “*social glue that holds an organisation together*”, and as the beliefs and values shared by members, which are manifested in symbolic devices, e.g. rituals, specialised language, myths, stories and legends (Smircich, 1983a: 344). In this regard, more recent reviews categorise these corporate culture researchers in the IP (see Martin and Frost, 2011), which will be further discussed in this chapter.

2.5.2 Culture as a root metaphor: the non-functional perspective

In contrast to the functional paradigm, Smircich (1983a) indicates that other cultural scholars argue that organisations can be understood as a culture, or a collection of cultures (e.g. Young, 1989; Van Maanen, 1991; Kunda, 1992; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015). Rather than considering culture as something an organisation ‘has’, and which can therefore be managed and linked to organisational performance, this view favors the assumption that culture is something an organisation ‘is’. Culture in this tradition is perceived as an ambiguous social phenomenon, i.e. as an environment in which behaviours, institutions and social engagements take place (Smircich, 1981). The epistemological stance of this view has its roots in sociology and anthropology (Geertz, 1973). Smircich (1983a) illustrates that it is possible to analyse culture from different schools of thought within anthropology: symbolic anthropology (e.g. Van Maanen, 1973), cognitive anthropology (e.g. Harris and Cronen, 1979), psychodynamic theories (e.g. Gemmill, 1982) and structural anthropology (e.g. Turner, 1977). Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to conduct detailed discussions of each perspective (useful reviews: Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Smircich, 1983a; Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984), it will highlight the main philosophical and methodological view(s) that advocates of the ‘is’ perspective adopt. This is well described by Smircich (1983a: 348), when she states:

“Culture as a root metaphor promotes a view of organisations as expressive forms, manifestations of human consciousness. Organisations are understood and analysed not mainly in economic or material items, but in terms of their expressive, ideational, and symbolic aspects.”

Similar to the functionalist conceptualisation, Smircich (1983a) shows that the research in this tradition also emphasises symbols, stories, rituals and myths; nevertheless, they are not considered cultural artefacts. They are considered, rather, as generative processes that shape ‘meanings’ and are significant to the very existence of organisation (see Martin, 2002; Alvesson, 2013). It assumes that the social world is constructed by people and reproduced through the network of meaning and symbols that are shared by them (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Therefore, the culture as a root metaphor emphasises a comprehensive understanding of culture, and insists on providing greater reflection upon its settings.

Beyond Smircich (1983a) analysis, cultural theorists who favor the non-functional approach, argue that the concept of a causal link between organisational efficiency and management of culture, which most of the ‘has’ research adopts, is simplistic; it significantly underestimates the theoretical potential and depth of culture (Geertz, 1973; Meyerson, 1991a, 1991b;

Meyerson and Martin 1987; Alvesson, 1993a, 2013). They claim that this fails to address undesirable characteristics of individuals' behaviour, e.g. individual resistance, and analyse other 'essential' and neglected cultural issues, such as subcultures and ambiguities (see Marglin and Marglin, 1990; Willmott, 1993; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Fleming, 2013). Accordingly, they argue that through the 'is' approach, culture is described in dense thick and complex ways (Geertz, 1973); these 'thick' descriptions are not limited to only explaining human behaviour, but also its context, in such a way as to make behaviour meaningful to an observer. Hence, several advantages have been argued for this approach; most importantly, it provides greater room for examining informal/subjective aspects of organisations that might be hidden, inconsistent and contradictory due to culture's non-concrete status (e.g. subcultures, individual resistance, and ambiguous aspects of culture that most of the 'has' studies neglect or deny in their analysis). This is done through using ethnographical tools (e.g. observation, interview and document analysis), which are argued – unlike the methodological approaches that a number of 'has' researchers apply (i.e. quantitative) – to be capable of uncovering the objective, as well as the subjective issues of culture (e.g. Young, 1989; Van Maanen, 1991; Kunda, 1992; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015; Alvesson, 2016). As was indicated previously, the methodological issues will be further discussed in this chapter.

2.5.3 Postmodernist views of culture

The review of the literature shows that postmodernism is not an integrated concept; it has a variety of advocates, like philosophers and architects, whose literature challenges and critiques the postulates of modern science, which include 'clarity, realism, rationality, truth, order and intellectual progress' (Martin and Frost, 2011). Postmodernism also argues that the seeds of destruction are inherent in any viewpoint, which has led several researchers and theorists to discern dangers in this assumption. Calas and Smircich (1999) indicate that the language, representation, reflexivity, and reconsideration of power and subjectivity are some of the typical features of postmodernism and that postmodernists always tend to challenge conventional methods of theoretical development. On the other hand, according to their interpretation, postmodernists do not provide any alternative theoretical approaches, due to the elusive nature of postmodernism. Interestingly, Martin and Frost (2011) also maintain that in the context of culture, postmodernism only provides a theoretical and ideological critique, rather than a theory of political action.

Alvesson and Berg (1992) highlight the fact that reality in the postmodern view is a ‘series of fictions and illusions’. Smircich (1995) raises concerns about the depiction of objective reality, which is defined as ‘out there’, and the objectivity of language, which supports an author’s authority. Alvesson (2013) has also taken this into consideration, when detecting that OC captures the life of an organisation in all its richness. Martin and Frost (2011) show how postmodernists apply analytical techniques like deconstruction to limit and uncover strategies intended at projecting an illusion of truth in a text. They also argue that deconstruction reveals how conflicting meanings are hidden, doubts avoided, and suppressed points of view made less obvious. Calas and Smircich (1999), for instance, detect that deconstruction studies the metaphors that are most neglected in the main discussion of the text, with such metaphors usually conflicting with the themes in the key text. What differentiates postmodernism from other alternative views is the effort it makes to avoid confronting the author with the assumption that the critic knows better, but on the other hand, to make the point that “*language always exceeds the writer’s control*” (Calas and Smircich, 1999: 657). The work of Martin (1990) can be seen as an example of this view. Postmodernists also use textual analysis to challenge and interrogate the claims of a theoretical superiority of truth (e.g. Gagiliardi, 1991). Other researchers have expressed similar views. Mills et al. (2001), for instance, maintain that postmodernism is unswayed by dominant hierarchical voices. Reality is portrayed as a series of fictions and illusions shared by all, and power is neutralised; accordingly, order and clarity are presented as being in state of flux.

The postmodernist approach has been criticised. Most importantly, it appears to be very relativistic, challenging the principles of the scientific method. However, this section can be concluded by considering Martin and Frost’s (2011: 326-328) argument that the postmodernist tradition is useful for the study of OC because it acts as a check on incorrect assumptions of certainty, facilitates greater reflexivity, provides insights unavailable in accepted theories and promotes intellectual honesty. At this point, there could be a better understanding of the underlying reasons behind the confusion in OC definition and conceptualisation. However, a final pivotal that this chapter will address to reduce the conflict in OC definite and explains approach of this research is discussing the types of methodological approaches that OC studies apply to evaluate culture in organisations.

2.6 Approaches to studying culture in organisations

A significant approach to analysing culture was carried out by Pettigrew (1979) (see Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). Treating culture from an interpretive perspective, he argued that culture is a family of concepts. Arguing against applying a unitary perspective for exploring culture (which is a view that appeared to be approved by many contemporary cultural scholars, e.g. Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; and Alvesson, 2013, 2016), he emphasises that culture has several 'offspring', such as language, ideology, symbols, beliefs, myths and rituals. Pettigrew applied these concepts to an organisational context and concentrated on individuals as the creators and controllers of meaning. The importance of this concept can be observed from the great works of researchers and academics who combined several such 'offspring' in their research (see Koprowski, 1983; Broms and Gahmberg, 1983; Smith and Simmons, 1983). Koprowski (1983), for example, emphasises the importance of myths in resolving three management challenges: the application of Japanese organisation practises, the increase of women's role in the workplace, and the leadership role of managers. Smith and Simmons (1983) explain the significance of tales, myths, symbols and legends in examining culture. Hence, it can be observed from their views that myths are not mere imaginary stories, but incorporate beliefs, values and traditions of society. This makes myths important in studying culture.

Another influential approach to analysing culture can be observed in Wilkins's (1983) research. He shows that culture assumes considerable significance, because it prescribes a 'right' way to view the world (which is never questioned or challenged by others), and is reinforced by being 'taken for granted' by the organisation and its employees. This view is also emphasised by other key scholars, who view culture from different perspectives (e.g. Schein, 1984, 2010, from the psychology perspective, and Hatch, 1993, from the symbolic perspective). Nevertheless, Wilkins (1983) shows that shared assumptions are hard to analyse, because they are not openly expressed by cultural members. They are, however, implied in concrete examples. He explains that some assumptions go against overtly indicated norms, and accordingly, they would not be directly expressed. As a result, analysing shared assumptions in large organisations is considered difficult, due to the size and prevalence of diverse subcultures in parts of the organisation.

Interestingly, Wilkins (1983: 34) determined three instances, when OC becomes apparent: (i) When employees change roles, change functions or get promotion. This provides an opportunity for cultural assumptions to arise in the form of the reactions of the existing

members to the actions of the newcomer who is breaking certain ‘taken-for-granted assumptions’, and this may be expressed in the form of stories, offering advice, ridicule, lecturing, shunning, etc. These stories and experiences, encountered while breaking the normal approach to doing things, offer newcomers valuable information about the organisation. (ii) When subcultures conflict and subculture members describe each other. This permits the observation of an enormous amount of information about both culture and subcultures. (iii) When critical decisions are made, and applied, by top management. In this situation, the personal behaviour of top management can be full of indirect assumptions.

Another key approach to analysing culture, which covers influential cultural issues and is evident in different forms of academic research, is Schein’s (1984, 2010) framework (see Martin and Frost, 2011; Schneider et al., 2013; Chatman and O’Reilly, 2016). Schein’s framework, as well as that of some other cultural scholars (e.g. Hofstede et al., 1990; Rousseau, 1990; Hofstede, 2001), tends to analyse culture through different levels and layers of cultural manifestations. It assumes that each level is based on how accurately and deeply it deciphers a culture. Different attributes that Schein’s (1984, 2010) framework identifies are applied to the analysis of culture. These include shared meaning, formal rituals, observed behavioural irregularities, group norms, espoused values, root metaphors and celebrations. As can be seen in Figure 2-1, Schein claims that culture has three levels. These levels range from very physical superficial manifestations, which can be felt and observed, to deeply embedded, subconscious, basic assumptions, which represent the essence of OC. Between these two levels are the espoused beliefs, notions, roles of behaviour and values that culture members carry in the organisation and apply as a way of depicting the culture to others as well as themselves.

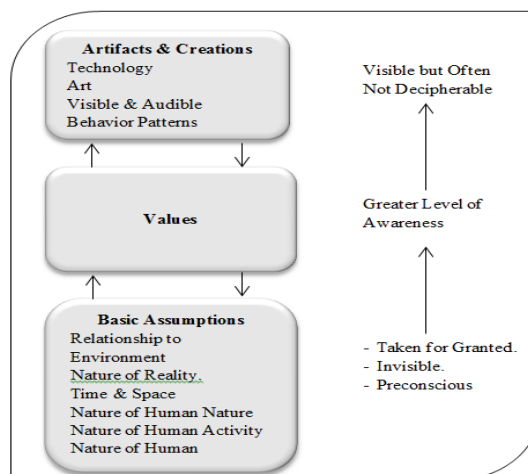


Figure 2-1: Levels of culture (source: Schein, 1984: 4).

Schein (1984, 2010) maintains that the overt value system or behaviour stressed by management is not culture, rather it is the assumptions that underlie those values. He argues that such values govern both the visible artefacts, e.g. office layout and dress code, and the behavioural patterns. However, he emphasises the role of the organisational founder(s) in evolving culture, as founder(s) inculcating their philosophies of how to succeed by implanting their values or cultural models in the organisations they started. Nevertheless, Schein indicates that the model develops out of the consensus of the assumptions of how to do things. Accordingly, he maintains that OC shaping is a result of the interaction of these philosophies and assumptions and the group's learning from experience. The group develops assumptions of the environment with which it interacts and these are shared between its members. These assumptions serve the function of making the life of organisational members comfortable, by offering them a set of values (which they can recall when faced with contradictory issues, in terms of internal aspects (e.g. distribution of power and status, consensus on membership and standards for inclusion and exclusion, rewards and punishments, and intimacy and openness) and external aspects (e.g. the core mission and the means of achieving the objectives set, evaluative systems to measure the advancement in achieving the aims and correctives for non-attainment of aims)).

However, although Schein (1984, 2010) emphasises that culture relates to underlying assumptions, he recognises the practical difficulties that a researcher faces in discovering them. Therefore, he underlines that investigation is necessarily done clinically, by using ethnographical methodologies. Also, he advocates that to overcome these difficulties, the researcher should analyse the central values that cover behaviours and drive the day-to-day working values, which is a view that appears to be consistent with other key scholars (e.g. Martin, 2002; Alvesson, 2013). Consequently, it can be observed that Schein's approach to culture reflects the psychological view on analysing culture, as the subconscious mind is viewed as harbouring the unquestionable assumptions from which the artefacts and values flow. This is unlike the anthropological view of Pettigrew, which emphasises symbols and language. Nevertheless, the subconscious in Schein's model appears to be similar to the collective subconscious, or psychodynamic viewpoints in anthropology (see Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984).

Different attempts have been made to add to Schein's framework. For example, Hatch (1993) (who considers culture from a symbolic-interpretive perspective) observes some limitations

on Schein's model, as it did not address the relationship between layers and how they impact on each other. She does so by introducing the concept of OC dynamics (see Figure 1-2). Considering culture from the symbolic-interpretive perspective has also introduced symbols as an additional aspect between artefacts and assumptions. It illustrates that underlying assumptions do not impact values in a unidirectional way, as Schein's model implies. Instead, it assumes that values also have influences on underlying assumptions, leading to a change in the underlying assumptions themselves, where this is applied to the relationship between all three layers, inclusive of the artefacts.

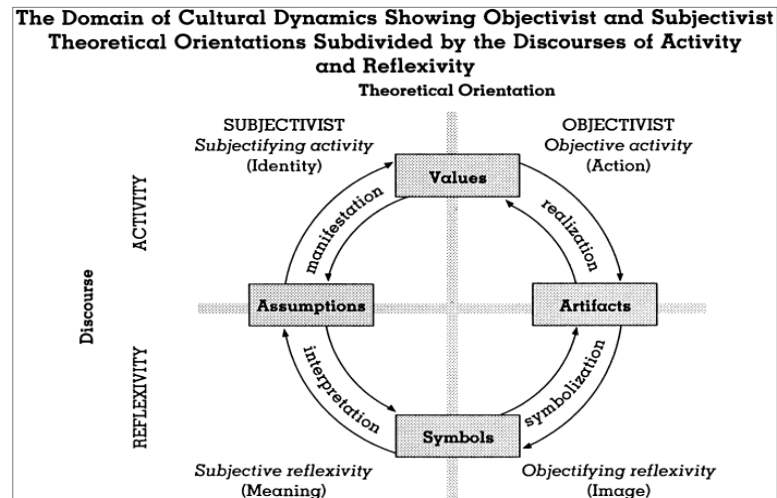


Figure 2-2: The dynamics of organisational culture (source: Hatch 1993: 685).

Martin (2002) analyses culture in terms of etic and emic views. In etic studies, the researcher analyses the culture as an objective outsider who determines the dimensions to be examined. The national culture study of Hofstede (2001) can be viewed as an example. Several etic researches apply a questionnaire with the Likert scale (Likert, 1932). Such researches are labelled etic, because the researcher determines the dimension categories and keeps an outsider position throughout the research's progress. The researcher frames the questions so that they embody verbalisation from the native view of point (e.g. Chatman et al., 2014; O'Reilly et al., 2014). On the other hand, the researcher with the emic perspective approaches the study of OC from the native's point of view and attempts to capture his vision of reality and the world, as much as is humanly possible. An example of this is Evans-Pritchard's (1937) research of Azande beliefs in witchcraft. Geertz (1973) adopts a reasonable approach, as he tries to find a balance between both views and claims that although the researcher's aim is to understand as much as he can from the native's point of view, he retains his personal existence, which is not the same as the ethnography of witchcraft explained by a geometer. According to Geertz's (1973) argument, the importance of the emic view is to understand reality through the eyes of

the researched, not so much to achieve a communion with the researched. This is done by grasping a proverb or catching an illusion. Obviously, this debate underlines the significance of examining issues without the biases and preconceptions of the observer, and stresses ‘reflexivity’ and offering a voice for the marginalised, as postmodernist approach advocates encourage when studying culture.

In short, Martin’s (2002) approach highlights a significant issue, frequently discussed in this chapter, which is the debate between qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The ensuing section discusses this debate.

2.7 Qualitative versus quantitative approaches to culture

The review of OC shows that the most appropriate methodologies for studying culture have been a debatable issue for scholars (see Martin, 2002; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013; Chatman and O’Reilly, 2016). Historically, reviews show that qualitative studies were criticised extensively in the middle of the 1960s, and a proliferation of quantitative researches was observed. Daft (1980) argues that the preference for quantitative research can be seen in the amount of quantitative researches accepted by *Administrative Science Quarterly* between 1959 and 1979. In addition, Martin (2002) argues that the US had a pronounced disapproval of qualitative researches, to the extent that publishing qualitative research in leading journals was very difficult. Nevertheless, this obsession with positivism was faced with significant criticism in Japan and Europe, where there was a tendency towards postmodernism and critical theory. This trend re-evaluated the claim that quantitative researches were superior. As indicated previously, the 1980s witnessed a considerable interest in studying culture, and due to the qualitative method applied by OC researchers, qualitative methodologies received a high degree of acceptance in the 1980s, as well as the 1990s (see Martin, 2002).

This methodology debate can be viewed as an extension of the argument of the study of culture from etic or emic (i.e. the native view paradigm, Gregory, 1983) perspectives. The variance in methodologies of cultural studies is underpinned by the expected research outcomes, i.e. whether they are (a) generalisable to the population, or (b) context specific. In general, those who adopt quantitative methods (characterised by wide samples, reliability and validity measurements and statistical inferences), adopt an ‘objective’ view, which has more of an emphasis on breadth, rather than depth, and aims at generalisation (e.g. Ogbonna and Harris, 2000; Van Vianen, 2000; Mathew et al., 2012; Chatman et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2016). Observing existing culture reviews (see Smircich, 1983a; Denison, 1996; Martin and Frost,

2011; Alvesson, 2013; Schneider et al., 2013; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016), this matches the 'etic' perspective, in which this research tradition examines organisational life through the lens of an outsider. In contrast, qualitative methodologies concentrate more on depth by adopting ethnographical methodologies (which include analysis of artefacts and photographs, participant and non-participant observation and discourse analysis) (see Martin and Siehl, 1983; Van Maanen, 1991; Kunda, 1992; Mathew and Ogbonna, 2009; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015). Such studies do not aim at generalisation, except a few qualitative researches that attempted a generalisation through, within and across case studies (see Martin, 2002). This approach evidently reflects the native view paradigm (i.e. the 'emic' perspective), and it should be noted that there are several hybrid researches using both methodologies, as will be outlined shortly.

A careful analysis of the debates for and against quantification shows that they emerge from what Burrell and Morgan (1979) labelled as the objective versus subjective argument in sociology, which is in turn reflected in positivism and anti-positivism. The basic disagreement derives from the argument that social phenomena are not open to the techniques of quantitative analysis in the same way as the natural sciences. This is evident in the observation of Martin and Frost (2011) that the struggles between subjective and objective preferences are related to the epistemological and ontological variances underlying quantitative and qualitative approaches, besides preferences emerging from the assumptions about the nature of organisations.

However, while some researchers and theorists are vehemently opposed to quantification (e.g. Schwartz and Davis, 1981; Trice and Beyer, 1993; Schein, 2010; Alvesson, 2013), others see merit in quantification (e.g. Hofstede, 1984, 1991; Denison and Mishra, 1995; Den Hartog et al., 1999; House et al., 1999; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). Those who adopt qualitative methods argue that cultures are unique, therefore they can only be appropriately understood through deep immersion in the organisation (see Pettigrew, 1979; Wilkins, 1983; Smircich, 1983b; Schein, 1984, 2010; Martin, 2002; Alvesson, 2013, 2016). The advocates of this approach have stressed the belief and underlying assumptions of culture, and argue that they require a deep, time-intensive study by the researcher allowing these implicit cultural components to be raised by a conscious observer over considerable time (weeks or months). They argue that understanding the meaning of symbols and rituals requires a qualitative

methodology for analysing culture, since quantitative methodologies are incapable of capturing implicit or subconscious beliefs and assumptions.

On the other hand, a more ‘functionalist’ perspective of culture concentrates on norms and values (e.g. O’Reilly and Chatman, 1996; Chatman et al., 1998; Chatman and O’Reilly, 2016). This approach typically studies culture by measuring the operating and espoused norms and values that guide behaviour, usually applying quantitative approaches. Unlike qualitative methodology (which stresses distinction of each organisation), the functionalist view concentrates on how culture influences both organisational and employee’s behaviour and how commonalities in culture can be compared across organisations. As indicated previously, this approach claims that a single manifestation of culture (e.g. norms or values) would represent the culture as a whole; however, this conceptualisation has been criticised from different points of view (see Pettigrew, 1979; Schein, 1984, 2010; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Alvesson, 2013).

Advocates of qualitative researches argue that culture is inherently subjective and needs a researcher having “*extraordinary sensitivity, an almost preternatural capacity to think, feel, and perceive like a native*” (Geertz, 1983: 86). Also, given the concerns of many scholars of characterising organisations in terms of a single, strong overall culture (as previously discussed that organisations encompass significant internal heterogeneity), scholars argue that responding to standardised surveys is an inappropriate way for capturing cultural variances among organisations. They claim that findings generated from standardised surveys are influenced by several aspects, importantly, how members need to be honest in their answers, how simplistic people are with verbal answers, and whether underlying dimensions consolidate multiple meanings and multiple qualities (e.g. Fiske, 2002). Hence, these issues imply that standardised survey methodologies for evaluating culture are focused in terms of their capability for observing cultural dimensions accurately. As an alternative, based on this view, culture is best studied through observation into how meaning is created and subjectively experienced.

Other key academics argue that culture can be observed equally well via either subjective (qualitative) or objective (quantitative) theorising, but that linking them would provide a more complete image. Hatch (1993) maintains that their advantage relies on the presence of diverse appreciations of organisational reality. She also observes that the evident elements of culture (e.g. artefacts) would be more adequately theorised from the objectivist view. In contrast,

cultural assumptions would be theorised better using the subjectivist perception, as in her perception of organisational dynamics, she recognises both perspectives. These perspectives are approved by Martin (2002), as she detects that a careful look at other methodological approaches would enable conversant choice and theoretical richness not conceivable with exclusionary researches.

Obviously, there are aspects for which quantitative analysis is appropriate just as there are aspects where qualitative approach is suitable and they should be applied only to capture those aspects for which they are best suited. Therefore, considering the definition of culture of this thesis (i.e. underlying values, beliefs and assumptions), and the culture conceptualisation (i.e. considering multiple manifestations to analyse culture), it seems that the ethnographical approach appears to be the most appropriate way to evaluate culture for this study. This is consistent with various studies, such as Harris and Ogbonna, 1998; Kilduff and Corley, 2000; Mathew and Ogbonna, 2009 and Jackson, 2011.

2.8 Structuration as a means of studying organisational culture

Another approach that researchers applied as a means of studying culture is structuration. It is a neat theory that aims to relate human action with the structural analysis (Giddens, 1979). Some scholars indicate that structuration bridges the gap between the qualitative and quantitative researches, by the conceptualisation of structure (i.e. the resources and rules that people use in their interaction) (see McPhee and Poole, 1980). Riley (1983) discovers structures as a means for understanding and analysing OC, by arguing that systems of structures embody the life of organisation with individuals acting as both the makers and holders of structure. Also, she argues developments of structuration being distinct interactions, which then continue to shape structures. Furthermore, she indicates that issues that occurred in the past have a bias, as they become part of the system and reproduce themselves.

Given that social systems are interrelated, their interactions cause changes in the structuring development, and a significant part of this development is to find the factors that caused the constancy or shift of the structures and the reproduction of systems. Also, since structuration theory takes a middle position in the objective-subjective argument, Riley (1983) argues that it allows the use of a diversity of methodologies. In brief, Riley determines three structural features that are significant in an OC context: (a) legitimation, (b) domination, and (c) signification. Signification is examined by the analysis of codes or methods of coding in communication. While some codes may remain constant, new codes may arise and symbols

can adopt new meanings by being linked to structures. In structuration, 'symbolic orders' are examined by studying the institutional forms, as in turn, these orders are perceived as elements of culture. Domination is shaped by resources and authorisation. Authorisation refers to the competencies wielding power over 'material phenomena', while allocation denotes the allocation of resources and they (firstly) shape the political system and (after that) the economic system in organisation. Accordingly, they are assumed vital in examining culture. Legitimation, or normative regulation, refers to the dynamics between the interests of diverse groups in the organisation and the value criteria. Thus, legitimate orders are considered as the 'structural conditions' of action in the organisation by a group of organisational workers, thereby precluding an agreement by all members of organisation.

Riley (1983) emphasises the understanding of the structuration approach. She quotes Giddens (1979) for highlighting that the normative integration of the dominant group is more vital in maintaining cohesion of the systems of organisation than an agreement on values. This suggests the reality of subcultures and subgroups with a stress on varying sets of values. This approach focuses on how the three processes, discussed previously, are developed and continued, which she argues arises through mediation (which occurs when an interactant perceives the contextual message from another's responses) and transformation (which arises when structures are subject to change through 'interaction with other structures'). She also claims that culture is multivalent, and consequently, can be examined by observing the main structuring aspects. The cultural nature of office politics – as she indicates – needs an analysis of the symbolic structures. The political phenomena can be analysed from the patterns of institutional structures, which can be attained by (1) concentrating on language and symbols indicating political goals, and (2) by analysing language and symbols in relation to the structuring properties (see Riley, 1984).

Riley (1984) conducted an in-depth study of two organisations, which varied in their 'task embeddedness' on a comparative basis. The study aimed to explore the symbols that produce political images of an OC and observe how these symbolic structures are reproduced or transformed among organisational subgroups. This analysis included material symbols, verbal symbols, and action symbols. It shows that the IB is deeply affected by mostly subconscious patterns led by structures (in a rules and procedures form). Through repeating structures, individuals 're-legitimate the past', 'give a medium for the present', and provide 'a pattern for the future' (Riley 1983). The images shaped by employees at different hierarchical levels were

found to be varied and demonstrated the power of the dominant subgroups, thus showing a dyssynchronous perspective of OC. It should be indicated that the structuration approach is implied in several academic works and that the results of several researches validate Riley's view. Bartunek and Seo (2002), as an example, concentrated on five dissimilar subcultures (mainly based on hierarchy) and found that they reacted in different ways to the issues of work that administration intervened.

In summary, it is evident from this discussion that this approach depicts the role of politics and power in the development of OC, which appears to be akin to Burrell and Morgan's (1979) radical paradigm. Meyerson and Martin (1987), Martin (1992, 2002), Martin et al., (2006) and Martin and Frost's (2011) advocacy of the three-perspective framework, merits argument both as part of the theoretical framework and for describing the methodological approaches for analysing and examining culture adopted in this thesis. Hence, the three-perspective framework is discussed in the following section.

2.9 The three-perspective framework

The advocates of the three-perspective framework (cited above) argue that OC researches can be generally categorised into three key paradigmatic views, (a) integration, (b) differentiation, and (c) fragmentation. The following section conducts a brief examination of their key issues.

2.9.1 Integration perspective

Martin (1991, 2002) indicates that the IP characterises culture as organisation-wide clarity, consensus and consistency. She argues that consistency contains three main forms: (a) symbolic consistency, (b) action consistency and (c) ideological consistency. Action consistency accrues when formal practices are consistent with informal practices. Martin (1992) observes that the employees of the organisation she studied, shared management claims of equality, which was evident in their initiatives in profit contributions and sharing in charities. Likewise, symbolic consistency arises when cultural forms are consistent with content themes. For instance, a canteen that is shared by management and workers supports the belief of equal treatment between employees, regardless of their level. Ideological consistency occurs the consistency between content themes are consistent. An example of this can be a policy that claims to treat all employees equally, which is consistent with a considerable level of empowerment.

Martin and Frost (2011: 316) argue that integration studies define culture as “an internally consistent package of cultural manifestations that generates organisation-wide consensus, usually around some set of shared values” (e.g. Sathe, 1985; Ott, 1989; Schein, 1991, 2010). This perspective emphasises that culture manifestations are consistent with each other, thereby “creating a net of mutually reinforcing elements” and there is clarity and consensus in the organisation, in terms of those elements (Martin, 2002: 95). Therefore, they assume that everything in this culture is clear, shared by most – if not all – employees and displays almost no ambiguity. Some even claim that which is ambiguous is not part of culture (e.g. Schein, 1991, 2010).

However, another interesting issue that Martin and Frost (2011) indicate is that many scholars who favour this perspective argue that in order to improve organisational effectiveness, organisational leaders can – and should – establish ‘strong’ and ‘unified’ culture, by emphasising and reinforcing certain types of values (e.g. Peters and Waterman, 1982). This perspective seems to fit the functional paradigm. The concern of these studies centres on finding the appropriate techniques for creating and managing a strong and unified culture that positively supports the strategies of the organisation, and, therefore, improves its financial position (Martin and Frost, 2011). However, regardless of the considerable arguments and limitations of these types of culture studies, which mostly reflect practitioner interest (see Ogbonna, 1993; Willmott, 1993; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Alvesson, 2013, 2016; Fleming, 2013; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015), the business of how to change culture in organisations continues to be present, whether in academic texts (e.g. Bremer, 2012; Connors and Smith, 2012), or in the business press (e.g. Kantor and Streitfeld, 2015; Nocera, 2016; Spector, 2016). However, Martin and Frost (2011) noted that not all integration studies have value engineering and functionalist overtones, e.g. those that adopt a more symbolic approach (e.g. Barley, 1983). Alvesson (2013) characterised these studies – consistent with Martin’s view – as ‘unitarist’ in orientation.

Also, Martin et al. (2006) and Martin and Frost (2011) noted that IP studies are varied in relation to their methodological approach, i.e. they can be either qualitative or quantitative. While many integration studies emphasise that understanding cultures needs to consider a variety of manifestations, which requires qualitative methodologies (see Pettigrew, 1979; Schein, 1991, 2010), other integration studies focus on one – or a maximum two – manifestations (e.g. values and norms) and favor quantitative methodologies (e.g. O’Reilly et

al., 1991; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1996; Ashkanasy et al., 2000b; Chatman et al., 2014; O'Reilly et al., 2014). Those researches are called 'specialist' culture studies. In contrast, 'generalist' studies are called for those that emphasise collective culture manifestations (see Martin and Frost, 2011: 317). The next table summarises the main assumptions of IP:

Integration perspective	Perspective/ Attributes
	Relationship to manifestation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency exists among cultural manifestations (i.e. action, symbolic and ideology). • Various levels in the hierarchy display similar viewpoints. • Culture is monolithic, integrated and homogeneous.
	Degree of consensus
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation-wide consensus on issues among all members of the organisation. <p><i>Culture as shared across the organisation.</i></p>
	Orientation to ambiguity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excludes ambiguity. • Culture is defined in a way that denies ambiguity. • It assumes that culture is about agreements because values are shared.
	Paradigm
	Functional
	Research method
	Qualitative and quantitative

Table 2-3: Summary of integration perspective main points (source: Martin, 1996, 2002).

However, regardless of the fact that integration studies are considered fundamental in OC field (see Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013, 2016), they have been criticised on different grounds. Most interestingly, these studies have been criticised for neglecting – either by denying or ignoring – other 'significant' realities of culture in their analysis. For instance, integration studies emphasise that top managers are the main actors in establishing OC; this does not recognise the role of other managerial-levels, such as lower-level employees. Also, IP researchers ignore the reality of subcultures and individual resistance, as they are considered evidence of 'weak' cultures (see Schein, 2010). In contrast, the existing literature indicates many empirical studies that show sufficient evidence of the existence and effectiveness of subcultures in organisational life (e.g. Van Maanen, 1991; Kunda, 1992; Morgan and Ogbonna, 2008; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015). This has caused some argument that integration studies are superficial and appear to have failed in the uncovering of such significant cultural aspects (see Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013).

Another interesting criticism directed at the IP is related to the culture conceptualisation of 'specialist' studies. Scholars who argue against their conceptualisation (e.g. Pettigrew, 1979;

Martin et al., 2006; Schein, 2010; Alvesson, 2013, 2016) maintain that these specialist studies assume – “*sometimes without adequate evidence*”, as Martin and Frost (2011: 317) expressed – that culture manifestations are consistent with each other. Accordingly, they argue that a single manifestation would represent the culture as a whole. Many culture scholars disproved this assumption for different critical reasons. Most significantly, they argued that the meaning associated with a single cultural manifestation may not be consistent with the meaning associated with a wide range of manifestations. Consequently, this would produce misleading data (see Martin et al., 1983; Schein, 1984, 2010; Martin et al., 2006; Alvesson, 2013, 2016). Finally, the methodological approaches of the specialist integration studies have been very debatable, especially in recent years (see Martin, 2002; Jung et al., 2009; Martin and Frost, 2011; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). Specialist studies usually favor quantitative methodologies (e.g. Chatman, 1991; O'Reilly et al., 1991). On the other hand, advocates of qualitative methodologies (including some integration theorists) argue that understanding cultural manifestations, e.g. the meaning of symbols and rituals, needs qualitative approaches, because quantitative methodologies are incapable of capturing such social phenomena (Pettigrew, 1979; Smircich, 1983b; Alvesson and Berg, 1992; Martin, 2002; Alvesson, 2013).

2.9.2 Differentiation perspective

Culture in this perspective is characterised by differentiation and diversity (Meyerson and Martin, 1987). In general, Martin and Frost (2011) indicate that the DP is characterised by (a) inconsistent interpretations of cultural manifestations (e.g. formal policies versus real practices, or attitudes versus behaviour), (b) consensus existing only within subcultural boundaries, and (c) clarity existing only within subcultures. Similar to the IP, Martin (1992, 2002) maintains that inconsistency can take three types of forms. The first is symbolic inconsistency, which can be observed when cultural forms are inconsistent with content themes, for instance, while there is a policy of equal treatment for ‘all’ employees, managers occupy a separate canteen from other employees. The second form is action inconsistency that occurs when cultural themes are not consistent with actual practices (e.g. the policy of ‘consensual decision-making’ and sustaining strict controls is inconsistent). The last form is ideological inconsistency. This arises when content themes are inconsistent with each other. For example, a policy that claims high consideration of people is in contradiction when set in the context of inappropriate opportunities for training.

Martin and Frost (2011) show that – like the IP – the differentiation researches emphasise some ideational aspects of culture, e.g. cognitions (meanings), values and symbolism, in addition to artefacts. However, they also argue about the significance of including more than just cognitive and symbolic aspects of culture, i.e. aspects believed to be neglected in mainstream organisational research. They assume that the material aspects of working life, e.g. pay inequalities, reporting relationships, task responsibilities, formal policies and procedures should be included in OC research. This has shifted the focus from only one managerial-level, i.e. corporate, to incorporate the views of other managerial-levels.

From the DP viewpoint, Martin and Frost (2011) show that good cultural research needs to have depth (usually based on ethnographical methodologies), in order to go beyond the surface of the cultural manifestations, i.e. the aspects that cultural members usually present to strangers. This is done in an attempt to overcome the prejudices of impression management and social desirability of organisational life, i.e. issues that are not consistent with managerial ideals. Therefore, the stress on material manifestations and the emphasis on exploring culture in depth makes DP researches sensitive to inconsistencies between formal practices and informal norms, between stated attitudes and real behaviour, between one story and another, and most essentially, between the interpretations of one group and another (e.g. Van Maanen and Barley, 1984; Barley, 1986; Van Maanen and Kunda, 1989; Van Maanen, 1991; Kunda, 1992; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015).

DP researches, unlike the self-contained approach of IP researches, tend to have high sensitivity to the environmental influences on cultures in organisations (e.g. occupational subcultures and societal cultures). Furthermore, they tend to accept some level of diversity, in terms of shared assumptions or consensus among groups in the organisation. An example of this can be the study of Gregory (1983), which shows that accountants make a unique kind of culture, regardless of the place they work at. In terms of the influences of the environment, Martin and Frost (2011) argue that pressures from the environment change cultures. However, the degree of change may vary according to the stress of pressure used by the segment of the environment influencing it. An example of this is a study of Bartunek and Seo (2002), and Ogbonna and Harris (2015), which uncovers different types of subcultures. They show that each subculture reacted in a different way to the quality of organisational life interference by the management. Hence, some argue that differentiated studies provide a bold, empirically well-supported challenge against IP assumptions, which champion a unified and strong culture

that can be created by top leaders and is characterised by clear interpretations and values that are perceived, enacted and shared, in the same way, by all employees (see Turner, 1986; Meyerson and Martin, 1987; Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2008; Alvesson, and Spicer, 2012; Alvesson, 2013, 2016). Interestingly, there are many contemporary calls encouraging researchers on subcultures to go beyond the traditional professional groups to broader organisational communities and aspects (see Jermier et al., 1991; Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2008; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015), as occupational group research has continued to be the mainstay of subcultural research (see Morgan and Ogbonna, 2008).

Another issue that Martin and Frost (2011) observed from different DP researchers (e.g. Rosen, 1991) is that subcultures can be both vertical and horizontal. Vertical subcultures describe the variances between groups of unequal status (see Alvesson, 1993a), while horizontal subcultures describe jobs or functions of equivalent status (see Trice and Beyer 1993). For example, Kunda's (1992) study uncovers inconsistencies in the attitudes of engineers to organisational values, which were manifested by their ironic comments in their break period. Also, Van Maanen (1991) investigates the nature of subcultures in Disneyland, where ride operators, food vendors and managers vary in terms of the treatment of customers. Hence, Martin and Frost (2011), as well as many other researchers (e.g. Alvesson, 2013) argue that the DP was stretched to the extent that some started heralding differentiation research as the new dominant approach of OC research, as Alvesson (2013: 136) states: *"Today most scholars emphasise the presence of subcultures in organisations."* Therefore, the subcultural realities in an organisation can be seen as significant enough to be included in research analysis.

In brief, it seems hard to determine whether DP researches are categorised under the functional or non-functional paradigm. This is because research from both the IP (functional) and FP (non-functional) paradigms accept and recognise, with some restrictions, aspects of the DP paradigm. The DP paradigm provides a pragmatic position, which allows cultural researchers to locate their researches between the extreme philosophical views of the integration and fragmentation perspectives (Martin and Frost, 2011). Interestingly, some 'specialist' culture studies recognise the DP aspects and assume that subcultures can exist within organisation (see Martin et al., 2006; Martin and Frost, 2011; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). This is also done by applying quantitative approaches, which are believed to identify the different values that are shared by a subgroup(s) from the overall values that are shared by organisational

members (see Adkins and Caldwell, 2004; Elfenbein and O'Reilly, 2007; Seong et al., 2015).

The next table summarises the main points of the DP:

Differentiation perspective	Perspective/ Attributes
	Relationship to manifestation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency and inconsistency among cultural manifestations (i.e. action, symbolic and ideology) exists at different levels. • It assumes differentiation and diversity at a group and individual level.
	Degree of consensus
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consensus exists within subcultures, but not between them. <p><i>Culture as shared within groups, but not across an organisation</i></p>
	Orientation to ambiguity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Channels ambiguity to outside subcultures. • Culture is often emphasised by disagreements.
	Paradigm
	Functional and non-functional (i.e. mutable viewpoints from different employees and different job levels).
	Research method
	Qualitative and quantitative

Table 2-4: Summary of differentiation perspective main points (source: Martin, 1996, 2002).

2.9.3 Fragmentation perspective

The paradigm of this perspective is argued to be different from the integration and differentiation perspectives, especially in terms of ambiguity (Meyerson and Martin, 1987). Martin (1992, 2002) describes FP as being marked by ambiguity, the multifaceted nature of cultural manifestations, and multiple interpretations of organisational life aspects. The central argument of fragmentation studies is that the interpretations of cultural manifestations are not necessarily consistent or inconsistent; they can be multifaceted, involving elements of confusion and contradiction. Hence, similar to the IP and DP, ambiguity can take three forms: symbolic, action and ideological. Symbolic ambiguity reveals when cultural themes give an uncertain relationship to cultural forms. For example, open offices may be viewed by some employees as an indication of transparency, while at the same time, others may perceive it as intended for 'close' supervision (or intended for close supervision on some occasions and transparency on others). Action ambiguity arises when the relationship between themes and practices of the organisations are not clear. For instance, ambiguity may occur when organisational workers are unaware of how decisions are made, because of inappropriate documentation of the processes. Ideological ambiguity occurs when there is vagueness in the relationship of the content themes. A policy that gives high priority to clients, as well as offering a high flexibility level for workers could, as an example, lead to situations where both

parties contribute to each other. Nevertheless, issues could also arise resulting in conflict and it would be problematic, therefore, to determine whether they are contradictory or complementary to each other. Martin (2002: 104) suggests that *“the fragmentation perspective is the most difficult to conceptualise because it focuses on ambiguity and ambiguity is difficult to conceptualise clearly”*.

Culture, in this approach, is viewed as a disorder that contributes to dysfunctional facets of organisational life. Thus, this perspective is categorised under the non-functional paradigm of culture (see Feldman, 1991; Meyerson, 1991a, 1991b; Alvesson, 1993b, 2013). Martin and Frost (2011) show that the advocates of FP assume that interpretations of cultural manifestations are multiple. They believe that the relationships between cultural manifestations are neither clearly consistent nor clearly inconsistent, but complex, as they contain different elements of contradiction and confusion. In the same way, they do not recognise consensus as being organisation-wide or peculiar to a specified subculture. Consensus in FP researches is transient and issue-specific, resulting in ephemeral affinities between organisational members that might be quickly replaced by other patterns of affinities, as other concerns draw the attention of members of a culture (e.g. Kreiner and Schultz, 1993). Therefore, culture in such a short-lived environment is no longer a clearing in a jungle of meaninglessness; rather, culture is the jungle itself (Martin and Frost, 2011: 324). It is this aspect that makes advocates of FP assume ambiguity to be the essence of any culture, which pervades all (e.g. Meyerson, 1991a; Feldman, 1991). Clarity, at that point, is a dogma of meaningfulness and order spread by organisational management to create an illusion of clarity where there is none.

The characteristics of the FP, therefore, are ambiguity, lack of consistency, and lack of consensus. The FP incorporates ambiguity and perceives it as normal and not problematic, developing from the irreconcilable tensions between contraries, e.g. paradoxes and contradictions, ironies and multiple meanings. Also, Martin and Frost (2011) maintain that power, in a fragmentation description, diffused widely across all levels of the hierarchy, is perceived as a constant flush (instead of an unusual occurrence out of individual control), triggered by the environment and other forces. Isolation, lethargy, satisfaction and confusion are all highlighted and described in detail, without offering a solution. Hence, most of the FP researches position ambiguity centre stage (e.g. March and Olsen, 1976; Brunsson, 1985; Feldman, 1989; Meyerson, 1991b; Weick, 1991; Robertson and Swan, 2003). Considering

ambiguity as the core of OC, FP assumes that certainties of IP and clearly defined differences of DP are simplistic (see Martin and Frost, 2011). For instance, Meyerson's (1991b) description of social workers' work indicates that there was pervasive confusion about aims, criteria for success, and means for achieving aims, which created all-pervasive ambiguity in the organisation. In Robertson and Swan's (2003) study, which was about a knowledge-intensive organisation, ambiguities were also emphasised as the dominant element of any cultural study, which lies in people's interpretations. The next table summarises the main points of the FP:

Fragmentation perspective	Perspective/ Attributes
	Relationship to manifestation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clarity of consistency or inconsistency among cultural manifestations (i.e. action, symbolic and ideology). • Issue-specific consensus and confusion among individuals.
	Degree of consensus
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall lack of consensus.
	<i>Culture not shared in the organisation.</i>
	Orientation to ambiguity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges ambiguity. • Ambiguity is accepted as inevitable and continuing. • It is part of the usual way of doing business.
	Paradigm
	Non-functional
	Research method
	Qualitative

Table 2-5: Summary of fragmentation perspective main points (source: Martin, 1996, 2002).

However, the FP is not without its critics. Regardless of the intensity of adversaries to the FP, some key OC authors do not consider ambiguity as a part of OC (e.g. Schein, 1991). Also, in comparison with the other perspectives, FP is argued to be the most difficult to examine (Martin, 2002; Martin and Frost, 2011). However, others have argued for the necessity for an FP approach to analysing culture. For example, Alvesson (2013) presents a detailed discussion about this aspect and argues that some ambiguity characterises organisations, which is the result of observing organisational life from the ambiguity perspective itself. Also, Meyerson (1991b: 256) argues that the acknowledgement of ambiguity by researchers can be taken as evidence of its reality and emphasises that this component of organisational life should be included in the culture analysis; otherwise, it may run the risk of contributing an oversimplified, clearly described, cartoonish description of a culture that may not succeed in capturing the complexity, flux and contradiction that characterise the subjective side of present-day organisational life.

What is apparent from the last discussion is that each perspective provides essential understanding of culture (see a summary of the three-culture perspective's main points in the following table).

Perspective/ Attributes	Integration perspective	Differentiation perspective	Fragmentation perspective
Relationship to manifestation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistency exists among cultural manifestations (i.e. action, symbolic and ideology). Various levels in the hierarchy display similar viewpoint. Culture is monolithic, integrated and homogeneous. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistency and inconsistency among cultural manifestations (i.e. action, symbolic and ideology) exists at different levels. This promotes differentiation and diversity at a group and individual level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clarity of consistency or inconsistency among cultural manifestations (i.e. action, symbolic and ideology).
Degree of consensus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisation-wide consensus on issues among all members of the organisation. <p>Culture as shared across the organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consensus exists within subcultures, but not between them. <p>Culture as shared within groups, but not across an organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue-specific consensus and confusion among individuals. Overall lack of consensus. <p>Culture not shared in the organisation</p>
Orientation to ambiguity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excludes ambiguity. Culture is defined in a way that denies ambiguity. It assumes that culture is about agreements because values are shared. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Channels ambiguity to outside subcultures. Culture is often emphasised by disagreements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledges ambiguity. Ambiguity is accepted as inevitable and continuing. It is part of the usual way of doing business.
Paradigm	Functional (i.e. managerial viewpoints).	Functional & non-functional (i.e. mutable viewpoints from different employee and different job levels).	Non-functional (i.e. mutable viewpoints from different employee and different job levels).
Research method	Qualitative and quantitative	Qualitative and quantitative	Qualitative

Table 2-6: A summary of the three-culture perspective's key issues (adopted from Martin, 1992; Martin and Frost, 2011; Gajendran et al., 2012).

Martin (1992, 2002) suggests that analyses of culture should include all the issues of the three perspectives simultaneously. She emphasises that some issues of culture will be shared by most organisation employees (which leads to a clear and consistent interpretation of manifestations), thereby explaining the IP. At the same time, there may be some elements of culture that will be interpreted differently by different groups, e.g. concerning what is important. This gives rise to subcultures (existing in independence, harmony and/or conflict). Based on this reality, consistency can be only seen in subcultures. At the same time, specific issues of culture may be interpreted ambiguously, manifested by paradox and irreconcilable tensions, irony and constant flux. These three cultural perspectives vary in three respects: (1) orientation to consensus in a culture, (2) relationship among cultural manifestations, and (3) view of ambiguity.

Thus, Martin (1992, 2002) argues that since the three perspectives emphasise three variant issues of the same phenomenon, they, as a result, complement each other. Therefore, including all aspects of these perspectives in culture analyses would provide a comprehensive understanding of culture, in which the weakness of one perspective can be complemented by the strength of another. Also, they can provide a broader range of insights than is offered from any single perspective. Martin (2002) additionally indicates that most culture study has concentrated on only one of these perspectives, but argues that a complex perspective makes it conceivable to draw on and contribute to these studies. Martin and Frost (2011) provide some examples of studies applying all three perspectives and argue that the intention of the three-perspective framework is to focus on the collection and interpretation of data from all three scientific points of view from the social sciences. This assumption implicitly assumes that some cultural aspects would be consistent with all these cultural perspectives at any one time. Thus, the application of these cultural perspectives is envisaged to develop a broader, deeper and more complex understanding.

Martin (1992, 2002) was in favor of referring to the three-perspective framework as meta-theory, as the theory includes all the views of the three perspectives, moving to an advanced level of abstraction, which has both positive and critical dimensions. On the positive side, it can be viewed as recognition of the careful study that has created support for every perspective of the three, in both their critical or managerial instantiations. On the critical side, this framework can be seen as an effort to provide grand theories by dominating the theories preceding them, thereby, dominating variation in academic perspectives (e.g. Gagliardi, 1991).

Martin (2002) acknowledges that there is merit in the criticism that the framework neglects unclassifiable study, researches overlapping boundaries of perspective, and challenges the distinction of their knowledge and contribution. However, different reviews and studies that applied the three-perspective framework argue that Martin's (2002) three-perspective framework is by no means a 'fix-all' solution for the significant flaws of both the 'pragmatic' and 'idealist' perspectives of culture; nevertheless, many of these issues are discussed, addressed and overcome by the framework (e.g. Harris and Ogbonna, 1998; Kilduff and Corley, 2000; Mathew and Ogbonna, 2009; Jackson, 2011; Schneider et al., 2013). The three-perspective is considered appropriate for this study, because it tends to capture the phenomenon of culture in all its complexity, without weakening the order and consistency that characterise some other issues of culture. Also, by giving freedom to the researcher to move

between paradigms, it can lead to a considerable and comprehensive explanation of the different aspects of organisational life. This is argued to be necessary, since this study aims to understand the relationship between OC and IB in Saudi Arabia, and there are only a few studies that cover the Saudi Arabian context (as will be shown in the Saudi Arabia chapter). Accordingly, adopting the three-perspective framework would help to cover different issues of culture that are being complementary and contradictory.

2.10 Concluding remarks

This chapter has attempted to review the concept of OC, aiming primarily at a discussion of the issues relating to its definition, paradigm, and methodological approach. Throughout, it has been observed that OC is a complex concept, its construct reflecting the various traditions of theorising culture in anthropology. The ontological and epistemological variances are further reflections of these conceptualisations of culture. Furthermore, it has been observed that mixing culture with other organisational concepts (i.e. power and climate) further increases conceptual complexity. Based on the discussions conducted in this chapter, the following points appear to be the most significant:

- (1) Given the varying definitions of culture, this study defines OC as the underlying beliefs, values, and assumptions of employees that are expressed and can be observed through diverse methods and that have substantial implications for the working lives of organisational members.
- (2) Observing the different approaches to studying OC, this study adopts the view that analysing culture requires the consideration of different cultural manifestations, in contrast to the approach of ‘specialist’ research, which sees manifestations of culture as consistent, whereby one or two manifestations can be seen as representing the culture as a whole.
- (3) Taking into consideration the various methodologies and the definition of culture that this study adopts, the ethnographic methodologies (i.e. in-depth interviews, participant and non-participant observation, and documental analysis) seem to be the most appropriate approaches for the purpose of this study.
- (4) In terms of cultural paradigms, this chapter showed that perspectives of culture as root metaphor and variable (in in-depth analysis) are not paradoxical positions. Rather, they are shown to be two sides of the same coin. Therefore, taking into consideration the different perspectives of cultural and methodological approaches (e.g. myths and native-view paradigms, qualitative and quantitative methodologies, and structuration), the three-

perspective framework, as meta-theory, has the potential to offer a more comprehensive, rich, and detailed picture of social reality.

Having identified the issues of OC, another significant issue of this study – IB – is discussed in the ensuing chapter.

Chapter 3. Organisational culture and individuals behaviour

3.1 Introduction

IB has long been recognised as a critical concept in HR management, organisational behaviour and organisational psychology theories (Lewin, 1951; Schein, 1971; Analoui, 1993; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013a, 2013b; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). Organisational scholars have shown that individuals interact with various organisational dimensions (most interestingly, OC); thus, researchers have attempted to explore these interactions and develop different models for understanding how they function and what their impacts may be on IB.

The last chapter highlighted a key organisational dimension (OC) and discussed several issues relating to its conceptualisations, paradigms, perspectives and methodologies. After identifying the conceptualisation of culture (the shared values, beliefs and underlying assumptions), the approach that this thesis adopted (the three-perspective framework) and the type of methodology chosen to reveal the reality of OC (ethnography approach), the OC chapter raised vital questions regarding 'how' individuals interact with OC aspects and what the consequences of this interaction are. The OC overview shows that when an individual works in an organisation, he or she has to interact with various cultural manifestations, e.g. stories about incidents that have taken place there, agree with norms, and follow formal rules and 'unwritten' regulations. However, while OC authors assume that the sharing of these aspects and the ways in which they are interpreted vary between individuals (e.g. Martin, 1992; Alvesson, 2016), only a few have examined the relationship between these variations in individuals' characteristics 'directly' (e.g. Chatman, 1989; O'Reilly et al., 1991). Previous OC scholars have suggested that these variations may be related to the functions of an individual, e.g. the different departments they may work in, such as finance (see Gregory, 1983), or to difficulties interacting with the OC, because of gender issues (see Ouchi, 1981; Martin, 1992). Therefore, in order to understand the relationship between IB and OC, it seems essential to explore how these two concepts interact directly.

Extant and contemporary reviews on behaviour (e.g. Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013a, 2013b; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016) have shown that the literature on person-environment (PE) fit has contributed significant empirical studies that provide some answers to the concerns of this thesis. The PE fit research assumes that the interaction between individuals and their environment settings influences various individual behavioural and attitudinal patterns. This includes individual job satisfaction, performance or intention to stay

with /leave the organisation (see O'Reilly et al, 1991: 487). In this regard, to investigate the relationship between OC and IB, this study assumes that it seems necessary to explore the literature of PE fit research and understand how it constructs the culture and IB. Also, it seems essential to explore how the concept of PE fit has been constructed and what aspects of this concept are related to the concerns of this thesis. Hence, it should be noted that the concern of this thesis is not with 'fit' as such; instead, it draws-from PE fit research which provides an essential approach to studying the relationship between OC and IB.

The present chapter has three important aims. The first aim is to provide a general review of the PE fit literature. This is because the PE fit literature – as per most social science literature – comprises a broad range of perspectives, in terms of fit conceptualisations, operationalisations, measurements and levels of analysis. Thus, it should be noted that it is beyond the scope of this chapter to conduct a comprehensive review that includes and evaluates the various arguments and viewpoints of the PE fit literature. Nevertheless, there are several reviews that have covered and evaluated the different perspectives of PE fit (e.g. Kristof, 1996; Walsh et al., 2000; Cable and Edwards, 2004; Ostroff, 2012; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013a; 2013b; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016).

The second aim of this chapter, through an outlining of the PE fit aspects, is to emphasise the conceptualisations, operationalisations, measurements and levels of analysis that might be relevant to the questions of this chapter. These aspects are typically covered by person-culture fit research (e.g. Meglino et al., 1989; Chatman, 1989; 1991; O'Reilly et al., 1991; Vandenberghe, 1999; Adkins and Caldwell, 2004; Chatman et al., 2014; O'Reilly et al., 2014).

The last aim, and the most important one, is to provide an evaluation of the approaches and methods that person-culture fit researchers have adopted to construct and conduct their studies. This help to underline the limitations and potential theoretical gaps in these types of PE fit studies. Hence, each section provides (1) a general overview of the PE fit literature, (2) an assessment of the aspects that are related to the person-culture fit literature, and (3) an evaluation of the approaches and methods that person-culture fit researchers have adopted, which recognises the limitations and potential theoretical gaps.

The structure of this chapter is divided into five sections. The first starts with an introduction that covers various research issues relating to PE fit. In general, this section determines three aspects that have produced confusion in the definition of PE fit. In response to this confusion,

different researchers have attempted to outline the differences between fit conceptualisations, operationalisations, measurements and forms. These fit aspects are covered in the subsequent sections.

The second section discusses two conceptualisations that have dominated the fit literature: supplementary and complementary. It shows that each conceptualisation has different operationalisations of fit. Most importantly, this section determines the types of fit conceptualisation and operationalisation that have been adopted by most person-culture fit studies. It also provides an evaluation of the underlying assumptions of person-culture fit studies to identify vital limitations and theoretical gaps.

The third section reviews the different measurements applied in the PE fit literature. This outlines three types of fit measurements: subjective, objective and perceived. It shows that objective fit has been widely adopted by person-culture fit researchers. However, this approach has received various critiques, which are further discussed under this section.

The fourth section covers the distinct forms of PE fit. It shows that five forms have dominated the PE fit literature: person-organisation (PO) fit; person-group (PG) fit; person-job (PJ) fit; person-vocation (PV) fit; and person-supervisor (PS) fit. This section identifies two related forms that are considered by person-culture fit: PO fit and PG fit. However, it has been noted that, of all forms of fit, PG fit has been found to be the most nascent, although studies on it remain very limited. Thus, the underlying logic of the studies that adopt this form of fit is discussed and evaluated under this section. The fifth and concluding section provides a brief summary of the findings of this chapter. More importantly, it provides a summary of the theoretical gaps and limitations of person-culture fit research. This discussion offers essential guidance for this thesis on the issues that require further investigation for revealing the relationship between IB and OC.

3.2 Person-environment fit

Reviews on PE fit have shown that the concept has attracted the attention of both managers and academics. The notion of PE fit is viewed as being central to studying human resource management, organisational behaviour and organisational psychology (Edwards et al., 2006; Ostroff, 2012; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013a; Seong et al., 2015). The primary concern of the extant literature is to predict and understand how individuals behave in environmental settings. This is done by considering various issues related to individual and environmental

characteristics. Unlike other researchers, particularly organisational behaviour researchers, scholars of PE fit usually focus on considering ‘both’ individual characteristics and environmental factors (e.g. Chatman, 1989).

Scholars of organisational behaviour have typically taken two very distinct approaches to understanding and predicting how individuals behave in work settings. The first is the individual difference paradigm, and the second is the situational paradigm. The individual difference paradigm assumes that an individual’s behaviour may best be predicted by assessing their characteristics (e.g. values, motives, abilities and personality traits). This is based on the argument that such characteristics are stable and reflected in behaviour (e.g. Allport, 1937; 1966; Bowers, 1973; Block, 1978; Weiss and Adler, 1984; Staw and Ross, 1985). On the other hand, the situational paradigm suggests that an individual’s behaviour may best be predicted by measuring the factors of his or her situation (e.g. Thorndike, 1906; Mischel, 1968; Skinner, 1971; Salancik and Pfeffer, 1977; 1978). However, consistent with most behavioural scholars (e.g. Lewin, 1951; Magnusson and Endler, 1977; Terborg, 1981; Schneider, 1983), PE fit researchers assume that both individual and situational aspects are essential in predicting behaviour.

Nevertheless, PE fit encompasses various conceptualisations, operationalisations and measurement schemes (see Kristof, 1996; Cable and Edwards, 2004; Edwards, 2008; Kristof-Brown and Guay, 2011; Ostroff, 2012; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013b; Chatman and O’Reilly, 2016 for review). PE fit is broadly defined by most researchers as the compatibility between individuals and work environments. This occurs when individual characteristics and environmental factors are well matched (French et al., 1982; Muchinsky and Monahan, 1987; Chatman, 1989; 1991; Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Edwards, 2008; Ostroff, 2012). However, regardless of, or perhaps due to, the simplicity of this definition, compatibility might be conceptualised, operationalised and examined in various ways.

Some authors have characterised the concept of PE fit as elusive and as having an inconsistent and imprecise definition (e.g. Rynes and Gerhart, 1990; Judge and Ferris, 1992). A recent review of PE fit identified three variations that are recognised in the PE fit literature and may create this elusiveness (Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013b). Firstly, researchers can select which individual characteristics are most related to the questions of their studies. Secondly, scholars can choose which environmental variables are most relevant to measuring fit in their research. Typically, researchers measure commensurable variables; sometimes, however,

other theoretically justifiable variables of expected compatibility are considered. For example, Cable and Judge (1994) show that pay-for-performance systems are viewed as being a good fit for individuals who place high value on achievement. Such differences in the organisational variables have caused distinct forms of fit to emerge: PO fit, PG fit, PJ fit, PV fit and PS fit. Interestingly, within these distinct forms of fit, there are different factors that can be used to measure fit (e.g. goals, ability, and values) (see Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Ostroff, 2012; Chatman et al., 2014; Shin et al., 2016).

The last variation observed in the PE fit literature is the flexibility that scholars of PE fit have for defining what underlies the compatibility of the individual and organisational characteristics of choice (Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013b). Researchers in the supplementary fit literature have concentrated on the compositional perspective of congruence and similarity. In contrast, complementary fit researchers have focused on the compilational perspective, whereby one entity completes the other (Muchinsky and Monahan, 1987; Ostroff and Judge, 2007). However, there are others who have not calculated fit of any kind; as an alternative, they have interpreted the statistical interaction between individual and environmental variables (e.g. Cable and Judge, 1994; Chatman et al., 2008).

Therefore, in response to the confusion in the PE fit literature, efforts have been made during recent years to clarify the underlying assumptions of the mutable conceptualisations, operationalisations, measurements and distinct forms of fit. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, regardless of the diverse aspects of PE fit research, the underpinning notion of the PE fit literature can be summarised in the idea that a suitable interaction or alignment of external and internal elements will influence and most likely shape IB and attitudes. These diverse research aspects are discussed further in the following sections. However, since PE fit scholars can select which individual characteristics and environmental variables are most related to their research, the discussions focus more on the issues related to person-culture fit research.

3.3 Multiple conceptualisations of person-environment fit

Some scholars of PE fit have underlined a troubling oversight in the literature. Muchinsky and Monahan (1987: 268-269) note that although “*‘person-environment congruence’ refers to the degree of fit or match between the two sets of variables (...) what exactly constitutes a fit or match is not totally clear.*” Hence, in response to this ambiguity, they introduced two different conceptualisations of PE fit: supplementary fit and complementary fit. These conceptualisations have been widely adopted and accepted by organisational scholars (see

Kristof, 1996; Cable and Edwards, 2004; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Ostroff, 2012; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016).

3.3.1 Supplementary fit

According to Muchinsky and Monahan (1987: 269), the occurrence of supplementary fit exists when an individual “*supplements, embellishes, or possesses characteristics which are similar to other individuals*” in an environment. Based on the extant PE fit literature that has adopted this conceptualisation, it has been shown that fit may occur if an organisation and an individual have matching or similar characteristics (Kristof, 1996; Cable and Edwards, 2004; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Edwards, 2008; Ostroff, 2012; Chatman et al., 2014; O'Reilly et al., 2014). The organisational variables that most researchers have examined include organisational climate, culture, values, norms and goals. The individual characteristics that most studies have examined are personality, attitudes, goals and values (see Kristof, 1996).

However, several studies and recent reviews on PE fit (e.g. Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Cable and Edwards, 2004; Ostroff and Judge, 2007; Edwards and Cable, 2009; Ostroff, 2012; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013b; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016) have shown that the tradition of supplementary fit, regardless of the level of analysis, is usually exemplified by studies that have examined the congruence between organisational values (which are assumed to be reflective of the culture of the organisation) and individuals' values (e.g. Meglino et al., 1989; Chatman, 1989; 1991; O'Reilly et al., 1991; Vandenberghe, 1999; Adkins and Caldwell, 2004; Chatman et al., 2014; O'Reilly et al., 2014).

Researchers of person-culture fit have placed more emphasis on the role that culture plays as a social control system within firms, viewing culture as a system of “*shared values (that define what is important) and norms that define appropriate attitudes and behaviours for organisational members (how to feel and behave)*” (O'Reilly and Chatman, 1996: 160). Accordingly, they have assumed that fit between OC and employees – assessed by examining the similarity between the organisation's values and the individuals' values – will effectively influence IB (see Kristof, 1996; Ostroff, 2012; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013b; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016).

Although these researchers have made significant contributions to the PE fit literature (see Kristof, 1996; Ostroff, 2012; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013b; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016), the way they have conceptualised/ defined OC may suggest theoretical gaps. It was

shown in the OC chapter that although values are an important component of OC definition/manifestation, many other scholars have also emphasised other component/manifestations. Cultural scholars have provided three essential components that define OC (shared values, beliefs, and underlying assumptions) and have shown that the interpretations underlying these components describe the reality of OC, including how it influences and guides IB in the work environment (e.g. Pettigrew, 1979; Sathe, 1983; Martin and Siehl, 1983; Schein, 1984; 1990; 2010; Alvesson, 2013, 2016). Interestingly, some person-culture fit researches have already acknowledged this limitation. For example, Van Vianen (2000: 114) states that Schein's definition of OC (which this study adopts) is far more comprehensive than the one that person-culture fit research uses. This is instead of analysing the interpretations of a wide range of manifestations, it seems that person-culture fit studies have focused merely on the espoused values and have assumed that "*congruency between an individual's values and those of an organisation may be at the crux of person-culture fit*" (O'Reilly et al., 1991: 492). However, it was argued in the OC chapter that a single type of cultural manifestation may not reflect the reality of OC, and, as a result, misleading findings may be deduced when making this assumption. Furthermore, this approach of conceptualising a culture neglects the significant influence of other cultural manifestations on IB, especially the underlying assumptions that are considered to be the essence of the culture (see Schein, 1984, 2010; Siehl and Martin, 1990; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Alvesson, 2013, 2016).

Different cultural scholars have explained that although values may enable the analysis of why individuals behave the way they do, the underlying factors remain subconscious or concealed (see Martin and Siehl, 1993; Schein, 1984, 1990, 2010). Thus, as highlighted in the last chapter, to reach a high level of understanding of a culture and to discover more fully a group's values and their explicit (i.e. overt) behaviour, it is important to reveal the shared underlying assumptions of the group members. Many cultural scholars have shown that although the underlying assumptions are typically subconscious, they truly reveal what organisational members think, feel and perceive in the work environment (e.g. Sathe, 1983; Schein, 1984, 1990, 2010; Meyerson and Martin, 1987; Alvesson, 1993b, 2013, 2016). Hence, person-culture fit studies' approach to conceptualising culture may provide a significant theoretical limitation.

Person-culture fit studies generally reflect the assumption of 'specialist' IP research. These studies typically emphasise only one or (at most) two types of cultural manifestations. Instead

of analysing multiple cultural or symbolic manifestations, as some generalist IP studies would do, they focus only on the espoused (instead of enacted) values or self-reported behavioural norms (e.g. Denison, 1990; O'Reilly et al., 1991). Different questions regarding this approach have been raised in different cultural reviews (e.g. Martin, 1992, 2002; Martin et al., 2006; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Alvesson, 2013, 2016).

Relevant to this section, Martin et al.'s (2006) review shows that these specialist studies have implicitly presumed that one type of cultural or symbolic manifestation is consistent with other manifestations and can therefore be representative of the culture as a whole (i.e. a strong and unitary culture). This notion was adopted by early person-culture fit studies (e.g. O'Reilly et al., 1991). This assumption may create significant problems in revealing the reality of OC. As noted in the last chapter, the meanings associated with only one kind of cultural manifestation may not be consistent with the meanings associated with a full range of cultural manifestations. For instance, formal policies are frequently inconsistent with informal practices, and attitudes and values may be inconsistent with behaviour (Martin and Frost, 2011).

Furthermore, such studies have disregarded the different findings of differentiation perspective (DP) research, which provides empirical evidence of inconsistency across manifestations. This inconsistency may cause diverse cultural groups to emerge within an organisation (Van Maanen and Barley, 1984; Young, 1989; Van Maanen, 1991; Kunda, 1992; Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2008; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015). Accordingly, the validity of assuming (or asserting) that one type of cultural manifestation is consistent with or can be representative of the culture as a whole has been disproved and has most likely created misleading findings among OC researchers (for further explanation on this issue, see Martin et al., 1983). Finally, the methodological approach of the person-culture (i.e. quantitative) fit has been criticised on a number of grounds (see Edwards, 1993, 1994; Meade, 2004). This issue will be reviewed in the measurement of PE fit section.

Consequently, based the above argument, it seems that the relationship between OC and IB have not fully addressed. The theoretical gaps of the person-culture fit literature provide a rationale for conducting further research to consider a wider range of cultural manifestations and to observe how OC interacts with individual characteristics (including employees' values, believe, personality/ideology, ability, gender, age, etc., i.e. potential individual characteristics that previous PE fit research indicates).

3.3.2 Complementary fit

Complementary fit scholars have conceptualised fit differently. The concept of complementary fit assumes that *“the basis for a good fit is the mutually offsetting pattern of relevant characteristics between the person and the environment”* (Muchinsky and Monahan, 1987: 272). Accordingly, this conceptualisation presumes that fit occurs when an individual’s characteristics “make whole” the environment or add to it what is missing (Muchinsky and Monahan, 1987: 271).

Different reviews (e.g. Cable and Edwards, 2004; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005) have noted that Kristof’s (1996) study made a further contribution to narrowing the definition of PE fit, precisely in the conceptualisation of complementary fit. Kristof makes a distinction between two concepts of complementary congruence: demands-abilities fit, and needs-supplies fit. She outlines that although different researchers have operationalised complementary fit strictly based on demands-abilities fit (which occurs when a person has the required abilities to meet the demands of the job), she extends the definition to include the concept of needs-supplies fit (which occurs when an organisation fulfils employees’ preferences, needs or desires).

More specifically, organisations supply psychological, physical and financial resources in addition to the interpersonal, task-related and growth opportunities that employees demand. Thus, needs-supplies fit occurs when these organisational supplies meet the demands of employees. In the same way, organisations demand contributions from employees in regard to knowledge, abilities, time, effort, commitment and skills. Therefore, when employee contributions meet the organisational demands, demands-abilities fit occurs (see Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

Although making the distinction between supplementary and complementary fit may reduce the ambiguity and confusions in the literature and may make the definition of fit clearer, the debate on this research issue continues (see recent reviews by Kristof-Brown and Guay, 2011; Ostroff, 2012). Regardless of these recent debates, there is consensus among PE fit researchers that once the differences between supplementary and complementary fit have been determined, the two concepts can be distinguished. In this regard, Ostroff (2012: 380) concludes that:

“Clearly, there is some debate and ambiguity about how fit is conceptualised and the precise definitions of some of the terminology used in the fit literature. When fit is framed as fulfilment versus similarity, the two can be distinguished.”

Taking into consideration the underlying assumptions of both conceptualisations, supplementary fit seems the most relevant to this thesis. This is complementary fit's conceptualisations and operationalisations emphasise different issues in comparison to supplementary fit. For instance, it has been shown that the concept of demands-abilities fit concentrates on finding a match between the demands of the job and a person's skills, knowledge, abilities and needs. These issues are not significantly related to the dimensions that this thesis attempts to explore (i.e. OC and IB). Similarly, it has been highlighted that the concept of needs-supplies fit usually focuses on different aspects in comparison to supplementary fit. Hence, the underlying assumptions of this conceptualisation of fit are excluded from the analysis in this chapter.

This section has discussed and distinguished the multiple conceptualisations and operationalisations of fit; the next section discusses how fit has been measured in organisational fit studies. The discussion gives a brief overview of the different measurements of fit and highlights how person-culture fit studies have measured the interaction between OC and IB.

3.4 Measurements of person-environment fit

In addition to the multiple operationalisations and conceptualisations of the PE fit research, many reviews have raised different questions regarding where the source of fit resides. It can be seen that PE fit comprises two distinct aspects and levels of analysis: the person, and the environment. Reviews on organisational fit have highlighted two dominant and very different depictions of organisational fit. While the first describes concentrating on fit as an internal feeling of 'fitting in', or of 'feeling like a misfit' (frequently referred to as 'perceived fit'), the second considers fit as the interaction or interplay of external and internal elements (Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013b).

The approach to measuring fit occupies a significant part of the PE fit research. Most, if not all, such studies have examined fit through applying quantitative methodologies. The reviews have shown that fit measurements can be divided into three key groups: (a) perceived fit, (b) objective fit, and (c) subjective fit. The debate centres on direct versus indirect measures (see reviews by Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Ostroff, 2012; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013b; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016).

3.4.1 Subjective fit

Subjective fit is measured when the person whose fit is being assessed is asked to report on external and internal factors. Fit, according to this approach, is indirectly evaluated by comparing the personal and environmental characteristics of the same person (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Ostroff, 2012; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013b; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). For instance, respondents might be asked to address their own values, as well as their perceptions of their organisations' values. Accordingly, both evaluations originate from respondents' views (Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013b). This technique is different from the objective fit approach.

3.4.2 Objective fit

The objective or actual fit approach is an indirect cross-level measurement that employs distinct sources to determine environmental and personal characteristics. Most commonly, the internal dimensions (i.e. personality or individual values) are reported by the individual whose fit is being assessed. However, and unlike when measuring subjective fit, the external dimensions (i.e. climate or organisational values) are calculated from another source (Kristof, 1996; Ostroff, 2012; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013b; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). Most typically, the organisational values are assessed by asking the representatives of the organisation (i.e. senior managers) to report their perceptions of the organisation's values. Although these external sources may still comprise perceptions, the observations are assumed, by those who adopt this measurement of fit, to be more objective, based on the assumption that these external dimensions are reported by someone else. However, sometimes the environment may be assessed strictly objectively; this happens when the reward system or structural components are applied as the environmental measure (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Ostroff, 2012; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013b; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016).

Early person-culture fit research adopted this approach to measuring fit and examining its consequences on IB. These early studies assumed that the level of fit is determined by the congruency between what employees report about their own characteristics (i.e. personal values) and how the representatives of the organisation (i.e. senior managers) define aggregate organisational attributes (e.g. Chatman, 1989, 1991; Caldwell and O'Reilly, 1990; O'Reilly et al., 1991; Chatman et al., 2014; O'Reilly et al., 2014). These studies developed quantitative techniques to measure cultural phenomena, drawing primarily on methods applied in

organisational climate studies (see Schneider, 1990; Martin et al., 2006; Schneider et al., 2013). In addition to the issues surrounding the cultural conceptualisation of these studies (i.e. the ‘specialist’ conceptualisation), the methods that they used to explore culture have also received considerable criticism (see Chatman and O’Reilly, 2016: 212-213).

Classic person-culture fit research used profile similarity indices and various other scores to determine fit between an individual and the OC. Such research claimed that the occurrence of fit has many consequences for IB. For example, Chatman (1991) states that value congruence between newcomers and the OC, which is measured by the OCP (O’Reilly et al., 1991), will increase the level of job satisfaction and decrease the intention of the employee to leave the organisation. The same result and technique have been replicated by many subsequent researchers (e.g. Vandenberghe, 1999).

O’Reilly et al.’s (1991) instrument (the OCP) has been broadly used in person-culture fit studies (Chatman and O’Reilly, 2016). Based on content analysis of managerially oriented qualitative literature, they established a Q-sort measure that comprises 54 value statements that were claimed to characterise strong and unified corporate cultures. In this study, professional and managerial employees of big accounting organisations were requested to identify which of these values characterised their organisations. Values that were not selected by the majority were excluded; they were considered as not descriptive of the organisation’s culture. Based on this approach, the researchers found that when new managerial and professional employees personally approved of the same subset of values as existing employees, the job satisfaction of those new employees was higher and their intention to quit (and thus turnover) was lower, in comparison with new employees with dissenting opinions. However, considering the approach of OCP, different and significant issues have brought into question the use of quantitative techniques to measure culture (see reviews by Martin, 2002; Martin et al., 2006; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013, 2016). This reiterates the importance of the distinction between ‘specialist’ and ‘generalist’ cultural studies, as will be outlined shortly.

Person-culture fit studies, as previously described, have adopted the specialist IP assumption that a single cultural manifestation is consistent with other cultural manifestations; thus, this single manifestation is seen as representing the culture as a whole. In addition to different scholars making important arguments regarding the problems of considering one manifestation as representative of the culture, as discussed previously, the method of

measuring cultural phenomena (i.e. questionnaires) has also received criticism. For instance, respondents – as different cultural scholars have argued (e.g. Argyris and Schon, 1978) – may not be aware that their espoused values are not being consistently enacted, and this may create various bias issues. Furthermore, respondents may fear that promises of anonymity given by researchers may not be kept, and thus responding in a certain way may risk their jobs. Hence, instead of giving real answers about their actual behaviours or beliefs, they may give untrue responses that are commonly reflective of the top management's stated preferences. Thus, their responses will most likely make a fake impression, typically one of organisational consensus (Martin et al., 2006).

Under this approach, bias may also occur when respondents offer answers that reflect their current levels of job satisfaction (high or low) or that are considered socially desirable, instead of giving answers that reflect a more enduring quality of their experience. Furthermore, due to the IP assumption (aspects that are not shared or not clear for the majority of cultural members are not part of the culture, e.g. ambiguity or resistance), answers that do not seem to be consistent with this perspective and that differ from the overall shared values are excluded from the analysis and discussion. However, other specialist researchers have conducted questionnaire-based research using wider and random samples of respondents across status levels. This research has revealed significant evidence of subcultural differentiations (i.e. signs of resistance to and ignorance of managerial values), rather than organisation-wide consensus (cf. Kilmann, 1985; Rousseau, 1990). Accordingly, this type of quantitative measurement may offer an incomplete reality of a culture; *“the researcher has generated the alternative that the respondents are evaluating”* (Martin et al., 2006: 737).

Consequently, cultural scholars – of both IP and DP – have supported the use of a qualitative methodology (especially ethnography) to avoid the substantial limitations of these techniques and to reveal actual understandings of OC. This is because both integrationist (e.g. Schein, 1984, 1987, 2010) and differentiationist (e.g. Van Maanen, 1991; Kunda, 1992) cultural scholars have not only emphasised the need to include a full range of cultural manifestations to explore culture but have also stressed the need to reveal the deeply held assumptions shared by organisational members. This allows researchers to observe the conflicts, ambiguities, ironies, contradictions and inconsistencies that are neglected in person-culture studies (see Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013, 2016).

Other interesting limitations on the person-culture fit approach (i.e. OCP), which support the previous arguments, were introduced recently by Chatman and O'Reilly (2016: 212-213). In their review, they show that the OCP approach can be criticised on a number of grounds. Most significantly, they argue that although person-culture fit researchers claim that they are measuring values and norms, they are, in fact, "*measuring how similarly informants sort the 54 items into 9 categories*". Although the item set was developed explicitly to concentrate on organisational values, as a key aspect of culture, and the item set is enormous and proposed to be inclusive, "*there is no guarantee that the full universe of possible norm dimensions is being captured.*" Accordingly, they suggest that a careful ethnographic research may reveal values that may not have been assessed by OCP.

Hence, based on the argument set out previously, this makes the measurement adopted by person-culture fit studies inadequate in capturing a full range of cultural manifestations and the organisational life in its entirety. Therefore, this may signify another limitation of this type of PE fit research. Similarly, the significant interactional individual characteristics with the OC may need to be revealed. This is will be further highlighted in the research gaps and research rational section.

3.4.3 Perceived fit

Perceived fit is the third approach that is used to assess fit. This approach, as mentioned earlier, considers organisational fit as a person's sense of 'fitting in' or 'feeling like a misfit'. It is a direct, individual-level measurement that asks the person whose fit is being assessed to address their own characteristics and the characteristics of their organisation simultaneously (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Ostroff, 2012; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013b). Therefore, fit, here, is determined solely from the person's depictions. The environmental characteristics are assumed to be influenced by individual traits, as well as by individual perceptions (Hoffman and Woehr, 2006).

Those who adopt this perspective (e.g. Kristof-Brown, 2000; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004; Billsberry et al., 2005; Ravlin and Ritchie, 2006; Wheeler et al., 2007) consider organisational fit as a psychological construct (similar to organisational commitment or job satisfaction) inside a person's mind that impacts their feelings and thoughts towards their organisation or job. They believe that people react to what they perceive in the environment; thus, they claim that this approach may reflect the reality more than the objective fit approach and may more strongly predict IB than objective fit can (Verquer et al., 2003; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005;

Hoffman and Woehr, 2006). However, some scholars of organisational fit (e.g. Edwards et al., 2006; Harrison, 2007) have noted that this approach has attracted relatively little attention and has been criticised for being an attitude that is deeply impacted by affect. The long-standing assumption, which diverse scholars of organisational fit have applied, has been that perceived fit is simply the cognitive representation of PE interactions. Consequently, PE and perceived fit calculated interactions should be closely related (see Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013b: 5). Nevertheless, most evidence suggests that there are only low to moderate correlations between more calculated approaches to fit and a person's experience of perceived fit (Edwards et al., 2006). Thus, recent reviews on organisational fit have assumed that very little is known about these perceptions or about why they impact IB and attitudes as strongly as they do (Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013b). Therefore, several researchers have considered it to be fertile ground for new organisational fit research, advocating further studies in this area (see Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013a).

Hence, these two distinct paradigms reflect a methodological distinction of direct (perceived) versus indirect (PE interaction) measurement. Nevertheless, it should be stated that these distinctions also suggest other variations in their epistemological foundations. Kristof-Brown and Billsberry (2013b: 5-8) show that although few scholars have clearly specified their epistemological slant, positivism – or, maybe more precisely, post-positivism – supports PE fit studies, while interpretivism supports the perceived fit paradigm.

In classical person-culture fit studies, it was observed that several principles of positivism and post-positivism supported the PE fit paradigm (Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013b). For instance, the hypotheses of Chatman's (1991) study were established to predict the relationships between PO fit and psychological consequences. In Chatman's research, data on newcomers' values were taken directly from the newcomers, whereas data on their hiring organisations were captured from senior managers. This allowed the researcher to adjust and calculate a measure of PO fit for every newcomer to test the hypotheses. Accordingly, she was able to conclude that the PO fit of newcomers is positively related to their level of organisational commitment and job satisfaction; it is also negatively correlated with their intention to leave the organisation. This is a result that has been replicated by several subsequent researchers (e.g. Verquer et al., 2003; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

In short, this section has described three measurement types in PE fit research. It highlights that objective fit has been broadly adopted by most – if not all – person-culture fit studies (e.g.

Chatman, 1989, 1991; O'Reilly et al., 1991; Vandenberghe, 1999; Chatman et al., 2014; O'Reilly et al., 2014). Objective fit emphasises using a quantitative methodology adopted from organisational climate research (see Schneider, 1990; Martin et al., 2006; Schneider et al., 2013) under the claim that this approach provides findings that are more objective and accurate.

However, due to the problems that this approach may contain, it has received various criticisms (see Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016: 212-213). For instance, it examines only one cultural component (e.g. values) and has several bias issues, as explained earlier. These theoretical and measurement issues have raised justifiable concerns among cultural scholars, especially in terms of the validity of the research findings. Hence, consistent with various views on culture (see Martin et al., 1983; Sathe, 1983; Schein, 1984, 1987, 2010; Martin et al., 2006; Alvesson, 2013, 2016), a cultural study needs to examine comprehensive cultural manifestations to uncover the reality of the culture. Additionally, it is important to investigate the deeply held assumptions that are shared by cultural members. This can be done through employing qualitative techniques, mainly based on ethnographical methodologies.

The previous sections have discussed various aspects of the PE fit research and have highlighted the issues related to the person-culture fit literature. The multiple conceptualisations, operationalisations and different measurements of PE fit have been covered. In addition, the issues related to person-culture fit have been identified and evaluated. The following section covers the distinct forms of PE fit.

3.5 Different forms of person-environment fit

Reviews have shown that five forms of PE fit have dominated the literature: PO fit, PG fit, PJ fit, PV fit and PS fit. However, it has been noted that not all of these forms are significantly related to the concerns of this thesis. The literature on person-culture fit shows that two types (or levels of analysis) have been considered and adopted by this type of PE fit researchers: (a) PO fit, and (b) PG fit (see Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Ostroff, 2012). Consequently, this thesis excludes the other forms of PE fit, as will be explained shortly. Nevertheless, it should be noted that these other types may examine and explain significant factors of individuals and organisations; however, the factors of each form are distinct and not significantly linked to the main factors discussed in this thesis.

These excluded types are different and comprise distinctive conceptualisations and operationalisations of fit. As explained at the beginning of this chapter, these forms reflect the individual researcher's preferences regarding which personal or internal characteristics are most relevant to their research questions, and regarding which environmental variables are most relevant for assessing fit (Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013b). For example, PJ fit explores how an individual's knowledge, skills and abilities meet and match the demands of the job. This reflects the conceptualisation of complementary fit (i.e. demands-abilities fit) (see Kristof, 1996; Werbel and Johns, 2001; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Ostroff, 2012), which is different from the conceptualisation and operationalisation of person-culture fit.

Similarly, different scholars have shown that PV fit is different from the forms of person-culture fit. This type of PE fit comprises theories of vocational choice (which emphasise matching individuals with careers that meet their interests) and the theory of work adjustment (which underlines that satisfaction and adjustment are the consequences of employees' needs being met by their occupational environment) (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Some scholars of PE fit have argued that these theories do not contribute to predictions of fit with specific organisations, although they may predict vocational choice (e.g. Kristof, 1996). Cultural researchers have argued that, even in predominantly vocation-specific industries (e.g. accounting or law), the culture of each organisation may vary (e.g. Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Chatman, 1991; Schein, 2010). Hence, this has been taken as empirical support for the theoretical difference between the form of PV fit and the theoretical foundations of the person-culture literature.

Another type of PE fit that is seen as different from the underlying concepts of person-culture fit research is PS fit. The fit of this form exists in the dyadic relationships between people and their work environments. This form attempts to examine the dyadic fit that may occur between applicants and recruiters, between colleagues, and between mentors and protégés. Kristof-Brown et al. (2005: 287) highlight that the most researched aspect of this type of fit is the match between subordinates and supervisors. Clearly, this is different from the person-culture fit approach. While these approaches may apply similar operationalisations (i.e. value congruence), the former approach is primarily based on the match between leaders' values and followers' values (e.g. Krishnan, 2002; Colbert, 2004). Supervisors in this form do not report the organisational or work group characteristics, as in person-culture fit research; thus, studies

that apply this approach are classified as PO fit or PG fit, respectively (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005: 287).

In brief, there are many different reasons that show that the concepts of PJ fit, PV fit and PS fit are distinct from the forms of fit that have been adopted by person-culture fit studies. These reasons provide some empirical support for the conceptual differences between PO and PG fit, and between PJ, PV and PS fit. The following subsection introduces and discusses the person-culture fit forms.

3.5.1 Person-organisation fit

PO fit has been adopted by most person-culture fit research (e.g. Meglino et al., 1989; Chatman, 1989, 1991; O'Reilly et al., 1991; Vandenberghe, 1999; Chatman et al., 2014; O'Reilly et al., 2014). This form reflects the notion of supplementary fit, as previously described. The level of analysis of this form concentrates on the similarity between individual and organisational characteristics. Although there are different operationalisations of this PE fit form, value congruence is considered as the most common operationalisation. Person-culture fit research that adopts the PO fit level of analysis presumes that fit occurs when the individual values match the OC values. Some scholars have stated that PO fit and person-culture fit are equivalent terms (Kristof, 1996: 5). They have claimed that organisational value, as a single cultural manifestation, is consistent with other cultural manifestations and can be representative of the culture as a whole (Martin et al., 2006; Martin and Frost, 2011). Hence, person-culture fit studies that have adopted this form are consistent with the IP assumption on culture (which only focuses on the issues that produce a united and strong culture) and ignore the other cultural aspects that are explained by the other perspectives of culture (e.g. differentiation and fragmentation).

In most generalist and specialist IP studies, this form does not recognise the existence of subcultures within the organisation, therefore excluding their effects from the analysis (see Kristof, 1996). While this form focuses on the overall effects of OC, different researchers have provided significant evidence that supports the existence of subcultures within organisations (e.g. Martin et al., 2006; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013, 2016).

As explained in the last chapter, cultural researchers have shown that subcultures may emerge and develop within functions, practice areas, professions or sub-organisational units (e.g. Van Maanen and Barley, 1984; Young, 1989; Morgan and Ogbonna, 2008; Ogbonna and Harris,

2015). Subcultures may have distinct values and norms from the organisation in which they are contained. This perspective on culture has been recognised in the form of PG fit (see Kristof, 1996).

3.5.2 Person-group fit

PG or person-team fit adopts a different level of analysis from that of PO fit. In general, this form defines fit as the compatibility between individuals and their work groups (Judge and Ferris, 1992; Kristof, 1996; Werbel and Gilliland, 1999; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Seong et al., 2015). Advocators of this form argue that because work groups/teams are now broadly applied in the business world, PG fit has become an increasingly vital concept (e.g. Guzzo and Salas, 1995; Werbel and Johnson, 2001; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). The work group, according to this form, may range from a small group of immediate colleagues to any recognisable sub-organisational unit (e.g. geographic division or functional department) (Kristof, 1996). Interestingly, the extant literature on PE fit notes that even though there are many relevant research streams, this form is seen as the most nascent, although studies on it remain very limited. Most person-culture fit studies have been based on the PO fit perspective (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016).

Reviews on the PE fit research have shown that PG fit may reflect the conceptualisations of supplementary fit (when a person shares similar characteristics with other group members) or complementary fit (when a person has distinctive abilities that support or complement the abilities of the other group members) (Werbel and Johnson, 2001; Seong et al., 2015). Furthermore, it may examine various dimensions of individuals and their work groups. These dimensions may include colleague similarity in terms of demographic variables (e.g. Riordan, 2000; Elfenbein and O'Reilly, 2007) or in terms of psychological dimensions, such as values or goals (e.g. Becker, 1992; Adkins et al., 1996; Witt, 1998; Kristof-Brown and Stevens, 2001; Zellmer-Bruhn et al., 2008) and personality traits (e.g. Slocombe and Bluedorn, 1999; Barsade et al., 2000; Hobman et al., 2003).

However, it should be noted that these types of PG fit studies differ from studies on team homogeneity or similarity (e.g. Barry and Stewart, 1997; Jehn et al., 1999) and from that aggregates a person's fit to the unit level (e.g. Ostroff, 1993). These types of PG fit studies predict individual-level criteria, whereas other research focuses on unit-level criteria (see Kristof-Brown et al., 2005), which are the focus of this thesis.

Team composition, which stresses team homogeneity, is one of the most relevant areas of the PG fit literature. Advocators of this approach argue that the group in which an individual works is found a different – yet relevant – level of analysis from the other PE fit forms, most particularly here is the PO fit (Kristof, 1996). The support for their underlying logic is also found in the underlying theories of the OC literature, which show that sub-organisational units (e.g. group) may hold distinctive values and norms from the organisation in which they are contained (e.g. Patsfall and Feimer, 1985; Louis, 1985, 1990; Trice and Beyer, 1993). Hence, it has been argued that the level of fit between a person and group (i.e. PG fit) may completely vary from the level of fit between the individual and the organisation (i.e. PO fit) (see Kristof, 1996; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016).

The compositional literature underlines that reaching high levels of person-team fit is the driving principle behind effective and productive team composition (Klimoski and Jones, 1995). The literature shows that values (e.g. Haythorn, 1968; Klimoski and Jones, 1995), goals (e.g. Shaw, 1981; Weldon and Weingart, 1993) and sometimes personality homogeneity (e.g. Hackman and Morris, 1975; Driskell et al., 1987) effectively impact the attitudinal and behavioural responses of groups and their members. In line with the perspective of demand-abilities fit, different researchers have shown that teams composed of members with heterogeneous knowledge, skills and abilities are more effective than those with homogenous knowledge, skills and abilities (e.g. Haythorn, 1968; Laughlin et al., 1969; Shaw, 1981). Another related area of literature that emphasises group-level variables concerns group demography, instead of psychological variables (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). It has been shown that group demographic composition impacts attachment to the group (Tsui et al., 1992) and other behavioural patterns, such as turnover (Jackson et al., 1991).

Therefore, and based on the underlying assumptions of PG fit, recent researchers of person-culture fit have found this form essentially relevant and providing a rationale for conducting further research on the congruence between individual and subcultural characteristics. They have presumed that this may reveal different findings from those of PO fit research (e.g. Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992; Adkins and Caldwell, 2004; Elfenbein and O'Reilly, 2007; Seong et al., 2015). Unlike PO fit research, the PG fit perspective does not completely assume that a unitary culture may represent the organisation as a whole. It also recognises the ample empirical evidence for the existence of subcultures within an organisation; as a result, researchers adopting this perspective have tried to examine the consequences of fit between

people and subcultures. These researchers have provided interesting discussions and empirical evidence of these consequences. Consistent with the DP on culture and the PG fit assumption, these theoretical constructs reveal different (yet relevant) findings from those of PO fit research. Hence, this perspective on PE fit is seen as essential to the concerns of this thesis.

In regard to person-culture fit studies that have adopted the PG fit perspective, it seems that demographic variables have attracted increasing attention. Several researchers have examined PG fit alongside demographic variables, focusing on demographic similarities among employees such as ethnicity (e.g. Elfenbein and O'Reilly, 2007), gender (e.g. Young and Hurlic, 2007; Elfenbein and O'Reilly, 2007) and generation (e.g. Cennamo and Gardner, 2008). These variables assist in highlighting the differences among sub-group members and in observing the consequences of these within subcultures.

In terms of psychological variables, some studies have focused on the shared values and beliefs among sub-group members, arguing that they enhance the members' fit with their sub-groups. They have shown that this results in more positive work attitudes (e.g. Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992). An interesting study that focused on the value congruence between individuals and subcultures was conducted by Adkins and Caldwell (2004). This study evaluated the effects of OC, as a whole, on IB (i.e. the PO fit level) and the effects of subcultures on IB (i.e. the PG fit level). In other words, they acknowledge that an organisation can have a strong overall culture and distinct subcultures simultaneously. Although they show that evaluating both PO and PG fit may produce similar findings (e.g. in terms of job satisfaction), they note that there are some differences in regard to the value-based cultures of sub-organisational groups.

Hence, PG fit is consistent with the DP on culture that an organisation may have distinct subcultures. However, there are some issues regarding how subcultures are conceptualised and assessed, which may be subject to similar critiques as the PO fit studies. PG fit conceptualises and assesses subcultures using the same idealisation as PO fit does. It also follows the notion that cultural manifestations are consistent (see Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013b; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016); therefore, it assumes that subcultures can be assessed in terms of the different values that they may hold from the values of the organisation as a whole. In terms of their research methodologies, PG fit researchers use a similar method (i.e. a quantitative method) to measure the culture. For instance, Adkins and Caldwell (2004) evaluated both the overall culture of the organisation and the sub-groups' cultures by using the OCP. In the same vein, Elfenbein and O'Reilly's (2007) research, which used demography

variables, also used the OCP to assess subcultures. Accordingly, the limitations of the PO fit research may also apply to the PG fit conceptualisation and methodology.

In brief, although PG fit may focus on subcultures, it seems that both PO fit and PG fit researchers have adopted the specialist perspective on culture and have used a quantitative methodology to assess both the overall culture and the distinct subcultures. Some recent PG fit studies (e.g. Adkins and Caldwell, 2004; Elfenbein and O'Reilly, 2007) cite researches that reinforce the differentiations aspect on culture (e.g. Van Maanen and Barley, 1984) and also use Martin's (1992) work to support their research constructs. However, neither Van Maanen and Barley's (1984) research nor Martin's (1992) work support the 'specialist' conceptualisation of culture and the qualitative method to evaluate culture. As discussed in the last chapter, the differentiation research argues that a cultural study should be 'generalist' instead of 'specialist'. In addition, scholars have argued that using a generalist range is not enough (see Martin, 1992; Martin et al., 2006; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013, 2016). Research on culture should also have depth (usually based on ethnographical methodologies) to penetrate the surface shown to outsiders (Gregory, 1983). This stress on depth ensures that cultural calculations are sensitive to inconsistencies between formal practices and informal norms, between stated attitudes and real behaviour, between one story and another, and (most essentially) between the interpretations of one individual and those of another (Van Maanen and Barley, 1984; Barley, 1986; Van Maanen and Kunda, 1989).

Hence, although this type of person-culture fit study considers a vital aspect of culture (i.e. subcultures), the way such studies have conceptualised and evaluated subcultures may suggest similar theoretical gaps and methodological limitations to the PO fit research on culture. Also, person-culture fit never considered the alternative form of culture (i.e. FP). This provides a rationale for conducting further research to overcome these gaps and limitations.

3.6 Research gaps and research rationale

Based on the examination of OC literature, person-culture fit research, as well as PG fit, it is clear that these 'cultural fit' studies have greatly contributed to defining the consequences of IB through measuring the 'fit' between individual values and OC values. Therefore, some would argue that this research has empirically shown that the fit between a person's psychological characteristics (e.g. values) or demographic traits (e.g. gender) and OC or subculture's characteristics (which is commonly defined by sub-values) may influence IB. Nevertheless, the conceptualisation of culture, the research methodologies and the analyses

that such researches have adopted have generated different and important limitations in exploring the relationship between OC and IB. As will be outlined shortly, these limitations have raised significant questions, most interestingly how employees ‘interact’ with the three forms of OC and how their integrated, differentiated and ambiguous interactions relate to their IB.

The various evaluations in this chapter have generated evidence that provides a rationale for conducting further research to overcome the theoretical gaps and limitations in the person-culture fit and PG fit researches in exploring the relationship between OC and IB. These limitations are centred on four main issues: (a) theoretical, (b) methodological, (c) analytical, and (d) contextual. However, it should be noted that these research limitations – as will be illustrated shortly – are interrelated and cannot be taken separately. For example, the research methodologies and the analysis approaches that most of these cultural studies adopted to explore the relationship between OC and IB emerged from the theoretical framework that they followed. Accordingly, it can be argued that the most significant limitation of cultural fit researches is related to the theoretical approach that they adopted. This is indicated to clarify any confusion that the reader may find in explaining the limitations of person-culture fit and PG fit researches, and to elaborate the rationale that this study argues for conducting further research to discover the relationship between OC and IB. In general, this section will outline the limitations of the cultural fit researches, and at the end of this section, the key questions of the study will be highlighted.

Theoretical limitations

Given that most person-culture studies adopt the integration ‘specialist’ perspective, and most of the PG fit studies adopt the differentiation ‘specialist’ perspective (see Martin, 2002; Martin et al., 2006; Martin and Frost, 2011), their OC conceptualisations suggest critical limitations. According to Martin et al. (2006) and Martin and Frost (2011), the integration and differentiation ‘specialist’ theoretical conceptualisations do not adopt a comprehensive definition of OC (see Van Vianen, 2000: 114). Instead of examining a broad range of cultural manifestations, they commonly focus on one – or two – cultural manifestations to explore the OC or subculture(s) of an organisation. More specifically, most person-culture fit researches assume that cultural manifestations are consistent, and thus a single manifestation can be representative of the OC as a whole. Similarly, most PG fit researches claim that values that are shared within a group can be considered reflective of a subculture (see Chatman and

O'Reilly, 2016). Accordingly, most person-culture fit studies claim that assessing the espoused (instead of enacted) values or behavioural norms will explore OC (e.g. O'Reilly et al., 1991; Chatman et al., 2014; O'Reilly et al., 2014). In the same vein, PG fit studies, which adopt the same conceptualisation that person-culture fit researches used (the OCP), assume that the values that are shared within a subculture can be compared with the group members' values to assess PG fit. However, different cultural scholars (e.g. Pettigrew, 1979; Martin et al., 1983; Schain, 1984, 2010; Martin et al., 2006; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Alvesson, 2013, 2016) have rejected these assumptions for different and vital reasons.

Martin et al. (2006) argue that considering only one set of cultural manifestations (e.g. the espoused values or norms) cannot explore the reality of OC or subcultures. They explain that the issue with these 'specialist' assumptions is that the meaning associated with a single kind of cultural manifestation may not be consistent with the meanings associated with a wide range of cultural manifestations. For instance, they outline that attitudes and values are usually inconsistent with behaviour. Similarly, formal policies are usually inconsistent with informal practices. Therefore, different key cultural scholars (e.g. Pettigrew, 1979; Schain, 1984, 2010; Alvesson, 2013, 2016) have emphasised that an exploration of the reality of OC needs to examine a wide range of cultural manifestations. This includes the values, beliefs and underlying assumptions, which explains the comprehensive culture definition that this study adopts. Indeed, Pettigrew (1979); Schain (1984, 2010); Alvesson (2013, 2016) and many other scholars have stressed that adopting such an approach will reflect deeper and greater understanding about OC and IB. For example, cultural scholars, as discussed in the OC chapter, have argued for revealing the underlying assumptions that explain IB (see Wilkins, 1983; Schein, 1984, 1990, 2010; Alvesson, 2013, 2016). They have shown that although underlying assumptions may be subconscious, they more accurately reveal what organisational members think, feel and perceive in their work settings. This allows researchers to discover more fully the group's values and their explicit (i.e. overt) behaviour.

Similarly, DP advocates reject the 'specialist' research assumption. Martin et al. (2006) and Martin and Frost (2011) state that DP advocates have also argued against viewing OC from a single manifestation (e.g. values). They emphasise, rather, the need for a full range of cultural manifestations; they have provided evidence that depth is also needed in DP analysis (Gregory, 1983; Van Maanen and Barley, 1984; Van Maanen and Kunda, 1989; Young, 1989; Van Maanen, 1991; Kunda, 1992; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015). They also stress – as was outlined

in the OC chapter – that the research needs to go beyond the phenomena presented to outsiders which do not reflect the reality of culture, and examine essential cultural aspects such as conflicts and resistance. These vital issues have not been fully considered in the existing person-culture fit studies or the PG fit studies (see Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013a, 2013b; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). Accordingly, this is seen as a significant limitation of this type of cultural fit research, and raises a significant question. Through adopting a comprehensive definition of culture and considering the different characteristics of employees (e.g. values, beliefs, aims, demographic background, etc.), what cultural and individual factors encourage the interaction between OC (including the integration, differentiation and fragmentation aspects) and employees' personal characteristics? Also, what are the consequences that may arise from their interactions?

The significance of these questions has not only been inspired by the theoretical framework of the cultural fit researches but also by the empirical findings that previous OC researches have revealed. Interestingly, some OC scholars (e.g. Pettigrew, 1979; Kunda, 1992) note that some employees are aware of the ways culture is operationalised in an organisation. Accordingly, are there some individual qualities that may increase/encourage or decrease/discourage this awareness? Are there some individual characteristics that appear to interact more with one specific cultural form (e.g. integration, differentiation or fragmentation) than with others? Exploring these issues would lead to an understanding of the underlying reasons behind employees' behaviour (e.g. actions/reactions, support/resistance) towards key OC issues. Indeed, considering the claims of these cultural scholars cited previously, Martin's (1992) findings can be linked to their argument, and this may provide more clarity on this study research rationality. In Martin's study (1992: 76–77), she indicates that some employees are of the opinion that the traditional gender of the organisation's management that she studied has created discrimination in promotion and pay against women. She also indicates that according to some employees, the promotion and pay discrimination experienced by women at the organisation is exacerbated by the organisation's concern for staff's personal well-being that favours the traditional housewife paradigm, rather than a working-mother role for women. She classified this example under the DP. Therefore, with this example in mind, as well as the current study rationale, different questions can be raised to understand the relationship between the differentiated views of these employees and the OC. One question could be: what makes this group of employees assume that the traditional gender ideology of the

organisation's management has raised inequities in pay and promotion? Is it due to their gender (e.g. female) or their status (e.g. married or divorced)? Also, it would be interesting to know the personal factors that encourage the male employee's view about 'equality', which appears to be different from the organisation's management, as well as the dominant group view. Is it due to the different ideology of this male employee (e.g. activist), or are there other individual factors that make him interact with the OC differently?

Another interesting question that this study seeks to address is: is it their different social views or ideology that makes it difficult for the organisation's management to understand the different needs of women – traditional housewives and working-mothers? Or does the demographic background of these subgroup members (e.g. Arab, Muslim, Asian, African, etc.) have something to do with their differentiated view? What appears from this example is that all these individual and cultural factors come into play, and accordingly, this study assumes that exploring these cultural and individual factors in a direct way will provide better understanding of the relationship between OC and IB. This example can also be applied to other cultural forms (e.g. integration and fragmentation). As Martin (1992: 118–119), as well as other OC reviews (e.g. Roodt et al., 2002; Belias and Koustelios, 2014), implicitly state, individuals' needs, beliefs, social background, etc. may all play essential roles in the interaction between employees and OC aspects. However, she has not examined this directly.

Limitations linked to analysis

The last discussion raised another limitation, which is related to the analyses that most person-culture and PG fit researches have adopted. As outlined in this chapter, most of the fit studies that have tried to explore the relationship between OC and IB (i.e. the person-culture fit studies) adopted the IP (e.g. Chatman, 1991; O'Reilly et al., 1991; Chatman et al., 2014; O'Reilly, 2014). As demonstrated earlier, these studies relied mainly on managerial views to explain organisational values and individual values (for reviews, see Martin et al., 2006; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Alvesson, 2013, 2016; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). Furthermore, they only considered the elements that might support the IP, excluding anything that does not reflect organisation-wide consensus from the analysis and discussion because they are not considered as part of 'culture' (Martin et al., 2006; Martin and Frost, 2011). Therefore, in addition to the theoretical issue of person-culture fit research – i.e. considering mainly a single type of manifestation as representative of the OC – they also emphasise integration aspects when they analyse the OC. This analytical approach, as

illustrated in the OC chapter, neglects other important aspects of culture (e.g. subcultures and ambiguities), which suggests another research limitation in discovering the relationship between OC and IB.

Interestingly, although other fit researches (most specifically the ‘specialist’ PG fit research) have provided evidence of fit between subcultures and subgroups members, they are considered very limited (see Chatman and O’Reilly, 2016), and neglect other aspects of culture in their analysis, namely ambiguities. Significantly, no OC reviews (including Kristof, 1996; Martin and Frost, 1996; Martin et al., 2006; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013, 2016; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013a, 2013b; Chatman and O’Reilly, 2016) have cited a study that covers the relationship between ambiguity (i.e. FP) and individual fit. This suggests a research gap in this type of cultural research and indicates that the relationship between ambiguities (which is considered a significant cultural aspect, see Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013, 2016) and IB has not been discovered directly yet. This highlights the rationale behind adopting the three-perspective framework to explore the relationship between OC and IB. Thus, taking into consideration the argument provided in the OC chapter, and the theoretical and analytical approaches that person-culture fit and PG fit adopted, it can be argued that examining the relationship between OC (including the IP, DP and FP aspects) and how individual characteristics relate to each perspective seems significant to the understanding of the relationship between OC and IB. This suggests – see previous chapter – that OC may not only include aspects of consistency and harmony, but may also encompass conflicts, ambiguities, ironies, contradictions and inconsistencies that should be considered part of the OC (see Martin, 1992; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013, 2016).

Methodological limitations

The other key limitation in person-culture and PG fit researches is related to their research methodology approach. Most person-culture and PG fit researches have used quantitative techniques, drawing primarily on methods applied in organisational climate research, to explore OC and its relationship with IB (i.e. employees fit) (see Schneider, 1990; Martin et al., 2006; Schein, 2010; Schneider et al., 2013; Chatman and O’Reilly, 2016). Their quantitative techniques have received significant criticisms (see Martin et al., 2006; Schein, 2010; Alvesson, 2013; Chatman and O’Reilly, 2016). This brings into question the validity of using quantitative methods to reveal OC and the reliability of the person-culture and PG fit research findings. The previous chapter, as well as this one, discussed and highlighted various

criticisms of adopting quantitative methodologies to explore OC and its relationship with IB, and based on these arguments, this study adopts the ethnographic approach. However, further evidence concerning person-culture fit and PG fit methodological approaches seems to be essential to specify and explain the limitations of their techniques and the rationale behind adopting ethnography as a research methodology for discovering the relationship between OC and IB. These will be outlined in the following paragraphs, which will also show how the conceptualisation and analysis approach limitations are related to methodological limitations.

Firstly, person-culture fit and PG fit research conceptualisations and operationalisations (as discussed earlier) assume that quantitative methodologies are the most appropriate approach to examining the relationship between OC and individual fit (see Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016, for more reviews). However, different scholars (e.g. Pettigrew, 1979; Martin et al., 2006; Schein, 2010; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013, 2016) have identified several problems with these quantitative approaches. Most importantly, Martin et al. (2006) and Martin and Frost (2011) argue that these person-culture fit and PG fit studies should not assert or assume that a single type of cultural manifestation is consistent with or representative of the culture as a whole (this point was covered earlier in this section). As they indicate, respondents may not be aware that their espoused values (which person-culture fit and PG fit studies usually focus on) are not being consistently enacted. They may be concerned that the researcher's promises of anonymity may not be kept, risking their positions at work, and may consequently give misleading answers that reflect the expressed preferences of top managers, thereby creating the illusion of organisational consensus. To qualify the impression provided to researchers, Martin et al. (2006) and Martin and Frost (2011) show that participants may give answers that appeared to be socially desirable or that reflect their present job satisfaction levels (either low or high).

Also, consistent with cultural scholars' arguments cited earlier, the methodology tool that earlier person-culture fit research used, also adopted by PG fit research later on (e.g. Elfenbein and O'Reilly, 2007), also stresses some limitations. It has been outlined in this chapter that early person-culture fit studies (e.g. Chatman, 1989, 1991; O'Reilly et al., 1991) developed the OCP tool to measure the person-culture fit (which is measured by the match between organisational values and individual values). In order to develop the values statements of both organisation and individuals, they relied on a review of academic texts and popular press on OC which were mainly managerially oriented (see O'Reilly et al., 1991: 495). Thus, according

to Martin et al. (2006), Martin and Frost (2011), Alvesson and Spicer (2012) and Alvesson (2013, 2016), these academic reviews mostly represent top management views, or the IP of culture. Martin et al. (2006:736–737) and Martin and Frost (2011: 322) make significant comments on this issue which support the theoretical and methodological rationale of the current studies. They explain that this type of quantitative measurement may generate a misleading representation; the investigator has generated the alternatives that the participants are evaluating. As a result, they argue that such quantitative studies are only able to provide empirical support for IP – as explained previously in the OC chapter – if responses that do not reflect organisation-wide consensus are excluded from analysis and discussion as not being part of ‘strong and united culture’. However, Martin et al. (2006) and Martin and Frost (2011) explain that some ‘specialist’ studies (e.g. PG fit) have applied wider, random samples of respondents across status levels, revealing evidence of subcultural differentiation instead of organisation-wide consensus. Interestingly, the PG fit research has also adopted the OCP to measure the fit between subgroup values and the values of group members (see Chatman and O’Reilly, 2016). Thus, the limitations that were discussed concerning person-culture fit studies measurements can also be applied to the measurements that PG fit studies adopted. Based on this discussion, therefore, key cultural scholars (e.g. Pettigrew, 1979; Van Maanen et al., 1982; Smircich, 1983; Schein, 1984, 2010; Alvesson, 2013, 2016) emphasise adopting qualitative methodology, especially ethnography, to reflect deep and comprehensive realities concerning the OC. Significantly, some pioneers of person-culture fit and PG fit researches have recently acknowledged the limitations of the OCP tool for exploring the relationship between OC and IB, seeing merit in qualitative methodology. Chatman and O’Reilly (2016: 212–213) show that although the OCP was developed explicitly to concentrate on organisational values – as key manifestations of culture – and its scope is wide and intended to be inclusive, they indicate that *“there is no guarantee that the full universe of possible norm dimensions is being captured.”* Thus, the argument is that careful ethnographic research may uncover values not captured by the OCP.

Context limitation

Although research context is still an arguable topic in organisational research (e.g. whether context should be considered a contribution or not; for reviews, see Johns, 2006; Corley and Gioia, 2011; Parker et al., 2017, different organisational scholars (e.g. Joshi and Roh, 2009; Hernandez et al., 2016; Schneider et al., 2016; Parker et al., 2017) emphasise that context has

an essential impact on organisational behaviour. For instance, Johns (2006: 386–387) argues that context has a powerful influence on research findings, and he shows that many researchers underestimate this impact in their research analysis. Consequently, he indicates a number of reasons for studying and reporting context. Most importantly, he argues that studying and reporting context helps to convey research applications. Accordingly, potential readers (e.g. managers, reviewers and organisational researchers) will all benefit from observing different research findings conducted from different contexts. He also stresses that if researchers do not understand the situation they will not understand person-situation interactions. This point is assumed, for the purpose of the current study, to be significant. Taking into consideration the social, religious, economic and political systems of Saudi Arabia (which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter), as well as the limited OC studies that have been conducted in this context (e.g. Hijan, 1992; Al-Adaileh and Al-Atawi, 2011; Awadh and Ismail, 2012; Aldhuwaihi and Shee, 2015), the current study suggests that context is a vital research gap. This will be further discussed in the next chapter, where the importance of Saudi Arabia as a research context will be emphasised.

Overall, the current study raises some concerns with respect to explaining the relationship between OC and IB. Most interestingly:

- (1) Considering OC as comprising values, beliefs and underlying assumptions, what are the consequences that may arise from the interactions between these cultural elements and individual characteristics? While most person-culture fit researches concern the ‘compatibility’ between employees and organisational values to explore the ‘fit’, it seems essential to understand how individuals’ qualities (including values, beliefs and other demographic like age and gender) ‘interact’ with OC characteristics. Understanding this operation would explain several essential issues in organisational life, as the next point highlights.
- (2) Given that culture may include not only consistency and harmony, but also conflicts, ambiguities, ironies, contradictions and inconsistencies (see Martin, 2002; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013, 2016), an important question must be how do these cultural elements relate to individuals’ characteristics and influence their behaviour? Indeed, are there some individual characteristics that appear to interact more with a specific cultural form (e.g. integration, differentiation or fragmentation) than others? Exploring these issues would lead to an understanding of the underlying reasons behind employees’ behaviour

(e.g. actions and reactions, or support and resistance) towards key OC issues. Most essentially, the fact that no cultural review (including Kristof, 1996; Martin and Frost, 1996; Martin et al., 2006; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013, 2016; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013a, 2013b; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016) has presented a study that has evaluated the relationship between ambiguity and the individual in a direct way (such as the approach of cultural fit research) signifies a rationale for this study to explore that relationship between ambiguity and individual characteristics to explain IB. It would be interesting to know which individual qualities are most associated with fragmentation issues (e.g. confusion and conflicts), and would individual characteristics play a role in regard to the shaping of these cultural forms.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to cover different aspects related to OC and IB. It primarily aimed to provide some answers to the concerns that were raised in the last chapter, in terms of how an individual interacts with the OC and what the consequences of this interaction are on IB. Hence, this chapter has introduced the research on PE fit, which contains some studies (person-culture fit and PG fit) that have partly explained the relationship between OC and IB. After explaining the PE fit research concepts and identifying the person-culture fit, as well as PG fit aspects, various issues related to the person-culture fit have been critically evaluated. This critical evaluation has outlined three vital issues that may suggest some theoretical and methodological gaps in the cultural fit literature. These issues, as discussed in this chapter, show significant limitations and suggest that the relationship between OC and IB has not been fully addressed yet. These limitations and the gap will be integrated and highlighted in the methodology chapter, after discussing the research context. As a significant aspect of this study – the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Saudi Arabia) – the following chapter outlines the context of Saudi Arabia and will underline some interesting aspects that are related to its social and national concepts. These aspects are believed to have an effect on its organisational practices.

Chapter 4. Saudi Arabia in literature

4.1 Introduction

After identifying the concept of OC and how the relationship between OC and IB has been studied, this chapter aims to discuss the research context, Saudi Arabia, and attempts to acquaint the reader with the most salient characteristics of its social, political, geographical and economic environment. Due to the unique features of Saudi Arabia, different reviews have called for additional studies to examine the implications of these features in the workplace (e.g. Zahra, 2011; Yurdakul and Ozturkcan, 2014). While most previous OC studies were conducted in organisations from countries that have strict separation between state and religion, or where few people actively engage in religion, Islam and some other social norms are argued to be substantial in driving Saudi individuals' behaviour in the workplace (see Deresky, 2014: 91; Al-Khalifa et al., 2015: 205). This also can be taken as an explanation of the emphasis of some scholars (e.g. Johns, 2006) on the importance of context. Context can affect organisational behaviour and research can uncover different findings that are necessary to add to organisational literature and knowledge.

However, it should be noted that conducting a comprehensive review on Saudi Arabia is a difficult task. This is due to several reasons (see Yurdakul and Ozturkcan, 2014: 231; Niblock, 2015: 11): the difficulty in obtaining statistical data (apart from the economic data); the limited number of organisational studies conducted in Saudi Arabia, compared with other countries; the limited access of important official documents; and the contradicting information/facts that some reviewers demonstrate about Saudi Arabia. For example, Moran et al. (2007: 326) state that Makkah is the “‘*City of God*’, where the Prophet Muhammad is buried.” However, the prophet Muhammad was in fact born in Makkah (which is locally called ‘the Sacred City’) and is buried in Al Madinah (another sacred city for Muslims; see Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017a).

Divided into three main sections, the first part of the chapter provides an overview of Saudi Arabia's key geographical, social, political and economic features. The second section gives attention to the issues of Saudi Arabia in organisational literature. It shows that the context of Saudi Arabia is mainly discussed in cross-cultural research, with very few studies that cover the OC concept in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, this section provides a critical discussion of the assumption of cultural homogeneity in Arabian countries, including Saudi Arabia, and the homogeneity assumption within Saudi society. The importance of conducting more

organisational studies in Saudi Arabia is highlighted in the third section, ‘Why Saudi Arabia?’ This section suggests another research rational that supports the research limitation and gaps that previous OC research neglects. Finally, the conclusion will provide a summary of the discussions of this chapter and will introduce the topic of the following chapter.

4.2 Saudi Arabia: an overview

4.2.1 Geographical features

Located in the southwest corner of Asia, Saudi Arabia occupies around four-fifths of the Arabian Peninsula (a total area of over 2,240,000 square kilometres) and is at the crossroads of Asia, Africa and Europe. It is bordered by Kuwait, Iraq and Jordan to the north, by Yemen and the Sultanate of Oman to the south, by Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and the Arabian Gulf to the west, and by the Red Sea to the west (Saudi National Portal, 2016). The significance of the country’s position has been recognised in old and recent academic business books. For example, Lipsk (1959: 19) states that:

“the potential importance of Saudi Arabia’s geographical position is quickly apparent: it is strategically located between Africa and mainland Asia, lies close to the Suez Canal and has frontiers on both the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf”.

The value of the Saudi geographical position can be seen in the agreement that was arranged between Saudi and Egyptian governments to link Asia with Africa by a bridge (see BBC News, 2016), and the considerable attention that the latest Saudi vision gives on the location of the country (see Saudi Vision 2030, 2016).

Geographically, Saudi Arabia contains five major regions: northern, southern, eastern, western and central. Due to the huge space of the country, these regions comprise various topographical structures and have different climates. Furthermore, the cultural and economic activities that are practised by people are observed to be diverse (see Johany et al., 1986; Al-Farsy, 1986, 1990; Dew, 2003; Moran et al., 2014; Saudi National Portal, 2016). The key features of these regions are summarised as follows:

- (1) The central region (*Najd*) (where the capital Riyadh is) is the country’s heartland, culturally and physically. This region enjoys a continental climate: relatively cold in winter and considerably hot in summer (between 45° and 48°). Trade is identified as the main economic activity, with a remarkable amount of agriculture that relies on fossil water.
- (2) In the western region (*Hijaz*), there is a mountain chain surrounding the rest of the west coast along the Red Sea. The *Hijaz* climate is well-known for its lack of rainfall, heat and

- humidity, particularly in the areas close to the coast. Economically, this region occupies one of the key seaports of the Kingdom, the city of Jeddah, which is the industrial centre and economic capital of the Kingdom (see Saudi Ports Authority, 2014a; Saudi National Portal, 2017). The region has another significant seaport, King Abdullah Economic City, *Thuwal* (see King Abdullah Port, 2016). Religiously, *Hijaz* is well-known for its occupancy of the two holy cities of Islam, Al Madinah and Makkah, with over two million Muslim pilgrims every year (see General Authority for Statistics, 2016d).
- (3) The eastern region (*Al-Hasa*) is a wide flat desert with several oases with a coastal plain along the Arabian Gulf. Due to the nature of this area, this region has a special climate, mainly humid and hot with dust-storms. However, the eastern area is found to be one of the wealthiest areas in the Kingdom, if not in the world (see Mellahi, 2006; Hourani, 2013; Moran et al., 2014). This region contains one of the biggest gas and oil fields in the world, which is considered, so far, to be the key resource of the country's economic development. Therefore, the oil and gas industries are located in this area. Also, *Al-Hasa* has the second major seaport in Saudi Arabia on the Arabian Gulf, King Abdulaziz, which serves as a significant industrial and commercial centre (Saudi Ports Authority, 2014b).
 - (4) *Asir* is the name of the southern region, a fertile mountainous area that lies at above 10000 feet. This region is relatively cold and has a significant amount of rainfall during the year. Therefore, agriculture is one of the significant economic activities practiced by people. Also, the region one of the main tourist destinations in the country. Recently, the government has planned to build another seaport and industrial city, Jazan (see Saudi Industrial Property Authority, 2016). They believe that would attract more investments and enhance the commercial activities in the region.
 - (5) The last region this section covers is the northern region (*Alhodud Alshamaliyah*, i.e. the northern borders). A significant part of *Alhodud Alshamaliyah* is a desert covered with sand dunes. The climate is cold in winter and relatively hot in summer, with rainfall that tends to be limited to winter. The common economic activities in *Alhodud Alshamaliyah* are agriculture and nomadic pastoralism.

4.2.2 Social features

The Saudi Arabia 1974 census put the population at just over 7 million. However, it is observed that the population during the last decades has grown dramatically. The 1992 census preliminary results showed that the population was 16.9 million, of which 12.3 million were

Saudi nationals. Around ten years later, in 2004, the number was estimated to be over 22.6 million, and showed that three-quarters of the population were Saudis. The latest report, 2016, shows that the census gave a figure for total population of 31.7 million (57.44% are males and 42.56% are females). Interestingly, two-thirds of the population are Saudi nationals, which makes the country fourth in terms of migrants hosted after the US, Germany and Russia (United Nations, 2016; General Authority for Statistics, 2016e). The remarkable rate of population growth can be related to different factors. Most importantly are: the considerable increase of birth rate and the decrease in death rate, which are attributed to the expansion and improvement of health services. The enhancement of social and economic conditions in the Kingdom are considered to be other factors. Furthermore, the acceptance and normality of large families in Saudi society, as well as the limitations of women in the workplace (which will be explained shortly), are believed to be important factors (Johany et al., 1986; Al-Shuaibi, 1991; Mellahi, 2006; Vassiliev, 2013).

Religiously, the majority of Saudis are Muslim; Islam is the only accepted and practised religion in the country. At the social level, most people in Saudi Arabia have Arabic origins and often share mutual cultural values deriving from both tribal traditions and Islamic teachings. However, this does not imply that Saudi society is ‘fully’ homogeneous (Al-Farsy, 1990; Vassiliev, 2013; Dickson, 2015), as will be discussed in more detail in the next section. Although it is often categorised into different classifications, Saudi society is socially diversified. It comprises rural people and urbanised city inhabitants, tribal and non-tribal communities, which each have different norms and rituals. Al-Farsy (1990) indicates that until the 1930s, most Saudi tribes (i.e. *qabila*) were nomadic or semi-nomadic. However, due to the significant urban and economic growth, the tribes have settled either in urbanised cities or rural villages.

Interestingly, it has been indicated that in spite of urbanisation, and the need for some people to leave their tribal societies to seek life’s requirements (e.g. work, health services and education), members of tribes still maintain their tribal identity. Kinship relationships appear to be one of the evident characteristics, and although a tribe may have diverse sections that may be opposed to one another, they tend to present themselves as one integrated unit. This is an outlook found to create respect for rival tribes (see Al-Farsy, 1990; Vassiliev, 2013; Dickson, 2015; Niblock, 2015). The tribe is led by a male *Sheikh* (i.e. a chief), whose position is ‘socially’ derived, but usually not officially formalised. Generally, the decisions that *Sheikhs*

make are enforced through moral influence and, more importantly, by forging a consensus among heads of the tribe. Therefore, the *Sheikh* needs to possess critical personal characteristics that command respect (e.g. wisdom, impartiality and seniority). Furthermore, the *Sheikh* serves as advisor to the government in tribal affairs. He usually acts as a communication link between tribe and government (see Mohammed, 1988; Dickson, 2015).

The non-tribal societies also have their existence within the Saudi demography; nevertheless, they represent a minority of the overall population. They contain varied ethnic groups, most of whom are immigrants from various countries. Vassiliev (2013) indicates in his history review on Saudi Arabia that numerous immigrants, of Arabic and non-Arabic origin, have always lived in the region. These are mostly African, as well as descendants of Muslim pilgrims from several countries who settled in Jeddah and Makkah, e.g. Indonesian, Indian, Hadhramis (from Hadhramaut, or Aden) and people from other parts of the Arabic-speaking world. In addition to *Hijaz*, the eastern region has been settled for decades by foreign labourers, who traveled with their families seeking job opportunities through the oil multinational organisations. Interestingly, it has been observed that the majority of these groups are not assimilated into society. They maintain their original cultural identity and practise distinct customs and traditions, which comprise funeral, marriage and gathering rituals (see Shata, 1985; Al-Saif, 1997; Vassiliev, 2013).

4.2.3 Political features

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was established in 1932, by the late King Abdul Aziz Al Saud. Today, the country is an influential member of three main global bodies: (a) the Arab world (which comprises 22 states (see League of Arab States, 2016), (b) the Islamic world (which includes 57 different countries (see Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, 2016), and (c) the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) (which encompasses six states (see Gulf Cooperation Council, 2017)). Saudi Arabia is a monarchy that is supported by a political system based on Islamic law (i.e. *Shari'a*), encompassing a Consultative Council (*Majlis Al-Shura*), a Council of Ministers (*Majlis Al-Wuzara*) and 13 regional governments (*Mintaqah*) (see Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017c; The Shura Council, 2016). The main body of the Kingdom's government is the Council of Ministers, which was formally established in October 1953, and contains the Prime Minister (the King), two Deputy Prime Ministers (the Crown Prince, and the second Crown Prince), 21 Ministers and seven Ministers of State. In general, *Majlis Al-Wuzara* is reshuffled every four years, the last time being in November 2016. The main

responsibilities of the Council are drafting and supervising the implementation of external, internal, economic, educational and defense policies, as well as the general affairs of the country (Bureau of Experts at the Council of Ministers, 2011).

The Consultative Council was established in December 1923; however, its modern version was officially formalised in 1993 (see The Shura Council, 2016). The Council acts as an advisory forum for the King, as well as initiating legislation, reviewing all governmental policies, and supervising the performance of government departments. The council started with just 12 members, but this number has increased at different occasions, e.g. 61 members in 1993, 90 members in 1997, 120 members in 2001, and 150 members in 2005 (The Shura Council, 2016). Interestingly, all the Council members used to be males only, until the historical decision made in January 2013 by the former King Abdullah (1924-2015) that 30% of the members must be females. This decision was made due to the significant role of Saudi women in both social and work life (allowing a female voice in the *Majlis* would reflect better recommendations, specifically on Saudi women issues). Also, there has been a strong vision in the government to empower all members of the society, especially the females. This can be seen in the legislation that the government has established to increase women's job opportunities (see Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2005, 2010; Saudi Vision 2030, 2016), the establishment of the unique and largest female-only university in the country and the world (see Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, 2014), and allowing Saudi women to vote and run as candidates in the country's municipal elections, granted in September 2011 (see Saudi National Portal, 2017).

Majlis Al-Shura members are appointed by the King, for four-year renewable terms, who usually represent the spectrum of Saudi society. Reviewing this, it should be noticed that the formation of *Majlis Al-Shura* should not be considered as an interdiction of the western-style system of democracy; alternatively, it has been considered as an improvement of long-established consultative procedures at work since the establishment of the Kingdom. Also, *Majlis Al-Shura* is seen as a step forward for decentralisation of power, sharing decision-making and governing responsibilities with knowledgeable and educated elite members from different classes of Saudi society (The Shura Council, 2016).

4.2.4 Economic features

Oil has dominated the Saudi economy for several decades. Regardless of the government's gradual steps to reduce the dependency on oil (see Ministry of Economy and Planning, 1985,

2000, 2005, 2010; Saudi Vision 2030, 2016), Saudi Arabia is commonly defined as a single-commodity (i.e. oil) economy, and not as well-diversified one (Alsarhani, 2010; Nakov and Nuño, 2013; Vassiliev, 2013; Niblock, 2015). Since the discovery of oil in 1938, it has been not only the main source of economic success, but also a political power tool (see oil crisis in 1973, OPEC, 2015; U.S Department of State, 2016). Today, the country is considered to be one of the most significant producers of crude oil, possessing about 25% of the world's proven oil reserves (see Dew, 2003; OPEC, 2016). This has led some reviewers to assume that Saudi Arabia is a major player in the stability of the global economy; the prices of oil are considerably related to Saudi's social and political stability (e.g. Mellahi, 2006; Nakov and Nuño, 2013; Niblock, 2015). Indeed, Saudi Arabia today is found to be a member of significant economic organisations, e.g. G20, the World Trade Organisation, and the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) (see Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017b).

The oil industry has been a significant contributor to government revenues; it accounts for around 70% to 80% of the country's exports (General Authority for Statistics, 2016b). However, the government has been aware of the need for diversification in the national economy (see Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2000, 2005, 2010). Hence, a series of reforms has been planned and executed by the Saudi government that aim to enhance economic diversification. For example, the eighth Development Plan (2005–2009) emphasised investment in human resources and a skilled labour force. Accordingly, the government in 2005 launched the King Abdullah Foreign Scholarship Program, which has sponsored over 150,000 Saudi employees and students in its first nine years, for accessing different training courses and degrees (Ministry of Education, 2014). Similarly, the number of the public universities increased significantly from just seven, before 2005, to 26 public universities and nine private universities in 2017. Furthermore, the government has plans for building 'industrial cities', indicated previously (see Saudi Industrial Property Authority, 2016). Lately, in 2016, Saudi Arabia announced its latest vision in which one of its major missions is reducing dependency on oil and creating real diversification in the national economy (see Saudi Vision 2030, 2016).

4.3 Saudi Arabia culture in organisational literature

4.3.1 Arab world and Saudi Arabian culture: the assumption of homogeneity

Given a brief background of Saudi Arabia, this section aims to examine the country's unique characteristics in relation to its organisational works practices. In general, most organisational

studies that cover the context of Saudi Arabia are found in cross-cultural research, where there are a limited number of researches covering the concept of ‘OC’ in Saudi Arabia (e.g. Hijan 1992; Al-Adaileh, and Al-Atawi, 2011; Awadh and Ismail, 2012; Aldhuwaihi and Shee, 2015). This has some academics calling for more organisation studies that cover Arabian nations in general, and Saudi Arabia in particular (e.g. Dresky, 2014). The emergence of globalisation and the growth of international business have drawn different academics’ attention to cultural diversities and differences at international level. While some organisational researchers have given considerable attention to cultural differences between nations (e.g. Hofstede, 1980; Black, 1999; Dastmalchian et al., 2000; Parker and Bradley, 2000; Raghuram et al., 2001), others have given noticeable attention to diversities within national culture, most importantly ‘Arab culture’ (see Muna, 1980; Bjerke, 1999; Koopman et al., 1999; Beugre and Offodile, 2001; Branine and Analoui, 2006). The underlying aim of such researches is to examine cultural differences and their influence on organisations and management across countries, on the assumption that individuals in a certain group, country or nation share a collectivity of values that determine their behaviour.

In a critical discussion, these cross-cultural researches have made, to some extent, an essential contribution to understanding some key differences between national cultures and to explain, even if comparatively, variances and similarities in work-related attitudes, behaviour and values. Nevertheless, it is noticeable that cross-cultural research tends to focus on consistency at the macro level, neglecting diversity at the micro level. Indeed, these studies overemphasise common or dominant values that are apparently representative, whereas variances and subcultures in how individuals interpret these values are evidently neglected (see Soutar et al., 1999; Chrisman et al., 2002). Tayeb (2001: 95) argues that:

“national culture is a complex construct and we simplify it at our own peril. But regrettably, many authors of cross cultural studies have a tendency to focus on a few dimensions and ignore various aspects of cultures which might have equally significant bearings on people’s values, attitudes and behaviours.”

The risk in this kind of research is that universalism and selection at the macro level appears to make a confident assumption of homogeneity that oversimplifies important issues. One of the most well-known cross-cultural researches that covers the context of Saudi Arabia and reproduces claims about cultural homogeneity is ‘Culture Consequences’. In this tradition, Hofstede (1980, 1984, 1991, 2001) assumes that there are two types of cultural groups that influence the behaviour of organisations, national and regional. He attempts to differentiate

between 40 (expanded later to 50) national cultures through developing four dimensions of culture (increased later to six). These include: (1) Power Distance: the level to which a group of people accept the unequal distribution of power in organisations. (2) Individualism vs. Collectivism: explains the degree to which the people in a culture are expected to behave independently of other persons in the society. More specifically, individualism refers to the inclination of individuals to look after themselves and their immediate family ‘only’ (and this suggests a loosely unified society), while collectives, alternatively, refers to the inclination of individuals to belong to groups and look after each other in exchange for unquestioning loyalty in a strongly united society. (3) Uncertainty Avoidance: deals with a society’s acceptance of uncertainty and ambiguity. (4) Masculinity vs. Femininity: where masculinity explains the degree to which the central values in a society tend towards the acquisition of money, assertiveness and material things. In contrast, femininity pertains to the level to which the central values in a society involve caring for others, i.e. people consideration or quality of life. (5) Long-Term or Short-Term Orientation: refers to the degree to which a culture programmes its members to accept delayed gratification of their social, emotional and material needs. (6) Indulgence vs. Restraint: refers to the gratification versus control of basic human needs associated with life enjoyment (see Hofstede et al., 2010; Hofstede, 2011).

Although Hofstede’s Model is used universally (e.g. Bond, 2002; Matzler et al., 2016), it has been subject to major criticisms. It is argued that the model depends on dominant and common social values at the macro level, claiming that they are accurately representative of national cultures (see Wallace et al., 1999; McSweeney, 2002; Baskerville, 2003; Jones, 2007). For instance, Hofstede argues that commonality in language and religion truly represents the Arab nations, assuming that Arab regions are culturally indistinguishable. Consequently, Hofstede grouped Arab-speaking nations, including Saudi Arabia, under a single group and described them as exhibiting high-uncertainty avoidance, a high-power distance, low masculinity, low individualism, short-term orientation and flexhumility (see Hofstede, 2001, 2011; Obeidat et al., 2012; Najm, 2015). Given this ‘unvarying’ characterisation of Arabian national cultures, an outsider would assume Arab workers to have comparable values with respect to such work aims as employment security, bureaucracy, centralisation, and the opportunity to help others and society in general. At best, this combination of the Arab nations’ cultures may underline some similarities and patterns between them; however, it crucially neglects variances within and between these nations, resulting in an insufficient picture of national culture.

Hence, since Hofstede's dimensions were accumulated based upon variances and similarities between countries, it can be argued that understanding the real distinctiveness of certain national cultures seems to be unexamined. Evidently, Hofstede gave insufficient consideration to the qualities and dynamics of the respective populations from which his sample was collected. This means Hofstede is diverting attention from any difference in the degree to which people adhere to specific value sets (Sondergaard, 1994; Wallace et al., 1999; Eckhardt, 2002; McSweeney, 2002; Baskerville, 2003; Jones, 2007; Joannidés et al., 2012). McSweeney (2002) argues that the population of a country can be distinguished on different bases; yet, Hofstede claims that in spite of divisions, the population of each country 'somehow' shares a distinctive identity. Therefore, Hofstede considers Great Britain to be one entity with a single national culture, although it is composed of three distinct nations (Wales, Scotland and England). However, McSweeney argues that the totality of culture within a nation cannot be represented by the national culture; as an alternative, it may highlight characteristics that are territorially substantial and which differentiate the people of one nation from another. In line with McSweeney's views, Baskerville (2003) maintains that Hofstede equated nations with cultures, failing to recognise that there are several diverse cultures and subcultures within one nation.

Other reviewers, such as Banai, 1982; Smith and Dugan, 1996; Harrison and McKinnon, 1999; Peterson, 2003; Bhimani et al., 2005, are also concerned about whether collecting data from one country is appropriately valid for making inferences about national cultures. This is because a significant part of Hofstede's sample material (IBM employees) appeared to be representative only of one country's middle class. However, other studies have indicated significant differences between social classes in relation to work values (e.g. Kidd, 1982; Black, 1994; Nyambegera et al., 2000). Furthermore, Hofstede's study encompassed managers' views only, excluding those of workers as other stakeholders in organisations. Hence, fundamental subcultures were neglected, which may have differed dramatically in orientation and outlook (see Portwood, 1982). Another noticeable critique of Hofstede's model is the insufficient attention it gives to the dynamic nature of culture. Hofstede (1984: 22) claimed that mechanisms in society "*permit the maintenance of stability in culture patterns across many generations*". These have led some reviewers to be concerned about whether the dimensions that emerged from the data gathered between 1968 and 1973 are truly indicative of the period of analysis (Sondergaard, 1994; Nyambegera et al., 2000). For

instance, Rowley and Benson (2002) highlight that while Hofstede acknowledged that there is evidence of rising individualism in Japan society, the shifting values of the younger generation have led organisational managers reviewing some work practices. Also, Schmitz and Weber (2014) examined the validity of Uncertainty Avoidance and found challenging results in Hofstede's study. By using original data from Germany and France (2011), they found that this dimension does not prove to be a valid construct. Interestingly, Al-Twajiri and Al-Muhaiza (1996) – in a replicative study of Hofstede's – explained the variance between their findings and Hofstede's original study findings about culture in Arab nations, which they related to key social shifts that evolved between the 1970s and 1990s. Also, Robertson et al. (2001) raise concerns that although the results of Hofstede's research are interesting, treating Arab nations as a single homogeneous entity serves as a 'cultural panacea' for the issue that relate to diversity in the region. Similar issues concerning Hofstede's model are noted in recent Arab nations' studies (see Najm, 2015).

Briefly, it is evident from these arguments that Hofstede's model neglects variety, dynamics and diversity within certain country cultures, implicitly making an artificial homogeneity. The neglect of these issues is argued to have resulted in incomplete conclusions about the implications of both national culture and OC on the employees behaviour (see Kozan and Ergin, 1999; Robertson et al. 2001). The next table provides a summary of Hofstede's major critiques:

	On the extensive use of the model		On the model itself	
Critics	Harrison and McKinnon (1999)	Bhimani et al. (2005)	McSweeney (2002)	Baskerville (2003)
Empirical weaknesses	-	Only well-known cultural settings are studied (ethnocentrism)	IBM is not representative for the world.	Only nations are studied.
Theoretical weaknesses	The richness and specificities of a culture are not grasped; the model is predictive and self-referencing.	The specificities of culture are not understood.	The richness and specificities of a culture are not grasped; the model is self-predictive and self-referencing	The richness and specificities of a culture are not grasped; the model is self-predictive and self-referencing
Methodological weaknesses	-	Nomothetic methods are inappropriate in the understanding of cultural specificities.	Statistical measures do not inform on the contents of culture and impacts on practices	Questionnaires are inappropriate to understand culture.
Contributions to knowledge	Conclusions are homogenous and predictable.	Conclusions are homogenous and predictable. Conclusions	Conclusions are neither robust nor reliable	Conclusions are poor.

Table 4-1: The four critiques addressed to Hofstede's model (source: Joannidés et al., 2012).

Another key cross-culture study that covers Arab nations is ‘The Arab Executive’, which also confers socio-cultural homogeneity on Arab people and axiomatality to every Arab nation. This research was led by Muna (1980) to study the implications of ‘Arab Culture’ with respect to a manager’s work attitudes, behaviours and values. With a sample of 52 managers from six Arabian nations, including Saudi Arabia, Muna demonstrated that Arab people share with each other three interrelated bases of cultural identity: history, religion and language. Also, it shows that they share common socio-cultural norms and values, e.g. loyalty to clan and family, nepotism, reputation in the community, fusion of business and other social norms. Based on this assumption, Muna assumed that the cultural commonality within and across Arab nations leads to unique managerial behaviour and thinking.

Bjerke (1999) also assumes cultural homogeneity across and within Arab cultures, as he provides a comparative analysis of five different cultures (Arab, Japanese, Chinese, American, and Scandinavian) and how they reveal themselves in business practices. Bjerke put all Arab nations in one category, arguing that their culture is very social and collectivistic, informal, prioritising care of others more than individual freedom. Therefore, he observed that Arabs view their work organisation in terms of social integration, instead of depersonalised systems. Belonging and membership are also emphasised. In addition, he observed that Arabs apparently have an emotional dependence on their institutions and organisations. Accordingly, workers become morally involved, while superiors and subordinates become highly dependent on each other. Based on his argument, this is attributable to Arab norms and values, in addition to the collectivistic structure of Arab society that underlines kinship ties in group interaction and group affiliation.

In short, while Hofstede, Muna, and Bjerke, as well as other studies indicated in Najm (2015: 424–425) showed that managerial behaviour is certainly affected by society’s social norms, value structures and traditions, the pattern is far from straightforward and is mediated by intervening variables. The next section will further discuss this issue and will outline the cultural diversity within Saudi Arabia society that has been neglected in these researches.

4.3.2 Review of Saudi Arabian culture and organisational work

Similar to cross-cultural studies, which stress socio-cultural homogeneity within and across Arab nations, other researches have emphasised the homogeneity of Saudi culture. Al-Farsy (1990: 199), for example, claimed that:

“The population of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is homogeneous. All citizens share the same cultural heritage, the same religion and the same language. Because this is so, the problems sometimes associated with multi-cultural societies (polycommunality) do not arise. In many developing countries, any study of the ethnic composition would immediately involve the concept of polycommunality. By this we mean that in countries like India, the Lebanon, Nigeria, Pakistan, where problems of cultural and religious heritage, language and ethnic origin exist.”

Al-Farsy also added that regardless of the considerable number of expatriate workers that have arrived in the country from all over the world, who may have cultural backgrounds that vary significantly from the native population, the homogeneity of Saudi Arabian society and culture has been ‘totally’ unaffected. Other researchers shared similar assumptions with Al-Farsy, such as Al-Aiban and Pearce (1993: 47) and Al-Adaily (1983: 162). Looking through these studies, it seems that there are four key components sustaining such impressions of Saudi Arabia society: (a) the religion of Islam; (b) Arabic ethnicity; (c) language; and (d) common cultural values, which are mainly derived from Arabic traditions and Islamic teachings. Looking closely at the underlying assumptions of these four components, it can be argued that although subcultures and cultural diversity do exist within Saudi society (as the ‘Overview of Saudi Arabia’ section indicated), they have been neglected in previous researches. Hence, the following subsections attempt to provide further discussion on these key Saudi social issues, since they have a direct and indirect relationship with work practices.

4.3.3 The religion of Islam

As discussed previously, Islam is considered to be the main and only accepted religion in Saudi Arabia. This makes different reviewers assume that Saudi people are 100% Muslim, who share a common Islamic faith that is openly valued not merely as a ‘religion’, but as a ‘way of life’ (e.g. Anastos et al., 1980; Mohammed, 1988; Al-Twajiri and Al-Muhaiza, 1996; Mellahi, 2006; Deresky, 2014). Islam is argued to be the source of all acts of a Saudi life, e.g. economic, legal and political. Hence, it is often referred to as the main factor that shapes Saudis’ personality and behaviour. For instance, the religion of Islam, at the political level, is believed to organise the relationship between the people and the leader. It formulates the rule by consultation and consensus in the political decision-making process (see Al-Twajiri and Al-Muhaiza, 1996; Moran et al., 2014). In terms of social aspects, it also calls for noble traits and virtues, e.g. generosity, hospitality, honesty, the keeping of a promise, chivalry, time management, hard work and repayment of one’s debts (see Al-Twajiri and Al-Muhaiza, 1996; Deresky, 2014). At the economic level, different reviewers (e.g. Sebhatu, 1994; Robertson et

al., 2001; Hassan and Lewis, 2014) claim that the values of Islam have a significant influence on Saudi organisational operations and managers' attitude and behaviour. A comprehensive discussion concocted by Anastos et al. (1980) shows that the values of Islam affect Saudis' attitudinal behaviour toward the conduct of business and attendant management practices. Therefore, Saudis, as Muslims, are asked to keep high moral standards in their conduct of business relationships. This, in turn, has work agreements taking on a religious value, with people avoiding casually rescinding an agreement.

In view of the claims of these types of studies, it is no wonder that Saudi Arabia is widely perceived as a homogenous Islamic society in which all social, economic and political issues are directed by an adherence to Islamic cultural principles. Nevertheless, such studies neglect some significant issues. For example, although Islam is the only religion practised in Saudi Arabia, the level of adherence to its teachings appears to be varied. Ali and Al-Shakhis (1989: 181) argue that while Islam perceives hard work positively, the advocacy of the work ethic usually reflects a commitment to principle instead of practice. Also, although Islam emphasises consultation in decision-making, it is observed that Saudi leaders make decisions 'paternalistically', i.e. restricting consultation to a few chosen persons (see Bjerke and Al-Meer, 1993). Finally, while 'all' Saudis are presented as Muslims, other reviews reveal that the society should not be viewed to be 'completely' homogenous. Alsaeeri (1993) explains that regardless of the reality that most of the Saudi population are *Sunni* Muslims, a significant number of Saudi people are Shiite Twelvers. Furthermore, Alsaeeri reveals that other doctrinal sects do exist within Saudi society, like Zaydis and Ismailis. Accordingly, each have different views on Islamic teachings and interpret them differently.

4.3.4 Arabic ethnicity and language

Arabic ethnicity and language are, without doubt, essential elements of Saudi culture. The majority of Saudis are Arabs and Arabic is the main and official language in the country. This commonality of language and ethnicity has led former studies to claim cultural homogeneity. For instance, Al-Farsy (1986: 85) argues that "*as to native residents of cities, towns and villages, little can be said, except that the population of Saudi Arabia is ethnically homogenous.*" Also, Bjerke (1999), Moran et al. (2014) and Deresky (2014) emphasise that the Arab language, as a means of interaction and communication, is a vital start to understanding Arab culture. They show that verbal communication between Arabs is 'implicative', i.e. when Arabs communicate with each other, they rely on deeply implicit,

hidden, contextual cues like social context, non-verbal behaviour and the nature of interpersonal relationships. Assuming uniform interpretations and meaning of verbal communication among Arabs, Moran et al. (2014) outline some conversational points that outsiders should consider when they negotiate with Saudis/Arabs, such as:

- (1) Bringing up business matters before getting to know the host may be considered rude.
- (2) Commenting on a man's wife or any female adult relatives will be deemed offensive.
- (3) Private financial matters should not be discussed; even brothers do not usually discuss their pay.
- (4) Avoid using swear words or disparaging and obscene or off-color attempts at humour.
- (5) Pointing your finger at someone during a conversation or showing the soles of your feet when seated will be considered rude and an attempt at humiliation.

However, regardless of the fact that the majority of the Saudi population are Arabs, and Arabic is the main language for verbal and written communication, these should not be taken as indicative of cultural homogeneity within Saudi society. Based on Mohammed's (1988) research findings, Saudis can be divided into three main groups: urbanised city dwellers, settled agriculturists, and nomadic and semi-nomadic Bedouin tribes. These classifications and groups may reflect various cultural norms, values and traditions within Saudi society. Al-Nimir and Palmer (1982) indicate that urban respondents are observed to be somewhat less attached to tradition than their rural counterparts and would have perhaps become more receptive to modern values. Cultural differences could also be observed between the settled (*Hadr*), and the nomads (*Badu*) (Alsaeeeri, 1993). Other Saudi scholars seem to agree with these findings, such as Alsarhani (2005), who provides a more detailed discussion of these differences. Also, a few reviews and researches in the literature (e.g. Moran et al., 2014) have noticed that although Arabic is the official language in the country, it includes three forms (standard, classic, and many dialects), with the last, which can be very confusing, based on the individual regional environment (i.e. *Hijaz* or *Al-Hasa*) and/or the living environment (i.e. settled (*Hadr*) and nomadic (*Badu*)). Hence, given that Saudi culture is multi-contextual, these subgroups and classifications could also lead to different interpretations of non-verbal communication, even of body language and symbols. Logically, these individual characteristics can also be applied to the OC, where their interaction may vary and examining them would reflect essential realities and more understanding of work practices.

4.3.5 Common cultural values

Different academics and official documents emphasise that the teachings of Islam, and Arab heredity and traditions, are central in Saudi society; they provide the Saudi cultural values (Mohammed, 1988; Hunt and At-Twajiri, 1996; Moran et al., 2014; Saudi National Portal, 2016; Saudi Vision 2030, 2016). Accordingly, an outsider might assume that Saudis share broad and uniform values in their society and, therefore, in their organisations. Nevertheless, reviews on Saudi Arabian cultural values show they are rich and diverse (Mohammed, 1988; Al-Twajiri and Al-Muhaiza, 1996; Dickson, 2015). Therefore, the focus of this research has been on family allegiance, friendship commitment, and tribal belonging. These three particular elements can be justified as follows:

- (a) Values, in general, are a significant component of any society (Soutar et al., 1999; Wallace et al., 1999), and tribal members usually tend to emphasise some activities that reinforce them (Beugre and Offodile, 2001; Moran et al., 2014; Dickson, 2015).
- (b) As underlined by both Arabic traditions and Islamic teaching, these values are viewed to be the most prevalent, dominant and lasting among Saudi people, even though some observed some changes toward these values in the Arab world between the 1970s and 1990s (see Al-Twajiri and Al-Muhaiza, 1996).
- (c) Examining these values argued to provide alternative realities of Saudi work practices, better than any aggregated and artificial values. Indeed, previous studies, which were conducted in similar tribal societies (e.g. in Arabian, Asian and African countries), emphasises that the accurate selection of particular cultural profiles and values is vital in achieving a representative picture of how the society interacts and in exploring genuine links between varied social and organisational practices (e.g. Mendonca and Kanungo, 1996; Nyambegera et al., 2000; Beugre and Offodile, 2001; Aycan et al., 2007; Katou et al., 2010; Ali and Kramar, 2015).
- (d) As a contrast to the cross-cultural researches, these cultural values are explored to examine the reality of the cultural homogeneity assumption within Saudi society.

Consequently, reviewing these Saudi societal aspects is assumed to be highly relevant to the purpose of this research.

Family allegiance

Family in Islam and Arab traditions is considered highly significant, with both calling for the strengthening of family ties, with members of the family looking after their relatives (see

Muna, 1980; Mohammed, 1988; Ali et al., 1991; Bjerke, 1999; Moran et al., 2014; Deresky, 2015). According to Alsaeri's (1993) study, Saudi society varies noticeably from other communities in that it is an Islamic and Arabian society, which perceives the family unit as the central social structure to which they are loyal. Other scholars stated similar findings (e.g. Alsarhani, 2005). Interestingly, the family in Saudi society is hierarchically structured. The identity of the family is tied to the father, who is the main person responsible for the family and the decision maker. Traditionally, the elder son takes over his father's position, in his absence or on his death, and takes care of his mother, as well as younger sisters and brothers. Hence, the Saudi family structure can be expanded beyond the 'traditional' or 'nuclear' family, and it is common to see parents, grandparents, brothers (with their sub-families), sisters and sometimes aunts and uncles living in a single house in Saudi cities (see Mohammed; 1988; Al-Saif, 1997).

This societal value has some interesting implications for Saudi institutions and work groups. Most essentially, Ali et al. (1991) show that work in Saudi society is considered as a means of fostering family interests and boosting its reputation. A family's prestige and image will obviously be strengthened when its members have work and occupy valued positions. Al-Kathiri (1989) further claims that being unemployed in Saudi society with the ability to work (or even having a low status job) is socially unacceptable in family and tribal traditions. This seems significantly important to the current study; the motivation of accepting a job, employee turnover, fulfilling job satisfaction and interacting positively with other organisational aspects may rely on other personal – and subjective – qualities, different to what previous studies have indicated (e.g. Chatman, 1989; O'Reilly et al., 1991). Accordingly, would these values reveal unique interactions with the Saudi OC?

Reviews show that women in Saudi social traditions and Islamic teachings are treated very specially. Although discussing this aspect is beyond the scope of the current study, it seems to be vital – for understanding Saudi culture and women's life in the workplace – to highlight some interesting points. Both social and Islamic traditions call for looking after women's needs (mainly offering them protection and sponsoring them financially) (see Deaver, 1980; Al Lily, 2011; Abalkhail and Allan, 2015). Hence, unlike in some other communities, a daughter in Saudi Arabia lives in her family house if she is single, or in her husband's house, who will be responsible for providing the family with proper shelter and a suitable income (see Al-Munajjid, 2001; Abalkhail and Allan, 2015). If widowed or divorced, her closest male

relative (e.g. father, brother, uncle, etc.) is culturally and legally obligated to give her the support she may need. Temporarily, in case of divorce, the husband will be responsible for sponsoring her financially if they have nursing children. Interestingly, those male relatives can be identified as *Mahram*, which also includes any person that she cannot marry. With *Mahram*, a Muslim woman does not have to wear *Abaya* or *Hijab*³, i.e. the dress code that Muslim women must wear in public or in the presence of any male who is of the opposite sex (Al-Munajjid, 1999). This is one of the key reasons that explains the gender segregation, non-mixed work environment in Saudi Arabia, although others may have different views or even disagree with this assumption (see Meijer, 2010; Al Lily, 2011; Abalkhail and Allan, 2015; Alhareth et al., 2015). The responsibilities of *Mahram* are countless, most significantly helping the woman during her trip and offering her protection. In this relation, Islamic teachings prohibit women from traveling without *Mahram*, unless it is difficult for the *Mahram* to travel with her and it is necessary for her to travel (see Al-Munajjid, 2012). This may explain the government policy that women should have a permission from her *Mahram* before she travels abroad (see Al Lily, 2011).

The role of women in Saudi society, in general, is maintaining the structure of the family, and in turn, of the society (Alireza, 1987). However, based on Islamic teachings, women should not be prevented from working or pursuing education, especially if they meet certain conditions (see Arebi, 1994; Al-Mohsen, 2000; Hamdan, 2005; Al-Munajjid, 2008; Elamin and Omair, 2010; Al Lily, 2011; Abalkhail and Allan, 2015). Among these conditions are: (a) the job should be suitable for her nature and not risk her life (e.g. heavy labouring); (b) the work or education requirements and environment do not contradict Islamic teachings (e.g. the job requires her to take off her *Hijab* or *Abaya*); and (c) it should not be disruptive to the family or to the woman's household responsibilities.

Nevertheless, the role of Saudi women in public (i.e. 'gender gap') is observed to be a highly arguable and complicated topic. While different reviews and reports criticise the situation of Saudi women and argue that they are not empowered enough to participate in public (due to the male guardianship concept in Saudi society) (e.g. Meijer, 2010; Badran, 2011; Al-Rasheed, 2013; Alhareth et al., 2015), others disagree with this concept and propose alternative views (e.g. Qureshi, 2014; Yurdakul and Ozturkcan, 2014; Abalkhail and Allan, 2015). One of the main causes that has escalated the conflict in this topic is the different authors' backgrounds,

³ *Abaya* is a cloak and *Hijab* is a veil/ headdress that are worn by Muslim women beyond the age of puberty.

ideologies and philosophical views (most significantly: Westerner activists and feminists, Saudi Islamic scholars (moderate and radical), Saudi activists (characterised as liberal or secular, both male and female) and Saudi feminists) (see Meijer, 2010; Badran, 2011; Al-Rasheed, 2013; Alhareth et al., 2015). Although reviewing this debate seems to be out of this study's scope, some important points are relevant here. Firstly, regardless of the improvement of Saudi women's participation in public life over the last decades (see Qureshi, 2014), especially at the education and work opportunities levels, some social and Islamic norms have remained unchanged (see Abalkhail and Allan, 2015; Al-Khalifa et al., 2015). For example, the concept of *Mahram* has been a strong norm for Saudi women, most interestingly in Saudi organisations (see Abalkhail and Allan, 2015). Based on this view, this study's concern is whether gender issues in Saudi organisations reveal different interactions with the OC. This seems relevant, since gender has been a major issue in organisational and OC literature (see Lewis, 2001; Alvesson and Billing, 2009; Worrall, 2012; Vanderbroeck and Wasserfallen, 2017).

Secondly, although the Saudi government gives considerable attention to increasing Saudi women's work opportunities (which some media reports and Saudi activists' views argue will improve the lives of Saudi women, society and national economic conditions, e.g. Alhareth et al., 2015; Aljazeera News, 2016), there are almost no academic studies that have empirically examined the implications of these claims in Saudi society. Interestingly, Sara Alqahtani's (2016) report shows that the percentage of divorced Saudi women workers is relatively higher than that of unemployed Saudi women. Based on an official statistical report (see General Authority for Statistics, 2016c: 32) and a marriage counselor consultation (Abdual Alasmari), she attributes this issue to the long hours that Saudi women have to put in at the workplace (usually 40 hours a week) which may cause stress in the household and, in turn, increase conflicts between couples which may end up, unfortunately, with separation. In this respect, while some academic studies (globally, like Clark, 2001 and Allen et al., 2013; or Saudi, like Al-Mohsen, 2000) indicate empirical findings that appear to highlight the relevance of Alqahtani's claims, Saudi media have criticised such claims, which pressured the General Authority for Statistics to withdraw the validity of Alqahtani's claims (see General Authority for Statistics, 2016a).

In brief, family values appear to be driving factors for Saudi employees, which suggests different findings in relation to OC. Also, from the previous discussion, the Saudi women's

issues and their challenges in the workplace appear to be highly relative to the aim of this study. It seems to be highly relevant to examine the role of gender (as a characteristic of an individual) within the OC.

Tribal belonging

The tribe (*Qabilah*) is another essential social entity in Saudi communality. In general, members of a tribe project a strong relationship, so that although elements, like a clan, of a tribe might have their differences, they usually present as one unit with respect to other tribes. Arab – but not necessarily Islamic – traditions place significant consideration on maintaining tribal dignity and reputation (see Dickson, 2015). Hence, tribal belonging is presented as a vital aspect for shaping the behaviour of Arab people. Al-Twajri and Al-Muhaiza (1996) observe that while members of individualistic cultures are controlled by internal pressure (e.g. guilt), collectivist cultures, e.g. Arabs, are controlled by external societal pressure (e.g. shame). Other reviewers, such as Robertson et al. (2001) and Dickson (2015), show that the effect of strict and unquestionable codes of honour and loyalty, which are combined with a strong family structure, appear to be powerful in guiding Saudi people's behaviour. For instance, Mohammed (1988) reveals that if a tribal member cheated on a deal or did not make good on a promise, this might cause him loss of honour, criticism, and impact his tribal relationships (see Dickson, 2015 for more examples). Although the foundation of Saudi Arabia has united the tribes and their lands under one country (the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), which has increased their involvement in aspects of urbanised life (e.g. education and employment) and allowed for more interaction between them and other national communities and global societies (especially in respect to the government scholarship programme), there has been limited change with respect to tribal norms and traditions, especially in the recent generation (see Al-Yahya, 2009). Different reviews show that most Saudi people still maintain their tribal identities and exercise tribal customs and traditions in their daily life (see Sirageldin et al., 1984; Al-Farsy, 1986, 1990; Adler and Gundersen, 2007; Dickson, 2015). Interestingly, tribal belonging still appears to be a vital source of pride and prestige, which goes beyond merely holding the name of the tribe, stressing commitment to maintaining tribal norms, traditions and being supportive to other tribal members. Failure to fulfil this moral obligation would incur the displeasure of other members and may lead to ostracism (Mohammed, 1988).

These tribal features have gained the attention of academics examining their influence on OC and employee behaviour (see Branine and Analoui, 2006; ALHussan et al, 2014). One of the

most recent cultural studies conducted in Saudi (see Al-Khalifa et al., 2015: 205) shows that social traditions concerning family and tribal prioritisation have an influential impact on organisational behaviour, stating:

“in Saudi Arabia a person never leaves the family mentality behind and moves on; this mentality stays within him or her throughout all stages of their life. What this mentality does is create the “connections” they need wherever they work either in a government job or in the private sector. These “connections” have a nickname in the Saudi culture; the Saudis call it “vitamin C” (it’s vitamin WOW in Arabic as the translation of “connections” in Arabic jargon is Wasta).”

Al-Yahya (2009) and Sidani and Thornberry (2013) observe similar issues. In addition to Wasta, Al-Yahya (2009) demonstrates that due to family and tribal strictures, participation and representation in decision-making is very limited among other organisational members in Saudi public organisations. However, an interesting finding indicates that some forms of representation and participation in decision-making have changed over the last decades toward more involvement in decision-making. He assumes the new generation of leaders are accepting and empowering other organisational members to participate in decision-making, which, in turn, helps reduce resistance in the culture. Hence, these observations increase the validity of examining the relationship between OC and IB in Saudi Arabia. Looking over the points of the last discussion, they seem to also support the argument concerning Saudi female issues in the workplace.

Friendship commitment

Arab traditions and Islamic teachings also encourage friendly relationships. Most of Saudi culture reviews and studies indicate that Islam is seen to be significant for its highly collective orientation (e.g. Bjerke and Al-Meer, 1993; Al-Khalifa et al., 2015; Dickson, 2015). Islam underlines concern for others and emphasises a friendly relationship among individuals. According to Muna (1980), friendship in Arab culture, generally, and Saudi culture, particularly, remains a prevalent and an essential value. This has some important implications in the functioning of formal organisations and groups. Muna indicates that it is not surprising to observe an Arab manager depending on friendship ties for getting things done within his society and institution, i.e. *Wasta*. Al-Faleh (1985) also shows that the value of friendship in Arab culture is taken beyond boundaries that are familiar in other societies, in the West in particular. For example, he shows that it is unusual for an Arab to refuse a request from a friend, for example when they request that their business in the organisation gets done faster

than usual. Refusing it might be seen as ‘shame’, which is also a similar issue in tribal traditions (see also Al-Khalifa et al., 2015; Dickson, 2015).

However, some researchers claim that family allegiance, tribal belonging and friendship commitment values have ‘positive’ implications for organisational operations. Ali et al. (1991) state that Saudi executives commonly attempt to establish a good reputation, not only for themselves or their tribes and friends, but also with their employees by being generous, wise, honest and committed to social relationships. Sebhatu (1994) also claims that Saudi executives express concern for the quality of their workers’ living conditions, especially if they are from the same community, family or tribe. Based on Sebhatu’s argument, this increases trust between Saudi executives and workers, which inspires cooperative and participative leadership in Saudi enterprises.

To summarise, given that Saudi cultural themes (i.e. friendship commitment, tribal belonging and family allegiance) are frequently seen to bond Saudi people, and taking into consideration the alternative discussions outlined in this section, a few points are worth highlighting: (1) not all Saudi people adhere to these cultural values to the same degree; (2) the interpretations and articulations of these values vary among Saudis; (3) due to the distinct work practices of Saudi organisations, which are attributable to their societal values, examining their implications is argued to be highly relevant to the aim of this study. This will be summarised in the next section.

4.4 Why Saudi Arabia?

Looking closely at the discussions of this chapter, there are some interesting points that make Saudi Arabia a good context for an additional study. Firstly, it has been observed that most of the existing organisational studies were conducted in organisations from countries that have strict separation between state and the affairs of religion, or where few people actively engage in religion. In this regard, undertaking organisational studies on Saudi Arabia, with its organisational operations associated with various influential religious and social values, seems to have significant potential for adding to the organisational literature and Saudi work knowledge (see Johns, 2006). Furthermore, the increasing significance of Saudi Arabia in international businesses has led to many theorists calling for more organisational researches to understand the nature of Saudi values and their impacts in the workplace (see Deresky, 2014: 91; Peng and Meyer, 2016: 283). These cited reviews show that misunderstanding these

values or underestimating their influence in the Saudi workplace may affect the success of international organisations.

Another point that may reinforce the importance of this study is that while previous researches have emphasised having a deep understanding of Saudi language, ancient cultures, domestic communities, the nature of the country's legal systems, and Islamic values for reflecting reflective realities of Saudi organisational work practices (see Bjerke, 1999; Moran et al., 2014; Yurdakul and Ozturkcan, 2014; Deresky 2014; Niblock, 2015), this study assumes to have an advantage in this matter. The background of the research (the author was born, raised and has work experience in Saudi Arabia) may provide alternative interpretations to those claimed by previous research. The example proposed in the introduction to this chapter may justify the underlying argument of this point. Furthermore, given that subgroups and diversity within Saudi society have been neglected in the previous studies (e.g. Hofstede, 1980; Muna, 1980; Farsy, 1990; Al-Aiban and Pearce; 1993), examining these social aspects is argued to be vital. Indeed, the former discussions of this chapter showed that Saudi society has variance in its minor communities (both cultural and religious) and some of its people have different ideologies (e.g. activist, liberal, secular and feminist). Accordingly, examining how these individual characteristics interact with Saudi OC is seen to be highly important (see Alsarhani, 2010).

Another reason that suggests carrying out further researches on Saudi Arabia is the limited OC studies that have been conducted in Saudi organisations. Reviewing the Saudi OC studies (e.g. Hijan, 1992; Al-beraidi, 2008; Al-Adaileh and Al-Atawi, 2011; Awadh and Ismail, 2012; Aldhuwaihi and Shee, 2015), it seems that undertaking further OC researches in the context is useful. This is argued for different key reasons, most significantly:

- (a) There is a limited amount of OC research conducted in the context of Saudi Arabia, with its organisational operations associated with many social and religious norms (see Al-beraidi, 2008: 14).
- (b) Most of these researches focus on a single culture perspective (mostly IP) (e.g. Hijan, 1992), hence, considering alternative culture perspectives (i.e. DP and FP) would produce different and more reflective findings.

(c) These researches relied on quantitative methodologies, and it was argued that qualitative approaches (e.g. ethnography) may provide better insights into the nature of the dynamic relationship between OC and IB.

(d) The culture definition/model of these studies focused on one or two components (e.g. artefacts and values) (Al-Adaileh and Al-Atawi, 2011), and it was argued that this would not reflect the reality of OC (see Martin and Frost, 2011).

(e) Culture in these studies is assumed to be represented by organisational leaders. Other organisational members, especially lower-level employees and female workers, have not been fully taken into consideration. Examining these aspects would add to the OC literature knowledge and increase the understanding of these issues, which, in turn, would improve HR management practices in Saudi organisations.

Briefly, taking into consideration the research limitations and gaps outlined in the previous chapter, the points expanded on in this section can add to the importance of this study. All these points will be summarised in the following chapter.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to highlight some key aspects of Saudi Arabian geographical, political, social and economic features. Divided into three main sections, it showed that although Saudi Arabia shares some common values with other Arab and Islamic countries, which have significant influences on its organisational operations, these should not imply full cultural homogeneity. This chapter shows that the unique political, economic and social aspects of Saudi Arabia reveal considerable differences; however, most international studies have focused on the similarities of these issues at the macro level, and, therefore, the differences at the micro level have not been included in their analyses. Also, the assumption of homogeneity within Saudi society has led some Saudi management studies to neglect the diversity within Saudi social and religious communities, as well as Saudi people's ideologies. Therefore, this chapter has demonstrated the influence of these differences in Saudi society and organisational operations. Examining these issues is argued to be significant in adding to the organisational literature (both Saudi and international) and to greater understanding of Saudi workplace practices. The next chapter will explain the methodological approach of this study which will dominate its key aims and questions.

Chapter 5. Research methodology

5.1 Introduction

The literature review chapters have outlined essential issues that are related to the concerns of this study (i.e. how an individual interacts with the OC and what the implications of this interaction are on IB). More precisely, the OC and IB chapters covered significant studies that have attempted to study the relationship between OC and IB directly, under the PO fit or person-culture fit research. Nevertheless, critical theoretical gaps and methodological limitations were discussed about person-culture fit studies (which were highlighted at the end of Chapter 3). These limitations and theoretical gaps serve as the foundation for this study's aims and its research strategy, design and methodology. Furthermore, the Saudi Arabia chapter provides important arguments that call for conducting further organisational studies in that context. Given that Saudi Arabia contains some unusual organisational characteristics, it seems highly desirable to conduct more cultural studies in Saudi organisations.

This chapters aims to demonstrate the research design and methods employed to collect and analyse the data for this study. Also, since it has now become commonly acknowledged that most qualitative research requires an exercise of disciplined reflexivity (Weick, 1999: 803) in order to deliver more discriminating, discerning accounts of research (Foley, 2002), the sections of this chapter will include some of the researcher 'key' experiences in the study and how these shaped the choices of the research strategy, the methods of collecting the data, the dynamics within the field, and the analysis of the data. Nevertheless, more detailed experiences of the data collection and process was included in Appendix 1. Reflexivity is argued to be very significant in revealing the assumptions of researchers (Willmott, 1993; Keenoy, 1999) and avoiding giving undue superiority to the researcher's final account (Rorty, 1989). This is more important for ethnographic research, since it is considered to be greatly interwoven with the researcher's values, preferences and assumptions from the primary conception of ideas to the final phases of the research (Van Maanen, 1991; Martin, 1992; Mathew and Ogbonna, 2009). More precisely for subjective research, reflexivity is essential in ensuring that the voices of the participants in the writing are not lost. This is also emphasised by the argument that knowledge of facts cannot exist without some interpretation or theoretical positioning by the researcher (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000). However, the researcher is aware that reflexivity (or ethnography approach) is a debatable issue in social science research methodology and some researchers have argued that the researcher's personal and emotional

involvement in the research process may give rise to a host of issues, e.g. validity, reliability and generalisation (see Martin, 1992; Schein, 2010; Gentles et al., 2014; Berger, 2015; Sandywell et al., 2015). Although those issues will be addressed through this chapter, it should be emphasised here that an attempt has been made to keep researcher input to a minimum.⁴

This chapter will start with a brief overview of the main gaps in the existing researches and how the design of this study is illuminated by such gaps. This is covered in the ‘Research problems and objectives’ section. Following this, is a section that demonstrates the significance of the study. This section will highlight a number of reasons that make this study valuable. After explaining the importance of the research, the research methodologies section attempts to provide a critical discussion on the research methods (qualitative vs. quantitative). Following this section is the research strategy and design section. This section will outline how a single case study was adopted as a strategy of this study. In addition, it will introduce important information relating to the organisation that was selected for the study and the research sample. Subsequently, the methods that were employed to collect the research data will be extensively discussed in the data collection techniques section. This section shows that the interview, observation and document analysis were used to collect the research data. Also, it demonstrates that due to some critical reasons, the data collection went into two stages. Each will be illustrated and the reason behind this technique will be explained. Another essential section this chapter included is the data analysis. This section will outline how the data of the study was analysed. Furthermore, it includes a critical argument about whether using computer software would be helpful for qualitative researches, such as the current one. Finally, the conclusion will provide a summary about the discussions of this chapter and will introduce the topic of the following chapter.

5.2 Research problems and objectives

The examination of the literature identified critical limitations, in terms of the person-culture research, and some other research gaps. These include theoretical, methodological and contextual levels of analysis gaps. Generally, literature review chapters concluded that person-culture fit studies have considered only one, or sometimes two, cultural dimensions (e.g.

⁴ Martin (1992: 24-26) makes valuable suggestions on how the researcher should use the language. She suggests not to make universalising assumptions (like “all people think that ...”), instead, using ‘many’ or ‘few’ appeared to be more appropriate. Also, she indicates that ‘generalisation’ should be kept to a minimum. For example, when the researcher of this current study gathered information about the organisational policy, some employees appeared to be unfamiliar – or provided contradicting information – about it. In this case – as Martin suggests – the researcher tried to use phrases like “the policy states that [...], what do you think of this?” This chapter will elaborate similar notices from other organisational researchers and explain how the researcher has employed them for the research purpose and aims.

values and norms) to assess culture and its relationship with IB (which usually focuses on the congruence between organisational ‘values’ and individual ‘values’) (e.g. Chatman, 1989, 1991; O’Reilly et al., 1991; Chatman et al., 2014; O’Reilly et al., 2014). They argue that considering one or two cultural manifestations would be enough to represent the culture as a whole. This reflects the ‘specialist’ IP cultural studies, as Martin et al. (2006) and Martin and Frost (2011) illustrate. However, this approach was criticised by different key OC scholars (e.g. Pettigrew, 1979; Schein, 1984, 2010; Martin, 2002; Alvesson, 2013, 2016). In brief, they argued that assessing the OC needs to consider all cultural manifestations, including values, beliefs and underlying assumptions. Among their critical points, which were discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, they argued that the meanings associated with a single kind of cultural manifestation may not be consistent with the meanings associated with a wide range of cultural manifestations. Hence, adopting this approach would lead to misleading data about culture. Accordingly, they have emphasised that a cultural study should be ‘generalist’ rather than ‘specialist’; it needs to examine a wide range of cultural manifestations to assess the OC. Based on their arguments, researches on person-culture fit have failed to capture a full definition of OC and its relationship with IB. Adopting such a definition would reveal critical aspects in the relationship between OC and IB.

Another limitation of person-culture fit researchers is the methodological approach they adopt to evaluate OC. Person-culture fit studies rely on quantitative approaches to examine OC and how individuals interact with it (see Chatman and O’Reilly, 2016). Nevertheless, other OC scholars (such as Smircich, 1983b; Schein, 1984, 2010; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013) showed that quantitative methodologies are inadequate in exploring culture comprehensively and capturing its complexity and multidimensionality. They argued that exploring OC and its relationship with other organisational dimensions (e.g. IB) should be through conducting qualitative studies (e.g. Martin, 1992; Kunda, 1992; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015). Recently, as formerly indicated, Chatman and O’Reilly (2016: 212–213), pioneers of the person-culture fit research approach, show that the values that are selected in the OCP are not comprehensive and suggested that a careful ethnography study may discover other values. Based on this short argument, the methodological approach of person-culture fit study suggests another critical limitation in examining the relationship between OC and IB.

In addition to the last limitations, person-culture fit suggests a level analysis gap. As was explained in literature review chapters, most of person-culture fit researchers have

concentrated on the functionalist IP of culture, and a few studies consider the DP (i.e. the PG fit researches). Although PG fit studies assume to consider the DP aspects of culture, they have only considered the different values that differentiate subcultures within an organisation (see Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992; Adkins and Caldwell, 2004; Elfenbein and O'Reilly, 2007). Hence, person-culture fit researches have neglected other important cultural aspects in their analyses, most significantly the fragmentation aspects. Therefore, it can be argued that the relationship between OC (which includes all the cultural aspects, harmony, inconsistency, and ambiguity) and IB have not been fully addressed yet. The dominant research approach in person-culture fit studies has leaned towards revealing only specific aspects of the relationship, while ignoring potentially critical and challenging aspects. The following diagram may simplify this argument:

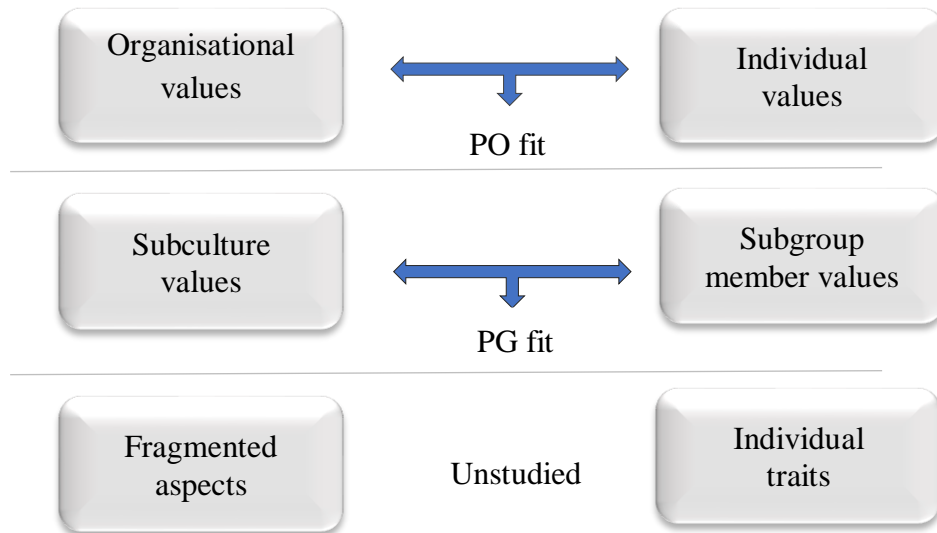


Figure 5-1: An imaginary diagram simplifies the level analysis of person-culture fit and person-group fit researches.

The last research gap that was identified in the literature review chapters demonstrated is context. It was broadly discussed that most OC researches are commonly conducted in organisations from countries that have strict separation between state and religion, or where few people actively engage in religion. Therefore, other countries that may have strong social and religious norms (e.g. Saudi Arabia) provide alternative context and compelling research rationale for conducting further OC studies in such countries. Such studies are argued to add significant insights to the extant organisational literature (see Al-beraidi, 2008; Alsarhani, 2010; Zuhur, 2011; Zahra, 2011; Yurdakul and Ozturkcan, 2014; Peng and Meyer, 2016).

Considering these research limitations and gaps, this study was designed to contribute by conducting a full examination of OC and its relationship with IB. It essentially aimed to explore and evaluate the dynamics and complexities of the relationship between OC and IB in a context that is considered different, important and worthy of further research. Thus, this exploratory study attempted to address these research limitations and gaps by (a) adopting a full definition of culture (i.e. values, beliefs and underlying assumptions), (b) adopting the three-perspective framework (i.e. IP, DP and FP), and (c) adopting a qualitative-ethnographic approach to explore the relationship between OC and IB. This research has focused on the following key objectives:

- (1) To conduct a qualitative study that attempts to analyse all aspects of organisational life in depth and explore documents in a way that captures aspects of harmony (integration), inconsistency (differentiation), ambiguity, irony and contradiction (fragmentation) contemporaneously (i.e. the three-perspective framework) in the context of a finance organisation in Saudi Arabia;
- (2) To analyse the individual characteristics comprehensively (i.e. including psychological/social (e.g. values and beliefs), social category (e.g. age, gender), and other subjective characteristics (e.g. education and work experience)) and examine how they interact and interrelate with OC aspects (i.e. consistencies, conflicts and ambiguities) within the context of a single organisation; and
- (3) To explore the consequences that may arise from the interactions between OC and individual characteristics in depth, and analyse the nature, dynamics and extent of their relationship. Most interestingly, this study aims to explore the individual qualities that were more interacting (or tended to be shaping) with one of the OC forms (either integration, differentiation or fragmentation).

5.3 The importance of research

The significance of this study can be summarised under three key points:

- (1) The research methodology (qualitative);
- (2) The multiple-perspectives framework (IP, DP and FP); and
- (3) The research context (Saudi) and sector (finance).

In terms of the research methodology, it has been shown in previous chapters that different leading researchers on culture (e.g. Pettigrew, 1979; Smircich, 1983b; Schein, 1984, 2010;

Van Maanen, 1979a; Martin, 2002; Alvesson, 2013, 2016) have advocated the need for an in-depth qualitative analysis to study OC. However, based on the existing cultural literature, it seems that there are a limited number of researchers who have considered and taken this suggestion forwards (e.g. Van Maanen, 1991; Kunda, 1992; Mathew and Ogbonna, 2009; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015). This is more relevant in the context of the indeterminacy in the existing person-culture fit studies that, in general, reached inconclusive findings regarding the relationship between OC and IB. This inconclusiveness is often the consequence of the functionalist approach adopted by the person-culture fit studies. Hence, this study responds to the increasing need for further insights into these vital aspects of organisational analysis. This is done through the presentation of an empirically driven ethnographic account of the relationship between OC and IB from multiple perspectives. This last point leads to the second reason that makes this study important.

As this study has previously explained, attempts to analyse OC from multiple perspectives. In line with the reasons and benefits of adopting the three-perspective framework (which have been discussed in the previous chapters), it also responds to the call for the adoption of multiple frameworks and perspectives in analysing the OC of a single organisation (see Martin, 1992, 2002; Harris and Ogbonna, 1998; Martin et al., 2006; Morgan and Ogbonna, 2008; Kappos and Rivard, 2008; Mathew and Ogbonna, 2009; Martin and Frost, 2011; Jackson, 2011; Alvesson, 2013). Most of these cited scholars have been arguing that the adoption of the three-perspective framework in analysing OC will most likely offer deep and rich insights into organisational life. However, not many researchers have applied multiple lenses in such analysis. Therefore, this study assumes that the three-perspective framework would present useful and vital insights into the integration, differentiation and fragmentation of organisational life and their relationship with IB. Potentially, this will identify different aspects of it, which facilitates a more comprehensive analysis in the relationship between OC and IB (especially in terms of the FP where none of the person-culture fit studies have examined this perspective). In addition, the cultural studies that applied the three-perspective framework have been lacking in the research context (i.e. Saudi Arabia) and the setting (i.e. a financial organisation) of this study. This important issue will be discussed further under the third key point that makes this study significant.

The final point that makes this research significant is the research context and setting (see Johns, 2006). As indicated previously, Saudi Arabia was selected as the research context and

its financial sector was chosen as the empirical setting for this study. This adds to the study's significance for various reasons. Firstly, Saudi Arabia has attracted ample attention from different researchers who found it a very interesting context that needs further environmental, social, economic, political and organisational studies (see Mellahi, 2006; Zuhur, 2011; Zahra, 2011; Deresky, 2014; Yurdakul and Ozturkcan, 2014; Peng and Meyer, 2016). This is due to the limited research that has been conducted in Saudi (most of the organisational studies are based on Western countries), its special position (i.e. political and economic) and its unique characteristics (e.g. social and religious).

In general, the Saudi Arabia chapter indicates that Saudi occupies an essential political and economic position – locally, regionally and globally – that makes it an attractive place for investment. It has been the key member of the Arab world, the GCC, and is considered a leader of the Islamic world (see Mellahi, 2006). Also, besides being a member of the WTO and the G20, Saudi has one of the biggest oil reserves in the world. This makes it a major player in the stability of the global economy; the prices of oil are considerably related to Saudi's social and political stability (see Adelman, 1995; Mellahi, 2006). In addition, Saudi Arabia is a key member of OPEC, and plays a central role in its decision-making (see Nakov and Nuño, 2013; Alkhathlan et al., 2014; Niblock, 2015). OPEC controls global oil production, which affects oil prices.

In terms of Saudi Arabian social issues, it was outlined that the social and religious aspects of Saudi society play significant roles within the Saudi workplace environment (see Najm, 2015: 424–425). However, previous organisational researches (which were mostly on cross-culture) tended to focus on Saudi social commonalities at the macro level, hence, neglecting social diversities at the micro level. Therefore, taking into consideration the discussions in the Saudi Arabia chapter, this study has given attention to the diversities of Saudi society, with the examination of IB (which included these different individual social aspects) and its relationship with OC revealing interesting findings that would challenge or give alternative views to previous research findings (e.g. Hofstede, 1980; Muna, 1980; Al-Rasheed, 2013; Alhareth et al., 2015).

Hence, taking into consideration these factors and the call for more research in Saudi, this study will contribute to the organisational literature (in relation to Saudi in particular, and globally in general) by exploring and analysing the special characteristics that Saudi organisations possess and discovering how these characteristics relate to OC and IB. This

study has potential implications. For example, it will (1) help Saudi organisations to improve their work environments and work practices (especially HR), and (2) help foreign investors who have found Saudi an attractive place to invest but have experienced difficulties in a number of cases through lack of understanding of Saudi business procedures and aspects of Saudi social life.

The other reason why the context and setting add to the significance of this study is that the focus is the Saudi financial sector. This sector plays a vital role in the Saudi economy and is considered to be one of its most important. This is related to the growth that this sector adds to the Saudi economy and the advantages of its development process (see Samargandi et al., 2014; Saudi Vision 2030, 2016). Nowadays, this sector is increasingly growing in its national, regional and international significance, and during the last decade it attracted increasing investment from the Saudi government. For instance, the Saudi government has expended much effort on and invested heavily in the King Abdullah Financial District project (see King Abdullah Financial District, 2014). Such action reflects the importance of this sector to the Saudi economy. Consequently, since there is a need to conduct further research in Saudi, and this sector is important to the Saudi economy, this study will be a useful contribution to both the organisational studies and to the growing literature on Saudi financial business development.

The last point that makes this study important (in relation to the research context and setting) is the adaptation of the three-perspective framework which it employs. It has been mentioned under this section that there is a call for the adoption of multiple perspectives in analysing OC; however, few researchers have taken this suggestion forwards. This has also been lacking in this study's context and setting. Looking at the existing cultural research, it can be seen that most cultural studies are based on Western countries and a very limited number have been conducted in Saudi or other non-Western countries. In relation to this point, it has been pointed out that most, if not all, of the studies that are based on Saudi organisations have adopted the functional IP (e.g. Hijan, 1992; Al-Adaileh and Al-Atawi, 2011; Awadh and Ismail, 2012; Aldhuwaihi and Shee, 2015). Thus, considering the limitations of the IP perspective, the benefits of the three-perspective framework and the need for more cultural research in Saudi Arabia, this study seems to be important for the contribution it makes in covering the Saudi context through adopting multiple lenses in analysing the relationship with OC.

5.4 Research methodologies (qualitative vs. quantitative)

According to many research methodological reviews (e.g. Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Bryman and Bell, 2011; Yin, 2014, 2015; Saunders et al., 2016), there are two broad traditions of academic enquiry. These are qualitative and quantitative methods, and they will be discussed briefly under this section. Quantitative methodology includes techniques such as the study of existing data, use of questionnaires, and content analysis. In general, these methods require sophisticated statistical analyses of data. In contrast, qualitative research may apply methods such as discourse analysis, ethnographic studies, participant/non-participant observation and analysis of issues such as artefacts. Sometimes, the qualitative approach is referred to as a ‘soft’ approach, whereas the quantitative research is described as ‘hard’ and objective (see Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Although these two methods are important in OC research, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to conduct a comprehensive discussion that covers the merits of both (which have been long debated in different reviews, such as Burrell and Morgan (1979), Smircich (1983a, 1983b), Martin (2002), Schneider et al., (2013) and Chatman and O’Reilly (2016)). Nevertheless, there are some critical aspects of this debate that should be highlighted, since this is essential in the discussion of the choice of methodology for this study. These aspects are introduced and discussed under the following paragraphs.

As indicated previously, quantitative research adopts an objective view which has more of an emphasis on breadth rather than depth, and aims at generalisation (see Martin, 2002). Looking at the existing culture reviews (e.g. Denison, 1996; Martin and Frost, 2011; Schneider et al., 2013; Chatman and O’Reilly, 2016), this seems to match the ‘etic’ perspective, where the study examines organisational life through the lens of an outsider. In contrast, qualitative methodologies concentrate on obtaining an in-depth understanding of organisational life (‘emic’ or native point of view), and they do not aim at generalisation.

Interestingly, some scholars (e.g. Reichardt and Cook, 1979) argue that the qualitative method is both process- and explorative-oriented, holistic in its approach, concentrates on understanding, and follows an interpretive and rationalistic process. Qualitative researches are generally descriptive compared to the rigorous methods that are frequently related to quantitative research. In relation to this point, it should be mentioned that the roots of these arguments (as described in the OC chapter) can be traced back to the subjective-versus-objective debate, which is represented by positivism and anti-positivism (see Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Smircich, 1983a; Martin and Frost, 2011).

It has been outlined in the OC chapter that the struggle between the objective and subjective choices are related to the epistemological and ontological variances and these have a foundation in the central thoughts regarding the nature of organisations (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Martin, 2002). However, the most important point here is that OC – like several social phenomena – is not readily responsive to quantitative rigour. OC comprises the beliefs, values and underlying assumptions of cultural members, and some of these vital cultural components are located at the level of the subconscious. Also, several of these assumptions can be influential enough to impact and guide IB without individuals being aware of them (see Pettigrew, 1979; Schein, 1984, 2010; Alvesson, 2013). This is because some of these underlying assumptions are taken for granted, and, hence, cultural scholars have been arguing that the capability of quantitative measurement (e.g. questionnaires) to analyse such crucial cultural aspects is, at best, very suspect, if not impossible (see Martin, 2002).

For instance, examining the FP, which reflects aspects such as inconsistencies, ironies and ambiguities, is impossible using quantitative approach. The emotional and subjective worldview is captured and analysed well by applying the qualitative approach (see Martin, 2002; Alvesson, 2013). This might be the reason behind different scholars' arguments (e.g. Scholz, 1987) that applying methods other than case studies for examining OC would be difficult. Concerning the importance of the qualitative approach, Bartunek and Seo (2002: 240) state that:

“such exploration offers the possibility of stimulating the development of new understanding about the variety and depth with which organisational members experience important organisational phenomena.”

Therefore, due to these key reasons, this thesis adopts a qualitative approach to examining the relationship between OC and IB in Saudi Arabia. The exploration of OC in this thesis tries to capture in depth the subjective world view of members of the organisation and explore how they tend to perceive their OC, based on their individual characteristics, and what their actions/reactions are in response to their perceptions. This was done taking into consideration that although quantitative research is seen as highly sophisticated, objective and rigorous, this does not mean that the qualitative approach is unsystematic.

In fact, by making a comparison analysis of both methods, it can be seen that qualitative research has much more detailed data to analyse (usually gathered from different sources, e.g. interviews, narratives and observation) (see Smircich, 1983a, 1983b; Martin, 2002; Bryman

and Bell, 2011; Clarke and Braun, 2014; Yin, 2015). This means that not adopting systematic analysis strategies in the qualitative tradition will most likely cause the researcher to become lost in the middle of a voluminous amount of data.

The acclaimed researchers who followed the qualitative tradition have developed systematic processes for data analysis. For example, Mintzberg (1979) has provided guidelines for analysing qualitative data. In grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967) have discussed detailed processes for the systematic analysis of qualitative data. Looking back at the evolution of the processes of grounded theory reveals that it has been divided into two camps, each distinguished by its own ideographic processes (see Goulding, 2002).

Goulding (1999) shows that Glaser focuses on the emergent nature of theory development while, on the other hand, Strauss places more emphasis on the systematic (open, axial) coding procedures. Goulding (2002: 47) observes that the variances are subtle and states:

“... Glaser stresses the interpretive, contextual and emergent nature of theory development, while, on the other hand, the late Strauss appeared to have emphasised highly systematic coding techniques.”

This variance is effectively indicated in Stern’s (1994) observation that Glaser would stop at each word to ask ‘what do we have here?’ while, in contrast, Strauss would stop at each word and ask ‘what if?’

Having these essential discussions, this thesis – while making use of coding for analysing the research data – tends to maintain the emergent nature of the examination active and intact. This technique closely reflects Atkinson et al.’s (2003: 150) view that *“when Glaser and Strauss discuss such issues as ‘constant comparative method’, they are describing one mode or variation of practical research reasoning.”* Interestingly, Turner (1981), in the analysis of qualitative data, added another dimension and argued that the implicit understanding with which the researcher begins their study is made sharper and, in some events, changed within the process of the data analysis. Turner explained that it might be essential, during data analysis, to make changes in the codes, which might require additional data collection to validate the emerging thoughts. In this regard, different researchers (see Pidgeon and Henwood, 2004; Smith, 2015) show that the relationship between data analysis and data collection in pursuit of ‘theoretical saturation’ makes grounded theory distinctive and its appeal attractive to qualitative researchers.

This study considers Turner's view and will apply his style in the data collection and analysis process of this study. This issue will be further explained in the data analysis section. Having introduced this research design (case study) and the data analysis methodology (qualitative), the following sections contain key discussions and descriptions of these two important issues. Furthermore, it should be indicated that the research data analysis will be described in further detail under a separate section in this chapter.

5.5 Research strategy and design

In the context of this study, there are two vital issues that have been highlighted and discussed in previous chapters and sections. The first is the research strategy that this study adopts, and the second is the research methodologies that this study applies. This section will focus on the research strategy, and the following section will outline the research methodologies.

The case study approach has been widely employed in OC research. Different key scholars in culture have identified several essential advantages of adopting the case study approach to exploring culture. For instance, Hartley (2004) showed that the methodologies of the case study – which falls within the qualitative tradition – are suitable when discovering social processes as they unfold in organisations, and also when the purpose of the study is exploring the level of normalcy of the organisational life (e.g. illicit or covert behaviour). Other cultural scholars argue that the case study can offer insightful understandings (Geertz, 1973), a more complete contextual logic of the examined phenomena (Miles, 1979) and a foundation for theory development (Van Maanen, 1979b; 1979c). It has also been argued that the case study is capable of explaining the 'how' and 'why' of relationships: it has the potential to provide explanations and discern patterns, which other research methodologies (i.e. quantitative) may not capture (see Yin, 2014).

Consequently, it can be seen that the research gaps identified, and the research aims and questions outlined, make the case study the most suitable approach and provide the motivation to adopt this strategy for this study. This takes into consideration the central aim of this research, which is to illuminate how OC develops in a context, and to explore this phenomenon's influence on, and relationship to, IB. This can be best arrived at through analysing and documenting the set of factors affecting the organisation and employees as a whole, rather than in fragmentation.

Having selected the case study as the research strategy, the next step was to choose the most appropriate case design. This is because case studies can have a multiple or single-case design. It has been argued that a single-case design is used when the case is critical, rare or revelatory (see Yin, 2009: 53–60), whereas multiple-case studies are seen as stronger: the data collected is more exhaustive. However, Yin (2009: 53) mentions that the aim of multiple-case studies is replication, but not sampling logic.

Hence, taking into consideration these key points, the purpose of this study (i.e. exploring the relationship between OC and IB), the persuasive scholars' arguments (e.g. Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2014) and the example of various single-case cultural studies (e.g. Ackroyd and Crowdy, 1990; Van Maanen, 1991; Kunda, 1992; Martin, 1992; Mathew and Ogbonna, 2009; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015), this study adopted the single-case study as its research strategy and design. This choice also considers the suggestion of Dyer and Wilkins (1991) that a single deep-case study is more effective than a multiple-case study; it offers more insights into organisational aspects and issues, as this thesis has attempted. However, this thesis is aware that case studies have been criticised on different grounds. More importantly, some organisational scholars maintain that case studies are lacking in statistical reliability and validity, which makes generalisation problematic. Nevertheless, this argument is not supported by advocates of case study and Yin (2014) explains that the aim of a case study is to make analytic, rather than statistical generalisations. The advocates of case study also maintain that steps can be taken to reduce, if not remove, the limitations of case study (see Yin, 2014).

The organisation that was the subject of the case study for this research operates in the financial sector in Saudi Arabia. Full access was successfully obtained to this organisation, the name of which will remain anonymous, as requested by the officials of this organisation. Therefore, the organisation will be given an abbreviated name: SO (Saudi Organisation). However, it should be noted that gaining access to a Saudi organisation was a very difficult proposition (see Appendix 1). Although this might be with many studies worldwide, Saudi Arabia has some idiosyncratic issues (for examples, see Yurdakul and Ozturkcan, 2014: 231; Niblock, 2015: 11). Indeed, Saudi organisations, private organisations in particular, have only recently become familiar with the concept of qualitative research⁵. Indeed, doing the negotiations for

⁵ The researcher also was involved in different research projects during the undergraduate study and conducted a Master's dissertation at a Saudi organisation on a similar subject (see Aldhobaib, 2011).

access with some Saudi organisations, several managers and other organisational members expressed doubts about the benefits of qualitative research. They were concerned with finding quick solutions for certain work practices in their organisations and appeared to be more comfortable with quantitative techniques (e.g. questionnaires) and, therefore, quantitative figures.

Three organisations were approached for access; two were in the financial sector (including the SO) and one in the petroleum industry. Due to the nature of the methods adopted for collecting the research data (observation, interviews and document analysis), two organisations did not agree to give the researcher a position in their organisations to conduct the observation part. One of them explained that there was no precedence for supporting this kind of request and the other one claimed that sensitive information cannot be exposed to the public. After two failed attempts, SO agreed to give an unpaid full-time position (from 08:00 to 16:00) with certain conditions. Most interestingly, SO was undertaking a training programme for fresh graduates and the researcher was asked to carry out some tasks related to this project, in exchange for collecting the research data. Also, SO was undertaking a project with a consulting organisation to assess its culture ('Great Place to Work, Saudi Arabia'⁶) and how to improve it. Consequently, the researcher was asked to attend the meetings and assess their recommendations. This was not anticipated, and appeared to be unhelpful for the data collection time. However, they turned out to be great opportunities for accessing fundamental information about the organisation and its culture. Finally, the organisation asked for its identity and the identities of its employees to remain completely confidential. As a result, the data analysis process (i.e. transcribing the interviews) was done mainly by the researcher. In addition, the unique characteristics of the organisation will not be discussed.

A final point worth mentioning here is the period of the data collection. The position held at the SO lasted for four months, starting in May 2015, though some scholars argue that an ethnography study should take longer than that (see Martin and Frost, 2011: 321–324). The main reason for not staying longer than four months was related to the regulation that needed to be met by any Saudi scholarship holder, i.e. the researcher. Saudi scholarship programmes allow a maximum of 90 days for a student who would like to collect research data in a Saudi organisation. Although the researcher tried to discuss this condition with the scholarship programme officials (which took around two months of negotiation), the final decision was

⁶ See <http://saen.greatplacetowork.com/>

90 days only. As a result, the researcher asked for a month as a vacation and used it for the benefit of the data collection. Nevertheless, it will be observed through the next sections that different approaches were employed to use the time for data collection effectively.

5.6 Data collection techniques

It has been disclosed that this study adopted ethnographical research methodologies, using the common methods of cultural researchers for collecting data in ethnographic case studies (see Smircich, 1983b; Martin and Frost, 2011). For instance, Smircich (1983b: 162-163) states that for an OC study to be effective, *“three forms of evidence may be used; observational, reports from informants, and the researcher’s participation in the setting.”* Consistent with other cultural researchers’ views, such as Pettigrew (1979), Schein (1984, 2010), Watson (1995), Martin (2002), and Alvesson (2013), as well as other OC studies (e.g. Martin and Siehl, 1983; Kunda, 1992; Mathew and Ogbonna, 2009; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015), the methods that this research adopted were: (1) in-depth interviews, (2) document analysis, and (3) observation. Each of these methods will be introduced and discussed after providing an overview of the data collection process and key information.

In general, data collection went through two main phases. In the first phase (as Figure 5-2 outlines), extensive information about the SO was collected. Due to time constraints on data collection, as mentioned previously, this stage began in the UK before going to carry out the field work. In particular, seven weeks before joining the SO organisation, the researcher started collecting SO documents that were available on its webpage (which contained all their annual reports) and on the internet (e.g. press reports). Furthermore, the researcher tried to contact an employee at HR to discuss the joining process and ask for any essential documents (some of them were statistical reports and internal monthly newsletters). After joining the SO, the researcher engaged in full-time work (40 hours a week) and more documents were collected and close observations made. Also, several in-depth interviews were conducted with key organisational members, mostly high-level managers. This took around six weeks after joining the SO, and consequently, the total duration of the first stage was 13 weeks. Every day (including weekends), the researcher reviewed and compared the data collected from observation, document analysis and interviews, and began designing a list of questions (for the semi-structured interviews) focusing on significant and critical issues related to the OC. It should be noted that this put unnecessary stress on the researcher, because he was concerned about missing any important data. This situation continued until the data analysis process

started.

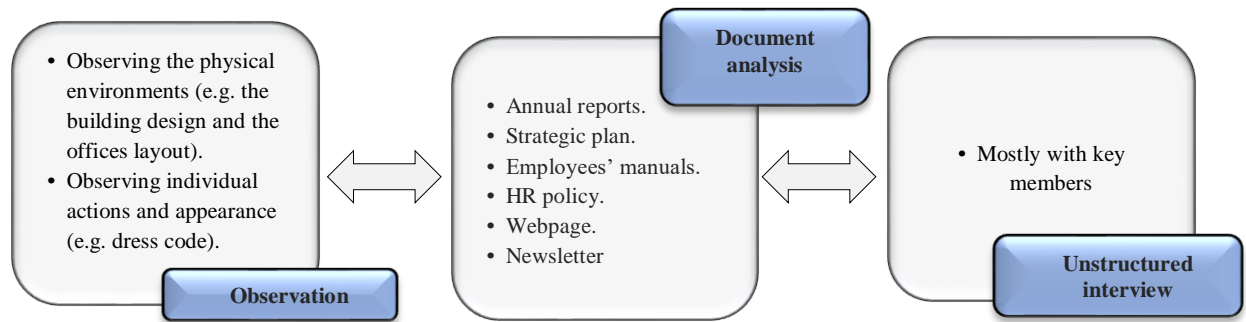


Figure 5-2: The first stage of data collection.

The second data collection phase was not very different from the first, in terms of collecting extensive information. After establishing a basic understanding of key aspects of the organisation, the researcher at this stage started to engage more deeply in the reality of life within the organisation. Most importantly, he started to focus on aspects that appeared to emerge in terms of the relationship between OC and IB, and some other interesting aspects not explained by theories.

After developing an overview of the organisation, the semi-structured interviews were conducted with different employees, at different levels, and with different genders. Also, at this stage, the researcher began to compare the collected data and improve the interview questions (see Figure 5-3). At different times, previous participants were approached again and follow-up interviews were conducted with them about some issues they had mentioned or issues that the researcher observed during the data collection and needed to make more inquiries. This continued even after the researcher left the organisation in September 2015, as will be highlighted in the following sections. Also, the researcher at this stage started giving more attention to the relevance of individual characteristics (e.g. age, gender, level of education, job position, aims, beliefs and values) and investigating how they interact with the OC characteristics (e.g. integration, differentiation, ambiguity). The following section will explain each data collection method. Finally, another important point at this stage is that the researcher attempted to remain independent of and uninfluenced by the SO management. In other words, the interviews with other members of the SO (e.g. lower-level employees) were significant to the aim of this study to observe alternative views to managerial ones. Hence, the researcher tried not to rely on managers' suggestions or guidance on whom to interview, as they might share similar views of the organisation. This technique was also applied in the observation method. Along with observing widely shared norms and behaviours, the

researcher also attempted to observe the ‘undesired’ (or different) behaviour and norms of SO management. This particular technique was inspired by Martin (1992: 23).

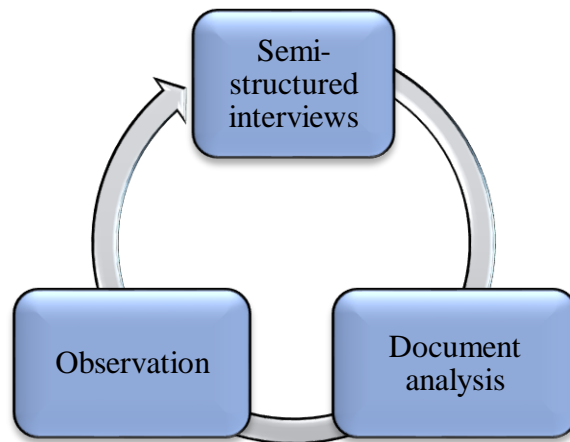


Figure 5-3: The second stage of data collection.

5.6.1 Interview

Many methodological scholars consider the interview to be an essential source of qualitative data (e.g. Fontana and Frey, 2005; Spradley, 2016; Miller and Glassner, 2016) because the interview is found to be a flexible and emergent technique. Additionally, the interview can access individual experiences, inner feelings, opinions (see Fontana and Frey, 2005; Spradley, 2016; Miller and Glassner, 2016) and, more importantly, it can “*elicit views of the person’s subjective world*” (Holstein and Gubrium, 2000: 21). Considering the purpose and aims of this study, as well as the benefits of the interview in studying OC (see Smircich, 1983b; Schein, 1984, 2010; Alvesson, 2013; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015), this technique was regarded as one of the more effective ways of collecting this study data. In general, the focus of the interview was on uncovering and outlining the views of participants on a range of essential OC aspects and examining the interaction and relationships of these aspects with their individual characteristics. The aspects included:

- (1) their interpretations of the wider OC beliefs, values and underlying assumptions;
- (2) exploring the emergence of different organisational groups by discovering how they define themselves, determining the values they hold and how they are differentiated and defined by others; and
- (3) observing the agreements, disagreements and contradictions in the perceptions of employees (among individuals, within single groups and across the different groups in the

organisation) and observing the relationship of these issues with their individual qualities (e.g. values, age, gender, ideology, etc.)

This study began with unstructured interviews (the first stage), asking key participants (i.e. managers) broad and very general questions about their OC and letting them explain and express their experiences freely. The researcher tried to keep the interview informal and encourage interviewees to talk about their work freely and keep leading questions to a minimum by asking things like, “Why do you think this is important?” and, “What else?” The focus was on gathering the objective and subjective views of these key organisational members. This was significant, because the study was about the lack of deep information about aspects of SO culture and the characteristics of its individual. The questions in these interviews were inspired by previous key OC scholars’ guidance (e.g. Schein, 1984, 2010; Kunda, 1992; Martin, 1992; Ogbonna and Harris, 1998; Alvesson, 2013; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015). The interview questions also emerged from the notes collected from SO documents (collected before and after joining the organisation) and early observations of work practices and organisation artefacts (e.g. office layout and facilities).

Hence, when the researcher was gathering necessary information about the organisational life, semi-structured interviews (the second stage) were conducted with employees with different work positions and backgrounds to examine key aspects of SO culture and explore any perceived relationships between employee opinions and their individual characteristics. However, it should be noted that the semi-structured interviews were used as a guide for asking participants about the most significant (or controversial) aspects of SO culture, i.e. participants were encouraged and given the freedom to talk freely. This was important for many reasons. For instance, due to the nature of the fragmentation aspects of culture, participants on different occasions brought different topics or expressed a variety of interpretations of organisational life that were not listed in the interview questions. Also, a few participants preferred not following the interview questions; instead, they wanted to discuss issues that related to their individual experiences. Although some scholars observe that this may not help the study, e.g. they may take it as an opportunity to air their frustrations and grievances, which makes it harder for the data to be analysed (see Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Martin and Frost, 2011), the points that some of them revealed (in terms of the hidden/subconscious aspects of the organisational life and how their discussions exposed their individual characteristics) were worth the risk and the extra effort. The information that some of them provided encouraged

conducting further conversations with previous participants and making further investigations about some of the points they came up with. This was done to (a) be sure that the issues they mentioned reflected the reality of the OC, and (b) to seek further explanations and justifications about the subconscious aspects that these participants expressed and observe the reactions of other participants towards them.

The number of interviews was 48 (Table 5-1 shows the distribution of the interviews). Most interviews were conducted in the organisations, while some were conducted outside, after the researcher had developed good friendships with some members. However, it should be noted that the number of interviews reflects only the interviews that were arranged formally⁷ with the participants. This means that the number of side-conversations (e.g. after the business meetings or during lunch breaks) and the follow-up discussions with previous informants were not included in this figure. As explained previously, due to time constraints on data collection, further investigations were necessary (especially during the data analysis) to complete some important issues about SO culture aspects and its relationship with individuals' characteristics. This was done by phone calls, Skype and sometimes by the WhatsApp chatting application, when the researcher was in the UK. Further, the researcher arranged some visits to the organisation⁸ – during the researcher's family visit to Saudi Arabia – and met with some SO members outside the organisation.

Description	Number	Percentage
Male	38	79%
Female ⁹	10	21%
Board Member	1	2%
General Manager	3	6%
Advisor	3	6%
Department Manager	3	6%
Unit Head	8	17%
Officer	20	42%
Trainee	5	11%
Assistant	5	10%

Table 5-1: The distribution of the interviews.

Each interview started with an introduction covering the researcher's identity and the aim of the study. It also assured the participants of anonymity and confidentiality, and each was given

⁷ 'Formally' here means that the researcher asked the participant to sit an interview – either in the HR department or at their offices – and the researcher followed the procedure explained in this section.

⁸ The last one was in January 2017.

⁹ Females occupy 10% of the total number of the SO members.

an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix 2). Furthermore, each participant was asked permission to record the interview. Interestingly, among all interviewees, one did not allow recording of the interview, one asked not to do the interview (after he was asked for permission to record it), and one – as will be explained shortly – asked for the recording to be deleted. The device used to record the interviews was an iPhone¹⁰. Previous scholars (e.g. Bryman and Bell, 2011) note that participants may feel uncomfortable speaking freely when they know that their conversation is being recorded. Also, they may feel more uncomfortable when an audio device is visible (e.g. on the table). Thus, the iPhone was thought to be familiar to participants and was put in the front pocket of the researcher in order to be invisible. However, one of the participants asked for the interview to be deleted, even though he gave permission to record the interview. He explained that he did not see the researcher actually starting the recording, and thereby assumed that the interview was not recorded¹¹. Therefore, the interview was immediately deleted in view of the interviewee; nevertheless, he allowed the researcher to use the information in the interview and notes which were taken from it.

Another interesting incident occurred during the interviews when the researcher noticed that some interviewees were hesitating at some points of the interview, due to the recorder, especially when they were asked about deep aspects of organisational life or their personality. Although permission was taken to record the interview, the researcher offered to switch off the recorder and continue taking notes on their answers. Some of them preferred to continue with the recording and tried to express their thoughts freely – probably due to the increase in trust after the researcher's reaction – but most of them preferred not recording their answers. After taking notes on their answers, they were asked again either to resume the recording or continue the interview without it.

After each interview, the researcher asked the participants if they wanted to add further information or ask the researcher to cover an area that he had not covered in the interview questions. In addition, they were asked if they would like to recommend other people that might contribute to the research. Some participants did make insightful points and introduced other people. Following each interview, notes were arranged, summarised and highlighted in the interview transcription, as will be explained in the data analysis section.

¹⁰ It should be noted that the iPhone was protected by a passcode and all the data gathered by this device – as will be outlined in this chapter – were transferred immediately to an external password-protected hard drive.

¹¹ The researcher always assured the interviewees that recording the interview was optional and they could ask for it to be deleted at any time.

5.6.2 Observation

Organisational and cultural scholars place great emphasis on observation (participant and non-participant). They show that observation represents an essential source of qualitative data collection (e.g. Smircich, 1983b; Kunda, 1992; Watson, 1994; Martin, 2002; Schein, 2010; Alvesson, 2013; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015). This is because observation provides a vital opportunity for the researcher to access and engage in the daily life of the organisation. This is done through the involvement of the researcher in the day-to-day running of an organisation. This approach permits an understanding of organisational phenomena from an insider's point of view (see Bryman and Bell, 2011; Flyvbjerg, 2011; Hamera, 2011; Yin, 2015; Spradley, 2016). Hence, the advantages of observation, combined with the experiences of past cultural studies (e.g. Kunda, 1992; Watson, 1995; Harris and Ogbonna, 1998; Matthew and Ogbonna, 2009; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015), make it a valuable means to achieving the goals of the study.

This study, in keeping with key cultural scholars (e.g. Smircich, 1983b; Kunda, 1992; Watson, 1995; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015), attempted to engage in regular interaction with the SO employees in their daily work life. Thus, the aim was to conduct detailed observation (participant and non-participant) since the researcher had succeeded in securing a position in the SO. In general, the researcher tended to arrive early at the organisation, to prepare for – or finish – the daily tasks, and frequently stayed on after work hours to have some conversations with some employees and summarise the notes that were gathered from the data collection methods. This approach helped to maximise the benefit of the data collection time.

Observation included attending organisational business meetings (especially at HR), ceremonies, new employee inductions, internal presentations and training programmes. In addition, the researcher was able to attend several job interviews and observe the recruitment and selection (R&S) procedures closely. He was also allowed to attend – and sometimes to conduct – some exit interviews. All interviewees were aware of the researcher's identity and were asked for their permission to allow the researcher attending or conducting the interviews. Among all the exit interviews, there was only one interviewee who complained that the researcher had "*sensitive*" information about the SO, according to the HR employee's expression, and believed the researcher should not have this kind of information. These interviews produced very valuable data for the research.

Also, organisation artefacts, e.g. office layouts, wall pictures, technologies, facilities, etc. were all under examination. Furthermore, the nature and the unique characteristics of the Saudi business environment added another dimension to data gathering. Saudi employees – as explained in the last chapter – usually gather in external social meetings (mostly informal), and these meetings may involve serious discussions about their work (see Mellahi, 2006; Abalkhail and Allan, 2015). The researcher found these meetings significant for observing further and freer discussions about the SO culture and how employees perceived its aspects and how they tended to react to them. However, it should also be stated that due to the nature of Saudi organisational environment, the researcher was not able to access the separate women's section. This suggests limitations on covering women in workplace. This issue will be further discussed in the data analysis chapters.

The notes of each meeting were taken during or after the events and were assembled and summarised in a single research notebook. The notes were organised by day, date and a short subject heading explaining the main event(s) (e.g. Monday, 21-03-2016: The Chairman's Meeting and Employees' Lunch Gathering). This helped mapping the key points that arose each day and made them easy to be remember. Also, the researcher kept reading and rereading the notes – as with notes of other research methods – which resulted in finding essential links between what was observed with other interesting aspects of employees' stories, actions and conversations. However, considering the advantages of observation, this approach had some issues to which the researcher had to give attention. Different methodology reviews have collected, presented and analysed past researchers' approaches (e.g. Bryman and Bell, 2011; Flyvbjerg, 2011; Hamera, 2011; Atkinson, 2014; Yin, 2014, 2015). They show common issues that researchers are faced with in fieldwork and offer solutions for avoiding – or at least minimising – them. One of the main issues faced during the observation was taking notes. In some cases, it seemed to be inappropriate to write down notes in front of participants, e.g. during external or informal gatherings; it might make the participants feel uncomfortable to be watched or observed. In order to avoid, or minimise, this effect, the iPhone was used, which contained an application facilitating the writing of a long text and organising it easily in the research notebook. Many photos of the organisation were also taken using the iPhone and were added to the notebook. On different occasions, when taking notes was not possible, they were made as soon as possible. An interesting example in this regard is when the researcher was going to wash his hands and he entered the WC, there was an employee smoking inside

(although smoking was prohibited inside the SO). The interesting point is that a manager (who was a key member of SO) was looking for this employee and he went to the WC to look for him. It was observed that both acted normally, as if the employee was not doing something against SO policy. The researcher remained to observe this and, when the manager left, the researcher went to his desk and summarised what he had observed.

Another significant issue that some researchers have highlighted (e.g. Van Maanen, 1991) is that participants might worry that what they do or say may get back to colleagues or managers. Van Maanen shows that this may happen when the researcher observes activities that might be against organisational policy or norms. Hence, since these issues are important for the research, it being necessary to observe and explore issues other than agreement and consistency, i.e. conflicts, ambiguities and irony, it has been recommended that the researcher should try not to be judgmental when such things occur during data collection. The former incident can be taken as an example of this. Another recommendation that previous OC scholars have emphasised is that researchers need to be careful that the information given to them does not get back to other employees, neither managers, nor peers.

The researcher was aware of some of these data collection issues before engaging in the field work. This was due to (a) reviewing different research methodologies reviews (e.g. Hartley, 2004; Bryman and Bell, 2011; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Atkinson, 2014; Yin, 2014, 2015), (b) the observation of previous OC reviews (e.g. Smircich, 1983b; Willmott, 1993; Schein, 1984, 2010; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Alvesson, 2013) and previous OC studies (e.g. Van Maanen, 1991; Kunda, 1992; Martin and Siehl, 1983; Matthew and Ogbonna, 2009; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015), and (c) the research methodology programme that the researcher was required to pass, as a condition for pursuing a PhD programme at Cardiff Business School¹². The awareness of data collection issues appeared to be important for increasing the trust between the participants and the researcher. For instance, from the start of the interviews, it was noted that some interviewees were referring to certain other employees, who were assumed to have insightful information about the SO and who were expected to have effective individual characteristics in the workplace. Hence, the researcher started to engage in different informal conversations with one of these employees, explaining that there were issues relevant to the research within the SO (without being judgmental) and

¹² See <http://business.cardiff.ac.uk/courses/phd-programme/phd-business-and-management> and <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/taught/courses/course/social-science-research-methods-business-and-management-studies-msc>

implicitly asking the employee to express his views about them. During the conversation, the researcher hinted to the employee that an interview would be beneficial. At first, the employee claimed that he was very busy with his work. Thus, the researcher asked the participant to choose a convenient time. After several days, the employee agreed to participate in an interview. He explained that he was concerned that the things that he might say about the work environment, which involved his colleagues, might not be kept confidential by the researcher. However, he felt confident that the researcher was “*trustworthy*”, to use his own expression. Interestingly, this interview (which lasted for about two hours) was one of the richest; it contained answers to different aspects that were observed by the researcher and opened new investigations that the researcher started to conduct directly after the interview.

5.6.3 Document analysis

An organisation’s documents are also seen as crucial qualitative data (see Altheide, 1996; Bryman and Bell, 2011; Myers, 2013; Yin, 2014). In relation to this data source, some cultural scholars argue that analysing an organisation’s documents is an effective approach to understanding certain unique aspects of the OC (e.g. Smircich, 1983b; Schein, 1984, 2010; Brown, 1995; Martin, 2002; Alvesson, 2013). For this study, the organisation’s documents helped in understanding the evolution and the history of the organisation, which provided some insights into the way in which SO culture was perceived. Thus, the available information about SO was collected before and after joining the organisation, through using internal and external sources.

As was outlined in this chapter, the collecting of SO documents started seven weeks before joining the organisation. During this time, the focus was on collecting SO documents that were available on the SO webpage, the internet, and on social network applications (mostly Twitter). Also, it has been stated that attempts were made to contact SO before arriving at the field work to provide any relevant documents. One of the most useful documents provided at that stage was the monthly internal newsletter. Combining the annual reports with the newsletter gave a significant overview of the SO evolution and history. They also provided an important outline of the SO strategic plan. All these documents assisted in developing the unstructured interviews, and in collecting evidence for the research findings.

In terms of the internal sources, the position and the tasks that SO asked the researcher to accomplish made accessing the organisation’s internal documents more convenient and achievable. The SO was asked for permission to allow the researcher to collect internal

documents that might serve the purpose of the research. It should be stated that SO managers and employees were very cooperative and provided many vital documents. Table 5-2 provides a summary of the documents collected.

Summary of documents collected	
Annual reports	Resignation reports (between 2007 & 2015)
Strategic plans	SO Rules of Conduct file
Internal newsletter	Documents related to Best Place to Work
Organisation policy	HR manuals (e.g. R&S, training, benefits, etc.)
Appraisal manual	Exit interviews files

Table 5-2: Summary of documents collected.

The organisation was also asked to provide confidential documents; this, however, was subject to permission given by the organisation's officials to access such documents. The confidential documents requested were about investigations with some employees of the SO, mostly to do with work conflicts that had occurred between employees and their managers. Although reviewing these documents was not allowed, the SO agreed to answer specific questions (e.g. the results of the investigation, or some parts of the employees and managers' cases). Hence, it should be noted that revealing any conflicts between employees and aspects of the SO culture relied mainly on the researcher's own investigation efforts.

However, this method, as with other methods mentioned previously, is not without its problems. Most importantly, different methodological reviews indicate that the volume of organisational documents collected may become huge, therefore moving them, difficult (see Bryman and Bell, 2011; Yin, 2014). Given that the data collection was located in Saudi Arabia, transferring the SO documents to the UK was thought to be problematic. Consequently, from the early stages of data collection, most of the documents were scanned and saved in an external password-protected hard drive. Furthermore, methodology scholars indicate that the huge volume of organisational documents may make analysing them a frustrating and highly protracted business. Therefore, the researcher tried to organise and archive the documents in a way that made it easier for them to be analysed and linked to the other data collected via other techniques. This issue will be discussed further in the next section.

5.7 Data analysis

After outlining the methods used to collect the research data, this section attempts to illustrate the methods used to analyse the data. The interviews that were audio-recorded were transcribed verbatim, which was one of the most difficult processes of the data analysis. The

transcription was done mainly by the researcher, due to the SO privacy agreement. This resulted in over 215,000 words. Although the researcher had been trying to transcribe each interview immediately after it was conducted, the time that each interview consumed was considerable and frustrating. It was impossible to transcribe all interviews during the data collection. The interviews were transcribed from Arabic to English, and it took considerable effort and time to maintain the Arabic meaning. On consulting some PhD students at Cardiff University, they recommended buying and using a transcription kit to accelerate the process. However, after trying it, it turned out not to be very helpful. The researcher searched the internet, trying to review previous researcher experiences. He found a very suitable multimedia software player (PotPlayer¹³) that improved the process of transcription. For example, it offered some tools to make the voice of the interviewee clearer. Also, it enabled the researcher to customise shortcuts on the computer keyboard to pause the interview (e.g. Ctrl + Space) or replay the last five seconds (e.g. Alt + S?), while the interview is playing.

However, transcribing the interviews by the researcher provided some advantages and opportunities for improving the quality of data analysis. Those were inspired by different methodological authors' experiences, such as Coffey and Atkinson (1996), Hartley (2004), Braun and Clarke (2006), Yin (2015). For example, it helped the researcher to identify the similarity and differences between participants' stories and information in more detail. This was done by making footnotes during the transcription process about the data collected by other methods. Secondly, the transcription assisted the researcher to find essential links between the data collected from the observation and organisational documents. For example, the researcher once noted an interesting incident, the meaning of which was not clear at the time. However, during the transcription, the researcher explored some stories that linked to that incident, which produced a relevant explanation. This incident is covered in the data analysis chapters. Also, transcribing the interviews encouraged the researcher to have further discussions with some previous interviewees, as explained previously. These investigations added significant value to the data analysis. Finally, the transcription enabled the researcher to develop a profile that summarised the main information of each interviewee and interview, as in Table 5-3. In view of these points, the transcription advantages assisted the researcher to develop the data analysis themes.

¹³ <https://potplayer.daum.net/>

All participants were informed that their identity would be kept anonymous, so that they would not be afraid to speak freely, especially about things that might go against administration opinions. They were given different names and their key information (i.e. department, managerial-level and position) were given abbreviated codes, as in Table 5-3, so as not to be identified by other SO members. However, the researcher asked permission from certain participants to reveal their identity (e.g. the hide of HR department); it was seen as necessary to make sense of the data analysis. The data analysis chapters will reveal other examples.

Date	16-06-15	Grade	G
Interview Duration	01:46:59	Education level	PG
Name	Abdulaziz	Department	C1
Age	49	Position level	A
Gender	M	Duration at SO	6 years
Status	Married	Previous experience	Yes

Table 5-3: Example of the profile that summarises key employee/interview information.

In addition to the interviews, over 600 pages of archival information (including SO documents and notes conducted from the observation) were analysed. All data was coded into theoretically derived themes, drawing from and adopting the grounded theory approach (see Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Langley, 1999). The codes specified were characterised into key categories, linkages and associations (integration, differentiation, and fragmentation), and these major themes were further subdivided into theoretically coherent sets. They were arranged on the basis of the relationship between individual characteristics and the different aspects of the OC integration (IP), subcultures (DP) and aspects of fragmentation (FP) (i.e. contradictions, perceived dichotomies in behaviour, ironies and incongruences between actual and espoused behaviours). Each of these major themes was analysed in a separate chapter. Some aspects of Martin's (1992) analysis style inspired the analysis style of this thesis. Each data analysis chapter is introduced by a guide to how it was structured, based on the aim and purpose of the study.

The data analysis processes were done by taking into special consideration the beliefs, values and underlying assumptions that were hinted at in the data and the ways in which individuals perceived these essential aspects and how they reacted to them. Their different individual reactions and interactions were linked to their individual characteristics, and the result of these interactions made up the IB. In other words, the data analysis examined how an employee perceived the SO culture, (e.g. integrated, having subcultures, or ambiguous), and observed how their individual characteristics (e.g. values, beliefs, age, gender, previous experience,

managerial-level, etc.) affected their perceptions and interactions to these OC aspects. Through this process, some individual characteristics were found to be supportive of aspects of the IP. Likewise, there were other individual characteristics that tended to generate and maintain subcultures within the organisation (consciously and subconsciously). In the same vein, some IB was observed to be irrelevant to the SO culture aspects (e.g. FP). This led some employees to indicate that IB decreased the coherence in the OC and increased the confusing elements of the OC.

This data analysis processes were carried out by the researcher and exhaustively discussed with some experienced academics at Cardiff Business School, and was also introduced and evaluated in a workshop¹⁴ that hosted different academics in the area of organisational behaviour. Also, given that the researcher kept visiting the SO and conducting follow-up discussions with some participants after the data collection period, there were opportunities to discuss specific results with some key members¹⁵ of the organisation to validate the credibility of the findings that emerged from the data analysis (see Price et al., 2000). The discussions generally resulted in reconsideration of some sub-themes and consideration of adding others.

Finally, due to the challenges of analysing the qualitative data (see Yin, 2015), the use of CAQDAS (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data) tools presented a dilemma in this research (see Atherton and Elsmore, 2007; Silverman, 2013; Yin, 2014 for review). One of the most popular software programmes that had been used to analyse the qualitative data was NVivo. Some researchers highlighted the advantages of using such text analysis software (e.g. Weitzman and Miles, 1995; Silver and Lewins, 2014). In general, it has been argued that the use of CAQDAS may promote easier categorisation and faster retrieval of data, and increased ease of coding. Nevertheless, other key methodological authors (e.g. Coffey et al., 1996; Atkinson et al., 2003; Atherton and Elsmore, 2007) have raised considerable concerns about using CAQDAS to analyse qualitative data and argued that mechanical approaches of treating data will attract the limitations that are related to surveys or quantitative methods of analysis. Most interestingly, Coffey et al. (1996) maintain:

“In our view qualitative research is not enhanced by poor imitations of other research styles and traditions. Analytic procedures which appear rooted in standardised, often mechanistic procedures, are no substitute for genuinely ‘grounded’ engagement with the data throughout the whole of the research process. It is worth mentioning that the

¹⁴ The workshop was hosted by UV University Amsterdam between 14–15th April 2016. The topic was the 4th Ethnography workshop.

¹⁵ Those were interested in the study and had an average tenure of three years in SO.

‘usefulness’ of such computer applications implies that you have collected and input all of your data, and this suggests that data collection and analysis are discrete and linear. [...] As a consequence of that, there is an increasing danger of seeing coding data segments as an analytic strategy in its own right, and of seeing such an approach as the analytic strategy of choice. That should not be the case.”

Based on the last argument, as well as considering the purpose and arguments of this study, the researcher preferred to adopt manual coding, with the aim of being close to data and applying a data driven method to analysis.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter discusses the research methodologies and the ways in which the researcher will analyse the data. It also argues that although there are different issues associated with the qualitative approach, this methodology is the most suitable approach to exploring the OC. The selection of the research design and methodologies was done after a careful consideration of the most appropriate approach to reach the goals of this study and answer its questions. As has been shown previously, this study attempts to adopt a comprehensive definition of culture, which encompasses values, beliefs and underlying assumptions. Therefore, it needs to go beyond the surface of the culture to explore these aspects in depth and observe how individuals interact with them, examining the consequences of this interaction on their behaviour. Furthermore, it is important for this study to examine culture from multiple perspectives (e.g. IP, DP and FP) to achieve more accurate and comprehensive results. Thus, for this study to be effective, a qualitative approach (i.e. an ethnographic case study) is adopted.

Although the study presents a valid rationale for adopting a qualitative approach to examining the relationship between OC and IB, this approach may have some limitations and issues of which the researcher should be aware. This is based on different methodological reviews (e.g. Martin, 2002; Bryman and Bell, 2011) as well as the previous discussions that this and earlier chapters present. For instance, the time-consuming nature of this approach, the volume of the data, the need for the researcher to become involved in the participants’ daily lives, etc. may create different challenges that the researcher needs to face and deal with by being patient and making careful decisions (e.g. viewing other researchers’ experiences and learning from them). Nevertheless, whether this research adopts a quantitative or qualitative approach, each approach has its own limitations and issues. The following chapter will outline the first data analysis chapter. This chapter will include a brief overview of SO. It is thought to be helpful for the data analysis.

Chapter 6. The relationship between organisational culture and individual behaviour: an integration perspective

6.1 Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to present the empirical findings on the relationship between OC and IB from an IP. In this chapter, data is presented to show that SO employees perceive and define their OC from an IP as a harmony and homogeneity culture. The data analysis from an IP reveals certain behaviour associated with their perceptions and relates them to some individual characteristics. In general, the data has been examined with regard to the consistency in the major themes of OC, and these themes have been analysed to observe the individual characteristics and interactions that are involved, along with exploring the impact of these interactions on behaviour.

As was outlined in the OC chapter, the IP is categorised by an organisation-wide consensus and harmony about organisational values and their consistent expression in a variety of cultural manifestations, thus, excluding subcultures and aspects of ambiguity (see Martin 1992, 2002). The consistency consists of three types: (a) symbolic consistency (similarity between themes and their symbolic expressions); (b) action consistency (similarity between formal and informal actions); and, (c) ideological consistency (similarity between content themes).

In general, this chapter is divided into three key sections. This was done after a careful consideration of the possible and appropriate ways to present the study findings. The first main section comprises an overview of SO. In brief, it introduces some vital issues about SO work life, e.g. the evolution of the organisation, number of employees, career ladder, etc. These were not included in the methodology chapter because they are considered as part of the data analysis, and they clarify significant aspects of the data findings. The second main section presents an analysis of OC from an IP in SO. Throughout the four cultural themes, this section attempts to focus on SO's management views about their OC, and explores how employees perceive and interact with the overall OC. The third main section outlines a collection of individual characteristics and personality traits that have been found to be significant in the interaction between SO employees and the overall OC. Most importantly, it illustrates the individual factors that may encourage SO employees to interact with IP cultural elements. It also attempts to explain why some top managers and other organisation members practise some OC norms, although they – individually – might not fully believe or agree with them.

6.2 Saudi organisation: an overview

SO is a semi-governmental organisation that works in the financial sector and is located in one of the major cities of the country. Historically, it was started ‘unofficially’ in the middle of the last century, then the government established its basic regulations two decades after its establishment. The modern version of SO was approved by the King (i.e. the Prime Minister) in the early days of the new millennium, which formally brought it into existence. SO reports directly to the King; however, it operates with full administrative and financial independence. In relation to this issue, it should be noted that the Chairman and the SO Board are exceptionally appointed by the King, and could be recruited from within or without the organisation. In the last ten years leading to the end of data collection, four Chairmen have directed SO. Although the data analysis shows that each of these Chairmen was effective in SO culture, the 2nd and the 3rd appeared to be the most effective. Thus, because of the identity protection agreement with SO, the data will refer these Chairmen as the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Chairman. According to the HR manager, the SO Board is a full-time job, unlike other Saudi organisation boards that meet occasionally.

The SO documents show that the human capital at the inception of SO was modest, but has increased dramatically, especially after 2007. The number of employees in 2015 was between 650 and 700 (50-60 of them were females). Furthermore, SO official documents state that all SO management are Saudis, and 99% of SO employees are also Saudis¹⁶. Thus, as well as nationality, most of the organisation’s employees share the same language (Arabic) and faith (Islam). The data analysis reveals that these demographic elements have played essential roles in the interaction between OC and SO employees. This will be covered mainly in this chapter, and in the FP. In relation to female employees, it has observed that all female employees were located in a section segregated from the male employees. Although the underlying reasons for having a non-mixed work environment were explained in the Saudi overview chapter, there are a few points worth highlighting here as they are significant in elaborating some aspects of the data analysis findings.

Firstly, although SO adopts a non-mixed work environment policy, there is no formal policy that restricts female employees from directly approaching their male colleagues or managers during working hours. They are also allowed to attend any business meetings and training sessions or participate in ‘informal’ employees’ gatherings in the males’ section. However,

¹⁶ There are many reasons explaining these percentages, most importantly the Saudi government programme (Saudisation) that aims to empower qualified Saudi citizens to occupy all jobs in governmental or semi-governmental organisations, as well as a large percentage of Saudi private organisation jobs (see Ministry of Labour, Saudi Arabia, 2017).

these interactions are subject to certain general social norms, as well as the personal view of the female employee herself. These themes will be highlighted in this chapter, as well as in the following data analysis chapters.

Another significant point concerns the dress code of SO female employees. Female employees are required to wear *Abaya* and *Hijab*, especially when they are outside their section. However, it has been observed that *Hijab* is interpreted differently by different female employees. While some of them cover their faces with a veil, others just use the *Hijab*. Essentially, the different *Hijab* dress styles could – to some extent – be explained by their personality. For example, SO female employees usually associate the veil with conservatives (generally characterised as older and more concerned about social and Islamic norms). On the other hand, those who only wear *Hijab*, i.e. they expose their faces, are usually referred to by employees as modernists (generally characterised as young and less concerned, or having different views about social and Islamic norms). These characteristics play very interesting roles in how female employees perceive and interact with SO cultural aspects.

SO has a flat organisational structure comprising five levels: Chairman, direct managers, department managers, unit heads and the rest of the employees. The name of each department is not publicised, but each is given a unique code, such as A1, C2, E5, etc. The SO career ladder has 14 levels, which are also given different codes as the following table shows:

Level	Level code	Level ranking
14	L	High
13	K	
12	J	
11	I	Middle
10	H	
9	G	
8	F	
7	E	
6	D	
5	C	Entry-levels
4	B	
3	A	
2	-A	
1	-B	

Table 6-1: Career ladder of SO.

Thus, with the participants' imaginary names, the data analysis will reveal their job level, gender, department code and their service at SO.

In terms of work space, low- and mid-level employees are located in cubicles, while managers are given formal offices. The building of SO has five floors and each has at least two departments. As was expected from the Saudi Arabia overview chapter, SO appeared to give great value to Islamic and social norms. Apart from the female-related issues mentioned, e.g. dress code, SO has a good-size prayer room. Furthermore, SO official holidays are linked to two important religious celebration days (*Eid Al-Fitr* and *Eid Al Adha*). These two days are also celebrated by SO each year. With respect to male employees' dress code, it is a white *Thobe* (robe) and a red *Shemagh* with *Eghal* (a black headband) on top of it. Male head dress styles also vary among employees. Most male employees wear none inside their department, but do when outside the organisation and during formal meetings. Some employees therefore consider head dress a symbol of formality. Interestingly, those who do not wear head dress at all are usually referred to by employees as modernists (i.e. young and less concerned about social and Islamic norms). Those who wear head dress all the time are sometimes referred as conservatives (i.e. older and more concerned about social and Islamic norms). However, it should be noted that although SO culture comprises various Islamic and social norms, SO employees have been demonstrating a unique OC, as the data analysis will indicate.

A final important point that will simplify explanation of the data analysis concerns the phrases and jargon used in SO. In the data analysis chapters, these special phrases and jargon are enclosed in single quotes, e.g. '*excellent work environment*' or '*stars*'. Such phrases and jargon have been either (a) stated frequently in organisational documents, (b) expressed widely by employees, or (c) shared within a subgroup. The data analysis highlights them, therefore, as significant aspects in explaining SO culture.

6.3 Organisational culture from an integration perspective

6.3.1 'Staff care'

The data analysis from an IP reveals that SO management expresses concern for their employees' career and personal well-being. '*Staff care*', which is a formal policy and a motto extensively quoted in many SO documents and expressed widely by different organisational members, is considered an essential aspect of SO culture. Different formal and informal aspects are seen by many employees as evidence of SO's concern with '*staff care*'. For example, a board member stresses in a research interview that the staff of SO are considered '*its greatest asset*', and taking care of them, therefore, is considered to be one of SO

management's top priorities. Also, different organisational documents emphasise this policy, as the first page of the employees' manual states:

"Since the beginning of [SO], it has been believed that human capital is the ultimate asset in its work environment. Therefore, [SO] has attempted to apply best practices, especially those related to HR management, and has made 'staff care' one of its ultimate values, aiming to invest in the career and private life of [SO] employees."

Many employees, especially at executive and managerial-level, confirm that SO gives considerable priority to staff well-being. They also assume that 'staff care' is a significant value that has increased employees' ownership and satisfaction and has encouraged positive behaviour among employees resulting in positive work outcomes. In relation to their claims, some key managers (e.g. the head of HR and the R&S and the Board member) as well as many employees consistently attribute the low turnover rate (5%) that SO enjoys to the SO commitment to 'staff care'. Several formal practices and policies that SO has implemented are seen by many employees as reinforcing 'staff care'. An in-depth interview with the head of HR – which gives vital insights into SO cultural aspects – explains:

"Interviewee: The other thing [relating to 'staff care'] is the degree of support that the Board has given to the organisation. I have worked with other organisations and I have never encountered a Board that is so supportive of an organisation as our Board is... [...]"

Researcher: What makes them do this?

Interviewee: This Board strongly believes in human capital. It does not only believe in human capital, but also understands human capital... I mean, it understands what motivates people. So, they will support anything that benefits [SO] employees, which is usually by applying the following: [1] They support HR; [...] they give us resources ... (especially money), and have approved everything we have suggested, which may suit the overall work environment. There is no one saying, 'NO! ... NO! ... NO! ... I feel this may not work ... or this is wrong.' [2] The Board is a full-time [...]. While our Board works from 08:00 to 16:00, in other organisations they meet once every quarter, or something like that, just to review some financial issues, whereas HR issues [...] are usually addressed by a small 'committee' [...] which reviews salary issues ... only. So, they do not care about training or anything that might be beneficial to the employees... NO! In fact, these are things they do not even understand." (HR manager, male, 9 years' service)

Also, other employees have regarded the concern of SO to facilitate an 'excellent work environment' as evidence of 'staff care'. For example, when the researcher attended the first meeting with the HR officials, he asked: *"What makes [SO] different from other*

organisations?” One of their answers stresses the work environment and they related it to ‘staff care’ policy:

“[SO] owns a modern building located in a nice central area that is easy [for employees] to reach. Its facilities are properly designed to accommodate the employees with style and comfort. It provides 24-hour security, supported by high-technology monitors, 24-hour in-house expert maintenance and electronic access linked to the HR Oracle system for monitoring the employees’ attendance. [...] it also takes care of disabled employees, or visitors, as it provides the necessary accessibility for them. The [SO] also obtained a Safety Licence from the General Directorate of Civil Defence [this is mentioned to show that they take care of the employees’ safety], and in doing so, the [SO] has surpassed many organisations [in taking care of staff safety] like [F2000, a well-known group company that operates a well-known tower in the city] and [YYY, another well-known organisation that operates a well-known building in the city].” (Hind, female, high-level, HR department, 8 years’ service)

Different high-level employees have revealed that the reasons behind maintaining such a work environment is to attract high-quality employees (or ‘stars’, as SO management usually calls SO employees), keeping them within the organisation, and driving their positive behavioural and work productivity:

“I believe that [SO] has one of the best workplaces in the Kingdom, based on what I have heard and based on my previous work experience. I have worked with different organisations [...] and I believe that [SO] management shares a general concern for improving the employees’ well-being and attracting the good ones and trying to keep them in the organisation.” (Faisal, male, director, C5 department, 7 years’ service)

Many employees from different work levels, especially the managerial-level, share the SO assumption and state that SO provides excellent facilities and services for maintaining staff comfort and encourage high quality performance. For example, a male managerial-level employee who has worked at A4 department for ten years states that SO has gone ‘beyond’ employees’ expectations of taking care of staff needs. He explained that SO has an in-house health clinic and a psychiatric clinic, and emphasised – with pride and appreciation – that “only a few organisations provide such services to their employees in the whole country.” Another example frequently mentioned by many employees as evidence of ‘staff care’ is that of each department having a kitchenette and a ‘tea-boy’ (or ‘tea-girl’ for the female section) that serves different kinds of beverages to all employees, free of charge. Different employees have revealed that these issues have increased self-satisfaction, self-belonging and work performance:

“Interviewee: The benefits that [SO] provides to its employees are excellent I came from an aggressive work environment; however, when I started working here, I found it a peaceful and healthy work environment It really encourages you to work better.

Researcher: Why has [SO] done these things?

Interviewee: To make sure that all employees feel better [staff care].

Researcher: And how do you find this concept [staff care]?

Interviewee: It has had a positive effect on me. When I wake up in the morning, I really feel like I want to go to work¹⁷. I mean, when you come and see how good the building looks and so clean and see how healthy the work environment is, these things give you all the motivation to work better. And when you know that your coffee and water will be ready on your desk, you feel more like working ... when you know that there is a cafeteria that you can buy food from, you feel more like working.” (Qasim, male, managerial-level employee, C4 department, 3 years’ service)

Another formal rule that SO management has applied and that has been seen by different employees as reinforcing ‘*staff care*’ is the females’ segregated section. Interestingly, when HR officials were asked at the first meeting about the nature of the females’ section, they explained that this was created to meet the expectations of female employees, and provide them with a decent and comfortable work environment. Hind indicated that this might be found odd in other organisations in countries like the UK, as she gave as an example¹⁸.

During the course of interviews and other friendly conversations with some female employees, they revealed that having their own separate section provides them with the necessary ‘*privacy*’ and comfort that they need. They explained that although the female work environment has been a highly debatable topic in the country (between conservatives, Islamic scholars and liberals¹⁹), they do not accept the idea of working in an entirely ‘*mixed*’ workplace. Many female employees from different work levels shared the view that working with males in a totally mixed workplace would not only be against their morals, but also against their own faith (as Muslim women have to maintain a boundary between themselves and the opposite sex). Furthermore, they related that in their section they do not have to wear their *Abaya* or *Hijab*, which would be necessary if they were working in the male section.

¹⁷ This expression (when I wake up in the morning, I feel like I want to go to work) is well-known among Saudi people and it means that I am very happy with my work.

¹⁸ She knew that the researcher is pursuing his PhD in the UK.

¹⁹ The term ‘liberal’ in Saudi Arabia has a different meaning to the global term. It usually refers to anyone (especially activists) who try to bring in new ideas that appear to be different from or against traditional norms, but not necessarily different to or against Islamic traditions. Also, it should be mentioned that the literature review discusses the female working concept (see the Saudi Arabia chapter).

Wearing the *Abaya* or *Hijab* all the time is experienced by certain female employees as inconvenient.

Concerns have been expressed by the researcher about their working life. However, according to the various views of female employees, this does not appear to have restricted their free movement within the organisation, nor has it created significant obstacles, as might be expected from this study. An example of these concerns can be observed in the following discussion:

“Researcher: How you would describe [SO]?”

Interviewee: *It is very convenient...*

Researcher: How convenient...?

Interviewee: *You do not feel that you are not involved in what is happening here, especially when males’ and females’ offices are located in separate places ... (as you may know we do not have a totally mixed workplace). Here it is different [based on her work experience with other Saudi organisations]; you get involved in the business with no real problems.*

Researcher: Have you ever had a problem getting in and out of the female section?

Interviewee: *No ... never ...*

Researcher: Do you attend meetings with males in the male section?

Interviewee: *Yes!*

Researcher: Is there any problem with having meetings with them?

Interviewee: *No... in fact, most of the departments make you feel part of a family [i.e. they respect female employees].”* (Najla, female, managerial-level employee, B5 department, 7 years’ service)

There are also other physical arrangements that have been seen by some employees as consistent with a ‘*staff care*’ policy. For instance, some employees considered the wallpaper that SO papered the organisation’s corridors and departments with as evidence of SO’s concern for employees’ well-being. This wallpaper usually carries different phrases and jargon, with the most shared by these employees being, ‘*You are first.*’

There are other formal rules and policies that SO has applied which have been referenced by some employees to illustrate SO commitment to employees’ well-being. SO management’s

expressed concern for ‘*staff care*’ should go beyond the professional life of employees to improve their personal life. Several employees have approved these claims and have shared certain examples as evidence. Along with the in-house clinics (discussed previously), SO has arranged different formal policies to provide the employees with a saving and investment programme²⁰, a house loan, and other services. Some employees have mentioned these things – with gratitude – in their stories:

“[SO] provides many services for us, like offering house loans, and they even have a contract with a local bank to open a branch in the building so the employee does not have to go to the trouble of leaving the building to deal with his financial issues. So, I believe that [SO] provides me with all that I need.” (Qasim, male, managerial-level employee, C4 department, 3 years’ service)

Another significant policy that some employees have referenced as reinforcing SO’s concern for improving employees’ personal and professional lives is healthcare insurance. Some employees have pointed out that any private or semi-governmental operations in Saudi Arabia have – by law – to grant all employees healthcare insurance. However, they have explained that SO has applied additional policies in this respect that they see as evidence of SO’s concern for ‘*staff care*’. These employees have indicated that the SO Board approved a standard that guides SO’s management selection in making contracts with a health insurance company. The most important one is that SO can only make contracts with top healthcare insurance companies. Furthermore, they underline that the healthcare insurance company needs to provide an in-house office to deal with employees’ requirements, in order to make it convenient for them, and – most significantly – they stress that the company has to be able to provide decent cover for the employees’ parents. Indeed, different organisational documents show that 70% of the healthcare insurance budget is dedicated to employees’ parental healthcare insurance, as confirmed by the head of the HR:

“when we make a contract with an excellent health insurance company, we are trying to send a message that we are taking care of you We used to have a contract with Tawuniya [an insurance company] and now we have a contract with Bupa [another insurance company], and they are not rubbish companies ... as a matter of fact, those are the best two insurance companies in the Kingdom.” (HR manager, male, 9 years’ service)

²⁰ SO takes a certain cut from employees who have subscribed to the investment programme and makes investments on their behalf. SO guarantees the amount they take from their salary and gives 50% revenue after 5 years and 100% after 10 years. For example, if an employee allows a cut of £100 a month, SO guarantees after 5 years to give him/ her £6000 (i.e. $(100 \times 12 \times 5) + £3000$). In the case of 10 years, this will be £12000+£12000).

Some participants have underlined that parental health insurance has driven their work behavior and increased their sense of self-belonging and appreciation of SO:

“Parental health insurance is very ... very important. I believe it is one of the very ... very essential things that has been carried out here. [...] It has played a significant role, without doubt [he meant in maintaining employees within SO]. Personally, [...] I have heard about many job opportunities, and have been offered some, but when I found out that they did not provide parental healthcare insurance, I felt I would be losing out on something important, so I did not take any of them seriously. [...]this [parental health insurance] has a high value for employees. Imagine if they decided to reduce their budget or cancel it ... you cannot imagine how disappointed the employees would be.”
(Tamim, male, high-level employee, D1 departments, 8 years’ service)

Consistent with Tamim’s view, a managerial-level employee was asked if SO ‘really’ does care about the employees and if it has influenced his behaviour, and he answered:

“The healthcare insurance that [SO] provides makes me feel that the organisation takes care of me, because it covers my parents too. One day I was so ... so glad when my mum called me and thanked me for the healthcare insurance, because she had just had her teeth done. This phone call made me think many times about my work [especially when he receives job offers], her gratitude was due to something that [SO] provided for her.” (Qasim, male, managerial-level employee, C4 department, 3 years’ service)

Another formal policy that has been seen by a large number of employees – especially at managerial-level and low-level employees – as consistent with an emphasis on ‘staff care’ is training programmes. Training is claimed by SO to be offered to all employees, based mainly their preferences of programme and regardless of their work positions, in world-wide institutions. Employees have stated that many Saudi organisations offer training programmes to their employees; nevertheless, SO offers different kinds of training programmes that aim to enhance both the personal lives and careers of employees. Employees have asserted that SO training programmes take place in high-quality world-wide institutions. This includes training at prestigious institutions, such as Harvard and the London Business School, and enables employees to have high-quality training which will improve their work skills and increase their job opportunities in SO. In relation to this, Qasim has shown how the training that SO has given him has made him feel proud to be a member of SO and makes him behave “positively” in the workplace²¹. He also mentioned during his interview a widely shared story

²¹ More example will be outlined in the following main section.

involving the 3rd Chairman of SO and he interpreted the story in terms of SO commitment to taking care of its employees, regardless of their work level:

“in fact, there were some people [high level managers from outside the organisation] who went to [the 3rd Chairman] [in a meeting that was arranged outside the SO] and said, ‘Are you sending drivers to study in New York!?’ [drivers’ work requirements need not involve such high standards and expensive training programmes]”

Consistent with these assertions, certain employees have stated in research interviews that they have received job offers from other organisations (with an increase of 5%, 10% and 15% on their salaries), but due to the training programmes offered them at SO, they preferred to remain there. Interestingly, some female employees have provided examples of what they have seen confirming the ‘staff care’ policy. Salma (a female managerial-level employee with B4 for 5 years) perceived that the training programmes at SO aim at fostering employees’ professional and personal lives. Most significantly, she stated that SO management requirements for obtaining training are simple, whereas other organisations have high demands for training based on her experience. She also underlined that SO management takes care of the individual needs of the employees. She stated that SO covered the expenses of her *Mahram*²² when she was training abroad. She explained that this has made her look at SO with a sense of appreciation and loyalty. She also said that this encourages her to do more work for SO, even on weekends, as she put it: *“whenever work is needed.”* As an example, her work sometimes requires her to make international calls and she claimed that she made them using her personal cellphone and did not claim the charges back from the SO.

6.3.2 Fostering teamwork

The data analysis from an IP shows that SO management gives notable attention to building a ‘high standard of teamwork’. ‘High standard teamwork’ is defined by SO management as highly qualified, cooperative and having mutual respect within the team. Different formal practices that SO has applied has led to some employees – at different job levels and in different functions – to consider themselves as committed to ‘high standard teamwork’. For example, many high-level managers and other members of the organisation have attributed ‘high standard teamwork’ to the ‘strict’ R&S procedures that SO management has followed. Strict R&S criteria have been claimed to attract and recruit only high qualified employees:

²² The underlying meanings of *Mahram* was covered in Saudi Arabia chapter.

“I believe that since the beginning of [SO], the recruitment and selection criteria have been very precise. There is no Wasta²³ here as in many other Saudi organisations. Thus, [...] only a certain category of people has been selected. I have carried out several job interviews and have employed many people in [SO]. One of the main requirements that we [the R&S panel] evaluate a candidate for is their teamwork skills – we do not only consider their qualifications. [...] there is no question about the value of qualifications here; however, we always think (can this person really work within a team or not?) So, if I have someone today who is highly qualified but has a problem with, let’s say, communication with others, and I have another one who has fewer qualifications but can work as a part of a team, I will choose that person.” (Faisal, male, director, C5 department, 7 years’ service)

Other employees have shared an organisational story to illustrate SO commitment to *‘high standard teamwork’* (which is consistent with Faisal’s quotation). These employees narrate that a high-ranked government official asked the SO Chairman to make exceptions regarding certain R&S criteria that SO applies, in order to permit the daughter of one of his employees to work at SO (i.e. *Wasta*/favouritism). Although it was difficult for the Chairman to refuse his request (as some employees have stressed), the Chairman explained to him that SO has critical conditions and one of them is that the candidate needs to have at least ‘Very good’ GPA, whereas the employee’s daughter had only ‘Good’. This story is usually related to new employees (as the researcher observed in the HR induction) emphasising the significance of having high-quality teamwork.

Another issue that many employees have referred to as reinforcing *‘high standard teamwork’* is the notion of *‘all-stars’* or *‘stars’*. A number of SO management members, as well as other employees have frequently stated that most – if not all – employees are *‘stars’* (i.e. holding high degrees from *‘top’* universities or recruited from other *‘top’* organisations). This, they suggested, is something rare in Saudi Arabian organisations. Indeed, an SO document shows that 50% of SO employees hold Bachelor degrees, and 37% of them hold Postgraduate degrees (five of them holding PhD degrees). *‘All stars,’* which is a slogan in itself, appears in various locations, such as on the wallpaper in the organisation.

Another formal value that SO management emphasises, and which is considered by some employees as reinforcing *‘high standard teamwork’*, is cooperation and consultation. Cooperation and consultation focusses on *“strengthening the values and practices of cooperation, teamwork spirit and mutual respect within the [SO]”* (seen in different SO

²³ The concept of *Wasta*/favouritism was introduced in the Saudi Arabia chapter.

organisation documents). Stories narrated by employees point up this value and how it influences their perception and behaviour. Most interestingly, Faaris (a lower-level male employee who has worked in the security department for eight years) narrates:

“One day an employee turned up and wanted to get into the building through the public access, so the security guard asked him politely to use the employees’ gates. He said [with a disrespectful tone]: ‘You really like to make things complicated ... [...] just get lost!’ Meanwhile, [XXX, one of the Board members] happened to hear him. [...] the chairman’s office summoned him and they made him to come to us [the security team] and apologise. [...] Later on, that person resigned.”

Faaris stated that the emphasis of SO on cooperation and consultation has had him working with a strong sense of ‘*professionalism*’, reacting in such situations with good manners, regardless of the difficulties faced by a security guard.

Other informal practices are also seen as consistent with the emphasis on teamwork. For instance, SO management has attempted to arrange various gatherings for employees, e.g. the celebration of the two *Eid* days, *Ramadan* breakfast and the annual meeting. Some employees, especially managers, have explained that the underlying aim of these gatherings is to reinforce cooperation and consultation between all employees, encouraging positive and admirable behaviour. For example, the head of R&S says:

“[SO] believes that these kinds of celebrations would reduce ‘tension’ between employees and improve communication, increasing their interaction with each other and creating harmony. In other words, if you want any team to work well, you need to set up a certain level of harmony and these celebrations are believed [by SO] to encourage that.” (The head of R&S, male, 10 years’ service)

Other employees see these celebrations as reflecting a concern with teamwork. For example, the annual meeting is arranged in a desert camp in order to reduce work stress and allow employees to build friendly relationships. During the annual meeting, SO also attempts to arrange some ‘*fun*’ activities involving managers and employees. Some of these activities are covered in the SO newsletter, symbolising healthy teamwork. Other employees have stated that some department managers have sponsored different employees’ gatherings (such as lunches, or to celebrate some employees’ promotions or the launching of a new programme) out of their own pocket. This has generated enthusiasm for teamwork to the extent that other employees have started to do the same.

Interestingly, although some key gatherings are not mixed, some female employees share similar views to male employees (that these gatherings encourage positive relationships and teamwork activities among employees which, in turn, reinforce the concern of SO with fostering ‘*high standard teamwork*’). Nevertheless, there are a number of complex observations that the researcher has made. Female employees have indicated that the celebrations that SO sponsors are arranged for all employees, however, female employees’ celebrations are arranged separately, *Ramadan* breakfast and *Eid Al Fitr*, for example. It has also been observed that some female employees have sponsored gatherings themselves for the male employees in the males’ section. For instance, the researcher attended a farewell that some female employees from the (A4) department arranged for a male employee in the male section. They provided the food and a gift for the employee. However, it was interesting to note that after some of them had made a short speech, they all left the department and went back to their separate section, without sharing the food with their male colleagues. The researcher tried to ask the female employees if the separate celebrations that SO arranges has raised any issues (e.g. gender equality). Interestingly, some of them found it strange, or disrespectful, to be asked this by a Saudi person. This issue will be discussed further in the following data analysis chapters, and, most importantly, in the third main section of this chapter.

6.3.3 Encouraging best work practices

The data analysis from an IP observes that SO management stresses ‘*best work practices*’ in all aspects of work. SO management, as well as some employees, believe that SO commitment to best work practices assists in shaping the actions and reactions (i.e. behaviour) and perceptions of employees towards SO work. Different formal and informal aspects indicate the commitment of SO management to best work practices. For example, SO strategic plan (2015–2019) demonstrates many attempts to ensure best practices:

“During the preparation of the strategic plan, we have studied the most important challenges to the [SO] market, its needs and other influential factors. We have also taken into account the views and comments of specialists at the [SO] and those of market participants such as [SO clients]. Eventually, the results of this study have formed the building blocks in the designing of our plan. [...] After reviewing and analysing the information and data, we have identified and prioritised the strategic issues. Also, benchmarking studies have been conducted to explore international best practices in developed and emerging markets. Several workshops have been organised to develop the components of the strategic plan including strategic objectives and

initiatives which are broken down into four strategic themes, namely: (1) foster [SO] development, [...], and (4) enhance [SO] organisational excellence.” (Strategic plan manual) [emphasis added]

Consistent with the issues in the last quotation, the data analysis reveals a general belief among SO employees – managers in particular – that SO adopts a ‘*continuous development philosophy*’ (which is considered to be one of SO’s formal policies) and a ‘*seeking best work practices*’ policy (jargon emerging from the SO emphasising the continuous development policy) in all aspects of work. Different formal and informal measures that SO management has executed have been seen by different employees as evidence of best practices. For example, some employees have explained that SO has made great efforts to obtain and develop the latest IT system to implement work efficiency. Some employees have interpreted the emphasis of SO management on obtaining the latest IT system as encouraging employees innovation to find ways of improving work performance and constantly seek out better procedures to increase work effectiveness. According to their views, this has increased the momentum of work and development and minimised ‘*bureaucracy*’ to a minimum, an issue that many Saudi Arabian organisations suffer from (i.e. slow work outputs and high-level bureaucracy). One of the formal procedures that many SO employees cited as reinforcing best work practice is the Oracle system recently developed by SO:

“In [SO], making a request for leave, an identification letter, a business trip, fixing the air conditioner or even a broken chair [...] is just a matter of some clicks on the keyboard Countless services are managed electronically by Oracle or the in-house systems [systems that have been developed by SO employees] to save effort and time [...], which all lead to work efficiency.” (Hind, female, high-level employee, 8 years’ service)

Employees from different departments and work levels have a shared story underlining the effect on SO culture of best work practices. Their story concerns members of a Korean organisation, who were visiting SO, and were ‘*amazed*’ by the Oracle system that SO IT employees have developed. Their stories evidence noticeable pride and satisfaction with the organisation’s work.

Another formal practice that employees have cited as being consistent with ‘*best work practices*’ is efforts that SO management have made to ensure the most efficient work procedures. For instance, a discussion with the head of R&S reveals that SO hired a specialist HR consultancy company to assess their HR procedures and provide recommendations on how

to improve them. Taking their recommendations into account, the head of R&S stated that the company were ‘impressed’ with the ‘professionalism’ of the department, which they described as applying ‘best practices’. Consistent with the head of R&S’s report, Malik says:

“I have to say [based on his previous work experience] that the work of [SO] and the work of HR cannot be found in any other Saudi Arabian organisation. [...] the HR model is the best in the Middle East, as certified by Oracle.” (Malik, male, managerial-level employee, J1 department, 4 years’ service)

Another example indicating SO assurance with ‘best practices’ is provided by a female employee:

“There is always a commitment to development here. Like we always evaluate the work: is it the best practice? This is a general concept in [SO]. Also, they [SO management] are always looking for different angles (as they say: two eyes, two views). Those angles are discussed, and the best is applied.” (Najla, female, managerial-level employee, B5 department, 7 years’ service)

SO has also implemented another formal practice that employees interpret as conforming with the concept of best practice, by attempting to systemise or standardise work procedures to avoid task duplication or the wasting of work time. For example, in the interview with Faisal, he explained that his department with his ‘effective team’ (which in his view believes in ‘best work practices’) had recently succeeded in reducing the time taken over two long tasks related to core SO business. He said that while the first task used to take three months to complete, they had managed to reduce it to eight days. Similarly, they had reduced the second task, which used to take 14 months to complete, to just three and a half months:

“I sat with the fellows²⁴ and we discussed the factors that might reduce these tasks’ time frames. Nowadays – alhamdulillah – [thank God] the 90 days has become eight days exactly. And the 14 months has become three and a half months only. Those things would not have been changed or redesigned if the team did not believe in improvement. We made it, and – alhamdulillah – [thank God] it is now better than ever.” (Faisal, male, director, C5 department, 7 years’ service)

Tamim provides consistent examples of SO commitment to best practice. He states that SO is currently aiming to put together a general operations manual that explains the role of each SO department. He explains that this is being done to enhance work efficiency by making sure

²⁴ The reason Faisal describes his subordinates as fellows (and sometimes lads) is to stress the mutual respect and the close relationship between managers and employees.

that each department understands exactly its responsibility, the responsibility of other departments and the mutual tasks between departments:

“A general operations manual that shows how I can carry out a job and who is involved in it from other departments has not been done yet ... but we are working on it now. The internal audit had made a big issue of this, so the Board reacted immediately and made it a priority target for all [SO] departments. [...] so, compiling the operations manual has become the focus lately, and everyone is enthusiastic about completing it... [...] and no one wants to fail.”

There are also other concrete arrangements seen by many employees as confirming best practice value. Interestingly, since SO applied standardised design and facilities to each department (e.g. stationary, toilet, meeting room, etc.), some employees have cited this as evidence of SO commitment to *‘best work practices’*. Other formal practices (e.g. recruiting and maintaining the best employees (*‘stars’*) within the organisation and sponsoring excellent training) have also been seen by some employees as *‘best work practices’*.

6.3.4 Facilitating equality

The last issue that the data analysis from an IP reveals is SO management concern with equality. There is a general belief among employees – especially at managerial-level – that SO management prioritises equality, by encouraging a good relationship between SO management and other members of the organisation, based on support, respect, appreciation and empowerment. Consistent narratives indicate that SO has effective and encouraging leaders, which has resulted in a range of positive behaviour. The narrative of the HR manager (when he described the rationale behind the concept of *‘staff care’*) and the feedback from the Board member (when he stated that the employees of SO are seen as *‘its greatest asset’*) can be taken as examples.

SO believes that leadership is a concept that involves supporting and empowering employees in accomplishing SO’s work and aims. Many formal and informal practices have been applied by SO management and are seen by employees as evidence of SO’s claims of equality. For instance, employees have indicated that formal relationships between managers and employees have been reduced to a minimum, and SO management seeks to adopt and welcome any ideas that might encourage this. A related issue is that SO culture emphasises *‘transparency’* between managers and employees. Transparency is a formal value that has been cited frequently in different organisational documents and mentioned extensively during informal discussions and research interviews. This value is believed to be central, resulting in

SO employees being involved in all aspects of work, especially decision-making. In order to encourage this, SO management has adopted different methods, which – according to them – have resulted in positive behaviour:

“We [as SO management] meet frequently with employees. I meet with all employees [in his department] and try to have normal [informal] conversations with all of them, I mean without any restrictions. I talk with them about all work issues, without keeping any information secret. I mean, is there any governmental organisation that would enroll a 21-year-old trainee in a team [...] making a presentation in front of the Board of directors, the Chairman and Vice Chairman? This has happened here on weekly basis for ten years now. I always say to these employees that it is part of their training to come to the Board and observe the real work. We [as SO management] try to invest in our employees and treat them as long-term assets. I try to give them assignments [...] to work on and ask them to arrange a presentation and make it to the Board and the Chairman, even if this is someone who is only a 21-year-old with no work experience. Can you imagine more transparency than that? Bringing an employee under training to a meeting with other directors and witness all their discussions and arguments ...?”
(Bandar, male, director, B5 department, 10 years’ service)

Many employees’ stories were found to be consistent with the claims that this director made. For instance, a fresh graduate male employee, who was still in training, explained in an interview that his department had discussed a legal case with the Chairman and the Board of directors. He related that during the meeting, the Chairman and the Board members decided to go with one solution, while he was trying to convince them to consider another one. After extensive effort, they agreed to go with his solution. His story was also shared by the Board member in a meeting with other trainees, who were at the end of their training programme. He referred to it as an example of the ‘good’ behaviour that SO management encourages, saying: *“Later on, we found that he was right and we were impressed by his courage.”* This is not exclusive to employees in training; it also includes other employees, especially young employees at managerial-level:

“For example, when I have any meetings here, even if it is with a CEO of the biggest company in the world, there must be at least two young employees with me, so they feel that they are responsible and that their input is always valued. Number two, I believe that any team that has been working on a project needs to be recognised by giving them the credit of accomplishing it. Similarly, when you take a young employee to the Board and allow him to make a presentation about a project that plays a vital role in the country’s economy, this provides recognition his effort and means a lot to him, as I have observed. I mean, it is not like taking his work and letting the seniors make the presentation and take the credit, while he is sitting at his desk here. Also, we [as SO

management] believe that these young fellows should be involved in any decision this organisation makes. For instance, anything in this department we would like to improve should involve brainstorming. This brainstorming takes place between seniors, juniors and anyone who [...] would like to sit with us and participate in the decision-making.”
(Faisal, male, director, C5 department, 7 years’ service)

These formal and informal aspects mentioned by the preceding SO management members have been recognised by different employees – mostly at the managerial-level – as reinforcing the concern of SO with equality. They explain that this has assisted in increasing mutual ‘respect’ between managers and employees, and has increased a feeling of belonging. An example of this can be observed in a conversation with a head of unit (who works with a different manager from the last two directors):

“Researcher: What makes you feel that you belong to this place?

Interviewee: *Maybe that the [SO] (God bless it) has had good leaders, honestly. I mean, there are many good directors in the [SO] and Board members, with of course at the top of them the Chairman, who are good in their treatment of employees and they are humble when they meet with the employees ...*

Researcher: What does this make you feel?

Interviewee: *It makes me feel close to them ... they allow me to discuss anything I would like with them. Their doors are always open and they hear from you and give advice to you, whenever necessary. So, this makes you feel assured that you are really working for this place and you are appreciated ... really appreciated! This appreciation is something very valuable ... Personally, when I feel I am appreciated, I feel so happy and it motivates me to do more and work harder. Secondly, those people trust us, they treat us very well and they really appreciate us, so we should give back to this organisation. These things will make anyone feel that he belongs to this place.”*
(Hakeem, male, high-level employee, A2 department, 6 years’ service)

Similarly, Faaris (the lower-level male employee who works in the security department) relates an incident that occurred with the HR manager as evidence of reinforcing ‘appreciation’, “regardless of their position”, as he says:

“The managers, even the big ones, are so humble. Like last Wednesday, the head of HR arrived with a car that had no parking permit. The security guard²⁵ told him that he could not let him in The HR manager said: ‘I am the head of HR, do not you recognise me?’ The security guard said: ‘No, I know who you are, but I was informed to let no car park without a parking permit.’ After that he did not argue and he parked

²⁵ Based on this employee’s claim, and his long work experience in this field, he indicates that: “People always look down on the security guard... because he has not got a degree or anything like that.”

his car outside the building. He respected the rules! And he made me like the [SO] more.”

Another formal policy that SO adopts and is seen by a number of employees as facilitating equality is the open-door policy. The last conversation with Hakeem illustrates this issue. There is a shared belief – especially among managers – that this policy makes the relationship between managers and employees close and without barriers. Managers, as well as many employees, cite this policy as consistent with SO efforts to reduce ‘formality’ to a minimum. As Bandar says:

“You find here [in his department], and this is the general culture of [SO], that employees do not have to go through formal procedures to contact a department manager or a director (like going through the boring procedure of calling the secretary and arranging an appointment ...). They just call them directly and they [managers] will answer their phone. Also, when employees go to the manager, they will find their doors – most of the time – are open ... closed doors are not usual here. So, the concepts of ‘I am important’, ‘Do not show up unless you arrange it with my secretary’, or ‘Make an appointment before you come to me’, do not exist here.” (Bandar, male, director, B5 department, 10 years’ service)

The open-door policy is also evident in other employees’ stories, communicated to other people (e.g. new employees or outsiders) as evidence of equality. Different employees have narrated a widely shared story of an employee who went to the Vice Chairman and asked him for exceptional unpaid leave to be with his father who was going abroad for health treatment. Those who share this story refer to the open-door policy, which is an attempt to maintain a close and direct connection between SO management and employees. One of the employees expressed her feelings about this policy, saying:

“This makes me feel satisfied with the [SO]. At the end of the day, and even if I have not benefitted from this [open-door policy], I know that whenever I have a situation, the [SO] will support me. I mean, it will be there whenever I need it [i.e. to speak with a manager].” (Kholod, female, managerial-level employee, F2 department, 5 years’ service)

6.4 The relationship between the integration culture perspective and individual characteristics

After analysing SO’s culture from an IP, this section underlines the individual characteristics and personal traits that the data analysis finds to be significant in influencing employees’ interactions with aspects of SO culture. Most importantly, this section illustrates why some employees confirm, share or adopt aspects of SO culture (e.g. SO takes care of employees’

well-being) and why they interact with them positively. Although this section is supposed to focus on OC from an IP, some opposing views (as was indicated) that might fit the DP or FP will be included to support the data analysis argument.

6.4.1 Employee motives

One of the factors that the data analysis finds vital in how employees perceive and behave according to overall SO culture (i.e. sharing the organisation's values and acting according to them) is employees' motives. As will be shown in this section, the data analysis finds that some employees tend to emphasise some aspects of SO culture more than others. They also have tried not to share different or '*negative*' views of work, or cite them as evidence against SO commitment to the organisation's values. Furthermore, the data analysis shows that the motive of managerial employees in adopting and supporting SO culture is slightly different from the motive of top managers.

In general, managerial employees showed in their discussions that they share common goals, that is, improving their careers and personal skills. Thus, they – intentionally and unintentionally – tend to highlight SO values that appear to match with their personal interests (which can explain their support and action toward them), and, at the same time, they tend to ignore negative aspects of work and not discuss them with other employees. For example, Qasim indicated in his interview some aspects of work that can be seen as inconsistent with SO values; however, he did not interpret them as evidence against SO's commitment to organisational values. Instead, he frequently emphasised the high-quality training as evidence of SO commitment to '*staff care*' and how this has affected his performance and views about the organisation. His emphasis on this appeared to be due to his personal interest in self-development. As he explains:

"I like to improve myself and improve my CV. When you look at my CV, you will see a lot of training programmes that I have attended, some of which I paid for [before joining SO]. [SO] is very good in this respect [offering good training] and this is more than enough for me." (Qasim, male, managerial-level employee, C4 department, 3 years' service)

Like Qasim, Malik is another male employee who cited certain work issues that can be seen as evidence against SO values; nevertheless, he tends to classify them as "*unrelated*" to the general norms of SO and emphasises that they should not impact his actions (e.g. his performance and improving his work skills) and view about the reality of the organisation. He

claimed that his ambition to improve his career and personal skills has made him focus on positive issues and try to think positively. Thus, he – like Qasim – stresses training as an important element that will improve his career, and ignores other work-related issues. As he demonstrates:

“[SO] grants employees the best training possible, which may cost between 81000 SR [around £17,000] and 90000 SR [around £19,000] annually in the best universities in the world, like the London Business School, University College London and other excellent institutions. [...] this makes me stay with [SO] because I want to improve my skills and learn new things, regardless of the challenges [work issues] that I may face.”
(Malik, male, managerial-level employee, J1 department, 4 years’ service)

Najla showed in the last section that cooperation and consultation are among the significant values of SO and have motivated her to interact and positively with SO work. She attributed her emphasis on these values to her personality, enjoying working as part of a team and sharing ‘success’ with other people:

“Researcher: So, you really believe that [SO] encourages employees to be cooperative and share cooperation and consultation values?

Interviewee: *Yes ... and we [she with other team members] like them a lot ...! Personally, I like to work as a team It will be our success if we provide excellent work, you know what I mean. All who have participated in a job will take the credit. I am so glad that [SO] recognises these value, alhamdulillah [Thank God].”* (Najla, female, managerial-level employee, B5 department, 7 years’ service)

Nawaf was observed (during formal meetings and informal gatherings) to be supportive of the overall culture of SO, tending to avoid discussions about conflict relating to work issues. In his interview, he explained that discussing such issues would make him feel negative about his work and would prevent him from improving his career and his work skills. For instance, he showed that *Wasta* (i.e. nepotism) (since the researcher had been aware of it) does exist in SO, when it has been widely assumed not to. He cited certain formal decisions and other informal actions (the researcher had been aware of them too) that appeared to be inconsistent with SO values. However, he tended not to share them with other employees (especially newcomers) or discuss them with his colleagues. As he put it:

“Personally, I do not think about these problems Regardless of the aims of these decisions, I always try to put myself in the shoes of the decision-makers [i.e. managers]. I am sure that they know there is something good behind them [i.e. the decisions], and although I may disagree with them, I try my best not to resist them or slow down

applying them. Thinking about them negatively may affect me ... year after year ... and I know for sure that many of these decisions may be taken, and, therefore, they may negatively affect my enthusiasm and enjoyment of work. So, it is better to push these kinds of ideas out of my head.” (Nawaf, male, managerial-level employee, A4 department, 6 years’ service)

Other employees, who shared similar motives for improving their career and work skills, stated that involving themselves in conflicting work issues might suggest that they were ‘*negative employees*’²⁶ in managers’ eyes, and as a result, their chances of attaining a higher level of work might be reduced. Similarly, other employees indicated that being a ‘*negative employee*’ might reduce their chances of working in other positions, i.e. other than their main job, like working in the strategic planning committee or the HR development committee. Consequently, they believed that this could result in them missing out on great opportunities for gaining contrasting experience.

Managers provided alternative motive for adopting, supporting and reinforcing SO culture. The data analysis has observed that some managers, such as the HR, R&S, Hind, Faisal, Tamim, Bandar and the Board member, have been trying to show other employees that they are acting in accordance with SO values, even if they sometimes disagree with certain aspects of work. Like previous employees, they try to maintain SO norms and tend not to discuss negative aspects of work or share them with others. The discussions with these managers showed that they share common perceptions. They frequently described it as a ‘*sense of leadership*’. As they explained, one of the main characteristics of a good leader is to be responsible to his/her work and to accomplish the organisation’s aims. They also shared a common belief that a good leader is supposed to take care of his/her employees. For example, Tamim believed that the forced-ranking appraisal (which the 3rd Chairman approved a year before the data collection) would harm the teamwork value of SO:

“Honestly, [...] I face a difficulty which is that most of the employees [in his department] perform very well and one of the criticisms (which is negative) is the ‘forced-ranking’ appraisal, which means you have to give 30% of the employees ‘excellent’, 30% of them ‘very good’ and 30% to take a rest. This is one of the very... very bad issues in this organisation. I do not believe that this department or this organisation should apply the forced-ranking. This is my view.” (Tamim, male, high-level employee, D1 departments, 8 years’ service)

²⁶ ‘*Negative employee*’ is a reference by SO employees (managers and employees) to those who always complain about work issues and try to find negative issues in SO formal and informal aspects of work, sometimes without providing real solutions.

He has thus attempted to apply different methods to accomplish the new performance measurement policy and to maintain the teamwork value. For example, he has tried to explain to his employees that having a low evaluation does not mean they are bad employees, and having a good evaluation does not mean they are performing better than others; it is due to the forced-ranking appraisal. Also, Bandar claimed that the mechanism for promoting employees does not fit with SO values and has created many issues concerning the values of teamwork. In order to minimise negative effects, he decided to sponsor special celebrations for those who receive promotions, inviting their colleagues to participate. In his view, this reduces tension between employees and reinforces many SO values, such as equality. Hind cited another example relating to employees' motives. She explained that although the female dress code did not suit her personality (for example, she did not wear *hijab* outside the organisation), she felt responsible to SO rules (i.e. being rule oriented) and to other female employees. Therefore, she stated, she had decided to wear it, although another female manager did not wear her *hijab* in the organisation (as will be explained in other chapters).

Some of these managers expressed the firm belief (developed over their long work experience) that work issues always occur; however, they believed there were solutions. For instance, Faisal stressed that facing work issues with patience and managing them reasonably to reduce their consequences is one of their responsibilities as a leader. As he explained:

“Let’s assume that our Chairman is not treating employees well, like doing bad stuff, and he starts creating stress for the directors, [...] because of his bad management style, OK And I, as a director, transfer this stress to employees under me, like the department managers and other unit heads.... What will the result of this action be? It will be a complete disaster in the entire [SO]. [...] Thus, one of our logical responsibilities, I mean as directors, toward [SO] is to take care of its overall positive culture. If there is like a ‘culture’ with employees (from the top to bottom) emphasising that the Chairman is bad... or the new Chairman we have is bad ... I believe it is not a good time to share it or try to discuss it with other employees [because he thinks that will not help to resolve the problem].” (Faisal, male, director, C5 department, 7 years’ service)

Thus, the employees’ motives can be significant in the perceptions and interactions with SO values. General personal characteristics that have been observed as reinforcing their motives include: self-learning, productive, supportive, high achievement, tolerance, having a good reputation, and a willingness to experiment.

6.4.2 Work experience

The data analysis suggests employees' work experience as another factor that increases the interaction between employees and OC (i.e. confirming, sharing and acting upon SO culture). The data analysis suggests that work experience has a considerable impact on the improvement of employees' intellectual ability and their personal values and beliefs. It reveals that those who frequently support aspects of SO culture (through expressions and actions) and show general satisfaction with SO workplace, have had previous work experience. These employees – who are mainly at the top and managerial-level – indicated that their commitment to SO culture and their general work satisfaction is down to their work experience in other Saudi Arabian organisations. In their discussions, they explained that when they compare SO culture with the culture in their previous workplaces, they can identify the realities of SO and have confidence in the underlying importance of SO formal and informal policies and actions. This can be observed in previous commentaries, as well as in the following conversations, where these employees were asked about their views on SO culture and what made them, personally, have such views:

“it is an amazing place. Since the moment I started [SO], I decided it would be the only place I would work. It has a fabulous working environment; even when they asked me about [SO] during my difficult time here, I always used to say that [SO] is very good, but I had a problem with my manager My judgment about [SO] is so realistic; it is rare to find a place like this in Saudi Arabia. However, if you asked someone here who has not worked in another organisations, they may say there are such and such issues [i.e. interpreting work issues negatively, because they lack work experience]. Personally, I was working in a very advanced department, one of the best hospitals in Saudi and the region, and I was so happy in my work [...]. However, when I came here, I found this place different. [...] Compared with the other organisations that I worked in, I believe that [SO] is less bureaucratic. The physical environment and the services it provides to the employees are five-star. It has an advanced IT work system; it has a clear spirit of being always the best, like approaching the best practice all the time. These puts [SO] ahead of many organisations. If I compare it with YYY [one of the well-known companies in Saudi she was working in] which was similar to [SO], new, and managing a major business in the country, they do not have the good things that [SO] has.” (Hind, female, high-level employee, HR department, 8 years' service) [emphasis added]

“I believe that [SO] is one of the best workplaces in the Kingdom, based on what I have heard and based on my previous work experience. I have worked with different organisations [...] and I believe that [SO] management shares a general concern for improving employees' well-being and attracting the good ones and trying to keep them

in the organisation” (Faisal, male, director, C5 department, 7 years’ service) [emphasis added]

“It has a good culture, honestly, and it is full of knowledge ... I mean people here are highly qualified, and sometimes – mashallah²⁷– over-qualified. Also, based on my experience and comparing it with other organisations, I think it has an attractive work environment, and, personally, I see it as an ‘elite’ institution.” (Malik, male, managerial-level employee, J1 department, 4 years’ service) [emphasis added]

“I have long work experience, around 13 years ... [...] I perform here better than anywhere else; they [SO values] provide me with motivation ...” (Faaris, male, lower-level employee, security department, 8 years’ service) [emphasis added]

These employees emphasised that their work experience had enabled them to develop critical cognition (or tools) with which they could examine the realities and benefits of SO culture rationally. They stated that their interactions with aspects of organisation life had created deep and convincing confidence in that their current culture was overall the best, or at least one of the best. They therefore felt that adopting the concepts of SO culture and acting upon them was essential to maintaining a good overall culture (as some of them also stressed in the last section). For example, when the researcher discussed with Faaris an issue related to the promotion mechanism (which as indicated previously, will be discussed further in the DP chapter) and asked him about his personal opinion on this issue, he did not deny the existence of the issue or its effect on him. However, he explained that compared with the situation in other organisations, it has made him more “*tolerant*” in dealing with it, and, as he says, “*trying to live with it*”. Also, Hind, in her previous commentary, indicated that although she faced some problems with her manager to start off with, she only had time for the good aspects of SO and classified her manager’s behaviour as being unrelated to SO culture. Another example was provided by Qasim who confirmed that although he faced some difficulties at the outset of his employment (i.e. things that were not consistent with the overall OC), he indicated that due to the good concepts of the overall culture of SO, compared with his previous experience, he had found a positive way to “*overcome*” them:

“even though I faced some difficulties at the beginning of my work here, I would not consider (SO) a bad organisation. On the contrary, I would consider it an experience that has added to my life.” (Qasim, male, managerial-level employee, C4 department, 3 years’ service)

²⁷ Muslims are asked by Allah/God to say *mashallah* [i.e. God bless] when they express a high regard for something that they are afraid to envy.

Many of the previously cited employees frequently emphasised – also mentioned in the previous section – that what they had learned from their work experience was that discussing work issues did not improve their performance or assist them to achieve a better position at work. However, they stated that being productive and supportive, and focussing on achievements and concentrating on advantages (*“the overall image”*, as Faaris says) had helped them overcome any conflicting issues within the OC. Nawaf, for example, explained that discussing work issues with his colleagues could go on forever, as he put it: *“Like the question, ‘What came first? The chicken or the egg?’”* He believed that having such discussions can increase conflicts within the workplace, which can impair the harmony and unity that he found very useful in comparison with his last job.

6.4.3 Similar demographics (language, faith, and nationality)

The last factor that the data analysis chapter found effective in the interactions between SO employees and the OC is similarity of demographics. More specifically, the data analysis reveals that the nationality (Saudi), the language (Arabic) and the faith (Islam) of SO employees have played significant roles in the interaction between them and their OC. Many SO managers and employees underlined, in their illustrations of SO culture, that the *‘mutual’* principles, norms and rituals of Saudi people – who comprise the majority of SO employees – have facilitated the creating and the understanding of the underlying assumptions of SO culture. Based on their experience, this has increased the possibility of accepting and adopting its formal and informal values and norms. They emphasised in their discussions that the values of SO culture have emerged from Saudi employees who share the same nationality, language and faith, and as a result, understand the most suitable culture for their organisation. For example, the formal male and female employees’ dress codes are consistent with their cultural background, so most SO employees have adopted this policy without any resistance.

This also applies to the business of the females’ section. Hind, as well as the HR manager and other female employees, indicated in her discussion that while having a segregated females’ section in a Western organisation would be resisted by the organisation employees and rejected by other activist organisations in that country, having a mixed environment in a Saudi organisation would be resisted by a whole range of employees (male and female) and rejected by different members of the Saudi community and civic organisations (e.g. The General

Presidency of the Scholarly²⁸). Some employees explained that the conflict resulting from having a mixed work environment has indeed occurred in other organisations, where managers and employees come from diverse backgrounds, such as the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology and other Saudi Banks. Another example can be parental healthcare insurance. Due to the fact that taking care of parents is integral to Saudi faith and social norms, SO understands the significance Saudi employees' place on the availability of this insurance in their OC. According to SO employees (e.g. Qasim, Tamim, Malik and the head of HR and R&S), they regard parental healthcare insurance as evidence of SO's commitment to 'staff care'. They also wondered whether parental healthcare insurance would be considered to be 'staff care' in an organisation whose members value individuality highly.

The different cultural phenomena discussed in the Saudi chapter, and in this one, may underpin the suggestion that these individual characteristics have real and affective involvement with the OC. Also, as this study has observed, different participants assumed that the researcher would understand the main thrust of their accounts, simply because they assumed that he shared the same nationality, language and faith. This can be observed in the reaction of some of the females when they were asked about equality, and the segregated section or separate celebrations. They indicated that questioning on these issues was inappropriate – simply, as a Saudi, the value of a separate female section should be respected. Another example providing further explanation of this data analysis section is the following account from a director, explaining the management relationship and the nature of management in Saudi Arabia. As he stated:

“So, back to the management issues. From my experience of working in this country, the right and successful management style here in Saudi Arabia is managing people through love. We are, as Saudis, very close to South American or Spanish culture ... I may give you my ‘eyes’ if I like you. But, if the relationship between you and I is formal, whatever you do, you will get nothing from me. Therefore, those who have succeeded in this country are those who have managed their organisations through love. When people like you as a leader, they will like the organisation they are working in; as a result, they will feel grateful and work hard – not because of the salary, the Chairman, or the government ... they will work hard because they appreciate the leader. All who have succeeded in this country succeeded with this style. On the other hand, if you take this style (copy and paste) to one of the New York banks, you will be the most unsuccessful leader in the world ...” (Faisal, male, director, C5 department, 7 years' service)

²⁸ See [http: www.ssa.gov.sa/](http://www.ssa.gov.sa/)

What may be understood from the preceding examples, therefore, is that similarities in individuals' demographics may assist in increasing organisation-wide consensus and harmony.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the relationship between OC and IB from an IP. It firstly analysed the different aspects of SO culture from an IP under four cultural themes. It also showed that the integration view of SO culture is characterised by consistency of symbols, action and content. After analysing SO from an IP, this chapter analysed the individual factors found to be significant in the interaction between SO employees and SO culture. Briefly, the data analysis suggested that some individual aims (e.g. the responsibility some managers feel to achieve SO aims) encourage people to reinforce SO values and act in accordance with its norms. As they explained, harmony and unity are important elements that make the work process faster and more effective. In the case of some employees, their interest in improving their individual careers and personal work skills sees them focusing on certain formal and informal policies that are consistent with their individual aims. As was outlined in this chapter, these employees value the organisation's training programmes and relate to SO's concern with '*staff care*'. Interestingly, some employees believe that there are certain formal and informal aspects of work that are inconsistent with SO culture. However, managers believe that those sharing these beliefs will negatively impact the harmony and unity between SO employees, and, as a result, will slow down work progress and work efficiency. Similarly, some employees explained that these issues will be fixed sooner or later and they believe that highlighting them or involving themselves in them will only slow down their career progress.

The other significant issue that the data analysis suggested was significant in the interaction between employees and OC was work experience. In brief, it was explained that those who have had previous work experience are more enthusiastic about SO culture and more convinced about its values. They also cited a high level of tolerance about certain work issues that they found inconsistent with overall SO culture. As they outlined, work experience has developed their intellectual work skills and assisted them in developing a broad view of work realities and a greater ability to deal with different work issues. Finally, the data analysis indicated that sharing the same nationality, language and faith may enable SO management to adopt the most suitable culture that employees can understand. The examples that managers and employees provided as evidence of SO culture (e.g. the female segregation section,

parental healthcare insurance, formal dress code, organisation celebration days, the nature of the relationship between leaders and subordinates, etc.) are all inspired by these demographic elements. However, despite the claims of a high degree of unity and consistency in cultural manifestations, some groups of SO employees provided contrasting views on overall SO culture. The next chapter analyses the relationship between OC and IB from a DP.

Chapter 7. The relationship between organisational culture and individual behaviour: a differentiation perspective

7.1 Introduction

Despite the manifestations of cohesion, high claims of integrity, and organisation-wide consensus that the last chapter demonstrates, the data analysis from a DP exposes several cultural aspects that are observed to be incompatible with these claims. This chapter aims primarily to present the relationship between OC and IB from a DP. As has been broadly described in the OC chapter, the DP is characterised by inconsistency, subcultural consensus and rejection of ambiguity (see Martin, 1992, 2002). It illustrates that inconsistency takes three forms: (a) symbolic inconsistency (i.e. non-congruence between content themes and forms of the culture); (b) ideological inconsistency (i.e. non-congruence between content themes); and, (c) action inconsistency (i.e. non-congruence between content themes and actual practice). Accordingly, this chapter explores the individual characteristics and personality traits found increasingly interacting with the DP aspects. Like the last data analysis chapter, this chapter is divided into three key sections. The first section provides a general and brief overview of the data analysis from a DP. This is important in understanding and explaining the relationship between OC and IB from a DP. Essentially, this section presents the data analysis from a DP focus on four subgroups. It will also explain why the data analysis highlights these subgroups and will reveal some of their key characteristics. The second section provides an analysis of SO culture from a DP under three cultural themes, where SO employees cite other views found to be different from the dominant SO culture. The third main section outlines different individual characteristics and characteristics that are suggested to be significant in the interaction between SO employees and the DP. Most importantly, it illustrates the individual traits that encourage SO employees to behave in certain ways and interact with particular DP cultural elements.

7.2 Analysing the relationship between organisational culture and individual behaviour from a differentiation perspective: an overview

The data analysis from a DP reveals different subgroups. However, due to the limited time-frame of the data collection, this study concentrated on four different groups, which SO employees indicated as the most effective subgroups. These included a group in the J1 department, two subgroups in the females' section, and a lower-level subcultural group. Importantly, each group displayed different views that challenged the views of the dominate

group about OC. Furthermore, each group shared certain individual characteristics and characteristics that might explain their differentiated views.

The J1 subgroup emerged after the 3rd Chairman took over at the SO Board (2013–2014). During the tenure of the 3rd Chairman, he approved a number of formal policies that this subgroup frequently emphasised in their discussions as being inconsistent with the OC. Their focus on these issues may have been related to certain individual characteristics, as will be shown in the third key section. With respect to the female subgroups, the data analysis highlights two effective subgroups. It seems from this data analysis identification that their gender could have had a significant relationship with their differentiated interaction. However, the data analysis reveals that the differentiated perceptions and behaviour of these two female subgroups are not fully compatible. As will be discussed in the following sections, this is related to additional characteristics that may have influenced their differentiated views and actions. The final subgroup that the following sections highlight is associated with some lower-level employees from different departments. This subgroup highlights interesting individual characteristics that may explain their different views and reaction with SO culture.

7.3 Organisational culture from a differentiation perspective

7.3.1 Lack of concern for ‘staff care’

The data analysis from a DP finds that some SO employees listen with notable scepticism to claims of ‘*staff care*’. Some employees (mostly managerial-level and lower-level employees, males and females) have frequently questioned SO’s commitment to ‘*staff care*’, citing the gap between what SO claims to adopt and what the real practices are. The commonest criticism is that apparently humanitarian policies, e.g. personal development opportunities and the informalities that make SO an ‘*excellent work environment*’, are not ‘*really*’ followed by SO management. In an interview with Fahad, he described certain formal and informal actions that he, as well as some of his colleagues (the J1 subgroup), believed to be inconsistent with SO claims of ‘*staff care*’. He explained that SO cares more about the work than its employees as people. For example, he related that the 3rd Chairman of SO made cuts to some of the employees’ benefits, such as beverages, training and bonuses. He also suggested that when he and other employees asked the 3rd Chairman in a meeting about these cuts, and explained to him that they might have negative implications for their work and personal lives, the response of the Chairman was unexpected. As he narrates:

“He [the 3rd Chairman] suddenly interrupted the employees’ discussion [about their views on reducing employees’ advantages] and said: ‘Do you know how much this water [he pointed at a bottle of water on the meeting table] you drink every day costs [SO]? At this point, people started looking at each other [surprised by the explanation of the Chairman, as it did not tally with SO commitment to ‘staff care’]. After the meeting, the employees of [SO] started making jokes and mocking his expressions because they did not see it as consistent with SO’s claims of taking care of employees, like [...] the slogan ‘STAFF CARE’ that they frequently stress in their discussions and other things like that.” (Fahad, male, managerial-level employee, J1 department, 4 years’ service)

Ali (another member of J1 group) referred to the Chairman’s actions as a sign of weakness of SO management commitment to ‘staff care’:

“Major changes happen after each Chairman [referring to the 3rd Chairman], which is a strong sign of management weakness due to a lack of clarity concerning the organisation’s aims and uncertainty around the organisation’s vision. This is obvious, especially when the organisation has been ‘claiming’ that it adopts ‘certain’ values, but acts in contradiction with its claims. This makes you question anything that the management claims [...]. For example, when they state that they care about the employees, I ask myself, ‘Are they really acting in light of this statement?’” (Ali, male, managerial-level employee, J1 department, 3-5 years’ service)

Some employees from J1 department also suggested in a group discussion that the underlying reason that makes SO determined to have an ‘*excellent work environment*’ and stresses that it provides the best training programmes for its employees is not in order to maintain employees’ well-being. Rather, they believed that the ‘*hidden reason*’ for these benefits is to maintain the ‘*organisation’s public image*’. In support of their claims, they explained that SO’s management and some employees frequently indicate that the ‘best workplace’ prize the organisation won recently was due to the ‘*excellent work environment*’ that SO maintains for employees. However, they showed that this story is not totally true. Naser (a managerial-level male employee who has worked in J1 department for three years) outlined that SO ‘*paid*’ Great Place to Work (the company that regulates this prize) to be part of the competition. He also stated that due to the partnership between Great Place to Work and Al-Eqtessadiya Newspaper (a well-known economic and business newspaper), SO management paid the competition fee because it enhanced organisational publicity. Accordingly, he argued that when Great Place to Work published an article about the best work environments in Saudi Arabian organisations and included SO on the list, SO management “*indirectly*” publicised that the media was “*impressed*” by the “*excellent work environment*” that they provided for their employees.

Other employees from different departments believe that lower-level employees' perception of SO's management is that it has fostered inequities in benefits for lower-level employees. Taking into account that SO underlines that it takes care of 'all' employees regardless of their work level, certain lower-level employees have developed views that contradict SO claims. For example, Saad claims that mid-level and high-level employees have priority when it comes to the distribution of benefits. He argues that although SO regularly 'advertises' its commitment to providing an 'excellent work environment to all employees', the reality is different:

"If you have seen the drivers' [who occupy a low work level] working environment conditions, you would be really surprised. They have a room in the 'basement', like when I was in [F2000] building, we used to have a room in the basement that when you wipe your face, you see black things on the napkin that come from car exhausts. They believe that because you are nothing but a 'driver', you are supposed to be close to the parking. Even now, they only have one computer that they all share, just like other things like the telephone. Also, because you are a messenger [postman], you are supposed to stay on the reception desk, as YOUR desk, but where 'everything' can be on your desk, like newspapers, the coffee set, and so on." (Saad, male, lower-level employee, A5 department, 6 years' service)

According to Saad and other employees, as will be outlined shortly, the differing management treatment experienced by lower-level employees at SO is exacerbated because they believe that SO management looks down on their qualifications and work status, rather than considering them valuable members of SO who face realities tougher than those faced by mid- and high-level employees (with better income and other advantages). This suggests status culture. For instance, some lower-level employees question the genuineness of organisational policies (e.g. humanitarian policies). They claim that they only have the appearance of fairness; they do not consider the actual life situations of those at the 'bottom of the hierarchy', according to Saad. Salem provides several examples showing inconsistency between what SO management espouses and what is really being practised in terms of employees' well-being. He expresses a feeling of 'unfairness' in the application of the organisation's policy, believing that 'simple' employees have recently been neglected. He claims that whenever SO faces financial shortages, the mid- and higher-level employees are given benefits priority:

"For example, when they [SO management] consider who deserves training or something like that, they start with them first [referring to those at higher levels]. They think that 'simple' employees can wait ... you know what I mean? [he indicates that they look down on their qualification and work status] I just want to have similar

benefits to other employees. What is the difference between someone in grade [H, a middle position] and [A, one of the high-level positions] or [B, a lower-level position]? There is no difference; they are all EMPLOYEES! In fact, I would actually care about the simple employees more, as they usually remain within the organisation more so than those who are in grade [H] or [I, one of the highest positions]. We have explained this to them many times [referring to top management]; however, they said if we do not like the work here we should find another job. [...] I feel that in the past, they took care of the employees 'equally', but not anymore.” (Salem, male, lower-level employee, A2 department, 10 years' service)

The data analysis from a DP finds that some female employees (the first female group) hold views different from those of the dominant culture. They express inequality in management treatment of female employees' benefits. Although these female groups share with other female employees the value of having a segregated section (i.e. privacy), at the same time, they argue that this does not provide 'equality' of taking care of employees' well-being, as the SO management has been claiming. They believe that female employees should be considered and treated just like any other employees (i.e. males), regardless of any factors that may affect this 'granted right', that is, the need to be in a separated section. In this regard, they have been demanding that SO management provide similar advantages to those offered to male employees. Interestingly, they also want SO to leave in place the privileges the organisation offers them due to their gender (such as having a separate section, special pregnancy leave²⁹, covering *Mahrahm* expenses when they travel for business trip, etc.). For example, in a discussion with Huda (a female managerial position employee who worked in A5 department for five years), she explained that this inequality can be seen in SO's physical arrangement. She outlined that benefit equality, according to this female group's perceptions, suggests that each female employee, like her male co-workers, is supposed to work in a segregated section *within* her department, and not be seated with different female employees from different departments in the same place. She went on to argue that this would make her perform better and feel more satisfied about her workplace. As the investigation progressed, different females shared this view and provided different reasons justifying their argument. For instance, Shams argued that being with females from different departments would not create the feeling of 'belonging' that SO believes is necessary. She claimed that when female employees are closer

²⁹ It should be noted that 'by Saudi law', all organisations must give every female employee fully paid pregnancy leave (specified as four weeks before the expected birth date and six weeks after the birth date) (see Ministry of Labour, Saudi Arabia, 2017). However, the SO Board passed a policy, which was suggested by HR, that offers any female employee additional leave (specified 'unpaid' of a maximum of six months' duration), when it is needed, due to any circumstances that may arise from her pregnancy. This is done to allow the employee to keep her position, after a case occurred involving one of the female employees.

to their department, like male employees, the relationship between them and their department members become stronger:

“Honestly, male employees here are like a one-group department, because they stay together. So, their relationship is better than the female employees’. [...] In the female section, you may have a strong relationship with people close to your desk, but not from your department ... this is very common.” (Shams, female, managerial-level employee, A4 department, 2 years’ service)

Other female employees (the second group) also indicated that many benefits that SO offers to employees do not actually meet their personal needs. Observing SO’s claims that it offers benefits that suit the needs of ‘all’ employees, these female employees showed that the company’s concern for employees’ personal well-being usually takes the form of supporting male employees, rather than traditional-housewives. Salma illustrated that:

“We have a lot of benefits here in [SO], and I am talking now from a female perspective more than a male’s [indicating that these benefits are more important to male employees than female employees]. [...] as a female [traditional-housewife], I consider the working hours (from 08:00 to 16:00) a great benefit. It is true that they are slightly long working hours for me [because it does not fit her situation], but personally, I find it a benefit to some extent and a very good one and better than other organisations. [...] For example, female bankers may work from 09:00 to 17:00. One hour makes a big difference to me, even half an hour. So, for me, this is a benefit. I wish [SO] management would focus on such things, which would help us [traditional-housewife] ... I mean things that help us [her and other female employees] to make the balance between our work and private lives, not only things that help male employees.” (Salma, female, managerial-level employee, B4 department, 5 years’ service)

According to these female employees, SO tends to focus on benefits that suit male employees, rather than offering some benefits more appropriate for traditional-housewives. Maha (a managerial-level female employee who has worked in I1 department for four years) explained that she and other female employees (housewives) do not usually need to take house loans, because their husbands usually take care it. She also shared Salma’s view that having fewer work hours was one of her requirements; it suited her life-style. Thus, these female employees (the first and second female groups) are concerned that SO’s commitment to ‘staff care’ does not include them as fully as their male colleagues.

7.3.2 Impediments to teamwork

The data analysis from a DP highlights different work issues that some employees believe undermine the teamwork that SO claims to support. For example, some employees of J1

department argued that certain formal policies and informal actions contradict SO's concern with teamwork. Some of them claimed that the forced-ranking appraisal that SO management approved lately has harmed the teamwork spirit that SO claims is necessary. Abdullah (in his exit interview) claimed that forced-ranking appraisals (explained in the last chapter) had generated conflict between employees and department management. He explained that organisational work *"is based on teamwork, not on individual work"*, and argued that the forced-ranking appraisal supports *"individual performance"*. He pointed out that when managers have no choice but to give 30% of the total to each category, only a few members of the team will get a high evaluation and only those will get the full rewards (most importantly promotion and bonus). He explained that after many arguments with his department management about his evaluation, conflict started to increase between him and his managers. Consequently, because he was not able to be part of a team, he decided to leave the organisation.

Some employees of J1 department cited certain informal actions that – in their view – appeared not to be consistent with SO's concern for teamwork. Interestingly, a group discussion with members of the department³⁰ confirmed Abdullah's view. They related that due to the tension between some employees (included them) and their department management about the forced-ranking appraisal, one of the *'excellent employees'* (based on their views) went to the Vice-Chairman *'desperate'* to explain his problems with the appraisal and how it had undermined the teamwork in the department. They explained that the Vice-Chairman offered no solution to the employee. This suggested to the employee that this could result in many employees in the department leaving the organisation. *"Surprisingly"*, according to Rashed (a managerial-level male employee who has worked in J1 department for five years), the Vice-Chairman said in a direct and forceful tone that, *"any employee is free to leave the organisation; the [SO] can bring in new and 'excellent' ones ... [indicating cooperative employees]."* This action was seen by the group of employees as a sign of the weakness of SO commitment to teamwork.

Consistent with the last group discussion, other employees of J1 department explained that the forced-ranking appraisal had also impaired the coherence between employees (i.e. not only between managers and employees). Ali, in his interview, explained that after SO management applied the appraisal, tension and work complaints started to increase not only between managers and employees, but also between employees. He illustrated that some employees

³⁰ This discussion took a place in J1 department and included Ali, Fahad, Naser, Rashed, and later on, Abdullah joined the group discussion.

started to do work by themselves, tending not to share work information with other members of the team or help them in accomplishing the work. In his view, this was done to “*impress their managers*”, so they would get a high evaluation. He also stated that some employees had complained to their managers and to HR about employees tending to keep work to themselves rather than being cooperative. This resulted in other employees appearing “*in their management’s eyes*” not to be performing as they should be. In his view, these actions have had a negative impact on teamwork and he claimed that SO management was not trying to solve the issue.

The data analysis from a DP pointed up some female employees who had revealed different formal and informal practices that – based on their views – had undermined teamwork. Some (i.e. the first female group) expressed difficulties in achieving ‘*excellent teamwork*’, which is based on unity and coordination, and stressed that SO management was supposed to make an extra effort to fix these issues. They felt that the harmony between female employees that SO believes important for teamwork was not fully accomplished, and this was having negative impacts on teamwork. In Shams’ discussion, she indicated that one of the difficulties could be seen in SO’s physical arrangements. She illustrated that SO do not organise the desks in the females’ section based on departments (i.e. each department’s employees are seated next to each other), and this issue had created difficulties in teamwork:

“if [SO] cannot arrange a separate section for female employees within their department, at least they should arrange their desks so that employees from each department sit next to each other [...]. This would make teamwork more effective and speed up performance.” (Shams, female, managerial-level employee, A4 department, 2 years’ service)

Although some formal practices can be implemented to enhance ‘*excellent teamwork*’, the informal approaches applied are – according to some employees – inconsistent with teamwork values. Noting that SO management organises extended social gatherings and arranges other extended work meetings, which they believe will reduce tension between employees and reinforce cooperation, some female employees from the first and second groups provided contrasting views. The first female group stated that some female employees, who they called ‘*mums*’ (the second female group), do not engage in many extended work activities, such as attending the female-only social gatherings or other optional meetings (female or mixed meetings). Hind (who is responsible for arranging female gathering) confirmed their view:

“Last Ramadan, the organisation arranged iftar [breakfast] meals separately – male employees together and female employees together. But I think the female gathering, as usual, was unsuccessful because many did not come.” (Hind, female, high-level employee, HR department, 8 years’ service)

Thus, some of the first female group assumed that they tended to communicate with each other and gather in a group, as Marim indicates:

“it is just that they like to stay and chat with each other, because they are the same age ... as some of them are mums (and there are a few here), thus they are a group. Also, I believe it is based on shared interests.” (Marim, female, managerial-level employee, C5 department, 2 years’ service)

This behaviour, according to these employees, was unhealthy for teamwork and required SO management to encourage these employees to cooperate in such gatherings and meetings. Hayat (a managerial female employee who has worked in D2 department for three years) claims that not engaging in such activities will reduce communication between female employees, which is necessary for teamwork, in her view. Marim also explained that not attending such work activities put this group behind because they were not getting updated about work progress:

“Sometimes we [her and other employees] discuss issues related to work and afterwards, we have to explain them again to those who did not attend [indicating the ‘mums’] [...]. I feel frustrated having to explain work issues twice.”

During the course of the interviews, as well as during other conversations with members of the ‘mums’ group, it appeared that they call the first group ‘juniors’, i.e. through lack of work and life experience. Furthermore, the ‘mums’ group expressed different views that appeared not only inconsistent with the ‘juniors’ group views, but also with the views of the dominant organisational group. A member of the ‘mums’ group expressed a view that she assumed was shared by her colleagues. In a phone interview, Maha explained that such extended work activities did not help her and her female colleagues to do their ‘own work’ and believed that they consume work time. Also, noting that SO emphasises that such meetings are voluntary, she claimed that management sometimes made them part of work requirements:

“I have found some meetings and gatherings to be a waste of time, and I do not have time to waste. I have to finish my work first and then do extra things. Just like the gathering³¹ that we had last time [the researcher attended], it was not beneficial that

³¹ This gathering is organised by SO to get each new arrival (males and females) to make a presentation that other employees may find interesting. Some employees from their department may be invited to attend.

much and sometimes I feel that [SO] makes them obligatory.” (Maha, female, managerial-level female employee, I1 department, 4 years’ service)

Another interesting view about teamwork thrown up by the data analysis from a DP was revealed by some lower-level employees. They provided different examples that show up inconsistency between what SO people state as valuable and adopt in work, and what is really happening (i.e. action inconsistency). Saud discussed the reality of SO’s commitment to teamwork critically and claimed that the work style of some SO managers was ‘*annoying*’ and inconsistent with SO’s concern with the values of teamwork. He complained that his opinion of the work that he is responsible for is deflected by his manager, and that everything depends on his manager:

“Interviewee: The work in [SO], to be honest with you, depends on what your manager ‘exactly’ wants. Your direct manager determines the kind of tasks you should do and determines the type of trust that he puts in you to accomplish them. For example, some managers give you some tasks and give you space to work on them. Others involve themselves in every single detail. [...] The second is so annoying! The first one trusts you, like when he gives you a task, he shows you that you will be able to accomplish it, without him ‘interfering’. And when you have finished it, he may give you some feedback, like if you had done this it would be better and may say, after all, thank you for your work, well done! So, now, your job is done! In the case of the second type, although he has been involving himself in every single detail and has been ‘nagging’ (like every morning asking you: ‘What have you done? What’s the progress? And what have you done with X...’) and you give him the work back, he asks you about every single mistake that he finds and, of course, blames you for them. This is so annoying! Also, you may do things that you are not convinced about, but they are ‘the manager’s’ requirements; and this way, the result comes out different from what was expected.

Researcher: What type of manager do you have now?

Interviewee: The second one.” (Saud, male, lower-level employee, G1 department, 3.5 years’ service)

According to Saud, the reaction of some SO managers depends on their ideology with regard to the ‘*all start*’, which usually puts emphasis on qualifications more than work experience. He explained that although he has long-term work experience, his manager believes that his qualification (i.e. diploma) does not qualify him to work independently. As a result, he struggles to act as a member of a team.

Like Saud, Sultan (a lower-level male employee who has worked in E2 department for ten years) was concerned about inconsistency. Given that SO emphasises that the relationship

between managers and employees should be based on cooperation and consultation, Sultan claimed that the treatment by some SO managers of lower-level employees was inconsistent, and this action makes him feel dissatisfied about SO claims of teamwork:

“Based on my observation of the managers here, they treat employees differently. There is ‘discrimination’ in the way managers treat employees. I mean, even their tone changes when they speak to us [referring to lower-level employees] and the other officers [middle managerial employees]. I strongly disagree with this behaviour and I find it unacceptable.”

Thus, according to some lower-level employees, a closer look at SO’s commitment to teamwork reveals that the inputs of some team members (mid-level and high-level employees) are – in management’s view – more valuable than those of other members of the team (i.e. the lower-level employees).

7.3.3 Challenging claims of equality

The data analysis reveals certain employees who question the reality of SO’s commitment to equality. As was indicated in the last chapter, SO stresses equality by encouraging good relationships between managers and employees that offer employees support, respect, appreciation and empowerment (i.e. equal opportunities) in accomplishing the organisation’s aims, as well as the employees’ aims. However, some employees have cited different formal and informal practices that they believe to be inconsistent with SO claims of equality.

For example, the last chapter explained that SO managers tend to meet with their employees – regardless of their work level – to discuss work issues and try to involve them in decision-making because their views are valuable. Also, the last chapter introduced some stories that some employees shared and related to SO values of equality. However, other employees from J1 departments (Fahad, Naser and Abdullah) had a different interpretation of some of SO management’s actions and certain aspects of these stories, emphasising that equality is just a myth used by management *“to pass special agenda”*, as Abdullah put it. In support of their claims, they shared a story that when the 3rd Chairman was appointed in 2013, he arranged meetings with managers from each department, inviting some of their subordinates who occupy different job positions to discuss critical work issues that are usually carried out by top management, such as new strategic planning and other new policies that aimed to regulate the benefits that SO offers to employees. They said that while many employees saw these actions as evidence of SO management commitment to equality, they had different view.

They believed that the “*hidden agenda*” of such meetings was not to share critical decision-making with employees; most of the decisions are made by top managers and certain department managers (indicating HR). According to them, SO management wanted to “*create the illusion*” that they appreciate employees’ views and wanted to share strategic decision-making with them. Naser (who attended one of these meetings) stressed, in a private conversation, that SO was not committed to equality, nor any other values it claims. He claimed that decisions about the strategic plan and regulations concerning employees’ benefits had already been made before the meeting with the Chairman, and therefore, he argued, “*there was no point in hearing from the employees*”. He believed that the reason for the meetings was that the Chairman was trying to “*convince*” employees that decision-making was shared by “*all members of the organisation*”. In so doing, this would have “*the regular employees*” accepting decisions (because they believed they were part of the decision-making process) and SO management would avoid “*resistance*” or “*negative behaviour*” like tardiness in applying them. As Naser narrates, during the meeting with the Chairman, he and his colleagues tried to discuss the forced-ranking appraisal that SO had approved lately, because it would discriminate with employees’ rewards (as explained in the last section, last chapter) which is incompatible with SO’s concern for ‘*staff care*’ (as discussed in the last section). In response to their inquiries (as Naser relates), the Chairman stressed that the financial resources of SO are limited, and, therefore, they need to be managed “*efficiently*” by offering only the “*excellent*” employees the rewards that they “*really deserve*”. However, Naser and his colleagues believed that this is another issue that appeared to be incompatible with SO ‘*all-stars*’, arguing that SO defines ‘*all-stars*’ as ‘*excellent employees*’ and that SO has recruited ‘*only*’ top employees. Furthermore, he argued that since SO emphasises that they only have ‘*star employees*’, star employees should be offered “*decent*” reward packages, or, as he added later on the discussion, “*How will [SO] keep them from competitor organisations?*”

Interestingly, the data analysis from a DP found a group of female employees (the first group) who challenged SO’s claim of equality. Given that the first group shares with other female employees the privacy that the female-only section offers, they, at the same time, argued that SO management does not consider the negative implications of being in a separate section (which is located on the ground floor) from their departments (which are mostly located on upper floors). This also underlines their demands to the SO management to have a separate section within their department and not to be seated with female-only employees from

different departments in a segregated section. The data analysis suggests that the argument of this group centers round their perceptions of the modern role of Saudi females in a Saudi Arabian organisation. As they stated in preceding sections, they believe that Saudi female employees should be considered and treated just like any other member of the organisation (i.e. males), regardless of any factor that may undermine this '*granted right*', that is, the need to be in a separate section. In the conversation with Shams, she explained that the females' section could prevent her from progressing her career, believing that some SO managers do not take into consideration that the current females' section may lead to inequalities of opportunity between male and female employees. She believes that not being close to her department (i.e. being seated in a segregation section *within* her department) will hinder her understanding of her work:

“Researcher: In your view [after she criticised the current situation of the females' section], what is the situation supposed to be?

Interviewee: *I prefer to stay close to the other employees of my department and understand how work is done. We may understand how other departments work, but we may not understand our own that much, because we need to be closer*

Researcher: Do you prefer to work in your department with other males [in a mixed workplace], instead of being in a separate section?

Interviewee: *No, because there would not be 'privacy'.*” (Shams, female, managerial-level employee, A4 department, 2 years' service)

Shams illustrated that not understanding how work should be carried out would hinder her from occupying a higher position. She argued that since male employees are close to department management, this would give them an advantage over female employees, with promotion more likely given to male employees.

Another interesting discussion with two female employees from the first female group showed that the traditional housewife ideology of SO management has fostered inequalities in empowerment of women. Noting that SO's publicised opportunities are given to any employees (i.e. male or female), they questioned why women who have the same capabilities as males are not empowered to participate in work tasks. Haifa (a managerial-level female employee who has worked in D2 department for three years) related that when she started working at SO, HR arranged an induction that discussed SO work and its values. She outlined that the HR official “*clearly*” stated that SO management would empower “*any*” employee to achieve the organisation's aims. However, she argued that there is difference between what

the organisation espouses and what is practiced. She explained that some unit heads in a certain department (which she named) have never let a woman work on their team, and have always tried to avoid working with one. This had made her wonder about the SO commitment to this value, as well as the other values that SO has claimed to be concerned with. Basmah (a managerial female employee who has worked in O1 department for 3 years) added, in the same discussion, that she had observed managers neglecting their female employees and giving them less work, preferring the males to do it. Thus, she said, it was usual to see female employees spending their work time doing inappropriate things such as online shopping. According to them, the empowerment inequalities they experienced were exacerbated by SO managers assuming that male employees were more capable than female employees. They stated that this ideology was supported by a social assumption that men can deal with stress and hard work better than women.

The lower-level employees group also questioned the reality of SO's commitment to equality. Although some formal practices may have to be designed to enhance equality, the informal approach applied is, according to these employees, definitely not equal. For example, formality between managers and employees is supposed to be kept to a minimum; however, some lower-level employees believe that depends on employees' work and social position. Sultan (the lower-level male employee who has worked in E2 department for ten years) said that managers always imply "*formality*" in the relationship between them and lower-level employees. As he expressed it: "*It is like, 'Do not think that I am your friend, no! Do not forget that I am your manager, so you need to understand that I am a manager and you are just an employee. I feel that the 'prestige' [i.e. status] is over here ...*" He suggested that managers treat them in such way because they have a low social and education level.

Another lower-level employee claimed unfairness in SO management's treatment of employees. Saad argued that contrary to SO management claims, opportunities are not equally distributed between all employees, and believed that lower-level employees gain fewer opportunities. Consistent with Sultan's view, he also suggested in his interview that the reason behind SO management's treatment of them was their low social and education level:

"I would like to show you that there are some people, and I am one of them, who are 'oppressed' in this organisation. This is in terms of the salary, position and opportunities that [SO] management are trying to 'convince' us as they are providing fairly to everyone. Like when they changed the promotion policy, it was not difficult for those who have higher grades; they would not experience a significant difference ...

(well, not that they [the people who occupy higher grades] would not notice the difference, it will be for them; however, their circumstances are better than mine). Also, unlike others, we were transferred into positions that have lower salaries, and when you look at the general salaries in [SO], you will find them high. So, why are people's situation [those in lower-level positions] like this? They are so 'crushed', why!? They think that they are 'professional' and 'critical' in everything; however, when it comes to reality, like applying a policy, we [referring to the lower-level employees] face the dark side ..." (Saad, male, lower-level employee, A5 department, 6 years' service)

7.4 The relationship between the differentiation culture perspective and individual characteristics

After analysing SO's culture from a DP, this main section – as was explained previously – outlines the individual characteristics and personal traits that the data analysis suggests influence employees' interaction with aspects of SO culture. In general, this section tries to explain why some employees have differing perceptions of the OC. It should be noted that in keeping with the approach adopted in the previous chapter, views (which may fit the IP) will be included here to support data analysis findings, although this section is supposed to focus on a DP.

7.4.1 Lack of work experience

Considering the J1 group's differing views and behaviour, the data analysis from a DP identifies common individual characteristics that this group's members share and which may influence their interpretations and behaviour. Some SO employees (e.g. Hind, Malik, the head of HR and R&S) argue that the interaction and interpretation of the J1 group with aspects of SO culture is due to their lack of work experience, as will be explained below.

They believe (as will be discussed shortly) that a lack of work experience makes J1 group members appear to have a lack of adaptability, communication and/ negotiation skills, analysis competence, and understanding of mutual administrative standards. Verifying these employees' assumptions, the researcher accessed the J1 group work profiles which showed that they were fresh graduates when SO recruited them. According to the discussion with the head of R&S, as well as the HR manager and Hind, in investigating J1 group's differing views and behaviour, they claim that employees who have not worked in other organisations usually show a lack of competence in analysing the realities of work conditions, that is, the pros and cons of aspects of SO culture. As a result, these SO employees argue that J1 appears to be *'impulsive'* when interpreting new changes (e.g. the appraisal) or statements (e.g. the J1 view of best workplace award). This impulsiveness causes them to make *'unconsidered'* decisions,

which sometime makes it difficult for certain parties (e.g. their department management and HR) to manage. Hind cited Abdullah's case as a *"typical one"*. She stated that, *"many employees [who have no previous work experience] take management's actions 'personally' and sometimes take their expressions out of context [...], which can create endless work conflict."* In support of her argument, she cited examples of employees who went to the HR department and made complaints about their managers' actions (which were not consistent with SO culture), without trying to discuss them with their managers first. As she showed, some cases were closed due to a *"misunderstanding"* between the employee and his manager. According to her explanation, once the conflict between an employee and a manager gets official, the relationship between them usually becomes tense, and as a result, difficult to normalise again. This *"tension"* results in these employees (who have no previous work experience) questioning *"anything"* related to SO management claims concerning the OC. Interestingly, certain aspects of the J1 employees' interviews and discussions confirmed her assumption. They frequently focussed on work issues (e.g. forced-ranking appraisals) and tended to question the reality of SO culture as a whole (e.g. forced-ranking appraisals being inconsistent with SO's concern for *'staff care'*, *'all-star'* teamwork, sharing decision-making, etc.).

Hind also suggested that some employees with no previous work experience interpreted management statements differently (which the HR manager confirmed in a separate interview). For instance, she explained that some of these employees assume that the *'open-door policy'* means that, *"if you have any issues at work, it is appropriate [recommended] to take it to the highest authorities [the Chairman, Vice-Chairman or the organisation Board]."* She believed that their interpretation was *"naïve"* because it did not take into account a *"critical"* administrative norm, namely, the administrative hierarchy. She suggested, like the HR manager and other SO employees who have previous work experience (such as Nawaf), that the employee should discuss the problem first with his/her direct manager, and if it can not be resolved, take it to a higher authority, and so on. Interestingly, when Abdullah was interviewed again and asked for his opinion of Hind's explanation³², he explained that it was his *"right"* as an employee to make a complaint and argued that, *"every employee in this organisation, including me and my manager, are supposed to act professionally, as the work*

³² It should be noted that the identity of Hind was not revealed during this side discussion with Abdullah (due to the informed consent agreement).

ethic and other documents state.” However, Hind insisted that their attitude was due to their youth and lack of work experience:

“A good number of [SO] employees are classified as ‘youth’, and some of them have not had enough work experience [...]. So, when they experience this environment, they think this is how work everywhere looks, and assume that conflicts in work should not happen. But, when some of them moved from the [SO], they had a shock, because they found themselves facing something different to what they were thinking about and experiencing here. So, some asked to come back to work in [SO] again. Also, some are not fully aware of common management norms that we [employees with work experience] often assume are clear to every employee. [...] It seems quite unprofessional to just bypass your manager and make a complaint about actions you believe are ‘unfair’ and usually difficult to prove. It is even worse to take it to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman without clear evidence in hand. I believe that the culture of [SO] is great; however, it requires thinking, creative, hard-working and decent people and I would prefer to work with someone mature that has work experience other than at [SO] and an ability to understand work conflicts and ‘ways’ of dealing with them.” (Hind, female, high-level employee, HR department, 8 years’ service)

The data analysis observes certain aspects that confirm Hind’s, as well as other SO employee’s, perceptions of the differences between those who have worked in different organisation(s) and those who have only worked in SO. For example, Qasim related that after several failed attempts to solve his problems with two different managers, their actions being inconsistent with core SO values, he did not discuss them directly with HR. He assumed that, *“jumping over the department manager and the department director would give a bad impression.”* Thus, unlike other J1 group members (e.g. Fahad, Naser and Abdullah), Qasim, after approaching his manager, went to the director of his department and they managed to solve the problem. Interestingly, he viewed the action of the department director as evidence of SO’s commitment to organisation values, and the behaviour of his direct managers as unrepresentative of SO culture. When asked in the interview for his opinion of SO culture, especially during the hard time that he has, he said:

“I would say the same thing that I said to you [at the beginning of his interview]. I would say that [SO] is ‘excellent’ and I’m not going to make a judgment based on the behaviour of two people.” (Qasim, male, managerial-level employee, C4 department, 3 years’ service) [emphasis added]

Another interesting issue that the data analysis threw up in relation to the different perspectives and behaviour of the J1 group was explained by Malik. Although Malik is a member of the J1 department, he engages in different interactions with conflicts that occur within the

organisation. As was outlined in the last chapter, his views of the dominant culture are related to his 14 years' work experience. Malik started by explaining the culture of SO and comparing it with his previous work experience without addressing the inconsistent aspects of work in relation to SO values. After he had demonstrated the “*essence*” of the OC, as he expressed it, he explained the conflicting aspects of SO and J1 management (since he knew that the researcher had some information on this). Malik (like Qasim) believes that these conflicts are contingent, so his reactions and judgment should not be based on them. On the other hand, during the interview with J1 group members, they tended to focus on proving how conflicts were inconsistent with SO management claims about the OC. This – as was indicated previously – made SO claims of culture (e.g. ‘*staff care*’ and ‘*all-star*’) appear suspicious. During the interview with Yazeed (a managerial-level male employee who has worked in J1 department for nine years), he began addressing the conflicts within the organisation and comparing them with his previous phases of his work within SO. As may be evident from his interview, he ignored facts and aspects of SO that many employees shared and presented in the IP chapter. The following conversation presents the first part of his interview:

“Interviewer: Could you please describe the [SO] culture?”

Interviewee: *The stereotype of [SO] is to assume that it is a great institution and provides big salaries However, if someone asked me now I would be honest with them.*

Researcher: What would you say?

Interviewee: *I would say the reality now is different. [...] Before [the time before the third Chairman] there were more courses, promotions, bonuses ... but, now there are not.*

Researcher: Do you mean they are all gone now?

Interviewee: *No, [...] but they have established some sort of rules [i.e. policy] that prevent you from gaining any benefit. For example, one of these rules states that no one will take any course, unless he has an ‘excellent’ evaluation. However, in my opinion, I believe the opposite; the person with lower training should be offered more training, because he needs these courses more. But, anyway, I think they do not care.*

Researcher: Do you feel that [SO] takes care of staff?

Interviewee: *No, I do not believe so, but it should, though!”*

Despite Malik’s attempts to reduce the gap between J1 management and J1 group employees, because he strongly believes in the positive values of SO culture, he explained that one of the

issues with this subgroup is that they appear ‘*unreasonable*’ when they present their case and seem ‘*aggressive*’ reacting to management’s statements or informal actions. This may confirm a lack of communication skills within the group, which different employees of SO have noticed, along with certain other characteristics. According to Malik, these characteristics make a negative impression on management:

“Personally, I have learned that when I talk to my manager about something that is wrong, I try first to find the right time for it [...]. I try not to hurt his feelings, because he might take it personally. On the other hand, [Ali] is not like that. You can find him in a meeting saying, ‘Well, I hope the rest of us resign very soon...’ displaying a strong rejection of the management’s action ... you know what I mean? He used to be the same when discussing appraisals and other work issues Honestly, there were no limits to his demands; so he was set aside.”

A final interesting example that may support data analysis findings on the relationship between J1 group’s different views and behaviour and their individual characteristics is the case of Zyad. Zyad is a managerial-level male employee who has worked in A4 department for five years and was interviewed during data collection after his welfare celebration. Back then, he was going to leave SO to work in another organisation. Although Zyad is not a member of J1 group, he displayed similar views to the J1 group, e.g. concerns about SO commitment to ‘*staff care*’, which made him decide to leave SO. About a year after his interview, the researcher went to visit SO and – surprisingly – found Zyad working there again. When the researcher spoke with Zyad, he explained that his views about SO had changed after he tried working in another institution. He said he tended to be more “*convinced*” now about aspects of SO culture and was more “*tolerant*” about other work issues. For instance, he now viewed the forced-ranking appraisal as a “*minor*” issue or “*side effect*” of work. His views about equality had also changed. He now felt that equality should be supported by both managers and employees; managers cannot work alone in fostering this.

Therefore, taking into consideration the different views and behaviour shared by SO employees, it may be argued that those who show a lack of work adjustment, communication skills, analysis competence, tolerance, and understanding of certain critical administrative norms are more likely to have different views and behaviour than the general OC.

7.4.2 Gender issues

Observing the different interpretations and behaviours that the two female groups exhibited, the data analysis from a DP has found some individual qualities that may explain the

inconsistency of their views and reaction to the dominant SO culture. However, it should be noted that regardless of the individual qualities that each group displays (as will be discussed shortly), they both share a significant characteristic, gender. The data analysis suggests that gender is one of the main factors that has resulted in each group revealing different perceptions and showing different reactions to overall SO culture.

First subgroup: ‘the juniors’

In terms of the first group, it is evident from previous discussions that they are young; and in view of that, the data analysis observes that they share common characteristic with the J1 subgroup, that is, a lack of previous work experience. Thus, as was outlined before, previous work experience plays an important role in increasing the interaction between employees and different aspects of overall SO culture. Nevertheless, the data analysis also observes additional factors that have been found to allow for the DP of this female group. Different officials (e.g. the Board member) and some female employees (e.g. Najla, Hind and Salma) explained that women working in private or semi-governmental organisations in Saudi Arabia³³ is still a relatively new experience. This was confirmed and explained by the HR manager:

“The latest vision of the [Saudi] government, during the time of King Abdullah [1924–2015], may Allah [God] have mercy on him, was that Saudi females have not been offered enough opportunities to work in different sectors. So, the government has been supporting the employment of women in all types of organisations, especially those [females] for whom the government was sponsoring study abroad. Thus, with the focus of the media on this issue and the encouragement of Saudi universities in convincing females to pursue degrees in different subjects, like management, law, architecture, and engineering, this has resulted in females of this group believing that they are different and have the responsibility to lead this experience to succeed.”

Thus, taking into consideration the HR manager’s claims and the other discussions with the first female group outlined formerly, the data analysis suggests that this particular female group (unlike the ‘mums’ subgroup or the dominant female group) believes that they have a responsibility to change the ‘stereotyping’ that assumes ‘women can only do certain jobs (e.g. teaching)’ and ‘men are more capable of doing the other jobs’, as they expressed it. Accordingly, it can be claimed that their own aims have been driving their interpretation of different cultural aspects (e.g. empowering all employees) and their reactions within the

³³ The head of HR claims that over the last few decades, most females have been working in the education sector (i.e. teachers), public sector and medical sector respectively. This is also confirmed by the Saudi Arabia chapter.

organisation (e.g. demanding that SO provide equal work opportunities and work conditions for male and female employees).

In general, it has been noticed that this female group is considered to be one of the hardest-working groups, with active and innovative employees, and that in the view of the HR manager, they meet the expectations of SO. However, data analysis detects that the lack of work experience and the aims that they discussed may have led some of them to make subjective interpretations and react haphazardly towards work realities.

Some of its members reported that male employees had tried to show that they were more capable of work than female employees. However, this has not come up in any other female employees' interviews (e.g. the 'mums' or the dominant females group), nor has any male employee compared his work capacity with that of female employees. Consequently, this has made them appear highly competitive towards the opposite gender, as the following discussion shows:

“Interviewee: ... *I feel that females work more than males in the [SO].*

Researcher: What makes you think this?

Interviewee: *I do not know ... I think the females are more educated than the males ...*

Researcher: Do they want to show that they can work as well as ... [I was going to say (just as other males), but she interrupted and immediately said] ...

Interviewee: *Yes, I think so Personally, it is one of my aims to prove that I can do better than the men.*” (Hayat, female, managerial-level employee, D2 department, 3 years' service)

Along with Hayat's account, the discussion with Haifa and Basmah gave the impression that male employees dominate SO life; they occupy most of the management positions and this leaves limited opportunities for women to improve their career. In contrast, when Najla (who was mentioned in the IP chapter) was asked about this, she had an alternative point of view:

“some of those [referring to the female managers], when they came, were juniors [as a work position], and after a time, they were given management positions. Thus, [SO] has no issues with this [giving females management positions].”

The data analysis finds that the perceptions of the women in relation to equality influenced their behaviour at work, and contributed to what may be considered inconsistency with the general norms of SO work. This also tallies with a number of employees' accounts. Ghazi (a male employee) said:

“One day, I arranged a meeting with some female employees for training to show them how to work on some issues of accounting entries and how to do them properly. There were three girls, two of them in training and one was with us for a long time and I asked her to help them [in the female section] if they needed any help with work. [...] During the meeting, I realised the two girls were looking at each other and smiling, until one of them said [in a challenging tone] ‘I think this accounting entry is wrong and YOU could not spot it.’ I was surprised; like I would not be happy to ‘spot’ a colleague’s mistake, but, rather, would notify him for the sake of work ... I mean we are one team here! I said, ‘Yes, you are right, well done,’ and was going to show them how to fix it, but I noticed that they looked at each other again and smiled like ‘ego’. So, I said: ‘Do you know how to correct it?’ I wanted to teach them a lesson. She said: ‘Yes, I can, in an hour.’ I said: ‘OK, you have the rest of today and the whole day tomorrow and we will meet an hour before the end of the working day.’ They went away and we met as agreed and she had not been able to find a solution; as she explained, there was not enough time for her to fix it. I said, ‘OK I will show you how to fix it and I tried to explain to them that it is important to work as a team; we are not in a competition.’”
(Ghazi, male, managerial-level employee, Accounting department, 8 years’ service)

Another example in the data analysis is that of Malik. Malik felt that some young female employees are oversensitive about certain work issues. His account may be related to their perceptions of equality:

“I feel it is OK if someone tells me that I have done something wrong. Like last Sunday, due to the stress of the projects that I am managing and the deadlines, I think I raised my voice a little bit in a meeting and, among the employees that attended, a girl came to me and said: ‘You raised your voice at me and I do not accept that ...’ [...] so I told her that I was really sorry, I might have raised my voice, but I did not mean anything. I was talking generally to all the employees, not specifically to her ...”

Second subgroup: the ‘mums’

With regard to the second female group, the last main section showed that they do not usually engage with many extended activities (e.g. SO celebrations), and tend to focus on finishing their work, and do not socialise with other groups other than their own (which makes the first group assume that they are negative concerning work). The data analysis suggests that the main individual characteristic that may explain their inconsistent behaviour with regard to overall cultural norms is their family orientation/status. They believe that work is a ‘secondary’ consideration and that their families take priority. Indeed, their profiles show that most of them are married, unlike the members of the first group.

This has given them different views and caused them to adopt different norms to the other female group discussed (both the ‘juniors’ and the dominant). As was outlined in the last

section, in spite of the different benefits that SO provides, Salma stated that the working hours (08:00 – 16:00) were one of the main benefits for her. In view of that, it can be assumed that the effects of these SO benefits for her, as well as for the ‘mums’ group, could be limited. The reason for her view is that she could go home and look after her house. As she said:

“Personally, I am not demanding, so [SO] for me is choice number one. I have never asked for a bank loan [one of the SO benefits], never ever. I personally do not want to stay home doing nothing, although I am busy at home; I have a family. I spend half of my time working here and the other half I look after my family. Thus, I try to make my working hours balance with my family. I do not see myself as a banker [they work between 09:00 and 17:00]. I know some people who are working in banks, [...] so I know that I would not be able to achieve a balance between working in the bank and my family ... it would be a deficit for me. Here, [in SO] it is in the middle ... a lot of work; however, comfortable. The work environment is very comfortable [being in a separate department], at least for me.” (Salma, female, managerial-level employee, C2 department, 5 years’ service)

Accordingly, it has been observed that different members of this group leave at 16:00 ‘sharp’. Also, this may justify their behaviour when it comes to focussing on work and not attending extra gatherings.

In terms of the socialisation issue, some of them argue that their interests are different from those of other employees. For instance, Maha outlined that when she meets with the ‘mums’ group, she can exchange different family experiences with other ‘mums’ employees. As she says:

“When my kid gets sick (God forbid), or something like this, of course I would not ask a young girl who has just graduated and is trying to improve her ‘career’ what she did when she faced a similar situation. I have nothing against them, God bless them, and I do not have a problem working with them ... it is just about sharing interests.” (Maha, female, managerial-level employee, I1 department, 4 years’ service)

This confirms the first group’s assumptions, when they labelled this group as the ‘mums’.

Also supporting the data analysis findings on this female group are some of the managers’ opinions. A discussion between some managers suggested that when a female employee gets married, her ‘enthusiasm’ for work is usually affected. This was observed at a meeting that was arranged for employees who had finished their first-year training and were nominated for positions at SO. This meeting hosted different female employees who had made their final presentations about their performance in the last year to representatives from the organisation

– Board members, HR and their department (i.e. their managers). A comment from one HR manager, which was supported by other managers, concerned one of the female employee's presentations, and showed that he was amazed at her performance during the last year. He said that, *"When I knew that she was getting married at the beginning of the training period, I said: 'Ya Allah [i.e. oh, God], I hope she will not drop the programme or struggle with it But, unexpectedly, she has been excellent, well done [XXX, mentioned her name]!"*³⁴

7.4.3 Level of dependency and self-confidence issues

Observing the discussions of the lower-level employees cited in this chapter, the data analysis suggests that one of the individual characteristics that influences their perceptions of the OC, and that may explain why their behaviour is different from overall norms, is their high level of dependency. They believe that the organisation is not only responsible for providing decent work conditions, but also for supposed to go beyond this issue and try to improve their general life conditions. This is based on their perception of the role that Saudi 'semi-governmental' organisations play with regard to their employees, and on their own interpretations of some organisational policies.

For instance, Saad opined that since SO is financially supported by the Saudi government (because it is a semi-governmental organisation), it should play a role in taking care of lower-level employees in particular. This was due to his assumption that the general norm in Saudi government was to support Saudi citizens through the different programmes that it sponsors, for example Saudisation³⁵. Nevertheless, different organisation documents (e.g. financial statements) and employees (e.g. Board members, the HR manager, and Othman³⁶) show that the financial support of the Saudi government is limited, and that the organisation depends on its performance to generate its income. Furthermore, it has been indicated that SO is questioned (quarterly and annually) about its performance by the Saudi Council of Ministers. Therefore, SO management argues that it has to act professionally and efficiently.

Thus, it can be assumed that the difference between many employees' perspectives of SO culture is related to their degree of dependency on the organisation. For example:

"Interviewee: no one has told me, 'Come and do this and that...' [as he indicated in the interview: how to learn new skills to improve his work status and thus have a better

³⁴ Although this expression seems to contradict the data analysis suggestion, the performance of this female employee was considered by the HR manager and the other managers to be exceptional (i.e. not in line with the general norms of married female employees).

³⁵ Saudisation is a government programme that aims to replace foreign workers with Saudi workers (in private and public sectors) (see Alsarhani, 2010).

³⁶ The official, who works in the finance department.

income]. If you take a look at the drivers and messengers in [SO] you will be surprised by their numbers. Why do they not train us and make some of us like 'secretaries'...? I feel that the [SO] is not mine...

Researcher: Why do you feel like this?

Interviewee: [...] I feel that anyone in grade [E, a middle level] or [F, another middle level] and above feels like a member of [SO]... Why? Because, they are in a better situation than us. Like now, when I applied for a housing loan [one of SO's benefits], they will offer me 60 basic salaries and the instalments will be 50% of my total salary, which is 5000 SR [about £850]. So, [...] the salary that remains is around 2500 SR.... Also, how much will they give me? 5000 multiplied by 60 is equal to 300000 [about £48400]. This will not buy you a flat in [XXX, the name of the city]! Also, the training ... why is the training not for ALL people in the organisation? Why is it for a specific 'class' of people?

Researcher: You have not had any training?

Interviewee: We used to have something funny! We used to have two training sessions each year, while at that time, those who have high and middle grades used to have three annually. Our training is national, in Saudi. All that you get from [SO] you spend on the trip. However, they suddenly cancelled them. Why? We do not know! They even felt that this was too much to offer us."

However, comparing Saad's claims with other employees' perceptions (who have a lower level of dependency), they show appreciation for many things that SO grants them, and they believe that they are 'extra' and it is not obligatory for the organisation to offer them. For instance, many employees express noticeable appreciation for the parental healthcare insurance programme that SO offers to employees (e.g. Qasim, as outlined previously, stated that it helps him to take care of his parents, although the organisation does not have to do this). Furthermore, the data analysis reveals that other lower-level employees work under similar personal and work conditions; however, due to their level of dependency, they expressed views that contradict those of lower-level employees, as discussed previously, and this appears consistent with the overall norms of the SO culture.

For example, Faaris (who was introduced in the IP chapter) expressed overall satisfaction with the annual increase of 2.5% of his salary, although he stated that it had decreased from 7% last year. While confirming that this 2.5% is considered very low, compared with other mid-level employees, Faaris claimed that the organisation was supposed to enhance this percentage to improve his level. Also, unlike the claims that the former lower-level employees made, Hamzah (who was also introduced in the IP chapter) stated that SO has provided him with a

lot of training, all of which relates to his work. He related that recently, he received training sponsored by SO for 18 days in London to learn about maintenance.

Another example that illustrates the high dependency of these types of employees is evident in Salem's interview. Briefly, he claimed that SO grants grade [E] to any lower-level employees³⁷ who have a Bachelor's degree with a grade 'Good' and above. However, he argued that the employee's effort in pursuing his own degree should be recognised, even if his overall grade was 'Fair' (since this was his current average at the time of interview). Furthermore, he accused SO management – without clear evidence – of practising *Wasta*/favouritism, as they granted an exception to an employee concerning this requirement while not giving it to another one. As he explains:

“there is a decision that [SO] made recently that if you get an undergraduate degree you need to have at least ‘Good’ to grant you grade [E]. But, what is the difference between ‘Good’ and ‘Fair’? OK, ‘Good’ is better and everything, but I am an employee who works eight hours a day ... and I need to take care of my family. Also, the chairman stated in a meeting that, ‘it is an ‘extra’ effort when an employee does something good after work.’ I mean, the degree is the most important thing here; it means that I am qualified, regardless of the grade. No one will ask me about my grade; they will ask me what degree I have.”

Conversely, other employees (e.g. the head of HR, the Board member, Bander and Faisal) have argued in their interviews that when an employee completes his higher education, this is for his own benefit, and not necessarily for the benefit of SO. This is consistent with Jasear's statement (the head of the training section), as he said:

“we offer this to inspire passionate lower-level employees to pursue their higher education. Also, this [i.e. granting grade [E]] provides the opportunity for aspirational employees to carry on with their career, which eventually will enhance ‘both’ their work and financial position.” (Jasear, male, a head of unit, HR department, 8 years' service)

Another personality trait that the data analysis suggests has shaped the different views and attitudes among these lower-level employees, in contrast to the overall culture, is the perception they have of their education and social levels. In their discussions, they stated that there is a stereotyping across Saudi's that tends to categorise employees with less education (especially the Bachelor degree) and a lower social rank (i.e. not from a wealthy or well-known family/tribe) as *‘insignificant employees’*. They claimed that this explained the discrimination

³⁷ According to SO policy, any lower-level employee (e.g. in level –A, –B, A, B, C or D) who has gained a Bachelor's degree can be promoted 'directly' to level E, regardless of whether his/her level is –A or D.

in the treatment of employees by SO management (compared with other mid- and high-level employees who usually have a better level of education or more social class). However, the data analysis suggests that the concern of these lower-level employees may make them oversensitive to any actions or management decisions, as they consistently anticipate – sometimes without any evidence – that they are neglected. This oversensitivity (as will be illustrated shortly) sometimes makes them less confident, distorting their focus on working realities. There are a number of points revealed by the data analysis that support this assumption.

Firstly, while some employees (e.g. J1 and the ‘juniors’ group) mentioned similar issues to those discussed by the lower-level employees, they did not relate them to their education or social status. For example, the ‘juniors’ group argued that differing treatment of employees (e.g. empowerment) was based on gender, not education or social level. Also, none of the J1 subgroup members indicated that their concern with SO management commitment to ‘staff care’ or equality was due to their education or social levels. Rather, they communicated other concerns, as was explained in the preceding sections. Secondly – and most importantly – the data analysis revealed some lower-level employees with similar educational and social levels who assumed that these factors might result in discrimination (e.g. Faaris and Hamzah). Their views and behaviour, however, appeared to be consistent with overall SO culture (as the IP chapter outlined). This might have something to do with being less concerned about discrimination and more focussed on improving their work skills and career. According to them, this helps boost their confidence about the importance of their work and their role within the organisation. Farris outlined that some people would look down on his job which was normally worked by someone with a low education and was generally considered to be one of the lowest work positions in Saudi Arabian organisations. However, he stated that this general perception had not affected his confidence and that he was an important member of SO (which is consistent with SO claims of ‘stars’). As he explained:

“People always look down on the security employee, because he has not got a degree or anything like that. But, they do not know the reality of ‘security’ [the importance of the security job] or anything about it. [...] But, anyway, there are ‘good’ and ‘bad’ people everywhere and there are many obstacles and stresses that you need to deal with in the workplace [indicating the actual work issues and other subjective issues like the perception some people hold about those who have low education or job level].”

Interestingly, Faaris stressed the organisation's claims that SO management treats all employees with respect and cooperation,³⁸ regardless of their work position. Consistent with Faaris's view, Hamzah displayed a high level of "*pride*" in his work, and claimed that this has led him to win the best performance prize that his department organises twice, and showed his determination to win it again.

The data analysis suggests that the tenacity with which these concerns are held by lower-level employees not only points up how they view SO management's treatment, but also their perceptions of how other employees look at them. Like Sultan (who claimed that the '*tone*' of some managers changes according to the job level of the employee), Saad stated that some SO employees do not show respect to lower-level employees. Saad argued that some employees tend to insult lower-level employees' intelligence (because they do not hold a high degree). The following discussion with Saad illustrates the findings of the data analysis:

"Interviewee: I feel that [SO] has classes; wealthy people at high levels and others at lower levels [...] Sometimes, you meet someone in the elevator and when he looks at you he furrows his eyebrows, while if someone else comes [who looks like having a better financial level] he will act differently with him.

Researcher: What do you mean?

Interviewee: Looking at how powerful his family is.... "

And he adds later on in his interview:

"Interviewee: Even when we talk with other employees at the front desk, you find them talking about a restaurant in London! What on earth is that?!"

Researcher: Sorry, what do you mean?

Interviewee: I mean like we are on a break, eating ... and there is a messenger, a doctor, a manager, and a Vice-Chancellor, OK! Why should the main discussion be about the 'Ozone Layer'? [...] [i.e. something beyond his understanding]? [...] It is a typical wealthy attitude, speaking frankly. They may talk like, 'Well, when we were in Paris, we went to that restaurant and such and such ...' you get what I mean? Be humble! If you cannot lower your standards for me, why do you need me?"

Saad's case confirms what the data analysis suggested earlier about the self-confidence issue of some of these lower-level employees. The researcher noticed that some of the examples that Saad provided could have been exaggerated, which could be explained by a sensitivity

³⁸ See Faaris' example concerning the HR manager and Board member's treatment outlined in the IP chapter.

that makes him prone to misinterpreting others. The researcher attended some of the gatherings that Saad mentioned and witnessed the discussions he talked about and it was the researcher's impression that the employees in the discussions did not try to show off their knowledge or speak disrespectfully. Also, during his interview, as well as the lunch and extended social gatherings he sometimes indicated that the society look down on his social and education level, although the people in the gathering, who are in his view have good education and social status, appear to have good friendship with him, as he also confirms. Interestingly, a year after Saad's interview, the researcher found out that his situation had improved (e.g. the organisation had granted him a private desk, which he used to complain about). Nevertheless, Saad still seemed dissatisfied with the organisation. According to the researcher's conversation with him, his original perception of SO culture remained unchanged. This might indicate that Saad's sensitivity had become an obstacle distorting his perceptions of SO cultural values, such as '*staff care*'.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter explored the relationship between OC and individuals from a DP. It shows that despite claims of cohesion, high levels of integrity and organisation-wide consensus (outlined in the IP chapter), there are many differences of opinion, perception and reaction amongst employees that contradict these claims. In general, four subgroups are highlighted (the J1 department group, the '*mums*' group, the '*juniors*' group and the lower-level employees group). This chapter has argued that the differing perceptions and behaviour of these groups are related to the differing individual characteristics and personality traits of the employees. One of the most interesting issues observed is that although different groups of employees referred to similar cultural aspects, each group perceived them from a different angle. For instance, some of the '*juniors*' subgroup members felt that SO management has not succeeded in providing equivalent benefits for male and female employees, while the lower-level employees argue that SO administration has not succeeded in providing equivalent benefits between lower-level employees and higher-level employees. This demonstrates how the interaction between the employee and the organisation relies on different factors, and more interestingly for this researcher, the importance of the characteristics and personal qualities of each individual. After exploring the relationship between OC and individuals from the integration and differentiation perspectives, the last chapter of the data analysis will explore the relationship between OC and IB from a FP.

Chapter 8. The relationship between organisational culture and individual behaviour: fragmentation perspective

8.1 Introduction

The last two data analysis chapters provided many findings on the relationship between OC and individuals from an IP and a DP. This chapter aims to explore the relationship between OC and individuals from a FP, which completes the three-perspective analysis of SO culture. The data analysis uncovers several significant elements of SO culture that are related to “fragmentation”. It has been observed that some employees appeared to be unable to share certain essential aspects of SO culture, or subcultures, to the extent that these could not be described as “strong” or “thick”. However, it should be noted that the fragmentation aspects that this chapter discusses are not only different from those outlined in the DP chapter, but also expose the reality of ambiguities, conflicting and hard-to-resolve opinions.

Based on the discussion provided in the literature review chapters, the FP is defined by ambiguity (i.e. multiple interpretations of the culture), ironies and contradictions (see Mating, 1992, 2002). Ambiguity can take three key forms: (a) symbolic ambiguity (i.e. serious lack of a clearly consistent relationship between themes and cultural forms); (b) action ambiguity (i.e. absence of a clear relationship between themes and observed practices); and (c) ideological ambiguity (i.e. vagueness in the relationship between the content themes).

The data analysis from a FP explores many examples of ideological, action and symbolic ambiguities in SO life. It also finds that these forms of ambiguities emerged from certain types of individuals, who were shown to have distinctive individual characteristics. Thus, like the last data analysis chapter, this chapter has three key sections. The first section provides an overview of the data analysis from a FP. This section contains significant information that helps to explain and understand the relationship between OC and IB from a FP. The second main section explains the OC from a FP. This is done via four themes. After analysing the SO culture from a FP, the third section indicates some individual characteristics that may explain their “fragmented” view of SO culture.

8.2 Analysing the relationship between organisational culture and individual behaviour from a fragmentation perspective: an overview

The data analysis from a FP highlights some employees who share fragmented views about SO culture. Some of the most interesting employees that this chapter will discuss are certain managers who used to occupy high-level positions at C5 department. The interesting point

about these employees is that they started a “fragmented” culture that is not shared by any subgroups or by a member of C5 department. However, due to their positions (some believe they were representative of SO’s views), significant ambiguities and contradictions have emerged in respect of essential aspects of SO culture. The data analysis investigation highlights different individual and personality traits that may be related to their fragmented views. Essentially, the researcher observed a C5 employee who shared some of their views. The data analysis suggests that they share common individual characteristic. However, it should be stated that this does not indicate a subculture as the data analysis will illustrate.

The other interesting employee that the data analysis outlines is a female director called Reem. The purpose of discussing this member in particular is for different and ‘unusual’ reasons. The first reason relates to the vital position that Reem occupies (general director of the K1 department since 2013). This means that she is one of the ‘key’ members of SO, whose actions and views are more likely to be consistent with the claimed ‘strong’ and ‘thick’ culture of SO. The other reason has to do with Reem’s individual characteristics. Reem is a middle-aged Saudi female employee, and given that it is not very common to find a female employee occupying a high and ‘executive’ position in a Saudi Arabian organisation, Reem’s ‘different’ perceptions of some aspects of SO culture are ‘in the spotlight’. The degree of ambiguity that participants cited in relation to Reem’s ‘unusual’ attitudes is beyond dispute. As will be outlined in ensuing sections, participants from different levels and functions depicted examples of her attitudes and personality that contradict vital norms of SO work, as well as social culture.

The final interesting persons that the data analysis focusses on are some employees who showed low work performance and unpredicted interactions with the OC. These employees were at different managerial-levels and although they appeared to be qualified to work at SO (based on SO managers’ views), their individual aims had a significant effect on their perceptions and behaviour at SO.

8.3 Organisational culture from a fragmentation perspective

8.3.1 Confliction of ‘*staff care*’ policy

The data analysis from a FP reveals widespread ambiguities in the organisation’s policies regarding ‘*staff care*’. Some managers and employees highlighted many ambiguities that mostly emerged in the form of conflict between content and themes. For instance, some head units and managerial-level employees expressed deep concerns about ‘*unexpected*’

perceptions and the behaviour of some employees towards the organisation policy of ‘*staff care*’. They demonstrated that while the implications of ‘*staff care*’, such as the excellent work environment and the policy of not sacking employees, are believed to increase the feeling of belonging of employees and drive their positive performance (as explained in the IP chapter), the consequences of this policy are frequently unintended and commonly counterproductive. These employees indicate that the policy of not sacking employees and the management norm that SO adopts of not carrying out any type of punishment (e.g. cutting an employee’s salary) has been ‘*unpredictably*’ seen by some employees as an ‘*insurance*’ against any issue that might risk their positions and benefits at SO. For instance, Othman (a male unit head who has worked in A3 department for ten years) claims that these policies have some employees assuming that SO has a “*relaxing work environment*”. As he explains, this results in employees in his department coming in late to work and sometimes they go absent with no excuse. Based on his comments, a key consequence is that the commitment of SO managers to ‘*staff care*’ policies is mistakenly interpreted as an indication of managers being easy on bad performance or other undesirable work issues.

This behaviour, as Othman and the other managers and employees expressed has created confusion and chaos in critical parts of SO working life. As will be discussed shortly, the general concern of some SO employees suggests an incomplete realisation of SO’s ‘*staff care*’ policy, as well as the desire of SO employees to reorient the culture of the organisation to achieve the organisation aims. For example, Faisal (the director of C5 department) explained that when he was appointed director of the C5 department, he was notified that one of the staff was not delivering any meaningful work and was resisting all the help he was offered to improve his performance. Faisal expressed difficulty in dealing with this situation. While he needed to remain committed to SO’s policies, e.g. ‘*staff care*’, he also needed to make sure that all employees fulfilled their work descriptions:

“I remember an employee who used to be in this department [the C5], when I was assigned ... and I was informed, by some people here and others from HR, that he was not working as he was supposed to be, and two directors before me tried everything to get this employee to resign [because he was resisting producing any work], but he refused. [...] You may know that we do not fire anyone here, right. I asked him to come to my office and I sat with him and his direct manager. I told him that I have heard something about you [that he has been resisting doing any work], is this correct? [...] He always used to say that his direct manager had never given him a task, so I asked his manager to give him work to do. At the same time, I asked to have an email copy of

every task he was given [from his direct manager] and another email copy [from the employee] [...] once he had finished the task, explaining what he had done. He went and after a month he had done nothing! So, I asked him again and I showed him his work attendance [which makes it legal for the organisation to dismiss the employee if he has been absent for a significant time]. We discovered that 50% of his work hours were spent outside the office. [...] After 6 months of having the same discussion, he started to come and say, 'It is my mistake,' not like before, complaining that his manager was not giving him any work to do. So, in the end, he decided to resign."

The examples of these employees may also indicate symbolic and action ambiguities. They suggest that the perceptions of these employees of SO work methods regarding 'staff care' were unpredictable. In other words, they show that these employees did not share the SO claims that the implications of 'staff care' policies would motivate employees to perform better. Rather, they suggest unexpected reactions toward SO 'staff care' policies. For example, the data analysis highlights another ambiguity in terms of the implications of an 'excellent work environment'. As was explained in the IP chapter, the underlying assumptions of the 'excellent work environment' are supposed to encourage the employees' performance and good behaviour. However, this SO policy – as will be explained in the next paragraph – appeared to be perceived 'unexpectedly' by some employees, as a 'relaxing work environment', and this perception resulted in confusion and chaos in different areas of SO working life.

Nadeer (a high-level male employee who has worked in A4 department for eight years) stated that the organisation had hired a department manager who "*produced almost no work*". The situation of this employee made Nadeer concerned about the validity of SO claims of following high R&S standards that ensure only 'star' employees to join the work force at SO. According to Nadeer, this employee was recommended by a 'headhunter', meaning he was very qualified. Nadeer explained that they did a reference check on him and found him "*fitting*" SO requirements; as he put it, "*he fitted the position [as a department manager] perfectly, just like a buzzle.*" However, he relates that while all the signs indicated he would perform excellently, he gave a very poor performance in his first year, which had his department in complete chaos. According to Nadeer's investigation, the underlying reason for this employee's behaviour was the perception he had that SO has a 'relaxed work environment'. Nadeer explained that when this employee heard about the facilities and privileges that SO provides for employees (e.g. the office, coffee, special parking, etc.), the employee anticipated that SO would be tolerant of an "*average performance*", and would

never demand a high performance. What made the situation even worse – according to Nadeer – was that when the Chairman wanted to use the first-year contract authorisation to sack this employee, some managers, who appeared to be more committed to SO culture than the success of the organisation, tried to convince the Chairman to give him a second chance, which he did, with the result that this employee’s performance in the second year was even worse.

Nadeer could not understand the priorities of SO. He argued that if the Chairman had been more concerned about the organisation’s success and had sacked this employee, the department and the organisation as a whole would have been better off. He showed that the commitment of SO management to ‘staff care’ and other SO policies, such as trust and empowerment, had not allowed SO managers to exercise managerial authority in this case. Nadeer related that the director of this employee “*had no choice, but to get rid of him*” recommending him in an “*unprofessional way*” to another department director, who was in great need of employees:

“A different department director who was in bad need of any employees was given this employee who was ‘packaged’ to him [hiding that he had a problem]. So, he ‘swallowed the lure’ [an Arabic idiom, which means that this director fell into the trap], and that employee moved to the other department. The new direct manager started to give him work, but [...] he does not give anything The director started to push him, but nothing came of it. [...] He [the employee] came in every day at 08:00 and left at 16:00 ... ON TIME ... ON TIME ... never missed a day ... but doing nothing, and just enjoying the good work environment, [...] as you see, it is a nice place, good office, good facilities, good coffee, etc.”

Further investigation was carried out on this employee as well as on others who demonstrated similar behaviour. The data analysis suggests that there were certain aspects of personality that may have influenced their behaviour. Also, as the investigation progressed, the behaviour of these employees has created further confusion in other aspects of work. This will be further discussed in this chapter.

Other interesting ambiguities that the data analysis threw up were highlighted by the case of Reem (a female director who has worked in K1 department for two years). Reem expressed in her interview³⁹ several unexpected views on different realities of her work (which will be discussed in different sections of this chapter). Her views showed that although there is evidence of consensus in subcultures, this does not always extend across them. One of the

³⁹ Reem was one of a few participants who refused to have the interview recorded. She explained that it would not allow her to speak freely.

most interesting issues that Reem discussed, related to the female section. Different to what other employees stated previously (males and females, including the two female subgroups), Reem expressed confusion about the rationale that led to SO having a section based on 'gender', i.e. the female section. Observably, this signified a lack of consistency; the value of the female section (outlined in the last two chapters) was evidently not shared by all employees. Reem "aggressively" criticised the situation:

*"If you look at the people [female employees] downstairs [where the female section is located], you would feel like they are gathered in – with no offence – a 'cowshed' ... ALL the females from EVERY department and level are seated there. I would NOT assume that is appropriate I mean, for God's sake, how can I manage my staff? What if my staff are not working properly, like they are not at their desks or something like that ...? This is insane! Right?"*⁴⁰

According to Reem's interview, she showed deep-seated concerns about SO work ideology, e.g. female employees are "forced" to work in a segregated section, and she expressed concerns about the way in which a female manager was supposed to do her job (i.e. symbolic ambiguity)⁴¹. She argued that it would have a negative impact on different aspects of work. As she claimed, it would not be 'convenient' for her to manage the department from such a long distance. Also, she related other ambiguities relating to SO values, which will be discussed in the next sections. Therefore, she mentioned that before she accepted the SO offer (as she intended to show that SO needed her services), she demanded that the organisation provide her with an office in the K1 department, in the male section. Thus, SO granted her two offices (one in the female section and another one in the males' section); however, she refused to confirm which was the official one.

8.3.2 Concerns of teamwork

The data analysis from a FP reveals some ambiguities surrounding the values of SO of teamwork. Despite the SO's claims of high cultural hegemony, some employees indicate many ambiguities, contradictions and ironies in this important aspect of SO culture. The data analysis has found that one of the main ambiguities is related to the 'all-stars' concept. Given that SO management and many employees believe that all SO employees are 'stars' – that

⁴⁰ The researcher observed that the language that Reem used was unusual compared with that of female employees. In Arabic, describing a place as a 'cowshed' would be very offensive for those who use it. Also, many words that Reem used in her interview are commonly used by male employees. This is related to her individual characteristics, as this chapter will show.

⁴¹ Some would argue that Reem's views on the female section are similar to those of the female subgroup 'Juniors'. However, there is an important difference between Reem's views and those of the female 'Juniors' subgroup. Reem argued that women should work with men without physical barriers (i.e. in a pure mixed environment). On the other hand, the 'Juniors' subgroup argued that female employees are supposed to have a separate section [that hosts females only] within their department. Thus, they disapproved of the pure mixed environment.

they (a) hold high qualifications, (b) are considered among the best employees in the Saudi Arabian market (i.e. highly qualified), and (c) went through the hard R&S process (as was outlined in the IP chapter) – the data analysis reveals that understanding of these assumptions is not fully shared by all employees or interpreted consistently. As the next part will show, it is found that some employees hold unrelated perceptions of these assumptions (mostly indicating symbolic and action ambiguity), and this has created confusion and serious instability in many vital issues of SO culture and working life.

Interestingly, some SO employees expressed deep concern about the SO cultural concept of ‘*all-stars*’ and how it supports teamwork. Their concerns arise from the unexpected interpretations of the underlying meaning of ‘*all-stars*’ that some employees expressed, and how these unpredictable interpretations have negative impacts on SO working life. The main unpredictable interpretation that the data analysis observes is related to a personal assumption that a few members of C5 show. Given that SO defines ‘*star*’ employees as those who hold high qualifications, some employees in C5 department claim they are the most qualified employees in SO with the most sophisticated degrees (as quoted by some key members of C5 “*the best of the best*”). Their perceptions are based on the argument that since their department (C5) is the core of SO business – and therefore the most important one in SO – this makes them – by definition – the most qualified and valuable employees of SO. Such unpredictable perceptions affect the day-to-day teamwork tasks and have a harmful impact on work issues in SO. The study investigation found that this issue started when previous managers of C5, most importantly the previous director of C5 department who left the organisation, used to say that “[C5] department is the ‘wings’ of [SO] and without it the organisation cannot fly”, implying that without the existence of C5 department, the whole organisation would not exist. The director also emphasised that C5 employees are the pilots of SO, i.e. they hold the most sophisticated degrees in the organisation. These unexpected assumptions (based on many key members of SO, including the recent director of C5 employees) have led to multiple interpretations in daily operational interactions of the organisation. For example, when SO employees discarded the confusion surrounding the C5 department assumption and the negative effects it has had on different aspects of SO work operations, they tended to make the generalisation that all C5 employees share the same assumptions. To give an example, Othman explained how C5 employees’ “*subjective interpretations*”, as he put it, have harmed the consistency of SO teamwork and reduced the effect of the ‘*all-stars*’ value:

“[...] I am not sure what to say about these people [the C5 employees]. They have expressed this nonsense and naive views [that they are the best among other SO departments and employees], directly and indirectly, in different events and gatherings. I mean each department here, and in fact this has already happened, would argue that if it did not exist [...], the organisation would struggle to make a step forward, and likewise, they would claim that they are ‘important’ too, right!? How a decent organisation would work without a finance department ... or an HR ... or an IT ... or ... or I mean, all departments here are supposed to be considered valuable and their employees are supposed to be considered ‘stars’” (Othman, male, unit head, A3 department, over 10 years’ service).

However, the researcher’s investigation reveals that not all C5 employees hold, or practise, these assumptions. For instance, Faisal expressed a strong rejection of these assumptions and stressed that *“they are alien to [SO] culture”*. Furthermore, while several employees tended to make the generalisation that all C5 employees share the same assumptions, some C5 employees (especially those who had recently joined the department and appeared to have a limited understanding of the roots of these unexpected perceptions) showed other confusing issues in relation to this reality. According to their discussions, they expressed anxiety about the nature of teamwork and the underlying assumptions of ‘all-stars’. Although they confirmed that previous members of C5 hold the assumptions that have been outlined in this section, they – at the same time – accused other employees from other departments of making the same statement. For example, Tariq (a managerial-level male employee who has worked in C5 department for six years) did not deny that *“the culture of [C5] ‘used’ to assume that it was the number one department in [SO]”*; however, he ironically mocked other employees who make the same claims:

“Some people here make you feel that they are the core of the [SO] business. There is a saying that I most hate in this organisation – that is, ‘We are the most important department in the [SO].’ [...] one of my friends who was studying with me in Australia joined [SO] six months before me and he told me about this issue. He said ‘Listen, people here will say to you that they are the most important employees and their department is the core of [SO] business ... so do not believe them ...’”

Based on Tariq’s comments, it seems that the confusion about ‘all-stars’ led these employees to look for ‘allies’ to support the team perspective, and these allies changed or relied on the relationship between employees (i.e. friends or co-workers who worked in the same department). This had many employees who had recently joined the organisation (either C5 department or other departments) recounting the difficulty they had in reconciling several aspects of SO culture. Most interestingly, the arguments of prior interviewees indicated that

there is no certainty whether the C5 department managers stated these assumptions as a reaction to other SO employees' claims or the other way round (that their department is the core business in SO and they are the most significant employees in the organisation). Also, it could be that other SO employees felt undervalued due to the C5 department manager's views concerning the role of their department. As a result, they started acting against them, stressing the significance of their department role within the organisation. This has cast a shadow on the teamwork of SO, as evidenced in Othman's discussion:

“this has created some sensitivities and conflict issues in many meetings and gatherings that host employees of this department [i.e. C5]. It is typical to see each employee trying to present the ‘importance of their role’ and how their work is ‘sophisticated’, so the opposite people [C5 employees, who attended the meeting] would understand that they are not the most important department in the [SO].”

Therefore, there is significant confusion surrounding the concept of SO culture ‘all-stars’, which shows that SO management has not succeeded in dealing with this problematic perception, and this has adversely affected some aspects of SO day-to-day operations. In addition to the effects it has had on the SO teamwork, it has had a negative impact on the SO concept of ‘equality’, as will be explained in this chapter.

The data analysis also highlights an interesting aspect of FP pertaining to the deep-seated confusions and dichotomies among some members of top management about organisational structure. This mostly concerns Reem, the female director. The data analysis outlined in the previous section outlined her deep concerns about the way in which a female manager is supposed to do her job. She extended her concern to the business of teamwork, which, as she emphasised, “*is the cornerstone of SO culture*”. Reem expressed an anxiety and confusion, due to the implications of the separate female's section, of having healthy teamwork interaction (i.e. conflict between content and themes). She expressed lack of clarity about the “*mechanism*” that SO adopts to manage teamwork. She outlined that on the one hand, she is “*required*” to respect SO culture, as well as female employees' norms that women should work in a separate section. On the other hand, she is pressured by her job requirements to manage her team, which the former requirement makes difficult.

Reem attributed this conflict of duty to the community perception that women cannot work in a mixed work environment. However, she argued that SO was supposed to act professionally regardless of any external force, in keeping with Saudi culture. Her argument indicated that these norms may prevent many SO female managers from delivering their work tasks normally:

“having such conflicted policies [the female section and the female director’s responsibilities towards her work] makes you wonder how to act... how this can work? I mean shall I be a nice employee and stay in the female section and leave my employees who are under my responsibility without close supervision? Or should I act like a responsible director and interact with my team more efficiently? [...] teamwork, as I am sure you know, needs dynamic interaction, right? You need to be close whenever you are needed and you need to be there so the decision-making will be faster... I mean the rhythm of work in general will be faster. [...] I would not risk this with nonsense norms [social norms]”

She also emphasised that such confusion at work would not only affect teamwork and delay operations, but also have a negative impact on other aspects of work, such as ‘*applying the best work practices*’ and equality that SO values. Her views will be further discussed in the following sections.

8.3.3 Best work practices?

The data analysis from a FP also revealed different aspects of work that relate to SO’s commitment of applying best work practices, which implies ‘fragmentation’. According to SO culture, the organisation is concerned about applying best work practices in all aspects of work. This is done – as explained in the IP chapter – to ensure more efficient work performance (i.e. less bureaucratic) and shape the actions and reactions of SO employees (e.g. preventing employees from practising *Wasta*/favouritism). However, the data analysis found other examples that led to confusion and chaos in SO workplace.

One of the interesting examples in relation to ‘*applying best work practices*’ was highlighted by Reem. As an extension of her previous discussion, she pointed out an uncertainty in how to balance two important policies of SO, namely ‘*applying best work practices*’ and ‘*staff care*’ policy. In her interview, she described that when SO recruits an employee, they usually give them a one-year contract to ensure that she or he is working “*up to [SO] standard*” before granting them a permanent contract. According to her explanation, one of the main differences between the two contracts is that the first one gives the manager the authority to make the employee redundant, especially when they do not perform well or when their behaviour does not fit with SO culture, which is seen as evidence of SO’s commitment to ‘*applying best work practices*’. The second contract thus gives the employee job security, that is, SO will not terminate the employee’s contract, which is regarded by some employees as an example of SO’s concern with ‘*staff care*’. Based on Reem’s discussion, confusion arose when she decided to terminate an employee’s contract (because – according to her – he did not perform

and behave in keeping with *her* standards). SO management tried to convince her to give this employee a chance, which meant he would be granted a permanent contract. However, Reem – as she showed – insisted on her decision, and after a long discussion with SO management, HR transferred this employee to another department, with Reem commenting, “*Well, let that director [who had accepted the employee working in his department] deal with this rubbish [referring to the performance of the employee and, maybe, his behaviour]*”.

Reem attributed this confusion to “*the extra and unhealthy emotions that [SO] management have when they manage serious problems relating to employees*”, which she strongly disagrees with. She argues that “*too much emotion*” makes some managers “*blind or weak*” in making the right decision. She argued that such incidents not only make her work difficult, but also throw up many negative impressions about SO work life, “*creating*” as she suggested, “*a culture of [SO] being ‘soft’ on poor work performance or disrespectful behaviour.*” She also suggested that such incidents may have something to do with Saudi social norms and religion. Further, she said, certain managers used – during the discussion of the problem with her employee – Arabic idioms that Saudi people usually use to get her to reconsider her decision about the employee. One of the idioms used meant “*do not be the cause of preventing someone from being the only source of family income.*” Some SO managers used certain Prophet Mohammed authentic narratives (*Hadith* in Arabic) and verses of the Quran to convince her to rethink her decision, e.g. “*The parable of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever.*”⁴² However, she believed that this was not relevant, because she needed to consider the organisation’s aims and act responsibly towards SO finance. As she put it, “*We are not a charity organisation*”.

The data analysis from the FP revealed another ambiguity concerning the organisation’s policies of ‘*staff care*’ and ‘*applying best work practices*’. As has been outlined in this chapter, certain employees cited examples of unpredictable poor work performance. They referred this behaviour to their interpretation of the ‘*excellent work environment*’ (which SO assumes drives the good performance and behaviour of employees) as a ‘*relaxing work environment*’, i.e. easy, with low performance. This assumption has not only had a negative impact on the performance of these employees, but also on other aspects of the work process, most

⁴² Reem indicates the meaning of the Prophet Mohammed narration and the researcher cited the original narration to make Reem’s explanation understandable to the reader. The source of this narration is: Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī 5665, Grade: Muttafaquun Alayhi.

importantly *'applying the best work practices'*. Given that SO applies a high-standard R&S to ensure only *'star'* candidates join SO, the unpredictable interpretation and behaviour of these low performance employees has made various HR employees uncertain about *'high-standard'* R&S procedures and how they ensure only *'star'* employees join the organisation. Indeed, an observation of a job interview by the researcher indicated the real concern of an HR employee related to these issues and how they affected the objectivity of the R&S process. Rakhan (an HR male employee who has worked in SO for five years) explained after the job interview that the candidate had all the attributes of a *'star'* employee, e.g. he worked in one of the most reliable organisations in the country and appeared to have *'excellent'* work skills. However, Rakhan expressed a concern that the candidate may have been *'aiming to take advantage of the good [SO] policies'*:

"I have experienced [during his time in SO] different employees who appeared [in their recruitment and selection process] to have no problems and showed great motivation for working at the organisation. However, once they join the organisation, their performances do not seem as strong as we expected, I mean based on their CVs and job interviews."

By way of illustration, Rakhan stated that the candidate asked some questions that led him to feel uncertain about his motives for working at SO. For instance, the candidate asked, *"How 'harsh' is the work environment?"* and, *"Is there a lot of work stress?"*, and he tended to compare each answer with his current job, which, based on his description, was hard and stressful. Accordingly, Rakhan said, *"He might have been looking for a 'relaxing' work environment with good pay."*

Another interesting ambiguity that the data analysis threw up regarding *'applying the best work practices'* was observed by the researcher when met with Sami, a managerial-level male employee who works in A3 department. The researcher noticed that Sami's behaviour and interpretation of some aspects of work were very different compared with other participants. The researcher called Sami and asked him if he was interested in participating in the research. Sami showed no hesitation in agreeing to have an interview. However, at the beginning of the interview, he asked for it not to be recorded and he started talking about ambiguous issues that had no relationship with work realities. For instance, Sami claimed that he had *"a certain number of aims"* that he needed to achieve in life. Interestingly, one of these aims was to work at *"a famous European organisation"* (as he described it, refusing to reveal its name) that operates in finance and the accounting research field. However, he stated that this European

organisation required him to have “*sufficient work experience*” at least seven recommendations from different people that showed that he had taught them something that “*inspired*” their working life. Unusually, when the researcher asked him to describe the culture of SO, he surprisingly denied knowing “*anything*” about the organisation. Sami claimed that he did not know anything about the nature of SO business or the nature of the work he was doing. He stated that during his “*10 years*” working at SO, he only did the work that his manager asked him to do and did not get involved in anything else. He also stated that he did not “*fit*” into SO culture; in his view, it was “*closed-minded*”, while he described himself as being “*open-minded*”.

As the investigation progressed, the story of this employee was found to be well-known among some SO employees, one of whom said, sarcastically: “*He has an ‘interesting’ and ‘contradictory’ personality ...*”, indicating an ambiguity about his existence in the organisation. Indeed, different questions were raised, most significantly: did this employee meet ‘*the high-standard*’ R&S that SO claims, and how was he accepted by the organisation recruitment panel? Also, how did this employee interact with aspects of work, e.g. teamwork, without having the necessary knowledge about his work or the organisation’s business nature? Although it was beyond this research to explain the underlying meaning of this employee’s claims, or his state of intelligence, some employees, as will be shown shortly, gave insights that might explain his behaviour.

Essentially, an interview conducted with one of his department managers (Othman, who has been introduced previously) revealed that Sami’s performance was below average, and his interaction with different aspects of work, including teamwork, ineffective. Othman stated that due to Sami’s personality, managing daily work became harder. Othman explained that terminating his contract was almost impossible, due to the implications of the ‘*staff care*’ policy explained previously. Othman was asked by the researcher how this employee managed to get past the R&S panel, and how he interacted with SO work. He stated that many values and norms of SO are driven by Saudi society (e.g. the parental healthcare insurance, and the separate female section), and this employee might have taken advantage of this situation. Othman said that the norms and operational system of SO at the outset were not as developed or as strong as they are now. This might have allowed his father to influence the SO R&S decision to hire him (i.e. *Wasta*). He suggested that his father was a very respected person in Saudi society which might have made his request to have his son hired impossible to reject.

This clearly suggested ideological ambiguity. What the discussion with Othman implied is that the implications of *'staff care'* can hinder the objectivity of R&S decision-making, which sets up a contradiction between the two values.

Othman also outlined that Sami relies heavily on his father to deal with vital issues of work, although his file showed that he is over 35 years old. This may have something to do with Saudi society family structure. The norm in Saudi is that parents, especially fathers, are responsible for showing the way to their children until they are independent, usually when they finish secondary school (according to some SO employees, e.g. the head of R&S). Sami, however, showed signs of dependency on his well-connected father. Othman explained that one day he received a phone call from Sami's father asking him to discuss a problem that his son was facing at work. Clearly, this kind of things can cause complications in the workplace; 'external forces' (e.g. an interfering father) can be effective in dealing with certain critical issues that the employee (e.g. Sami) is supposed to be dealing with. However, this 'external force' may have a limited understanding of organisational work realities and their involvement, therefore, may not be aligned with SO culture. Furthermore, the very existence of this ineffective employee had affected the credibility of SO standards among some employees. They stated that witnessing and working with such an employee had driven down their work satisfaction (because such employee did not show a healthy interaction with teamwork) and might hinder their performance (because the employee had them taking on more responsibility *'to get the teamwork done'*). Interestingly, the data analysis revealed other similar cases of employees appearing to have a high dependency on their families. The analysis assumed that this concerns individual characteristics that might affect their interactions with SO culture. This will be further discussed in this chapter.

8.3.4 Facilitating equality?

Despite SO management stating its commitment to facilitating equality, some employees point out that the organisation's practices are confusing in this respect. For instance, Reem revealed deep-seated concerns about the way in which SO treats female employees in general, and a female manager in particular. While different female employees emphasised the value of the female section (i.e. privacy), Reem stated that being seated with other female employees implied *'humiliation'*, i.e. symbolic ambiguity, arguing that this would impact her personal *'image'* among her staff. As she says: *"How will your staff respect you, when you [as a director] are forced to be seated with other employees [the female section] away from your*

department?” She believed that SO management action, in this regard, implies that male employees have superiority over female employees, which in her view will deny her the necessary prestige to control her staff. Therefore, she asked SO, upon her acceptance of their job offer, to grant her an office in the K1 male section department.

However, given the discussion outlined in the IP and DP data analysis chapters, it is evident that Reem’s interpretations and actions suggest several forms of ambiguities. For instance, while Reem argued that having an office in the K1 department would give her a decent image (as a direct department manager) and better control over her department and staff, other employees (as will be shown) argued that she did not appear to care about the image and regulations of SO. This implies another constant ambiguity in SO culture. For example, Talal (a managerial-level male employee who has worked in A4 department for 10 years) expressed a lack of clarity on the underlying reasons for granting Reem an office in the K1 department:

“there is some confusion surrounding the [K1] department. To start with, I would like to know how a female employee [Reem] can have an office in the males’ section, while others [female employees] do not? Also, why is this particular female free to do certain things, but others [female employees] are not allowed to do the same things?”

Consistent with Talal’s comments, other employees (especially females) opined that she did not show ‘respect’ for the general ‘order’ of the organisation. For instance, Reham⁴³ (a female employee, who also occupies a high position at SO) indicated in conversation that *“she [Reem] did not only break the general rules, when she demanded an office in the male section, but she also does not follow other rules and norms of [SO]”*, which led Reham to state that *“she literally crossed all the red lines”*. Reham stated that the outfit (i.e. *Abaya*) that Reem wears does not match the SO’s *“proper/decent”*⁴⁴ female dress code (which suggests action ambiguity; there is incongruence between managerial actions and espoused content themes). Reham criticised the way Reem wears her *Abaya*, because she does not cover her head. Although Reham does not wear an *Abaya* when she is abroad, she claimed that all female employees, including her, follow the SO dress code (researcher observation confirmed this statement). Reham also commented on Reem’s *“inappropriate behaviour”*, when she saw her

⁴³ This female participant was introduced in other data analysis chapters, but with a different name. As explained in the methodology chapter, some employees were asked to reveal information (e.g. their department or gender) for data analysis purposes. This could allow their colleagues to identify them. However, due to the sensitivity of her views about her colleague, she was asked not to reveal any information that may reveal her identity. She says that this might develop unnecessary tension between her and this female director.

⁴⁴ The decent *Abaya* that Reham referred to was defined in the context and IP chapter. It is the Islamic outer garment that Muslim women are supposed to wear to cover their body in the presence of any male, except their *Mahram*.

putting her feet on her desk. Reham felt that this signified disrespect, according to Saudi Arabian work and social culture.

A further observation concerning Reem's behaviour was made by another female employee. Like Reham, Marim (who was introduced in the last chapter) expressed ambiguity about the dress code that SO requires employees to follow:

“Interviewee: I used to wear comfy shoes ... but for reasons that I am not aware of, they [SO management, HR] asked us [she and other female employees] not to wear them at work.

Researcher: Why?

Interviewee: ... They said that they must be formal [shoes] ... so no sneakers [trainers] or anything like that [...].

Researcher: Have you observed other employees wearing 'informal shoes'?

Interviewee: Yes, there are a few employees ... One of them is a big female manager, if you know [she mentioned the K1 department] [...]. But the majority do not, only a few of them ... ” (Marim, female, managerial-level employee, C5 department, 2 years' service).

This indicates further action ambiguity; Marim displayed anxiety about the fact that SO applies the dress code policy to some employees and “*turns a blind eye*” to others (e.g. Reem).

Another important case of ambiguity that the data analysis reveals in relation to SO's commitment to facilitate equality is the implications that developed from the unexpected assumptions of C5 employees. The data analysis finds that the unpredictable assumptions that a few C5 employees adopt, which was explained previously, has led other employees to express anxiety in regard to the commitment of SO to facilitate equality. While SO stresses that the relationship between managers and employees, as well as between employees, is based on mutual respect, support, appreciation and empowerment, the negative implications of the assumptions of C5 employees has some employees expressing a lack clarity as to how this can be achieved, which suggests ambiguity of action.

In general, the discussions with SO employees indicate that there is no clear guidance that employees are agreed on regulating the relationship between (a) managers and their employees, (b) managers and other department employees, (c) between employees of the same department, and (d) between SO employees in general. For example, some key SO employees claim that previous C5 managers may have misunderstood the concept of '*supporting and empowering their employees*'. They claim that these managers incorrectly assumed that they

should ‘only’ support and empower their employees, while other managers were supposed to support and empower ‘their’ employees. According to their argument, this led to previous C5 managers claiming that their employees were the representatives of the organisation, because the C5 department represents the core business of SO. In the same context, they believed that some managers assumed that the most effective way to gain the respect of their employees was by making them feel that ‘they were fighting hard battles for their benefit’. In support of their argument, they explained how previous C5 managers engaged in discussions with other employees from other departments to stress the sophistication of C5 and the high qualifications of its members. This has developed negative assumptions and behaviour in SO work, which they emphasised that SO management is aware of and has tried to fix:

“[Faisal⁴⁵, the recent director of C5] with no doubt has had a significant effect on that department [the C5]. In terms of the previous managers, I have no doubt that they had this attitude that ... they give you the impression that ... ‘I am the top’. There was a manager who has been saying that this section [one of the C5 sections] is the ‘pilots’ and the other one is the ‘marines’ ... and so on. This was at the beginning of [SO] time [...] and, of course, other people did not like it. However, I believe that [Faisal] has been trying to change these problematic impressions, especially internally [among C5 employees], because they are the ones who have these problems [...]. Also, I believe that they have observed that their general manager appeared to be so humble; he speaks with people in a comfortable and respectful way, and he does not make this kind of impression with other departments, and he has started paying more attention to the other departments’ views of them.” (Tamim, male, high-level employee, D1 department, 8 years’ service).

In addition to Tamim’s comments, other employees highlighted negative aspects of the previous C5 managers’ claims on the department employees. Some employees classified the attitude of C5 employees as ‘arrogant’. Nawaf explained, in conversation, that work with C5 employees has always been tense. He claimed that the attitude of the previous C5 managers (that the C5 department represents the core business of SO) has led some employees of the department to believe that “they know everything”. According to Nawaf, this makes them “aggressive” in discussions at work, appearing to have limited understanding of SO work values, that is, supporting each other by showing mutual respect and being cooperative. The data analysis observes that the views of Nawaf, as well as of previous SO key members (e.g.

⁴⁵ It should be noted that Faisal was introduced in the IP analysis chapter, which showed that his individual characteristics and personality traits were consistent with and supportive of overall SO culture.

Tamim), are confirmed by a member of C5 department. His discussion illustrates the confusion concerning the basis of the equal relationship that SO stresses:

“Interviewee: Some of the [SO] employees say that we are ‘arrogant’...

Researcher: What makes them say that?

Interviewee: Well, I would not blame them for saying this, because this started during [XXX’s, mentioned the name of the previous department manager] time, who was the general director of our department. He frequently used to say that ‘We are the wings of the [SO] and without us [the employees of C5 department], it would not fly.’ Obviously other departments heard about this and they have kept it [in mind] until now. [...] Even the [most recent] Chairman, when he visited us for the first time, said that, ‘The most important thing is to improve your attitude,’ and he kept saying things that did not make any sense to us. At first we did not know if he was talking about our department or the [SO] in general. At last, he said: ‘I have heard that you are arrogant.’ Then we realised what he was referring to.” (Hamad, male, managerial-level employee, C5 department, 3.5 years’ service).

However, despite the last employees’ claims regarding the efforts that SO management have made to resolve these confusing cultural aspects, the data analysis emphasises that the influences of these aspects are still relevant. The data analysis suggests that there is a strong relationship between the differing interpretations and behaviour of those specific C5 employees and their individual characteristics. This will be illustrated in the next chapter section.

8.4 The relationship between the fragmentation perspective and individual characteristics

As an extension to the findings outlined in the last sections, the following sections attempt to uncover the individual characteristics that the data analysis finds relates to the different interactions of the previously discussed employees.

8.4.1 Different demography background

The data analysis identifies some individual characteristics that distinguish the C5 managers and employees, as well as Reem, from other employees of the organisation. These personal characteristics are suggested to have had a significant influence on the different interpretations and actions of the dominant culture of SO. In terms of the C5 employees, the data analysis finds that (a) their different backgrounds (i.e. the place they grew up in), and (b) their educational backgrounds (i.e. the place where they gained their degree(s) from) are considered the main influential characteristics. The data analysis indicates that the cultural background of

these C5 employees has a significant influence on their attitudes, as well as the ways in which they perceive their role in the organisation and their relationship with work environment realities (i.e. vital findings approximated to “fragmentation”). As will be discussed shortly, some C5 members (e.g. the C5 department director), as well as employees from other departments, pointed out that these employees of C5 (including their previous managers, who stated that the C5 department is the most important one) have spent a significant part of their lives in the US (born and/or raised), and they indicated that some of them are half American (more specifically on the mother’s side)⁴⁶. This main – demographic – characteristic has a clear influence on the values, perceptions, behaviour and beliefs of these employees. Different participants suggested that since these C5 employees were born and raised in such an ‘advanced country’ (US), in terms of education and technology, they appeared to feel that they were ‘superior’ to other ‘local’ employees, whose education and level of English were assumed to be below theirs. An interesting interview with Bandar uncovers this particular aspect:

“Researcher: You indicated some issues about the [C5] department earlier and I am interested about this department’s employees ... could you please say more about them?

Interviewee: *Well, I know some of them, as we get together from time to time. What I see, and I frankly say this to them [...] is that because they were born in the US, [he said it in a disapproving and sarcastic tone] they think that they came from ‘the Western world’, you know what I mean ... where the most developed countries are, and they believe that they inherited its culture and everything [e.g. advanced education]. So, they think that ‘We [the C5 employees] are supposed to be the elites among the others,’ if you know what I mean ...?*

Researcher: ... [my reaction showing that I am not sure about what he is indicating]

Interviewee: *For example, they think that they are the best representatives of [SO], when there is a meeting with foreign consultants or a CEO of a company, simply because they think that ‘We are the speakers of English.’ Also, when they meet with some of the [A3] employees, or even other employees from other departments, they usually look down on them ... although they do not actually state that, but it is obvious from the ‘charisma’ that they think they have. This is one of their most obvious characteristics.” (Bandar, male, managerial-level employee, F1 department, 4 years’ service).*

⁴⁶ All these employees hold Saudi nationality, and some of them have both Saudi and American nationality. Some employees have explained that the Saudi government scholarship programme during the 1970s (which was mostly focussing on the American institutions) allowed some students to marry American women and have children. Their children were granted American passports and returned to Saudi Arabia after finishing their education.

The issues that Bandar highlighted can be viewed as further support to the findings that were outlined in the last section, one of which indicated that C5 employees tend to show that they are the best representatives of SO. However, Bandar highlights other issues that could explain the C5 employees' perceptions and behaviour. It can be seen that they believe that since they received their education in such an advanced country (i.e. the US), this is supposed to give them an advantage over the other employees. In support of this finding, it was found that C5 is not the only core business department. In other words, the claim that the C5 department and its employees are the most important, because they represent the core business of SO, cannot be the underlying reason for C5 employees making this statement. In this regard, Bandar made a significant observation by saying that when C5 employees meet with A3 employees, "*they usually look down on them*". He mentioned A3 employees, because the educational background of C5 and A3 employees is very similar, i.e. they all studied similar disciplines. However, because some of the C5 employees received their early education in the US and graduated from American/Western institutions, they believed they had an advantage over A3 employees, as well as other employees (e.g. the quality of their spoken English).

Interviews with other employees have outlined several issues that support Bandar's observation. When the head of R&S was asked about the groups that he might identify in the organisation, he said:

"There is also another group in the [C5] department. These people speak English very fluently ... [...] and have been studying abroad for a long time. You feel that there is a special spirit shared by these people" (Osama, male, head of R&S, HR department, over 10 years' service).

Another insight into the relationship between the C5 employees' characteristics and their "fragmented" views and attitudes can be seen in Hamad's interview. As can be seen in his quotation, which was also outlined in the last section, he showed no denial of the other employees' opinions on C5 employees (e.g. '*arrogant*'), and he revealed some individual characteristics that can be linked to their different assumptions and actions. For instance, he explained that some C5 employees (indicating the previous C5 managers and three others) have been living and studying abroad for some time and this has had effects on the general norms of the C5 department. He stated that, unlike the other SO departments, English is the most common form of communication in the department, "*to the extent that one of the managers [as he indicated, one of those who expressed that the C5 department is the most essential one in SO] was speaking broken Arabic*". Also, and most interestingly, Hamad

emphasised that due to the different cultural background of these employees, some hold different views on SO norms (especially those that are driven by Saudi society culture) and have their 'own' norms. He also said that although their norms are not considered common in other Saudi Arabian organisations, or Saudi society, some of them encourage other employees to practise them.

Hamad's last observation is verified in the C5 employees' interviews. Tariq (who supports the superiority of the C5 department and its employees, as the last section outlined) said that he does not usually attend celebrations that SO organises, because he does not fully understand why SO sees them as a good thing. This may suggest another symbolic ambiguity⁴⁷; that is, while several employees (including some of Tariq's colleagues, as will be outlined shortly) see that the celebrations symbolise the unity of SO employees – they increase communication between employees and reduce tensions – Tariq's discussion showed that he could not see the link between the norms that these celebrations involve and SO claims of facilitating equality. He stated that every time SO arranges a celebration, he asks his colleagues about the benefits and whether the rituals that they involve match SO claims of facilitating equality. For example, he could not understand why SO top management (usually the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and the Board members) stands in a line and SO employees '*line up*' to greet them. He said that this ritual reminds him of when people '*line up*' '*to receive blessings*' (like in Churches). In his view, this shows up the state of top management, that is, people need to come to them (because they occupy higher positions) but they do not go to people (because they occupy lower positions).

The data analysis finds that the background of Tariq and his limited understanding of the way SO organises celebrations could explain his fragmented views. It was noticed that the issues he discussed were related to the 'protocol' of the celebrations. Usually, the Chairman and the other top managers stand in the middle of the lobby (in front of the reception desk) and employees get in a queue to greet them, before they eat lunch and go back to their work. These norms or rituals appeared to be appropriate to other employees (e.g. Faisal, Salman, Qasim, Hamzah and many other employees), who stated that they are common in many Saudi Arabian organisations. When these employees were asked about SO celebrations, none of them

⁴⁷ It should be stated that this is another FP example, among many, that C5 employees exhibit and was discussed in the previous section.

endorsed Tariq's observations, as can be seen in Faaris's interview (who occupies a low-level job):

“Researcher: In your view, why does [SO] arrange such events [as he mentioned the two Eid celebrations and the annual celebration]?”

Interviewee: *To improve the relationship between the employees and to make everyone equal, in the eyes of [SO] management.*

Researcher: Do you feel that all employees share this view?

Interviewee: *Well, some people do not want to come, but they should, though. Some of them have to come, because they are department managers.”* (Faaris, male, low-level employee, Security department, 8 years' service).

An important finding in this regard, relating to the individual characteristics of C5 employees, is that they have their own types of celebrations (which they understand) and encourage other employees to celebrate them (as indicated previously by Hamad). For example, some C5 employees celebrate birthdays, which is not common in Saudi organisations or Saudi society. This is based on the researcher's observation and, most significantly, on Tariq's comments:

“We have ‘strange’ norms. [...] I am responsible for the birthday celebrations here Just let me know when your birthday is and I will take care of the rest. This breaks the ‘routine’ I learned this culture [practice] from a company I used to work in [abroad], before I moved to [SO].”

8.4.2 Feminist⁴⁸

The preceding sections have highlighted certain elements of SO culture associated with the FP (i.e. ambiguity, contradictions and multiple interpretations of culture). It was outlined that these elements have emerged, mainly, due to the ‘different’ actions and perceptions of an influential member of SO (i.e. Reem) in relation to some aspects of SO culture. In this regard, the data analysis has explored vital individual personalities that were found to drive Reem's ‘different’ behaviour and perceptions (such as her view on the female section that contradicted that of SO culture).

Considering Reem's discussions and views, which revealed personal characteristics and attitudes that were also highlighted by some employees, the data analysis suggests that these views are approximated to “feminism”. The data analysis observes a variety of evidence to support this assumption. Firstly, it is evident from Reem's first quotations that she strongly

⁴⁸ Feminist is “a person who believes in feminism, and tries to achieve change that helps women to get equal opportunities and treatment” (see Cambridge Dictionary, 2017).

disapproves of the idea of the female section. In addition to her argument that being in a separate section would not allow her to engage with her department effectively (which can be assumed to be valid), Reem, during her interview, revealed a deep-seated belief that female employees should not be treated ‘*differently*’, based on their gender. When Reem was asked about the ‘*privacy*’ that other female employees valued, she explained that “*the privacy that other female employees frequently emphasised should NOT be assumed or even viewed as a significant*”, indicating that female employees should ‘*challenge*’ the restrictions that the work environment, as well as the social environment, place on Saudi women. In relation to this, it was observed by the researcher and other employees who attended the final trainee presentation meeting that Reem tended to encourage female employees ‘specifically’ to strive towards their best performance. As she said to some of them: “*go and show what a ‘female’ can do in a society [which could indicate the national society or the organisational society]*.” This prompted a direct manager, who was attending the meeting, to say [in a friendly/sarcastic way]: “*I think we ALL now know that [Reem] can be the best support for you [talking to female presenters] in the organisation ... [and everybody was laughing]*.”

Another aspect of Reem’s personality that implies feminism is her challenging of any issue that she may feel restricts her ability, because of her gender. In addition, her rejection of the female section (which can be viewed as an example), demanding that SO provide her with an office in the male section and not following the SO dress code could be suggested as other examples. Also, Reem’s language, as could be seen from her first dialogue, was observed to be unconventional, compared with that of other female participants. The data analysis confirms that none of the female participants (and only a few male participants) used language as strong as Reem’s, for example, her description of the female section as a cowshed. Furthermore, the researcher noted during Reem’s interview that she uses language that is commonly used by male employees. The best example can be observed in Talal’s conversation, as follows.

While the researcher was working with Talal on some issues related to SO work, the researcher noticed an unusual noise at the department front desk (a woman talking loudly with the receptionist). Talal said, “*Oh, that is [Reem] announcing that she is here,*” indicating that she tends to be different from other female employees in SO, as he continued:

“[Reem] tends to have a different female personality. When I talk to her, she gives me the impression of: ‘Talk to me just like you are talking to any of your friends [he

specified a male friend]''' (Talal, male, managerial-level employee, A4 department, over 10 years' service).

Thus, Talal implied another 'feminist' characteristic, which the data analysis argues has driven Reem's behaviour and perceptions on some aspects of SO culture.

Another individual characteristic that is related to Reem's contradictory views and behaviour is her background. Like the previous managers of C5 and some of the employees, Reem revealed in her interview that she has spent a significant amount of her life in the US; the data analysis finds that this has encouraged her 'feminist' characteristics. Indeed, Reem stated that the time she spent in the US shaped her "*identity*", as well as other personal beliefs, and she viewed herself as "*a strong and independent female*". An interesting aspect of her 'personal belief' is that she does not appear to be convinced that the *Hijab* is required in Islamic traditions (which contradicts SO management's and other female employees' views, as was outlined in the context and IP chapters). She argued that these are things that may have emerged from societal traditions, rather than Islamic traditions, to "*restrict*" females. Consequently, she stated that this should be challenged and changed. What is confusing about this opinion is that having expressed this personal view, she then showed pride in the fact that her family is originally from a Saudi city that is well-known among many recent Islamic scholars and people who are very attached to special social traditions (which contradict her perspective).

The final individual characteristics that the data analysis suggests are related to Reem's unpredictable perspectives and behaviour are her personal aims. Reem has emphasised in different parts of her interview that the purpose of her accepting the SO offer was to establish the K1 department (as she mentioned that she would leave the organisation once it was working regularly)⁴⁹. This personal aim is also assumed to have driven Reem's views and decisions that appeared to be inconsistent with the general norms of SO culture.

It was noticed, for example, during the interview with Reem, that she saw herself as '*the founder*' of the department, as she once said [in English]: "*It is my baby [referring to the K1 department] and I came back [to SO] to take care of it*". This would thus indicate further confusion; her statement appeared to be inconsistent with the general norms of SO. SO culture states that an accomplishment is a result of team work, not of a particular employee or manager

⁴⁹ The researcher was informed after the last visit that Reem had left the organisation, due to a conflict between her and SO management about the K1 department.

(as was discussed in the IP chapter). The data analysis observes that this could be related to Reem's background, as Western societies (the US in her case) usually value individuality, and Eastern societies generally value collectivity (see the discussion of Faisal provided in the IP chapter).

Also, given that Reem appeared to be very attached to her own aims, i.e. the K1 department, it was observed that she sometimes focussed on the benefits of the K1 department and neglected the general norms of the organisation. For instance, Reem said that she had noticed that one of her subordinates was not performing as he was supposed to. Therefore, she told HR not to extend his contract (because he was under a training contract) and to replace him with another employee. Although Reem has the right to make this kind of decision (as is stated in the SO policy manual), some would argue that this is inconsistent with significant SO culture (as will be discussed in the following paragraph). Leaders of SO and employees explained in the IP chapter that such a decision would be made after HR and the department manager had run out of solutions to correct the employee's performance (as they related this to the value of 'staff care' – see the comments of Faisal, Tamim and the HR manager presented previously). Thus, HR asked Reem to cooperate in helping the employee to perform better; she, however, (as she admitted) stuck with her decision. Afterward, HR decided to move the employee to another department. In relation to this example, Reem appeared to rely on her 'personal' judgement, which was that the employee did not deserve to stay in the organisation, due to his low performance. This is clear from her interview, as she mentioned (in mixed English and Arabic): *"The sympathy kicked in [indicating HR and the Vice- Chairman, who were trying to convince her to reconsider her decision], and I do not believe that sympathy should be involved at work [because she stated that she has a 'strong and independent' personality]."* On the other hand, SO managers (as was shown in the IP chapter) would argue that 'staff care' is supposed to encourage managers to make every effort to help employees to achieve SO aims (in this case, trying to find the underlying reasons that prevented the employee from not performing regularly).

8.4.3 Different personal interests

The data analysis reveals certain individual interests and assumptions that may explain the unusual interactions between some employees (identified in this chapter as low-performance employees) and significant elements of SO culture (approximated to fragmentation). The last sections discussed some employees who – unpredictably – showed poor performance and no

interest in interacting with SO aspects of work (e.g. teamwork). Based on the discussion of this chapter, some employees explained that their unusual behaviour may be related to their unexpected interpretations of some of SO policies. For example, some SO employees believe that the implications of the organisation's '*staff care*' policy (such as, not terminating an employee's contract and not applying any type of punishment, which is supposed to encourage employees' feeling of belonging and motivation to work) are '*mistakenly*' assumed by these employees as an indication of SO management being '*easy-going*' on low performance. Also, they show that the '*excellent work environment*' that SO tries providing is usually interpreted by these employees as an indication of SO management fostering a '*relaxing work environment*'. Therefore, the data analysis attempted to understand the individual factors that may drive their views and behaviour, as will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The first individual characteristic that the data analysis suggests is related to their different behaviour is their individual work motive. As the investigation progressed, it was found that some of these employees are not interested in carrying on a career at SO; they are more interested in operating their own private business. For instance, the story that Faisal told about his low-performance employee (related earlier in this chapter) showed that his behaviour was due to his interest in being an employer:

"I sat with him [the employee, after he resigned] on his last day and I told him, 'Son! ... You are a very smart person, so do not waste your future and try to do your best in your next job.' He said: 'Honestly, I have a great interest in running my own business.' I said: 'This is a great idea, do it!' I still have good contact with this person and I think he is doing very well and he seems happy with his new business."

Although this example may show clear evidence of a link between those employees who exhibit low work performance and establishing their own business, this example does not establish whether an interest in setting up their own business arises before joining the SO, or after. The data analysis investigation reveals that some employees were, in fact, interested in establishing their own business before joining SO staff. A follow-up discussion with Nadeer (concerning the employee who demonstrated low performance) also revealed that the employee reacted differently because he was interested in operating his own company, even before he joined SO:

"what I have heard is that he just uses his office [which is provided by SO] ... you know what I mean? ... Managing his private business. So practically, he does not have a problem with the organisation; he IS the problem, and he tends to remain with the

organisation and continue doing what he is doing. He has been saying to everybody, 'I do not mind working anywhere, just give me work,' but when you give him an opportunity, he produces garbage."

It appears that those employees have the advantages of SO staff benefits for a personal agenda. The question that comes to mind is, why would they join SO in the first place? The data analysis demonstrates several reasons (two will be discussed here, and the rest will be explained later in the chapter). Firstly, some employees point out that joining SO reflects high skill levels and reliability, therefore people will feel more confident in doing business with them. Secondly, being an employee at SO, gives you excellent exposure to a wide range of connections, which could be utilised for their own benefits. Interestingly, it seems that the number of employees who work full-time at SO (with low performance) and run their private business simultaneously is spreading across departments. Hamad highlighted this issue:

“Researcher: Do you have any concerns about any aspect of [SO] work?

Interviewee: *There are things that [SO] has [he refers to the 'staff care' policy benefits] and I believe they will affect the work negatively [...]. They accuse some employees of having a job on the side [...].*

Researcher: How?

Interviewee: *They [the 'staff care' benefits] accused some employees of looking for a job and doing the job of the [SO] at the same time. I once sat with some people from the [E4] department, who were saying that they would stay in [SO] and start their private businesses, like estate agent or something like that. I have observed that ... they do not consider [SO] a priority.*

Researcher: So, what work do they do here?

Interviewee: *They come to work every day ... as normal. It is also not necessarily that they own a company; some have flexible business that can be done over the phone. [...] and I believe these things affect the work I thought this is happening here only [in the C5 department], but when I spent a month with these people [in the E4 department], I realised it is everywhere in the organisation."*

Evidently, there is a considerable lack of consistency in essential elements of SO that is found to be related to unpredictable individual interests. This has created observable chaos in some aspects of SO life, as discussed previously.

The other personal trait that was indicated by the data analysis is that some employees tend to look for a 'relaxing' work environment. The definition of a 'relaxing' work environment – as was highlighted in the last section, and will be further discussed in this subsection – is a work

environment that appears to be less stressful and has good job security. Based on Rakhan's example (which was about a candidate who made Rakhan concerned about his motive for working at SO), the researcher observed that when SO recruits a new candidate, it tends to advertise the advantages of SO, most importantly the 'excellent' work environment. Thus, this may attract both types of employees: (a) those who perform better when they work in a good work environment (who were observed to be in the majority at SO), and (b) those who would like to work in an organisation that appears to be less stressful and where poor performance would not threaten their job. Rakhan's case encouraged the researcher to conduct further investigations on this issue, which uncovered other cases that appeared similar to his.

The following discussion with Faaris explains the underlying relationship between the inconsistent perceptions of these employees (who observed the aspects that characterised the 'excellent' SO work environment as providing a 'relaxing' work environment) and their personal interests:

“Researcher: I would like to ask you about the most important things that [SO] values?

Interviewee: ... Well, [SO] takes care of a lot of issues, as I said before, the development and training, which is for everyone Also, I have noticed that [SO] management does not fire someone quickly; they do not want to destroy the employee's future, even if he has been coming to work late and been absent on some days [which 'legally' can be used as significant reasons for firing an employee]. They usually give them many chances before moving against them, you know what I mean? ... But if they were in another organisation, they might not let them stay, not even for a minute.

Researcher: [...] So, why do they behave like this [be late and absent on some days]?

Interviewee: Some people are careless, just like that.

Researcher: OK, why did they join [SO]?

Interviewee: Look, I will explain to you why. During the time of [the second Chairman], may Allah [God] bless him, he applied a great idea for employing those who are in grade [-A] or [-B] [low-level grades]. He used to make a contract with them for two years, as outsourcing, and after that he let them join [SO] on a three-year contract. So, now, they have been with us for around five years, and you can say who is good and who is not. But once the employee had been granted a permanent job in the [SO], some of them changed. They do not perform anymore! I want to change those people [...]. Why do they perform less well. I feel it is a negative thing to the work. Whereas, when they were under temporary contracts, they were performing better. I am putting up with one now. I remember he used to be so good and come in every morning, working so

hard. But since he was granted the contract, he has become so lazy. We have asked him in several times to work, but no response [...]”

The example that Faaris gave indicates similar elements to those mentioned by other employees. It can be observed that this low-performing employee also went through a similar kind of R&S process. Like all candidates whose CV, references and job interview(s) imply that they fit SO standards (as explained in Rakhan’s example), the employee that Faaris talked about appeared to be perfect for the organisation. However, due to his ‘different’ interests (having a relaxing work environment) and the policies that SO adopts (which SO management believes are driving the employees’ positive performance and behaviour), he reacted unexpectedly, i.e. “fragmentation”.

The last issue that this section covers is related to certain social norms, which the data analysis finds are adopted by some employees, and thus affect the OC. Given that individuals in Saudi Arabia are very attached to their immediate families, as was highlighted in the context chapter, there is a tendency for some employees to be highly ‘dependent’ on family support. This can be seen in the way that some employees’ family members influence certain aspects of their ‘working lives’. This ‘complicated’ issue can be made clearer with the example of Sami. As this chapter shows, Sami appeared to be highly dependent on his father’s support and this may have restricted his understanding of basic issues of SO culture and may also have restricted his interaction with basic work realities. This led to multiple ambiguities and work complexities, as was outlined in previous sections. The data analysis identifies other employees in similar situations with similar characteristics to Sami’s. One of the HR employees explained that the organisation used to have a female employee whose father used to occupy a high official position in the Saudi government. He claimed that her performance was below average and she was relying on her father’s advice on many work issues, especially the type of training that she should get from SO, the most appropriate work behaviour, and he even influenced the organisation to give her unpaid leave, which should only be given on special occasions. According to him, she was not interested in developing a career at SO, but was looking out for her reputation, that is, she worked in one of the well-known organisations in the Kingdom. This may relate to the fact that in Saudi social culture, it is not appropriate for a family member to be unemployed, and working or having a good position in a well-known company will increase a person’s and his/her family’s reputation. Furthermore, the HR employee showed that achieving qualifications (MBA or CFA, which SO sponsors) sometimes gives the person or his/her family *prestige*.

SO has become aware of these issues and has tried to control it. The data analysis reveals that SO started to be stricter with those who appear to have high dependency on their family. For instance, the rejection of the high-ranked government official's request that was sent to the SO Chairman to hire the daughter of one of his employees was partly due to the impression that she might have a high level of dependency on her family. Faaris and Talal both narrated the same story about the father of a trainee (who was on a training course at SO, as part of his undergraduate degree) who dodged the front-of-house security and went to the Chairman's office to ask him to offer his son a permanent position at SO. SO, however, did not offer him a position, although the trainee met SO requirements. This could have had something to do with SO's concern about this trainee having a high level of dependency on family support.

The other inconsistent social norm that was observed in some employees, and which has links to different fragmentation issues, is that reporting a colleague (who has an issue) is considered equal to '*snitching*'. This was revealed after some employees (such as Hind, head of HR, Qasim, Nawaf and many others) mentioned in their interviews one of the employees who was not sitting at his desk for a long time, although the attendance system indicated that he was coming to work regularly (every day between 08:00 and 16:00). After HR investigated this issue, they found that the employee used to give a tea boy his ID and pay him to log him in. Besides the inconsistent behaviour of the employee, these employees' accounts imply another form of ambiguity. Firstly, the manager of this employee appeared to have a lack of understanding of the SO process, which is inconsistent with the assumption that employees in the IP demonstrated that SO has clear work processes of a high standard. When HR asked the manager about his responsibility for managing his staff, he claimed that HR was responsible for the employee's attendance and he did not receive a notification from HR of this employee's absence. Secondly, and most importantly, the employee's colleagues did not notify the department manager of the employee's absence. In this regard, Qasim said:

"it is a cultural issue [social norm]. As Saudis, it is not OK to go and report your colleague; it is like snitching. This is like if one of your relatives or friends has done something wrong and you cover for him and you will not let ANYONE know about it. You know that you should not have done this [covering for him], but you do it because it is the culture. In the same way, if one of us were not attending work and one went and reported it to the management, it would not be OK in our culture ... in fact, your colleagues will look at you differently. There are things that cannot be simply changed, because of our culture." (Qasim, male, managerial-level employee, C3 department, 3 years' service).

Accordingly, some social norms can influence the perceptions of employees, and this has contributed to this fragmentation issue (i.e. lack of work motivation). Similarly, it was shown in the IP chapter that employees' perceptions of the OC can be influenced by 'consistent' social norms; Faisal's example supports this data analysis finding.

In summary, this section has highlighted some findings that showed that some employees interpret and interact with the values and policies of SO in unusual ways. The data analysis outlined different individual characteristics that have a significant relationship with the way in which these employees perceive the realities of SO. Based on the discussions of this chapter, individual interests, high-level dependency on family support, and some subjective social forces seem to come into play in explaining the relationship between the fragmentation cultural aspects and individual characteristics.

8.5 Conclusion

The last chapter of the data analysis uncovers the relationship between OC and individuals from a FP. It shows, viewing SO culture from a FP, that it is characterised by ambiguities (symbolic, action and ideological), ironies, contradictions and multiple interpretations of essential events and issues. Furthermore, the data analysis finds that certain individual characteristics have a significant relationship to the 'fragmentation characteristics' that this chapter has outlined. Most interestingly, some key members of SO (e.g. the director of C5 and K1 departments) interpreted the underlying assumptions of important aspects of SO culture in an unexpected manner. The data analysis suggests that their interpretations are related to their different educational and cultural backgrounds and that their interactions with SO culture have negatively affected vital aspects of work (e.g. teamwork and increasing tension between employees). The data analysis also pointed up interesting interactions between certain employees who show low work performance, although their CV and job interviews showed that they are qualified to work at SO. The data analysis suggested that their differing levels of interest in working at SO and their high dependence on their families may have a significant influence on their unconventional perceptions of SO culture and on their behaviour.

The next chapter forms the last chapter of this thesis, and provides the discussion and conclusion.

Chapter 9. Discussion and conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the contributions that this study makes on the relationship between OC and IB. It will also highlight the research limitations and future research. Specifically, this study is the first of its kind which examine OC and IB in a knowledge-intensive organisation in a developing economy, i.e. Saudi Arabia. While similar existing studies on culture-behaviour relations were mainly conducted in organisations from countries that have strict separation between religion and state (e.g. O'Reilly et al., 1991; Martin, 1992), theorists have called for more organisational researchers to explore alternative contexts, which is argued to lead to alternative research outcomes (Johns, 2006), especially in Saudi Arabia (see Deresky, 2014). The findings of this study have made interesting contributions to the organisational literature in general and Saudi literature and HR management practices in particular.

This chapter will start with a summary of the aims of this thesis and an outline of its content. Following this, there will be a discussion of the main contributions and key findings of this study. Drawing on the findings of this thesis, the contributions are divided into four main parts: (a) empirical; (b) theoretical; (c) context; (d) methodological; and (e) practical. After discussing these last issues, the limitations, challenges, and further research will be outlined before arriving at the conclusion.

9.2 Theoretical approach and aims

The main objective of this study was to explore the relationship between OC and IB through analysing the interactions between the elements of an OC and employees' characteristics. Figure 9-1 explains the finding of the interaction between OC and IB that emerged from the data. This was done by conducting a qualitative study in a Saudi Arabian organisation that analysed organisational working life in a way that captured cultural aspects such as harmony, inconsistency, ambiguity, irony, and contradiction simultaneously (i.e. the three-perspective framework), and explored how these aspects interact according to employees' characteristics. Essentially, this study intended to explore how employees perceive, and react to, the aspects of the OC, and whether their views and reactions are consistent with the overall culture (IP), different from the overall culture (DP), or contradict the overall OC (FP).

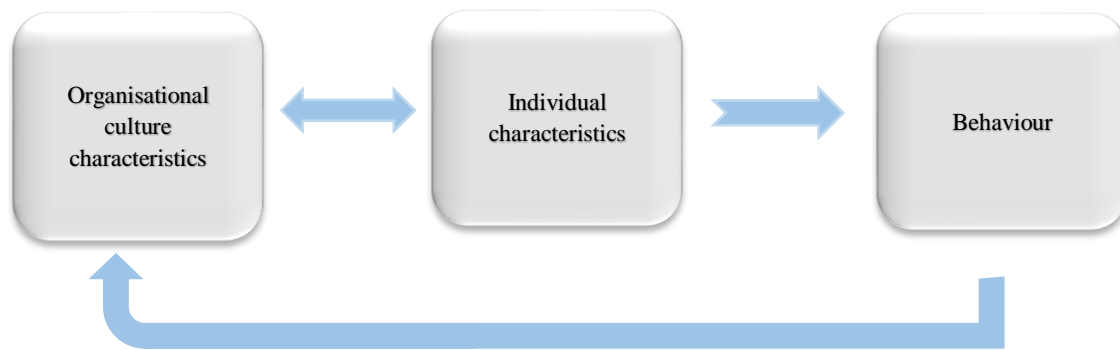


Figure 9-1: Conceptualising the relationship between organisational culture and individual behaviour.

The review of literature on OC (see Chapter 2) shows that there are several – and often conflicting – views on OC which have contributed to considerable difficulty in how to conceptualise and analyse culture in an organisation (see Smircich, 1983a; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013, 2016; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). The conflicting views are commonly regarded by OC scholars in the conception that an organisation *has* a culture (i.e. as a variable, which is amenable to manipulation and change and can be analysed by using quantitative tools) and an organisation *is* culture (i.e. as a root metaphor, which many of its aspects are not subject to manipulation and control and they can be only captured by adopting qualitative approaches) (see Smircich, 1983a). The main implication of this is that those who favour the root metaphor approach usually follow interpretive views, which aim to highlight the multiplicity of values, interpretations, and beliefs in an organisation. On the other hand, those who prefer the organisational variable approach commonly adopt a functionalist orientation, which relates culture to a range of organisational level outcomes, most importantly performance, effectiveness, and control and change (see Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013, 2016).

Essentially, the literature review indicates that the conceptualisation of culture in the existing culture and behaviour research has generally been functionalist in orientation, which neglect other cultural manifestations (see Martin et al., 2006; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Alvesson, 2013, 2016). The conceptualisation of these studies was reviewed in the third chapter. These studies are considered as the few which examine the relationship between OC and IB in a direct way. This was commonly done by examining the 'fit' between organisational characteristics (mainly values or norms) and individual characteristics (mainly individual values). However, the review of literature on OC and IB shows that such studies are criticised on different grounds (see Section 3.6). This study therefore argued that adopting the three-

perspective framework and the ethnography approach in analysing the relationship between OC and IB is appropriate, due to the limitation in the contemporary culture-behaviour literature (see Martin and Frost, 2011). The framework and methodological approach that this study adopted enables the researcher to capture a broader range of views and individual characteristics than have been adopted in the existing ‘fit’ studies.

Chapter 4 reviewed the key social, political, and economic characteristics of Saudi Arabia (i.e. the research context). It also reviewed the most related organisational and cultural studies that were conducted at Saudi Arabian organisations. It highlighted different reasons for conducting further OC studies at Saudi Arabian organisations (see Section 4.4). Most importantly, the reviews show that while most of organisational studies have been conducted in countries that apply strict separation between state and religion (e.g. Van Maanen, 1991; Martin, 1992; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015), religion and social norms in Saudi organisations are influential in Saudi Arabian organisations (see Moran et al. 2014; Deresky 2014). This makes many scholars call for studies that explore the implications of these social and religious factors in organisations behaviour (e.g. Yurdakul and Ozturkcan, 2014; Niblock, 2015). Therefore, consistent with the suggestions of previous studies, as well as arguments about the importance of context in organisational research (see Johns, 2006), this study reveals interesting relationships between some social and religious characteristics (which are embraced by many employees) and their influence on the organisation and employees’ behaviour. These will be further discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5 outlined the research methodology. It includes detail of the approach that this study followed, and key information about the organisation that the research data was collected from. The data were collected from SO, a semi-governmental Saudi Arabian organisation that operates in the financial services sector. The study recognised and analysed different aspects of organisational life without neglecting or suppressing dissent, contradictions, or ambiguities, while at the same time detailing the elements of cohesion and harmony. These issues were analysed in Chapters 6–8. In Chapter 6, the portrayal of the lived life of SO members shows evidence for shared values, beliefs, elements of consensus, and harmony and explains their choice to avoid ambiguity and to show a clear demonstration of SO life. Nevertheless, the analysis of the data, in Chapter 7, provides valid evidence for disagreement about such high claims with some employees highlighting conflicts, and absence of authenticity. Finally, Chapter 8 outlines that the depiction of SO life is also characterised by widespread

contradictions, ambiguity, dichotomies, and ironies. Each of these perspectives were related to a range of individual characteristics, and each were included in the data analysis chapters (Chapters 6–8). Generally, the data analysis assumes that the different interactions of the employees might be driven by their common, and different or unusual characteristics. These analyses lead to a range of contributions that impact OC research, culture-behaviour relations research, and Saudi Arabia literature, as will be highlighted in the following section.

9.3 The study contributions

9.3.1 The three-perspective framework of organisational culture

One of the key empirical contributions of this study is the adaptation of the three-perspective framework for exploring OC in a single organisation. While many key OC scholars (e.g. Martin, 1992, 2002; Martin and Frost, 2011; Alvesson, 2013) have called for researchers to adopt a border range of views in exploring the OC, especially to include the three-perspective framework in analysing the culture of a single organisation, few researchers have taken this recommendation forward (e.g. Mathew and Ogbonna, 2009). The importance of this approach to organisational analysis is drawn from the assumption that people of an organisation are embedded in practices that are shaped in social norms and are characterised by multiple, sometimes inconsistent, meanings (Casey, 1999; Alvesson, 2013). The data analysis of this study (Chapters 6–8) consequently considers and reflects upon such variety of meanings. For instance, the analysis of the IP presents a hegemonic and a rather less complicated explanation of organisational working life. Such explanation is described by ideological, action, and symbolic consistencies and is also characterised by clarity, harmony, and organisation-wide consensus. The key themes of these explanations comprise: ‘staff care’, fostering teamwork, encouraging best work practices, and facilitating equality (see Sections 6.3.1, 6.3.2 and 6.3.3). Also, organisational life is characterised by strong attachment to certain domestic norms and religious traditions.

Interestingly, this study shares some “integration” themes and norms with previous cultural studies. For instance, this study shares similar themes with Martin (1992) and Mathew and Ogbonna (2009) (e.g. through examining taking care of employees’ well-being, fostering teamwork, and facilitating equality), although they were conducted in different countries. However, an interesting finding is that the perception of taking care of employees’ well-being and equality sometime varied between the employees of SO and the employees examined in the Martin (1992) and Mathew and Ogbonna (2009) studies. This reflects a number of issues

and contributions in relation to the IP. In particular, the findings imply that the majority of SO managers and the dominant group of the organisation believe that having a segregated females section meets the female employees' expectations, drives their work productivity, and that such policy does not contradict the employees' perception of equality. Taking into consideration the nature of business in other countries, this could lead to problematic working issues. The data suggests that SO employees' characteristics and the contextual particularities of the organisation may be major reasons for this. Thus, integrational cultural values are not universal (cf. O'Reilly et al., 1991; Alvesson, 2013; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016), and can sometimes be unusual. This will be further discussed in the following sections.

The findings reveal that the work model adopted by a certain organisation and the context idiosyncrasies of that organisation may bring forth considerable challenges to a high level of integration in OC. The underlying meaning behind this assumption is that a number of SO employees have received several government services (e.g. full scholarships and financial services) and benefitted from many governmental programs (e.g. Saudisation – the replacement of foreign workers by Saudi nationals). Taking into consideration the fact that SO is a semi-governmental organisation, the transmission of cultural values (especially to newcomers) is challenged because contextual idiosyncrasies pose serious challenges for high levels of integration of organisational values. Consequently, the employee interpretations of the artefacts of organisational life sometimes do not match the underlying assumptions they are designed to present (see Schein, 1984, 2010). For instance, a number of SO employees (especially perhaps the young) do not view the '*excellent work environment*', the non-punishment policy, the training, and the other financial services that SO offers to employees as unique features of organisational life, which are accompanied by corresponding accountabilities. Instead, they view them as a privilege. Based on this finding, the underlying meanings of the organisation's value could be lost on a considerable number of employees. For instance, the data analysis reveals that the underlying assumptions of such organisational elements (e.g. taking care of employees' well-being) and the implementations that such elements are designed for (driving employees behaviour and attitude, such as performance, cooperation, communication, commitment, and stratification) are not recognised by certain employees of the organisation. In this respect, the work model adopted by Saudi Arabian organisations boosts problematic issues and indicates considerable challenges to the IP of OC.

From the differentiation viewpoint, the view of cultural egalitarianism and hegemony presented by the IP are simultaneously challenged when the data is analysed from the DP. The data analysis in this regard has also highlighted a number of issues and contributions. It identifies four different subgroups that questioned certain aspects of OC, and each subgroup signifies different reactions with the organisational life aspects. Interestingly, the characteristics of some of these subgroups appeared to be akin to previous OC studies, e.g. a 'counterculture' (e.g. Van Maanen, 1991; Martin, 1992). Also, the study highlighted other female subcultural groups ('juniors' and 'mums' groups), which are not based on the individual work functional. The findings of these subgroups respond to claims by some scholars that researchers on subculture should go beyond the traditional professional groups to border organisational communities and aspects (see Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2008; Ogbonna and Harris, 2015), since occupational group research has continued to be the mainstay of subcultural research (see Morgan and Ogbonna, 2008).

In general, the data from the DP shows that such differentiating perceptions and behaviour typically emerge from employees in the managerial level and lower-level employees in different organisational departments. Most importantly, the conflicts between the employees and the organisation management manifested itself in the exercise of powers and the lack of understanding that some group members showed on critical administrative realities. The findings suggest that such different views and behaviour may relate to certain individual characteristics, as will be explored in the next section. For example, the extensive analysis of the arguments of the J1 subgroup members finds they believe that the constructing of organisational life in SO is detached from work realities because they question 'staff care', teamwork, and the other employees oriented aspects of SO life. They outlined the contradictions between the espoused values and actual practices with regard to various elements of SO working life. For example, the approach of the forced-ranking appraisal that the organisation management adopts does not match with the organisational concern of teamwork spirit (see Section 7.3.2).

The data analysis also reveals that there is variation in the perceptions of the OC among the two female groups, and thus their corresponding behaviour. Martin's (1992: 76–77) study implicitly points out such differentiating views, however, it does not go further and explain how they actual process and what are their individual characteristics and other factors that drive their behavior, as the present study does. The findings in relation to these two female

subgroups indicate critical theoretical and practical contributions, and suggest further research (as will be explained below in this chapter). Thus, the DP is characterised by subcultural consensus, ambiguity avoidance, and inconsistency (Martin, 1992; Martin and Frost, 2011).

When data was analysed from the FP, the multifaceted nature of SO working life was revealed, with a variety of manifestations of ambiguity, inconsistencies, and transient affiliations. The findings from this perspective emphasise that the incomplete and insufficient understanding of the espoused elements of organisational life, as well as the concerns about the disorderly external environment, usually result in considerable levels of confusion and complications. This has led certain members of the organisation to express that it is hard to develop a rational, consistent, and stable depiction of organisational life. For instance, the policy of non-punishment that managers and employees refer to as '*staff care*', is argued to create confusion and chaos in the workplace. This is because certain people mistakenly interpreted them as an indication of managers being easy on poor performance or other undesirable work issues, such as employees utilising the organisation facilities for their personal uses (see Section 8.3.1). Consequentially, the findings highlight deep-seated anxiety expressed by managers, as well as other employees, that many of the unique aspects of SO working life, such as the 'unconditional' training or lack of accountability system, might do more harm than good. The insufficient realisation of the underlying meaning of such aspects of organisational life usually results in a de-emphasis of organisational systems (e.g. a failure to deal with modest performance or undesirable behaviour) leading to managerial difficulties. Further discussion about these issues will be outlined in the following section.

In general, the inescapable inconsistency of values has made it problematic, and sometimes unattainable, for employees to reconcile the realities of organisational life on several occasions. Therefore, the organisational life in SO is characterised by pervasive confusion, inconsistency, and complexity. However, an important point that the data analysis from the FP highlights is that some aspects of Martin's (1992, 2002) framework could be reinforced. The findings of the study, for example, go beyond the nature of "fragmentation", as conceptualised by Martin (2002), and reveal aspects that approximate the postmodern perspective (see Alvesson, 2013). In other words, the multifaceted structure and disorderliness of irreconcilable explanations lean towards exceeding the boundaries of the 'manageable ambiguities' and unpredictability that can be manifested in the FP. The study investigation implies that this happens partly because of: (a) the enormity of the ambiguity and uncertainty

that characterises knowledge work (Newell et al., 2002; Alvesson, 2013), and (b) the considerable levels of anxieties stated by some female employees because they see themselves as subject to temporary and very elusive and restricting norms embraced by Saudi society. Some organisational scholars argue that such views are likely to prevail in several organisations in the developing countries (see Mathew and Ogbonna, 2009), and based on the study findings, Saudi Arabia is not an exception (see Ali and Al-Shakhis 1989; Yurdakul and Ozturkcan, 2014).

Therefore, taking into consideration the latest vision of the Saudi government (see Saudi Vision 2030, 2016), as well as the unique properties of Saudi Arabia, such issues are likely to intensify in the future, where the lack of research on the nature of Saudi Arabian organisations and other Saudi work-related issues may exacerbate the situation. This is more critical in the case of Saudi Arabian economically-driven organisations, e.g. SO, which usually hires highly qualified and professionals who appear to be aware of these issues. These kinds of multifaceted issues may limit the ability of OC to influence IB, and thereby the organisational effectiveness outcomes. In other words, the efforts that SO management has done to ensure workers attention by manipulating cultural variables (e.g. the policies of '*staff care*') will be limited considering the increase level of fragmentation. Although the determination of the organisation has – to some extent – succeeded to maintain proper employees' work behaviour, which has significant effects on several aspects of organisational life, it is accompanied by considerable anxieties in employees and has profound implications for the management, especially for HR management. Thus, the empirical findings of this study assume that such voices go beyond the reconcilable stresses and ambiguities that Martin (1992, 2002) conceptualises, and show that they are akin to the irreconcilable stresses, effective ambiguities, and sights of short-lived realities reminiscent of twenty-first century organisations.

Based on the previous discussion, it can be concluded that elements of congruence, disagreement, and ambiguity occur synchronously in SO. Therefore, this study assumes that by following the three-perspective approach, it is more likely to recognise the variety of interpretations that characterise values in a single organisation. Furthermore, it assumes that the adaptation of the three-perspective approach enables the researcher to document the reality of shared values, while simultaneously discovering variances and inadequate understanding of values, as well as the ambiguities and inconsistencies that may depict cultural values in an organisation. Thus, the findings emphasise that when such contradictory interpretations were

not recognised and analysed, the illustration of organisational working life will be characteristically simplistic (cf. Peters and Waterman, 1982; Marin, 1992; Schein, 2010; Alvesson, 2013; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016).

9.3.2 The organisational culture and individual behaviour relations from the three-perspective framework

The conceptualisation of culture-behaviour relations from the three-perspectives

Other important contributions in this study are related to the conceptualisation of the relationship between OC and IB (as outlined in Figure 9-1). As discussed in a number of chapters above (especially Section 3.6), most studies that have examined the relationship between OC and IB in a direct way have adopted a limited definition of OC, i.e. a 'specialist' definition (see Van Vianen, 2000: 114), or a restricted methodology approach (see Martin et al., 2006), and mainly follow a single perspective of OC, i.e. the IP (see Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). Some OC scholars therefore argue that these studies present a non-inclusive and rather simplistic nature of culture-behaviour relations; they have not recognised the multifaceted manifestations of OC (especially the FP) (see Martin et al., 2006; Alvesson, 2013) and how they actually interact with the different characteristics of individuals. Essentially, these studies are criticised based on the fact that they ignore and neglect the context-specific aspects of culture-behaviour relations. Due to these limitations, this thesis fills the gaps in the contemporary literature on the conceptualisation of culture-behaviour. Instead of restricting the examination between OC and IB on values (i.e. OC values and individual values) to analyse IB, this study adopts a comprehensive definition of OC, uses the three-perspective framework to analyse OC, and considers a wider range of individual characteristics to understand IB. The logic behind this approach is that both OC and IB are complex and interrelated concepts (see Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). Accordingly, in order to provide a full picture of the dynamic between these two concepts, it is necessary to analyse a full range of cultural manifestations and examine how they interact with the different individual characteristics. Indeed, this approach helps to reveal important aspects that may influence the perceptions and behaviour of the employees with the different perspective of OC, either integration (see Figure 9-2), differentiation (see Figure 9-3), or fragmentation (see Figure 9-4).

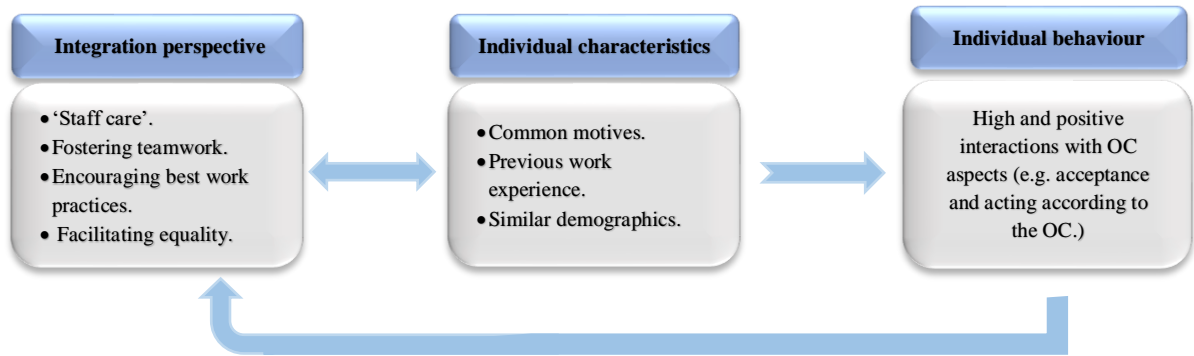


Figure 9-2: Analysis of the relationship between organisational culture and individual behaviour from an integration perspective.

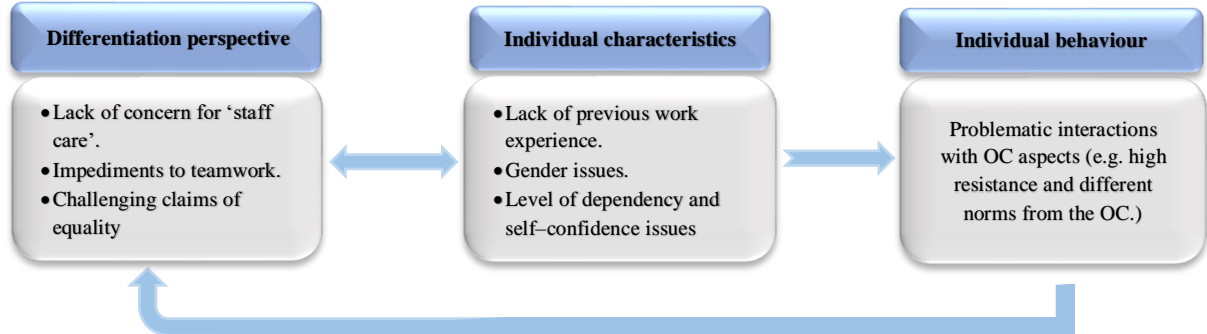


Figure 9-3: Analysis of the relationship between organisational culture and individual behaviour from a differentiation perspective.

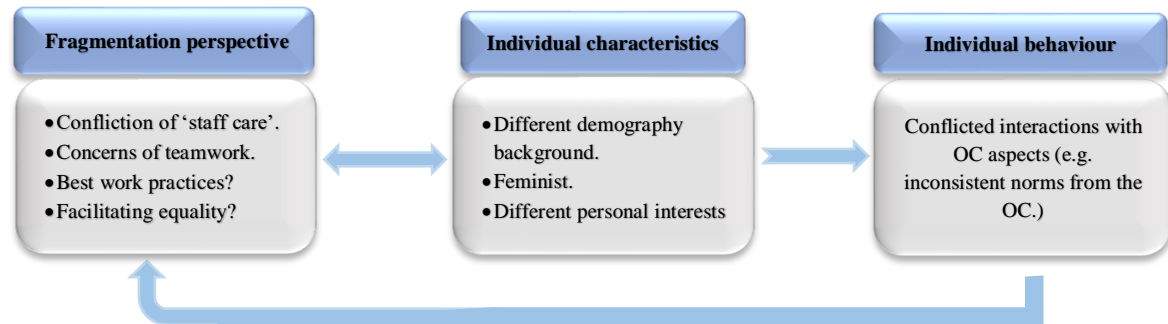


Figure 9-4: Analysis of the relationship between organisational culture and individual behaviour from a fragmentation perspective.

A significant contribution that arises from this conceptualisation is that this study provides insights into the processes which can explain why an individual acts and reacts to certain aspects of OC in a particular way. The results of the study show that different characteristics may influence employees' interactions (i.e. perception and behaviour) with various aspects of OC. Furthermore, the findings of this study provide empirical evidence that the relationship between OC and IB is multidimensional, where the objective and subjective aspects of OC, the factors that characterised the organisation environment, and the different characteristics of employees all come into play. The study also provides detailed evidence that the process of such multiple dimensions of OC characteristics and individual characteristics may generate direct, complex, unpredictable, or context-specific relationships between OC and employees'

behaviour. Importantly, the highly problematic and complex nature of the relationships between OC and IB is presented without suppressing or neglecting the inconsistencies, uncertainties, and ironies. A brief analysis of the discussion and highlighting of key findings with respect to the relationship between OC and IB is given in the following subsections.

The relationship between integration perspective and individual behaviour

The data analysis from the IP shows a hegemonic and rather less complicated relationship between OC and IB. As outlined above, the dominant group of SO present interpretations that are characterised by symbolic, action, and ideological consistencies. These interpretations are marked by clarity, harmony, and organisation-wide consensus, which are akin to the IP (see Martin, 1992), and the assumptions developed by studies that concern the relationship between OC and IB from the IP (e.g. O'Reilly et al., 1991). Essentially, this study finds that certain individual traits may drive employee “integration” interaction (as outlined in Figure 9-2). The study provides empirical evidence that those who have previous work experience are more tolerant with work differences/problems and show high level of adaptation to work norms and policies (see Section 6.4.1). They also show high tendency to reinforce the values of the organisation and support cultural harmony more than those that have not worked in other organisations. The data findings explain that previous work experience may enhance the employee work intelligence, which gives him or her a ‘tool’ that can measure the reality of work and issues that can serve their interests (as will be illustrated shortly). Interestingly, some researchers have recognised the importance of work experience in forming the OC (e.g. Van Maanen, 1975; Chatman, 1989; Schein, 2010; Schneider et al., 2013). However, they have mainly considered the work experience of an individual within his or her current organisation and have not effectively recognised that previous work experience can contribute to shaping the OC and IB (cf. Adkins, 1995; Roodt et al., 2002; Treem et al., 2015; Monteiro et al., 2015).

The data also shows that individual motives is effective in supporting the interaction of the employees (see Section 6.4.1). Those who imply high enthusiasm for progressing their career and ambition to accomplish the work aims tend to focus more on cultural aspects that match with their interests, and give less attention to issues that do not serve their interests (issues that are usually associated with the DP and FP). The data investigation explains that these individual motives make them accept the organisation values and act according to the organisation norms more than those with less ambition for progressing their career, as outlined in the differentiation and fragmentations data analysis chapters (i.e. Chapter 7–8). Some

findings of the study provide support for previous OC studies (e.g. O'Reilly et al., 1991; Martin, 1992). However, the current study goes further and explains subtle difference between the managers' motives and other employees' motives that may drive their "integration" interaction. Managers commonly emphasise that their '*leadership sense*' makes them adopt and reinforce values and norms that support harmony and integrity in work. They also stress that they do not tend to discuss or highlight work conflicts or differences with their subordinates (see Faisal, Tamim and Bander examples in Section 6.4.2). They believe that this helps accomplish the work more effectively and increase the cooperation between employees. On the other hand, the middle and lower-level employees show that their interest in progressing their career and improving their work skills are their main motives that drive their "integration" views and corresponding behaviour. Similar to the attitude and action of the higher-level managers, these employees tend to accept the values of the organisation and work according to them. The data also finds that they do not tend to discuss work conflicts and problems; they indicate that these will be solved with time, and such a response does not help them to achieve their aims (see Section 6.4.1 for more detail).

Finally, the data reveals some demographic characteristics that suggest increasing the interaction between individuals and the overall OC (see Section 6.4.3). The data investigation finds that similarity in language (Arabic), faith (Islam), and nationality (Saudi) between employees provides vital and basic understanding of the underlying meaning of organisational values. This results in less resistance and better adaptation to the organisation policies and norms. For example, the dominant group of the organisation perceived the non-mixed work environment policy as evidence of SO's concern with '*staff care*', and did not interpret it as discrimination against female employees. The faith of employees required them to maintain distance and boundaries between the opposite sex. Interestingly, some female employees stated that this policy made them decide to join-and-remain with SO, and made them perform better (because they did not have to continually wear their *Abaya*). Also, the majority of participants expressed the parents' healthcare insurance as a significant evidence of SO commitment to take care of employees' well-being. Religiously and socially, employees are expected to look after their parents. Certain employees emphasised that this policy affectively influenced their decision to reject other job offers, stressing that their parents' healthcare insurance is a key motivation behind their work performance. These findings stress the study conceptualisation, that there is a significant relationship between OC and individual

characteristics. Indeed, if the non-mixed policy and the parents' healthcare insurance existed in other organisations, which have no, or less concern for Islamic values (Martin, 1992; Mathew and Ogbonna, 2009), they would be assumed problematic or ineffective.

The relationship between the differentiation perspective and individual behaviour

The study findings show that the interpretations of cultural egalitarianism and hegemony presented in the IP are simultaneously questioned when the data was analysed from a DP. As explained previously, the data analysis identifies four different subgroups that reveal contrasting views and behaviour from the dominant group. Furthermore, the data finds that each subgroup has demonstrated varying interpretations and behaviour from the other subgroups (see Sections 7.3.1, 7.3.2, and 7.3.3). Interestingly, some views that the current studies reveal seem to support the finding of previous OC studies (e.g. Martin, 1992; Elfenbein and O'Reilly, 2007). However, such studies have not gone further and explained the characteristics, underlying assumptions, and other subjective factors that may drive their interactions with the OC. The following presents a brief analysis of the findings.

In terms of the first subgroup (J1), the data analysis presents some individual characteristics that may drive the different views and reactions, such as their young age and lack of previous work experience (see Section 7.4.1). While some existing organisational studies suggest that age can have an effective influence on an individual's perceptions of work environment, as well as group process, performance, and behaviour (e.g. Elfenbein and O'Reilly, 2007; Belias and Koustelion, 2014), the study findings highlight that the lack of previous work experience may significantly shape the employee's interactions with OC aspects (as outlined in Figure 9-3). The intensive investigation suggests that the lack of previous experience has affected the adaptation ability of J1 subgroups members, as well as their communication and negotiation skills, analysis competence, and understanding of mutual administrative standards. The lack of these individual characteristics leads them occasionally to react haphazardly in certain work realities (see Section 7.4.1, for various examples).

The two female subgroups (the '*juniors*' and '*mums*'), also present contrasting interpretations and behaviour from the other groups. Notably, the discoveries of the study reveal that there are variations in the perceptions of the two female subgroup members, and thus, their corresponding behaviour and attitude (see Sections 7.3.1, 7.3.2, and 7.3.3). For instance, some members of the '*juniors*' present different interpretations of SO management assumption concerning equality. They claim that working in a single section, away from their departments,

does not support equal working conditions between male and female employees. They seek equality by having a segregated female section in each department. On the other hand, the '*mums*' (who do not have the same level of concern about the work conditions as the '*juniors*') claim that the benefits that support employees well-being usually suited the male employees needs more than theirs (as explored shortly). Therefore, they usually demand SO management to consider other issues that supports their needs, e.g. flexible/less working, in-house nursery, and reachable work locations. Although the data introduces gender as an influential factor that may be the source of their views and reactions, the findings explore additional traits that characterised each female subgroup.

The '*juniors*' members share some common characteristics with the J1 group members, i.e. they are relatively young and lack previous work experience. Also, due to the new vision of the Saudi government, empowering women to work, some of these female employees implied that they have a responsibility to change the '*stereotyping*' that Saudi women can only do certain jobs and men are more capable of doing other jobs (see Section 7.4.2). Another important characteristic raised was that most of them are single. Indeed, some organisational studies argue that marriage status can be an important factor that influences the employee's perceptions and behaviour in the organisation (see Roodt et al., 2002; Elfenbein and O'Reilly, 2007; Belias and Koustelios, 2014). The influence of these individual characteristic is illustrated in the next section.

In relation to the '*mums*' subgroup, the study findings show that their older age and family orientation drives their interpretations and behaviour. In contrast to the views and aims of the '*juniors*' group members, the '*mums*' group stress that their family responsibilities take priority in their lives, and their job comes after. In other words, this group does not show strong determination with respect to occupying an executive job, or high enthusiasm about the new vision of the Saudi Arabia government as do '*juniors*' group members. Instead, they are interested about aspects that may help them to fulfil their responsibilities as housewives.

For example, they tend to focus on their direct work (that they can finish their work at 16:00) and do not usually engage in extending gathering or operational meetings. Also, some of them explained that having less working hours is more important than having house loans, parents' healthcare insurance, or training; they claim that such policies suited the male employees' needs more than theirs. With respect to this point, Martin's (1992: 76–77) study implies similar suggestions to the present study, explaining that the concerns of the traditional-wife are

different from the working-mother. Consequently, she highlights that their concerns may lead them to have different perspectives of certain aspects of their OC. Also, the empirical findings of this study support some suggestions of other organisational studies, that age, gender, marriage statues, and work experience may affect the view and behavior of employees (see Roodt et al., 2002; Elfenbein and O'Reilly, 2007; Belias and Koustelios, 2014). However, there are some differences between the suggestions of previous studies and the findings of the present study. For example, Roodt et al. (2002: 29) conclude that married employees in general perceive the OC more positively than single employees. They usually have longer work experience, and thus view the OC more realistically and maturely. However, the findings of the current study assume that the role of married women in Saudi Arabia society may affect their views and reactions in the workplace (see Section 4.3.5). Accordingly, some key organisational policies, such as house loans, would be less valuable in their view (since Saudi men are usually responsible for providing the financial care for their families).

Finally, the data from the DP reveal certain lower-level employees present different interaction from the overall CO (see Sections 7.3.1, 7.3.2, and 7.3.3). Similar to the findings of many previous OC studies, lower-employees claim neglect and unfairness in the application of organisational policies by managers (see Van Maanen, 1991; Martin, 1992; Mathew and Ogbonna, 2009). Most importantly, some lower-level employees challenge the sincerity of the management's commitment to '*staff care*', fostering teamwork, and equality. They believe that there is obvious discrimination against lower-level employees, since higher- and middle-level employees (who, in their view, have better financial and social ranking) receive most of the management attention. Although some of their views and reactions appear to be reasonable, they sometimes seem to be subjective, not objective. Essentially, their personal interpretations affected their work performance and their overall job satisfaction. These also impacted on their communication and relationships with their colleagues (see Section 7.4.3). Generally, the in-depth investigation suggests that their interpretations and reactions are influenced by views of the Saudi community who have lower education and work position. This assumption is consistent with previous reviews on this aspect of Saudi Arabian communities (e.g. Al-Kathiri, 1989). The data shows different lower-level employees who expressed that Saudi community do not usually value those who have low education or social ranking. Keeping this in mind, the data investigation reveals that lower-level employees in general reacted to this assumption differently. Those lower-level employees who show views

and behaviour that seem to be consistent with the overall culture signified strong confidence on their role in the organisation and work capability to progress their career. Therefore, they usually show better work performance and communication within their work environment. By contrast, the lower-level employees (who were covered in the DP) signified low self-confidence in their education level, work skills capabilities, and their social level. These personal issues have negatively impacted their views about the OC and behaviour, e.g. low performance, low cooperation, and less communications with work realities (see Section 7.4.3 for more detail).

The findings also reveal that the interaction of certain lower-level employees is influenced by their level of dependency. Some of the employees claim that government and semi-government organisations should not only be responsible for providing decent work conditions, but they should also go further and try to improve their life conditions (see Section 7.4.3). They explained that since SO is supported by the Saudi government, they should take care of lower-level employees more than other employees (due to their low-income and qualifications). This led them frequently demanding SO to provide more benefits for lower-level employees. However, SO management argue that the financial support of the Saudi government is limited, and the organisation depends on its performance to generate its income. Hence, they emphase that such employees are supposed to act professionally and efficiently.

The relationship between the fragmentation perspective and individual behaviour

The study findings from the FP reveal a complicated and contradictory picture of the relationship between OC and IB. As was highlighted previously, the complex realties of the work environment, as well as related individual characteristics were revealed from this perspective. In general, these findings are highly valuable. While many scholars emphasise the importance of revealing the “fragmentation” aspects of OC, to understand many aspects of organisational life (e.g. Martin, 1992; Alvesson, 2013), these aspects were neglected by most of the studies that analyse the relationship between OC and IB (see Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016).

The data from this perspective focuses on certain directors who show contradictory views and behaviour from the overall OC. SO management stresses that they recruit and select high standard employees (‘*stars*’). However, former managers of the C5 department claimed that their department contains the elites or ‘*the best of the best*’ of SO employees. Accordingly, they used to express their views in some business meetings and demand SO management to

let C5 employees represent SO in the future. These unhealthy views and actions (as many managers and employees contended) have spread across the organisation departments and bring forth chaotic work issues (see Sections 8.3.2, 8.3.3, and 8.3.4). Importantly, some members of the C5 department started to adopt such views and are beginning to create a subgroup that includes members of C5 only. They also tend to recruit '*allies*' (especially the newcomers) to reinforce their position in the organisation. This reaction inspired other anti-groups in other departments. It has also led certain members from the same department to reject such assumptions and act against them. In light of these findings, the study finds support for the claim that the emergence of some (unpredicted and unhealthy) subgroups is an implication of the ambiguity (e.g. Jermier et al., 1991; Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2008; Mathew and Ogbonna, 2009). It also finds support for the point that subgroups may emerge due to subjective or idiosyncratic work realities (see Ogbonna and Harris, 2015), i.e. not only as professional or occupational groups.

In general, the data outlines certain individual traits that may play a vital role in the interpretations and actions of C5 members. The most effective one is the different social and education backgrounds of managers. The investigation shows that former managers were born or raised in Western countries (US, UK, or Australia), and since such countries are considered to lead the business and education world, they assume that their qualifications and the quality of their spoken English give them superiority over many employees of SO (see Section 8.4.1). Also, some of those who adopt the former C5 managers' assumptions signified similar individual factors. Certain C5 employees explained that their individual characteristics lead them to adopt different and unusual behavioural norms (see Section 8.4.3 for further examples).

The literature review shows that education level and social background can be key factors in driving employees' attitudes and behaviour in the workplace (see Chatman et al., 1998; Elfenbein and O'Reilly, 2007; Belias and Koustelios, 2014). Nevertheless, such studies focus on how the similarity or differences of these individual characteristics may influence their performance. As a result, the subjective implications of such individual characteristics have not been sufficiently covered in their research analysis. Furthermore, such studies focus on employees who received their education from the same country in order to explain the emergence of subculture (see Chatman et al., 1998), or tend to examine how the different employee's degrees (e.g. Bachelor's or Master's degrees) may impact their views on the OC

and the processes of subcultural groups (e.g. Belias and Koustelios, 2014). In the case of the current study, individuals who lived and received their education from ‘developed’ countries and work in ‘developing’ countries may have views and behaviour that increase the “ambiguity” in the organisation. Finally, the findings also suggest that such employees do not cope or interact with the OC aspects easily; they expressed intentions to leave the organisation.

The data also reveals another director whose interpretations and behaviour are approximate to “fragmentation”. The data outlines that Reem (the female director of K1) has inconsistent views which contradicted reactions to its overall culture (see Section 8.3.2, 8.3.3, and 8.3.4). For example, she believed that the females’ section symbolises humiliation for the female employees, regardless of the dominant female employees’ view that such segregated section should be valued. She also emphasised that such policy prevents her from supervising and engaging with her subordinates. Therefore, she demanded the SO management locate her office in the male section and encouraged other female employees to do the same.

The data suggests that certain individual characteristics drive her interactions. Generally, Reem’s gender, as well as her education and social background, were significant factors. Similar to the former C5 managers, Reem has also spent a significant amount of time in the US. She expressed that the time she spent there has changed her personality making her strong and independent. This may explain the suggestions in the data that some of her views and behaviour approximate to ‘feminism’. Indeed, Reem expressed a deep-seated belief that female employees should not be treated differently on account of their gender. She also expressed a strong rejection of the values that legislate the females’ section and believed that the ‘*privacy*’ that most of the female participants demand should not be taken as significant. As she explained, the non-mix policy is a discrimination practice against Saudi women that is usually reinforced by the society norms. Therefore, she consistently encourages Saudi women (e.g. SO female employees) to identify and challenge such discriminations and progress their career.

The last issue that the relationship between FP and IB revealed is related to certain employees who provided unexpected interactions with key aspects of SO culture. Their interactions suggest revisiting the factors that are proposed to drive employees’ motivation and performance (Mitchell, 1982). They also may support organisation research that concern the R&S process, more particularly in Saudi Arabian organisations. The data finds certain employees who misinterpreted the underlying meaning of ‘*staff care*’ policies, and this has led

to considerable work problems. While different managers argue that '*staff care*' policies are meant to drive the employees' positive attitudes and performance, these employees interpreted them as managers responding leniently to bad performance. Consequently, these employees (which the data analysis classifies as low-performance employees) yield poor work outcomes. Their interpretations and reactions to the '*staff care*' policies also affected the R&S processes. Certain HR officials expressed that such uncommon attitudes and behaviour did not allow the R&S process to be completely objective, as SO stresses (see Section 8.3.2).

Although some previous OC studies imply similar attitudes and behaviour (e.g. Martin, 1992; Mathew and Ogbonna, 2009), they have not explored the individual characteristics that may be derived from their interactions. The current study suggests that their unusual work motives can be effective. The data investigation shows that certain low-performance employees are looking for less stressful working environments. This is an important issue that SO management should consider, and an interesting phenomenon worth further research. The data investigation also uncovers that some of these low-performance employees are not interested in carrying on a career at SO. Instead, they are interested in operating their private businesses. This is done by utilising SO work environment and neglecting the organisation aims (see Section 8.4.3 for further discussion).

Another key factor that the findings reveal is the high dependency on family support of certain low-performance employees. The data investigation shows that the high dependency on family support may restrict understanding of basic OC aspects, and this affected work outcomes. Furthermore, these employees showed no real interest in progressing a career at SO. As will be explained in the following section, the data suggests that their dependency on their families can be extended to other life issues, e.g. financial. These findings are very critical for various reasons. Most importantly, while some organisational studies (especially those which were conducted in Saudi Arabian organisations) revealed that dependency on family support is very common among Saudi employees (e.g. Mohammed, 1988; Abalkhail and Allan, 2015), they do not usually explore how such attitudes and actions relate to "fragmentation".

Finally, the data implies that certain low-performance employees look for self-reputation, either for them or their family, suggests these are influential aspects that affect their interpretations and actions. Since certain low-performance employees (including those who implied high dependency on family support) did not join SO for career development, the good reputation of SO could be a key factor. The empirical findings of this study support the

assumption that the repetition of a Saudi person and his or her family increases when a family member works or has a high position at a well-known organisation (see Al-Kathiri, 1989), (see Section 8.4.3 for more examples).

9.3.3 Context contributions

Another important contribution in this study is linked with the study context. Although OC scholars have signified the importance of conducting further studies in Saudi Arabian organisations, few researchers have taken this recommendation forward (see Hijan, 1992; Al-beraidi, 2008; Aldhuwaihi and Shee, 2015). A number of points raised in this thesis support this suggestion (see Sections 3.6 and 4.4). Most essentially, similar existing studies on culture-behaviour relations were mainly conducted in organisations from countries that have strict separation between state and the affairs of religion (e.g. O'Reilly et al., 1991; O'Reilly et al., 2014). Therefore, theorists have called for more organisational researchers to explore alternative contexts, which are believed to have the potential to reveal alternative research outcomes (Johns, 2006). The case of Saudi Arabia is particularly pertinent in this regard (see Deresky, 2014). Also, due to the increased importance of Saudi Arabian business, a number of organisational scholars have suggested the importance of exploring Saudi social and religious norms, which are assumed to be highly influential in the Saudi business realities. They argue that researchers have not thoroughly explored such social and religious norms or how they impact organisational behaviour (Deresky, 2014; Yurdakul and Ozturkcan, 2014; Abalkhail and Allan, 2015). Further, the few OC studies that were conducted in Saudi Arabia adopt the functionalist view and the IP (e.g. Hijan, 1992; Aldhuwaihi and Shee, 2015). Accordingly, the limitations that the literature review chapters discussed about functionalist cultural studies can also be applied to these Saudi studies. Therefore, this research fills these gaps in the existing literature and in so doing help to enhance international research knowledge in general, and Saudi Arabian knowledge and practice in particular. The following paragraphs will discuss the main findings and contributions.

Firstly, the findings stress that understanding OC and IB would not be sufficient without considering the context and individual social background (cf. Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984; Schein, 1984; O'Reilly et al., 1991; Martin, 1992; Johns, 2006; Alvesson, 2013). As previous Saudi reviews imply (e.g. Ali et al., 1991; Deresky, 2014; Abalkhail and Allan, 2015), the data analysis shows that Saudi Arabian organisations and Saudi employees' behaviour are highly influenced by key social and religious norms. Thus, the understanding of the interaction

between OC and IB will be incomplete without an understanding of the context in which such interaction occurs. In the current case, the significant variables that emerged as significant are social and especially religious norms. For instance, the underlying reasons that make SO introduce some policies, such as segregated female sections and special faith areas, as well as linking the organisational annual celebrations and holidays to the Islamic calendar, would not be understood effectively without recognising the local norms and Islamic traditions in the analysis. Accordingly, this study finds support to John's (2006: 386) suggestion that context has an impact on organisational behaviour, and this has not been sufficiently appreciated or recognised by researchers.

Another significant contribution in this respect is the range of social and religious norms that the findings give attention to, showing they may positively or negatively influence employees and organisational behaviour. The importance of these norms is that they can help international companies (as well as Saudi organisations) to understand the nature and realities that influence Saudi work operations (see Deresky, 2014: 91; Peng and Meyer, 2016: 283). Also, the study highlights that the lack understanding of such norms will considerably affect the international consultation companies that would like to work in Saudi Arabia (e.g. Great Place to Work, KPMG, and McKinsey & Company).

Another key contribution of this study is that it affords one of the few research-driven investigations of the HR management issues in Saudi Arabia in a setting that is described as important, but lacks relevant studies, i.e. the Saudi financial industry. Thus, the study findings suggest certain implications for HR management in Saudi Arabia in general, and the Saudi financial sector in particular. Most importantly, this study responds to the growing calls for more studies of HR management in Saudi Arabia (see Ali et al., 1991; Alsarhani, 2010; Yurdakul and Ozturkcan, 2014; Abalkhail and Allan, 2015). This is done by providing an empirical assessment of essential issues involved in HR management (i.e. OC and IB). Most significantly, gender in Saudi Arabia can be considered as one of the most challenging issues for Saudi Arabian organisations, more particularly after the latest 'Vision' of the Saudi government, which aims to increase the number of women in employment. As the data findings indicate, some of their perceptions and behaviour appeared to be unusual and do not correspond to other organisation worldwide. Thus, understanding these aspects and their resources can solve several work problems for both female employees and organisational managers. In this regard, the data finds empirical support for the point that work may create

personal issues for married female employees (e.g. Al-Mohsen, 2000; Hamdan, 2005; Abalkhail and Allan, 2015; Alqahtani, 2016). The data attributed this to two reasons: (a) the Saudi social structure (the general responsibilities of Saudi males and females), (b) a number of social and Islamic norms that remained unchanged (regardless of the many norms that changed in Saudi Arabia over the last decades (see Najm, 2015; Abalkhail and Allan, 2015; Al-Khalifa et al., 2015)). Accordingly, Saudi organisations need to consider some solutions for married female employees, essentially: flexible working hours, remote-working jobs, in-house nursery, and reachable work locations. Also, an important suggestion is that those who would like to understand or improve the employees ‘interactions’ in Saudi Arabian organisations should consider the differences between social and religious norms. Changing social norms is far easier than changing norms linked to Islam traditions. For instance, male employees will not show strong resistance to changing their outfit (the *Thobe* and *Shemagh*) as do female employees in changing their *Abaya* or *Hijab*. The *Thobe* and *Shemagh* are constructed socially, whereas *Abaya* and *Hijab* are constructed religiously.

This study also points out the issues of Saudi young employees, who usually lack work experience and actual realisation of work realities. Based on the different government reports (e.g. Saudi Vision 2030, 2016; General Authority for Statistics, 2016), the dominant group of job seekers is young graduates. Thus, the findings stress key challenges that relate to this group and suggest how to deal with such employees.

The other contribution is related to the empirical evidence that the findings provide for arguments about Saudi social homogeneity and diversity. Consistent with different researchers’ arguments (e.g. Muna, 1980; Hofstede, 1984), the data shows that Saudi people share general values and norms that influence both organisational and individual behaviour (e.g. faith, language, and other common social norms). However, the findings also identify unusual characteristics and values that impact organisational and individual behaviour (e.g. different ideologies (some people embrace liberal thoughts) or different backgrounds (some Saudi people are open-minded or influenced by other societal norms, such as those of the UK or US)). Therefore, this study concludes that similarities in values and norms usually represent the macro level of Saudi society (which many organisational scholars have overemphasised and that has led them to assume homogeneity in Saudi society (e.g. Muna, 1980; Hofstede, 1984, 1991, 2001)), whereas variances and diversities of Saudi subgroups represent the micro level of Saudi society (which scholars assume have been neglected in Saudi organisational

reviews and research analyses, e.g. Al-Twaijiri and Al-muhaiza, 1996; Alsarhani, 2005; Najm, 2015). Indeed, if this study only recognised the similarities at the macro level, the variances in the organisation subgroups (e.g. the *juniors* and *mums*), as well as other individuals (e.g. former C5 managers and Reem) would be neglected in the analysis, and this would result in inadequate findings.

Finally, the data implies that although Saudi Arabia has ancient and deeply rooted social structure and culture – which are effective in Saudi Arabian business organisation – Saudi Arabian organisations seem to adopt two different management approaches (Eastern and Western). Regardless of the fact that this study has not made enough data in this aspect (due to limited time), this makes the context very interesting for both those that wish to explore the management approaches (e.g. Yurdakul and Ozturkcan, 2014) and those that seek to know how these two management approaches form the OC and influence IB.

9.3.4 Methodological and practical contributions

A further contribution of this study relates to the methodological approach adopted. As explained previously, the research methodology used in previous culture-behaviour studies has been mainly quantitative (see Martin et al., 2006; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). Consequently, there is limited understanding of the ways in which cultural progress is played out in organisational working life, and how the different individual characteristics influence employees interactions with the OC and impact their behaviour. By following an ethnographic approach, this study uncovers the complications involved in OC and IB relations, which are overlooked to some extent in similar research. The study findings imply that the adoption of qualitative methodologies (especially ethnography, see Smircich, 1983b; Martin, 2002; Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016) in the study of the relationship between OC and IB is more likely to reveal critical insights. Most significantly, it enables the researcher to develop a closer understanding of the organisational context and processes, through which employees and groups attribute interpretations to their working lives. Furthermore, such an approach is likely to lead to a greater realisation of how the result of the interaction between OC and individual characteristics influence IB, as well as other vital work issues, such as strategy, organisational design, and HR management issues. Also, this approach is more likely to lead to a better appreciation of the social context in which social norms and religious traditions can be influential. In general, the approach allowed the researcher to understand how the cultural manipulation of such context can impact the expressions and nature of employees' behaviour.

The thesis also reveals some practical implications. The first is related to subcultural conflict, which may emerge when a company launches a new work policy (e.g. the J1 subgroup). Leaders and managers should understand that such conflict is part of the subjective and the dynamic of organisational working life. Thus, they should be aware that some subcultural conflicts can be minimised, but not totally resolved. They should also note that it may not be useful to aggressively suppress such conflict. This may result in undesirable outcomes, e.g. losing the employees motivations, commitment, loyalty, or making a talented employee leave the organisation. Alternatively, managers should continually try to consider the variances in the orientation of each subculture to recognise that IB may be resulting from multiple individual characteristics and to progress the suitable support system to guarantee a business focused solution. The study argues that such an approach necessitates high recognition of the coexistence of various cultures and individual characteristics, which effectively drive people interactions within the workplace. This requires considerable levels of critical reflexivity on the part of the leaders, not only to recognise these various cultural and individual aspects, but also to appreciate them because they are expected to prevail in contemporary firms. In this relation, it should be noted that managers' obsession with action usually encourages them to follow functionalism as a default approach in strategising and finding work solutions. This is the actual realities of organisations changing the business environment (e.g. the industry or community), which puts a high demand on leaders and managers to go beyond the postulates functionalism and consider the complications of organisational working life (see Van Maanen, 1991; Martin, 1992; Kunda, 1992; Mathew and Ogbonna, 2009). This essentially necessitates a manager to be a 'reflexive practitioner' (see Alvesson and Deertz, 2000; Barge and Oliver, 2002; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012).

In light of this discussion, this study contributes to the increasing call for managers (particularly HR managers) to be reflexive practitioners and be responsive to the synchronous varieties of demand, ambiguity, difficulty, and conflict, and the related individual characteristics associated with such work realities. Further, this study suggests that managers should consider opposition, flux, and conflicts as valuable opportunities for better understanding, thinking, and strategising in organisations, instead of deviations requiring remedial reaction. Therefore, rather than recognising and reinforcing a single vision of cultural hegemony (which may need similar individual characteristics, and this may restrict the work creativity), organisational managers should seek ways of harnessing certain subcultures (e.g.

'juniors' and 'mums') that may lead to positive work outcomes (such as high performance, effectiveness, cooperation, etc.).

Finally, this study explains the complicated nature of the relationship between OC and IB. Accordingly, it highlights the consequence of unpredictability and context-specific aspects in such relations. This is particularly relevant in a context that is characterised by being highly attached to ancient cultural and religious traditions, and in which organisations and workers might need to reconsider some of these traditions to overcome modern economic challenges. Indeed, issues such as high level of family dependency, *Wasta*, social ranking, female working realities, etc., are all factors that suggest real challenges to managers in general and HR managers in particular, who aim to improve organisational performance in Saudi Arabian organisations.

9.4 Limitations, challenges, and future researchers

Although this study provided important insights into the relationship between OC and IB, it does have some limitations. Some were indicated previously, and so this section will summarise them and outline additional limitations and challenges. There will also be a discussion of areas of interest which might warrant further research.

One limitation concerns the choice of methodology that this study adopted. Although the selection on ethnographic approach and the research design allow for generating substantial insights, this approach also created some challenges for the researcher. Taking into consideration the nature of this approach and the complications that characterise the key concepts in this study (i.e. OC and IB), extra time and additional resources would generate more insights in the relationship between OC and IB. Nevertheless, the time pressures, the restricted resources available, and the difficulty in persuading the case organisation to allow further involvement hindered this (see Chapter 5 for further discussion on this issue).

The other limitation of the study is with respect to the framework adopted to examine the relationship between OC and IB. Although the data gathering and analysis from the three-perspective was engaging, it was also challenging to implement. While the three-perspective framework frequently reflects three extreme and contradictory conceptual positions on organisational life and IB (which was an advantage because it forced the researcher to be reflexive during the research process), this task was complicated and challenging. The researcher had to change the analytical lenses used to view the three perspectives because

some employees gave contradicting views or changed their perspectives during the period within which research was conducted. Consequently, these issues placed a high demand on analytical enquiry and the time taken to analyse aspects of ambiguity and inconsistency in an apparently 'positive' workplace, and to examine how different individuals interact and behave considering such aspects. This is important since the voices of opposition were frequently expressed subtly or cautiously, especially during the early period of data collection, because the researcher was unfamiliar with the employees.

Similarly, the coding work was also challenging due to the necessity for arranging the data into the relationship between (i) OC characteristics, (ii) individual characteristics, and (iii) IB in all the three perspectives (see Section 5.7). In general, the discrimination between the differentiation and fragmentation boundaries created obstacles on a number of occasions. This could be attributed to the fact that one of the differences between differentiation and fragmentation is that fragmentation is the exploration of differentiation in-depth (see Martin, 1992; Mathew and Ogbonna, 2009). Also, the effective and inconsistent positions on organisational values that emerged from the opposing perspectives was high. This encroached on the emotional energies of the researcher; it sometimes consumed considerable time to fully understand the existence of opposing value positions in the organisation and individual and to validate the actual accuracies of effective positions.

Another limitation of this study is the number of subcultural groups covered. This study covers four subcultural groups (five if the C5 subgroup is considered) as well as the individual characteristics that shape the behaviour of its members. Due to the limitation of time and resources available, the researcher tended to focus on the most effective subcultural groups. However, there are other interesting groups that warrant further analysis, especially in the female section. As has previously been explained, the researcher was not allowed to access the female section and engage directly with their work realities (see Section 5.6.2). This did not permit the researcher to observe alternative subgroups that some females suggested in their conversations. Also, the findings about the two female subgroups relied on the female participants descriptions and explanations of their realities. This may affect the validity of the findings; the researcher could not observe their interactions as closely as with other subgroups in this study.

Finally, taken into consideration the above discussion, the issue of researcher involvement on the research process must be examined. Although the researcher made conscious efforts to

sustain maximum objectivity and reflexivity while in the research context and analysing the study data, the researcher's familiarity with Saudi Arabian culture might present limitations. Despite the argument that familiarity with Saudi social and religious norms might make an advantage for revealing realities in this study, finding valid and alternative readings of the data, this disposition might at the same time make the researcher fail to recognise some aspects in the data that someone who is not familiar with the context might have noticed. Therefore, the researcher suggests two possible solution: (a) the researcher that studies Saudi Arabian organisations and is familiar with the Saudi context should consistently discuss the research observations and findings with those who are less familiar with the context. Indeed, this would force researchers to be more objective and reflective. (b) The researcher who is familiar with the Saudi Arabian context and would like to study Saudi Arabian organisations should involve another researcher(s) that is less familiar with the context. This might reveal more valid, reflexive, and insightful data. According to these points, this study encourages conducting further research that could reveal alternative observations and findings.

In short, it should be acknowledged that the iterative process of qualitative research is the outcome of the researcher's explanation of the organisational and social realities. Accordingly, the question of whether it is valid explanation of the organisational or social realities or whether this is only the explanation of the researcher would be debatable, and remains a perennial point of contention in qualitative research (see Smircich, 1993b; Martin, 2002; Mathew and Ogbonna, 2009; Alvesson, 2013). Based on the discussion developed in this section, the following points are suggested for further research:

- Taking into consideration the culture-behavior conceptualisation in this study, further research could be conducted in other organisations to validate the individual characteristics that this study suggests drives the attitudes and behaviour of employees. In this regard, the researcher intends to conduct a further study that explores how the same participants interact in different organisations. It is questionable that their interaction would remain the same. For example, the findings suggest that those who show high enthusiasm for progressing their careers and have previous work experience, are more tolerant and supportive of the OC. Therefore, it is debatable whether their interaction would change in other organisations. Similarly, the findings reveal that those who have not had previous work experience lack competence in analysing the realities of work conditions, which can lead them to react

haphazardly in certain work realities. Thus, an examination of their reaction in another work environment might be profitable.

- Given that this study had limited access to the female workplace and considering the existing challenges that female employees face (which most likely create work problems for both female employees and managers), further research is recommended to validate problems and provide solutions for overcoming them. In the same vein, it is highly recommended for seeking effective solutions to recognise the difference between the social norms which are amenable to control or change, and the Islam traditions that cannot be changed, or are hard to do so.
- Relative to the last point, further research is recommended to identify alternative Saudi female subgroups and understand their characteristics. This would reveal findings that might help to understand the characteristics that form in such subgroups, and to predict their behaviour. Also, this would enable managers to create the most effective support systems and to guarantee a business focused solution.
- Given that similar studies on culture-behaviour relations neglect examining the aspect of “fragmentations” in their research analysis, and considering the limitations of the present study, the relationship between OC and IB from a FP warrants further research. This is the study could not explore more individuals whose behaviour and views may be approximated to “fragmentation”.
- The study findings indicate that Saudi Arabian organisations follow two different management approaches, Western and Eastern. From this unique situation emerge some interesting points: (a) examining the validity of hybrid management approaches (e.g. the positive and negative aspects), (b) how such an approach contributes to forming the OC and influencing the IB (especially since the study indicates that those who are highly influenced by Western culture provide contradicting views and behaviour (e.g. Reem), and those who maintain balance between the two approaches appear more effective (e.g. Faisal)).

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Some recommendations and steps that may help researchers to complete the data collection⁵⁰.

Stage	Recommendation	Avoid
Arranging access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding the most suitable organisation(s) that suites the research purpose and negotiating access with them should begin as soon as possible. Ethics approval should be thought about at the beginning of the research. Reading about the organisation and the background of its members provides a basic – and essential – start to engage with participants. Network connections (if possible) are very helpful for gaining access in a short time. Preparing to explain the aim(s) of the research and why it is important is critical for the organisation viewing them and to give access based on them. It is essential for the researcher to create a win-win scenario to encourage the organisation to grant access to the researcher. The researcher should be ready to accept and evaluate the requests of the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepting all the organisation's conditions may secure access; however, it may do harm more than good. Also, rejecting all the organisation's conditions would not be realistic. Making promises that are impossible to achieve may put the researcher in a critical situation. Also, it may reduce the chances of other researchers to have access opportunity in the future.
Data collection	Interview	
	<i>Arranging the interview</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The researcher should find the most suitable way to introduce themselves and the topic of their research to make it easy for participants to understand. Providing opportunities to let participants talk about themselves creates a better chance for participants to accept an interview. When participants show strong hesitation to participate in an interview, it is better to ask them to think about it and call if they are ready. Changing the word 'interview' to 'discussion' makes the participants less concerned about taking part. Asking the participants about the place that they want to conduct the interview is very useful in making them feel comfortable and able to talk freely. Having discussions with the participants in formal meetings or informal gatherings makes the researcher familiar to them. Hence, when participants are asked to give an interview, this makes them more open to accepting. Ensuring that recording the interview is optional and that participants can ask for it to be deleted at any time may increase trust in the researcher and may make participants more open to the interview questions. 	
	<i>During the interview</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thanking the participant at the beginning of the interview and showing that their participation is essential for accomplishing the research aims may help in making them more open to the research questions. Recording the interview provides a good opportunity for the researcher to focus on the process of the interview. Using a familiar device (e.g. a mobile phone) to record the interview may make participants less concerned about recording the interview and encourage them to speak normally about the research concerns. Managing time is fundamental to a successful interview that covers different aspects of the researcher's concerns, especially with managers. 	
	<i>After the interview</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking participants if they want to talk about other issues or cover areas that the researcher has not covered can sometimes lead to interesting points. Also, asking participants to recommend other participants that have similar or different views is found to be useful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pushing participants to give an interview may not encourage them to cooperate. Introducing the research topic and aims in pure academic terms may be difficult for participants to understand and, thus, deter them from giving the interview. Using an 'obvious' recording device or making it visible to participants (like putting it on the table) may make them more concerned about the issues discussed. Using unprotected device to conduct interviews can be very dangerous to the participants' privacy. Mentioning other employees' views consistently may make them feel that they are critical of their views; and therefore, not make them speak freely.

⁵⁰ The point incused in this table were inspired by the researcher experience as well the different aseismic researches and qualitative methodology reviews (most importantly Smircich, 1983b; Kunda, 1992; Martin, 1992; Van Maanen, 1979a, 1979b, 1979c ; Harris and Ogbonna, 1998; Mathew, 2008; Schein, 2010; Bryman and Bell, 2011; Alvesson, 2013, 2016; Yin, 2014, 2015).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arranging and summarising the interview notes directly is good to improve the quality of the data. • Listening to the interview may assist in improving the data collection process. • Transcribing the interview as soon as possible is recommended for saving time. 	
	Documents analysis	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The volume of the documents is a common issue for most of researchers. However, archiving the documents in a way that makes the researcher remember their content is very useful. • The researcher should make key points that summarise the content of each document. • Using a password-protected hard disk, or USB flash drive to store soft copy documents benefits by carrying fewer documents. 	
	Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answering participant questions may make the researcher judgmental and may not make the participant cooperate with the researcher.

Appendix 2: Information consent form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

(The Relationship between Organisational Culture and Individual Behaviour in Saudi Arabia)



PhD Researcher: Meshal Aldhobaib,

Cardiff Business School, Cardiff University

I have been given information about this research project that aims to explore how people of the organisation (in the Saudi Arabian context) interact with the organisation culture and observes what are the consequences of this interaction are on individual behaviour. I also have discussed the research project with Meshal Aldhobaib who is conducting this research as part of a PhD in the department of Management Employment and Organisation at Cardiff Business School.

I understand that my participation in this study will involve one or more interviews; each interview may take approximately one hour.

I understand that participation in this study is entirely voluntary and I am free to refuse to participate and I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.

I understand that I am free to ask any questions at any time. If for any reason I have second thoughts about my participation in this project, I am free to withdraw or discuss my concerns with the student's supervisor Prof. Emmanuel Ogbonna (Email: Ogbonna@cardiff.ac.uk)

I understand that the information provided by me will be held confidentially and securely, such that only the researcher can trace this information back to me individually. The information will be retained for up to three years and will then be anonymised, deleted or destroyed.

By being part of the research I am indicating my consent to for data to be used for the purpose of analysis for a PhD thesis and potential academic journal publication and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

I understand that if I withdraw my consent I can ask for the information I have provided to be anonymised/deleted/destroyed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Date

Appendix 3: Ethical approval

ETHICS 2



FULL ETHICAL APPROVAL FORM (STAFF/PHD STUDENTS) or students referring their form for a full ethical review

(For guidance on how to complete this form, please see Learning Central – CARBS RESEARCH ETHICS)

If your research will involve patients or patient data in the NHS then you should secure approval from the NHS National Research Ethics Service. Online applications are available on <http://www.nres.npsa.nhs.uk/applicants/>

NB: Safety Guidelines for researchers working alone on projects – please go to this University's web link to learn about safety policies - <http://www.cf.ac.uk/osheu/index.html>

Name of Lead Researcher : Meshal Aldhobaib

School: CARBS

Email: Aldhobaibma@Cardiff.ac.uk

Names of other Researchers:

Email addresses of other Researchers :

Title of Project:

The Relationship between Organizational Culture and Individual Behaviour in Saudi Arabia

Start and Estimated End Date of Project:

April 2015 and September 2015

Aims and Objectives of the Research Project:

Exploring how individuals interact with the organizational culture and what the consequences of this interaction are on their behaviour.

Please indicate any sources of funding for this project:

Ministry of Higher Education in KSA

APPLICATION APPROVED
Research Ethics Committee
Cardiff Business School
Cardiff University

1. Describe the methodology to be applied in the project

The methodology that this thesis will apply is qualitative, utilising a case study design. This study will conduct an in-depth investigation of how people interact with the aspects of the organizational culture and what are the consequences of these aspects are on their behaviour. The data collection methods will include: (a) interview, (b) documents analysis and (c) observation. This study succeeded to secure full access to a Saudi organization, which provides the researcher a great opportunity to observe closely the reality of the organizational life. In terms of the interview, it will be mainly semi-structured interview (see the questions list attached) and will be with employees from different levels of the organization. The additional sources of information (i.e. documents) will be obtained from internal sources (e.g. annual reports) and external sources (e.g. newspaper reports of the organization). The analysis of documents is considered essential for this study to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the case.

ETHICS 2

PLEASE ATTACH COPIES OF QUESTIONNAIRES OR INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDES TO THIS APPLICATION

2. Describe the participant sample who will be contacted for this Research Project. You need to consider the number of participants, their age, gender, recruitment methods and exclusion/inclusion criteria

The participant of this study will be only the members of the organization (this includes employees from different levels, functions departments and positions). The number of interviews is estimated to be between 45 and 70. The number of interviews with each participant may vary from one department to another; depending on the criticality of the personnel in relation to the project under study. Furthermore, the age of the participants may also vary; however, none will be under 18, as this is the minimum employment age in Saudi. The organization has males and females; nevertheless, most participants are estimated to be males. Finally, only participants willing to be involved in the study will form part of the overall thesis.

3. Describe the method by which you intend to gain consent from participants.

As mentioned previously, this research has obtained an agreement from a Saudi organization to conduct a case study in. Hence, consistent with the policy of the ethical committee, this study will apply the following methods to gain consent from participant:

- Full consent will be gained from all actors participant in this research.
- All participants will be free to decline to be interviewed, if they wish to.
- No covert research will be undertaken.
- A consent form will be utilized (see the attached document).
- Written request for participants will initially be sent stating an initial outline of the study and identifying the researcher and asking for meeting to explain more fully what the research entails and provide an opportunity for participants to pose any questions.
- Full contact details of the research and the supervisors will be provided, as well as the procedure of the approval form.
- The study will protect anonymity of the participants, and the right to withdraw from the research project will be informed and kept at all time.

PLEASE ATTACH A COPY OF ALL INFORMATION WHICH WILL BE GIVEN TO PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANTS (including invitation letter, briefing documents and, if appropriate, the consent form you will be using).

4. Please make a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with them throughout the duration of the project (please use additional sheets where necessary)

With taking into consideration that this research will make sure to not take any step that may cross major ethical boundaries, the essentiality of preserve data anonymity and confidentiality of all participants will be at the top priority of this research. Hence, a careful strategy will be followed to ensure this issue. For instance, this study will use pseudonyms in all verbal and written documentation, and also will take other methodological researchers experience (such as presented in Bryman and Bell, 2011) into consideration.

Bryman, A. and Bell, E. 2011. Business research methods. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

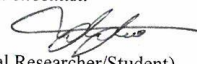
Please complete the following in relation to your research project:

		Yes	No	n/a
5				
(a)	Will you describe the main details of the research process to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b)	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c)	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d)	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e)	If you are using a questionnaire, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(f)	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(g)	Will you offer to send participants findings from the research (e.g. copies of publications arising from the research)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(h)	If working with children and young people please confirm that you have visited this website : Working with children and young people and vulnerable adults please go to web link - http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/racdv/ethics/guidelines/index.html	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(i)	DATA PROTECTION: (A) Will any non-anonymised and/or personalised data be generated? (B) If "YES" will it be stored beyond the end of the project/archived? http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsi/research/researchethics/destructionofdata/index.html	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PLEASE NOTE:

If you have ticked No to any of 5(a) to 5(g), please give an explanation on a separate sheet.
(Note: N/A = not applicable)

If there are any other potential ethical issues that you think SREC should consider please explain them on a separate sheet. It is your obligation to bring to the attention of the Committee any ethical issues not covered on this form and checklist.

Signed: 
(Principal Researcher/Student)

Print Name: MESHAL ALDHOB AIB

Date: 02-03-15

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION (Student researchers only): As the supervisor for this student project I confirm that I believe that all research ethical issues have been dealt with in accordance with University policy and the research ethics guidelines of the relevant professional organisation.

Signed: 

Print Name: Professor Emmanuel Ogburn

Date: 2/3/15

TWO copies of this form (and attachments) MUST BE OFFICIALLY STAMPED by
Ms Lainey Clayton, Room F43, Cardiff Business School BEFORE any research project work is undertaken

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

This project has been considered using agreed School procedures and is now approved.

Official stamp of approval of the School
Research Ethics Committee:

Date:

23/3/2015

APPLICATION APPROVED
Research Ethics Committee
Cardiff Business School
Cardiff University

ETHICS 2

Interview questions list:

No	Questions
1	Could you tell me how long you been working in this organization and what is your position today?
2	Could you give me a description of your workplace? How did it start? Who established it? And if there any stories that are worth telling?
3	How would you describe the organization to an outsider? What factors do you think differentiate this organization from other organizations? What would you say is special to this organization and why?
4	If you were asked about the most important issues (i.e. values, beliefs and underlying assumptions) that your organization care about what they will be? What do you think of them? Has those aspects changed your way of thinking or doing your job? And is everyone aware of them?
5	How do new employees learn what to do in the organization? How do you ensure that the norms and values of the organization are considered?
6	If you were asked about the acts of your manager and the high level managers, do they say something and do something else? Why?
6	Is there special ceremonies or rites that are celebrated by the employees of your organization? When were the last ones? What do they involve and what is the purpose of making them?
7	Are there special phrases that are frequently repeated by your colleges or the managers of this organization? What are the most repeated ones?
8	Could you tell me about the main achievements of this organization? Which one do you consider to be the most significant and why?
9	Do you think that your organization has subcultures (i.e. groups)? Tell me about the different groups in the organization. How do you describe/ classify them? Which group do you think has the stronger attachment to others and to the organization and why?
10	What do employees do if there are not happy about the organization norms and values? Can you describe the reason(s) behind this (e.g. conflicted with their own values or assumptions)?
11	Has the culture of your organization effected your relationship with your colleagues? How?
12	Are there unwritten rules agreed among employees (rules of thumb) that may determine what is right and what is wrong?
13	Would you describe the reward system of your organization? What is based on? And what do you feel about it?
14	Do you find the rules and regulations of the organization are (or felt to be) fair?