Merging Education Ministries: Lessons learned from international practices

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

1. This study aims to promote an informed approach to the recent merger (March 2015) of the Ministries of Public Education (K-12) and Higher Education in Saudi Arabia. Three sources of information provide the basis for its analyses: (i) a literature review covering the international press and scholarly work on ministerial mergers; (ii) a study tour of Malaysia where the ministries of public and higher education were merged in 2013 and then de-merged in 2015; and (iii) a review of press and other comments in Saudi Arabia following the merger of the Ministries of Public Education and Higher Education.

2. The information and analyses reported here are not designed to provide ‘how-to’ answers relating to the Saudi merger. Rather, the initial aim of the study was to inform discussions held at a workshop on 23 January 2016, which, in turn, informed the final version of this paper. Yet, it also furnishes clues on ways to anticipate and manage twists and turns in the road ahead towards implementing the merger.

3. This study begins with a review of the international literature on ministerial mergers, covering press reports, scholarly literature, and work performed by and for educational planners, managers and policy-makers. The next section comprises a case study report of the merger and subsequent de-merger of higher education and public education ministries in Malaysia. This was undertaken on the basis that the Malaysian case could provide useful lessons for the Saudi merger. The subsequent section reviews the Saudi context. It includes an overview of the institutional context followed by comments on the merger found in the Saudi press. The study concludes with a set of hypothetical (and ideal-typical) scenarios for the Saudi merger resulting from considerations and reflections presented in the preceding sections.
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON MINISTERIAL MERGERS

4. The IIEP documentation centre conducted a thorough search for published literature on the topic of ministerial mergers. In addition to materials located in IIEP’s documentation centre and others identified through web searches, the search extended to a university library in Paris (Sciences Po), which has access to a broad variety of bibliographical databases. Keywords used in the literature search included: merger, reorganization, government modernization and processes, and new public management. The bibliographical list is provided in Annex 5 at the end of this publication.

5. The search identified two sets of documentation more or less pertinent to the question of ministerial mergers: (i) news reports and (ii) scholarly work (books and articles). Work that directly addresses the issue of ministerial mergers is rare. Rather, the review uncovered material on:

- ministerial and organizational reorganizations;
- comparative analyses of public administrations;
- presentations of specific national models;
- references to and critiques of ‘new public management’, which applies management techniques from the private sector to government (Lane, 2000);
- the development of (more or less autonomous and professionalized) agencies within the overall sphere of government.

6. Available scholarly work on the topic provides little direct guidance on practical considerations such as: what has worked and what has not; factors to consider when reorganizing and/or merging organizational entities; the impact of reorganization on institutional effectiveness and efficiency; and the costs (financial, human, temporal) of reorganization and/or merging. Instead, such work focuses more on political and sociological analyses rather than on the mechanics of reorganizations and/or mergers.

Reports in the press

7. Reports of ministerial mergers do not appear to be popular news stories. Table 1 presents extracts from the search results. The web search found 17 news reports from 12 countries that reported on 15 different mergers. Only four of these mergers concerned education ministries (Australia, Brazil, Italy, and Malaysia). Although the search found news items going back to 1996, all but two reports date from 2011 to 2015.

8. Three basic reasons or motivations are given in these press accounts for the reported mergers (or reverse merger for Malaysia):

   i. Improved efficiency and better use of scarce resources – cited in six reports;
   ii. Improved effectiveness, service delivery, and professionalization of the ministries – cited in two reports;
   iii. Improved responsiveness to policy concerns – cited in only three reports.

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1 The contribution of Asuncion Valderrama, head of IIEP’s documentation centre, was invaluable in this regard.
2 The fact that the scope of the search was not limited to education ministries will be clear from the reports and studies reviewed.
3 Antigua and Barbuda, Brazil, Finland, Iran (Islamic Republic of), New Zealand, and Nigeria.
4 Liberia and Nigeria.
5 Malaysia (for both the merger and subsequent reverse merger), New Zealand, and Pakistan.
9. Without mentioning the official reasons given for them, three of the press reports focused on criticisms of the proposed mergers. Of particular interest is the report from Indonesia concerning the merger of the environment and forestry ministries. The report contains a brief analysis of the challenges and opportunities associated with ministerial mergers that are probably valid in a number of countries.

10. A complete inventory and review of ministerial mergers over the past 10 or 20 years is beyond the scope of this study. Nonetheless, this brief review provides valuable insights into the declared motivations behind the mergers, as well as some of the critiques and fears associated with them.

Scholarly research

11. With one exception (Zvavahera, 2014), we do not find empirical scholarly work that directly addresses the question of ministerial mergers. Rather, existing research concentrates mostly on the reorganization of government bodies (ministries or agencies), with some articles and books reviewing trends in public management. This literature is composed largely of country studies and comparative analyses focused on Europe. With only one exception (Zimbabwe), all the studies centre on Europe and North America, which is unsurprising given that the authors are affiliated with universities in these regions.

12. The one study that does assess aspects of merging government ministries (Zvavahera, 2014) focuses on the impact of a merger between two ministries in Zimbabwe on service delivery and staff motivation. Based on a survey of employees of the newly merged ministry 10 months after the start of the merger, the study found that:

- employees had no knowledge of what will happen to them;
- service delivery was not improved by the merger with only 20% of employees seeing prospects for improved service delivery;
- there was a sense of ‘despondency and uncertainty in the organization’;
- 88% of those interviewed ‘felt that reporting structures and the chain of command were distorted and chaotic due to the manner in which change was undertaken’.

Viewed from the perspective of staff, this study concludes that ‘mergers can harm the entire organization if they are not properly handled since they impact directly on the employees’. According to this study, a properly handled merger ensures that staff are secure about their future and are involved in the process. Counselling could be an element of this process.

6 Indonesia, Italy, and Nigeria.

7 Perhaps one way to approach this topic would be to interrogate IIEP’s extensive network of alumni in order to establish a fairly comprehensive view of mergers (and reverse mergers) of education ministries. This network contains a rich source of potential information on the topic.

8 Most of the articles cited are from peer-reviewed journals. The term ‘scholarly’ is used to distinguish the studies reviewed in this section from the more planning/management-oriented work reviewed in the following section.

9 The two ministries are the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Management and the Ministry of Water Resources Development and Management.
Table 1. Reporting on ministerial mergers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Ministries</th>
<th>Key quotes</th>
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| Antigua | Youth and Gender Affairs and Social Transformation | • ‘The merger is intended to better utilise the limited resources that are available and also to avoid duplication of services.’
• ‘Gender Affairs is specialised work,’ Dr Quinn told OBSERVER media. ‘When you are talking about policing human rights, generally, it is specialised work. Merging that with all of the programmes for the youth department and youth development, too, it is confusing.’
• ‘She further stated that both departments have specific functions and should be managed separately.’ | Antigua Observer, 2015. ‘Former gender affairs minister asks govt’ to reconsider merger’, 30 September. Retrieved from: http://antiguobserver.com/former-gender-affairs-minister-asks-govt-to-reconsider-merger/ |
<p>| Brazil | Science and Technology and Education | ‘Brazilian scientists fear that the merger could result in reduced funding for research.’ | Neto, R.B. 1998. ‘Brazil’s scientists fear ministry merger’. In: Nature, 396(6711), 503. Retrieved from: <a href="http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v396/n6711/full/396503b0.html">www.nature.com/nature/journal/v396/n6711/full/396503b0.html</a> |
| Finland | Agriculture and Environment | ‘Prime Minister-elect Juha Sipilä dropped a hint recently that his proposed coalition is considering merging Finland’s Ministry of Environment with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in order to save on operating costs, thereby creating a new Ministry of Natural Resources. The proposal has many opposition parties, especially the Greens, concerned about the fate of pressing environmental issues.’ | yle uutiset. 2015. ‘Possible agriculture and environment ministry merger in the cards’, 23 May. Retrieved from: <a href="http://yle.fi/uutiset/possible-agriculture-and-environment-ministry-merger-in-the-cards/8013502">http://yle.fi/uutiset/possible-agriculture-and-environment-ministry-merger-in-the-cards/8013502</a> |</p>
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<th>Country</th>
<th>Ministries</th>
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<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Environment and Forestry</td>
<td>• ‘The decision sent ripples throughout the Indonesian environmental and policy community – and could signal that a broad and cross-sectoral environmental agenda would be weakened and simplified. …The political ramifications of combining ministries can be unwieldy. Merging two distinct bureaucracies – with their own strengths, weaknesses and different capacities – is a challenge in any country, in any context. It could be some time before the new ministry is operating at full speed.’</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• ‘Orchestrating numerous legal instruments … is not an easy task.’</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• ‘It could help to consolidate the management of issues that used to be under the partial jurisdiction of both ministries’;</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• ‘The strengths and weaknesses of the two old ministries could complement each other, especially in terms of financial and human resources’;</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• ‘One single ministry could be more politically powerful than two smaller ministries.’</td>
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<td>Iran</td>
<td>Multiple ministries</td>
<td>• ‘According to Iran’s fifth Five-Year Development Plan (2010-2015), the Iranian government is obliged to reduce its ministries from 21 to 17 to improve the efficiency of state administration.’</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• ‘The Iranian Armed Forces say they disagree with merging the country’s Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology [with Roads and Transportation and Housing and Urban Development] for security reasons.’</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
<td>Universities and research and public education</td>
<td>• Scientists fear that the needs of research could become submerged within the new super-ministry</td>
<td>Abbot, A. 1996. ‘Ministry merger prompts fears in Italy’. In: Nature, 381(6580), 264.</td>
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<td>Country</td>
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<td>Liberia</td>
<td>Finance and Planning and Economy Affairs</td>
<td>• ‘A move towards a professionalized public sector is the most effective way to deliver quality services; the value of the merger would be seen in increased efficiency, better organizational management and improved serviced delivery, particularly in the fiscal and development policy direction.’&lt;br&gt;  • The policy thinking behind the merger is to ‘bring synergies to the government through the avoidance of duplications and gaps in the functions of both the Ministries, thereby resulting in better allocation of human/financial resources and better service delivery.’</td>
<td>Daily Observer, 2015. ‘GoL Ready for Finance, Planning Merger’, 15 October. Retrieved from: <a href="http://www.liberianobserver.com/news/%E2%80%99gol-ready-finance-planning-merger%E2%80%99">www.liberianobserver.com/news/%E2%80%99gol-ready-finance-planning-merger%E2%80%99</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Public Education and Higher Education</td>
<td>• 2013. Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said in 2013 that ‘the merger [of these two ministries] would spur the transformation of education in the country to be on par with international education standards by 2020. The merger is a big step taken by the government in striving for progress in the field of education and should be maintained under one roof to facilitate administration. Through this merger, the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025 and National Higher Education Strategic Plan would be strengthened. Human capital mobility in the field of education will be more active and effective when academicians cooperate with teaching staff to determine the direction of the national education,’ he said when launching the National Academic Awards 2011 and 2012 here today.&lt;br&gt;  • 2015. ‘Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) vice-chancellor Tan Sri Prof Dr Sahol Hamid Abu Bakar today said that the government had made a smart move by appointing a Higher Education Minister and making higher education a separate ministry from the Education Ministry. He said the separation would enable the minister to give more attention in the bid to empower higher education and meet the rising demands of educational institutions.’</td>
<td>FMT news, 2013. ‘Merging of ministries to ensure education quality’, 21 August. Retrieved from: <a href="http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2013/08/21/merging-of-ministries-to-ensure-education-quality/">www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2013/08/21/merging-of-ministries-to-ensure-education-quality/</a>.&lt;br&gt;  Malaysian Insider, 2015. ‘Separating education, higher education portfolios a good move, say academics’, 29 July.</td>
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<td>Country</td>
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<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Departments of Transport, Civil Aviation, Marine merged to become Ministry of Transport</td>
<td>‘The Ministry was established through the merger of the Transport Department and the Civil Aviation Department, which also incorporated the Meteorological Service. In 1972, the Marine Department was added into the Ministry. By the early 1970s the Ministry had over 4,500 staff, integrating such diverse elements as traffic enforcement, air traffic control, weather forecasting, air accident investigation, and lighthouses.’</td>
<td>Ministry of Transport, 2015. ‘History of the Ministry’. Retrieved from: <a href="http://www.transport.govt.nz/about/history/">www.transport.govt.nz/about/history/</a></td>
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<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Multiple ministries</td>
<td>‘After three weeks of consultations with international and Nigeria’s political leaders, President Muhammadu Buhari appears set to effect major changes in the administration of the country in a bid to translate the “change” mantra of his party into reality. To start with, the President is said to have accepted the recommendation of the transition committee he raised a few weeks ago to slash the number of ministries from the present 42 to 19 with a view to saving cost and making them more effective and responsive to the needs of Nigerians.’</td>
<td>Vanguard, 2015. ‘Buhari to merge EFCC, ICPC; 42 ministries reduced to 19’, 21 June. Retrieved from: <a href="http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/06/buhari-to-merge-efcc-icpc-42-ministries-reduced-to-19/">www.vanguardngr.com/2015/06/buhari-to-merge-efcc-icpc-42-ministries-reduced-to-19/</a></td>
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<td>Aviation and Transport</td>
<td>The article cites a letter from aviation sector unions arguing against the merger. Reasons given include: it would benefit a small group, a ‘cabal’ within the aviation industry; loss of efficiency; loss of representation; previous mergers of same ministries were reversed; and the need for professional, not political, leadership for aviation.</td>
<td>The Guardian. 2015. ‘Unions reject merger of aviation, transport ministries’, 19 June. Retrieved from: <a href="http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/2015/06/unions-reject-merger-of-aviation-transport-ministries/">www.ngrguardiannews.com/2015/06/unions-reject-merger-of-aviation-transport-ministries/</a></td>
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<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Textile and Commerce</td>
<td>‘In a letter to the Prime Minister, value-added textile producers in Pakistan have opposed the move to merge the textile ministry with the commerce ministry. ’ The letter concludes by saying ‘Rather [than merging], the textiles ministry should be given more powers to take vital decisions, since in its absence, it is not able to take vital decisions regarding implementation of the Textile Policy’.</td>
<td>Sunichem, 2015. ‘Pak industry opposes merger of textile &amp; commerce ministry’. Retrieved from: <a href="http://www.sunichem.com/en/jsfwe/jsxen/7A9C201541219.html">www.sunichem.com/en/jsfwe/jsxen/7A9C201541219.html</a></td>
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13. Ongaro (2009) reviews public management reforms in five European countries: France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain (with an emphasis on Italy). He concludes that there is no norm: each country system has to be seen in its own context. The only trend that seems to appear is greater specialization, generally accomplished through the establishment of specialized agencies. However, he notes an implementation gap between stated goals and actual implementation. In France, for example, some reforms have been hollowed out because of opposition from senior civil servants (les grands corps). A correlate to this may be that reorganizations present a challenge to the dominant position of the senior civil service in the machinery of government (Gervais, 2010), thereby prompting change within an overall context of continuity. Although somewhat shaken up as functions are reallocated and structures change, the senior civil service retain their tenure and privileged positions and, therefore, their influence. In the case of Italy, ministries have been merged and mergers have been reversed. The institutional (national) specificity of organizational structures and attempts to modify them is confirmed by studies on Spain (Parrado, 2010) and studies comparing public administration in England and France (Cole and John, 2001; Howarth, 2001).

14. With a focus mainly on France, Meimon (2008) notes that the meaning of ministerial reorganizations goes beyond their administrative and political justifications. Ministerial structures are more than positions, budget lines, and decrees. First and foremost, they comprise staff who have a specific professional identity which could be upset by reorganization, especially if it implies a new workplace and institutional affiliation. This is why reorganizations often result in political, administrative, and economic tensions and meet varying degrees and forms of resistance. Several factors play a role in the development of these tensions: the official discourse that, often, is seen as a threat to the institutional culture being reformed; the interests and internal logic of the senior civil service (les grands corps); and the overall institutional culture whose “instinct” for self-preservation can be heightened when under perceived threat. This study suggests that two “lenses” are needed to carry out such reforms: (i) a micro-sociological analysis focused on the particularities of the institutions, their rules, codes and routines; and (ii) an effort to understand the social and professional characteristics and identities of the staff.

15. Two studies that focus on reorganizations within the United States federal government propose rather simple typologies (Salamon, 1981; March and Olsen, 1983). March and Olsen (1983) refer to two ‘rhetorics’ for the justification of reorganization: (i) to facilitate efficiency and effectiveness (i.e. reorganization to improve managerial control), and (ii) reorganization as part of a political struggle among contending interests (i.e. reorganization for political control). They also note that regardless of the nature of the reorganization – which is an exceptional event – budgeting procedures are routinized and are likely to remain as such.

16. Salamon’s (1981) typology identifies three (not mutually exclusive) types of goals for governmental reorganizations: (i) economy and efficiency, (ii) policy effectiveness, and (iii) tactical political advantage. Taking a closer look at the review of press reports above, the reasons given for ministerial mergers (or the reverse) include: (i) gaining improved effectiveness and efficiency (e.g. ‘facilitate administration’; ‘slash the number of ministries … with a view to saving cost and making them more effective’; improved responsiveness) and/or (ii) improved policy effectiveness (e.g. ‘improve the country’s higher education system, increase the employment prospects of graduates and improve innovation’; ‘spur the transformation of education’; ‘separation [of higher education and national education administrations] would enable the minister to give more attention in the bid to empower higher education and meet the rising demands of educational institutions’). In other words, the official reasons given for reorganization appear to focus on Salamon’s first two types.
17. Looking beyond official statements – to the hidden curriculum, as it were – of reorganizations, several authors stress the legitimation function of organizational arrangements in general, and reorganizations in particular (Salamon, 1981; March and Olsen, 1983; Cole and John, 2001; Eymeri-Douzans, 2008; Gervais, 2010). Their analyses of reorganizations of government bodies in Europe and the United States suggest that legitimation of policy and political goals is often the deeper, unarticulated reason behind reorganizations. This analysis tends to confirm Weiler’s (1983) view that educational reforms are state strategies aimed at increasing the public perception of political legitimacy.

18. One impression that emerges from this limited literature on reorganization is confirmation of the French saying, “the more things change, the more they remain the same”. While some reorganizations are reversed or modified, others are passively resisted by the civil service on the basis that politically mandated reorganizations are less permanent than the staffing already in place. However, there is a lack of fine-grained analyses focusing on the mechanics of reorganization; in other words, how reorganizations are implemented function by function, structure by structure, and role by role.

19. Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind that reorganizations and mergers are not the same thing. A merger may or may not involve reorganization and vice versa. Whereas a reorganization, in principle, is an overhaul of an organization’s functions, structures, lines of communication, and decision-making chains, a merger could simply be the bringing together of two organizations under the same hierarchical roof; it may be a merger of equals or, rather, an acquisition of a smaller entity by a larger one. In the case of ministerial mergers (as so often happens in France and elsewhere), the two merged structures often continue as previously organized, operating side-by-side but under one minister (with, perhaps, one or two deputy ministers for each of the pre-merged ministries).

20. With the exception of the one study on Zimbabwe (Zvavahera, 2014), the literature is on the theoretical side. However, it provides some stimulating and useful points to take into consideration:

- **There is no norm**: Each national situation has to be approached on its own terms including political and institutional cultures, opportunities and constraints.
- **The ‘real’ or fundamental reasons behind governmental reorganizations may often be more political than technical, more tactical than strategic.** Understanding reorganizations, therefore, requires looking beyond official reasons and justifications and taking a closer look at wider political and/or sociological dimensions.
- **Staff** – whether senior civil servants or at more junior levels – can determine the success or failure of reorganizations.

21. **Decentralization and autonomy** are educational policies often associated with institutional reform. Decentralization usually refers to schools and school districts, whereas autonomy generally refers to university governance. The literature on decentralization is extensive. Broadly speaking, it suggests that the success of decentralization depends\(^{12}\) on a number of factors including: the overall level of the country’s development; the available resources (e.g. school principals, teachers, community organizations and participation, local

\(^{11}\) It is also referred to in the contribution by Cheng Kai-Ming in Hernes, Göttelmann-Duret, and Zadra (2003), who points out that participation and consultation provide policy-makers with legitimacy in a context where there is rarely consensus around education policies.

\(^{12}\) Indeed, ‘it depends’ is ‘often the best and only answer’ to many, if not most of the inherently complicated questions that characterize education (Dolby, 2015).
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education authorities, finances); how well and carefully the changes are implemented; and the central institutional cultures at the central and local levels (Di Gropello, 1999; Hanushek, Woessmann, and Link, 2012; Healey and Crouch, 2012; Huong, 2013; Williams, 1993). For example, one review of decentralization concludes that ‘it is simple to design decentralization policies ... but frequently very hard to implement the policies’ (Mwinjuma et al., 2015).

22. A review of university autonomy vis-à-vis governmental authority finds two strategies of government regulation: (i) rational planning and control; and (ii) self-regulation, along with accountability (van Vught, 1994). By and large, institutional autonomy is limited to strictly academic functions. Rare are the public universities that operate autonomously across the full spectrum of their functions: student admissions and selection; course programmes and diploma offerings; revenue generation, including fees for admission, tuition and services, as well as the solicitation and management of external resources (contracts, gifts, endowments); recruitment and appointments of leadership and faculty; and determining and implementing reward/incentive structures for faculty and staff and managing their careers (Sack, 2011). Using examples from Europe and Africa, van Vught (1994) argues that ‘the state control model ... is a major barrier for the further development of ... higher education in terms of an increase of efficiency and quality’. The issue of autonomy is largely linked to that of financing: where government financing plays the major role it is likely that the extent of real autonomy will alter in line with political changes and needs. Regardless, autonomy requires accountability, as these operate as two sides of the same coin.

23. In a review of university autonomy in Africa, Sack (2011) observed that levels of autonomy tend to be greater at the academic level – activities that come under the authority of deans and department heads – than at the level of broader policies that may have political consequences, such as financing, revenue raising, financial management, student admissions, overall structure, the creation of new faculties and/or programmes and diplomas, and the status and incentive structures of the teaching faculty. These areas are viewed as politically sensitive and are, therefore, often linked organically to government in the large majority of countries. This practice applies, of course, only to public universities; private institutions have full autonomy over all aspects of their operations, but with varying levels of regulation that include accreditation. If higher education were viewed as a systemic whole (in a country with an increasing number of private institutions), an aggregate, increasing levels of autonomy would appear to be present in all functional areas. However, there is clear evidence of an autonomy gap between private and public institutions. The question, therefore, is whether this gap leads to qualitative differences in terms of teaching, research, diploma reputation, and the employability of graduates, assuming equal resource situations.

A functional approach for understanding the mechanics of organizational change

24. The scholarly studies briefly reviewed here examine the big, or macro picture. They do not explore the details of the organizations in question – the functions that constitute the essence of an organization – or how reorganizations affect vital functions such as personnel and financial management, budgeting processes, procurement, supervision, the establishment of norms, and so on. Our study, however, is concerned primarily with these functions and those that perform them: ‘what-is-done’ refers to the functions and ‘who-does-what’ refers to the structures (units, sections, directors and directorates, staff) and the accompanying roles.

25. Sack and Saïdi (1997) developed a functional approach for understanding the behaviour of education ministries. Developing a good understanding of any organization should be
Merging Education Ministries: Lessons learned from international practices

A necessary prerequisite to modifying its functional and structural arrangements. The first step in this approach is to identify the relevant functions and associated structures that could be in play during the merger. Table 2 presents a structural-functional overview of an education ministry that has three activity families: strategic management, pedagogy, and administration. Functions and structures are indicated for each activity family.

26. This approach explores the mechanics of the ministerial organization(s) and examines the actual workings: who does what and where it is done. In contrast to the macro-analytic literature on reorganizations reviewed above, this micro-approach focuses on the mechanics of what makes ministries tick, how their productive processes operate, and the roles of the various structures within the overall organization.  

Table 2. A structural-functional overview of an education ministry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity family</th>
<th>Strategic management</th>
<th>Pedagogy</th>
<th>Administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functions</td>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>Textbook ‘publishing chain’ (from curriculum development to writing to printing to distribution)</td>
<td>Financial and budgetary administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>Curricula</td>
<td>Personnel management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Assessment and evaluation</td>
<td>Procurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Teacher training</td>
<td>Maintenance of buildings and equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>Analysis of procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Support services</td>
<td>Distribution of mail, directives, guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information processing</td>
<td>Inspection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Budget processes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structures</td>
<td>Planning department</td>
<td>Teacher training schools</td>
<td>Central administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Budget department</td>
<td>Departments of primary, secondary, higher education</td>
<td>Regional administrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other departments</td>
<td>Pedagogical institute</td>
<td>Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other ministries (e.g. Finance, Planning, Labour, Civil Service)</td>
<td>Curriculum development department</td>
<td>Personnel management department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Examinations department</td>
<td>Financial and administrative affairs department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other ministries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Sack and Saidi, 1997.

27. Some practical lessons, inferred from several countries around the world, can be found in Hernes, Göttelmann-Duret, and Zadra (2003: 10), which addresses the question of whether some ‘organizational structures, or mechanisms, [are] more “appropriate” than others for promoting both efficient management of education and policies that are “responsive”

13 Note that a given structure can play several roles (i.e. take on several functions). For example, the inspectorate can take on functions related to supervision, training, accountability, and the enforcement of regulations. Each role played corresponds to a discrete function within the organization.
to the environment and sustainable?’. This book is drawn from an IIEP policy forum where the majority of participants were experienced practitioners at the highest levels. The discussions were organized around four ‘points of entry’ related to ministerial strategic management or ‘steering’ from: (i) above (‘links between policy/political leadership and administration’); (ii) below (‘interactions with the operational level – schools, teachers, students, etc.’); (iii) outside (‘interactions between the Ministry and the ‘main stakeholders outside of the education system’); and/or (iv) within (coming from the ‘Ministry’s internal organizational structures and regulating mechanisms’).

28. Two practical lessons are articulated in this book:

(a) The capacity of a minister to steer from above and, therefore, be an effective leader depends on whether he or she:

- values differences;
- exercises shared leadership;
- is willing to communicate, shares feelings and responsibilities and empathise with subordinate working groups;
- displays a fair mastery of issues that concern teachers, parents and students;
- is able to develop a common goal, structure, programmes around such a goal and follow-up;
- reaches the broader society, including opposition parties, community leaders, partners, etc.;
- collaborates effectively with the donor communities and coordinates their contribution; and
- leads change initiatives, but also cares for stability and the maintenance functions of administrative leadership;

(b) Effective decentralization requires a strong central structure – the central and decentralized levels need to be seen as complementary, not in opposition to one another. The central level has a ‘directive mission’, whereas the decentralized levels are in charge of ‘service delivery.’ In order to assure both operational effectiveness and strategic management, the ministry needs to accomplish three basic functions: ‘ensure unity of the system to preserve and protect social integration; ensure quality of results as a response to social demands; and ensure equity in the delivery of education to counteract tendencies towards segmentation imposed by the market.’

Conclusions

29. The relevant analytical literature is quite sparse, with little material directly addressing the question of how to engineer or manage a successful merger of two ministries. The literature most pertinent to the question of ministerial mergers focuses on reorganizations and seems to converge around the adage that ‘the more things change, the more they remain the same’. The practical value of these studies is limited to providing a broad perspective on the phenomenon of reorganization. Although clearly necessary, this perspective offers only limited practical guidance to practitioners about to embark on engineering a merger beyond the three essential points summarized in paragraph 20, above. Of particular note is the fact that the research reported in these studies tends to discount the stated policy

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14 These consisted of a former education minister, one vice-minister, one inspector, eight directors-general and directors, and one advisor to the Minister. In addition, there were five academics, one of whom once served as advisor to the minister. IIEP staff also attended.

15 The contribution of Aïcha Bah Diallo (Hernes, Göttelmann-Duret, and Zadra, 2003: 20-33) is based on her experience as Minister of Education in Guinea.

16 The contribution of Inés Aguerrondo (Hernes, Göttelmann-Duret, and Zadra, 2003: 65-76) is based on experience from Latin America.
goals associated with reorganizations in favour of explanations related to institutional and political legitimation.

30. The importance of implementation capacities is crucial. It is interesting to note that the topic and issue of implementation capacities is not found in the literature reviewed. A review of reform experiences in 11 African countries points to a disconnect between policy ambitions and implementation realities, which is manifested by the top-down nature of policy decisions that will be implemented by those with little incentive to ensure its success (Bah-Lalya and Sack, 2003).

31. The two studies published by the IIEP provide some practical guidance, including a functional approach for understanding and modifying the mechanics of education ministries. Perhaps the two major practical lessons that all the studies allude to (albeit in very different ways) are:

- **i.** There is no one proven way to reorganize or to merge ministries. Context is everything: each institution has its own culture, and its established routines within its specific national and institutional ecosystems, which include stakeholders both within and outside the education system. Within this context a thoroughly thought-through merger has every chance of success. The literature reviewed here provides a number of clues and guideposts in this regard.

- **ii.** Participation of stakeholders and staff, in particular, is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for success. Major institutional changes that are promulgated and implemented without some level of stakeholder participation will have diminished chances of success and sustainability.
III. **CASE STUDY: THE RECENT EXPERIENCE OF MALAYSIA**

32. This brief case study is based on a five-day visit to Kuala Lumpur, during 2–6 November 2015, where four meetings were held with the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), and the Malaysian Examinations Council (MPM). In addition, a more informal meeting was held with the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National University of Malaysia. The names and affiliations of the persons in question are given in Annex 1. The case study begins with a brief overview of the institutional situation and a view of the quantitative evolution of higher education. The remaining text presents findings on topics addressed by the study visit.

**Background**

33. Between 2004 and 2015 the education sector in Malaysia had undergone three major institutional mutations. In 2004, the MoHE was created to accelerate the development of higher education, in 2013 the MoHE was merged back into the MoE, and in 2015 that merger was undone resulting in two separate education ministries: the MoE and the MoHE.

34. The creation of the MoHE in 2004 was associated with and designed to promote the significant growth of higher education in Malaysia. Between 2005 and 2012 enrolments increased by 54, compared to an enrolment growth of 47% between 1999 and 2005, while gross enrolment ratios in higher education increased from 22.7% in 1999 to 27.9% in 2005 and then to 37.2% in 2012.\(^\text{17}\)

35. It should be noted that Malaysian public universities are fairly autonomous. According to the *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education)*, universities have full autonomy on budgetary matters and partial autonomy to (MoE, 2015: Exhibit 6-1):

- set academic structure and course content (where approval is needed from the academic department and MQA);
- appoint and dismiss academic staff (appointments are based on posts opened by the Public Service Department);
- decide the level of tuition fees (which needs Government approval, except for international graduate programmes).

Decisions concerning the size of student enrolments and the level of staff salaries fall outside the control of universities.

**Reasons for the merger and subsequent de-merger**

36. According to the Deputy Prime Minister at the time, the 2013 merger:

would spur the transformation of education in the country to be on par with international education standards by 2020. The merger is a big step taken by the government in striving for progression of national education and should be maintained under one roof to facilitate administration. Through this merger, the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025 and National Higher Education Strategic Plan would be strengthened. Human capital mobility in the field of education will be more active and effective when academicians cooperate with teaching staff to determine the direction of the national education (FMT News, 2013).

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\(^{17}\) These data were drawn from the Qandl database. See: [http://goo.gl/8oB4Na](http://goo.gl/8oB4Na) and [http://goo.gl/ekdv1N](http://goo.gl/ekdv1N).
In justifying the 2015 reversal of the 2013 merger it was pointed out that ‘separation would enable the minister [of higher education] to give more attention in the bid to empower higher education and meet the rising demands of educational institutions’ (Malaysian Insider, 2015).

37. When asked about how the 2013 merger and the subsequent 2015 de-merger came about, our interlocutors responded that they were decisions taken by the Prime Minister. In other words, both decisions were political in nature and came as a surprise to the actors in the concerned sectors.

38. The overall perceived effects of the 2013 merger were minimal. Two reasons are given for this: (i) the existence of autonomous agencies including the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) and the Examinations Council (MPM), and (ii) the fact that the merger was in effect for only two years. If it had lasted longer the effects would have been more profound. For example, the situation would have been more difficult if the subsequent de-merger had occurred five years after the merger instead of two years.

39. The MQA was initially established by an Act of Education in 1996 under the title of the National Accreditation Bar, with the mandate to ensure the accreditation of higher education institutions (public and private) and, therefore, to enhance overall university capacity. In 2007, it was transformed into the MQA as the sole governmental institution responsible for accreditation and quality assurance in Malaysia. It is an anonymous statutory body under the purview of the MoHE. Its Board is responsible for leadership and operation while the Ministry sets policy (e.g. National Policies for Credit Transfer, Lifelong Learning, and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning, which are the entry-level requirements for higher education). The agency has a full-time staff of about 350, about half of whom are professionals. The Chief Executive Officer is appointed by the Minister and is accountable to the Minister and the MQA Board. The merger had no impact on the MQA.

40. The MPM administers ‘A’ level exams and English tests, both of which form part of the admissions process to higher education. It also issues the certificates associated with those examinations. The Council is a statutory body with its own Board drawn from the heads of universities, the Ministry of Education and elsewhere. It is self-financing with its resources drawn from examination fees, which until 2009 were paid by students and are now covered by the Government (Ministry of Finance). The merger had no effect on the MPM either.

41. The 2013 merger had little to no effect within the MoE on matters relating to operations, policy, development, and local (state, district, and school) structures, planning, and management, including personnel management. Regarding financial management, the payroll is managed directly by the Ministry of Finance. Prior to the merger each ministry was lodged in its own building; during the merger there was very little movement or consolidation between the offices in each building; subsequent to the de-merger each ministry has remained in its respective building.18

42. Some efforts were made towards consolidation of the two ministries during the second year of the merger. This included the existence of two financial comptrollers, one from each of the former ministries. In the first year of the merger, the function of sole comptroller was ensured by the former MoE.

43. There were several perceived benefits of the merger.

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18 Both buildings are located in the Government administrative complex which is situated outside of Kuala Lumpur. The two buildings are no more than 2-3 kilometres from each other.
For the MoE:

- the merger facilitated information-sharing between the two sub-sectors (K-12 and tertiary);
- it was easier to obtain advice from university faculty members and researchers;
- it was economically more efficient in terms of the management of human resources since the single HR directorate could consolidate resources and expertise (although there was no integration of information management systems or payroll management);
- it was easier to share infrastructure between sections of the merged ministry.

For the MoHE, benefits included:

- improved accessibility to information, which was particularly helpful during the two years of the merger, since that period coincided with the development of a long-term strategic plan that resulted in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education);
- a better understanding of the complexity of the basic education system (K-12) in its entirety, which improved harmonization with K-12 education in the Malaysia Education Blueprint and improved collaboration with MoE staff and policy-makers (prior to the merger a ‘don’t know, don’t care’ attitude prevailed, which gave way to improved collaboration and alignment);
- joint ownership of the Malaysia Education Blueprint;
- identification of overlapping activities, such as Technical and Vocational Education and Training;
- the definition of key performance indicators.

44. There were also some perceived problems and downsides associated with the merger.

For the MoE:

- international agreements had to be renegotiated to include education and higher education;
- it became more difficult to plan budgets;
- duplication of staffing, accounting, and legal departments during the merger period created some confusion, although plans were made to avoid these duplications had the merger lasted;
- it was easier to negotiate with outside parties (suppliers, partners, other ministries, international bodies, etc.) when separate;
- it appears that, since the de-merger, focus has improved in the areas of budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, and results reporting.

For the MoHE:

- the combined ministry was large and difficult to manage as decision chains lengthened;
- the budget for higher education declined under the merger;
- there were too many meetings and greater stress;
- the institutional cultures were not particularly compatible as:
  - MoHE decision-making processes were more flexible and informal than those of the MoE; in some respects, the MoHE could be seen as more ‘modern’: for instance, it relied less on hard copies, using digital files more often, and had greater international exposure;
MoE staff often held permanent positions while MoHE staff were often on secondment and/or contracts, leading to greater staff movement.

Conclusions

45. **The two major facts about the merger are: (i) it was politically motivated and unexpected, and (ii) it lasted for only two years.** The first of those two years was essentially a ‘getting-to-know’ period that lasted around 3-8 months (depending on the interlocutor). This was followed by a single year of actual implementation. All agreed that the merger did not result in significant changes, but that had it continued for several more years its reversal would have been difficult and painful. There was a general consensus that implementation and management were smoother and more efficient prior to the merger (and subsequent to the 2015 de-merger). It emerged that the de-merger in 2015 was also politically motivated and unexpected.

46. **No clear, unambiguous support was found for the merger.** According to the interlocutors, the major benefit (which was both unplanned and unexpected) was that the merger occurred while the MoHe was working on its strategic development plan (the *Malaysia Education Blueprint*). This facilitated an exchange of information and understanding, as well as shared responsibility and ownership throughout the education sector. Interestingly, this seems to have come as a surprise to the concerned parties. However, now that the exercise has been concluded, the concerned parties find that separation is preferable for the purposes of implementation and focus.

47. **The existence of autonomous agencies that perform major functions guarantees institutional stability for those functions in a context of politically driven change.** Furthermore, the large measure of autonomy enjoyed by universities sheltered them from the effects of the merger.
IV. THE SAUDI ARABIAN CONTEXT

A. The Saudi institutional context

Introduction

48. Institutional changes including mergers are not entirely new to the Saudi educational landscape. In 1973, the Supreme Council for Universities Statute was introduced to oversee public universities and was followed two years later by the establishment of the MoHE. In 2002, the General Presidency for Girls’ Education was merged with the MoE. Between 2003 and 2009, numerous Royal Decrees ordered the merger of colleges and university branches to create larger institutions and, most recently, in January 2015 a Royal Decree merged both ministries of education with a single minister. Corrective actions have therefore already been applied to address issues related to the variety of bodies overseeing educational sectors with similar powers and authority. Thus, the merging of boys’ and girls’ education (2004), the merger of teacher training colleges with universities (2007), and the merger of health sciences colleges with universities (2009) all represent attempts to unify the supervisory infrastructure.

49. The earliest education system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia dates back to 1925 with the founding of the Directorate of Education, a cornerstone of boys’ education in the country. In 1927, the Education Council was established to supervise all education activities in the western region of Hijaz, which had 323 schools (MoE, 2015).

Basic education

50. In 1951, during the reign of King Saud bin Abdulaziz, the Ministry of Knowledge was established and HRH Prince Fahd bin Abdulaziz was appointed as the first Minister of Knowledge (Education). The Ministry was founded under an ordinance to plan and supervise the three basic levels of education: primary, intermediate, and secondary.

51. In 1960, the General Presidency for Girls’ Education was established during the reign of King Faisal bin Abdulaziz. In 2002, the presidency was merged under the MoE to unify supervision of boys’ and girls’ education.

52. Primary, elementary, and secondary education are compulsory throughout the nation (MoE, 2004). Enforcement of this mandatory status can be described as relaxed.

53. Schools follow the 6-3-3 model, which consists of six years of primary, three years of intermediate (middle school), and three years of secondary (high school) education.

54. The Ministry operates under a strict centralized system with minimal authority granted to school districts and principals.

Higher education

55. Early efforts for post-secondary education in the Kingdom date back before the creation of the Ministry of Higher Education.

19 King Saud bin Abdulaziz, the second Monarch, ruled from 1953 to 1964.
20 HRH Prince Fahd bin Abdulaziz later became HM King Fahd bin Abdulaziz, the fifth Monarch, and ruled from 1982 to 2005.
21 King Faisal bin Abdulaziz, the third Monarch, ruled from 1964 to 1975.
56. Created by Royal Decree in 1934, the Overseas Scholarship Preparation School was founded to create a higher educated workforce. Students were mostly sent to Egypt to acquire higher degrees.\textsuperscript{22} Formal higher education was introduced in 1949 with the establishment of the Sharia College\textsuperscript{23} in Makkah under the Directorate of Education. A similar college was established in Riyadh in 1953 and the Arabic College was founded in 1954 (Aleisa, 2011).\textsuperscript{24}

57. The other institutions that predate the creation of the Ministry are: King Saud University (KSU) (1956), Islamic University (IU) (1960), King Fahad University for Petroleum & Minerals (KFUPM) (1962), King Abdulaziz University (KAU) (1966), Imam Mohammed bin Saud University (IMAMU) (1973), and King Faisal University (KFU) (1974).

58. In 1973, the Supreme Council for Universities Statute was introduced to oversee public universities in the Kingdom and was followed by the establishment of the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) in 1975 (Aleisa, 2011).

59. Until 2003, the country had eight public and five private universities. Currently, there are 26 public and around 30 private colleges and universities. Bachelors to doctoral degrees are offered in a range of fields that cover humanities to science.

60. Several institutions focus on specific fields, including two Islamic\textsuperscript{25} and two science and engineering\textsuperscript{26} universities, while the remainder tend to be comprehensive institutions that undertake research activities.

61. The Saudi model of higher education involves two types of institutions: (i) public institutions are owned and operated by the government (national faculty and staff are civil servants), and (ii) private institutions are owned and operated by investors while being supervised by the Ministry (faculty and staff are contracted).

62. Universities have a semi-autonomous status since they receive the bulk of their funds from the Government through the Ministry of Finance (MoF), while producing self-generated income through online, diploma, and numerous bachelors’ programmes. Classes are offered on a semester basis (two main and summer) throughout the year.

63. Teacher training is offered through Colleges of Education and in most cases through paid one-year diploma programmes. The National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA) has set guidelines for the creation of these programmes; however, there are no nationwide policies and/or regulations. Each university, therefore, sets its own requirements for entry, continuation, and graduation.

64. The old structure of the Saudi education landscape involved the jurisdiction of several bodies depending on the administrative level:

- **Basic education** (K-12) was governed by the Supreme Education Council (SEC)\textsuperscript{27} and its operations were managed at three different levels:

\textsuperscript{22} E. Dr Ahmed Aleisa was appointed as Minister of Education on 11 December 2015.
\textsuperscript{23} The Sharia College later merged with King Abdulaziz University and was transformed into Um Alqura University in 1980.
\textsuperscript{24} The Arabic College was transformed into Alimam Mohammed bin Saud University in 1973.
\textsuperscript{25} These are Islamic University (IU) and Imam Mohammed bin Saud University (IMAMU).
\textsuperscript{26} These are the King Fahad University for Petroleum & Minerals (KFUPM) and the King Abdullah University of Science & Technology (KAUST).
\textsuperscript{27} The Higher Council for Education Policy used to be a separate body that was later merged with the SEC. It is governed by the Council of Ministers.
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Central level:
- Ministry of Education (MoE)
- Public Education Evaluation Commission (PEEC)
- National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education (Qiyas)
- Tatweer Education Holding

Regional level:
- 13 Regional Offices of Education representing different administrative regions
- 45 General Departments of Education (school districts)
- Several Education Offices

Local level:
- 30,500 public schools
- 4,000 private schools

Higher education was governed by the SEC and the Higher Education and Universities Council (HEUC) and its operations are managed at two different levels:
- Central level:
  - Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE)
- Local level:
  - 50 universities (public and private)

Vocational education was governed by the SEC and the HEUC and its operations are managed at two different levels:
- Central level:
  - Ministry of Labour (MoL)
  - Saudi Skills Standards (SSS)
  - Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC)
- Local level:
  - 18 Girls Higher Technical Institutes
  - 36 Colleges of Technology
  - 68 Vocational Institutes

Military education was governed by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Ministry of National Guard (MoNG) and operates within six colleges around the Kingdom.

Separation 1: Creation of the MoHE

In 1975, the Ministry of Higher Education was created under a Royal Decree and all sectors relevant to tertiary education under the MoE were transferred to the newly created ministry.

Merger 1: Merger of female and male education divisions

In 2002, a Royal Decree ordered the merger of the General Presidency for Girls’ Education (GPGE) with the MoE (acquisition) creating a single authority to oversee all K-12 education in the country.

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28 PEEC reports to the Council of Ministers.
29 Qiyas reports to the Council of Ministers.
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67. This merger involved three key phases (MoE, n.d.):

1. Uniting ministerial sectors, thus creating a central apparatus. This involved: uniting all corresponding sectors (with the exception of the Deputies for Educational Affairs, as there are two sectors, one for each gender).

2. Restructuring and uniting (female and male) Departments of Education (DoE) in all administrative regions. This involved:
   i. Merging (41) female DoEs with (42) male DoEs, resulting in a total number of (45) DoEs across the country.
   ii. Numerous meetings between Directors-General of DoEs and relevant parties within the ministry to discuss, plan, and implement the actual merger(s). Approximately 40 key areas were discussed, according to reports.

3. Restructuring and uniting (female and male) Offices of Education (OoE) in all administrative regions with no DoEs.

68. According to a report prepared by the MoE, several advantages and disadvantages were noted.

Key advantages:

- Educational domain:
  - Utilization of educational leaders in both sectors to plan further work
  - Holistic system promotes increases in educational quality
  - Unification of educational mechanisms across the country
  - Unification of circulars and by-laws

- HR domain:
  - Better investment of HR in managerial positions
  - Reallocation of personnel to address staffing shortages
  - Reallocation of personnel to support schools with staffing shortages
  - Flexibility to grant personnel choice of work location

- Administrative and financial domain:
  - Unification of expenditure procedures
  - Facilitation of monitoring processes
  - Unification and regulation of administrative and financial procedures
  - Unification of procurement procedures
  - Reduction in size of supporting service staff (drivers, janitors, security guards, etc.)

- IT & development domain:
  - Development of a single software system to ensure compatibility
  - Utilization of computer labs
  - Unification of electronic forms and procedures
  - Formulation of unified work procedures

- Communication domain:
  - Facilitation of communication with the ministry
  - Facilitation of communication with the community
  - Fewer procedural periods
Supervision domain:
- More focused ministerial supervision (45) vs. (83) DoEs

Infrastructural domain:
- Utilization of available facilities and properties
- Utilization of available lands.

Key disadvantages:
- Lack of financial resources for merged DoEs
- Complications related to the incompatibility of computer and administrative systems across DoEs
- Insufficient and distant office spaces
- Limitations related to the organization of (gender) mixed meetings
- Discrepancies on working procedures between female and male sectors.

Sub-merger 1: Higher education

69. Between 2003 and 2009, numerous Royal Decrees ordered the merger of colleges and university branches to create larger institutions (see Annex 3 for full names of universities):

- In 2003, KSU and IMAMU branches merged to create Qasim University (QU).
- In 2003, UQU branch and Teachers’ Colleges (boys and girls) merged to create Taif University (TU).
- In 2004, KAU branch, IMAMU branch, and Teachers’ Colleges (boys and girls) merged to create Taibah University (TAIBAHU).
- In 2005, KFUPM branch and Teachers’ Colleges (boys and girls) merged to create Hail University (HU).
- In 2005, KKU branch and Teachers’ Colleges (girls) merged to create Jazan University (JAZANU).
- In 2005, Community College and Teachers’ Colleges (girls) merged to create Jouf University (JU).
- In 2005, Teachers’ Colleges (boys and girls) merged to create Albaha University (BU) (2005).
- In 2006, Teachers’ Colleges (girls) merged to create Princess Noura University (PNU) (2006).
- In 2006, several colleges merged to create the University of Tabuk (UT).
- In 2006, KKU branch was transformed into Najran University (NU).
- In 2007, Teachers’ Colleges (boys and girls) merged to create Northern Borders University (NBU).
- In 2009, KFU branch was transformed into the University of Dammam (UoD).
- In 2009, KSU branch was transformed into Majmaah University (MU).
- In 2009, KSU branch was transformed into Alkharj University (KU).
- In 2009, KSU branch was transformed into Shaqraa University (SU).

Merger 2: MoE and MoHE

70. In January 2015, a Royal Decree merged both ministries of education under a single minister.
The new MoE

71. **Vision**: ‘Quality education in order to build a knowledge-based society that shall be a global competitor’.

72. **Mission**: ‘Providing educational opportunities for all in an appropriate learning environment following the educational policy of the Kingdom, to raise the quality of its output, and increase the effectiveness of research, to encourage creativity and innovation, the development of social partnership, and upgrading the skills and capabilities of the stakeholders.’

73. **Goals**:
   - Build students’ personal, national, Islamic, cognitive, and intellectual skills and character.
   - Provide admission opportunities for students to join higher levels of education.
   - Develop criteria for teacher preparation, selection, development of educational efficacy, and stimulation.
   - Raise the quality and improve the qualitative level of education.
   - Promote expansion in school construction, educational facilities, and maintenance.
   - Promote research and the production, diffusion, and use of knowledge, and the expansion of graduate programmes.
   - Promote the expansion of private education to achieve development goals.
   - Raise the educational level to achieve alignment with development requirements and the needs of the community.
   - Develop a regulatory environment and effective governance.
   - Offer overseas scholarships for qualified students to meet development needs and promote the transfer of knowledge.
   - Ensure the optimum use of information technology and communications.
   - Promote the diversification of educational funding and investment.
   - Strengthen local and international partnerships.

74. **The current major units of the Ministry**:
   - Office of the Minister
   - Deputy Minister for Planning and Information
   - Deputy Minister for Educational Affairs
   - Deputy Minister of Scholarships
   - Deputy Minister for School Affairs
   - Director-General for Information Technology
   - Director-General for Administrative and Financial Affairs
   - Director-General for Public Relations and Media
   - Director-General for International Collaboration
   - Director-General for Project Management
   - Centre for Research and Studies in Higher Education
   - Legal Department
   - Follow-up Department (Auditing)
• Projects Management Department
• Committee Work Unit
• Director-General Internal Audit

75. The new structure following the merger of Ministries of Education and of Higher Education:

• General education (K-12) and higher education are governed by the Council of Economic and Development Affairs (CEDA),\textsuperscript{30} whose operations are managed at three different levels:
  - Central level: the Ministry of Education (MoE)
  - Regional level:
    - 13 Regional Offices of Education representing different administrative regions
    - 45 General Departments of Education (school districts)
    - Several Education Offices
  - Local level:
    - 30,500 public schools
    - 4,000 private schools
    - 50 universities (public and private)

• Vocational education is governed by CEDA and its operations are managed at two different levels:
  - Central level:
    - The Ministry of Labour (MoL)
    - Saudi Skills Standards (SSS)
    - Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC)
  - Local level:
    - 18 Girls Higher Technical Institutes
    - 36 Colleges of Technology
    - 68 Vocational Institutes

• Military education is governed by the Council of Political and Security Affairs (CPSA) and its operations are managed at two different levels:
  - Central level:
    - Ministry of Defence (MoD)
    - Ministry of National Guard (MoNG)
  - Local level:
    - Six colleges.

B. An analysis of news articles about the merger

76. The research department at the Regional Center of Quality and Excellence in Education (RCQE) conducted a thorough analysis of 90 articles and opinion columns published in 11

\textsuperscript{30} CEDA replaced the SEC and overseas more than 20 ministries. It is still governed by the Council of Ministers. Its membership includes the MoE, the MoL, and 20 additional ministries.
Saudi Arabian newspapers,\(^{31}\) in addition to miscellaneous news sources,\(^{32}\) that discussed the ministerial merger that took place in March 2015. Another analysis was conducted in August 2015 to update the data. Annex 3 provides a detailed listing of the number of articles from each Saudi newspaper. See Annex 5 for a bibliography of articles reviewed in this section.

77. An analysis conducted on the articles identified the following themes:
- concerns regarding the management of the new ministry;
- opportunities emerging from the merger related to many aspects of the system;
- benchmarking and international experiences of organizational management in education.

**Concerns regarding management**

78. The two former ministries were burdened with a range of problems which induced concerns expressed in the articles. One article listed 25 separate issues raising the question of which concerns the Minister should prioritize (Alnowaiser, 2015). Many of the articles raised the point that the two previous ministries were responsible for a large number of students and staff across the entire area of Saudi Arabia (Aba AlKhail, 2015; Aljabir, 2015; Alkart, 2015; Almaalamy, 2015; AlMussallam, 2015; Alsadairy, 2015; Alshahrani, 2015; Alshlash, 2015; Makki, 2015; Me’emar, 2015). The newly merged ministry will inherit an estimated 7 million students and 600,000 teaching staff and academics to oversee, making it the largest ministry in the country. Restructuring is going to be a difficult process and requires immediate measures (AlAqla, 2015; Alshareef, 2015). Aba Alkhail (2015) also expressed the concern that a single organization might prove incapable of governing this number of students, teachers, and professors. Electronic-based systems of management proposed for operations in the Ministry were viewed as justified to help monitor the large number of personnel under the Ministry’s supervision (AlMussallam, 2015). Experts also asserted that the merger was not based on a feasibility study and was, instead, a purely political decision (Alshanbari, 2015).

79. The fact that the two ministries had not devised a new organizational structure or merger plans added to the pessimism regarding the newly formed ministry’s capability to manage the large number of personnel and institutes. Because the merger was a purely political decision (Alshanbari, 2015), many experts proposed urgent planning sessions to develop a clear organizational structure, in order to avoid chaos at the beginning of the merger (Alfraihi, 2015; Ajjarallah, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c; Alsagaf, 2015b; Alturaifi, 2015). In addition, a report published in the Alsharq Alawsat newspaper stated that the Supreme Council had recommended that the new minister put into place a plan for the merger (Alrasheed, 2015).

80. The bureaucratic model of management and high degree of centralization that characterized the previous two ministries is another challenge for the success of the merger (AlAqla, 2015; Alshareef, 2015; Katbi, 2015; Me’emar, 2015; Sahab, 2015). Suggestions were made by a number of experts to elaborate policies preventing these bureaucratic management patterns from recurring in the new ministry (AlAqla, 2015). Altwairi (2015) was more optimistic, noting the relationships built with students and teachers by the new minister through social media and suggesting his career background might help to eliminate

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32 Additional articles were retrieved from the following electronic newspapers: Alma’aileem (Education) Electronic Newspaper, Alnnas, Alweem, Alyaum, and Sabq.
bureaucracy in the new ministry. Alsaleh (2015) and Alrasheed (2015a) further expressed confidence that the merger will change the management style of the two former ministries.

81. The only example of opposition to the merger was reported in the online newspaper Sbaq (تغیر على رئاسة رئيس جامعة دار العلوم السابق لوزير التعليم, 7 March, 2015). An expert from King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals expressed surprise over the decision to merge the two ministries. He claimed that higher education institutes in the country were performing well and the merger would not benefit the higher education sector.

Opportunities provided by the merger

82. Opportunities for management. Experts described the merger as ‘a qualitative leap’ in the higher education sector of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Alqarzaiy, 2015), as central supervision for both sectors will create long-sought after synergies between K-12 and higher education (Abou Riyah, 2015; Alhabib, 2015; Alrifai, 2015; Alsaqiry, 2015; Alzahrani, 2015; Alhoubashy, 2015; Moghrabi, Kaffas, and AlQahtany, 2015; Saudi Press Agency, 2015a–f). Unified governance of education will also enable professors and teachers to more easily exchange expertise and best practices (Alaowad, 2015; Alhabib, 2015; Alkhabti, 2015; Althowaini, 2015; Moghrabi, Kaffas, and AlQahtany, 2015; Shabraq, 2015, Saudi Press Agency, 2015c,d,e; Zaini, 2015). Another benefit provided by central management and termination of the Supreme Council of Education is that the execution of strategic decisions and plans will proceed more smoothly. It will also improve compatibility by eliminating duplications that occurred between the two separate ministries. This also implies that human and financial resources will be used more efficiently in the future (Aljabir, 2015; Alkhabti, 2015; Areeshy, 2015; Tago, 2015).

83. Effects on higher education. A major enabling policy for the merger would be financial and administrative autonomy on the part of universities.33 This is not only key to the success of the merger, but also to the improvement of educational outcomes (AlAqla, 2015; Alsagaf, 2015a, 2015b; Alshareef, 2015; Sab’an, 2015). Increased levels of university autonomy (in the spheres of expenditure and academic policies) would promote research in education to unprecedented levels of quality and excellence (Aba AlKhail, 2015; Alfraihi, 2015; Alhamid, 2015; Alkhabti, 2015, Alqarzaiy, 2015; Alrabiey, 2014; Alrasheed, 2015a; Alsagaf, 2015b, Alsdairy, 2015; Alssahali, 2015; Althabeety, 2015; Alzaied, 2015). Greater university autonomy would also facilitate the recruitment of professors and teachers thanks to the magnitude of personnel overseen by the Ministry (Almaalamy, 2015; Alsdairy, 2015; Althabeety, 2015; Saudi Press Agency, 2015c,d,e). Alzaied (2015) also noted that the success of the merger could be promoted by reducing the supervisory load of the new ministry through the creation of more privatized higher education institutes and the transfer of operational affairs to specialized authorities and other ministries. The new ministry should take on only the functions of strategic planning and supervision and the monitoring of quality.

84. Financial autonomy on the part of universities could lead to better outcomes in education. Competition between universities to achieve excellence and higher quality would increase

33 University autonomy is limited to the following: universities receive budgets directly from the MoF, not from the MoHE; they generate their own funds through tuition-paid programmes and other sources, although these funds are minimal compared to the budgets; and presidents recommend vice-president and deanship appointments and appoint Vice Deans, Department Chairs, and staff. However, the universities still have no authority regarding many aspects including, but not limited to expenditures (which have to follow government requirements and forms) including operations and projects. In addition, many academic policies are set by the Higher Education Council.
once institutions gained greater autonomy from the Ministry (Aba AlKhail, 2015; Aldooshi, 2015; Alfraini, 2015; Alghabewy, 2015; Alhamid, 2015; Almaliki, 2015; Alqarzaiy, 2015; Alsagaf, 2015; Alsahali, 2015; Sahab, 2015; Saudi Press Agency, 2015). Some suggest that if universities were given complete autonomy, elections to assign university presidents would be needed, whereas others propose the formation of a universities council to function as a reference for higher education. Members would include university presidents with the council chaired by the Minister (Sabq, 2015).

85. AlKhashramy (2015) urged that scientific research be given more attention in light of the merger by establishing a separate organization dedicated to research. More attention to research after the merger will be essential, as educators will need evidence-based practices in order to produce high quality outcomes and compete in the education market (Alkart, 2015; Alkhabti, 2015; Zaini, 2015). Many authors further stated that it is almost self-evident that research in higher education would improve significantly in the wake of the merger (Aldooshi, 2015; Alghabewy, 2015; Alghashaam, 2015; Aljomaiah and Aldahas, 2015; Alkhabti, 2015; Almaliki, 2015; Alqarzaiy, 2015; Alsahali, 2015; Alsdairy, 2015; Althabeety, 2015; Alzaied, 2015; Katbi, 2015; Sahab, 2015; Saudi Press Agency, 2015).

86. Authors agreed that the ministerial merger would result in the development of strong networks between higher education institutes and between these institutes and the private sector, leading to more compatible outcomes with the job market (Aljabir, 2015; Almkainzy, 2015; Alslaiman, 2015; Alzaied, 2015). Exchanges between higher education institutes and other national sectors will also improve significantly due to the shift away from autocratic management.

87. Effects on K-12 education. The merger will create synergies between K-12 and higher education, which will not only align outcomes, but provide a boost to them too (Alkart, 2015; Alshareef, 2015). Issues resulting from the gap between higher education and K-12 outcomes are also expected to disappear. There is speculation surrounding the cancellation of the preparatory year in university along with the university entry test (Qiyas), as a result of the merger (Alkhabti, 2015; Alsakran, 2015; Zaini, 2015), because outcomes would be aligned in education being governed by one ministry – that is, having a single ministry would, in theory, create a more harmonious flow between outcomes of K-12, which become inputs for higher education, then outcomes again for the job market.

88. Many changes occurring as a result of the merger could provide educators with more room to concentrate on developing teaching and learning processes and producing high-quality education (Al Farhan, 2015; Alkhabti, 2015; AlMarashi, 2015; Almkainzy, 2015; Alsakran, 2015; Alsahali, 2015; Alzaied, 2015; Zainy, 2015), in addition to developing teacher training and improving the status of the teaching profession (Alshahrani, 2015).

89. Financial opportunities. Authors predict that the ministerial merger will be financially advantageous for the education sector in general. The new ministry will inherit the largest portion of government spending, estimated at 25% of the annual budget (Almuneef, 2015; AlMussallam, 2015; Alshareef, 2015). The merger is also expected to diminish the amount of spending on the Ministry because autonomous universities will start generating operating revenue. In addition, a single ministry of education will bring about more efficient allocation of human and financial resources (Alghabewy, 2015; Alhabib, 2015; Aljabir, 2015; Alkhabti, 2015; Alsdairy, 2015; Alshahrani, 2015; Althowaini, 2015; Areeeshy, 2015; Me’emar, 2015; Moghrabi, Kaffas, and AlQahtany, 2015; Saudi Press Agency, 2015). AlKhazim (2015) proposed new financial channels substituting for government
spending on universities. Such financial channels would support educational outcomes and effectiveness through the following means:

- **Scholarships**: universities operating in collaboration with the Ministry can generate about SAR 1 billion.
- **Project management**: universities could generate revenue through the execution of projects in collaboration with different sectors in the country.
- **Excellence**: universities could generate revenue from excellence awards.
- **Operational programmes**: the university could generate revenue from in-house services such as the university hospital.

**Proposed ideas and structures**

90. Aljarallah (2015c) proposed three structural models for the new ministry:

- The first envisages a ministry for public education that entails full autonomy for higher education institutions.
- Under the second model the ministry controls K-12 education and retains some control over higher education institutions.
- The third model differs from that of the two former ministries by reflecting the vision of the country and approaching public and higher education as a unified system.

**Benchmarking and international experiences**

91. The following suggestions were made:

- German experts and recommendations regarding the merger in the wake of the German experience recommend decentralization of the system (Aba Aljaish, 2015).
- The ministry should draw on the experience of Lebanon in merging ministries, so as to ensure the development of a knowledge society (AlTuraifi, 2015).
- The new ministry should utilize the experience of higher education management in the United Kingdom (Aba Alkhail, 2015).
- The merger should ensure that the education system is on track with successful education governing models in Europe, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States (AlSaad, 2015).
- Previous institutional mergers in Saudi Arabia can provide good lessons for the educational ministerial merger (Alshahrani, 2015).

**C. Outcomes of the RCQE workshop**

92. The RCQE held a workshop on 24 January 2016 as part of a project to study international experiences on ministerial mergers. During the workshop the participants (Annex 4) discussed the study’s findings, resulting in the following main conclusions regarding the merger:

- The merger decision could have been based on dissatisfaction with educational outcomes.
- Reflection on the previous merger (General Presidency for Girls Education and MoE) raised several points:
  - The merger was not comprehensive.
Two separate facilities and bodies are still in operation.

- Accordingly, the merger was generally referred to as a failure.
- Most participants are not particularly sanguine about the current merger, since the previous sub-merger did not seem to be successful.
- General concern surrounded the concepts of ‘merger’ vs. ‘acquisition’, as it is feared that one of the ministries will be consumed (acquisition) by the other.
- The current level of administrative bureaucracy and centralization would hinder the process, as greater decentralization is needed to facilitate the merger.
- Sharing of information and decision-making processes should be prioritized.
- Addressing staffing issues where there is confusion and ambiguity should be a priority, so as to ensure that people do not fear for their jobs.
- It is important to understand the effects of institutional culture, which differs immensely between the two ministries.
- Coordination with relevant ministries is key to the success of the merger.
V. **OVERALL CONCLUSIONS: HYPOTHETICAL POLICY SCENARIOS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS**

93. Given that the purpose of this study is to inform implementation of merger processes, it is appropriate to conclude with an attempt to outline hypothetical or possible policy scenarios and their implications for further analysis, planning, and decision-making. The word ‘hypothetical’ is important here. The study does not advocate any specific scenario and it is, moreover, likely that further scenarios or combinations of those presented below exist, along with their implications, advantages, and disadvantages.

94. Furthermore, the scenarios below represent ideal types or simplified versions of reality, which is itself rather more complex and complicated. It is possible to construct scenarios that combine aspects of several of the scenarios. In addition, implementation could include phasing processes whereby elements contained in the scenarios below are introduced over time. Alternatively, the merger process could begin with one scenario and, at some level of maturation and readiness, take on elements of other scenarios.

95. The purpose of these scenarios is to inform the arduous task of implementation during which policy analysts are expected to explore options, implications, advantages, and disadvantages. Decisions are, of course, left to the policy-makers. The scenarios are intended to provide information and perspectives on the implications and potential advantages and disadvantages of various courses of action. The remainder of this section, therefore, presents four hypothetical merger scenarios. For each scenario a brief overview is given of the implications for:

- the organizational structure of the merged ministry;
- the analytical and preparatory work that, ideally, should be realized to ensure effective and smooth implementation of the merger;
- the advantages of the scenario;
- the disadvantages of the scenario.

**Scenario 1. Functions and structures inherited from the MoE and MoHE are preserved: The merged ministry focuses on the development of comprehensive policies and plans**

**Major characteristics:**

- All functions that characterized the two previous ministries (MoE, MoHE) are retained in the merged ministry.
- Only the hierarchy at the very top changes.

**Organizational structures:**

- The new, merged ministry is mandated to cover all regulatory, technical, and administrative functions of the MoE and MoHE.
- The same level of centralization exists as before the merger.
- One minister presides over two parallel structures: one structure covers K-12, while another covers post-secondary. Analytical preparatory work paves the way for effective implementation.
- Assuming that each parallel structure has its own head and operates as before the merger, there is a need to establish a decision chain between sub-structure heads and the minister.
Advantages:

- The scenario would result in business as usual for all functions and structures (stability).
- The development of comprehensive policies and plans would proceed as in the past.
- Existing central management would be preserved.
- If necessary (change of political will), a de-merger would be relatively uncomplicated and result in minimal cost.

Disadvantages:

- There would be no efficiency gains through economies of scale.
- Certain functions and structures would be duplicated.

Conclusion. This scenario describes the minimal type of merger characterized by minimal effort, minimal short-term costs, minimal effect on ongoing operations, minimal changes, and minimal amount of time required for implementation. It could, however, also constitute a first step or a convenient entry point into a longer-term merger process. This process could include measures drawn from scenarios 2-4. It should also be noted that this minimal form of merger precludes possible expected benefits, such as improved cost efficiencies, unified policy formulation, and more effective service delivery. These potential benefits, however, may well entail costs and create confusion before they can be achieved. This also begs the question as to whether the expected benefits of the merger have been clearly defined.

Scenario 2. Deconcentration: Horizontal restructuring of ministerial functions and relevant structures to specialized agencies and universities while maintaining centralized management

Major characteristics:

- Selected technical and regulatory functions are performed by specialized, autonomous, or semi-autonomous agencies. PEEC, NCAAA, and Qiyas might be precursors here.
- Universities are granted increased autonomy.
- The central ministry focuses on regulation and administrative functions (to be determined).

Organizational structures:

- central ministry;
- satellite agencies, each associated with a major function such as: the teacher service commission, examinations council, qualifications/accreditation agency, higher education financing commission, assessment, auditing, etc.;
- more autonomous universities.

Analytical preparatory work to pave the way for effective implementation:

- Identify functions that would be devolved to agencies.
- Perform studies to determine:
  - the functions, organization, and governance arrangements of the new agencies, as well as the downsized ministry;
  - norms and procedures for accountability;
Merging Education Ministries: Lessons learned from international practices

- staffing (since this will entail staff movements);
- needs for staff capacity development and measures to adapt capacities to the new challenges;
- lines of authority and decision chains in all structures;
- the nature of reward or incentive structures;
- the detailed nature of university autonomy;
- financing implications and requirements;
- the management and communication of information;
- lessons from international experience with deconcentration, as well as from more intensive forms of university autonomy;
- additional information, to be determined.

- Formulate capacity development plans and programmes.
- Make sure that care is given to implementation processes, including training, and ensure that all concerned understand the aims, objectives, and processes related to the changes.

**Advantages:**

- There is less ministerial centralization (including a more streamlined structure) with increased focus on the Ministry’s core functions (planning, strategic development, and regulation).
- Specialized agencies will ensure the professionalization of technical functions.
- Elimination of duplication could engender lower operational costs.
- Specialized agencies and more autonomous universities promote institutional stability, as functions linked to agencies will not be perturbed by ministerial reorganization or de-mergers.
- University autonomy could result in more dynamic universities and greater differentiation between them.

**Disadvantages:**

- Outsourcing of functions will result in a lower ministerial budget.
- A de-merger (as a result of a change of political will) would be costly and complicated.
- Staffing complications.
- There would be less direct political control over functions moved to agencies.

**Conclusion.** Under this scenario the more technical functions would be spun off horizontally from the central ministry to (more or less) autonomous agencies whose operations and staffing would be characterized as professional. Each of these might even have its own board of directors or similar governance structure. In other words, these functions would be deconcentrated to the agencies, while remaining centralized in terms of the entire system within those agencies. This scenario would signal a move towards the professionalization of important areas of the education sector, while the central ministry retains strategic management, planning, overall regulation, and policy functions, as well as much of its current administrative activities.
Scenario 3. Decentralization: Vertical restructuring, gradually offering universities and school administrations autonomy according to capacity

Major characteristics:

- Selected functions (e.g., teacher recruitment, textbook, and curricular decisions, financing, construction and maintenance, etc.) are moved to schools or to school or regional districts.
- Universities are granted increased autonomy.
- Increased direct involvement of actors at more local levels.

Organizational structures:

- Local structures (to be defined), either districts or schools, would be enlarged and strengthened in order to accommodate their new functions.
- The central ministry would lose staff and structures to the decentralized structures.
- Technical functions (all or some) could remain in the central ministry, be spun off to agencies, or decentralized to local levels.

Analytical preparatory work to pave the way for effective implementation:

- Identify the functions to be decentralized and where and to what level they will be decentralized.
- Perform studies to determine:
  - the capacities of the central and decentralized levels to perform their new functions (this could take the form of a management audit or functional analysis of all structures);\(^\text{34}\)
  - norms and procedures for accountability;
  - staffing (since this might entail staff movements);
  - lines of authority and decision chains in all structures;
  - the detailed nature of university autonomy;
  - financing implications and requirements;
  - lessons from international experience with decentralization, as well as from more intensive forms of university autonomy;
  - the management and communication of information;
  - additional information, to be determined.
- Formulate capacity development plans and programmes.
- Consultations with and participation of local levels and with universities. This is useful to ensure ownership.
- Make sure that care is given to implementation processes, including training, and ensuring that all concerned understand the aims, objectives, and processes related to the changes.

Advantages:

- Greater ministerial focus on core functions (planning, strategic development, regulation).

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\(^{34}\) For a detailed view of what such an audit could cover, the scope of the work involved, and indicative terms of reference, see Sack and Saidi (1997) (Annex 5: Bibliography, Section II).
• Increased interaction between local communities and the education sector.
• Greater local control over schools, which could act as an incentive for community involvement in school matters leading to more dynamic schools.
• Potential for lowering operating costs at the central level.
• A more competitive environment for universities and educational administrations.

Disadvantages:

• Implementation can be complex and difficult with poor implementation resulting in failure to meet expected goals.
• Could lead to greater differentiation between schools and/or school districts and between universities. This could lead to discrepancies between institutions in the delivery of educational services.
• A de-merger would be costly and complex if a change in political will occurred.
• Capacity building would be costly in the short term.
• Staffing complications.

Conclusion. Decentralization can be complex and risky. As noted earlier in the study, ‘it is simple to design decentralization policies … but frequently very hard to implement the policies’. For this reason, implementation of this scenario would require careful planning and capacity-building measures based on a firm understanding of the issues, the capacities of existing structures, and the needs of the new structures. However, decentralization has the potential to unlock energies at local levels (including within universities) that could lead to a more reactive educational system overall.

Scenario 4. Total fusion of the two ministries through the merging of all functions and structures

Major characteristics:

• All functions that characterized the two previous ministries (MoE, MoHE) are retained in the merged ministry.
• There are no parallel functions and structures. Wherever possible, all functions common to the former MoE and MoHE are merged into single structures.

Organization structure:

• One large ministry where all functions and organizational units are fused. For example, a single unit would be responsible for personnel management for all teachers and professors, while one planning unit would cover the entire system; etc.

Analytical, preparatory work to pave the way for effective implementation:

• Perform studies to determine:
  ○ staffing requirements;
  ○ the compatibility of all systems and procedures in use in the two ministries and the implications for the merger;
  ○ the compatibility of authority structures and decision chains in the two ministries and the implications for the merger;
  ○ new decision chains;
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- the nature of internal communication and information management;
- additional information, to be determined.
- A functional analysis (organizational audit) could be useful.
- Staff of both ministries would need to be thoroughly informed.

Advantages:

- Potential for efficiency gains through the elimination of duplication.
- Preservation of governmental and ministerial centralization.

Disadvantages:

- There may be some disruption of staffing, procedures, and routines.
- Complications will emerge if computer and administrative systems are not compatible.
- Merging staff from different institutional cultures could affect productivity.
- Undoing the fused system could prove difficult and costly (in case of a subsequent de-merger).
- The large size of the fused ministry could lead to longer decision-making chains and more complicated procedures (i.e. increasing bureaucracy).

Conclusion. Given that one ministry is much larger than the other, this scenario could give rise to fears that the process resembled an acquisition rather than merger. It could also lead to staffing issues since duplications would be eliminated as all functions were fused. However, a major issue in this scenario would be the impact of the size of the ministry on its capacities for reactivity and timely decision-making. Conversely, this scenario holds potential for significant economies of scale bringing efficiency gains.
ANNEX 1. PERSONS INTERVIEWED FOR THE MALAYSIAN CASE STUDY

Malaysian Qualifications Agency

Dato’ Prof. Dr Rujhan Bin Mustafa, Chief Executive Officer
Syahrizan Shamsuddin, Head, Public and International Affairs
Soo Sit Chuan, Senior Director, Policy and Expertise Development

Ministry of Education

Dinatra Mohd Saat, Principal Assistant Secretary, Policy and International Relations Division
Jamil Bin Rakon, Under Secretary, Human Resource Management Division

Ministry of Higher Education

Dato’ Prof. Dr Asma Ismail, Director-General
Mohd. Yunus Bin Charlie Charington, Under Secretary
Assoc. Prof. Dr Norhayati Mohamed, Director, Programme Management Office

Malaysian Examinations Council

Dr Jamil Bin Adimin, Chief Executive
Dato Seri Dr Ibrahim Saad, Chairman, Board of Directors of the National University of Malaysia
## Annex 2. Saudi Newspaper Coverage on the Merger

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Number of articles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al Hayat</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Jazirah</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Almadina</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alriyadh</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alsharq Al-Awsat</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alsharq Daily Newspaper</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alwatan</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arab News</td>
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<tr>
<td>Makkah newspaper</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Okaz</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saudi Press Agency</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alta’aleem (Education) Electronic Newspaper</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alinnas</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alweeam</td>
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<td>Alyaum</td>
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## Annex 3. Saudi Public and Private Universities

<table>
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<th>Public universities</th>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Students*</th>
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<td>Umm Al-Qura University (UQU)</td>
<td>1949</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Al-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMAMU)</td>
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<td>King Khalid University (KKU)</td>
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<td>Taibah University (TAIBAHU)</td>
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<td>Taif University (TU)</td>
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Note: *= thousands.

### Private institutions

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<th>Faculty*</th>
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<td>Al Yamamah University (YU)</td>
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<td>Qassim Private Colleges</td>
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<td>Al-Farabi College</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Business and Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inaya Medical College</td>
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</table>


Note: * = thousands.
## Annex 4. RCQE Workshop Participants

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Husam A. Zaman</td>
<td>Board Secretary, Director General, RCQE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Suzanne Grant Lewis</td>
<td>Director, IIEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Omar A. Jalloun</td>
<td>Consultant, RCQE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Richard Sack</td>
<td>Consultant, IIEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Ali A. Alqarni</td>
<td>Director-General, ABEGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Abdulrahman Aboumoh</td>
<td>Former Consultant, MoHE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Khaled Alawad</td>
<td>Member, Shura Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Mohammed A. Alsaleh</td>
<td>Secretary-General, Higher Committee for Universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Majda I. Aljaroudi</td>
<td>Managing Editor, <em>Saudi Higher Education Journal</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Maha Taibah</td>
<td>Consultant, Ministry of Planning &amp; Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Jawhara Alalshiekh</td>
<td>Consultant, MoE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Mohammed A. Alohal</td>
<td>Deputy Minister Academic Affairs, MoE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Abdulrahman Albarak</td>
<td>Consultant, MoE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Haya A. Alawad</td>
<td>Deputy Minister Girls’ Education, MoE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Nayif H. Alroumi</td>
<td>Commissioner, PEEC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Section II


Section III


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Section IV (A)


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[An Analysis of the Merger of Saudi Arabia’s Education Ministries EN final.indd   47 27/01/2017   16:02:39]


Merging Education Ministries: Lessons learned from international practices


Merging Education Ministries: Lessons learned from international practices


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Merging Education Ministries: Lessons learned from international practices


