

## THE PREPAREDNESS OF SAUDI UNIVERSITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE TRIMESTER SYSTEM: A FORECAST STUDY FROM FACULTY MEMBERS PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

The goal of this study was to determine the level of readiness required for Saudi universities to operate under the trimester system. Due to its applicability to the study's topic, the researcher used the descriptive-analytical approach to address the study's questions. The questionnaire was the major tool used to gather data in order to meet the study's objectives. The questionnaire consisted of 21 items divided into 3 axes, and the study community included all faculty members at some universities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in the academic year 2022 (1443-1444AH). There were 359 academic members in the study sample. The study produced several results, the most important of which are (1) the highest level of readiness to work in the trimester system was with technical preparations, with a rating of 80.67%, (2) Saudi universities are only medially prepared to work in the trimester system, at 77.33%, and (3) Saudi universities in the category of administrative concerns received the lowest score. With a rating of 75.67%, they were just minimally prepared.

### Introduction

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Education (MOE) has announced that the new academic calendar for 2022–2023 will have three terms rather than two, with each term lasting 13 weeks. The country currently uses a two-semester system that lasts between 15 and 17 weeks. Because the Kingdom is performing poorly on international education assessments, the MOE came to the conclusion that the two-semester educational system needed revision. Comparisons with educationally advanced nations reveal one issue: the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's educational system lags behind advanced nations in terms of the actual number of days spent in the classroom. The transition to a trimester system is the first phase of reorganizing the educational system, which aims to increase system efficiency, enhance educational resources, and assist students in achieving their academic and professional objectives.

The trimester system academic calendar includes study plans consistent with curriculum development and modification. Trimesters are almost 12 weeks long per term; however, the advantages of this system include light scheduling or timetabling, getting out of unenjoyable classes sooner, light course load, and two graduation dates each year. On the other hand, the drawbacks of having three terms in an academic year include faster

Manuscrito recibido: 06/10/2023

Manuscrito aceptado: 20/10/2023

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paced learning and shorter breaks. Despite these drawbacks, it is important to note that under the two-semester system, students must sit through 15 weeks of the same classes (Cromwelle, 2022)

This study explores how faculty at five universities - King Faisal University, King Saud University, University of Jeddah, University of Tabuk, and King Khalid University - view the new trimester system and what impact it will have on the educational system (MOE, Saudi Arabia, 2016).

### Study objectives

1. To assess the degree to which Saudi Arabian professors are ready to start a trimester schedule.
2. To evaluate the preparedness of human resources in Saudi Arabian universities to commence a trimester schedule from the perspectives of faculty members.
3. To assess the technical preparedness of Saudi Arabian universities to commence a trimester schedule.

### Study problem

The Saudi two-semester academic year has shorter study days than other countries. Fewer study days is attributed to why students from the Kingdom score low on international tests. To address these issues, the MOE announced its intention to switch Saudi institutions from a two-semester to a trimester system. The readiness of universities in Saudi Arabia to use the trimester system, however, has not been determined by any study. This research explores the preparedness to implement the trimester system from the point of view of faculty at five universities – King Faisal University, King Saud University, University of Jeddah, University of Tabuk and King Khalid University.

### Study terminology

*University faculty members / academic staff:* All teaching staff of the five universities.

*Trimester:* Three semesters per academic year, lasting from 12 to 13 weeks,

*Sample:* Three hundred seventy-five academic members from five Saudi Arabia universities (King Faisal University, King Saud University, University of Jeddah, University of Tabuk and King Khalid University) selected randomly from all faculties.

*Data collection:* A self-administered questionnaire was sent via Google to 359 randomly selected academic member in the five universities, 52 participants from King Faisal University, 165 participants from King Saud University, 31 from University of Jeddah, 36 from University of Tabuk, and 75 from King Khalid University.

*The questionnaire:* It has 3 sections and a 3-point Likert scale survey: Agree, Neutral, Disagree. Participants are asked to choose the option as per their expectations of preparedness prior to launching the trimester system. The researcher chose a 3-point Likert scale because it is easy for academics to decide if they like, dislike or are neutral; it minimizes their misperceptions; and it is easy to assess the quantitative data of the survey.

### Study Questions

The overarching research question was "What is the preparedness of universities in Saudi Arabia to commence a trimester schedule?" Sub-questions that guided the study are:

1. How equipped are Saudi Arabian university administration to commence a trimester schedule?
2. How prepared are the human resources in Saudi Arabian universities to start a trimester schedule from the viewpoint of the faculty members?
3. How technically ready are Saudi institutions to start a trimester schedule?

### Literature review

The Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education (MOE) announced in 2021 that the traditional two-semester system in higher education institutions would be replaced with a trimester system. In line with the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030, it also aims to accomplish a number of present and long-term objectives that will directly contribute to the advancement and expansion of the Kingdom's educational system. As soon as this announcement was made, stakeholders flooded social media with inquiries. Which system is superior is arguably the question that is asked the most. A two-semester system with 15-17-week lengths, or a three-semester system with 12-13 week lengths?

In a study done at a university in Houston, Texas, twenty-four students and eight professors were questioned to determine the major variables that affect

course load recommendations and selection. Data was gathered, and then utilizing reconstructive analysis, low- and high-level coding procedures were used to analyze it. According to the findings, there are three main categories into which the elements influencing a student's decision-making fall: (1) academic performance, (2) financial factors and other costs, and (3) advising experiences. Academic instructors concurred that full-time enrollment is crucial for student success and stressed the significance of earning a degree within a set time, but they felt that many students lacked the necessary academic background or had too many other commitments to enroll in 15 credits per semester (McKinney, 2022).

In terms of education, the trimester system is preferable than the two-semester approach. Since there are three in a single academic year, the trimester term is compelled to be shorter. There are two lengthier terms in the two-semester system; however, the shorter, faster-paced trimester system is unlikely to bore a student. Furthermore, since many students attend classes during the summer term, the school's facilities are utilized practically year-round. After the second term of a two-semester university, there are typically two and a half months of summer break. The trimester method is more energy-efficient and cost-effective than the two-semester approach since power is used continuously throughout the year. Vicki (1996) also pointed out that the trimester system gives students the chance to go to school all year long. It provides full-year opportunities for students who need to finish school sooner, whereas the two-semester system calls for a protracted summer break.

The question of which is better a trimester or two-semester system was raised early in the 1960s as Dr. Grayson Kirk, president of Columbia University and an advocate of the trimester plan, says: "Four years in some adolescent playpens that are called centers of learning may be a pleasant interlude for young people, but it is a luxury they, their parents, the colleges, and the country can no longer afford." Dr. Grayson Kirk added "Trimester system saves money because it makes more efficient use of resources and it also benefits students by permitting them to get four years of college, thus enabling them to begin their careers earlier". Proponents of trimester system also say that faculty will like it because it gives professors a choice of teaching three semesters at higher pay or teaching only two and reserving the other for research (Alcade, 2022).

The trimester system has some benefits, including the ability for students to enroll in more classes and change their specialties with ease, as well as the ability to raise their cumulative score averages due to the increase in the number of hours assigned for the trimester system (180 hours, compared to 120 hours in the two-semester system). In the same vein, according to the findings of a study that examined university students' opinions on the trimester system, the system helps students focus more intently on their studies and raises their level of knowledge (Sy & Castillo, 2012). Despite these benefits, it is acknowledged that the trimester system, is demanding. Summer break is condensed in the trimester system as opposed to the two-semester approach. The possibility of summer employment may be limited by the shorter period, burdening students financially and impeding the acquisition of crucial skills for future employment. Furthermore, students who wish to transfer to a different university that uses the two-semester system or vice versa may find it challenging due to the distinct semester systems. This may make it challenging to benefit from exchange programs.

According to a study by the Prince Sultan University Ithraa Center, faculty members have more tenure while using the trimester method. Faculty teach for 32 weeks a year under the two-semester system; under the trimester system, that number rises to 39 weeks, necessitating increased professor salary. In Saudi Arabia, a significant portion of the professors are foreign-born. Due to the trimester arrangement, fewer vacation days at the conclusion of the academic year may affect staff retention. Also, due to the increased number of study days under the trimester system, university expenses for things like power, water, and maintenance could go up. However, it is imperative to note that the decision to use a two- or three-semester system is often made by the university in accordance with its resources and environment (Ithraa Center, 2021).

In a university that was not performing well in comparison with similar institutions, university leaders attempted to move from a two-semester schedule to a trimester one in hopes of improving student and faculty performance. A study of the perspectives of 11 university professors during the transitioning process was done, and the results showed that the professors believed they were underprepared for the switch to the trimester system. Additionally, they thought that the trimester structure hindered the growth of relationships with students. Although the faculty felt that there was significant staff collaboration under both schedules, they mentioned that there is a detrimental effect when faculty are not included in the planning and training for the transition (Showell & Brown, 2018).

**Study methodology**

This section describes the methodology and population of the study, as well

as the study sample, how the questionnaire was created and validated, the actions that were taken during the investigation, and the statistical techniques and tools that were employed to evaluate the data and derive the conclusions. The descriptive-analytical strategy was used by the researcher, and this is defined as the method that researchers rely on to gather adequate and accurate information that depicts the social reality and contributes to the interpretation of its phenomena (Darwish, 2018).

**Study population**

The study population consisted of 16,402 faculty from five universities (see Table 1) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in the academic year 2022-2023.

**The study sample**

**Pilot Sample:** For the pilot sample, 30 responses were randomly selected, and the study tool was applied to measure the tool's validity and reliability. This sample was excluded when applying the actual study.

**Actual study sample:** The stratified random sampling technique was utilized to choose the study sample, and the Steven Thompson equation was used to determine the sample size from the research's initial population.

$$n = \frac{N \times p(1-p)}{[(N-1) \times (d^2 + Z^2)] + p(1-p)}$$

n = sample size

N = community size

Z = the standard score corresponding to the significance level 0.95 and equal to 1.96

d = error rate equal to 0.05

p = feature availability and neutrality = 0.50

The study sample's variable distribution included the distribution of the participants' personal information, such as their educational qualification, years of service, gender, college, and university. Table 2 lists the characteristics of the study sample.

**The study tool**

The questionnaire was the major tool the researcher utilized to gather data in order to accomplish the study's goals. The questionnaire is "one of the widely used practical research methods to obtain data or information related to participants' conditions, tendencies, or attitudes, and it consists of a form containing a set of items that the participants answer, without the help or interference of anyone" (Khalifat, 2019, p. 154). The questionnaire contained 21 items divided into 3 axes (see Table 3).

The researcher employed the Likert Triangular Scale to measure participants' responses to the questionnaire items (see Table 4).

**The validity of the questionnaire**

**Internal consistency validity:** Through pilot testing consisting of 30 responses, the questionnaire's internal consistency was confirmed. The Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated between the score of each item and the total scores of the axes to which they belong. Tables 5, 6 and 7 indicate that the correlation is statistically significant at the level of significance  $\alpha = 0.05$ , this indicates the items of these axes are true to what they were designed to measure.

**Structural validity**

Structural validity measures the degree to which the scores of an instrument are an adequate reflection of the dimensionality of the construct to be measured (Table 8).

It is noted in Table 8 that the correlation coefficients between each axis of the questionnaire and the total score of the questionnaire are statistically significant at the level of significance ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) for all axes of the questionnaire, and the correlation coefficients ranged from (0.89-0.95). This indicates the

**Table 1:** Distribution of the study population according to the university in which they work.

| The University         | No. of Faculty | Percentage |
|------------------------|----------------|------------|
| King Faisal University | 2215           | 13.50      |
| King Khalid University | 7394           | 45.08      |
| King Saud University   | 1521           | 9.27       |
| University of Tabuk    | 1762           | 10.74      |
| University of Jeddah   | 3510           | 21.40      |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>16402</b>   | <b>100</b> |

**Table 2:** Distribution of the study sample according to the study variables.

| Variable            | Categories                | No. of Faculty | Percentage  |
|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Qualification       | BA                        | 54             | 15.04       |
|                     | Master                    | 106            | 29.53       |
|                     | PhD                       | 199            | 55.43       |
|                     | <b>Total</b>              | <b>359</b>     | <b>100%</b> |
| Years of experience | less than 3-5             | 55             | 15.32       |
|                     | between 6-10              | 94             | 26.18       |
|                     | 11 and more               | 210            | 58.50       |
|                     | <b>Total</b>              | <b>359</b>     | <b>100%</b> |
| Sex                 | Male                      | 113            | 31.48       |
|                     | Female                    | 246            | 68.52       |
|                     | <b>Total</b>              | <b>359</b>     | <b>100%</b> |
| The faculty         | Education                 | 112            | 31.20       |
|                     | Science                   | 133            | 37.04       |
|                     | Languages and translation | 56             | 15.60       |
|                     | Public health             | 14             | 3.90        |
|                     | Medical Sciences          | 21             | 5.85        |
|                     | Arts                      | 10             | 2.79        |
|                     | Design                    | 13             | 3.62        |
|                     | <b>Total</b>              | <b>359</b>     | <b>100%</b> |
| University          | King Faisal University    | 52             | 14.48       |
|                     | King Khalid University    | 75             | 20.89       |
|                     | King Saud University      | 165            | 45.96       |
|                     | University of Tabuk       | 36             | 10.03       |
|                     | University of Jeddah      | 31             | 8.64        |
|                     | <b>The total</b>          | <b>359</b>     | <b>100%</b> |

**Table 3:** Distribution of the questionnaire items to the axis.

| No. | The axes                    | Number of items |
|-----|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| 1   | Administrative preparedness | 7               |
| 2   | Faculty preparedness        | 7               |
| 3   | Technical preparedness      | 7               |
|     | <b>Total</b>                | <b>21</b>       |

**Table 4:** Likert triangular scale.

| Response | Agree | Neutral | Disagree |
|----------|-------|---------|----------|
| Score    | 1     | 2       | 3        |

**Table 5:** Pearson's correlation coefficient for faculty preparedness.

| No. | Item   | Pearson Correlation Coefficient | P Value Sig |
|-----|--|---------------------------------|-------------|
| 1   | The university has set an annual plan suitable for teaching the trimester.   | 0.72                            | 0.00        |
| 2   | The university approved its financial budget according to the trimester system.  | 0.65                            | 0.00        |
| 3   | The university has formed a committee to follow up trimester quality control system.   | 0.63                            | 0.00        |
| 4   | The university has developed its policy to suit the trimester system.  | 0.81                            | 0.00        |
| 5   | The university administration spreads awareness among students and faculty members about the importance of shifting to trimester system. | 0.76                            | 0.00        |
| 6   | The university develops electronic systems to suit the trimester system.   | 0.81                            | 0.00        |
| 7   | The university has developed a plan to train the staff to apply the trimester system.  | 0.83                            | 0.00        |

**Table 6:** Pearson's correlation coefficient for human resources preparedness.

| No. | Item   | Pearson Correlation Coefficient | P value Sig |
|-----|--|---------------------------------|-------------|
| 1   | The university trained its staff on the mechanisms of applying the trimester system  | 0.85                            | 0.00        |
| 2   | The university prepares students for integration into the trimester system   | 0.85                            | 0.00        |
| 3   | The university has formed working teams in faculties and departments to facilitate the application of the trimester system | 0.81                            | 0.00        |
| 4   | The university organized annual vacations of the administrative bodies in accordance with the trimester system             | 0.79                            | 0.00        |
| 5   | The university involves academic members in the preparedness for implementation of the trimester system                    | 0.88                            | 0.00        |
| 6   | The university motivates the academic members and students to start implementing the new system                            | 0.82                            | 0.00        |
| 7   | The university cooperates with all relevant members of society and the trimester system                                    | 0.86                            | 0.00        |

questionnaire axes are true to what they were developed to measure.

### Questionnaire reliability

Reliability indicates the consistency of the results, meaning if you repeat the measurement, you get the same results. In most cases it is a correlation coefficient, and there are several ways to measure it, the most common of which are the Cronbach's alpha method and the method of splitting the scale into two halves (Al-Wadi & Al-Zoubi, 2011). For this study, the researcher used Cronbach's alpha, which is the most popular method for measuring the reliability of a tool.

It is noted in Table 9 that Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all questionnaire axes is more than (0.87). This indicates a high reliability for all axes as well as the questionnaire in general.

After the researcher confirmed the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, and after making the necessary modifications, the questionnaire was published in its final form (see study appendix). This gave the researcher confidence that the questionnaire would help the study reach its goals.

### Statistical tests used in the study

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following statistical methods were used:

1. Frequencies, percentages, arithmetic averages, and standard deviations were used to understand the characteristics of the sample and the level of prevalence of the phenomenon the study sampled.
2. One sample t-test to gauge respondents' opinion of the topic under study.
3. The Pearson correlation coefficient, which assessed the degree of correlation between two variables. It was also used to calculate internal consistency and structural validity.

### Study results and discussion

To determine how ready Saudi universities are to adopt the trimester system, this session presents the study's findings. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to extract the research results. Specific statistical procedures were employed for data collected from the study instrument.

### The criteria adopted in the study

To determine the criteria adopted in the study, the researcher referred to the educational literature on scales, as well as some previous studies that relied on the same triangular scale to determine the level of response. The length of cells was determined in the triangular Likert scale by calculating the range between the scale degrees (3 - 1 = 2), and then dividing it by the largest value in the scale to get the length of the cell (2 ÷ 3 = 0.67). This value was added to the lowest value in the scale (the beginning of the scale is score 1) to determine

**Table 7:** Pearson's correlation coefficient for technical preparedness.

| No. | Item   | Pearson Correlation Coefficient | P value Sig |
|-----|--|---------------------------------|-------------|
| 1   | The university has redistributed the course study plans to fit the trimester system  | 0.66                            | 0.00        |
| 2   | The university developed curriculum to start implementing the trimester system   | 0.77                            | 0.00        |
| 3   | The university held workshops with academic members to develop mechanisms for implementing courses according to the trimester system       | 0.86                            | 0.00        |
| 4   | The university organized work in the scientific laboratories to fit the trimester system   | 0.87                            | 0.00        |
| 5   | The university has reorganized virtual classrooms to fit the trimester system  | 0.91                            | 0.00        |
| 6   | The university cooperated with local community institutions to implement practical training for students according to the trimester system | 0.90                            | 0.00        |
| 7   | The university has developed a student assessment system to fit the trimester system   | 0.84                            | 0.00        |

**Table 8:** Correlation coefficients between each axis of the questionnaire and the total score of the questionnaire.

| No. | Item                         | Pearson Correlation Coefficient | P value Sig |
|-----|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| 1   | Faculty preparedness         | 0.89                            | 0.00        |
| 2   | Human resources preparedness | 0.95                            | 0.00        |
| 3   | Technical preparedness       | 0.93                            | 0.00        |

**Table 9:** Cronbach's alpha coefficient for measuring the reliability of questionnaire.

| No. | The axes   | No. of items | Cronbach's alpha coefficient |
|-----|--|--------------|------------------------------|
| 1   | The first axis: Administrative preparedness axis | 7            | 0.87                         |
| 2   | The second axis:(human resources preparedness)   | 7            | 0.93                         |
| 3   | The third axis: Technical preparedness           | 7            | 0.93                         |
|     | Total  | 21           | 0.96                         |

**Table 10:** The approved criteria for the study.

| Cell length | Corresponding relative weight | Assessment |
|-------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| 1-1.76      | 3.33%- 55.67%                 | Low        |
| 1.76 -2.34  | 55.67 – 78.00%                | Medium     |
| 2.34 -3     | 78.00% - 55.67                | High       |

**Table 11:** Questionnaire axis analysis: Arithmetic mean, standard deviation, relative mean, test value, and probability value Significance for all items of the questionnaire (N=359).

| No. | The axis  | Mean        | S.D.        | Relative mean | t test value | P value Sig | Rank | Assessment |
|-----|---|-------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|------|------------|
| 1   | The first axis: Administrative preparedness     | 2.27        | 0.58        | 75.67%        | 9.02         | 0.00        | 3    | Medium     |
| 2   | The second axis: (human resources preparedness) | 2.28        | 0.66        | 76.00%        | 8.20         | 0.00        | 2    | Medium     |
| 3   | The third axis: Technical preparedness          | 2.42        | 0.62        | 80.67%        | 13.16        | 0.00        | 1    | High       |
|     | Total   | <b>2.32</b> | <b>0.58</b> | <b>77.33%</b> | <b>10.91</b> | <b>0.00</b> |      | Medium     |

the upper limit of this cell and thus the length of the cells as shown in Table 10.

To detect the hypothesis formed, the probability value significance was calculated and compared with the error value  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The participants' opinion is fundamentally different from the medium score and thus has formed an opinion about the practices to be studied.

**What is the preparedness of universities in Saudi Arabia to commence the trimester schedule?**

To answer this question, the score of all questions was analyzed according to the test adopted in the study, and the results were as follows:

It is noted in Table 11 that the questionnaire is statistically significant according to the criteria adopted in the study, and the arithmetic mean of the questionnaire as a whole was (2.32), standard deviation (0.58), relative weight (77.33%), and a medium degree of practice. The total trimester came with a medium score, with a rate of 77.33%.

Furthermore, the third axis came in first place: Technical preparedness, with an arithmetic mean (2.42), a standard deviation (0.62), a relative weight (80.67%), and a high degree of practice. The first axis scored lowest - faculty preparedness, with an arithmetic mean (2.27), a standard deviation (0.58), a relative weight (75.67%), and a medium degree of practice.

**What is the degree of administrative preparedness for Saudi universities to commence the trimester system?**

To answer this question, the first axis was analyzed according to the test adopted in the study, and the results were as follows:

It is noted in Table 12 that the first axis is statistically significant according to the criteria adopted in the study. The arithmetic mean of the axis as a whole was (2.27), a standard deviation (0.58), a relative weight (75.67%), and a medium degree of practice. This means that the study sample shows administrative preparedness in Saudi universities to adopt the three-season system is a medium degree, with a rate of 75.67%.

Item No. 3 came in first place, which states "The university has formed a committee to follow-up trimester quality control system." With an arithmetic mean (2.44), a standard deviation (0.71), and a relative weight (81.33%), and with great practice.

Items 5 and 7 score low, and state respectively "The university administration spreads awareness among students and faculty members about the importance of shifting to a trimester system." "The university has developed a plan to train staff to adopt the trimester system", with a mean (2.14), a standard deviation (0.84), a relative weight (71.33%), and a medium practice score.

**What is the degree of preparedness of human resources in Saudi Arabian universities to commence a trimester schedule from the faculty members perspective?**

To answer this question, the items of the second axis were analyzed according to the test adopted in the study, and the results were:

It is noted in Table 13 that the second axis is statistically significant according to the test adopted in the study, and the arithmetic mean of the axis as a whole was (2.28), a standard deviation (0.66), a relative weight (76.00%), and a medium degree of practice. This means the degree of staff preparedness

**Table 12:** Analysis of the items of the first axis (Administrative preparedness, N=359).

| No.          | Item  | Mean        | Standard deviation | Relative mean | Teat value  | P Value Sig | Rank | Assessment |
|--------------|---|-------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|------|------------|
| 1            | The university has set an annual plan suitable for teaching the trimester.  | 2.31        | 0.80               | 77.00%        | 7.48        | 0.00        | 3    | Medium     |
| 2            | The university approved its financial budget according to the trimester system.   | 2.38        | 0.63               | 79.33%        | 11.79       | 0.00        | 2    | High       |
| 3            | The university has formed a committee to follow-up the trimester quality control system.  | 2.44        | 0.71               | 81.33%        | 12.01       | 0.00        | 1    | High       |
| 4            | The university has developed its policy to suit the trimester system.   | 2.24        | 0.81               | 74.67%        | 5.67        | 0.00        | 4    | Medium     |
| 5            | The university administration promotes awareness among students and faculty members about the importance of shifting to the trimester system. | 2.14        | 0.90               | 71.33%        | 3.05        | 0.00        | 6    | Medium     |
| 6            | The university develops electronic systems to suit the trimester system.  | 2.24        | 0.74               | 74.67%        | 6.35        | 0.00        | 4    | Medium     |
| 7            | The university has developed a plan to train the staff to apply the trimester system.   | 2.14        | 0.84               | 71.33%        | 3.22        | 0.00        | 6    | Medium     |
| <b>Total</b> |   | <b>2.27</b> | <b>0.58</b>        | <b>75.67%</b> | <b>9.02</b> | <b>0.00</b> |      | Medium     |

**Table 13:** Analysis of the items of the second axis (human resources preparedness N=359).

| No.          | Item   | Mean        | Standard deviation | Relative mean | Teat value  | P Value Sig | Rank | Assessment |
|--------------|--|-------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|------|------------|
| 1            | The university trained its staff on the mechanisms of applying the trimester system  | 2.29        | 0.79               | 76.33%        | 7.10        | 0.00        | 3    | Medium     |
| 2            | The university prepares students for integration into the trimester system   | 2.16        | 0.78               | 72.00%        | 3.95        | 0.00        | 7    | Medium     |
| 3            | The university has formed working teams in faculties and departments to facilitate the application of the trimester system | 2.43        | 0.78               | 81.00%        | 10.59       | 0.00        | 1    | High       |
| 4            | The university organized the annual vacations of the administrative bodies in accordance with the trimester system         | 2.34        | 0.80               | 78.00%        | 8.21        | 0.00        | 2    | Medium     |
| 5            | The university involves the academic members to prepare for implementation of the trimester system                         | 2.29        | 0.86               | 76.33%        | 6.48        | 0.00        | 3    | Medium     |
| 6            | The university motivates academic members and students to start implementing the new system                                | 2.21        | 0.77               | 73.67%        | 5.17        | 0.00        | 6    | Medium     |
| 7            | The university cooperates with all relevant members of society and the trimester system                                    | 2.25        | 0.75               | 75.00%        | 6.53        | 0.00        | 5    | Medium     |
| <b>Total</b> |  | <b>2.28</b> | <b>0.66</b>        | <b>76.00%</b> | <b>8.20</b> | <b>0.00</b> |      | Medium     |

**Table 14:** Analysis of the items of the third axis (technical preparedness N=359).

| No.          | Item   | Mean        | Standard deviation | Relative mean | Teat value   | P Value Sig | Rank | Assessment |
|--------------|--|-------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|------|------------|
| 1            | The university has redistributed the study plans courses to fit the trimester  | 2.65        | 0.58               | 88.33%        | 21.89        | 0.00        | 1    | high       |
| 2            | The university developed the curriculum to start implementing the trimester system   | 2.39        | 0.75               | 79.67%        | 10.08        | 0.00        | 4    | high       |
| 3            | The university held workshops with academic members to develop mechanisms for implementing courses according to the trimester system       | 2.41        | 0.78               | 80.33%        | 10.00        | 0.00        | 3    | high       |
| 4            | The university organized the work in the scientific laboratories to fit the trimester system   | 2.39        | 0.75               | 79.67%        | 10.08        | 0.00        | 4    | high       |
| 5            | The university has reorganized virtual classrooms to fit the trimesters  | 2.44        | 0.75               | 81.33%        | 11.37        | 0.00        | 2    | high       |
| 6            | The university cooperated with local community institutions to implement practical training for students according to the trimester system | 2.39        | 0.75               | 79.67%        | 10.08        | 0.00        | 4    | high       |
| 7            | The university has developed a student assessment system to fit the trimester system   | 2.28        | 0.83               | 76.00%        | 6.62         | 0.00        | 7    | Medium     |
| <b>Total</b> |  | <b>2.42</b> | <b>0.62</b>        | <b>80.67%</b> | <b>13.16</b> | <b>0.00</b> |      | high       |

among Saudi universities to work in the trimester system came with a medium score of 76.00%.

Item 3 scored highest, which states "The university has formed working teams in faculties and departments to facilitate the application of the trimester system", with an arithmetic mean (2.43), a standard deviation (0.78), and a relative weight (81.00%), with a high degree of practice.

Item 2 scored lowest, which states "The university prepares students for integration into the trimester system", with an arithmetic mean (2.16), a standard deviation (0.78), a relative weight (72.00%), and an average practice score.

**What is the degree of technical preparedness for Saudi universities to commence the trimester system?**

It is noted in Table 14 that the third axis is statistically significant according to the test adopted in the study. The arithmetic mean of the axis as a whole is (2.42), standard deviation (0.62), relative weight (80.67%), showing a significant degree of practice. Therefore, the degree of technical preparedness of Saudi universities to start the trimester system was high, 80.67%.

Item 1 came in first. It states: "The university has redistributed the study plans to fit the trimester", with an arithmetic mean (2.65), a standard deviation (0.58),

a relative weight (88.33%), and a high degree of practice.

Item 7 came in last place. It states: "The university has developed a student assessment system to fit the trimester system", with an arithmetic mean (2.28), a standard deviation (0.83), and a relative weight (76.00%); classifying it as a moderate degree of practice.

#### Summary of the study results

1. The study showed that the degree of readiness of Saudi universities to commence the trimester system was medium, with a rate of 77.33%.
2. The study showed the highest levels of preparedness for Saudi universities to commence the trimester system was in technical preparedness, 80.67%.
3. One category, administrative preparedness, rated the lowest of any part of the study, although it is still classified as medium, with a rate of 75.67%.
4. The study showed the degree of faculty preparedness in Saudi universities to commence the trimester system was medium, with a rate of 76.00%.

#### Study recommendation

1. Hold meetings for faculty members and students in universities to spread awareness of the importance of the transition to the trimester system.
2. Issue paper and photo publications on the importance of the transition to the trimester system.
3. Universities need to build plans to train employees on the mechanisms of applying the trimester system.
4. Build plans to prepare students to integrate into the trimester system.
5. Develop a student performance appraisal system to match the trimester system.

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## **Appendix**

### **His/ Her excellency**

#### **Academic faculty member, May God bless you**

Peace, mercy and blessings of Allah

I inform you that I am in the process of preparing a research study: The preparedness of Saudi universities to implement the trimester system from the faculty members perspective: A Forecast Study. The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To assess the preparedness of administrations in universities in Saudi Arabia to commence the trimester schedule from academic members perspective.
2. To assess the preparedness of human resources in Saudi Arabian universities to commence a trimester schedule from the faculty members perspective.
3. To assess the technical preparedness in Saudi universities to commence a trimester schedule from academic members perspective.

To achieve the objectives of the study, the attached questionnaire will be used, and includes familiarization with the preparedness of Saudi universities to implement the trimester system from the faculty members perspective.

The study consists of four sections:

The scale that will be used in answering the questionnaire statements is the Triple Likert scale according to the following scores (Disagree, Neutral Agree).

Since your point of view is of great importance in this matter, we hope that you would kindly review the questionnaire's axes and answer all statements accurately and objectively. Note that the information you provide will be treated confidentially and will only be used for scientific research purposes. You have my sincere thanks and appreciation for your cooperation, and for your time and effort in answering the questions of the questionnaire.

#### **Zainah Mohammed Alqahtani**

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To avoid confusion in understanding some of the terms mentioned in the questionnaire, the meanings of these terms will be defined as written in the current study:

#### **Study terminology:**

- **University faculty members:** All teaching staff of the university in the different faculties.
- **Trimester:** Three semesters per academic year, each with a duration of from 12 to 13 weeks.

#### **Study objectives:**

1. To assess the preparedness of administrations in universities in Saudi Arabia to commence the trimester schedule from academic members perspective.
2. To assess the preparedness of human resources in Saudi Arabian universities to commence a trimester schedule from the faculty members perspective.
3. To assess the technical preparedness in Saudi universities to commence a trimester schedule from the perspective of academic members.

#### **A. Demographic factors**

##### **Educational level:**

- Bachelor
- Master
- PhD

##### **Teaching years:**

- less than 3-5
- between 6-10
- 11 and more

##### **Gender:**

- Male
- Female

College:.....

University: .....

| <b>B. Administrative preparedness to launch the trimester system in the academic year</b> |   | <b>agree</b> | <b>neutral</b> | <b>disagree</b> |
|---|---|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1   | The university has set an annual plan suitable for teaching the trimester.  |              |                |                 |
| 2   | The university approved its financial budget according to the trimester system.   |              |                |                 |
| 3   | The university has formed a committee to follow-up trimester quality control system.  |              |                |                 |
| 4   | The university has developed its policy to suit the trimester system.   |              |                |                 |
| 5   | The university administration spreads awareness among students and faculty members about the importance to shift to trimester system. |              |                |                 |
| 6   | The university develops electronic systems to suit the trimester system.  |              |                |                 |
| 7   | The university has developed a plan to train the staff to apply the trimester system.   |              |                |                 |

| <b>C. Degree of preparedness of human resources in Saudi Arabian universities to commence a trimester schedule from the faculty members perspective</b> |  | <b>agree</b> | <b>neutral</b> | <b>disagree</b> |
|---|--|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1   | The university trained its staff on the mechanisms of applying the trimester system  |              |                |                 |
| 2   | The university prepares students for integration into the trimester system   |              |                |                 |
| 3   | The university has formed working teams in faculties and departments to facilitate the application of the trimester system |              |                |                 |
| 4   | The university organized the annual vacations of the administrative bodies in accordance with the trimester system         |              |                |                 |
| 5   | The university involves the academic members to prepare for the implementation of the trimester system                     |              |                |                 |
| 6   | The university motivates the academic members and students to start implementing the new system                            |              |                |                 |
| 7   | The university cooperates with all relevant members of society and the trimester system                                    |              |                |                 |

| <b>D. Technical preparedness for the start of the trimester system in the academic year</b> |  | <b>agree</b> | <b>neutral</b> | <b>disagree</b> |
|---|--|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1   | The university has redistributed the study plans courses to fit the trimester  |              |                |                 |
| 2   | The university developed the curriculum to start implementing the trimester system   |              |                |                 |
| 3   | The university held workshops with academic members to develop mechanisms for implementing courses according to the trimester system |              |                |                 |
| 4   | The university organized the work in the scientific laboratories to fit the trimester system   |              |                |                 |
| 5   | The university has reorganized the virtual classrooms to fit the trimesters  |              |                |                 |



|   |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| 6 | The university cooperated with local community institutions to implement practical training for students according to the trimester system |  |  |  |
| 7 | The university has developed a student assessment system to fit the trimester system   |  |  |  |