

Outstanding Schools in Saudi Arabia: Leadership Practices, Culture and Professional Development

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Declaration of Original Authorship

Declaration:

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

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Abstract

As Saudi Arabia strives to position itself strategically in global markets in response to globalization, education has become one of the most important tools to achieve this aim. While demands for reform in Western countries have fostered new notions of school excellence, equivalent concepts have to date received little attention in Saudi Arabia. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the nature of outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia, and thus claims to be an original and important contribution to the understanding of this phenomenon.

A qualitative case-study approach was used drawing on data from three high schools in Saudi Arabia, each having been rated outstanding by the city's local authority. Principals, Deputies and Social Instructors from the three schools were interviewed (n=9), while group interviews were conducted with the majority of teachers from each school (n=68; 25 out of 26 teachers from school 1; 20 out of 24 teachers from school 2 and 23 out of 28 from school 3. In addition, the daily work of Principals in each school was observed and relevant documents were collected. The resulting data were thematically analysed using a framework based on the inter-related concepts of leadership practices, culture and professional development

The findings reveal that leadership practices in these outstanding schools included a number of common features, such as establishing school vision, restructuring the organisation, leadership distribution, effective communication, strategic planning and quality assurance. Cultural aspects revealed the effect of both macro-level cultures: global and national cultures on these schools, as well

as micro-scale effects. Professional development was perceived to be important, and both leaders and teachers engaged in training opportunities. While these results cannot be generalised, it is hoped that they will be important to inform practitioners, policy makers and researchers about the nature of outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to explore and understand the nature of three outstanding case study schools in Saudi Arabia. It aims to provide insight into these schools, helping researchers, policy makers and practitioners in Saudi Arabia to understand these schools and learn from them. Although there is considerable literature regarding outstanding schools in Western contexts, little is known about the dynamics of education in Saudi Arabia, and few studies have highlighted the characteristics of outstanding schools in this specific context. Therefore, this thesis aims to fill these knowledge gaps.

This chapter provides a general overview of this research, to introduce the reader to the key concepts and arguments that will be developed throughout the thesis. It is organised in the following sections: identifying the problem, research aims and questions, conceptual framework, methodology, significance and outcome of the study, overview of the thesis and conclusion.

1.1 Identifying the problem

Although education has always been understood as important to a country's evolution, as a result of globalization this importance has recently increased (West-Burnham, 2003). No longer seen merely as a basic human right (Mason, 1998), access to education has become increasingly linked to economic development and growth (Shields, 2013), as global trade markets have become increasingly available. Indeed, as result of globalization, education has become more than a way to create a Knowledge Economy; it is also a tradable service itself (Singh, 2004).

The influence of globalization on education systems may take various forms. For example, rescaling contemporary policies as a result of international organisations overseeing international decision making and sometimes exercising quasi-governmental control (e.g. World Trade Organisation) is one. Another is moving from government to governance which is the governments' response to political rescaling by allowing greater autonomy to public sector and schools (Dale, 2007; Lingard, 2009). These will be discussed in greater depth in chapter two.

A further example of globalization's effect on educational policy is through deliberate policy borrowing. Tan (2010) pointed out that developing nations often adopt the educational policies established by developed countries one as a short cut to economic development. Singapore's successful adoption of Western policies, such as educational decentralisation, after its independence from Britain in 1963, is a good example of this practice (ibid.).

It has been argued that effective practices can be adapted to new environments by borrowing policies from another country or by following examples set by effective organisations within the same national context. Policies borrowed from other countries may face contextual, legal and cultural obstacles that hinder the process. Therefore, the tendency is to look for best practices within nations that offer similar economic, political and cultural contexts.

Saudi Arabia, the context of this study, is situated within a global system and affects and is effected by policies, trends and economic flows originating elsewhere. Currently, the country is trying to free itself from dependence on oil shipments to develop a diversified economy based on goods and services production. One way that the government has responded to globalization is to

invest in its educational system seeking to effect reforms within the country to produce outcomes that match the needs of the labour market and to secure a preferred place in global competition (Alaqael, 2005; Aljughaiman and Grigorenko, 2013). Therefore, in Saudi Arabia, government spending in the education sector increased from 8.7% to 20.5% from the 1970s to 2006 (Alsinbal et al., 2008) and accounted for 24% of the total national budget in 2012.

However, while spending has increased rapidly, the Ministry of Education retains a highly centralised system that has been in place since the founding of the country. It is responsible for governing schools, establishing roles and responsibilities, recruiting teachers and staff, assigning school Principals, setting the curriculum and printing and distributing textbooks (Alharbi and Almahdi, 2012). There is no clear reason for this attachment to centralisation by the Ministry. Some explain it in terms of the principle of managerial accountability, ensuring that both general educational policy and religious principles are followed (Alaqael, 2013). Others attribute this practice to general cultural norms (Azazi, 2012).

In recent years, the Ministry of Education has taken steps towards decentralising the system, giving power to local authorities over certain procedures, such as receiving applications for new teachers and managing teachers' reassignment between cities (Alsinbal, Alkhateeb, Motwally and Abdaljawad, 2008). Although more needs to be done, these attempts are seen as essential to improving the work of the Ministry, and more importantly to bringing the country closer to global trends to cope with the demands of globalization.

Some people, however, believe that such attempts to decentralise the system and empower local educational authorities face obstacles arising from the bureaucratic and hierarchical nature of the Ministry of Education, which may slow down such reforms (Alharbi and Almahdi, 2012). Indeed, at the local school level, little change has been documented and in fact some steps taken by the Ministry have subsequently been reversed, as recruiting and teacher transfer have been centralised again using a centralised web portal.

Two key questions arise from this situation. How do these global influences impact a country like Saudi Arabia, which has traditionally had a centralised and controlled education system, underpinned by Islamic Law? And how do outstanding schools experience and work effectively within this rapidly changing context? These questions lie at the core of this thesis.

It is relevant, here, to discuss some difficulties that school Principals face in Saudi Arabia. First, it appears that there is no consistent provision of prior or *in situ* training. Therefore, Principals have to depend solely on their personal diligence and their previous experience to aid them in the complex task of school leadership (Alaqeel, 2013).

Second, school Principals have huge responsibilities; they are responsible for all school facilities and activities, housekeeping, visiting teachers, mentoring and performing evaluations and assessments (Azazi, 2012). In addition, they must process a huge amount of paperwork in the form of circulars received from the local educational authority (ibid.).

Third, school Principals have little power over the teachers they employ (Rifa'i, 2006). They are not able to choose or recruit them or to remove them from the school if problems arise. Their annual reports on teachers are undervalued;

reports made by Principals are not referred to except when a teacher is in his or her first year or is intending to transfer to another city (Alaqeel, 2005).

Therefore, it is difficult for a Principal to engage teachers in non-classroom activities, since teachers only obligation is classroom teaching, according their job description.

Finally, it can be argued that Principals are inadequately remunerated; they are paid the same amount as their fellow teachers even though they work more days of the year. This results in low motivation among Principals (Azazi, 2012; Rifa'i, 2006).

Although the Ministry of Education is trying to standardise schools according to its centralised system, it does not recognise successful school leadership, nor does it rank or rate its schools. As a result, school Principals lack both the power to achieve clear results and also the motivation to stay in the post for a reasonable length of time (Alharbi and Almahdi, 2012).

However, within this challenging context, a number of schools appear able to operate successfully, producing exceptional outcomes. As John West-Burnham has commented about schools nowadays; they sometimes succeed in spite of, not because of, the educational system within which they operate (West-Burnham, 2009). While much research has been undertaken in Western contexts regarding outstanding schools (see, for example, Day, Sammons and Leithwood, (2011), Day (2007), Klar and Brewer (2013), Moller et al. (2007), Moos, Day and Johansson (2011) Moos et al. (2005) and Sanzo, Sherman and Clayton (2011)), there appears to be a dearth of studies in the Arabic world exploring these issues. Thus, several questions remain unanswered in the current literature in relation to Saudi Arabia: how do some schools manage to be outstanding despite

these difficulties? How do these schools manage to operate effectively under such a centralised, bureaucratic educational system? How does globalization affect these schools, and how do they interact with worldwide trends that may be in tension with Islamic values, local culture or national educational policy? Finally, how are Principals in such schools motivated? How do they, along with other leaders and teachers in these schools, develop professionally so that they can lead their schools effectively?

The aim of this study is to address these questions to fill the knowledge gap affecting both Saudi and Western literature, while informing policy makers, practitioners and researchers about these outstanding examples.

Among the reasons this study is timely, is the current Saudi effort to secure a more entrenched and diversified economy with respect to global markets. Second, pursuit of a knowledge economy through educational reform is being undertaken as a path towards development, while education itself has become a transacted service in global markets. For these reasons, countries around the world are seeking to make their educational systems and policies more effective. This research project aims to inform Saudi policy makers to identify best school-based practices, to help them face these economic and educational issues.

1.2 The origin of the research

The notion of effective leadership has fascinated me throughout my professional development. During my undergraduate studies, from 2003 to 2007, I was engaged with the literature about personal and professional effectiveness. Since the notion has not been treated satisfactorily in Arabic-language literature, I turned to translations of Western books, such as Stephen Covey's *The Seven*

Habits of Highly Effective People. When I graduated from a Saudi university in Arabic studies, I had the opportunity to pursue a career teaching Arabic, but chose instead a lower-ranking job while waiting for an opportunity as a lecturer at a university in the capital which I obtained in 2008. In 2009, I applied for and was granted a scholarship to study in the UK, improving my English while working towards an MA and a PhD, while retaining my position in Saudi Arabia.

I chose this field because I saw myself called to a career in educational management. I believed that by choosing this subject I could benefit myself, my family and my country through this opportunity to further my education and experience in the West. Also, I believed that although theories of educational leadership and management have been developed in the context of educational institutions, they could also be applied when dealing with personal, family and social issues, such as problem-solving and collaborative decision making.

When I was doing my MA at the University of Nottingham, I reflected on my previous reading of Western literature about personal and professional effectiveness, alongside then-current research and practices concerning school effectiveness in England and elsewhere. I observed an apparent relationship between effectiveness theories, Western ideologies, and values such as democracy, justice, equality, freedom, secularity etc.; I began to wonder whether this approach to "effectiveness" could survive in a substantially diverse cultural, religious and ideological context.

I raised this question in an MA seminar, sparking a long debate, which led me to the belief that this question could be answered most effectively through empirical data. I then decided that my PhD project should focus on the topic of effectiveness in Saudi Arabian schools.

1.3 Research aims and questions

The aim of this thesis is to offer insight into the nature of outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia, through designing an analytical framework emphasising leadership practices, culture and professional development.

Thus, three main questions were developed:

1. What are the leadership practices of school leaders in outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia?
2. How is culture perceived and experienced by the school community in these cases?
3. How is professional development perceived and experienced by the leaders and staff of these institutions?

1.4 Conceptual framework

Three main aspects have been identified as essential concepts to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the nature of outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia: leadership practices, culture and professional development. Leadership practices have been established to be a significant factor in school effectiveness (Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins, 2008), it is also conventional in educational leadership research to look at professional practices through various mediators (Simkins, Coldwell, Close and Morgan, 2009). Culture in its different guises (global, religious, national and organisational) produces a range of potential mediating effects, facilitating (or obstructing) the construction of an environment for the leadership initiatives. Additionally, professional development is needed for Principals, leaders and teachers to keep pace with the current standards and to

be informed with up-to-date knowledge and skills (O'Doherty and Orr, 2012; Riley and Mulford, 2007). Therefore, the professional development experience of outstanding school participants needs to be highlighted so that Principals, leaders and teachers are inspired to learn from their experience. It also presents an account for policy makers and researchers of how practitioners experience their professional development, to find ways to improve the experience.

Leadership practices in this research as in previous research in the field (Day et al., 2011; Leithwood et al., 2006; Moos, Day and Johansson, 2011) originated from theories of educational leadership and management, such as transformational, transactional, instructional and distributed leadership. In this perspective, leadership practices are not driven by one theory, but can be influenced by all of the above concepts, creating a set of practices not driven by any one theoretical orientation but rather a mix of theories (Leithwood et al., 2006). Relevant leadership practices may include vision, structuring the organisation, distributed leadership, effective communication, strategic planning and quality assurance. It is important to highlight leadership practices because the literature suggests that leadership is the second most important factor in school effectiveness, after classroom learning itself (Leithwood et al., 2008). Although Western literature has thoroughly examined leadership practices in schools, there is very little research of this kind in Arabic countries; Saudi practitioners and policy makers need context-specific research to inform relevant leadership practices in schools.

Culture is the second concept in this framework, and will include global, macro cultures as well as religious national and micro-level cultures such as school culture and subcultures within schools. Studying culture in this research is

important because it serves as a mediating effect on leadership practices and school effectiveness; it is also very important to study cases within their contexts. Studying effective initiatives without understanding their context would result in important phenomena not being understood or interpreted well (Bush, 2008). Culture is also important for studying effectiveness, a concept grounded in Western ideologies; a nuanced understanding of culture is needed, to present an account that seems relevant to practitioners, policy makers and the wider audience within a Saudi cultural context (Raihani, 2008).

Professional development is the third concept in this framework. It aims to highlight the professional development of those individuals who managed to lead their schools effectively, including Principals, leaders and teachers. In this context, the section highlights the individual journeys of leaders, opportunities for staff within their schools and how professional development is positioned and experienced more generally.

Professional development as a concept has gained momentum over the last few decades; as a result, the complexity of globalization and the knowledge economy have brought change to the public sector in general and schools in particular (Shields, 2013). Therefore, it is seen as essential that leaders and teachers experience effective mentorship to perform effectively (Riley and Mulford, 2007; Bubb and Earley, 2007). Professional development is also very important in the Saudi context, given the race towards the knowledge economy and the need to encourage relevant educational reform.

The three concepts together (leadership practices, culture and professional development) will help provide insight into the work and nature of outstanding schools within the Saudi context. This insight aims to show to educators in Saudi

Arabia leadership practices as practiced by others in the same context and not borrowed from different background. Cultural aspects are presented with respect to international, national, religious and school-specific cultures. Professional development is presented as doable and can be learnt from, although further development of the local authority's role is needed.

This framework will be developed and further explored in chapter 3.

1.5 Methodology

The aim of this section is to briefly highlight the methodology used in this study; a more thorough discussion will be available in the methodology chapter.

To help answering the three research questions, I used an interpretive approach in relation to epistemology and informed by a constructivist orientation in relation to ontology. Using this approach made it possible for me to understand closely and deeply the nature of outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia. This understanding was supported by learning about these schools within their cultural and social contexts. Because of the ontological and epistemological perspectives incorporated, qualitative methodology was used to conduct this research. Case study as an approach to inquiry is used in this research because this research aims to describe and understand schools in their natural environment.

The context of the study is a city known for its educational excellence in Saudi Arabia. The selected cases consisted of the schools that were rated as outstanding by the local educational authority and that have sustained this rating for the last five years. Another criterion was that the school must have won the

national Education Excellence Award at least one time. The three outstanding schools fall within the selection criteria. Methods used were documentary analysis, face-to-face interviews, group interviews and observations.

Principals, Deputies, Social Instructors and teachers participated in the study, from the three schools selected. The number of teachers participating was 25 out of 26 in 5 groups from Safeer School, 20 out of 24 teachers in 4 groups from Wazeer School and 23 out of 28 in 5 groups from King's School.

Principals, Deputies and Social Instructors were interviewed separately, while teachers were interviewed in groups. The day-to-day activity of Principals was also observed in a semi-structured manner. The Principal of Safeer School was observed for 3 working days, that of Wazeer for 2.5 working days and the Principal at King's for 1.5 days, each depending on their scheduled availability. Richly informative documents were also collected from all three schools, and thematic analysis was used to analyse data collected using each of these methods.

1.6 Significance and importance of the study

Over recent decades, developed Western countries have responded to globalization by introducing new policies and developing and reforming their public sectors in general and the education sector in particular (Shields, 2013). The literature on education in the West is reacting to these developments, so theory and research paralleled this development with additional preoccupations such as that of effectiveness. Saudi Arabia is keen to develop economically as well as improve living standards through several means including educational reform and restructuring. The country is rich in financial resources, but more

work needs to be done to develop knowledge and skills that are relevant to the national context.

Educational restructuring through reforms, raising standards and shifting policy orientations from government to governance are all different ways to develop the national educational system. An important aspect of this development process is to look for best practices at school level to learn from, informing researchers and practitioners as these are identified and then standardising these practices (Leithwood, 2007). Many researchers in the West have done this for their contexts of practice (Bouchamma, 2012; Leithwood et al., 2006; L. Moos et al., 2011; Salfi, 2011).

One of the gaps in both Western and Saudi literature on educational leadership is that the nature of outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia has not been emphasised. Western scholarship has created a very rich, albeit evolving literature about effective schools in the West, but this is only of limited help in a Saudi context due to differences in the cultural, religious and policy environment.

This study aims to contribute to two contexts of analysis. In the context of Western literature on educational leadership, the study aims to offer new insight into outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia according to a theoretical framework involving leadership practices, culture and leadership development. In addition, the research project offers Western literature a new insight into outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia, including their contextual and cultural motivating factors and how effectiveness has been achieved in spite of these differences. The second context for this research is the Saudi educational system itself. The project offers the system new insight into such trends such as decentralisation, leadership distribution, school autonomy and the celebration of success and

professional development, which had previously been discussed and applied in Western contexts.

This research is therefore seen to offer very important potential contributions to both Western literature and Saudi literature. Its importance to Western literature lies in shedding light on outstanding schools in a substantially different context from other studies. Saudi Arabia is different given the centralisation of education as a field, in the way schools are governed, in the way resources are distributed and even in the perceptions of Principals and their roles.

This study aims to fill these gaps in the literature about outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia with respect to educational leadership and management.

This thesis aims to:

- Give new insight into outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia, using the analytical framework centred on leadership practices, culture and leadership development.
- Understand the leadership practices that have been adopted in outstanding Saudi Schools
- Study outstanding leadership practices within a specific context, namely Saudi Arabia. This contrasts sharply against the majority of research done in the West, which looks only at leadership practices regardless of the context, e.g. studies by Day, Sammons and Leithwood (2011) and Hallinger and Murphy (1985) – see further discussion in the literature review chapter).
- Highlight culture at a macro (globalization), and micro (school culture) scale as the environment in which such outstanding performance has

developed. This helps further the previous aim to place additional stress on the specific context.

- Give insight into professional development in Saudi Arabia and how leaders and teachers are prepared for their jobs, how this formation can contribute to school effectiveness and how educators and leaders could have been better prepared. This knowledge could help other present and future leaders and teachers, while contributing to build school leadership capacity in the country.
- Use a qualitative approach to enquiry, which runs counter to the quantitative methodologies more usual in Saudi Arabia. This is very important so that practitioners can learn from real life examples and to set an example for other researchers interested in qualitative enquiry.
- Use a method incorporating semi-structured observations, which is also unusual for educational contexts in Saudi Arabia as the typical practice relies on structured observations. This will enrich the case studied and may open the horizon for others to explore.
- Contribute to literature on educational leadership in Saudi Arabia and the Arabic-speaking world, not only with respect to effectiveness theory but especially with insights from cases relevant to their contexts.
- Contribute to Western literature documenting and analysing outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia.

1.7 Overview of the thesis

In chapter one, I have introduced this research project, identifying the research problems and research questions, setting its aims and discussing its

methodology. In chapter two, I will examine the international educational context, discussing globalization as a macro-level factor while also examining the Saudi context on a micro scale. Chapter three offers a literature review, divided into two sections: the first sketches the theoretical framework for the thesis and highlights the important theories underpinning the research. Section two recognises prior work done in the field of leadership and management that seems relevant to the development of the framework.

The Methodology section is a fourth chapter, in which I defined the research paradigm for this project, identifying the approach taken, providing its context and highlighting its methods. Chapters five, six and seven offer the findings and analysis for the three cases studied, one chapter for each school. Chapter eight is the discussion chapter, bringing the findings from this study together with the educational leadership literature so that theory and practice can inform each other. Chapter nine is the conclusion in which I summarise the study, highlight its contribution to knowledge and discuss the implications and recommendations it offers.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced this research project, from identifying the problem to unpacking its aims and research questions, its conceptual framework, the methodology and significance of the study and its anticipated outcomes. The next chapter will set the groundwork for this research in terms of the international and Saudi educational context.

Chapter Two: The International Educational Context

2.1 Introduction

Over the last few decades, the world has changed from a set of independent nations that have control of their own systems and are isolated from each other to nations that are more obliged to comply with common rules set by the international community represented by international organisations such as the United Nations (Shields, 2013). As nations evolve policies in line with these rules, many aspects of contemporary society, such as trade, media, justice and education, have become the subject of international discourse (Little and Green, 2009).

Education is no longer only a basic human right; it has become increasingly linked to a country's economic development and it is an important subject in international discourse (Shields, 2013). Therefore, as world trade becomes increasingly available and enormous profits can be made on the global market, many countries realise that education plays an important role in a country's ability to produce efficiently and effectively (Mason, 1998). In turn, in an increasingly globalised world, education has become more than a way to create a knowledge economy for a specific country; it has become a tradable service worldwide (Singh, 2004).

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the context of the study, the Saudi Arabian educational system. As the education system in Saudi Arabia is not isolated from the rest of the world, it is also important to explore the global system with which the Saudi Arabian educational system interacts and to understand how it influences and is influenced by this system.

This chapter, therefore, is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the underlying theories around the notion of globalization and examines how it affects education. The second part explores Saudi Arabia as the context of the study with some discussion about the Saudi Arabian country, people, culture and economy. The educational system is discussed in some depth. The design of the chapter starting from a wider (globalization) to a more specific context (Saudi Arabia) will allow for a deeper understanding of the Saudi Arabian educational system, while also explaining changes and developments in such a system.

2.2 Globalization

Globalization is one of the most popular concepts under discussion today since it relates to a range of political, economic, cultural and societal dimensions (Arshad-Ayaz, 2008). The aim of this section is to discuss globalization as an introduction to the Saudi Arabian context. Saudi Arabia is part of a worldwide system, interacting and responding to global trends such as neoliberalism, New Public Management and the development of a knowledge economy. This section will be divided into two parts: the first will define globalization and discuss underlying theories, such as neoliberalism, world-system theory and world culture theory. The second section will explore the relation between globalization and education discussing New Public Management, knowledge economy, reform and international organisations.

The rise of the United States as a global economic and military power following the Cold War, the spread of neoliberal economics and the increase of cultural relations between nations due to new communication technologies have been

stated as key factors in the emergence of globalization (ibid). On the other hand, given that the spread of religion and trade between nations and continents has existed for millennia, certain scholars claim that globalization is a much older concept (Little and Green, 2009).

Scholte (2000) describes three historic phases of globalization. The first dates back several hundred years when people became aware of the outside world as different religions expanded from their original territories, such as the spread of Islam to northern Africa and Spain in the mid- and late 8th century. The second imperialist territorial expansion began in the mid-19th century and continued throughout the decades to follow. Lastly, global relations gained greater significance in the 1960s, representing a shift in globalization from domination to international relations and trade.

Although scholars continue to debate whether the cross-cultural interactions found in the first and second phases, such as the spread of religion and imperialism, should count as a form of globalization, the likes of Little and Green (2009) and Scholte (2000) agree that the current form of globalization is different from those earlier interactions. Higgins-Desbiolles (2009) argues that globalization began to take its current form at the beginning of the 1980s, and this formation was facilitated by modern movements that occurred between the 1950s and 1980s along with economic and technological developments in Europe and North America.

2.2.1 Defining globalization

Globalization has been described as a vague (Scholte, 2000) and contested (Singh, 2004) term because it is a dynamic and multi-dimensional concept. The

term “globalization” is not only used in economic, political, media-related, cultural and social discourses (Scholte, 2000), but it is also used by ordinary people in everyday life (Edwards and Usher, 2000). Scholte (2000) argues that different definitions of globalization have emerged due to the different historical contexts, theoretical standpoints, normative commitments and political orientations of the writer. Therefore, he argues, no definition appears to be completely objective and final (Scholte, 2000).

Some, however, have defined globalization simply as the “accelerated movement of goods, services, capital, people and ideas across national borders” (Little and Green, 2009, p. 166). Singh (2004) has defined globalization in greater depth as follows:

a set of theories that provide researchers with conceptual tools for analysing and understanding current economic, cultural and technological changes, as well as a process and a phenomenon that is experienced in complex, uneven and varied ways by people across different places or locales (Singh, 2004, p. 1).

Higgins-Desbiolles (2009) notes that many definitions of globalization refer to the relation of people to space-time compression, as well as contemporary changes related to such a relation. Singh (2004) posits there are signals to be understood from the phrase “space-time compression”. First, it suggests that time shrinks in order to move people or goods physically or electronically from place to place; people and goods move faster via advanced transportation systems. It is also possible for people to “roam” a country through their computer using the likes of Google Street View, for example. The second signal is the increase in cultural connectivity across geographic locations and the expansion of social interaction.

The final signal is the possibility of being physically absent and electronically present at the same time in the same place, such as online meetings or Skype calls.

Edwards and Usher (2000) argue that globalization is a response to the limitations of international relations and world-systems theory. The former concentrates on the political relations among states, while the latter focuses on economic relations. These areas, Edwards and Usher claim, typically fail to consider the cultural dimension and the importance of information technology with regard to space and time compression. Some of these notions, especially world-systems theory, will be discussed subsequently.

Alternatively, Scholte (2000) suggests globalization stems from an increase in rationalism as a cultural framework of knowledge, the development of capitalism, technological advancement and the establishment of global regulations, such as the United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights (Shields, 2013). In addition to these factors, Scholte (2000) posits globalization is the product of "non-territorial bonds", such as those developed by green environmental societies that network across the globe and share similar ideas.

Although rationalism and capitalism may have been the driving forces behind globalization in Western countries, in countries where religion and culture are the main priority, these notions may be more controversial. For example, around two thirds of the educational policy objectives in Saudi Arabia aim to build good Islamic citizens and to create positive members of society with family as their priority (Alsinbal, Alkhateeb, Motwally and Abdaljawad, 2008). This difference in educational policy objectives becomes an issue in low-income countries where world aid is required. For example, the World Bank has been linked to offering

conditional help in return for ideological changes (Filho, 2009). This will be further analysed later in the chapter alongside the discussion about the role of international organisations.

Underlying theories

Globalization has been addressed from a wide variety of perspectives (Little and Green, 2009). Some have discussed the notion in terms of capitalism and sociology (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009), while others have addressed it in terms of those who are in favour of globalization, "globalists", and those who are not, "sceptics" (Held and McGrew, 2000). Alternatively, Shields (2013) argues for multi-theoretical perspectives on globalization, including neoliberalism, world-systems analysis, and world culture theory. This multi-theory perspective will be used as a framework for the current discussion since it investigates the impact of globalization on different governmental, cultural and societal levels.

Neoliberalism

Smith (2006) states that neoliberalism has an impact on households, countries and the global state. The neoliberal ideology considers both men and women to be of equal importance within the household. Therefore, women benefit from neoliberalism by being considered equal to men in terms of their right to education, jobs and political action. Such equal opportunity in turn offers countries the potential for greater productivity through the employment of the traditionally ignored yet potentially talented female workforce.

In the neoliberal ideology, countries adapt to contemporary changes, develop their own financial, industrial and cultural aspects and reserve the right to have their own restrictions (Little and Green, 2009). In addition, the neoliberal state is

financially redistributive, appropriating a certain percentage of the incomes of wealthy individuals and corporations to give to the less advantaged in society.

Finally, the neoliberal state promotes the development of the global market by reducing tariff barriers, facilitating foreign investments and adapting policies and laws to allow such changes (Smith, 2006). In addition, the state commonly adapts information technologies that allow people to interact and exchange information and experiences (Shields, 2013).

The main tenet of neoliberalism is that competition is beneficial as a driving force of the economy; as businesses and individuals compete with one another they adapt new and innovative practices. Neoliberalism also promotes the development of an open job market for talented workers to seek employment throughout the world (ibid).

However, there are also certain downsides to neoliberalism. In terms of foreign investment, neoliberalism may encourage multinational firms to situate in countries where they can pay low wages, which in turn may cause instability and uncertainty among employees, since firms may be constantly on the move toward cheaper labour (Shields, 2013). In addition, these firms may shift profits generated in a country with higher taxes to a country with lower taxes to avoid paying the difference, which may cause instability in the financial sector within the state (Shields, 2013; Smith, 2006). For example, it has been reported that Amazon UK paid only £2.4 million in 2013 in corporate taxes despite making £4 billion in sales because the firm routed its sales through a Luxembourg affiliate (British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), 2013).

Another disadvantage of neoliberalism is its tendency to widen the income gap between rich and poor countries due to developed countries' exploitation of

developing countries as cheap labour sources (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009). In terms of economic benefits, goods exchanged between developed and developing countries tend to benefit the richer country as they typically have more goods to sell; this can affect the cash flow of the developing country. This issue is not limited solely to the gap between rich and poor countries, but also within states themselves. Capital owners seek out elites within countries to help them invest and make profit, and they may exploit the poor as a cheap source of labour (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009; Smith, 2006).

However, Shields (2013) believes that “despite these downsides, neoliberalism argues that globalization is largely inevitable and individual nations that attempt to resist it will face isolation and even greater levels of insecurity” (Shields, 2013, p. 67).

World-systems analysis

World-systems analysis approaches globalization from a different perspective as it argues that changes brought about by globalization tend to benefit those who are already powerful (Clayton, 2004; Shields, 2013). World-systems theory argues that globalization is not creating a borderless world (Shields, 2013), but rather world domination in the hands of the most powerful parties (Arshad-Ayaz, 2008). Through globalization, powerful nations are able to network and distribute their power beyond their national borders in a kind of contemporary imperialism (ibid). World-systems analysis argues that the notion of globalization as being “inevitable” is merely a tactic of ideological manipulation (Shields, 2013).

Economically, world-systems analysis views globalization as simply the expansion of capitalism. According to Shields (2013), Immanuel Wallerstein’s 1974 analysis of globalization is among the strongest articulations of the conflicts it brings. In

Wallerstein's view, globalization has helped economies throughout the world become more closely knit together, but the power between the different parties is unequal. This inequality, as Clayton (2004) suggests, can be divided between the labouring proletariat, which can be understood as either a group of labourers or an entire country, and the owners of capital. The latter is in control of production, while the former is not and receives little compensation for its labour (Clayton, 2004; Shields, 2013). It is worth noting that such a theory of the relationship between the owners of capital and the proletariat is developed from the Marxist standpoint on capitalism (ibid).

However, critiques of globalization are not limited to questions of an imbalance in political and economic power. Indeed, the cultural consequences, such as Westernisation, are equally important (Held and McGrew, 2000) and will be examined in the next few paragraphs.

World culture theory

Higgins-Desbiolles (2009) argues that the cultural impacts of globalization are some of the most important areas in need of analysis, as globalization is founded on relationships among people and societies. The cultural impacts of globalization vary from the nature of ideas and values to representations in the media and the distribution of knowledge (Arshad-Ayaz, 2008). These impacts involve valuing ideas such as democratic citizenship, respect for human rights and freedom of expression (Shields, 2013). Shields (2013) believes that, as globalization spreads, such values will become less linked to a national perspective (e.g., American or European) and become recognised as universal truths worldwide.

Arshad-Ayaz (2008) argues that world culture theory has both a positive and a negative side. The positive side is the culturally homogenising effect it can have

on the world. This homogenisation began to emerge when people around the world joined a global market economy that contributes to changing their lifestyles through global consumerism. This homogenisation has occurred in people's lifestyles, but also in people's values and beliefs and results in a globally common support for basic human rights, democratic citizenship and individual rights (Shields, 2013).

The negative side of globalization, however, is that such homogenisation involves a one-way Western influence, which creates a kind of neo-imperialism (Arshad-Ayaz, 2008; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009). World culture theorists argue that what are commonly understood as "universal beliefs" are basically those of Western culture, with few global values of Eastern or Islamic origin. Therefore, it can be argued that globalization is a form of Westernisation. Higgins-Desbiolles posits that such domination has occurred because the West achieved success and development before the East; this has led to an ease in spreading Western beliefs as they may be regarded as the way to success (2009).

More worryingly, Western success in the areas of science, technology and industry has been achieved via a break from religion, followed by a privileging of ideas of individualism, urbanisation, rationalism, secularity and a breakdown of family ties. This process may threaten countries such as Saudi Arabia that are closely attached to religion, culture and family values. Indeed, if success is seen by underdeveloped countries as only attainable by following the West's cultural practices mentioned earlier, this threat is very real (ibid).

This section has provided an outline and discussion of the development, definition and underlying assumptions of globalization. The following section assesses globalization in relation to education.

2.2.2 Globalization and education

The purpose of assessing globalization's impact on education is to have a clear understanding of the Saudi Arabian education system in a global context. This is necessary because Saudi Arabia does not exist in isolation; rather it interacts with, affects and is affected by other countries and trends in the global system.

Globalization affects the way countries are managed economically and countries respond to it in two ways: collectively and individually (Dale, 2007). For the former, as Dale argues, states have become more concerned with forming a collective framework globally represented by international organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and international agreements such as the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). This response will be examined in further detail in the discussion about the effects international organisations and agreements have on education.

Regarding the latter response, countries react to globalization individually by making themselves as competitive countries. The nature of globalization, as neoliberalism argues, encourages competition among and within nations as it benefits the global market by creating efficiency, better products and motivation for innovation (Shields, 2013). Such competition does not only benefit the global market, as some believe, it might also provide the opportunity for nations to achieve political and economic superiority (Lane and Kinser, 2011).

In order for the country to cope with such competition, it needs to adapt in a number of specific ways, one of which is in educational policy (Dale, 2007). One of the motivations for such changes during the late 20th century, especially those

in education, was to create workforces that are skilful and competitive. Some countries have realised the importance of higher education for their economies. Therefore, instead of developing the sector slowly and gradually in relation to domestic institutions, some countries have opened their doors to international institutions and Universities to operate within the country. This is perceived as a quick way to advance the economy by making it possible for local students to benefit from respected and reputed colleges and universities from around the world. Examples of this strategy are the University of Reading and Nottingham campuses in Malaysia and the American University branches in Kuwait and in United Arab Emirates (Lane and Kinser, 2011).

Menon (2007) argues that the impact of globalization on education has different levels of intensity depending on the level of education. He believes that since higher education, including professional education, is seen to have a direct impact on the nation's economy, governments view it as crucial to development and it receives considerable attention. A further effect of globalization on education is the increased decentralisation and privatisation of the sector. On the other hand, to some extent, governments are still responsible for vocational education receiving less privatisation and decentralisation.

Regarding high school education, Menon (2007) argues that instead of learning being an enjoyable process, students are under immense pressure to achieve higher marks, choose a subject area and look ahead to their future learning and employment because this stage of learning is an important factor in determining students' futures. Their future is likely to be socially deemed a success if it is directed to certain subject areas such as industry, business or the services sector.

Primary education on the other hand, is the least affected by globalization. That may be because primary education does not fit under the services that GATS recognises (Robertson, Bonal and Dale, 2002). Services under GATS' definition include those that are not under governmental administration and have commercial aims, as will be further discussed subsequently. A further reason is that primary education has less direct impact on the economy and future employment trends than higher and high school education have.

Such an indirect link to the market has resulted in primary education receiving less attention from governments than high school education and higher education have. This is especially the case in developing countries. In some countries, this lack of attention from governments has resulted in some wealthy parents sending their children to fee-paying private schools, which are regarded as being more competitive than public schools; however, the majority of parents cannot afford to do so. This has affected students' opportunities and resulted in a widening of the quality of education gap between rich and poor students (Little and Green, 2009).

Many practices manifest the impact of globalization on educational policy such as rescaling contemporary politics and moving from government to governance (Dale, 2007; Lingard, 2009) and policy borrowing (Tan, 2010). Lingard (2009) argues that after the Cold War and the global economy boom, the way that nations used to govern shifted. This was because of new international organisations and relations such as the United Nations that had power above state governments' control. This rescaling has had an impact on countries in terms of a move from governance from a hierarchical, bureaucratic and central power base to a more modern, networked and horizontal style of governing.

The second practice is moving from government to governance. The impact of political rescaling has led to greater pressure on the public sector, including pressure on educational institutions to perform as a private sector by dealing with citizens as customers. For example, the effect of New Public Management (NPM), which will be discussed subsequently, (Wittmann, 2008) and the pressure of privatisation or public-private sector partnerships (Lingard, 2009) have far-reaching consequences.

Another practice that manifests the impact of globalization on educational policy is policy borrowing. Tan (2010) describes it as a developing nation adapting the educational policy of a developed one. Singapore's successful adaptation of Western policies such as educational decentralisation after independence from Britain in 1963 is a good example of this practice (ibid). However, some academics argue that such practice is sometimes forced upon the adapting country and cite Singapore as an example of a postcolonial country (Dale, 2007).

As discussed earlier, world-systems analysis and world culture theory view globalization as benefiting the richer and more powerful members of society. While such policy adaptation as evidenced in Singapore may sound positive, some argue that education systems around the world may become overly similar and such similarity may be rooted to the most powerful parties (i.e., the West) resulting in specific cultures and traditions becoming irrelevant (Shields, 2013).

New Public Management (NPM)

As discussed earlier, globalization is associated with the promotion of a global competitive market, the rescaling of contemporary politics and a movement from government to governance. It also has distinct characteristics related to the acceleration of social development and strengthens the voice of citizens in

decision making (Hesapcioglu, 2003). As a result, the public sector has been forced to be market-like and entrepreneurial (Jarl, Fredriksson and Persson, 2012). NPM has been an influential approach in enhancing the performance of the public sector to serve citizens as if they are customers.

Klenowski (2009) argues that NPM can be a country's solution to the hierarchical, bureaucratic and centralised structure offered traditionally by the public sector. It introduces new roles for citizens, politicians and people working in the civil services (Jarl et al., 2012). It changes the public's role from passive to active and gives the public a voice in public services. Moreover, the relationship between citizens and government has been redefined over the last few decades. The NPM movement proposes considering the public as customers that help to create outcome-based governments.

Some argue that NPM is a response to the inadequacy of the bureaucratic approach to success management by using a business and economic framework for civil services, such as health, education and emergency services, and it aims to make such services accountable, competitive and market-driven (Wittmann, 2008).

When introduced to public funded schools in Queensland, Australia; NPM resulted in an organisational restructuring (Klenowski, 2009). There have been positive consequences related to the decentralisation of decision-making and promotion of competitiveness between schools and the introduction of self-managed schools (ibid). It has also been argued that NPM increases the power of school Principals over staff as they are expected to perform as managers in the private sector would do (Jarl et al., 2012). The Principal's job, in turn, requires leadership abilities such as those required in capital management as the school aims to

improve results and respond to competition (ibid). This, however, is missing in Saudi schools where Principals lack power. This matter will be addressed further in throughout this thesis.

Klenowski (2009) argues that the introduction of NPM in 1988 to English schools as a part of the Education Reform Act resulted in school autonomy and marketing. Schools had more autonomy and their accountability was measured by standardised evaluations and assessments. Students' results played a significant role in a school's status and rank in that they not only reflected the school's academic performance, but were also a type of marketing as they were available to parents to view. Parents, in turn, had more options to choose from based on school rank, quality and reputation. However, this has affected schools in disadvantaged areas or areas with a high ethnicity composition by attracting fewer high achievers and more disadvantaged students.

There are some downsides to NPM when it is applied to education. Hesapcioglu (2003) argues that NPM perceives students as customers buying a service, which may affect the important student-teacher relationship. An additional downside is that as great attention is given to outcomes that are measured and assessed by effectiveness criteria, there is less attention being given to classroom activities, advancing the curriculum and teaching programmes.

Hesapcioglu (2003) suggests that introducing NPM to education requires communication among educators, policy makers, practitioners and parents that makes learners the first priority. Such an introduction should target mainly the process of learning and secondly the product from such a process, which, in turn, focuses on what education can offer the economic needs of the country.

Knowledge economy

As mentioned above, the race toward economic growth has increased significantly in the globalised era. Knowledge has been seen as a factor in economic growth since the Second World War (Resnik, 2006). It is commonly argued that as countries race and compete with each other toward economic development, knowledge and skills are becoming increasingly important (Little and Green, 2009). It is also assumed that in order to achieve growth, citizens need knowledge and skills required for a knowledge-based economy and success (Sahlberg, 2006). Skills and knowledge are not only important for national economic development, but they are also regarded as an attraction for foreign investment, which is a highly important factor for the development of many countries (Little and Green, 2009).

Thus, over the last few decades, education in knowledge-based economies has experienced changes in expectations, especially those related to quality of learning and training (Sahlberg, 2006). Lundahl (2012) argues that education pre-1990s experienced a sense of autonomy in relation to the economy, apart from vocational education and technical sciences research. Now, in contrast, it is expected to be a direct factor in the advancement of economic growth and competition.

Klenowski (2009) believes that a successful education system should provide knowledge as well as the ability to learn and apply knowledge and skills to a relevant and necessary product or service. Drawing from the Swedish experience with Free Schools that are independent but tax funded, Lundahl (2012) argued that such schools reflect a tight link between schools and the market. Sweden reshaped compulsory schools including preschools to be responsive to market

demands. In their study of European countries, Castagna et al., (2010) concluded that education that aims to fulfil market needs is an important factor in influencing GDP growth.

Britain is an interesting example for such link between market and education in the era of Thatcher's government in the mid-1980s. An independent body was formed to bring higher education and industry together, a move that aimed to build an entrepreneurial culture in higher education. One of the recommendations of the body was to facilitate more variety in subject areas in universities and encourage a shift toward science and technology. As a result, there was a notable change in targeting career training with more stress on these subject areas (Arshad-Ayaz, 2008).

Some academics, however, criticise the concept of the knowledge-economy for paying less attention to school curriculum and classroom practices, which should be the core of the learning process (Lundahl, 2012). It has been argued that changes toward marketization and privatisation of education seem to have targeted technical procedures. Different and multi-levels of changes should take place including curriculum, pedagogy and a new set of roles, responsibilities and identities for teachers, students, parents and administrators (ibid) to achieve a fully rounded education system.

Reform

One of the first large scale educational reforms in Europe was introduced by the conservative government led by Margret Thatcher in England 1988 (Sahlberg, 2011). The Education Reform Act (ERA) 1988 became very important in England as well as the rest of the world as many reforms have since followed it. Levin and Fullan (2008) described the ERA as being a watershed moment nationally

(England) and internationally. The reform was based on the belief that competition and knowledge are the main engines for improvement. Although the ERA was not the first large-scale reform based on such an assumption, it has gained large national and international attention as some believe it continues to inspire reforms as it did to the "No Child Left Behind Act" in the United States in 2001 (Sahlberg, 2011).

As Levin and Fullan (2008) point out, the effect of globalization on ERA can be sensed from its operational principles as follows:

- Competition as a successful driver in the economy can be used in schools.
- Autonomy among schools is important for competition to happen.
- Making it possible for parents to choose the school their children attend.
- Facilitating and publishing comparable measures and making them available for parents, which may determine their choice of school.

It is important to explain why such reforms have accrued. Filho (2009), states that in the 1980s many of the developed countries realised that their economies were not equipped to continue the development of their country in a time of economic changes and social transformations. For example, in Ohio, USA between 1997 and 2007, the state lost 200,000 manufacturing jobs. Jobs in the state were shifting in type from low-skilled, manual jobs to those in need of a higher level of skills and knowledge; therefore, education needed to adapt to address and cope with such demands. Thus, educational reform was introduced to deal with the problem (Gottlieb, 2012). Besides public demands for quality in education and accountability movements in education (Sahlberg, 2011), the economy and the need for a knowledge-economy are the main drivers of such reforms (Hargreaves, 2006).

Due to the huge flow of information via modern technology and the harmonisation of policies around the globe, educational reforms within countries have similar assumptions, aims and forms (Sahlberg, 2011). Three elements are common in educational reforms (Levin, 2007). One of which is that reforms share the assumptions about the decentralisation of authority to schools and the establishment of school-parent councils to exercise authority. The second, element is the promotion of school-school competition in order to gain more students, which may determine government funding. Finally, national testing determines school performance, and schools and teachers are held accountable for their practices.

It worth noting here that some of the elements used in this study will be further examined in the next section to determine the extent to which they exist in the current Saudi Arabian system and how they are shaping the reforms currently underway there. Some, such as the decentralisation of authority toward schools, school autonomy, performance measurement and accountability, lie at the core of this study.

To examine such elements of reform, Sahlberg (2011) questioned why the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia, Japan and New Zealand's scores in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) were declining. These countries have some of the common elements outlined above in their educational reforms; however, their students' results declined in Mathematics in 2000, 2003, 2006 and 2012 (see Figure 2:1). Sahlberg refers to the way their reforms were conducted and how the current phase of reform, which established the common elements outlined above, enhances school competition and intensifies student testing.

This can be supported by critiques of the concepts of neorealism and knowledge-economy mentioned earlier. Such opinions mainly focus on how reforms concentrate on technical procedures rather than developing curriculum, identifying new set of roles, responsibilities and identities among administrators, teachers, students and parents (Lundahl, 2012).

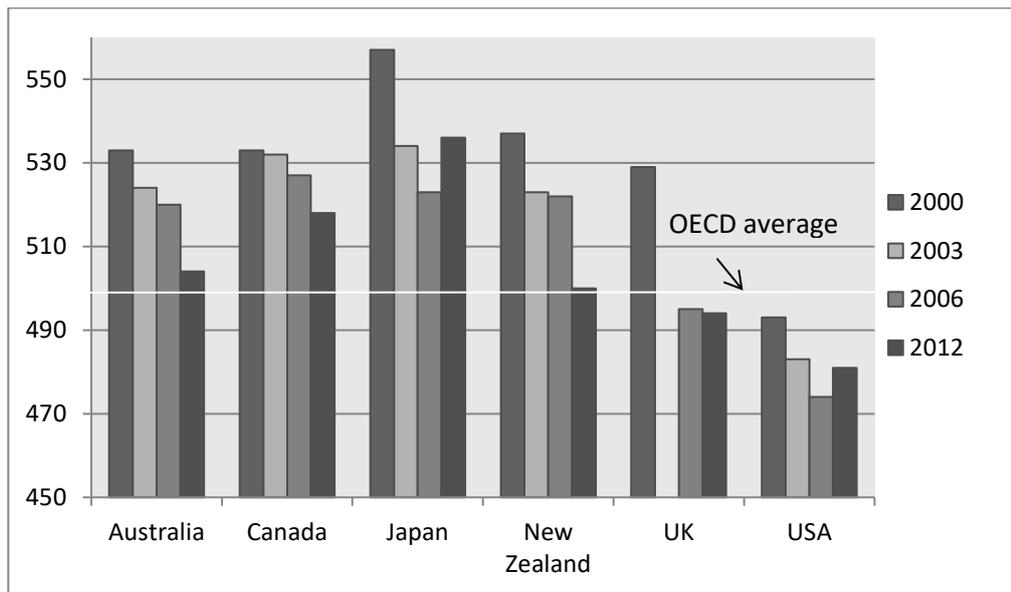


Figure 2: 1 National averages of students' performance in the OECD PISA mathematics scale in 2000, 2003, 2006 and 2012 in selected countries (inspired by Sahlberg (2011) and updated from OECD PISA database at (www.pisa.oecd.org)).

To give a clear picture of the extent to which globalization has affected educational reform, examples of reforms from around the world will be briefly given here. In some Turkish schools, for instance; students have more lessons in English language than in Turkish. In some cases, they receive 24 hours of English lessons a week compared to only four hours in Turkish (Hismanoglu, 2012).

Taiwan and Hong Kong redesigned their education systems in the 1990s to cope with globalization. They declared that their educational systems were not capable of meeting new workforce needs in the technological boom. They also feared being beaten by emerging economies, especially mainland China. Taiwan and

Hong Kong proposed changing toward a knowledge-based economy rather than an industrialised economy. They reformed their education systems based on what they called “global requirements”, such as standards outlined in international assessments such as PISA including critical thinking, innovation, promoting multicultural education and increasing students’ global awareness (Lane and Kinser, 2011).

Similarly, the impact of globalization on the reform currently under development in Saudi Arabia (*Tatweer*) is clear. The proposal contains many aspects that can be linked to the effects of globalization, such as quality assurance of the learning environment, an emphasis on the use of ICT, inclusion of parents in the educational process, standardisation and promotion of “thinking globally” for students and teachers (Alharbi and Almahdi, 2012). Further discussion on the reform will follow in the discussion on the changes in the educational system in Saudi Arabia.

It is clear from the above discussion that globalization affects education around the world. However, there are criticisms of this era of reform. These mainly point to the fact that teaching for results and the pressure of performance have reduced the margin of autonomy among teachers and schools (Hargreaves, 2006; Sahlberg, 2006, 2011), and the learning focus is on how to perform in the standardised tests. Another downside of such reforms is that judging school performance upon students’ results disregards some important aspects of schooling such as classroom practice and behaviour and learning outside the scope of standardised tests (Sahlberg, 2011).

International organisations

Over the last century, many international organisations have emerged to harmonise nations in the globalised age. This section will discuss the effect these organisations might have on compulsory education. The organisations in question include the World Bank, GATS as a treaty of the WTO and the OECD.

The World Bank through its Human Development Network invests in education especially basic education targeting the most disadvantaged groups (The World Bank, 2017). Its work in education mainly involves funding low-income countries to help develop education and offering strategies and suggestions along with the fund (Arshad-Ayaz, 2008). From his investigation of the World Bank's work in Latin America, Filho (2009) argues that it targets mainly lower levels of education. That, as he suggests, leaves people either unemployed or working in low-paid and low-skills jobs. The World Bank has also been accused of offering ideology alongside its loans (Arshad-Ayaz, 2008). As the bank lends money for development, it offers ideology on ideas such as privatisation, globalization and marketization as its central statement.

GATS came into force in 1995 (Verger, 2009). It includes 17 sectors of services, and education is one of them. Education became a tradable service as a result of this agreement (Little and Green, 2009). Since the role of WTO via GATS is to promote free trade in services, it does not mandate or push countries to implement its agenda (Verger, 2009). However, it does provide a general framework that WTO members are obliged to follow. Second, it identifies the degrees to which members are open to foreigners providing services in their countries (Robertson et al., 2002).

The term “service” has its own definition in GATS. Services that are included in GATS are those that are not under governmental administration and with a commercial purpose. That means the higher education sector fits largely under a GATS category, which may explain the privatisation and academic marketization that this sector has gone through. On the other hand, compulsory education may be exempt from such a definition (Robertson et al., 2002).

Some academics have raised concerns about GATS. The imposition facing new WTO members may result in more powerful nations exercising authority over them, such as giving loans in return for signing trade agreements (Robertson et al., 2002; Verger, 2009). Another issue concerns members’ commitment because the agreement is not obligatory and members have the right to withdraw from it when they wish (Verger, 2009). Indeed, the USA and EU withdrew in 2008.

The OECD, through PISA, is one of the most influential global organisations (Bieber and Martens, 2011). The programme assesses students’ performance after they have completed compulsory education (roughly at the age of 15) every three years starting from the year 2000. The test is carried out in the OECD 34 members and covers reading, science, mathematics and problem solving abilities (Sahlberg, 2006).

The US state of Ohio has positively responded to the PISA results. They reviewed the educational policies of the highest performing countries from each category. For example, they adopted aspects of the highest performing country in reading’s practices for their reading policy. After the publication of the results in 2006, Ohio announced a reform called “Race to the Top” (Gottlieb, 2012).

Japan, for example, announced a revision to its national curriculum in 1998, one year after the PISA project had started. Following the results in 2000, the

country came first in mathematics, second in science and eighth in reading; they announced a fundamental plan to promote reading in 2001 (Ninomiya and Urabe, 2011).

However, some commentators have criticised PISA and questioned whether it is a sophisticated way of measuring students' performance globally. One aspect largely relates to the issue that as PISA is a standardised test it has fewer links to any given context. Japan and the USA, for example, are both members of PISA and students there undergo the same tests regardless of being from different cultures, histories and backgrounds (Klenowski, 2009). Japan responded to this by implementing the National Achievement Test in 2007. It not only helps students to be familiar with the PISA test, but also includes aspects of Japanese culture and traditions and it tests the traditional Japanese teachings (Ninomiya and Urabe, 2011).

Although PISA claims that it tests how students are prepared for adult life (Shields, 2013), the requirements for adults differ in the West and the East (Klenowski, 2009). Therefore, some questions have been raised about whether PISA uses the Western curriculum as the reference for its tests. This again raises issues about international superiority and the influence of the West on globalization, which were discussed earlier in terms of the underlying theories of globalization.

This section has addressed globalization in the wider context of the research. The next section will address Saudi Arabia as the specific context of this research. It will discuss educational practices and reforms in Saudi Arabia as well as introducing the country for the reader.

2.3 Saudi Arabia

This section aims to assess the specific context of this research, Saudi Arabia, aiming to highlight its educational policies and practices. The chapter first introduces the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in particular its geographic nature, population, culture and economy. The second section discusses the education system in the country, particularly compulsory education, covering areas such as education history, development, levels of public education, problems the education system faces, influential factors on policymaking and changes over time.

Saudi Arabia is one of the largest and richest countries in the Middle East; as such, it plays a significant political, economic and religious role in the area (Baki, 2004). The country is also a major player at three different levels: in the Islamic World, the Arabic world and within the Cooperation Council for the Arabic States of the Gulf (GCC), including the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar (Azazi, 2012). Economically, Saudi Arabia benefits from being one of the richest nations in the world because of its oil and gas resources (The Council of Saudi Chambers, 2014). Religiously, it benefits from being at the heart of the Islamic World, home to the two most holy Islamic cities, Makah and Medina.

The country is a relatively young nation as it has only been in its current form since 1932. When King Abdulaziz Al Saud established the country, illiteracy was a major obstacle to the country's development (Alsinbal et al., 2008); even after four decades of settlement, the illiteracy rate was 60% (Azazi, 2012). Therefore, the King and his sons have paid significant attention to education during their reigns, resulting in major developments in the national education framework (Nasir, Althobiani and Alaithy, 2010).

2.3.1 The country and the people

Saudi Arabia is located in the Middle East in the south west of Asia and it covers over four-fifths of the land mass of the Arabian Peninsula with 2,250,000 km². It borders Iraq and Jordan to the north, Yemen and Oman to the south, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Persian Gulf to the east and has the Red Sea coastline to the west. (Please see figure 2:2 below).

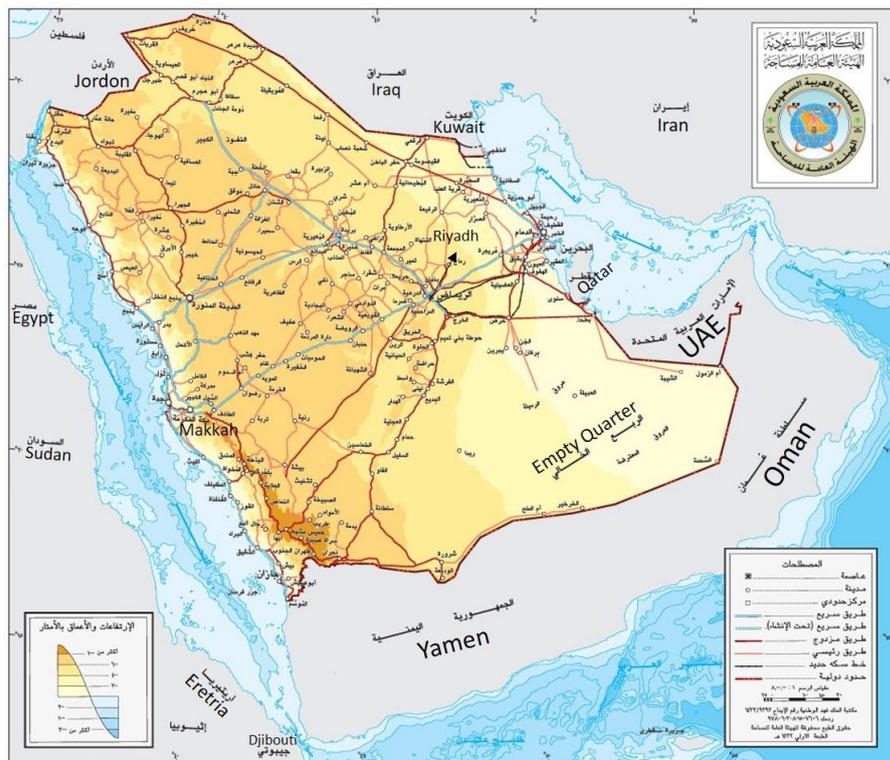


Figure 2: 2 Map of Saudi Arabia (General Commission for Survey, 2017), Translated by the researcher.

In the late 1700s and 1800s, before the establishment of the kingdom, the governors within the Arabian Peninsula were loyal to different parties. For example, those governing the eastern sides were loyal to the British while in the northern and western parts the rulers were loyal to the Ottoman Empire. The southern parts of present day Saudi Arabia were then part of Yemen. The middle of the Arabian Peninsula was mainly governed by a tribal system and had two

states, which are recognised as the beginnings of the current kingdom. They were governed and named after the same family as the current royal family, Al Saud. The First Saudi State was in 1744-1818 and the Second Saudi State was in 1824-1891. Both states were taken over by the Ottomans (Al-Zaydi, 2004).

King Abdul-Aziz Al Saud formed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, recalling his family heritage through the uniting of many villages formerly ruled by tribal governments that were loyal to different parties to create the one vast country known today. People at the time were content to be united under a single administration as it helped to prevent wars over water and land (Al-Fozan, 1997). The formation took place through agreements with governors and sometimes wars over a period of 30 years between 1902 and 1932. When King Abdul-Aziz died in 1953, his sons Saud, Faisal, Khalid, Fahad, Abdullah and the current King Salman inherited his title (Al-Zaydi, 2004).

According to the World Bank, the population of Saudi Arabia was 28 million in 2012, virtually all of whom are Arab and Muslim (Al-Fozan, 1997); of these, over 95% are Sunni Muslims (The World Bank, 2013).

Culture

This section presents contemporary cultural norms in Saudi Arabia. As such norms are well known in the country, they are not frequently documented. Therefore, I will be discussing them based on my experience as a person born and educated there. I also bring an additional reflective perspective, as I have been a resident in the UK for the last eight years. I will also refer to sources for supporting data wherever possible. I will also discuss issues related to the traditions and customs of Islam, which is the dominant religion in the country.

The chief traditions and customs in the country are based on generosity and hospitality, magnanimity and unity and solidarity. Before I discuss these, I will discuss the roots of local traditions and customs. Some sources suggest that the main source from which traditions are derived in the Kingdom is Islam, the religion practiced throughout Saudi Arabia (Baki, 2004). However, the religion is practiced by more than 1.57 billion people worldwide in around 200 countries, according to the Pew Research Center (2009), and traditions and customs differ notably across these countries. Therefore, religion on its own cannot be considered a significant factor. According to the Saudi Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (2017), the combination of religious teachings and the native Bedouin (Arabian desert settlers) heritage explain the country's strong traditions and customs.

A point should be made here regarding the above mentioned Bedouin heritage. In Saudi Arabia, although some people still live in the desert, the endurance of Bedouinism has been seen to be threatened by urbanisation; however, the Bedouin heritage is best understood as an icon and legacy of traditions and collectivism, inspired by tribal belonging, and not as a way of life.

Generosity and hospitality are strong traditions in the country. People are expected to be generous, and the more generous they are, the higher their social status becomes. Being miserly is regarded as a very bad quality in a person and can even be put forward as solid grounds on a divorce case, when one member of the couple, in particular the man, has this quality. In towns and small cities, when spotted, a visitor to the neighbourhood is likely to be invited for coffee at the very least. Often generosity is shown by serving a whole lamb or camel to guests.

Another tradition is magnanimity, which can be described as an eagerness to help others. It is a very important quality among Saudis that a person be eager to help others, and the significance of this increases as the need for help increases. Helping others is viewed as more important in desert locations, towns, and small cities than it is in larger cities. Help can range from jump starting a car or pushing a stuck vehicle out of the sand or mud, to giving assistance regarding personal loans or legal advice. Arguably this desire to assist is rooted in Bedouin heritage, as harsh desert conditions required that people help one another in order to survive.

The third Saudi tradition concerns unity. Saudi society is family oriented, not only towards close family members, but also the extended family and one's tribe. Indeed, Al-Fozan (1997) claims that attachment to the family in Saudi Arabian culture stems from the inherited tribal system, upon which people long relied for protection. Since the formation of the Kingdom, the tribal system has declined, but people continue to care for their extended families (Alaqeel, 2013). Thus, the structure that remains from the tribal system still provides people with a sense of belonging and pride (ibid). Indeed, until recently, in Saudi Arabia it was expected that the two partners in a marriage should be from tribes considered equal, as unequal tribal descent was believed to be fertile ground for divorce.

Religion, and specifically Islam, greatly influences Saudi society and culture. Two of the most important cities in the Islamic World, Makah, where Islam started and the city that Muslims pray towards five times a day, and Medina, where the prophet Mohammed developed the religion in the 6th century, are in Saudi Arabia (Baki, 2004). Every year in the last month of the Islamic calendar, in excess of two million pilgrims visit Makah for the Hajj (Islamic pilgrimage) and double that

number pays a visit to the city all year around. This has made the country exceptional in the Islamic world (Aljughaiman and Grigorenko, 2013). According to Baki (2004), Muslims consider Saudi Arabia to be the keeper of Islam, and the country preserves the language of the Qur'an (the Holy Book) and abides by the Hadith (the prophet's sayings) as the basis of its laws and governance.

Baki (2004) believes that the Saudi community is driven mainly by Islamic values and beliefs. These values affect people in their personal lives and in their professional lives, in particular helping to establish norms of behaviour and relationships. Strong family bonds characterise the Saudi community, and prioritising the family is also emphasised in Islam.

Economy

When the kingdom of Saudi Arabia was founded, it was economically weak (Baki, 2004); however, the discovery of oil in 1938 changed the nation's fortunes and since mass production in the 1970s the economy has boomed. Saudi Arabia has gained a good position internationally and is currently one of the richest countries on the world, playing a significant economic and political role (Alsinbal et al., 2008). This wealth has triggered a decline of the tribal system through internal migration as people move from deserted areas to regions that are more urbanised, abandoning animal husbandry for government jobs or private sector posts (Al-Fozan, 1997; Baki, 2004).

According to The Council of Saudi Chambers, Saudi Arabia is one of the largest countries involved in the production, export and preservation of oil globally, as it has roughly 20% of the world's total oil reserves (The Council of Saudi Chambers, 2014). It also comes fourth in terms of gas reserves internationally (ibid). In addition, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country was over

\$US 669 billion in 2011, with an annual growth rate of 9% in the same year creating GNI per capita of \$US 30,160 compared to \$US 35,260 in the United Kingdom (The World Bank, 2013). Furthermore, Saudi Arabia came 17th in the Global Competitiveness Report 2011-2012 according to (Hanware, 2011).

However, this rapid economic growth over the years has led to concern amongst the government and economists because oil is the foundation of this wealth and oil reserves may vanish one day (Gerth, 2004). Another major concern is that foreign workers comprise 20-30% of the population (Aljughaiman and Grigorenko, 2013), which may have a significant impact on the Saudi economy, as many of these workers send money overseas rather than invest or spend it locally.

2.3.2 The education system in Saudi Arabia

King Abdulaziz established Knowledge Management in 1925; this became the Ministry of Knowledge in 1953 and was renamed the Ministry of Education in 2003 (Alaqeel, 2005). The main objective of education, as stated in the educational policy, is the graduation of students with Islamic values and beliefs, conveying the appropriate knowledge and skills and being able to apply advanced technology with efficiency to ensure international competition in the field of practical sciences (Educational Policy for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 1970; Aljughaiman and Grigorenko, 2013).

The government has responded to the need to meet these objectives by investing in education, seeking to amend education within the country to develop outcomes to match the needs of the labour market and trying to secure a place in the global competition for development (Aljughaiman and Grigorenko, 2013;

Alaqeel, 2005). Hence, investment in education increased from 8.7% in the 1970s to 20.5% in 2006 (Alsinbal et al., 2008), accounting for 24% of the total national spending budget in 2012. As a proportion of GDP, spending on education is 6.4%; this can be compared with spending in the United States and the United Kingdom of 5.5% (Aljughaiman and Grigorenko, 2013). The results of such spending can be seen by the ratio of teachers to students, 1:9.9, and school to students 1:177 (See Table 2:1 below).

		Preschool	Primary	Secondary	High School	Total
Schools	M	0	6,328	3,801	2,403	12,532
	F	1,385	6,253	3,522	2,533	13,693
	Total	1,385	12,581	7,323	4,936	26,225
Students	M	34,101	1,138,577	565,461	506,539	2,244,678
	F	51,169	1,168,178	556,891	472,708	2,248,946
	Total	85,270	2,306,755	1,122,352	979,247	4,493,624
Teachers	M	0	101,267	54,223	44,330	199,820
	F	10,311	120,047	62,238	58,549	251,145
	Total	10,311	221,314	116,461	102,879	450,965
Teacher to students= 1:9.9 School to students= 1:171.34						

Table 2: 1 A statistical summary of general education in Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Education, 2013).

Extensive investment in education is particularly important with the expanding population and the increase in the working-age population, which is expected to double from 3.99 million to 8.26 million between 2004 and 2020 (Aljughaiman and Grigorenko, 2013).

The investment in education has resulted in a sharp decline in illiteracy from 60% in 1972 and to 4% in 2012 and an increase in primary school enrolment to

98.7% (Azazi, 2012). The total number of enrolled students in general education (which is primary, secondary and high) in 2012-2013 was over 5 million, with over 500,000 teachers (Ministry of Education, 2013). Furthermore, education is now compulsory until the age of 15 and free up to doctoral level.

However, if we compare the significant amount of money spent on education with the results, there appears to be a gap between labour market needs and education outcomes (Baki, 2004). According to Baki, the education system in Saudi Arabia has failed to cope with labour market demands resulting in an increase in the number foreign workers, who now comprise 20-30% of the population (Aljughaiman and Grigorenko, 2013). The country needs skilful graduates to fill the gaps in the labour market and to fuel the growth of the economy (Baki, 2004). A generation of new talent to service industries outside the oil sector is crucial because oil is unsustainable as the main source of income.

Furthermore, as noted above, in a globalised world, major economies turn to more knowledge-driven economies. Countries are not only racing toward knowledge itself, but they are convinced that the more knowledge they have, the richer and more powerful they become. Saudi Arabia needs to adapt its education system to keep pace with these trends.

Ministry of Education: roles and responsibilities

The education system in Saudi Arabia is ruled by the Supreme Council for Educational Policy, established in 1963 and chaired by the ruling king. The role of the council is to govern all types of education including compulsory and higher education represented by the Ministry of Education and the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation. Under the Ministry of Education there are 13

main educational management groups linked to the country's 13 provenances. The majority of these regional educational management groups are responsible for smaller local educational managements creating 45 groups in total. Each school in the country is linked to a local educational management group, if there is any, or to the regional management (see Figure 2:3).

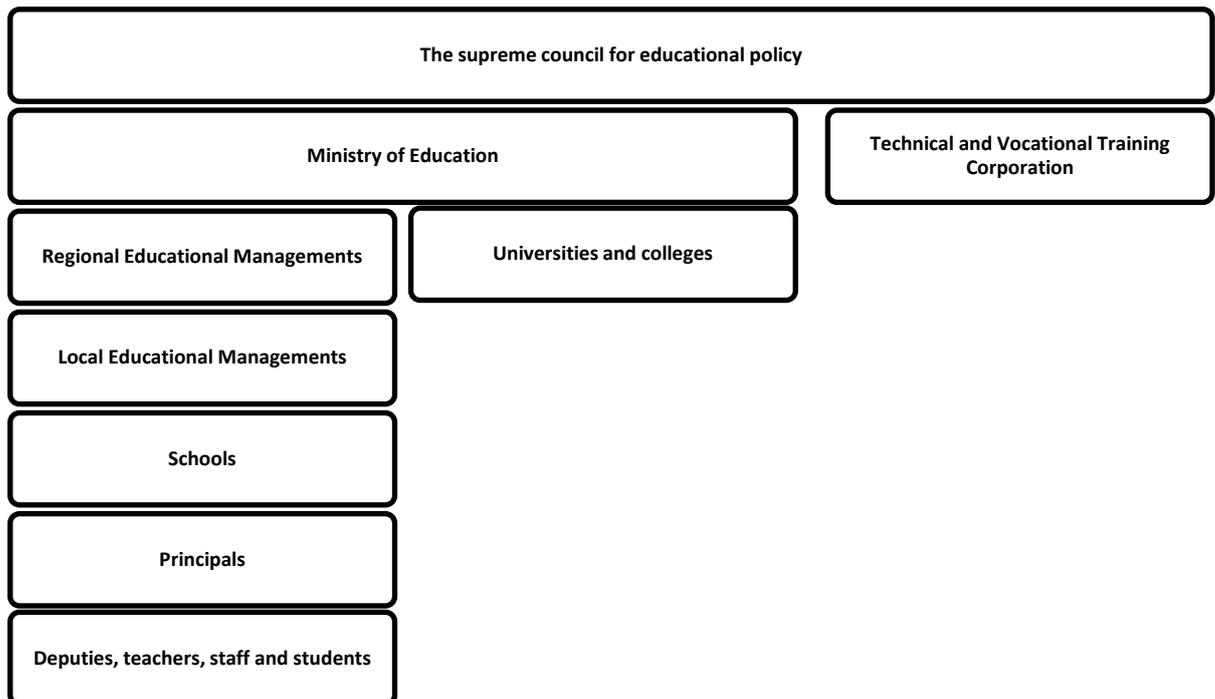


Figure 2: 3 The hierarchy of the educational system in Saudi Arabia (Alsinbal et al., 2008; Ministry of Education, 2017)

Historically, the Ministry of Education offers centralised management. Therefore, it is responsible for governing schools, establishing roles and responsibilities, recruiting teachers and staff, assigning school Principals, setting the curriculum, printing and distributing textbooks (Alharbi and Almahdi, 2012).

Ministry representatives or Regional Educational Managers oversee the interaction between schools and the Ministry of Education (Rifa'i, 2006). They are responsible for governing schools and applying the ministry's rules and instructions (Alaqeel, 2005; Alsinbal et al., 2008). The work of local Educational

Authorities is also centralised across schools (Rifa'i, 2006). For example, each school must report on extracurricular activities, such as open days, and gain permission for any events being held within the school (Alsinbal et al., 2008). Schools also have no authority over the curriculum since it is fixed for all schools across the country. In addition, schools do not choose or recruit their workforce; they are sent employees by the Ministry itself (ibid).

In recent years, the Ministry of Education has taken steps towards decentralising the system by giving local Education Managers authority and power to receive applications for new teachers and manage teachers who move from city to city (Alsinbal et al., 2008). These attempts have been linked to not only smoothing and easing the work of the Ministry (ibid), but also to developing the system and its outcomes to cope with globalization and its competitive nature. Some, however, believe that such attempts to decentralise and empower local educational authorities face the obstacle of the bureaucratic and hierarchical nature of the Ministry of Education, which may slow down such attempts to improve (Alharbi and Almahdi, 2012).

Levels of public education

In general, the Ministry of Education is responsible for educating students from the age of six to the age of fifteen, which includes primary and secondary education. Responsibility for high school students aged 16-18 is shared between the Ministry and the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (see Figure 2:4) and a higher portion of students choose to go to high schools offered by the Ministry (Alharbi and Almahdi, 2012). Therefore, in general the students in Saudi Arabia go through primary, secondary and high school.

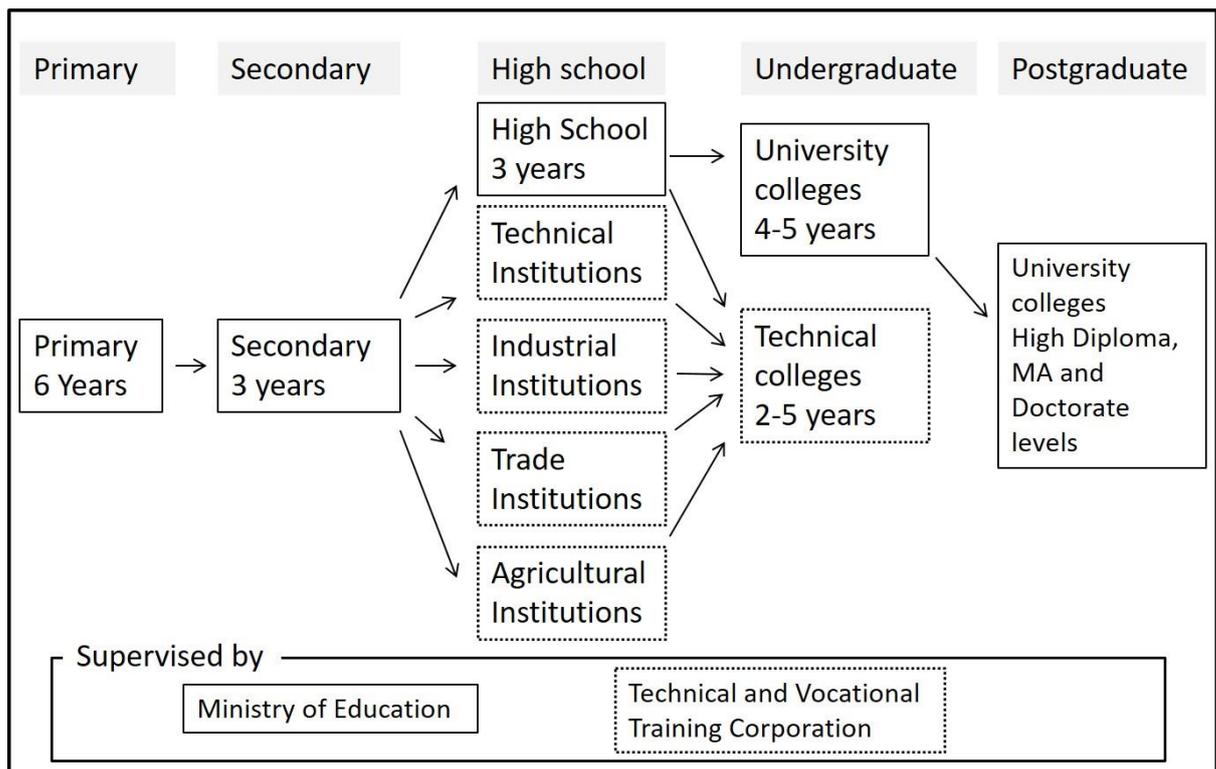


Figure 2: 4 Levels of education offered in Saudi Arabia (Alsinbal et al., 2008; Ministry of Education, 2017).

Public education (education from the age of 6-18) currently has three levels. The first is primary school, for children aged from 6 to 11, the second is secondary school, which is for children aged from 12 to 15 and finally, high school is for students aged from 15 to 18 (Alsinbal et al., 2008).

Students in the second year of high school are required to choose between scientific or social science subjects. The former includes the learning of practical science, such as maths, physics, etc., while the latter concentrates on social sciences, such as Islamic studies, Arabic, geography, history etc. On each pathway, graduates can only apply for an appropriate department when they go to university. For example, scientific graduates can apply for courses in engineering and medicine (Nasir et al., 2010), while those on the social sciences pathway can apply for courses in the humanities and social sciences, such as Islamic studies, Arabic Language, English or Law.

Problems the Saudi Arabian education system faces

It is broadly agreed in the literature on Saudi Arabia's education system that one of the major issues is the centralised nature of the system; this has resulted in a lack of administrative flexibility, local policy-making opportunities and a culture of hierarchy and bureaucracy (Al-Fozan, 1997; Alaqeel, 2005; Alsinbal et al., 2008; Alhamed et al., 2007; Nasir, Althobiani and Alaithy, 2010). An example of how this bureaucracy fails in practice is permission to hold an event is not received in occasions until after the actual date of the event, leading to the need for additional permissions to amend the dates.

Another issue facing the education sector has been its failure to prepare skilful graduates suitable for the labour market (Baki, 2004; Aljughaiman and Grigorenko, 2013). This has meant that private firms continue to employ migrants they can pay less and who are more skilful and willing to work more hours and days during the week (Alaqeel, 2005; Alhamed et al., 2007). Indeed, as mentioned above, current statistics show that migrants comprise 20-30% of the population (Aljughaiman and Grigorenko, 2013). Another issue linked to this is the lack of enrolment of Saudis in vocational education courses (Alsinbal et al., 2008). Alsinbal et al. (2008) argue that the reason vocational education is currently less popular than before is the lack of availability of jobs and the low wages paid.

An additional problem that is emerging is the gap between demand and availability of schools across the country. In heavily populated areas, there are sometimes as many as 45 children per class (Alhamed, Ziyadah, Alotaibi and Motwali, 2007) despite the fact that the current statistics show the teacher to student and school to students ratios are fine (see Table 2:1); this may indicate

a problem in school distribution. This is a consequence of the population boom from 24 million in 2004 to over 28 million in 2012 (The World Bank, 2013) and the increased awareness among Saudi Arabians of the importance of education (Nasir, Althobiani and Alaithy, 2010). Statistics show a growth rate of 3% in primary school enrolment between 2011 and 2012 (The World Bank, 2013). This high demand is not yet reflected adequately in the Ministry's preparation of classrooms and buildings (Alharbi and Almahdi, 2012).

According to the literature on student achievement, the crucial relationship between school and home (Nasir, Althobiani and Alaithy, 2010), is generally poor in Saudi Arabia (Alhamed et al., 2007). Communications between the two parties are limited to times of crisis over misbehaviour or low achievement. Therefore, there is a need to improve communication to educate parents to help their child when choosing the right field to work in, and to promote vocational options (Mostafa, 2006; Nasir, Althobiani and Alaithy, 2010).

A more in-depth exploration of such issues will be addressed in the literature review, especially those related to Principal autonomy and power and teacher training.

Influential factors on educational policy in Saudi Arabia

There are many influential factors affecting educational policymaking in Saudi Arabia. According to Nasir, Althobiani and Alaithy (2010), these factors can be divided into four main categories: geographic, social, economic and political.

As noted above, Saudi Arabia is geographically vast (2,250,000 km²). Most of the land is desert, with a very hot and arid climate (Alharbi and Almahdi, 2012). Communities vary depending on the geographical areas they inhabit, dividing broadly into industrial, agricultural and Bedouin (desert dwellers). Education in

Saudi Arabia must deal with the geographic and social realities; for example, the school day starts at 6am in the summer and finishes at 12pm, which helps to avoid students being out in the heat (Mostafa, 2006; Alaqeel, 2005). Retaining standards in desert areas is a major challenge for the ministry, not only because of the location, but also because of the nature of the community, as there is a high level of illiteracy among parents (Alsinbal et al., 2008).

Other social factors such as language, cultural differentiation in the population and the influence of Islam also affect education policymaking (Alharbi and Almahdi, 2012). Arabic is the official language in Saudi Arabia and all text books are printed in Arabic. Scientific terminologies are also translated from their original language into Arabic (Nasir, Althobiani and Alaithy, 2010). A sense of belonging to the language and the Arab world is also deeply considered by policymakers.

Due to the large migrant population, the education system pays attention to expatriates', such as highly paid workers and diplomatic personnel, children. Therefore, there are some international schools targeting these families. Such schools are usually designed to fulfil the needs of a specific population (e.g., American or British) and usually have the same curriculum as their country of origin (Alharbi and Almahdi, 2012). For example, the British International School in Riyadh teaches the English national curriculum. Therefore, Saudi students are not allowed to enrol in such schools since courses are taught in English, use a different curriculum and have less emphasis on religion.

In Saudi Arabian schools, the majority of the students are Muslim so all textbooks and subjects are taught in deference to the requirements of Islam (Alhamed et al., 2007). For example, segregation between boys and girls in

schools is a result of social pressure and encouraged by Islamic scholars (ibid). Some, however, claim that the government enforces this regardless of people's preferences (Baki, 2004; Prokop, 2003). On the other hand, segregation of the sexes in Saudi Arabia occurs in all areas of life, including weddings, funerals, parties, social events and within the home as people's choice (Alsinbal et al., 2008; Mostafa, 2006).

Economically, as discussed previously, Saudi Arabia is very rich in natural petroleum resources. This has led to more than adequate funding to improve education, as a first priority for planners and developers (Nasir, Althobiani and Alaithy, 2010). Although petrol prices have fluctuated over the years, investment in education has risen sharply (see the figures mentioned earlier) (Alaqael, 2005). One of the pillars of educational policy in Saudi Arabia is that education is free for all, from primary school until doctoral level. Moreover, undergraduate and postgraduate students receive monthly payments of about £200 a month from the government to cover their living expenses (Alsinbal et al., 2008).

Politics has a considerable influence on education. Saudi Arabia is a member of the Cooperation Council for the Arabic States of the Gulf (GCC) and exerts political influence within the Islamic and Arabic World. Education is necessary to increase a sense of belonging among the population to such groups (Azazi, 2012). In 2012, the Saudi leaders proposed a transition from cooperation to a union among the GCC members. Schools, therefore, explain to students why this step would be of benefit to their country and what the individual responsibilities toward enabling the transition are (Alharbi and Almahdi, 2012).

Changes and development

Since 1975, various programmes have been adopted to improve the education system (Nasir, Althobiani and Alaithy, 2010). The majority of such attempts have targeted high schools in an attempt to close the gap between general education and higher education (Alaqeel, 2005; Alsinbal et al., 2008; Alhamed et al., 2007). For example, the "Comprehensive School" and the "Developed High School" programmes were both attempts to conform to a university type system; students were given the freedom to choose subjects and build their own schedules. However, this final detail resulted in students leaving the school grounds in their free time and participating in antisocial behaviour away from home and school supervision. Both programmes failed and the government had to stop them because of the resultant disciplinary problems and security issues (Nasir, Althobiani and Alaithy, 2010; Mostafa, 2006; Alharbi and Almahdi, 2012).

In the following years, proposals were pursued to develop schools at all levels. In 1999, the Ministry of Education initiated the "Saudi Elite Schools" programme. The programme was implemented in five schools in Riyadh as a pilot study, and was later to be rolled out to all schools (Mostafa, 2006). The main changes were administrative where there is a school leader, a head of department and middle management instead of school manager, Deputy and teachers. The problem with this scheme was that, while it improved administrative procedures, it applied the same curriculum as normal schools did (Alhamed et al., 2007). Furthermore, problems regarding the school Principal's power and motivation remain unsolved. Although this attempt has not moved beyond the pilot phase, some of the five "Elite Schools" still exist (Alharbi and Almahdi, 2012).

When King Abdullah became king in 2005, he declared a national programme, the King Abdullah Programme to develop Education or the "*Tatweer*" (Alharbi and Almahdi, 2012). This programme aimed to develop education in four different areas. The first area for improvement is to offer continuous, effective and comprehensive professional training and development for all on topics relevant to the curriculum (ibid). The second is educational environment development, including the use of effective interactive technology as a learning environment. The third is a curriculum development programme, which has been implemented in schools since 2010-2011 (Nasir, Althobiani and Alaithy, 2010). The new curriculum has been introduced gradually according to a three-phase implementation strategy, starting with the first and fourth years of primary school and the first year of secondary and high school. The vision of this development is to prepare an "elite curriculum which has high interactive technology making students at the centre and motivating toward innovation and competitiveness through balanced values, believes, knowledge and skills achieving national interaction and global thinking" (Alharbi and Almahdi, 2012, p. 134). The final area of the programme is supporting non-classroom based activities. The programme stresses that these activities are as important as in-class learning. Such activities aim to prepare and develop the student physically, artistically, socially, culturally, scientifically and professionally, and the programme encourages activities targeting such skills such as communication, leadership and innovation (Alharbi and Almahdi, 2012).

Because the programme is only recently under way, some of its aspects have been implemented, such as changes to the curriculum, and others have not, such as professional training for staff, developing a learning environment and

supporting non-classroom activities; therefore, there is little evidence to date to measure its success.

2.3.3 Conclusion

The discussion of Saudi Arabia in this chapter highlights the importance of the economy as a major contributor to the development of the country in general and education in particular, as the significant amount of investment from the government has helped to develop and change education in recent years.

However, arguably, this drive for investment should be mirrored in the development of the educational system and the way it is run. The system would benefit from advancing administrative processes, developing these from hierarchical and bureaucratic to flat and networked in nature (Alharbi and Almahdi, 2012). This would help the system to run more smoothly and improve in order to cope with international competition in this time of globalization.

2.4 Summary

This chapter dealt with the international educational context and explores education in a wide, global context and in a more specific, national context in Saudi Arabia. Such a wide to narrow exploration aims to provide a deeper understanding of the Saudi educational system and show how the system interacts with, and is affected by the global system.

In the first section of this chapter, globalization was introduced to explain the wider context. Some theories around the effects of globalization were explored from the perspectives of those in favour and those against globalization. Then

the mutual effects between globalization and education were examined. The second section dealt with the Saudi Arabian country, people, culture and economy. The following part introduced the education system in Saudi Arabia, highlighting who is in charge, the levels of public education, problems facing education, factors affecting educational policy and changes and development over time.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

Studies of effective and outstanding schools in Western contexts have gained momentum in recent decades. Many theoretical and empirical studies have explored the notion and some have been funded by educational governing bodies in order to set standards and raise performance and outcomes (e.g. (Leithwood et al., 2006; West-burnham, 2009)). In Saudi Arabia, however, the notion seems to be under researched and centralisation and standardisation of the education system there may responsible for that.

The aims of this thesis are to give an insight into the nature of outstanding Schools in Saudi Arabia from a Western literature perspective, to draw new insight on the notions raised in the literature and to introduce the notions to the Arabic and Saudi contexts. Although there have been numerous studies in Western literature on the criteria for effective schools (e.g. Crum and Sherman, 2008; Day et al., 2011; Leithwood et al., 2006 and Moos et al., 2005), this thesis has developed a theoretical framework bringing about new insight into school effectiveness in the context of Saudi Arabia.

The framework explores outstanding schools through three dimensions of leadership style, culture and professional development. As leadership practices are significant to school performance, it is an educational leadership research conventional approach to look at the notion through different lenses (Simkins et al., 2009). Therefore, culture in its different guises (global, religious, national and organisational) serves as a mediating effect facilitating the right environment for the practices to take effect, and it also can affect leadership practices.

Professional development can serve as a professional creator in which effectiveness is made not born (Bush, 2008).

The research questions are based on the conceptual framework. Three main research questions have been developed:

1. What are the leadership practices of school leaders in outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia?
2. How is culture perceived and experienced by the school community in these cases?
3. How is professional development perceived and experienced by the leaders and staff of these institutions?

The chapter is divided into two parts; the first part discusses the conceptual framework mentioned above to define, discuss and evaluate each concept. The second part discusses the notions from a research point of view. Therefore, relevant empirical studies will be analysed and evaluated. Before discussing the conceptual framework and research review, outstanding schools are defined.

3.2 Outstanding schools

For researches on school effectiveness, it is common to use different methods to identify outstanding schools including students' national test results, popularity and independent bodies' school ratings. For example, Giles et al. (2007) used the State of New York Department of Education's inspection data. In Sweden, Höög, Johansson and Olofsson (2007) used the Swedish National Agency's inspection reports. In Denmark, Moos et al. (2005) used the popularity among peers technique to identify successful cases because there was no independent

inspection body. In Australia, Gurr and Drysdale (2007) used a combination of test results and popularity as a selection technique.

In England, researchers have used the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) inspection reports and ratings to identify outstanding schools (Day, 2007; Westburnham, 2009). Ofsted inspects schools and rates them as outstanding, good, require improvement or inadequate. Schools are inspected in terms of "overall effectiveness, effectiveness of leadership and management and quality of teaching, learning and assessment" (Ofsted, 2016 p.33).

This research uses a combination of two techniques: ratings assigned by the local educational authority and winning the National Education Excellence Award. The local educational authority's rating is assigned based on an annual inspection of schools within a jurisdiction, with schools being rated as outstanding, very good, acceptable or need attention. Areas inspected include the stability of leadership, teachers, students and the school. This is determined by the number of filings for transfers to other schools and the number of disputes and complaints raised to the local authority. Other criteria include the quality of teaching, students' educational outcomes, and school leaders' management skills (Diamond Educational Authority, 2015b).

The Education Excellence Award is organised by the Ministry of Education, and it is awarded in six categories: provincial and local educational authorities, educational supervisors, the school and its leadership, teachers, Social Instructors, and students. Candidates for awards for the last four branches must be nominated. Each local authority nominates schools and candidates to the award body, who then choose the awardees. From among 26,225 schools across the country, 40 schools (20 boys' schools and 20 girls' schools) are annually

awarded under the school and leadership branch (Education Excellence Award, 2016).

Schools are judged under the Excellence Award as Excellent, Very Good, Good and Satisfactory. The assessment sheet covers seven domains: effective leadership, school culture, quality, teaching and learning community, professional development, digital school and community partnership. Across these seven domains, there are 29 specific criteria (Education Excellence Award, 2015).

In educational research, outstanding schools are typically identified through their outstanding performance and is usually measured by how well these schools do against local standards, policies and or national exams (Leithwood et al., 2006).

3.3 Conceptual framework

The three concepts of leadership style, school culture and professional development are used to create a new theoretical understanding of the nature of outstanding schools. The developed framework aims to highlight the importance of the three concepts and their relationship to outstanding schools. Leadership is argued to be second in importance to classroom practices for a school's effectiveness (Leithwood et al., 2008) while culture is viewed as a mediating factor that creates the right environment for effective leadership (Simkins et al., 2009). Professional development is a very important aspect in preparing and developing competent Principals, leaders and teachers.

Each of the three concepts will be discussed and analysed in separate sections, which will be followed by a section that links leadership style, school culture and

professional development together. The discussion will focus on business management literature and educational leadership and management literature to cover both organisational and school based theories and researches.

3.3.1 Leadership styles

Leadership style is defined as the method that a leader adopts to deal with people, situations and processes within and outside his/her organisation. Devine and Alger (2012) define the concept as “the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans and motivating people” (p.2).

In this research, leadership styles provide a theoretical underpinning to frame understanding of leadership practices. Such approach is used by a number of researchers, including Crum and Sherman (2008), Hudson (2012), Klar and Brewer (2013), Parkes and Thomas (2007), and Sanzo et al. (2011). Awareness of different leadership styles enabled researchers to develop a model of leadership or a set of leadership practices driven by two or more leadership styles. Meanwhile, it is essential to discuss knowledge of leadership styles as reinforcing applicable models and sets of practices.

It is argued that leadership style is affected by culture (macro and micro) and by professional development that the leader is going and has gone through. Further discussion about the relationship between the three concepts will be discussed in the section 3.3.4 Linking concepts together.

In this section, the discussion will be about transformational, transactional, instructional and distributed leadership. The reason for selecting these concepts for discussion in relation to leadership styles is that transformational leadership

focuses on the development of people and the organisation with regard to skills, performance and values. In the educational context, it is also important to investigate instructional leadership as a concept focusing on teaching and learning. Therefore, the two concepts can complement each other in the educational context. They are also perceived as the dominant leadership styles in the educational context (Hallinger, 2003; Shatzer et al., 2013) as they also have exchanged popularity since the 1980s (Hallinger, 2010). Responding to criticisms that transformational and instructional leadership are limited in terms of adopting one-man power, the concept of distributed leadership will be introduced.

Transformational and transactional leadership

Transformational leadership as a concept was first considered in 1973 by James V. Downton in his book *Rebel Leadership: Commitment and Charisma in the Revolutionary Process*. Five years later, James M. Burns compared the concept to transactional leadership from a political point of view and from then the two concepts often appear together in the literature in comparison forms (Schedlitzki and Edwards, 2014). Therefore, in this section there will be a form of comparison in defining and evaluating the two concepts.

Literature on the topic offers more of a description than a definition of the terms. Transactional leadership is described as an exchange between leader and follower based on his/her performance in which the leader offers rewards or punishments for those who comply with his/her orders (Nan and Swamy, 2014; Schedlitzki and Edwards, 2014; Winkler, 2009).

Transactional leadership defined as:

a transaction or exchange between leader and followers, such as providing a material or psychological reward for followers' compliance with the leader's wishes (James Burns, 1978 cited in Schedlitzki and Edwards, 2014 p.66).

Transformational leadership, on the other hand, aims to develop people's skills and inner state through moral values, beliefs and visions developed and practiced by the leader and shared within the school community (Nan and Swamy, 2014; Schedlitzki and Edwards, 2014; Winkler, 2009).

It has been argued that transformational leadership is related to the charismatic leadership family because the transformational leader aims to change, affect and inspire followers through his/her strong sense of charisma, purpose and meaning. Those in favour of this classification justify it by arguing that the early routes of transformational leadership were evident in the work of early literature on charisma such as that by Mark Webber in 1947; hence they used the term neo-charismatic leadership (Schedlitzki and Edwards, 2014).

In an unpublished work, House et al. (1998) cited in Winkler, (2009), however, distance themselves from using the term charisma and choose the term value-based theory. They argued the charismatic personality does not refer to good deeds or bad deeds. For example, both Nelson Mandela and Adolf Hitler can be described as charismatic leaders since they inspired people by their strong vision and ideology.

As transformational leadership is related to charisma and value-based theories, transactional leadership is related to leader-follower exchange theory in which interaction between the two parties is based on exchanging one thing for another. Therefore, the follower is compensated for the work he/she is doing by

the manager (Nan and Swamy, 2014). However, Winkler (2009) believes that both transformational and transactional leadership are a form of leader-follower exchange.

The main difference is that higher needs are considered in the transformational leadership, which goes beyond monetary rewards to the psychological fulfilment (Schedlitzki and Edwards, 2014). Transformational leadership aims to develop people's inner state and abilities by raising their level of needs and goals. For example, a transformational leader aims to develop people's self-esteem and how they think about themselves to a higher level than they were aiming for. In addition, considering a follower's needs may help develop their personality as they become highly regarded in the organisation while transactional leadership may consider punishment as a form of exchange.

The transformational leadership has four basic dimensions (Bass and Riggio, 2006). The first is charisma and idealized influence or degree of which the leader's behaviour and ideology influence people and in turn how easily the leader gains people's trust, admiration and respect. Second is inspirational motivation in which the leader motivates his/her followers by demonstrating his/her vision, explaining why is it important, clarifying expectations and setting goals and committing to them (Winkler, 2009). The third dimension is intellectual stimulation. The transformational leader allows and encourages people to be creative and innovative to develop their own, their leader's and their organisation's values, beliefs and skills. Their opinions are valued and are not criticised if they are different from the leader's opinions. People are involved in decision making and the power is more distributed (further discussion about distributed leadership will follow). The final dimension is individualised

consideration. Individual characteristics and differences are considered and in turn learning opportunities are individualised and assigned for each individual's needs. Communication is considered to be a two-way flow and also personalised to the individual (Bass and Riggio, 2006; Schedlitzki and Edwards, 2014; Winkler, 2009).

As the literature often compares transformational and transactional leaderships, more often such comparison aims to view the limitations of transactional leadership while viewing transformational leadership as the successful alternative (Bealer and Bhanugopan, 2014). Transactional leaders have been accused of being controlling, hierarchical and having limited skills to work in higher positions that need visionary elements; they are deemed suitable to be in lower and middle leadership (Schedlitzki and Edwards, 2014).

However, transformational leadership should not be excluded from the criticism. Winkler (2009) argues that since this concept requires some form of charisma, it may stress the leader as a "great man" rather than a leader with characteristics. Not only would that make learning to be a leader more difficult, but it can also link the success of the organisation to the existence of the leader. Another downside of transformational leadership is that just as the concept is regarded as constructive it can be destructive in the case of dysfunctional transformational leaders with immoral ideologies (Schedlitzki and Edwards, 2014; Winkler, 2009).

Some argue that the concept alone in educational settings is not enough. In such settings, managerial processes are needed beside techniques for teaching and learning, since leadership is argued to be second in importance to teaching and learning (Leithwood et al., 2008). In addition, although people are intellectually stimulated in transformational leadership to provide their thoughts and opinions,

it remains unclear the extent to which leadership is actually distributed.

Therefore, the discussion in the next sections will cover instructional leadership, which is linked to teaching and learning and distributed leadership.

Instructional leadership

Instructional leadership was very popular in the 1980s and then, in the early 1990s, the trend slightly shifted towards transformational leadership as an alternative because some countries, especially those in North America, were looking for structural change in their educational systems. By the late 1990s, instructional leadership seemed to have lost its strength as a valid theory. However, as accountability and globalization in the 21st century led to an increased emphasis on the importance of learning outcomes, the notion started to regain popularity as an important concept for school development (Hallinger, 2010; Valentine and Prater, 2011). This section will define, discuss and evaluate instructional leadership. Some elements of comparison between the concept and transformational leadership will lie throughout the discussion.

Transformational and instructional leadership both aim to develop school performance and student outcomes. The former focuses on developing people within the school to improve student outcomes while the latter emphasises developing the teaching and learning programme to achieve such improvement (Hallinger, 2003).

Hallinger (2010) defines the Principal's role in instructional leadership as being composed of three conceptual dimensions: "defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program and promoting a positive school learning climate" (p.65). Defining the school mission involves working with people in the school to set goals that aim to improve student achievement. The Principal needs

to manage the structural programme, ensure the curriculum is being closely followed in the classroom, manage the curriculum and observe pupil progress. A final important feature is the promotion of a healthy and positive learning climate within the school by raising standards, fostering high expectations and protecting staff from distractions (Shatzer et al., 2013).

Hornig and Loeb (2010) argue that a successful instructional Principal is involved directly in day-to-day teaching and learning, is not afraid of observing teachers and performing continuous visits to classroom to ensure the correct application of the instructional programme. In addition, such a Principal needs to balance the effort for design such programme by hiring, monitoring and keeping/removing teachers and offering the relevant resources needed for the programme to run successfully.

The model, as Hallinger (2003) claims, is perceived to be effective in raising student achievement and school outcomes. In addition, Hallinger argues that the model helped to internationally reshape thinking about successful school leadership in the 1980s and early '90s as some countries, especially in North America, adopted the concept.

However, the concept attracts much criticism for the idea of the Principal being the main and sometimes only source of leadership. Top-down management is the norm in instructional leadership and sees the Principal establish, manage and control the instructional programme. The relationship between the teachers and the Principal is perceived to be formal and limited to work-related issues since there is an authority gap between the two parties (Shatzer et al., 2013). These issues and others led to a decline in the popularity of the instructional approach

and a move toward the transformational approach in the early 1990s (Hallinger, 2010).

In response to such criticism, there has been a move to broaden the scope from only focusing on instructional improvement to include other aspects such as the organisational process discussed earlier (Shatzer et al., 2013). In addition, there is a move toward more sharing of leadership, including teachers in the decision making and involving the wider community in school matters (Hallinger, 2010).

The new approach is reported to have taken new names such as “distributed instructional leadership” or “leadership for learning” (ibid). However, there has been little in-depth research on the new approach to date and as yet there is no conceptual framework for such a model (Valentine and Prater, 2011).

It should be noted that there are limitations to both transformational and instructional leadership with regard to power distribution, although the latter is more visible than the former; these limitations stress the importance of discussing distributed leadership. The matter of leadership distribution will be addressed in the next section ‘Distributed leadership’.

Another criticism is related to focusing on one aspect of the school and neglecting other important issues. It is clear from the discussion above that the notion focuses mainly on teaching and learning while paying less attention to organisational processes such as building collaboration, developing staff and building relationships with the outside community (Valentine and Prater, 2011). This will be compensated by discussing quality in education where quality assurance is takes a more comprehensive approach which includes teaching and learning as well as organisational matters.

Quality in education

As a result of globalisation, countries worldwide are enthusiastically developing their products and services to enhance their strategic position in the global marketplace, as mentioned above. Thus, the knowledge economy has become increasingly important. Not only is education acknowledged as a way to develop nations, but it is also considered a tradable commodity (Shields, 2013). For this reason, education theorists and researchers, policy makers and educators are keen to develop and improve schools to keep pace with rising expectations and global competition.

Ensuring quality in education is among various approaches to enhancing 'products' in order to meet 'consumers' expectations (Hoy, Bayne-Jardine, & Wood, 2000). In addition, New Public Management has reshaped the relationship between the general public and public organisations (Shields, 2013; Wittmann, 2008). In research exploring effective schools, it is always been argued that among the responsibilities that school leaders have, is to ensure quality in their schools including quality in teaching and learning, which involves supervising, providing evaluative instructions, coordinating curricular and monitoring students' progress (Hallinger, 2010).

Quality in education is defined as:

an evaluation of the process of educating which enhances the need to achieve and develop the talents of the customers of the process, and at the same time meets the accountability standards set by the clients who pay for the process or the outputs from the process of educating. (Hoy et al., 2000, p10)

Hoy et al. (2000) are passionate about introducing quality to education. They stress that quality management helps educators to realise their aims in a democratic society, thereby unleashing the potential of the population. They also argue that quality is essential for the learning process itself, and that meeting quality standards is essential to an effective learning process. Indeed, they argue that,

Quality has thus become one of the watchwords of the consumer's creed, and quality standards are enshrined in consumer charters: charters for parents, patients, job seekers and so on. (Hoy et al. 2000, p. 13)

However, Houston (2007) expressed concerns regarding quality management in general (in the commercial sector). One of his arguments is that the term quality is vague and has no agreed single definition as yet. Indeed, the nature of quality management, its processes, and what it means to an organisation are not well established. Another concern is that the concept is universal, and does not pay much attention to the specific context in which it is applied. In relation to this point, the writer cautions against:

The overselling of the universality of TQM without due consideration of particular organisational environments and characteristics. (Houston, 2007, p.7).

The third concern put forward concerns the application of quality management control procedures in work places and factories without concern for the rights of workers, their dignity and in some cases their health and safety.

As mentioned above, these criticisms relate to the concept of quality management when applied in its original commercial context. When applied to

the educational contexts, further concerns arise associated with the school environment. Some have argued that the main purpose of quality management in the commercial sector is to control processes to increase productivity and in turn produce high quality products and services efficiently to increase profit, which goes against the key purposes of education which are student learning, improvement and outcomes (Houston, 2007).

Another concern is that at the heart of quality management is the customer and the process of identifying the customer in the context of education is unclear; i.e. whether they are students, parents, Local Authorities, governments or employers (Meirovich and Romar, 2006). A further criticism of quality management in education is that learning is a human behaviour, and human psychology is at the core of the educational process; quality management clearly does not address this important issue (Houston, 2007).

The final criticism raised by Meirovich and Romar (2006) is that if that we agree the customers in education are the students, they are so diverse and each one has her/his unique needs, that it then becomes difficult to measure success. In addition in education, individual difference is at the heart of the learning process, as teaching is delivered according to students' unique needs, and this seems to be incongruent with the main aims of quality management as a process

To summarise, in this section I defined and introduced quality management, highlighting the reason why the concept is deemed by some to be effective in the public sector in general and in education specifically. I then highlighted the argument of those who believe quality assessment in education could benefit the sector, due its ability to unleash people potential and to satisfy customers. Then I cited the argument of those who are not in favour of quality assessment, due to

variations that arise in this environment, due to unclear structures and the nature and context of improvement being nonspecific. I also highlighted the concerns around introducing quality measures in education, including issues regarding the different purposes effecting quality management and education, the nature of human learning and the importance of recognising individuality within the learning process.

As mentioned above, due to the limitations imposed by transformational and instructional leadership regarding the issue of power, distributed leadership will be introduced and discussed in the following section.

Distributed leadership

Distributed leadership has attracted increasing attention from scholars, practitioners and policy makers especially in the educational leadership context since the late 1990s and early 2000s (Bolden, 2011; Leithwood et al., 2006) with its roots dating back to the mid-1920s (Harris, 2009).

Harris (2009) stated that such interest is as a result of a shift in research both theoretically and empirically from the role of one-person leadership. Such a shift can be explained by multiple factors. As a result of globalization, the public sector in general and education in specific has experienced immense pressure to raise standards and perform outstandingly with increasing competitiveness and the knowledge economy becoming a visible phenomenon (Shields, 2013).

Therefore, the conventional approach of a selected few people leading an organisation has become less efficient as the long standing attribution of a single person may become difficult (Ancona and Backman, 2010; Thorpe, Gold and Lawler, 2011).

The term distributed leadership overlaps with other leadership terms with similar meanings such as shared, democratic, dispersed or collective (Leithwood et al., 2006). Some argue that although such terms may have slightly different meanings, trying to define and distinguish each one may fail to capture the complexity of the field and its paradoxical nature and also may remove the opportunity of contributing to the on-going debate about gaps in the field which is inevitable and desirable (Bolden, 2011). Yet defining distributed leadership seems to be important in order to distinguish it from other forms (Harris, 2009)

Distributed leadership is a social exercise that stretches power over many people from different levels in the organisation while restricting such power to be limited to fewer people (Leithwood et al., 2006). Thorpe et al. (2011) defined distributed leadership as “a variety of configurations which emerge from the exercise of influence that produces interdependent and conjoint action” (p.241). It is also defined as that distributed leadership:

... argues for a less formalised model of leadership where leadership responsibility is dissociated from the organisational hierarchy. It is proposed that individuals at all levels in the organisation and in all roles can exert leadership influence over their colleagues and thus influence the overall direction of the organisation (Bolden et al., 2008 cited in Schedlitzki and Edwards, 2014 P. 152).

It has been argued that distributed leadership is not the opposite of top-down leadership since distributed leadership involves both vertical and horizontal processes. It is, however, an alternative interpretation of leadership practices that can be situated in relation to but not contrary to the top-down approach (Harris, 2009). The main concern for distributed leadership is co-performance

and a positive relationship between the leader and the follower as this contributes to healthy co-performance (ibid). In addition, instead of focusing on one agent's performance, it focuses on a board of actors as leaders (Bolden, 2011; West-Burnham, 2010). Distributed leadership can be viewed as a concept that affects the way relationships in organisations are practiced (West-Burnham, 2010). It suggests that the relationship between leader and follower should be positive and strong and built upon trust and collegiality (Leithwood et al., 2006). In addition, it offers a learning environment where knowledge, skills and expertise are shared among other school community members (West-Burnham, 2010).

However, there are some concerns about the concept. It has been stated in the literature that distributed leadership tends to be descriptive and normative rather than critical (Thorpe et al., 2011). Some state that research in this field has two concerns: one is defining the concept and the other is showing how leadership can be distributed without addressing the drawbacks and negative consequences of the concept (Camburn and Han, 2009). The reason the concept lacks critical evaluation is that it is relatively new and it needs some time for such evaluation to accrue (Leithwood et al., 2006),

Some also question whether the concept's first priority is to enhance performance and achieve outstanding outcomes or if the democratic elements are the main goal. Since the concept originated in the Western context where democracy is the way of governance, the concern stems from the notion that distributed leadership is a form of mirroring such politics in the educational context rather than a response to the limitations of other approaches and the requirements of complex situations that require collaboration (Hargreaves and

Fink, 2009). It is also a concern in Eastern (especially the Middle East) contexts where perspectives about power are different from the West and distributed leadership may be viewed as a form of Westernisation, as has been discussed in Chapter 2.

In summary, this section concentrates on leadership style which informs the behaviours of the school leaders in dealing with people, situations and processes. The section has discussed transformational, instructional and distributed leadership. The aim was to highlight that, as there is no single leadership theory that can be applied successfully to every context (Day et al., 2011), a combination of leadership theories covering different dimensions of a school and responding to each other's limitations is the ideal.

Some questions raised by this review in relation to the context of the study, Saudi Arabia, are as follows:

- How is the school's vision developed and shared by the school community?
- How are schools organised and structured (as organisations)?
- How is distributed leadership perceived and practiced?
- How do schools' communities communicate with each other?
- How do schools plan their work?
- What steps are taken by leaders to ensure quality?

3.3.2 Culture

Researchers from diverse disciplines use the term "culture" in different contexts; it refers to a notion that may have a similar base meaning but with different levels that range from macro to micro and an array of sub-levels in between.

Organisational culture has different levels of visibility from the most observable level that involves language and behaviour to the least observable level encompassing taken-for-granted beliefs and values. Organisational culture is a multidimensional concept that includes notions of power, relationships, communication, vision, goals etc. In addition, leadership plays a distinctive role in creating, managing and changing culture.

This section aims to address these different concepts of culture. I start by defining organisational culture, assessing the different levels of culture from macro to micro, discussing levels of observance and discussing the role of leadership within it.

Pfister (2009) has suggested that because culture is difficult to observe and describe, it warrants multiple definitions. Indeed, there are many varied definitions and interpretations of organisational culture in the literature (Cameron and Quinn, 2011). In addition, to the “slippery” nature of culture, researchers studying organisational culture do so with different purposes. Some researchers examine the effect of organisational culture on performance while others assess the effect of the external world or the relationship between culture and leadership (ibid); these varied research goals result in rich yet varied perspectives.

Cameron and Quinn (2011) argued that organisational culture is one of the few instances in which research has led to practice, as researchers and scholars have provided guidance for managers in implementing different approaches to effectively lead organisations. This has resulted in different scholars concentrating on different methods of organisational development, such as developing leadership styles, practices or communication. In turn, each

researcher defines organisational culture in a way that is relevant to the area he/she is studying.

Nonetheless, it is possible to identify common norms in the definition of organisational culture, and these connections have led researchers to identify the general characteristics for organisational culture. Pfister (2009) stated that "culture is about shared understandings among group members, about group member's interactions, is implicit (and explicit) and is based on history and tradition" (p.35). Similarly, Cameron and Quinn (2011) stated, based on their literature exploration, that "the majority of writers agree that the concept of organisational culture refers to the taken-for-granted values, underlying assumptions, expectations and definitions that characterise organisations and their members" (p.19).

Schein (2010) defined organisational culture as

a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems (P.18).

The shared assumptions and values "glue" the organisation's members together by making what they do and say in different situations meaningful. Busher (2006) believed that it was about making culture important. He looked at organisational culture in a school environment and claimed that school culture gives meaning to the members' endeavours, makes sense of the member's actions and behaviour, ensures that the actions of the community members are

consistent and establishes a sense of identity that all members can share and feel.

Another aspect of culture that scholars agree upon is that it has different levels ranging from the macro to the micro. Understanding these different levels is important when trying to understand the notion of school culture since they are affecting and are also affected by the notion. Such an understanding will help to give a clear vision of the shared assumptions and values and the deep unobservable levels of culture which will be discussed later.

The macro level of culture is the context in which the organisation or the school exists and operates. At the largest level, the macro culture is the global culture or the culture created by globalization (Cameron and Quinn, 2011), such as the knowledge economy. The macro culture, and how it affects schools and organisations, was discussed thoroughly in Chapter 2.

On a narrower level, national culture plays an important role in influencing people and organisations because it is experienced at an early stage of human life and is likely to continue to have influence for a long period of time (Onea, 2012). Some researchers have also tried to identify the leadership styles and practices commonly used in certain countries and cultures (Cameron and Quinn, 2011). For example, the GLOBE project's results suggest that team orientation as a leadership style is uncommon in the Middle East (a low score in the project's result), while it is used extensively in Latin America (a high score in the results) and is fairly common in Anglo countries (a medium score in the results). Self-protection as a leadership style, on the other hand, received a high score in the Middle East, a medium score in Latin America and a low score in Anglo countries (Schedlitzki and Edwards, 2014).

At the same level of importance, in certain cultures, is religion. Onea (2012) suggested that religion has a particular value because it is connected to the human soul. Onea indicated that religion may have an effect on the behaviour of people, including how they communicate with others and how they value people, time, hierarchy and money. It is important to note that the effects of religion vary from one culture to another. Religion in some countries, in particular in the West, has a limited effect at all levels. Some cultures, however, value religion, and it plays a significant role in people's lives. Saudi Arabia is one of the countries in which religion plays a significant role in politics and in people's lives (Baki, 2004), as discussed in Chapter 2.

Busher (2006) believed that there is homogeneity in the relationship between organisational culture, especially in schools, and the relevant macro culture, since schools have a mediating effect on the implementation of wider context policies and views. For example, schools in Saudi Arabia are required to implement the government's political orientation, such as incorporating a sense of belonging to the Arabic World and to the Cooperation Council for the Arabic States of the Gulf (GCC).

Some argue that organisational culture was ignored by scholars and researchers for a long time. It was not until the 1980s that researchers began to pay attention to the notion (Cameron and Quinn, 2011). The reason is that the culture of an organisation is difficult to identify and observe because it involves shared or taken-for-granted values, beliefs, fundamental assumptions and history (ibid).

Therefore, Schein (2010) and Cameron and Quinn (2011) developed a framework for defining organisational culture levels. These levels manifest the

degree to which culture is observable. Cameron and Quinn (2011) identified four levels, from the most observable to the least observable: "explicit behaviour, artefacts, conscious contracts and norms and implicit assumptions" (p.19).

Schein (2010), on the other hand, had similar levels but combined the first two levels into one level. Therefore, the first level in Schein's category is the level of artefacts, which includes the observed behaviour, the espoused beliefs and values and the basic underlying assumptions.

The artefact level of culture in an organisation or school is represented by the physical environment, such as the buildings, clothing, classrooms and offices. It also includes the observed behaviour of the people within the school, focusing on the way they communicate and interact with each other (Schein, 2010).

The second level is less observable, and it includes espoused beliefs and values. This level, as Schein (2010) argued, is adopted by the organisation's members over time after observing and applying these norms and finding them to be useful, both now and in the future. This level also contains the organisation's strategies, goals, aspirations and ideology.

At some levels, these shared beliefs and values can create one or more cultures within the organisation in which each member could associate themselves with a group of colleagues who share the same beliefs. This could be a positive or negative grouping such as one with a common belief of a learning group or one with a common belief of opposing the leaders and creating dysfunctional behaviour (Cameron and Quinn, 2011).

The most unobservable level is the underlying implicit assumptions, which include the taken-for-granted beliefs and values, in which alternative variations are less visible to the group and sometimes behaviours based on other premises

become non-understandable (Schein, 2010). For example, it is common in Middle Eastern cultures for managers to avoid making people redundant if they have family responsibilities. This managerial action may be inconceivable in capitalist cultures in the West, where managers focus only on what benefits their organisation.

Some argue that positive or conflict cultures occur when there is an agreement or disagreement among people within the school about the shared beliefs and values and the underlying implicit assumptions. When there is agreement on these norms, positive culture is likely to occur; by contrast, when people within the school, especially teachers and leaders, do not share the same values, conflict culture is likely to occur (Dongjiao, 2015). Therefore, bringing people together within the school is a healthy way to solve, avoid and prevent conflict, whereas having a culture of contradictions allows conflicts to occur and make them harder to solve (ibid).

It is evident that school culture is a complex phenomenon as it is affected by and affects the different levels it is embedded in, the global, national, religious and community levels. Adding to its complex nature are the different levels of observance in school culture from the most observable to the least observable.

At this stage, I have defined school culture, discussed macro and micro levels of culture and explained how visible culture is; it is now important to address the crucial role of leadership in relation to culture. Leadership plays a key role in creating, managing and changing culture (Schein, 2009).

Creating a culture within a school is perceived to be among the Principal and leaders' key responsibilities (Onea, 2012; Turan, 2013). Among the 14 basic practices in the four categories Leithwood et al. (2006) identify in their model of

successful school practices, almost half can be linked to creating a functional culture. For example, the whole category “setting directions’ can be related to school culture as it involves building a shared vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals and instilling high levels of performance expectations. Some argue that it may be possible for leaders to lead the school successfully without establishing a functional and positive culture. However, while this success may be possible in the short term, sustaining it over the long term is unlikely (Richard and Catano, 2008).

When a new leader comes to his position in an organisation with an existing culture, it is important for him/her to first understand that existing culture (Busher, 2006) and to understand what people think about themselves and others including pupils, parents and colleagues. It is also essential to understand values, beliefs, vision and goals that the school community shares.

Communication, how power lies within the organisation, how people are treated and how relationships are maintained should be assessed by the school Principal in order to garner a clear understanding of the school culture (Schein, 2010).

It is also important to consider the different levels of culture visibility discussed earlier in order to understand the deep underlying implicit assumptions, which include the taken-for-granted beliefs and values. Understanding, accepting and absorbing the macro-cultures the school is impeded in and understanding the micro cultures that is likely schools to have is very helpful in understanding the school culture itself (Cameron and Quinn, 2011).

Having understood the culture, the Principal should be able to distinguish between what is advantageous to maintain or to change. It has been argued that in the case of a dysfunctional culture, the leadership role is crucial to managing

and changing the culture in order to for it to become functional again (Schein, 2009).

Schein (2010) lists the crucial steps that the Principal and his fellow leaders should take to bring about the necessary changes. The first step is to understand the process of change, what it involves and how it happens. Second is to understand human attitudes toward change and to realise that resistance is likely because people tend to fear change. Third is having a clear vision about what should be done, why and how it should be done and being able to communicate that in a reassuring manner. The last step is implementing change, measuring and evaluating success and addressing further changes.

To sum up, organisational culture is the shared norms, values and beliefs that have been established and shared by members of an organisation as the "correct" way of dealing with challenges and day-to-day work. Organisational culture is affected by the different levels and types of culture, (macro, global, national and/or religious culture) in which it is embedded. It has different levels in terms of visibility. The most visible level involves aspects such as architecture and behaviour and the least visible level involves the taken-for-granted beliefs and values.

In addition, leadership plays a significant role in building managing and changing culture. It is also important for the school leaders to be able to understand these complexities and the multi-dimensional aspect of organisational culture in order to manage and change culture and effectively lead the organisation.

Key questions raised by this review in relation to Saudi Arabia and the concept of organisational culture are as follows.

- How do people in school communities perceive school culture?
- What effect do macro cultures have on school culture?
- Do leaders aim to establish one culture only or do they allow different cultures to exist?
- Who creates cultures?
- What is the culture role in case of problems and difficulties?

3.3.3 Professional development

In the last two sections, I dealt with leadership styles and culture with regard to leadership and management in general and school contexts in particular. This section looks at professional development in schools. I will briefly discuss the nature of professional development in effective schools, including school leaders' professional development and teachers' professional development.

Professional development in school

Professional development for adults within schools has gained momentum in the educational discourse owing to the complexity of modern schooling and parents' and policy-makers' increased expectations and the introduction of the Knowledge Economy and New Public Management. Furthermore, new policies, improvements and reforms implemented by governments (i.e. the introduction of the National Curriculum in England in 1988 and *Tatweer* program in Saudi Arabia in 2005) requires adults in schools, including leaders, teachers and administrators, to be competent to ensure the success of such new implementations (Riley and Mulford, 2007; Bubb and Earley, 2007).

In addition, owing to the increasing demand for competitiveness and as education shifts toward a market-like nature with the impact of globalization, the

notion of effective education and effective schools has become increasingly important. Thus, professional development for school members has been seen as one of the important factors to respond to such shifts (Shields, 2013).

Bubb and Earley (2007) argued that professional development in schools has many important effects:

- Efficacy in the job leaders and teachers do results in good achievements by students.
- Snowball effect helps attract more effective teachers as word-of-mouth spreads.
- Helps to improve self-ethos where staff feel valued as they learn and develop.
- Establishing a culture of learning and development for adults that consequently motivates students to learn.
- Fulfilling professional demands as the nature of professionalism continues to develop.

West-Burnham 2009 described the nature of effective learning communities as:

- *They work through consent around explicit values and clarity of purpose.*
- *The working culture is one of transparency, openness and sharing.*
- *There is a willingness to question and challenge.*
- *They work through highly sophisticated communication using modern technologies and traditional social and relational skills.*
- *There is a high degree of mutual trust, regard and friendship with a real sense of interdependence – the focus is on bonding and bridging (West-Burnham, 2009, p. 108).*

Organising professional development in schools helps fulfilling the schools' goals and objectives, and such planning should be oriented toward the school's vision. It is also important to ensure that such development is in line with individuals' needs within schools. Individuals' needs are important for developing a self-ethos and value, and individual development increases the efficacy required for the school's development (Bubb and Earley, 2007).

Leaders professional development

The aim of this subsection is to discuss leaders' professional development with regard to its importance and different forms. Reflection as an alternative method for leaders' development will also be discussed.

Professional development for school Principals and leaders has gained momentum over the last few decades (O'Doherty and Orr, 2012; Riley and Mulford, 2007). Besides the pursuit to improve quality in the public sector in general and in schools in specific brought about by globalization (Shields, 2013), the widespread belief in the importance of leadership practices in achieving and sustaining school effectiveness has helped to strengthen such momentum (West-Burnham, 2009).

In addition, Bush (2008) believes that such pressure has affected the Principal's role as well as leaders role so that they are now accountable to governments and the public. The demands from both are increasing to cope with 21st century expectations. Furthermore, responsibilities are, in some countries, no longer centralised to the central government or local authorities; instead they are distributed to schools to make their own decisions.

Schools have thus become more complex and also as a result of the position globalization has put them in. Schools are now under increasing pressure

because of global economic competition as education is now recognised as a tradable commodity (Shields, 2013). For all these reasons, school leadership is becoming increasingly complex and requires special skills and knowledge.

Different forms of professional development are available for leaders while different countries vary in their qualification requirements. For example, there is pre-service and in-service training, both campus-based and school-based, that lead to qualifications and there is ad hoc learning and centralised or pluralist programmes (Bush, 2008). With regard to qualification requirements for school leaders, countries differ. For example, England requires a pre-service qualification to be obtained in advance of accepting the post (Riley and Mulford, 2007) while in Saudi Arabia teaching experience is the only requirement.

The emphasis on professional development is part of the formal mode of development, such as programmes provided by departments of education or by universities. The standardisation of school leadership is a major factor in such emphasis, since standards help to set expectations and measure performance. In turn, programmes can be designed around these standards to make sure that a base-line of competence is reached (Bush, 2008).

However, while conventional professional development for leaders is important (West-Burnham, 1999; Polizzi and Frick, 2012), some believe that formal coursework and training are not the only ways leaders can truly learn. Yip and Wilson (2010) argue that leaders learn from other situations through their career: challenging assignments, developmental relationships, adverse situations and personal experience, for example. In addition, Bush (2008) believes that standardisation causes the content of such programmes to encourage a "one size that fits all" attitude that puts less emphasis on individual school contexts.

Further, Darling-Hammond (2005) argues that schools expand and grow faster than development programmes as a result of the complexity of school contexts and the expansion of leadership role addressed earlier.

Therefore, the quest is for something that can cover the drawbacks addressed here and can include all the situations that leaders can learn from. Polizzi and Frick (2012) argue that reflection can serve as an alternative method to the conventional development programmes since it is an inside-out process that uses the inner strength of the trainee to recall events from his/her past, modulate them into experiences, learn from them, act in line with such learning and reflect again on such action. The next subsection will define, discuss and evaluate reflection as a development method.

Reflection

Reynolds (1999) defines reflection as:

a commitment to questioning assumptions and taken-for-granted beliefs embodied in both theory and professional practice, and to raising questions that are moral as well as technical in nature and that are concerned with ends as least as much as with means (p.538).

It is also the ability to translate such practice into one's own and others' work with objectivity.

Schön (1991), when conceptualising reflection, distinguished between two types of management: management as a mechanism and management as an art form. The former recognises managers as technicians acting in accordance with standards, while the latter recognises managers as artists, solving problems in

uncertain situations in a manner Schon termed “decision[s] under uncertainty” (p.239).

Schön (1991) argues that since management has been recognised as an art form and managers are artists in the mid-20th century, reflection in (during) action has become the norm for managers, because they deal with situations that are uncertain, unstable and unique. Managers reflection in action:

... consists in on-the-spot surfacing, criticizing, restructuring, and testing of intuitive understandings of experienced phenomena; often it takes the form of a reflective conversation with the situation. (Schön, 1991, p.241)

Reflectors in action think before, during, and immediately after they act.

Conversely, reflectors on actions tend to consider experiences and think about them at a distance, from different angles, collecting primary and secondary data, examining both thoroughly before cautiously reaching definitive conclusions (Ryan, 2008).

In leadership development, reflection is the capacity of the individuals to learn from and evaluate their experience from a leadership perspective. Reflection requires leaders to consider the basic dynamics of power and to critically evaluate the underlying assumptions and behaviours (Densten and Gray, 2001). The ability to reflect upon others’ practice is crucial for the leader to not only evaluate their staff’s work but also to act as a coach and mentor to offer constructive feedback that both the mentor and mentored can learn from (Ryan, 2008). Reflective practice involves looking back at the instructional programme to learn from its success and failures and implementing change accordingly while providing teaching and learning support (ibid).

The theoretical grounds for reflection are constructivism and self-learning. A constructive learning approach allows learners (leaders) to integrate with new ideas through a lens of past experience, develop hypotheses, test them, apply changes and reflect on these changes with another cycle of reflection. Such a process would expand the leader's experience to enable him/her to respond to different situations (Densten and Gray, 2001).

Reflection also involves self-learning, which views leaders as adults who should be responsible about what, how and when they learn. It is assumed that adults have their own motivation to learn and have their own experience and knowledge so that they can choose what they learn in relation to their needs. Otherwise collective learning in leadership development would produce a learning that would fall into Bush's "one size that fits all" trap and miss out on embracing individual and school context differences (Bush, 2008).

It has been argued that reflection can be an intellectual stimulator. It encourages leaders to be constructivists of new knowledge, deep thinkers, problem solvers and assumptions questioners. It provides the leader with deep understanding of what occurs in his/her school, encourages him/her to learn from experience and deepen his/her thinking (Raffo, 2012).

However, there are some disadvantages of reflection as a means of leadership development. First there is a notable lack of academic studies about such a mode of development (Raffo, 2012), and hence there is also a lack of a practical framework and process that the leaders can go through and use. Second, the conventional leadership development programmes are likely to be designed to cope with regional/national standards which allow participants to benefit from theoretical and practical resources (Bush, 2008) while reflection is a kind of self-

development that may lack guidance, orientation and access to the relevant resources. Third, due to the nature of the reflection process that it is a self-evaluation of events that took place in the past, subjectivity is likely to affect the quality of the outcomes (Raffo, 2012). Mixing fiction and reality can lead to a misunderstanding or misjudging of situations (Polizzi and Frick, 2012). The last drawback is that the process of reflection requires deep and critical thinking that may not be easy to learn and achieve (Raffo, 2012). Adding to this dilemma is the subject of this critical and deep thinking is the "self", which adds complexity to the aforementioned drawback.

In conclusion, reflection can be a powerful tool of learning and development especially in the educational leadership field (Polizzi and Frick, 2012) since it has the strength of encouraging inner motivation and self-orientation. Considering the aforementioned drawbacks, reflection may be suitable for career reflection that can benefit leaders to gain the most of the learning experiences they are involved in (e.g. leadership development programmes, challenging assignments, adverse situations etc.) as it may serve as a thread linking different experiences together throughout their careers.

Teachers professional development

It has been argued that teachers' professional development is very important because teachers' practices, skills and knowledge have a direct impact on students, learning (Teacher Advisory Council, 2007). Teachers' development was considered an important factor affecting schools' effectiveness and students' learning (Leithwood et al., 2006; Adey, 2004). In this section, I will briefly discuss some aspects of professionalism regarding teaching, different forms of teachers' professional development and leaders' roles.

It is argued that professionalism in teaching elevates the profession beyond being simply a day job. It involves commitment, skills, knowledge and loyalty to the profession and community (Gewirtz, Mahony and Hextall, 2009).

Globalization has resulted in specialised and professional practices and encouraged greater commitment toward the profession via acquiring knowledge and skills and continuing to develop them (ibid). It is also argued that, just like some other professionals, teachers need to develop themselves constantly to be able to deliver effectively (Teacher Advisory Council, 2007) and to be able to compete in the increasingly market-like education (Shields, 2013).

Grimmett (2014) argues that one of the important forms of development is what she called the *relational agency*, in which people who individuals associate with and cultures surrounding the individual are important forms of motivational agencies. In other words, teachers interacting and associating themselves with effective and outstanding teachers can motivate them to develop. The same can be said about cultures in schools where learning can be the norm to motivate teachers to learn and develop. She argued that such interaction is not only motivational for development but also a form of learning, which she called *collective learning*.

In addition to traditional forms of training such as workshops and seminars outside the school, it is argued that online professional development is effective as it offers flexibility and potential to establish an online learning community, enables teachers to be in charge of their development and is cost-effective for governments (Teacher Advisory Council, 2007). However, although online learning can be effective, it could lead to isolation and make it difficult to transfer knowledge and skills into practice.

In-school learning and development for teachers has gained momentum in recent decades as it offers convenience to learners to learn at their place of work, bring theory and skills closer to practice and enable teachers to learn while doing their jobs. This form of learning has the potential to tailor learning to schools' needs (Adey, 2004). However, such learning can create an additional workload for teachers, and it may distract them from doing their jobs effectively.

One of the important factors in teachers' professional development is the leaders' and leadership's role. Bubb and Earley (2007) believed that school leaders have a great responsibility toward teachers' professional development. They are required to facilitate development, allow teachers to take responsibility over their learning and encourage them to learn and develop further. Grimmett (2014) saw coaching as an important leadership role in which leaders should act as coaches to guide teachers through development and also directly train and observe them and provide feedback to them.

Local authorities' role

It seems that there are differences in the discussion about who is responsible for in-service training for leaders and teachers. In developed systems such as those in England and Australia, the responsibility lies mainly with schools themselves as they exercise a great level of autonomy (Nicolaidou and Petridou, 2011). However, in centralised systems such as those in Saudi Arabia, the responsibility lies with the Ministry of Education and the local authorities.

Local authorities in Saudi Arabia offer many training programmes and schemes, some of which are mandatory and others are optional. Mandatory programmes are designed for those teachers who teach curricula that have been developed or changed. Some courses such as those for classroom management and teaching

strategies are mandatory for beginner teachers. The course length is usually 1–5 working days, and courses are run by the local authority at their facilities (Alsinbal et al., 2008).

Principals, Deputies and Social Instructors usually take up a term long Diploma run by universities across the country. They take up different diplomas relevant to their jobs; for example, Principals take up School Principals' Diploma.

Diplomas involve school placements and exams. Although these Diplomas are not required, they count in one's favour if there is competition for a job (ibid).

There is growing criticism regarding the training run by local authorities. Alharbi and Almahdi (2012) argued that such training is not adequate despite the large amount of money injected into it. They also argued that these courses were not designed based on needs analysis and that there is a gap between designers and performers on the one hand and leaders and teachers on the other hand.

Another issue is the difficulties faced by teachers and leaders if they want to enrol in a full-time professional development programme or even part-time or evening programmes.

Nicolaidou and Petridou (2011) found that in contexts where centralisation is the norm, teachers and leaders are usually confined to their role and are kept from engaging in professional development programmes. In addition, educational governors should involve leaders and teachers in the design of their professional development and should become more resilient regarding policies they implement. This study will reveal more about these courses with a combination of positive and negative aspects.

Key questions related to professional development in the Saudi context are:

- How does the school community perceive professional development?
- How is a school's professional development organised?
- What professional development opportunities have school leaders had?
- What is the leaders' role in shaping their professional career?
- Is reflection used as a PD tool by leaders, and if so, how?
- What PD opportunities do teachers have?
- What do leaders do for teachers' development?
- What is the role of the local educational authority and the Ministry of Education in relation to leaders' and staff's PD?

3.3.4 Linking concepts together

This chapter will examine the three angles of the framework leadership styles, culture and professional development. The framework developed earlier aims to show that leadership practices are affected by leaders' leadership behaviour practiced in the school under the title leadership styles. Such styles, in turn, are facilitated, affected by and are affecting culture in its wider (e.g., globalization and national culture) and narrower (e.g., school culture) contexts; professional development is a significant factor affecting Principals, leaders and teachers' knowledge, skills and behaviour.

Interrelationships

Each of the three dimensions of the framework (leadership styles, culture and professional development) will be discussed in this section, showing the interrelationships between the three dimensions and linking each of them to school effectiveness.

The relationship between leadership style and culture is mutually beneficial, that is, the leadership behaviour of the school leaders can affect school culture (West-Burnham, 2009) and vice versa. It has been argued that school leaders have a great influence on school culture since it is the role of leadership to create, maintain and change culture (Onea, 2012; Turan, 2013). It is important for the school Principal and leaders to create a functional culture where teachers can teach, students can learn and leaders can perform effectively.

Although the term functional culture seems to be vague, since it is a contextually linked phenomenon and what works for one school may not function in another, part of a leader's role is to create the right culture that fits into the context of the school and indeed to support effective teaching and learning (Busher, 2006). Additionally, it has been argued that in the case of a dysfunctional culture, the role of leadership is crucial to manage and change the culture in order for it to be functional again (Schein, 2010).

Furthermore, organisational culture can affect the leadership style practiced by the school leaders. Schein (2010) argues that when culture exists within an organisation, it can affect the leader's leadership behaviours. In organisations where certain leadership behaviour is dominant, it is likely that leaders with matching leadership styles will be perceived as effective (Cameron and Quinn, 2011). For example, in a hierarchical organisation, effective managers may be those perceived to be good at organising, controlling, monitoring, managing, etc.

With regard to the relationship between leadership style and professional development, it has been argued that, among other factors, globalization has heightened the complexity of the way schools are organised and managed and indeed increased the expectations of the outcomes required (Shields, 2013). As a

result, greater competencies are required of the school Principal, leaders and teachers to meet such 21st century expectations (Bush, 2008). Indeed, some argue that responsibilities in schools expand and develop so quickly and this requires a continuous learning and development of the people in charge (Darling-Hammond, 2005).

Bush et al. (2006) and Polizzi and Frick (2012) believe that engagement in professional development programmes can give the school leaders the knowledge and skills relevant to the post. He/she can learn about different leadership styles, their applications and critiques. Practical training to transfer such skills into practice is usually offered to the participant. That would result in changes to the leadership behaviour practiced by the Principal and his fellow leaders such as a shift towards shared leadership and the engagement of teachers and staff in decision making.

In addition, reflection as a form of learning and development would offer the school leaders the possibility to recall their behaviours, think about and evaluate them and make proper changes accordingly (Densten and Gray, 2001).

Links to outstanding performance

The second part of this section is to discuss the link leadership styles, culture and professional development have with effective school. With regard to leadership styles and school effectiveness, on the one hand, there seems to be an indirect link between a school's effectiveness and a leaders leadership styles, since such styles have little direct impact on student learning (Simkins et al., 2009).

Therefore, educational leadership research tends to measure effective leadership via different variables, such as teachers' performance and students exam results (Day et al., 2011; Leithwood et al., 2006).

On the other hand, it seems also that there is a wide acceptance in the literature that leadership is essential for school development (West-Burnham, 2009 and 2010; Crum and Sherman, 2008; Odhiambo and Hii, 2012; Salfi, 2011; Valentine and Prater, 2011). Indeed, the first of Leithwood et al.'s (2008) seven strong claims about successful school leadership is that "school leadership is only second to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning' (p.27).

Some argue that, hypothetically, students in effective schools are expected to score higher on exams than those in less effective ones; at the same time, the school Principals and their fellow leaders are an important factor in their effectiveness or failures (Marzano et al., 2005). In addition, there is support for the claim that leadership is responsible for a number of aspects that are necessary for student success, such as school vision, school culture, instructional programmes and the recruitment of highly qualified teachers (Richard and Catano, 2008).

With regard to linking culture and school being outstanding, culture serves as a mediating factor between leadership behaviour and the school's effectiveness. It has been widely accepted in the literature that the impact of leadership practices on student learning is indirect yet significant (Leithwood and Levin, 2005).

Therefore, researchers tend to use variables mediating between the two ends. Some argue that such mediating factors determine whether the leaders' actions have a suitable environment to effect and enhance achievement (Simkins et al., 2009).

School culture is used in many studies, such as those by Leithwood and Levin (2005) and Simkins et al. (2009), and it is applied among the mediating variables facilitating leadership practices to affect school outcomes. Leithwood

and Levin argue that the Principal has a direct impact on school culture, and, in turn, school culture has a direct influence on school outcomes. At the same level of effect, positive school culture is believed to influence the level of solving conflicts within schools (Dongjiao, 2015).

In addition, in a situation where a culture is dysfunctional, it is likely to not only affect leadership effectiveness, but also to affect teachers' abilities and motivations and in turn student learning and achievement (Day et al., 2011). It affects the effectiveness of conflict management, which makes solving problems harder and sparking problems easier (Dongjiao, 2015).

With regard to linking professional development and school being outstanding, it is argued that that there is an indirect link between the two ends (Crawford and Cowie, 2012; Riley and Mulford, 2007; Simkins et al., 2009). Yet, it is argued that schools are complex and not easy to run and school leaders and teachers have to have competences that qualify them to succeed. It is argued that such competences are learnt and are not innate (Bush, 2008). Therefore, systematic and continuous learning and development is important for school leaders to be able to lead their schools effectively and teachers to be competent in delivering their lessons.

This part of the literature review has discussed the conceptual framework which has been developed. The framework aims to explore the nature of outstanding schools by looking at them from three dimensions: leadership styles, culture and professional development, thereby bringing new insight into the concept of effective schools. Each dimension has been discussed conceptually throughout this part of the literature review.

It is possible to conclude that there is no single leadership style that can contribute to success for everyone in any given context (Day et al., 2011). Rather a combination of styles that cover different aspects of the school and balance out each other's limitations is the ideal. In addition, organisational culture is the shared norms, values and beliefs that have been established and shared by an organisation's members as the correct way of dealing with challenges and day-to-day work. Organisational culture is affected by different levels of culture, the macro, global, national or religious culture in which it is embedded.

Further, professional development is an important tool to equip leaders and teacher with to be able to effectively deal with school complexity and role expansion. Programme involvement as well as career-long reflection and self-evaluation are important to allow for the achievement of systematic learning and development. These notions (leadership styles, culture and professional development) have been discussed conceptually. Further discussion about up-to-date Western and Saudi research will follow.

3.4 Research studies

3.4.1 Leadership practices

The first part of the literature review dealt with the concepts of transformational, instructional and distributed leadership. This part will discuss these aspects from the research point of view. Although some researchers have tested the effectiveness of certain leadership styles in the context of school development, i.e. distributed leadership (Heck and Hallinger, 2009); this research will use the

term leadership practices to enable the researcher to explore multiple leadership styles when looking at outstanding schools where leadership practices are potentially derived from two or more leadership archetypes. Similar techniques have been implemented by Crum and Sherman (2008), Hudson (2012), Klar and Brewer (2013), Parkes and Thomas (2007) and Sanzo et al. (2011).

In addition, research on leadership styles in schools tends to focus on their effectiveness in bringing about school development; therefore, research tends not to restrict itself to one theory; for example, models for instructional leadership use some aspects from transformational leadership and vice versa.

Therefore, two models will be discussed in relation to transformational and instructional leadership: Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) instructional model of leadership and a combination-model of both instructional and transformational leadership suggested by Leithwood et al. (2006) which was then empirically studied by Day et al. (2011). The discussion will begin with Hallinger and Murphy's study for the sake of chronology and because the former influenced the latter.

The researchers used a quantitative questionnaire design and documentary analysis to assess the instructional practices of the Principals involved in the study. The research found frequent usage of certain instructional leadership practices among Principals. Eleven frequently used practices are categorised into three main categories. The first category is defining the school mission and it has two sub-practices, framing and communicating school goals.

The second category is managing the instructional (teaching and learning) programme that includes supervising, providing evaluation instructions, coordinating curriculum and monitoring students' progress. This category is the

core of instructional leadership as it aims to raise standards by focusing on teaching and learning quality (Hallinger, 2010). The final category is promoting a positive school learning climate and it consists of protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, enforcing academic standards and providing incentives for students.

Some aspects of Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model are worth mentioning. First, since this a study in school effectiveness the sample would benefit from choosing among outstanding schools in order to gain useful insight into what makes these schools effective. The second issue is that the practices are deemed effective if they are frequently used by the Principals. That suggests the quality of an action is measured by the quantity of its practice. The researchers identified this limitation. The last issue is that qualitative data is needed to confirm the effectiveness of each practice; interviews with Principals may give clearer understanding of this matter.

This research aims to cover these issues by selecting outstanding schools, using a qualitative approach to gain meaningful data and interviewing leaders and teachers to gain deeper understanding of how and why these practices are important.

The second study is a combination of instructional and transformational leadership styles and has some similarities to the Hallinger and Murphy study. The study is a multiphase literature exploration by Leithwood et al. (2006) and an empirical study by Day et al. (2011).

The first phase was conducted by Leithwood et al. (2006) as a research project funded by the Department for Education and the National College for Teaching

and Leadership in the UK. They concluded with a model called core or basic leadership practices. The model was developed by analysing empirical data and theoretical research provided by the literatures as a combination of evidence collected in schools and from non-school-based research. Some aspects of the model have roots in different leadership theories, such as transformational and instructional leadership theories (Day et al., 2011).

Day, Sammons and Leithwood (2011) research was a mixed method, multi-phase and aimed to explore what successful Principals do in most contexts and how success is sustained and developed over time. For the interest of this research, the first part, that is what successful Principals do, will be discussed along with the relevant methodology and methods.

The research concluded that four leadership practises are perceived to be effective for school development, thereby confirming to a great degree the literature review phase. Each of the four categories consists of further subcategories making 14 in total. The main categories are setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organisation and managing the instructional programme. These categories were driven by multiple leadership styles including transformational, instructional and distributed leadership. Each of the categories will be discussed and cross-examined with other studies where relevant to this thesis.

The first category—setting directions—is about defining the identity of the school by its vision and mission. Three practices are included in this category: building a shared and clear vision among the school community, fostering such a vision by identifying goals that will achieve it and encouraging members to aim for such goals and the expectations of high performances in achieving such goals,

including those of the teachers regarding their students (Leithwood and Seashore-Louis, 2011).

Further studies have confirmed these findings, such as a national mixed-method study conducted in England by Day, Gu and Sammons (2016). They investigated effective and improving schools in England over three years. They found that Principals of effective schools paid attention to vision establishment within schools. Their research suggested that such Principals were keen on creating clear and visible visions for their schools and that these visions were shared and communicated with staff (Day, Gu and Sammons, 2016).

Furthermore, an interoperative study suggested that the school vision in effective schools was influenced by the values and beliefs of the entire school community, which was essential to bring people together and unite efforts (Deenmamode, 2012). This is particularly important, as Saudi education and people are mainly driven by Islamic values.

Day, Sammons and Leithwood (2011) did not link vision and goals to the present by establishing an effective plan. Theoretically, Davies and Davies (2010) insisted on the importance and essentiality of long- and short-term planning through what they called "strategic planning" to cope with high expectations by parents and policy-makers. A qualitative study on successful schools in Canada revealed that planning, especially detailed and strategic annual planning, was a very important factor affecting schools' success (Bouchamma, 2012).

The second category is developing people which includes three practices: providing individualised support and consideration, intellectual stimulation by, for example, encouraging critical thinking and re-examining assumptions and the role of the Principal in being an appropriate model to lead by example (Leithwood

and Day, 2007). Further researches will be discussed about this category in the next section, professional development.

The third category of practices found to be common among successful Principals is redesigning the organisation to be a motivational and functional atmosphere, where tasks flow easily and communication is considered effective, productive and inclusive. Several practices are associated with this category: building collaborative cultures within schools, restructuring leadership roles by including more members in decision-making and flattening the hierarchy, creating an effective communication system, building productive relationships with families and communities and connecting the school to its wider environment (Day et al., 2011).

Other studies have shown the effect of flattening the hierarchy in the form of collective leadership on teachers' performance and, in turn, students' achievement. This flattening of the structure affected teachers' performance as it promoted a motivational atmosphere in which they could perform effectively (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010). Another study found that outstanding schools tended to stretch power and responsibilities over a far higher number of people than low-achieving schools (Leithwood and Mascall, 2008).

Regarding communication within the school, a Danish study on effective schools found that the school Principals paid attention to communication within their schools. This study concluded that such communications can be described as clear and transparent, especially those between Principals and teachers in which each party knows what is required from him/her once a communication has ended (Lejf Moos et al., 2005).

The last category is managing the instructional programmes. While the first three categories focus on pure leadership practices, this category focuses on the role of the school Principal in directly involving him/herself in the teaching and learning programmes. Four practices are included in this category: staffing the programmes, providing teaching and learning supports, monitoring school activities and preventing distractions to staff in their work (Leithwood and Seashore-Louis, 2011).

Other studies on effective schools revealed that these schools stress the importance of managing the curriculum quality, such as introducing assessment measures, bringing in resources, defining goals and raising expectations. The other aspect is managing and developing teachers as human resources through coaching, mentoring and developing staff (Bouchamma, 2012; Klar and Brewer, 2013).

Although Day, Sammons and Leithwood (2011) research discussed the importance of the context in which a school is embedded, it would benefit from widening the context in which organisational culture and other levels of culture such as macro culture are explored as not only an important role of leadership but also a mediating effect to effectiveness (Simkins et al., 2009). The category developing people is important yet it limits the work of the Principal to helping others develop. Professional development of the Principal was not addressed. This thesis will explore leadership practices along with cultural aspects and professional development in order to gain new insight into the school outstanding performance.

There are many studies on the link between distributed leadership and school improvement. Some of these studies will be mentioned here. The first study, by

Leithwood et al. (2007), aims to show the effect of leadership distribution at school level. The study took place in a large district in Ontario, Canada.

The research assesses whether formal or informal leaders are more effective. The researchers hypothesised that the four categories of successful leadership practices discussed earlier (setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organisation and managing the instructional programme) were the standards for good practice. They found that informal leaders generally practiced these functions more than the formal leaders did.

With regard to setting directions, informal leaders were more involved in motivating others and creating a culture of high expectations than formal leaders were, while Principals were involved more in identifying the overall vision. In the developing people category, informal leaders were more involved in providing individualised support for others and in providing an appropriate model for others based on values.

Informal leaders were more involved in redesigning the organisation as they focused on building a collaborative culture among the school community and on building a positive relationship with families. In terms of managing a teaching and learning programme, while formal leaders focused more on delegating tasks, informal leaders paid attention to managing the school programme and providing teaching and learning support to their peers.

The second study is a US-based quantitative multi-phase study by Heck and Hallinger (2009). The study aimed to assess the contribution of distributed leadership to the school development and maths achievement.

The study concluded that there is an interrelationship between distributed leadership and school development. The data confirms that if people perceive that leadership as distributed, then schools are thought to have the ability to improve over time. Similarly, when a school improves, it has positive consequences on the level of leadership distribution. These relationships appear to have a two-way effect.

Changes in the level of leadership distribution and school capacity have an effect on school achievement in maths. The data shows that as the school develops to a higher state standard, students' maths scores improve by almost 40%.

The study does not examine which leadership practice contributes the most to school organisation, development and academic achievement. Perhaps quality data is also needed in order to capture such a limitation. In addition, the study was in a context where distributed leadership is supported by the local authority. It does not address how leadership is performed and distributed effectively in a culture where leadership is limited to a group of individuals. This study aims to cover this aspect and thereby fill this gap.

Other studies have considered the impact of distributed leadership on teachers. Hulpia, Devos and Keer (2011) found that teachers in schools with a distributed leadership are committed to the organisation and to their assigned tasks. Muijs and Harris (2006) found that teachers' involvement in decision-making results in teachers feeling being involved within the school, having a sense of ownership toward the school and increasing their sense of self-competence. They also found that involving teachers benefits the school through teachers conveying their knowledge to decision-making.

3.4.2 Culture

This section will mainly focus on three aspects: the leadership role in building, managing and changing a school's culture; how significant are different school cultures to school improvement? and how are macro (global, national and religious) cultures reflected in a school culture? A mix of Western and non-Western based studies will be discussed in this section to offer a comparison to the Saudi context.

To answer the question about the relationship between leadership and school culture, research funded by the Department of School Education in New South Wales, Australia was carried out (Dinham et al., 1995). The study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

This study raises some important issues in terms of school culture.

Communication is an important factor in school culture. It is evident from the study that a Principal's communication skills have great influence on the effectiveness of school-wide communication. An open-door policy results in the Principal being deemed approachable and accessible; this in turn results in students', staff members' and parents' satisfaction. Issues are discussed openly and freely around the school, opinions are welcomed from everyone and cohesive information is apparent.

The study concluded that the school Principal plays a major role in the formation of school culture. The Principal's behaviour was affected by the existing culture and the school's reputation. However, this study failed to explore how culture change can be managed, what the Principal's role is in managing and changing

ineffective culture and what effects school culture has on Principals' leadership practices.

Another study revealed the role that a Principal played in relation to culture change (Sheppard, 2013). A Principal described the school culture as "toxic" when he was newly appointed to a troubled school. He then started to understand the source of trouble, which in this case was a small group of teachers. He started to gain their trust and made them part of the larger group without confrontation. By the end of his first year, he was able to engage these teachers to an extent with the mainstream teachers within the school and started to see results. It should be noted that was not the only thing he did but was one among several steps he took, including creating a learning community, establishing a vision and engaging the community.

The second question with regard to culture is how significant different school cultures are to school improvement. It has been established in the theoretical review that school culture acts as a mediating effect between the Principal's practices and school improvement (Leithwood and Levin, 2005) as school culture acts as a facilitating environment for the development to take place (Simkins et al., 2009).

In addition, having a positive culture can affect the way in which the school manages conflict. A positive culture in which strong relations are the norm is argued to be a strong mechanism for solving, avoiding and preventing conflicts. In cases where the culture is dysfunctional, the school is at risk of having negative outcomes, such as conflicts and low achievement (Dongjiao, 2015).

A qualitative based study conducted by Moos et al. (2005) aimed to investigate the culture of schools that are led by successful Principals. The study took place

in two schools in Denmark, one urban and the other suburban, with geographic and demographic differences. The sampling criteria depended on local authorities' rating of the Principals with regard to their evaluation, marks achieved and reputation among peers.

Results from the study show some notable recurring themes with regard to school culture. As Dinham et al.'s study (1995) suggests, communication played a significant role in the studied schools. This communication can be described as clear, respectful, transparent, elaborated and meaningful. In addition, both students and teachers identified the ability to listen as an important and appreciated trait in a good Principal. An extension of a successful communication system meant the school vision and mission were clear and communicated throughout the school community.

Student learning was emphasised by both Principals. Principals tend to exercise their influence to support student learning for the sake of learning rather than for the sake of results and attainment. Teacher learning was also the norm in the studied schools. Information, knowledge and skills were exchanged between members as a form of a professional learning community.

The schools were described by the researchers as being democratic communities. They facilitated an environment that allows for the flow of ideas, critical reflection and questions while displaying substantial interest in individuals' rights, personal dignity and welfare of all members. Minorities were included in the community. Furthermore, teachers were encouraged by Principals to participate in decision making, and in turn, teachers encouraged students to be involved in class-level decision making processes.

Apart from listening to students and staff and assessing some limited actions, Principals' practices were not highlighted by the study. It seems that learning and a democratic environment are the result of someone's actions. The study does not investigate actual Principal's practices and how and why these environments were built. This thesis investigates both leadership styles and culture and professional development; with such a mix of concepts the thesis should provide deep insight into the specific actions that may help to create such effective environments.

Another study examined the core practices of effective schools in disadvantaged areas in the USA and found that such schools have strong relationships among leaders, teachers, students and parents. In addition, collaboration, teamwork and collegiality characterised the relationships among adults in such schools (Klar and Brewer, 2013).

Another study examined the relationship between school culture and student discipline and found that the relation is positive. They also concluded that organisational culture affects students' discipline, in which positive school culture enhanced students' discipline whereas negative school culture negatively affected their discipline (Westhuizen, Oosthuizen and Wolhuter, 2007).

A study examined the extent to which creating a learning environment as a culture within schools affects students' learning and outcomes. They concluded that schools with environments that were associated with motivation, promoting high performance and high student expectation and celebrating success had higher achievements than other schools (Lomos, Hofman and Bosker, 2011).

Regarding the role of school culture on solving conflicts among adults, Saiti's (2015) study on conflicts in Greek schools concluded that a positive school

culture in which strong relationships among teachers are the norm approached conflicts effectively. Teachers tended to solve their problems independently without reverting to the leaders, and schools contained their conflicts and issues internally without allowing and asking the district educational management to interfere. Schools approached conflict informally in the quest to find a mutual agreement.

The last question with regard to culture is how macro cultures such as globalization, national culture and religion are reflected in Saudi schools. Western literature tends to ignore this issue (especially with regard to globalization) in Western contexts. This gap in the literature may be explained by the fact that global culture is Western culture, so the effect of globalization may be more apparent in non-Western contexts.

Two studies will be briefly discussed with regard to this matter. The studies can be related to the Saudi context since they share some similarities. Alsaeedi and Male's (2013) study took place in Kuwait, a state among the GCC states. Kuwait shares a border with Saudi Arabia and the two countries are similar in terms of political, economic and demographic circumstances. The second study by Raihani (2008) is an Indonesian study. Although Saudi Arabia and Indonesia have economic, demographic and geographical differences, they are both Islamic countries.

The Kuwaiti study used a qualitative methodology to interview school Principals to mainly assess their attitudes toward globalization and education and their opinions on transformational leadership as an effective leadership style. Results show that there is agreement among Principals regarding the notion that globalization poses a challenge to schools since education has been linked to

other aspects such as economy and politics. A sense of individual freedom has become a social norm as globalization and technology become widespread and people are increasingly informed about the democratic world (Alsaeedi and Male, 2013).

Such challenges require more effort from the Principals and more ability to change her/his leadership behaviour to become more open and flexible. The study shows a positive attitude among Principals toward transformative behaviours such as distributed leadership and the inclusion of others in decision making. However, while Principals showed signs of readiness to change, the education system continues to pose a dilemma to them as it was still centralised and bureaucratic. Such limitations may also be true in the Saudi context.

Apart from one Principal who referred to Stephen Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* as a good example of effective leadership, there is no reference to globalization and the spread of Western ideologies. In other words, transformational leadership was discussed as an effective leadership style without examining Principals' attitudes toward the idea that these theories originated in the West or considering how these Western theories would suit a different cultural context. In addition, the effect that globalization has on leadership was not explored. This thesis, however, aims to provide new insight to these issues in the Saudi context.

Another Kuwaiti study (Masters' Dissertation) on the perception of Principals and teachers in effective schools concluded that one of the main characteristics of effective leadership practices was to embrace national traditions and customs as a form of patriotism (Gnyman, 2008).

The second study is conducted by Raihani (2008) in three successful Indonesian schools, some of which were turned around by their Principals. Raihani used a qualitative approach and interviewed a range of the schools' stakeholders including the school Principal, vice principal, teachers, staff and students. The schools were mainstream schools run by the Ministry of Education rather than by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

The study showed that the successful Principals shared common practices that originated in Western literature such as setting directions, building school capacity, developing people, linking the school to the outside community and other aspects discussed earlier and found in Leithwood et al. (2006). In addition, the study found Islamic values and beliefs had a significant influence on the Principals' practices.

"Amanah", as an integrity value, was evident in that the Principals saw their work as being entrusted to them from God and they must therefore strive for quality. "Amanah" stresses the importance of responsibility, integrity and accountability. Another Principal stated that he was not only held accountable by students and teachers, but also by God. This study found other Islamic values such as "Iman" (faith) and "Taqwa" (piety) were influential in Indonesian Principals' views of their work duties.

Although the context of this study is similar to Saudi Arabia in terms of religion, the differences outweigh the similarities since culture, language, geography, economy and politics are different. Further exploration of the concept along with the impact of other levels of global and national culture would provide a deep contextual understanding of successful school leadership in Saudi Arabia.

3.4.3 Professional development

This section discusses previous researches on professional development. It covers studies on professional development in effective schools and professional development for leaders and teachers.

Theoretically, professional development in schools, as mentioned earlier, is important for school effectiveness; this was proved in studies on effective schools. Gurr and Drysdale (2007) studied effective schools in Australia and concluded that effective schools, through their leaders, ensure that individual and professional development occurs to increase teachers' personal and professional capacities. Moller et al. (2007) concluded that effective schools tend to work toward building a learning community in which learning is the culture for adults as well as for students. According to this study, professional development programmes in effective schools are aimed toward achieving the school's vision and objectives.

However, these studies do not cover what these effective schools do regarding professional development, how teachers and leaders perceive professional development and what professional development opportunities are available and in what forms. All these questions and more will be explored in this study.

This section looks at the effects of school leaders' participation in professional development on their leadership practices and consequently on the effectiveness of schools. However, as has been addressed earlier, assessing such effects on school effectiveness is not straightforward. Two aspects of professional development will be addressed, the impact of school leaders' professional

development to school effectiveness and how effective reflection is as a professional development method.

Several studies have been addressed concerning the impact of professional development on school effectiveness. A study conducted by West-Burnham (2009) and funded by the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) investigated outstanding school head teachers, to understand their journeys and learn from their expertise. The researcher employed a mixed methodology approach in the study, and 313 headteachers from outstanding schools in England participated in the study. The findings from the study revealed a number of qualities characterise outstanding head teachers. Among these, a number related directly to professional development:

- *A real understanding of how to learn from experience.*
- *The willingness to learn from pupils.*
- *Clarity and confidence about what works in terms of professional learning.*
- *Openness to learning from the example of other school leaders.*
- *Confidence in learning how to learn (West-burnham, 2009, p. 28).*

Another UK study investigated the effect of a number of NCTL in-school components through case studies and survey approaches (Simkins et al., 2009). One of the courses they studied was the Leadership Programme for Serving Heads (LPSH), designed for those with three or more years' experience.

Their survey data was very promising. One in three participants in the course felt that the programme helped them to balance work and personal life. Indeed, 90% of the leaders enacted changes in their school as a result of the programme, while 77% of positive changes were reported as relating to the qualities of

teaching and learning in the school, and 73% of the Principals reported a change in school culture as a result of participating in the programme.

The programmes investigated by this study were regular NCTL programmes involving sessions, coaching, reflecting and in-school training. The study attempted to assess the impact of the in-school component of the programmes on leadership but the researchers did not discuss how they distinguished the effect of the whole programme from the effect of in-school activities.

A UK study was also interested in the effect of early in-service leaders with fewer than three years' experience in the post (Bush et al., 2006). It used a mixed-method approach using surveys and interviews. The researchers used sequenced variables to measure the levels of programme effects from basic to more complicated: programme experience → quality of satisfaction → changes in knowledge and skills → changes in their leadership behaviour → classroom-level changes → students' outcome changes.

Most relevant to this section is the changes reported in the leadership practices. One effect is a shift towards shared leadership and the engagement of teachers and staff in decision making. The second effect is developing a focus on leadership for learning, reporting more engagement among the Principals in the learning activities and trying to establish a learning community within the school. The final effect involves changes to the school's organisational side that have been introduced by the Principals, such as restructuring leadership levels, linking—when possible—staff meetings to learning and developing communication among staff.

The results from these studies confirmed what was discussed earlier regarding the indirect effect of professional development programmes on school

achievement (Crawford and Cowie, 2012; Riley and Mulford, 2007; Simkins et al., 2009). Hence, such programmes have actual influence on the Principal's personal and leadership capacities and on the school's organisational and learning levels.

The second aspect related to professional development is the effectiveness of reflection as a professional development method. A study by Raffo (2012) examined reflection as a learning tool of a professional development course at a USA university. The researcher used online blogging as a reflective tool to analyse participants' experiences of the leadership course in which they were enrolled. Participants were asked to reflect on their learning and experience on a web blogging forum; they also had the opportunity to view their fellow participants' reflective blogging.

Participants were asked to reflect on their learning and experience as participants in five leadership components and blog them separately. The five components were, One is being purposeful in which commitment to goal is present; the second component is being inclusive of ideas, approaches and others; the third is the empowerment of others; the fourth is being ethically driven and the fifth is being process-oriented and maintaining a high level of quality leader-follower interactions. Each blog was academically graded by the researcher from three to one points reflecting exemplary, competent or weak blogs respectively.

Results from the study showed that participants appeared to understand the leadership components and reflect on them successfully as they scored an average of 2.1 out of 3 for all the components previously mentioned. In addition, participants showed an interest in others' reflections. They reported that others'

blogging helped them understand the material, raise their self-awareness, monitor their progress and understand leadership competences they had.

Some issues related to the study need to be addressed. First, as no learning and development aspects were stressed by the study, it seems that reflection was used by the study as an assessment tool rather than a learning tool in which participants can reflect on their experience and learn from it. The second aspect is that translating reflections into qualitative data such as numbers (grades) may be important for the study but a qualitative discussion of the available data is lacking. Individual discussion of some participants' experiences of each of the leadership elements may benefit from having the grades explained. Finally, the study used reflection as a short term "learning tool"; it would be useful if the experience had been expanded over a longer period of time to assess development.

The conceptual framework dealt with the notion that reflection as a professional development tool may be effective, but questions remain regarding reflection as a stand-alone approach. As Raffo (2012) suggest, there is a lack of studies investigating the effectiveness of reflection as a long-term approach for professional development.

Numerous studies have focused on teachers' professional development. Below, I will discuss studies related to the theories developed above and to the findings from this research. Studies show that teachers in effective schools engage in professional learning and development (Gurr and Drysdale, 2007).

There are different forms of teachers' professional development. One of them is school-based training. For example, Bai (2014) investigated the effect of such programmes and concluded that school-based professional development helps

teachers become confident and increase their efficacy. Teachers felt that they are in a culture of collective learning in which they share knowledge and feedback. Another impact was found relating to tailored learning, in which teachers felt that such programmes allow them to learn in their situations. However, this study did not show the negative effects on teachers, such as increased workload and unpaid extra work.

Another study examined private-public sector partnership in education in developing countries and concluded that such partnership has the potential to raise standards, introduce the knowledge economy to schools and enable schools to respond effectively to high expectations from the government and parents (Chattopadhyay and Nogueira, 2014).

Moller et al. (2007) studied effective schools and concluded that leaders have a great influence on and responsibility for teachers' professional development. They found that effective leaders help, allow, and encourage teachers to develop.

3.4 Conclusion

The literature review has raised a range of questions that may contribute to shaping the three research questions of this thesis. The questions raised and the main research questions are outlined in Table 3:1 below. These questions contribute directly to the construction of the main research inquiry which aims to understand the nature of:

Outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia: leadership practices, culture and professional development.

Literature review section	Specific research questions	Main research questions
Leadership practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the school’s vision developed and shared by the school community? • How are schools organised and structured (as organisations)? • How is distributed leadership perceived? • Is distributed leadership practiced, and if so, how? • How do school communities communicate with each other? • How do schools plan their work? • What steps are taken by leaders to ensure quality? 	What are the leadership practices of school leaders in outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia?
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What effect does globalization have on the school? • What effect does national culture have on the school? • How do school communities describe their school culture? • How do schools perceive subgroups? • Does the school culture play a role in the school’s outstanding performance? • Does the school culture play a role in case of problems or conflicts? 	How is culture perceived and experienced by the school community in such schools?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the Principals' and leaders' role in building, managing and changing the school culture? 	
Professional development (PD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the school community perceive PD? • How is the school's PD organised? • What are the professional development goals in the school? • Are they personal or organisational goals? • What PD opportunities have school leaders had? • What is the leaders' role in shaping their professional career? • Is reflection used as a PD tool by leaders, and if so, how? • What PD opportunity do teachers have? • What do leaders do for teachers' development? • What is the role of the local educational authority and the Ministry of Education in relation to leaders' and staff's PD? 	How is professional development perceived and experienced by leaders and staff in these schools?

Table 3: 1 Main and specific research questions.

It has become evident through the course of the literature review that it is not possible to directly answer a research question about a school's success (Day et al. (2011); Leithwood et al. (2006); Simkins et al., 2009). In other words,

different variables are typically used to explore school effectiveness. This thesis has developed a conceptual framework that is not only unique to the Saudi context but also offers new insight to outstanding schools in Western literature.

The framework looks at outstanding schools through three dimensions: leadership practices, culture in its different dimensions (global, religious, national and organisational) and the professional development opportunities that the Principal, leaders and teachers have had.

Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to explore and understand the nature of three outstanding case study schools in Saudi Arabia from three main perspectives: leadership practices, culture and professional development. From these concepts, the following research questions have been developed:

1. What are the leadership practices of school leaders in outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia?
2. How is culture perceived and experienced by the school community in these cases?
3. How is professional development perceived and experienced by the leaders and staff of these institutions?

This chapter is divided into sections. Paradigm rational discusses the philosophical background of the research and justifies the chosen methodology; approach discusses the case study as the appropriate research approach; research process offers an overview of the research process from beginning to end; context outlines the local area and schools; case study selection explains how the schools are selected; participants shows how and why were they selected; data collection discusses the methods of data collection; data analysis shows how the data will be analysed; then trustworthiness and credibility of the research will be discussed, as will ethical issues, research limitations and the final section is the conclusion.

4.2 Paradigm rational

Pring (2010) believes that it is important for researchers to draw their research from the light of a philosophical background and to use that as a foundation to ensure rigour in their inquiry. Philosophical theories linked to social research are vast since each topic can be looked at from different angles (Bryman, 2012). Without explicitly linking the research to such philosophies, the researcher lacks deep understanding of the meaning and commitment to the research being carried out and its results (Pring, 2010).

Kettley (2010) argues that there is a frequent debate about philosophical positions among scholars and researchers in educational social research, and sometimes such debate turns to intellectual war since the differences among such philosophies are maximised while the similarities are neglected. Therefore, a wide range of bewildering labels have emerged, such as positivism, realism, critical realism, interpretivism, hermeneutics and phenomenology as epistemological considerations (Bryman, 2012).

Although such divisions are evident in the conventions of social and educational research, it can be argued that the ideal method of carrying out social and educational research is to orient the research ontologically (how to view social reality), epistemologically (how knowledge is constructed) and to position the research methodologically (qualitative or/and quantitative) (Kettley, 2010).

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), an ontological consideration gives rise to an epistemological position and that can lead to the right choice of methodological stance and indeed methods of data collection and analysis.

Although such positioning does not always involve clear either/or options, there

are some traditions in research design in which a researcher may find the thread linking each step with the following one (Cohen et al., 2007; Kettley, 2010).

Further discussion about such links will be developed subsequently.

The next section will discuss where this research was positioned in terms of such philosophies and methodologies. Such discussion is important because it will not only clarify the research position, but also build a philosophical foundation to ensure rigour in the study (Pring, 2010) and help to choose the right methodology to conduct the research (Cohen et al., 2007; Johnston, 2014). The discussion will involve definitions of concepts, discussion and positioning of this research.

4.2.1 Ontology

Ontology is a philosophical theory that focuses on the nature of social entities (Bryman, 2012). It is about "...that thing to have being, to exist, to be present, real, actual and manifest" (Jacquette, 2002, p.12). As Bryman argues, existence is not the final destiny of ontology; it is the meaning behind being and existence. Ontology as a philosophy is a vast concept, yet in social sciences research it has two main orientations: objectivism and constructivism (Bryman, 2012).

Objectivism assumes social reality to be an external factor to individuals "imposing itself on their consciousness...has an objective nature...[and] it is given out there in the world" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 7). Constructivism, on the other hand, assumes that social reality is a product of the social members' consciousness, perceptions, actions and cognition (Cohen et al., 2007; Johnston, 2014). It is clear how it differs from objectivism where social members are perceived to be passive and have no control over their social reality.

In this research, constructivism is the ontological orientation. As the research inquiry is about exploring and understanding the nature of three outstanding case study schools in Saudi Arabia, it is important to view school members as active members of society who construct and change their social reality. Another reason is that leaders' practices are viewed as meaningful and a product of consciousness, influenced but not fully constrained, by external factors. School culture is very important to this research; therefore, school members are perceived to be dynamic and playing an important role in building, managing and changing school culture. In addition, leaders and teachers are viewed to be responsible about their professional development, who can take initiatives and pursue development.

4..2.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is a philosophical issue concerned with defining knowledge, its nature and its forms and how it should be gained, formed and communicated with others (Cohen et al., 2007; Leitch, Hill and Harrison, 2009). Many theoretical orientations in epistemology focus on the central issue of whether social science research should imitate or differentiate itself from natural science research (Kettley, 2010). The two orientations can be referred to as positivism and interpretivism, respectively.

Positivism is the most commonly used philosophical ground for research in social science research (Pring, 2010). Positivism as a paradigm views phenomena through lenses of "objectivity, measurability, predictability, controllability, patterning, the construction of laws and rules of behaviour and the ascription of causality" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 26). Researchers need to show links between

different topics in terms of cause and effect factors aiming to generalise results to a population from a selected sample among that particular population (Cibangu, 2010; Johnston, 2014; Leitch et al., 2010).

As a paradigm, positivism is the dominant research background for natural science research and positivists in social sciences view research in their field as being no different from natural science research; therefore, researchers of the former can imitate those of the latter in ethos, methods, analysis and interpretation (Bryman, 2012; Johnston, 2014). According to positivism, the researcher's role is as an independent observer of social reality since such reality is viewed through lenses of external forces, as objectivism also argues (Cohen et al., 2007). Therefore, positivism as an epistemological paradigm is in line with objectivism as an ontological orientation (Cibangu, 2010).

Interpretivism, on the other hand, views research differently as it views the world through its actors (Cohen et al., 2007). The paradigm argues that social research is integrated with people rather than objects; therefore, research should look for what a phenomenon means to people (Bryman, 2012; Leitch et al., 2010). Interpretivism seeks to understand people through their interpretation of their actions in order to understand their intentions (Pring, 2010). As Pring argues, people's actions cannot be understood by outsiders' observations because one action may have different intentions, so the best way to understand that is via the individual's interpretation.

Interpretivism is concerned with individuals rather than society (Leitch et al., 2010). Therefore, while positivism seeks to generalise results, interpretivism seek to understand individuals (Kettley, 2010). Since individuals' interpretations are important, efforts should be made by researchers to get inside and

investigate from within; therefore, the researcher's involvement and interaction are very important (Cohen et al., 2007). In addition, Kettley (2010) argues that society in interpretivism "is nothing more than the aggregation of people acting both individually and in social groups" (p. 68), so interpretivism as an epistemological orientation is in line with constructivism as an ontological consideration (Johnston, 2014).

This research had an interpretive orientation since it was important to this research to view people as a source of knowledge construction. The aim of this thesis is to explore and examine the nature of three outstanding case study schools in Saudi Arabi. This will be achieved through interaction with participants to understand their experiences of school being outstanding through the lenses of leadership practices, culture and professional development. Thus, interviews and observations are the main methods of data collection.

It is apparent that the aim of the above discussion was to build a philosophical foundation for this research. Such foundation building is also important to determine a methodological approach for this research (Johnston, 2014). It is believed that the ontological and epistemological orientation of any research can determine its methodology, methods of data collection and analysis (Cohen et al., 2007; Johnston, 2014; Kettley, 2010).

The difference between quantitative and qualitative methodologies does not only lie in the fact that the former contains numbers while the latter does not. It is rather about what philosophical background a certain research has (Bryman, 2012; Johnston, 2014). Hence, it is widely accepted in social science research that objectivism is in line with positivism and indeed leads to a quantitative approach to data collection (Kettley, 2010; Johnston, 2014). Objectivism views

social reality as an external factor beyond the reach of individuals while positivism views reality as observable facts that can be measured by objective methods (Johnston, 2014; Leitch et al., 2010); therefore, quantitative approaches are the most appropriate means to conduct research in the social sciences (Cohen et al., 2007).

On the other hand, it is also believed that constructivism is in line with interpretivism and then the most appropriate approach to data collection is a qualitative one (Kettley, 2010). Constructivism views social reality through its internal actors while interpreting people's meaning and understanding is the most appropriate way to understand phenomena (Johnston, 2014; Leitch et al., 2010). Therefore, a deep qualitative data collection method is necessary (Bryman, 2012).

This research aims to describe, understand and interpret the nature of three outstanding case study schools in Saudi Arabia. As mentioned earlier, leaders practices are meaningful products of consciousness and are not forced by external forces as all school members (including leaders and teachers) are active in building, managing and changing school culture and responsible about their professional development; furthermore people's interpretations of a given situation are important to describe and understand their social reality (school outstanding status). Therefore, a qualitative approach is seen to be the most appropriate methodology to answer the research questions outlined above.

4.3 Approach

Creswell (2007) lists five approaches to qualitative inquiry: narrative research, phenomenological research, grounded theory research, ethnographic research

and case study research. It is argued that the research approach of any inquiry is determined by the nature of the research itself and most importantly by the research questions (Yin, 2012). The nature of this thesis is to explore and understand three outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia. As Yin argues, case studies are the most appropriate approaches for descriptive nature of inquiry such as the one above. Therefore, case study was used as the research approach. Further justification will be provided throughout the discussion.

Case study is defined as "the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system [for example] a setting or a context" (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). The word "case" is broadly understood; it can refer to "person, social communities (e.g., families), organisations and institutions" (Flick, 2009, p. 135). Gillham (2010) has a similar view of what the term may refer to, yet Gillham goes beyond the physical meaning of "case" and refers to the it as an issue of inquiry:

a unit of human activity embedded in the real world; which can only be studied or understood in context; which exists in the here and now; that merges in with its context so that precise boundaries are difficult to draw... (p. 1)

Therefore, the cases that were studied in this research were outstanding schools; the human activity is leadership practices, school culture and professional development; while the context of the study is three Saudi Schools.

It is argued that case studies are popular in social sciences research since they provide the researcher with vivid and deep information about the case studied (McNeill and Chapman, 2005). As Cohen et al. argue,

It provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles (p.254).

Since the ontological orientation of this research was constructivism, in which reality was viewed through its actors (Johnston, 2014), and the epistemological orientation to knowledge was interpretivism, in which what people say and do was meaningful and important (Leitch et al., 2010), a case study was seen as the most appropriate approach to conduct the research. In order to answer the research questions outlined above, it is essential to get inside the schools, observe and interview people to gain as much in-depth information as possible to understand the nature of these outstanding schools. It is argued that case studies allow study participants to speak for themselves regardless of the perspective of the researcher (Cohen et al., 2007); this research aimed for this.

However, some argue that since case studies are concerned with gaining in-depth information about an issue from one case, it is likely that the conclusion reached may not be generalizable because it is not drawn from a representative sample (Robson, 2011). On the other hand, Cohen et al. (2007) believe that case studies can reach generalizable results in certain criteria such as “an instance or from an instance [generalized] to a class” (p. 256) (for more information about generalizing case studies refer to Cohen et al. (2007) p. 254-256). Some also argue that generalization from small samples can be done (Flick, 2009), yet may be difficult to defend (Shkedi, 2005). As the nature of qualitative inquiry is not inclined toward generalisation (Bryman, 2012), and the aim of this research is to deeply understand the case, this research does not aim to generalise results.

This moves the discussion to the different types of case studies mentioned by Shkedi (2005): the intrinsic and instrumental. Intrinsic case studies aim to learn about and gain deep information about a specific case studied, and not to understand others from its genre. An instrumental case study, on the other hand, aims to study an issue with the aim of understanding other issues similar to that issue. The intrinsic case study has no intention of generalising results to the wider population while the instrumental type has some intention of doing so (ibid). The aim of this thesis was to explore and understand the nature of three outstanding case study schools in Saudi without the intention of generalising the findings so it was an intrinsic case study.

Another issue is the question of a single or multi case study. In social sciences research, the case study approach is usually single case, individual, school or community (Bryman, 2012; McNeill and Chapman, 2005). Choosing between single or multi case studies is influenced by many factors, such as the nature of inquiry, research questions and objectives (Yin, 2012), yet multiple cases allow for in-depth, holistic descriptions and understanding of the case studied, which is not the case with conventional surveys (Shkedi, 2005). The strength of the multi case study lies in studying several cases, each in its own context and with its unique features, while not losing the advantage of qualitative design (ibid). Therefore, this research will use multi case studies (three schools) in order to gain an in-depth understanding of three outstanding schools in the context of Saudi Arabia.

Two types of case studies are mentioned by Yin (2012): explanatory and descriptive. For the former, case studies investigate how and why sequences of events take place. The problem with such case studies, as the author argues, is

to seek causality between events which may be difficult especially for a single case. The latter however, describes the reality of what is happening, offering a deep and revealing understanding of the social world. Descriptive case studies, as Yin believes, are important in exemplary cases that cover examples of success. This research aims to explore and examine the nature of three outstanding case study schools in Saudi Arabia as cases of exemplary success.

4.4 Research process

This section outlines how I conducted the research. The discussion in this section includes approaches to theory, research process, data collection process time and feasibility.

The two main approaches to theory in social research are deductive and inductive (Robson, 2011). The deductive approach starts from theory, deduces hypotheses from that theory, collects data, interprets findings, confirms or rejects hypotheses and goes back to the original theory to revise it (Bryman, 2012). This approach can be related to quantitative studies (ibid; Robson, 2011). The inductive approach, however, starts from data collection and feedback to theory; it is more associated with a qualitative approach (Flick, 2009).

The nature of this research required me to choose the inductive approach to theory for two reasons. First, the ontological orientation of the research was constructivism in which people were seen as active social actors (Johnston, 2014); therefore, the research aimed to investigate what was actually happening in outstanding schools. Second, since the epistemological orientation of this research was interpretivism, in which knowledge about people is best gathered directly from them through their interpretations and without the influence of the

researcher's preconceptions (Leitch et al., 2010), the research started from what people said and did rather than from a hypothesis.

Although this research has an inductive approach to theory, a literature review before gathering data was important to help the researcher understand the field and generate research questions, yet such a review of the literature will not intervene with the data collected (Flick, 2009).

The process of research in social science research is commonly argued to be as follows: concepts and theories, literature review, research questions, sampling cases, data collection, data analysis and writing up (Bryman, 2012). The research process followed in this case is similar to Bryman's, as the following table (Table 4:1) demonstrates.

Stage		Description
Context		This chapter discussed the context of the study by introducing the notion of globalization and moving toward the specific context, Saudi Arabia.
Literature review	Concepts and theories	A conceptual framework was built to highlight the concept of outstanding schools through three sub-concepts: leadership practices, culture and professional development.
	Literature review	A substantial amount of research was emphasised along with highlighting links between the sub-concepts and the main concept (e.g., links between leadership practices and school effectiveness)
	Research questions	From the light of the literature reviewed three main questions were introduced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the leadership practices of school leaders in outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is culture perceived and experienced by the school community in these cases? • How is professional development perceived and experienced by the leaders and staff of these institutions?
Sampling		Three outstanding high schools in the city of (Diamond), Saudi Arabia were chosen to be the case studies. The selected schools were rated outstanding and each school had won the Excellence Educational Award at least once.
Data collection		Methods of data collection were qualitative-based documentary analysis, observations, interviews and group interviews (Further discussion about this stage will follow).
Data analysis		Thematic analysis style was used to analyse the data collected.
Writing up		The discussion and conclusion of the research were formulated in the light of the findings. Then, a review of the rest of the chapters was made, especially the literature review.

Table 4: 1 Research process (adapted from Bryman (2012)).

Methods of data collection were qualitative-based documentary analysis, observations, interviews and group interviews (Further discussion about methods of data collection will be provided subsequently in the section 4.8). The following table (Table 4:2) highlights the process of data collection in each school, the participants targeted and the aims in the sequence given.

Sequence	Method	Participant/s	Aim/s
1	Documentary analysis	School documents	To gather general information and background on the school culture and how the school defines itself.
2	Observation	School Principal	Observing the Principal's day-to-day work and noting issues regarding leadership practices, culture and professional development.

3	Interview (1)	School Principal	Gaining data about leadership practices, how he perceived school culture and what professional development opportunities he had undergone.
4	Interview (2)	School Deputy	Getting data from the school Deputy about leadership practices, how he perceived his school culture and how professional development was perceived in his school.
5	Interview (3)	School Social Instructor	As an important player in the leadership team, the school Social Instructor was interviewed to gain his interpretation about leadership practices, the school culture and professional development.
6	Group interviews	All teachers	Data gained from teachers with regard to leadership practices, the shared culture in the school and how professional development is practiced in the school.

Table 4: 2 Process of data collection.

After I completed the process in Safeer school, Wazeer School followed and then Kings' School. The research took four months including the process of negotiating access to the schools. The study and related travel costs were funded for its duration by the Saudi Ministry of Education represented by the Saudi Cultural Bureau in London.

4.5 Context

The context of the study is Diamond city (not actual name), Saudi Arabia. This section will briefly discuss the city's geography and demography and then will present information about education in the city that will not reveal the city's name. In chapter two, it has been explored in details the macro contexts of the

study: globalization and national (Saudi Arabian) contexts while in this chapter the discussion will be focused on Diamond city as the micro context of the study.

The city is located in the northern side of the country, with a population of less than 200,000 (Central Department of Statistics & Information, 2010). Islam is the main religion practiced with 99% of the population Muslim; the 1% of the population who are Hindus, Christians and other religions are migrant workers, according to national statistics (ibid).

Traditionally, the city's primary industry was agriculture as date and wheat farming were the local farmers' speciality. It is estimated that the city has around 5,000 farms that meet some of the food demand in the local area (Al Khodairy, 2013). However, during the last few decades the country realised that water supply is very limited due to the desert climate. Therefore, there have been restrictions on farming leaving farmers with no option but to abandon their farms (ibid).

Culturally, education is regarded as very important in the city. As Al bader (2014) argues, as the farming industry in the city declined, people realised that education could be their saviour. However, others have argued that the people paid significant attention to education even when the farming industry was at its peak in the 1980s and '90s (Al Mosaini, 2015). A large part of city's population work in the education industry either in general or higher education (Central Department of Statistics & Information, 2010).

To date, the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia largely aims to standardise local authorities (Alsinbal et al., 2008). For example, on the Ministry's website, there are guidelines on how local authorities should look as organisations. Hierarchy is described and roles and responsibilities are defined. Therefore, to

some extent, local authorities represent the Ministry of Education in their local areas (ibid).

However, the educational authority in Diamond city is a pioneer in education. According to Al Mosaini (2015), education in the city is highly regarded, and as such it receives considerable publicity in the media. The Ministry has awarded the local authority three awards in the last ten years for educational excellence, and a further two awards for elite management (ibid).

The educational authority pays significant attention to modernising the system either educationally, by introducing e-learning and smart boards to every classroom, or organisationally, by e-networking schools and the local authority (Al bader, 2014).

According to the city's educational authority's statistics (2015), the city has more than two hundred and eighty schools divided equally between girls and boys. Schools in Saudi Arabia are divided into three sectors: primary (6-11), secondary (12-15) and high (15-18) schools (Alsinbal et al., 2008), and this is also the division in the city. The number of primary schools in the city is over 140 and the number of secondary schools is 83 and finally, there are 62 high schools in the city.

Although there is no national ranking for educational authorities in the country, the above-mentioned awards and national media publicity makes the city an appropriate context for this study. The next section will discuss the case study selection and describe the exact context of the study.

4.6 Case study selection

It has been discussed earlier that case study was the research approach. As mentioned above, Yin (2012) argues that case study can be very useful in studying exemplary cases of success. Purposive sampling is considered by Flick (2009) to be the most appropriate method of sampling for inquiries looking at exemplary cases, such as those of success or failure. Therefore, choosing the right sample which represent the study aim among others is important for this type of study to understand these particular fields (ibid).

Purposive sampling is defined as when "sampling is conducted with reference to the goals of the research" (Bryman, 2012, p. 418). Although the sampling technique that will be used in this study is purposive, there should be selection criteria that allow the researcher to choose the right sample that can inform the research (Bryman, 2012). This research used Diamond city's s educational authority's rating scheme as an independent source of selection criteria; this will be discussed subsequently.

It is argued that sample size should simultaneously balance two aspects: intensiveness of the inquiry and the researcher's ability to conduct the research (Cleary, Horsfall and Hayter, 2014; Creswell, 2007). Therefore, two techniques were combined in this research to identify case studies. The local educational authority school rating system was adopted for the first approach, and winning the national Educational Excellence Award comprised the second. Thus, the criteria were three boys' high schools that had been rated as outstanding by the local Diamond authority for at least five years consecutively, and who had won the national Educational Excellence Award at least once. The reason for choosing

boys' schools was that the researcher is male and cannot have access to girls' schools in Saudi Arabia.

The local educational authority in the city has a rating scheme for its schools. Schools were rated outstanding, very good, acceptable and need attention. Only, outstanding and very good schools were listed on the educational authority's website (Diamond Educational Authority, 2015b). The number of boys' high schools in the city was 29, 6 of which were rated outstanding and 17 of which were rated very good (ibid). Authority

All three schools were under the new scheme, *Tatweer* (development), or The King Abdullah Public Education Development Project, discussed earlier in the chapter two. They were all rated as outstanding, sustained that rating for the last five years and all had won the national Educational Excellent Award at least one time.

Safeer School Principal had been a Principal for 17 years, the school had 26 teachers and 185 students. Wazeer School's had been Principal for 24 years and had 24 teachers and 145 students while the Principal of King's School had the experience of being a Principal for 9 years and the school has 28 teachers and 150 students. Safeer and Wazeer schools were located within the city where the socio-economic status was middle class; King's School is in a deprived area and a large number of its students receive ministry aid (Diamond Educational Authority, 2015a).

4.7 Participants

The choice of participants is largely determined by the nature of the inquiry itself and its aims (Flick, 2009). The previous section explained that purposive sampling for case studies (schools) is the most appropriate technique for this research. It is argued that participants in purposive sampling must be able to inform the research by being knowledgeable about the field of inquiry (Cohen et al., 2007). Participants should be able to provide in-depth knowledge to the researcher to help him/her to answer research questions (ibid).

Since the selected schools were recognised by the local authority as being outstanding, it is assumed that by choosing such schools as case studies the staff are able to inform the researcher about the nature of the schools regarding: leadership practices, culture and professional development. Many studies used rating schemes to inform them about their participants. For example, Day et al. (2011) used Ofsted reports to choose outstanding schools as case studies for their research about successful school Principals in the England.

Three important issues were considered before choosing participants. First, since in-depth information is essential in informing this research (Robson, 2011) it is important to gather sufficient information on the three schools. This research will focus on three outstanding schools in Diamond, Saudi Arabia. Every school member who can potentially inform the research will be selected. The second issue is participants' triangulation. It is related to the first issue and is crucial in helping the researcher gain information from different sources (Flick, 2009).

The third issue is the representativeness of the participants. Although this research does not aim to generalise results, as Cohen et al. (2007) argue, the

representativeness of the population is also important in qualitative research because, for example, choosing one or two participants from each school would not provide sufficiently in-depth information.

Therefore, the participants from each of the three schools comprised the school Principal, Deputy and the Social Instructor and the teachers; all serving as triangulating sources of data.

Social Instructors in Saudi schools provide a link between home and school to assist students. The aim of this post is to work towards achieving psychological, educational, social and professional homogeneity for students, to help them develop their characters and solve any problems they face (Tatweer, 2013). A Social Instructor is a teacher who is progressing towards becoming a Social Instructor. They can choose to return to a teaching role at any time, and in smaller schools they can combine teaching and social instruction. The Social Instructor is typically the third most responsible person in the school setting after the Principal and the Deputy (Alsinbal et al., 2008).

The Principals were chosen as participants because the focus of the study was on outstanding school and leadership practices. They were subject to observation and were interviewed with the aim of determining their leadership practices because they were the chief leaders of the school. It was important to ascertain how they perceived, created and changed the school culture and to describe their professional development in terms of the available opportunities on offer and how do they perceive professional development.

The school Deputy and Social Instructor were interviewed separately to establish which leadership practices were performed at the schools, how the school culture was perceived and how professional development was perceived and practised.

All school teachers (where possible) were involved in group interviews to learn about their perception of their leaders leadership practices, school culture and professional development in the school.

4.8 Methods of data collection

One of the advantages of using a case study as the approach to the inquiry is that such an approach allows the researcher to use different types of data collection methods. According to Yin (2012), the case study approach makes it possible for the researcher to choose one or multiple method/s from a variety of methods available, such as observations, interviews, archival records and documentary analysis.

As mentioned earlier, gaining evidence from different sources (participants) is crucial in gaining as much in-depth information as possible about the issue of inquiry (Flick, 2009). It is also important to gather such evidence through a range of methods in order to get a “real” picture of what people do and say, how they behave and what documents show (Gillham, 2010). Such triangulation will make the research results as robust as possible (Yin, 2012). Therefore, this research used four qualitative methods to collect data: documentary analysis, observations, interviews and group interviews.

The aim of this section is to address each of the data collection methods, clarify why each method was used and how was it used. Table 4:3 summarises the methods in order of use and the documents and/or participants involved from each of the three schools.

Sequence	Method	Document targeted/Participants
1	Documentary analysis	All documents produced by the school between 2012-2015
2	Observation	School Principal
3	Interview	School Principal
4	Interview	School Deputy
5	Interview	Social instructor
6	Group interviews	All school teachers

Table 4: 3 Summary of methods and documents/participants.

Documentary analysis was the first method and primarily gave the researcher an overview of the school culture and professional development; furthermore, it allowed the researcher to raise questions to ask in the followed interviews and group interviews. Then the school Principal was observed for three days in case of Safer School while Wazeer and King's schools were observed for 2.5 and 1.5 days, respectively. The reason for that was to understand their day-do-day work including their leadership practices, how they dealt with matters related to school culture and professional development. Having the information gathered from document analysis and observation, the Principals were interviewed with some questions that may be generated from the document analysis and observations.

The school Deputies and the Social Instructor were then interviewed to gauge their perceptions about their Principals, and to quantify their role as school leaders. Finally, to conclude the interview process, the school teachers were interviewed to determine their perceptions about the leadership practices of their superiors, the school culture and opportunities for professional development at

the school. Twenty-five of the 26 teachers from Safeer School (five groups), 20 of the 24 teachers from Wazeer School (four groups) and 23 of the 28 teachers from King's School (five groups) participated in the group interviews. The data were collected individually from the three schools; beginning with Safeer, followed by Wazeer and then finally King's School.

4.8.1 Documentary analysis

Documents can be letters, emails, school newsletters, circulations, social media accounts (if any) and any official product (as text) produced by the school (Bell, 2010). Although informal (personal) documents (e.g. notes and diaries) can go under the category of documents as a source of data, the matter of access and ensuring authenticity can be an issue (Flick, 2009). Therefore, the documents sought after are any official authentic documents produced by the school between the years 2012-2015. This time frame is identified to ensure reflexivity of the schools' current status and the documents.

Gillham (2010) argues that documents provide the researcher with a formal side of the informal reality that may be produced by interviews and observations. However, Flick (2009) believes that documents show aspects of the institution beyond the facts and reality. He argues that each document is produced for a reason and for some kind of use; therefore, documents mean more than checking whether an institution's practices (in reality) reflect what it says it should be doing (in theory). Documents for Flick mean communication between people in the organisation.

This is important in this the research, because one of the main aims of using document analysis is to understand the schools' organisational cultures. This

includes evaluating how people communicate with each other and how school leadership is structured (hierarchical or flat), and examining how professional development works in the school.

Therefore, documents were viewed in this research as a method of communication in the school. Hence this method was not carried out at the end of the research to check the accuracy of the data collected through other methods. It was the beginning of the data collection process to give the researcher an overview of the studied school and, as this method is not responsive in nature (Robson, 2011), any issues raised by it will need interpretation.

Since this research views people in social reality as active actors and their interpretations as important in gaining knowledge while documentary analysis is not responsive in nature (Robson, 2011), it is important for the researcher to follow this method with observations, interviews and group interviews to gain the participants' interpretations from matters raised by the analysis of the documents.

4.8.2 Observations

May (2011) defines the role of the observer/s as:

they witness the "reflexive rationalization" of conduct, that is, the continual interpretation and application of new knowledge by people (including themselves) in their social environments as an on-going process (p. 170).

It is clear from May's definition that the witnessing itself is of value, regardless of what the observer does after that. In observations as a qualitative method, it is conventional for the researcher to use his/her own senses to take descriptive field notes of what he/she sees, hears or senses (Yin, 2012).

Yin (2012) believes that observations are one of the most unique features of carrying out case studies. It allows the researcher to gain information from live social situations that are occurring naturally without the influence of the researcher (Cohen et al., 2007). In addition, observations allow the researcher to observe actions and behaviours that may otherwise go unnoticed or be considered irrelevant (ibid).

Two issues are frequently discussed in the relevant research literature: researcher participation and the structure of the observation (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2007; Flick, 2009; Robson, 2011). The former is concerned with the observer's level of engagement with the observed community, such as communicating and interacting with them. It is conventionally scaled between complete participation and complete detachment with one or two levels in between (Creswell, 2007). Robson (2011) argues that the level of engagement affects the type of data produced, and the least level of engagement, "observer-as-participant", does not yield qualitative data. However, Bryman (2012) believes that all levels of participation can generate qualitative data. Nonetheless, the participation level will affect how the researcher relies on observations as a standalone method (ibid).

Since observation comes between other collection methods, the researcher was planning not to distract the Principal from his work. In order to avoid influencing

situations (Flick, 2009), the researcher maintained a low level of engagement and refrain from asking questions until the interviews unless necessary.

For the latter, the observation structure, three types of structures are common: unstructured, semi-structured and structured observations. In an unstructured observation the researcher goes to the field without looking for specific issues; instead, the researcher records anything that happens. In the semi-structured observation, the researcher has themes of issues emerging from his/her research questions and collects data accordingly. The structured observation is pre-organised and involves a systematic approach in which the researcher focuses only on the pre-specified aspects; this usually results in quantitative data (Cohen et al., 2007; Robson, 2011).

This research employs semi-structured observations; the researcher went into schools to examine themes and issues associated with leadership practices, school culture and professional development. These themes and issues originated from questions raised in the literature review, and related to the conceptual framework, including: leadership practices, cultural and professional development associated with the context of the study. (Please see Appendix 11 for the initial Principal's observation schedule). Prior to conducting the observations, I observed two Principals carrying out their duties for approximately 4 hours each. This process helped to develop my observation techniques and experience and to test the observation instrument, which improved my confidence in the value of the observation process. Some changes were consequently made to the observation schedule:

- Adding a General Field Notes section.
- Rewording some observation points.

- Splitting some points.
- Reorganising and restructuring.
- Adding to observation points:
 - Communication,
 - Planning,
 - Culture establishment, and
 - Description of professional development.

(Please see Appendix 12 for the Principal's amended observation schedule).

I then revised the tools and after gaining access to the studied schools, followed the Principal and observed his day-to-day work routine, taking notes regarding his actions, communications and behaviour.

Since the researcher kept low participation (communication), interviews of the Principals will follow. Another reason that interviews will follow observations is that it is argued that in observations it is easy for the researcher to overlap his/her own judgment with real events (May, 2011).

4.8.3 Interviews

Rowley (2012) defines interviews as "face-to-face verbal exchanges in which one person, the interviewer, attempts to acquire information from and gain an understanding of another person, the interviewee" (p. 260). Interviews can be based around one topic or more with one person or more (May, 2011). In this section, the discussion will be about face-to-face interviews with individuals, which in this research case are school Principals, school Deputies and school

Social Instructors, while group interviews with teachers will be discussed in the next section.

There are a number of reasons that interviews were a suitable data collection method for this research. First, interviews allow the researcher to ask open-ended questions in order to gain in-depth information (Woodside, 2010) about their experiences, understanding and points of view (Rowley, 2012) of outstanding schools. Second, interviews offer the researcher a flexible method of data collection that allows him/her to add questions, ask for clarification or explanations in a way that other methods may not (Bell, 2010; Robson, 2011). This is particularly important in this research because the interviews with participants followed documentary analysis and the researcher can ask questions raised by such documents.

Finally, the orientation of this research was that participants' interpretation was highly valued, as discussed in the ontological and epistemological assumptions, and it seemed that interviews give participants the opportunity to express themselves freely. As Cohen et al. (2007) suggest, interviews marked a movement toward recognising human interactions and conversations as sources of knowledge generation.

Three types of interviews are commonly discussed in the literature: structured, unstructured and semi-structured interviews. A structured interview has fixed questions that may have multiple choice answers and it usually yields quantitative data. The unstructured type is the opposite in that it has no structure; the interviewer has a general topic and keeps the conversation flowing (Dicicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006).

In the semi-structured interview, the researcher has an interview schedule containing themes and questions but with some flexibility in that the researcher can modify, change the order or omit questions according to the interview flow (Robson, 2011). Semi-structured interview was chosen as the interview type for this research because it offered the researcher the opportunity to ask open-ended questions and ensure the conversation was related to the aspects of inquiry (outstanding schools: leadership practices, culture and professional development).

Unstructured interviews may be suitable for fields with little knowledge available to generate themes for further exploration while semi-structured interviews are suitable to gain more in-depth information about a particular topic (Dicicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006), which is the aim of this inquiry.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with each of the three high school Principals, their Deputies and the schools' Social Instructors. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes to an hour, which offered enough time to cover the interview themes but were not too long to disturb the school routine. The interview themes originated from questions raised during the discussion in the literature review, which relates to the Saudi context. (Please see Appendix 13 for the initial interview schedule for Principals, Deputies and Social Instructors). Before conducting the interviews, and after gaining ethical approval, I interviewed 2 Principals and 2 Deputies and a Social Instructor to test the interview instrument, and build my confidence and enrich my experience before commencing data collection. Some amendments to the initial schedule were made including:

- Adding questions:

- How would you describe communication in your school?
- What do you think about subgroups?
- Redrafting some questions:
 - Do teachers play a role in decision making? How and why?
 - How does planning work in your school?
 - Is there a relationship between a school's culture and its performance?
- Splitting up some questions:
 - What steps do you take to ensure organisational quality?
 - What steps do you take to ensure quality in teaching and learning?

(Please see Appendix 14 for the amended interview schedule for Principals, Deputies and Social Instructors).

The aim of these interviews was to generate information about outstanding school from the Principals' points of view and their Deputies' and Social Instructors' perspectives as leadership partners.

4.8.4 Group interviews

The findings on face-to-face interviews can be also applied to group interviews (Flick, 2009) apart from the fact that the latter are conducted with a group of individuals. Choosing group interviews allows the researcher to gather in-depth information about what people collectively think as a community about certain issues and why (Bell, 2010). The aim of this thesis was to explore and understand the dynamics of three outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia, selected for analysis as case studies. Part of the research involved determining teacher

perceptions of the leadership practices of their superiors, how they perceived the school culture and opportunities for professional development in their school.

Research questions and themes included in the interview schedule for teachers were developed through the discussion in the literature review which was consistent with the interview schedule used to interview the school leaders (see Appendix 15 for the initial interview schedule for teachers). Before conducting the interviews, I initially interviewed 9 teachers in two groups with four or five individuals in each group to test the interview schedule and build my confidence and skills, before collecting actual data. Some amendments to the interview schedule were made after the initial group interviews:

- The addition of some questions:
 - What is your role in developing the school's vision?
 - How would you describe communication at your school?
 - How does planning work in your school?
 - What do you think about subgroups?
- Redrafting some questions:
 - Is there a relationship between school culture and the school's outstanding performance?
- Splitting some questions:
 - What steps do your leaders take to ensure organisational quality?
 - What steps do your leaders take to ensure quality in teaching and learning?

(Please see Appendix 16 for the amended interview schedule for teachers).

In each of the studied schools, all participating teachers were divided randomly into groups of 4-5 teachers as this number is the norm for group interviews

(May, 2011; Robson, 2011). Each session lasted approximately an hour. The role of the researcher, as Robson (2011) argues, was to moderate the group in the sense of regulating and keeping the discussion relevant and to facilitate the smooth and effective running of the discussion. Flick (2009) stresses the importance of maintaining the line between moderating the group and influencing the discussion; the former is necessary while the latter is bias.

An important part of the researcher's (or moderator's) job was to prevent a member of the group from dominating the discussion either physically (by dominating the discussion) or ideologically (by dominating ideas) and to encourage more reserved members to participate in the discussion (Flick, 2009).

4.9 Data analysis

It has been argued that the nature of qualitative data analysis lies within the process of breaking down data for classification reasons, creating concepts from the different classifications and making connections between such concepts in order to give new descriptions of the inquiry (Dey, 1993). More or less of this process can make a generic foundation for the different qualitative data analysis techniques (Cohen et al., 2007; Dey, 1993; Rowley, 2012). One of the techniques is thematic analysis in which data are conceptually broken into bits, labelled, connected and categorised in relation to similarities in order to give new insight into the study (Cohen et al., 2007; Dey, 1993; Rivas, 2012).

Thematic analysis was the chosen qualitative data analysis technique in this research for two reasons. One is that it is easier to make sense of data when they are broken down into themes and then each theme is connected with other similar themes since qualitative data tend to be large in quantity (Rivas, 2012).

Second is that thematic analysis allows the researcher to extract themes from data without taking them out of context. This is particularly important to this research because research concepts, especially school culture, are attached to the context in which they are embedded (Shkedi, 2005).

Dey (1993) suggests that themes can be generated from “inferences from the data, initial or emergent research questions, substantive, policy and theoretical issues and imagination, intuition and previous knowledge” (p. 106). The research generated themes from the first way since this research had an inductive orientation to theory, as discussed in the section on the research process. Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that research questions generated from the relevant literature may contributed to such a categorisation since the participants’ interpretations were in response to these questions. In addition, in line with inductive orientation to theory there were an iterative process between data analysis and going back to the conceptual framework and literature review for modification and further examination of concepts emerging from data.

Therefore, themes were generated mainly by the data but research questions may have contributed to these themes. As Yin (2012) argues, data do not speak for themselves; they are rather driven somehow by the case study aim, such as answering a research question or solving a problem. Shkedi (2005) argues that although researchers do not approach data “empty handed”, they should take extra care not to let their preconceptions drive the categorising of data and they should let the data drive the process. Therefore, in this research I analysed the data according to the data themselves not because they are relevant to the research questions.

I started analysing data as the data collection process took place by flagging concepts and themes in order to ease the process and to avoid data overlap (Cohen et al., 2007; Shkedi, 2005). Once I completed the data collection, I carefully read and reread the data with coding (labelling) in mind. Open (rather than selective) coding was used since the researcher was not looking for specific issues, but for important issues raised by the participants (Bryman, 2012). Initial categorisation and naming such categories was then conducted. This was stage one of the process and it is called coding (Shkedi, 2005) or dividing (Dey, 1993) data. See figure 4:1 for an example of the initial coding process.

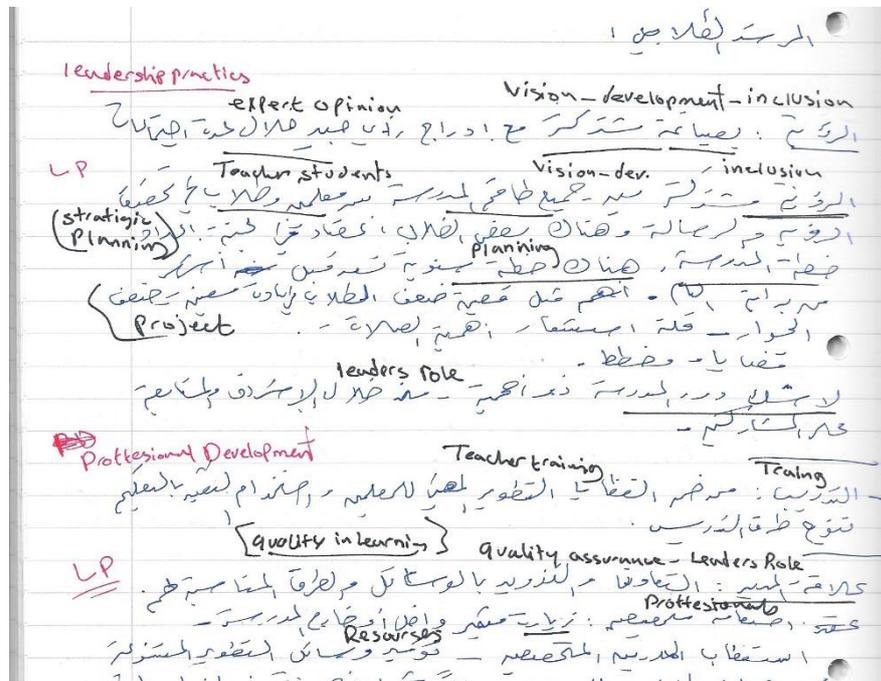


Figure 4: 1 Example of Initial Coding

The next stage was "splicing" (ibid) or grouping data and finding connections. It involved the researcher putting the different segments and labels together in terms of their similarities. In this process, I looked for similar data which can be grouped together, classified them in vertical and horizontal axes as a categorising process, named the different categories, restructured data against these categories for easy access without forgetting the context (Rowley, 2012),

evaluated the process, reduced levels and then produced the final categorisation (the whole process is refined from Dey (1993) and Shkedi (2005)). See figure 4:2 and 4:3 for examples of notes made during this process.

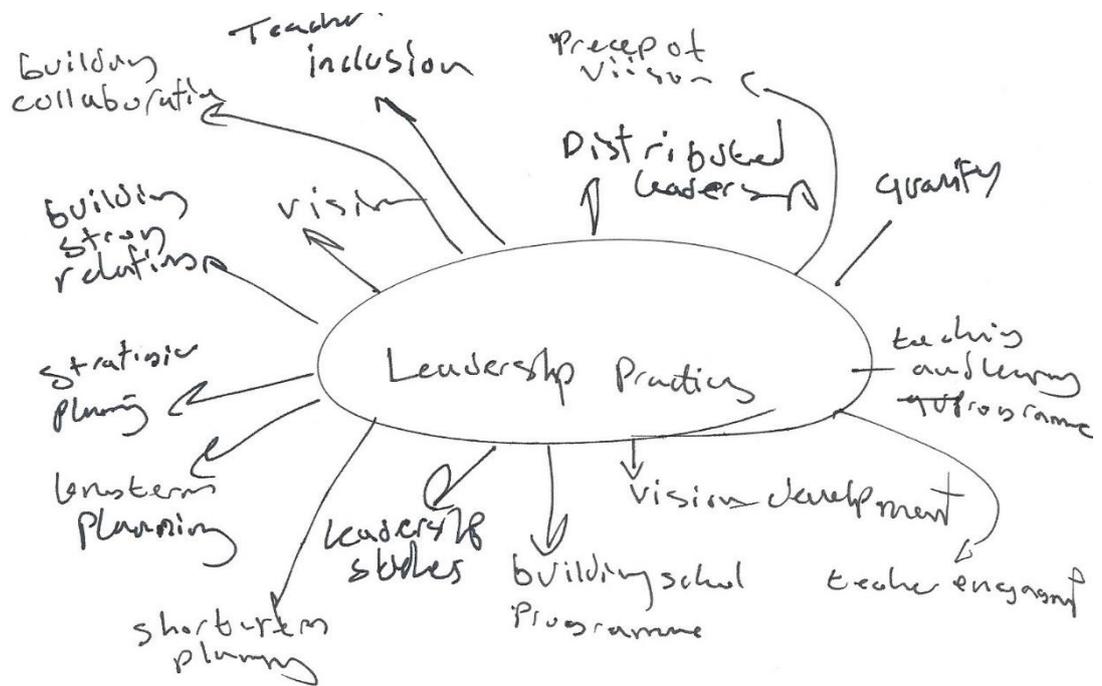


Figure 4: 2 Note used during categorisation process.

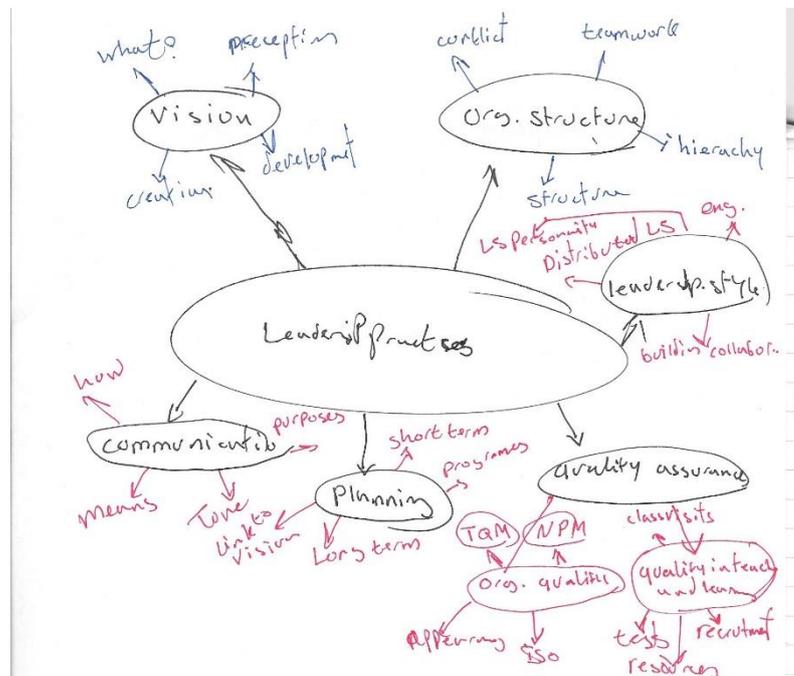


Figure 4: 3 Note used during categorisation process.

This research aimed to treat each school as a unique case relevant to its own context and did not aim to generalise the findings to a population. Therefore, each case was analysed separately with an open mind in order to avoid detaching the data from the context in which they were embedded (Rowley, 2012) and in order to avoid the first case influencing the categorisation of the other cases (Shkedi, 2005). Data from all the data collection methods were analysed using thematic analysis for consistency. Then, the results from the three cases were compared to deepen the understanding of what outstanding school leadership involves. During the process of analysis and discussion, the quotations were translated from Arabic to English by the researcher and were verified by two fluent, bilingual English-Arabic speakers (please see appendices 17, 18 and 19 for examples of original quotations).

4.10 Integrity of the research

The principal tradition of social research is to ensure that the knowledge produced has fulfilled certain quality criteria, so that the knowledge conveyed can be accepted by the wider social science community (Gobo, 2004; Goldberg and Allen, 2015; Ravenek and Rudman, 2013; Seale, 1999, 2004). The aim of this section is to discuss how quantitative and qualitative research methods ensure integrity in different ways, and to describe what this researcher did to ensure the rigour of this research.

Quantitative research is rooted in the scientific tradition of positivism, and deals with quantifications as methods of viewing social reality (Johnston, 2014).

Quality measures (reliability and validity) require the use of standardised criteria, such as checklists, guidelines and standards (Flick, 2007). Reliability refers to the

consistency of research findings and research procedures; it is said to apply when the same research procedures would be expected to yield the same results every time (Seale, 2012). Validity establishes the value of research according to the truthfulness of the data. Validity can be understood at two levels: internal validity, which measures the extent to which causality can be drawn from the study; and external validity, which measures how far generalisation is possible according to the study's findings (ibid).

In qualitative research, quality criteria have long proven to be a dilemma because standardised measures and checklists are not applicable to real life situational research (Ravenek and Rudman, 2013). The reliability measures in qualitative interviews might lead to the assumption of a structured method, since the answers to open ended questions are not expected to be the same; and this informs the depth of real world research (Flick, 2007).

On the other hand, Guba and Lincoln (2005) argue that dependability in qualitative research can replace reliability, as it is its quantitative counterpart. They further argue that dependability can be achieved through the use of a range of data collection methods and dependability auditing. A variety of data collection methods were used in this research including documentary analysis, observations, interviews and group interviews. A research audit is when the researcher documents the steps he took while planning, designing and implementing the research. It also covers the data analysis and reporting procedures. Auditing is employed to assure readers that the proper procedures were followed (ibid). When conducting this research, I recorded every step taken while completing the research. In this chapter, I have explained the study approach, the research process, the context, case study and participant

selection, the methods of data collection, and the analysis technique applied. In addition, consent forms and research instruments are included in the appendices.

Regarding using validity in qualitative research, this seems to be a subject prompting some disagreement. Flick (2007) opposes the idea that validity is necessary, and argues that it is necessary instead to create new measures to test rigour that are specifically designed for qualitative research. In agreement, Bryman (2012) favours reforming such criteria to ensure suitability for qualitative research.

Bryman (2012) contends that trustworthiness can parallel validity, employing criteria such as credibility, transferability and transparency. The next few paragraphs will define each of these criteria, and will outline how the researcher addressed them. Credibility replaces the truth-value in quantitative research, by ensuring results are believable (Seale, 2012). Techniques that ensure credibility in research involve philosophical orientation, whereby the research has a solid philosophical background (Seale, 1999, 2004); member validation, in which the findings go back to the case study community for validation (Bryman, 2012; Seale, 2012); and using a variety of data collection methods, in which the researcher employs more than one method of data collection and/or source of data (Flick, 2007).

This research had a philosophical background and orientates ontologically towards constructivism and epistemologically towards interpretivism; therefore, the research approach, methodology, methods of data collection, sampling and data analysis are in line with these approaches. With regard to member validation; transcripts of observations, interviews and group interviews served as feedback to the relevant participants for validation purposes.

Using different data collection methods can be important in qualitative research because they can help the researcher view the real world effectively using different methods drawn from different sources (Seale, 1999). This research utilised a range of methods including documentary analysis, observations, interviews and group interviews, with the aim of providing in-depth understanding of outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia. In addition, a range of participants took part in this research, to provide relevant information from different viewpoints and to enrich the research (Flick, 2007). Therefore, the research included the Principal, Deputy, Social Instructor and all teachers (where possible) from each of the three schools studied.

Two more credibility criteria were used in this research; the first during the sampling phase, and second relating to the use of multiple case studies. Regarding the former, although sampling in a qualitative inquiry is sometimes purposive, quality measures are essential to ensure the sample is chosen in a manner that effectively informs the research, not because the researcher thinks that is the case (Gobo, 2004). Therefore, this research used the local authority's (Diamond, Saudi Arabia) rating scheme to select three boy's schools rated as outstanding over the last five years; in addition, the schools had to have won a national Educational Excellence Award at least once. Concerning the latter point, using a multi case study is argued to be a credibility check to ensure that the research report offers a true and probing description of reality (Seale, 2004). As mentioned above, three outstanding schools were chosen as the case study setting to ensure an in-depth understanding was achieved.

Transferability and transparency are the final trustworthiness criteria, as mentioned by Bryman (2012). For the former, as transferability parallels

generalisation which is in line with external validity, it has been argued that because this research was looking at three cases only but with deep investigation and cultural and contextual interest, the generalizability of the findings will be hard to defend (ibid) and indeed not even an aim of the research. However, according to Guba and Lincoln (2005), in qualitative research transferability can also mean the degree to which the researcher produces a thick information and description of the study, allowing a deep and thorough understanding of the issue investigated to be gained from reading the research. This allows readers to apply the findings to similar situations. In this research I ensured a thick description of the data, providing detailed information (as permitted within the confines of maintaining anonymity) regarding the study context, case study selection, the participants, data collection methods and the data analysis procedures. The results of the study can also be viewed as thick and in depth, as the findings, analysis and discussion comprise a substantial percentage of this thesis.

In terms of transparency; this is seen as a criterion establishing trustworthiness. It requires that the researcher inform the research community how and why he conducted his research, offering a clear description of the data collection methods, sampling process, and data analysis (Goldberg and Allen, 2015; Trainor and Graue, 2014). Therefore, this research attempted to be as transparent as possible by describing these factors comprehensively.

While qualitative research has often been criticised as being subjective, suggesting that researchers influence participants in such a way that their presence affects the results, some have suggested an alternative criterion to replace objectivity in a qualitative inquiry. Guba and Lincoln (2005) argued that

confirmability can replace objectivity; this relies on the researcher and readers to assess the research conclusions, to ensure the results and findings are confirmed and supported by the data.

Throughout this research, I kept a record of every step taken, from formulating the research questions, through choosing the study context, the case study settings and participants, to designing the data collection instruments and conducting the data analysis. For example, records were kept when developing the data collection instruments and changes are highlighted and mentioned in this chapter. Original and amended instruments are included in the appendices (see for example appendices 11 and 12 for initial and revised observation schedules). The same can be said about explaining analysis process, while evidence was scanned and included within the main text (please see Figure 4: 1, 4: 2 and 4:3). One of the main reasons for such record keeping is to make it possible for the researcher and readers to confirm or question procedures, findings and contributions from the available data (Loh, 2013). Readers include research supervisors providing feedback, official assessment at the university, and general readers after the thesis has been published.

4.11 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are important in any research in general and in social sciences research in particular since the latter usually involves information about living individuals (Whiteman, 2012). Such a consideration is argued to be a matter of the legal rights of the participant and ensures research quality. Research may have followed quality criteria but breaching ethics can have negative consequences on the research community by providing information

collected in an unethical manner. Therefore, it is argued that ethics and quality measures go hand in hand (Harrison and Rooney, 2012).

In general, the researcher must consider two ethical principles when conducting research: one is treating participants in a way that the researcher would like to be treated and the second is giving them their rights (ibid). Participants have the right to be informed about the nature, aim and impact of the research when proper consent is gained (Ryen, 2004).

The British Educational Research Association (BERA) guidelines for ethical consideration involve the following:

- Participants must be informed and their consent must be gained
- Participants must be informed with openness and disclosure
- Participants must have the right to withdraw at anytime
- Harm to participants must be avoided
- Privacy of participants must be saved, including confidentiality and anonymity (BERA, 2011).

In this research, the guidelines stated above and those of the University of Reading's Research Ethics Committee (University of Reading, 2012) were taken into consideration. First, a risk assessment procedure were carried out by the researcher and it revealed that the research will not cause any risk to the participants (please see appendix 2). Second, an information sheet was sent to the participants containing detailed information about the research, what is expected, the methods used and the level of participants' involvement. It clearly stated that their participation is voluntary and that they have right to withdraw from the project at any time (please see appendices 3, 5, 7 and 9). A consent form was also sent to the participants confirming their consent to participate, to

be interviewed, observed and audio-recorded (please see appendices 4, 6, 8 and 10).

All methods and procedures of the research have been approved by the supervisors and ethical approval has been gained from the Institute of Education, University of Reading (please see appendix 1 for the ethical approval).

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter has considered methodologies, methods and procedures of conducting this research on outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia. After the introduction, the first section considered the paradigm rationale for this research including the ontological, epistemological and methodological orientations of this research. The second section discussed the case study as the research approach while the third section highlighted the process of this research as a whole and the process of data collection. The fourth section examines Diamond city, Saudi Arabia and its education system as the research context while the case study and participant selection were discussed in sections five and six respectively.

The methods of data collection were explained in section seven and include documentary analysis, observations, interviews and group interviews. Thematic analysis was chosen as the data analysis technique and it is outlined in section eight. Sections nine and ten examine how the researcher insures the quality of the research and considers ethical issues.

Findings and Analysis: Introductory Page

The aim of this thesis is to explore and understand the nature of three outstanding case study schools in Saudi Arabia from three main perspectives: leadership practices, culture and professional development.

In order to gain an understanding of the work of such schools, three main questions were asked, namely:

1. What are the leadership practices of school leaders in outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia?
2. How is culture perceived and experienced by the school community in these cases?
3. How is professional development perceived and experienced by the leaders and staff of these institutions?

Chapters Five, Six and Seven present the findings based on the data collected from three case studies, that is, Safeer School, Wazeer School and King's School respectively. Data were collected via documentary analysis, interviews, observations and group interviews. Table 5:1 below gives a summary of the data collected.

Schools	Documents	Principal interview	Principal observation	Deputy interview	Social instructor interview	Teachers interview
Safeer	Rich	✓	3 working days	✓	✓	25/26 in 5 groups
Wazeer	Rich	✓	2.5 working days	✓	✓	20/24 in 4 groups
King	Rich	✓	1.5 working day	✓	✓	23/28 in 5 groups

Table 5: 1 Summary of data collected from Safeer, Wazeer and King's schools.

The data collected from schools will be analysed using the thematic analysis technique, as explained in the methodology chapter.

The following system has been used to reference quotations:

For quotations collected from interviews:

Quotation (respondent's name [anonymous], position, interview).

For quotations collected from group interviews:

Quotation (Group number, group interview).

For data collected from observations:

Observed case (Location, observations).

For quotations collected from documents:

Quotation (document's title, document).

I collected data in Arabic and then analysed them. Quotations were, then, translated into English (Please see appendices 17,18, and 19 for examples of original quotations). The translation was checked by two multilingual people to ensure quality.

Chapter Five: Safer School- Findings and Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the findings of the data collected from the Safer school. It starts out by providing the context of the school by providing some background information and goes on to list the participants of the study providing details about their age, experience and qualifications. The findings based on the analysis of the data are then presented and summarised. The city where the school is located, the school name (nominal names were given) and the participants' names will not be revealed to maintain anonymity.

5.2 Context

Safer school is located in a town 10 km away from the main city. It comprises 26 teachers and 185 students, giving a 1:7 teachers to students ratio. Most of the students come from middle class families and a small percentage come from a low socioeconomic class ([Safer School] Facts and History, document). The school was established in the 1960s and the current building was built in 1984. The building looks old but is well maintained (ibid). The school benefits from being located within a spacious tract of land with the school building itself taking up only 1/6th of the space available. The school building is surrounded by other facilities such as the playground and other utilities. The school gate and the building door are not guarded and are always open.

Upon entry, the school building is rather dark but is well air conditioned. Within seconds, visitors are likely to be welcomed and assisted. My first visit to the

school coincided with the long break (schools typically have two long breaks: 30 and 20 minutes respectively). I noted the school was quiet and when I asked the school Deputy, Sami, about that he said:

This is a part of our school culture. We understand how 185 students would behave when squeezed into a limited space [the central covered area]. However, we managed to create a culture of calmness and quietness. (Sami, Deputy, interview).

How the school manages to achieve this will be discussed in more detail when addressing the school culture.

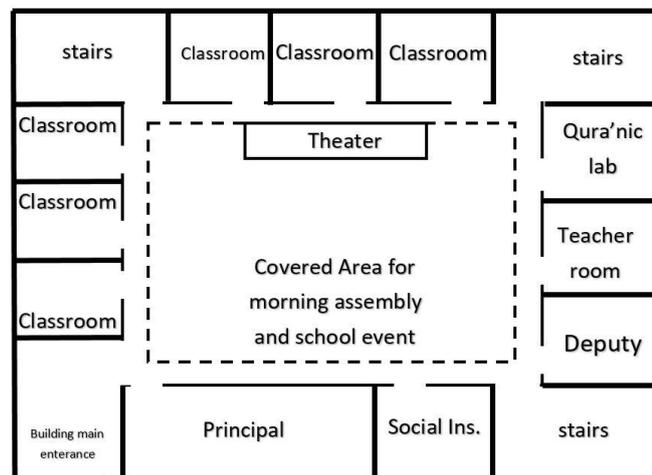


Figure 5: 1 Safer School floor plan, ground floor (field notes).

The school has a large covered air-conditioned hall at the centre which is used for daily morning assemblies and school events (see Figure 5:1). It also has five different laboratories, libraries and a digital resources room (field notes). The offices occupied by the Principal, the Deputy and the Social Instructors are very spacious and are furnished with sofas which can seat more than ten people. The teachers have the use of two rooms: one room is functional and contains a desk, chair and computer for each teacher and the other is a social common room

furnished in an Arab style. (Figure 5:2) The school also has a well-equipped meeting room.



Figure 5: 2 Representative picture of the room furnished in an Arab style.

The school has been rated as being outstanding by the local authority for 10 years running (Diamond Educational Authority, 2015b). The school has won the Education Excellence Award three times since this was launched in 2010, with the latest award being presented in June 2015 to the school and to its Principal branch (Khalid, Principal, interview and Education Excellence Award, 2016).

In June 2015, the school gained the International Organisation for Standardisation or ISO 9001:2008 certification for Quality Management. In 2014, the school came first in the city's academic achievement list (Khalid, Principal, interview and [Safer School] Facts and History, document).

This school has a history of good academic achievement, quality management and leadership, good practice, winning of awards, winning of contests and so much more. When I came in as Principal it was already an excellent school with a great reputation so I worked hard to maintain this excellent standard. (Khalid, Principal, interview)

5.3 Participants

Participant. (Code)	Post/ Number	Age	Experience*1	Duties*2	Qualifications
Khalid (Khalid, Safeer, Principal)	Principal	43	Teacher (3 years) Principal (9 years) Principal of this school (8 years)	Leading school to achieve the teaching and learning goals set by the Ministry of Education.	Bachelor Degree in Arabic, attendance of many long and short leadership courses, Diploma in School Management and a Certified Trainer in the leadership and management field.
Sami (Sami, Safeer, Deputy)	Deputy	41	Teacher (8 Years) Deputy of this school (9 years)	Participating in the school leadership and management, developing teaching and learning methods and ensuring quality.	Bachelor Degree in Geography and a Deputy's Diploma.
Fahad (Fahad, Safeer)	Social Instructor	37	Teacher (5 Years) Principal (2 years) Deputy (4 Years) Social Instructor (1 year) Social Instructor in this school (4 years)	To work towards achieving psychological, educational, social and professional homogeneity for students and helping them to develop their characters and solve any problems they may face.	Bachelor Degree in Islamic Studies and a Social Instructor's Diploma.
Teachers Group 1	5	22- 59	Teaching experience, some have had administrative duties.	Organise and deliver classes as set by the national curriculum.	Bachelor Degree in their subject areas and one teacher has a Diploma in Social Sciences.
Teachers Group 2	6	29- 38	Teaching experience, some have had leadership duties.	Organise and deliver classes as set by the national curriculum.	Bachelor Degree in their subject areas
Teachers Group 3	4	24- 52	Teaching experience, some have had leadership duties.	Organise and deliver classes as set by the national curriculum.	Bachelor Degree in their subject areas and one teacher has an MA in Curriculum and Teaching Methods.
Teachers Group 4	5	22- 49	Teaching experience.	Organise and deliver classes as set by the national curriculum.	Bachelor Degrees in their subject areas.
Teachers Group 5	5	26- 53	Teaching experience and some have had administrative and leadership duties.	Organise and deliver classes as set by the national curriculum.	Bachelor Degrees in their subject areas and one has a Deputy's Diploma.

Table 5: 2 Safer School's participants information list (field notes).

*1 Accurate as of April 2015

*2 From Tatweer. (2013)

Table 5:2 shows the position, age, duties and qualifications of the people who participated in this case study. There were face-to-face semi-structured interviews with the Principal, Deputy and Social Instructor. These three people

were chosen for face-to-face interviews because they function as the leadership board in the school. In addition, there were five group interviews with teachers ranging with each group comprising 4 to 6 teachers. In total, 25 teachers out of 26 were interviewed. I also observed the Principal's day-to-day activities during three full days of observations and a school event. During the visits, many documents, ranging from flyers, letters, brochures and leaflets to in school posters and information copied from notice boards, were collected from the school.

The Principal's career in the education sector started in 1995. He taught for three years and was appointed Principal, joining this school in 2007. The Deputy joined this school in 2002 with four years' experience as a teacher and became Deputy in 2006. The Social Instructor was a teacher for five years, a Principal for two years, a Deputy for four years and a Social Instructor in another school for one year. He has been a Social Instructor in the Safer school for four years.

5.4 Findings and analysis

5.4.1 Leadership practices

Several questions were asked in an attempt to understand the key characteristics of outstanding schools (please refer to Table 3: 1 main and specific research questions in chapter 3). The replies to the questions put and detailed observation notes once analysed yielded themes, which could help answer the underlying question. The data collected from the Safer School suggest that leadership practices are built around:

- The school vision
- Leadership style
- Communication
- Strategic planning
- Quality assurance

Vision

This theme can be defined as the aim of the school as an organisation, its identity, values and beliefs. This theme will be discussed in depth, highlighting the moral and religious aspects that have contributed to shaping the vision.

The Safer school benefits from having a clear vision. The vision is not only apparent in words but is also evident in the school's actions and plans. The school community knows the school's vision and has a clear plan on how to achieve it. The school vision is:

Through applying quality standards and working in the spirit of a team, we seek to create a generation that is promising, innovative and religiously

and morally committed. (A large sign in the front of the school building, document).

In the documents gathered from the school, emphasis is made on explaining the school vision to students, parents, visitors and the wider community. Leaflets are available to explain the quality standards and innovation which are part of the school vision. For example, in a particular leaflet the school explains to students that:

Our vision is to create innovative culture in our school [...] innovation is not limited to gifted people, it is rather a cycle of spotting a need for something, thinking about it and finding a solution [...] (Giftedness, document).

It seems that the school has a clear vision. It is prominently displayed on the walls of the school and in some classrooms and was written in the documents collected from the school.

This school vision is clearly posted in more than 15 spots around the school and in every single document we produce (Khalid, Principal, interview).

The vision is also clear in words and meaning.

The vision is clearly worded and we do not put words that are fancy but meaningless or not applicable. (Khalid, Principal, interview).

To the Social Instructor and some teachers, this school vision gives guidance to the school community about the school management and identity. The Social

Instructor argues that such vision mirrors what the school as a community wants to be.

It. (the school vision) represents what our school community wants the school to look like and what outcomes it would like to achieve (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

Some teachers believe that this vision creates a common goal for all teachers:

This vision is our goal as teachers. We, as teachers, would like our students to be a generation of innovators and to be religiously and morally committed [...] it gave us a shared goal (Teacher group 1, group interview).

The last point which was mentioned and emphasised by the school community is the moral and religious commitment which underpins the vision.

In an event held by the school on the 23/04/2015, an operetta was performed entitled "In the [Safeer School], I lightened my spirit" in which the students were taken on a journey which describes being away from religion as being locked into a prison, as a sinful person would be imprisoned by his/her sins (School Main Hall, observations).

When asked about the operetta, the Principal replied:

There is a huge burden on the school's shoulders which is that of ensuring the students' commitment to religion to prevent them straying far from religion (Khalid, Principal, observations).

Organisational structure

This subsection aims to present the findings from Safeer School regarding the school's organisational structure. It was evident that the school community widely believed that flat organisational structure is more appropriate for modern schools due to increased responsibilities and complexity.

Schools these days have many things to take care of. They have become larger and more complex (Teacher group 2, group interview).

The Social Instructor criticised hierarchical schools and argued that such structure may be hard to attain sustainability.

Hierarchical schools can work but not for a long time because people in power have limitations, they cannot continue for ever (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

Having a limited number of persons in charge was seen by some participant as negative since work may become attached to the person.

In hierarchical schools, when the top person is absent for any reason everything has to wait until he comes back (Teacher group 2, group interview).

For the Principal, distributing responsibilities allows him to make the most of his own time as the level of disruption decreases.

For me I enjoy flattening the organisation because when I am away for training or when I am on leave I do not get disrupted by colleagues' phone calls back in the school, I barely get calls (Khalid, Principal, interview).

The Deputy argues that in order to sustain an outstanding performance, the school should continue to flatten the structure.

As an outstanding school and we plan to continue to be so, responsibilities have to be distributed over a number of people (Sami, Deputy, interview).

To the Social Instructor, widening the leadership board is important for quality reasons as concentrating on fine matters may become difficult when focusing on the overall structure.

For the sake of quality performance, there has to be a board of leaders. Because quality means caring about small details at the same time as caring about the bigger picture which one or two people will not be capable of doing that (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

Regarding how the school operates structurally, the Principal and the Deputy stated that the structure is flat.

I aim to have a fully flat structure, because this is what I believe is right (Khalid, Principal, interview).

The Deputy stated that he exercises power in the school that other Deputies in other schools would not experience.

It is not hierarchical. I do some jobs that Deputies do not usually do. When he [the Principal] is not around and I make a decision, it is not likely that he will come back and change something (Sami, Deputy, interview).

When I asked the Principals whether the Ministry's instructions would allow him to broaden the responsibilities board.

I agree with you that the Ministry instructs us to have a hierarchical organisation because it is easier for them to hold people accountable. But this is not we do (Khalid, Principal, interview).

As mentioned above, that the Ministry aims to reduce the number of responsible people in schools to ease accountability procedures. But, how the Principal balanced the Ministry's accountability measures and flattening the school organisational structure? According to him, that trust in his staff was a key.

I have trust in people who work with me and flat organisations do not work without trust (Khalid, Principal, interview).

Findings will be revealed to further support such trust claims in the next subsection, leadership styles. It will discuss how the Deputy and the Social Instructor were able to sign important letters and documents on behalf of the Principal. However, the school is initiating a new system to enhance accountability in the school.

We are building a new way of traceability in which each decision, letter or instruction can be traced to the person in charge to increase internal accountability (Khalid, Principal, interview).

The Deputy argues that such initiative is not a sign of distrust and it rather aims to increase productivity and to homogenise work.

Well, it is not about that we do not trust each other. We want to have a work which is integrated and high in productivity (Sami, Deputy, interview).

Leadership style/s

Data regarding leadership styles will be analysed under two micro themes, leadership styles as practices such as engagement and distributed leadership and leadership style as the Principal's leadership qualities, such as charismatic and transformational qualities.

Data suggests that Safer School has a distinct leadership style where engagement and leadership distribution are very apparent. A substantial number of the internal and external communications and official letters sent out by the school are signed "on behalf of the Principal" as a member of the leadership team can signed letters on behalf of the Principal showing signs of shared leadership.

The Principal views engagement and leadership distribution as internal motivators as people tend to value the decisions they participated in making.

I usually do not make decisions; people make their decisions so they can fulfil them properly. When people are asked about their opinions they feel engaged and they would feel sense of ownership and commitment (Khalid, Principal, interview).

The Principal views engagement in decision making as a way to build strong communication networks and relationships between people in the school as well as a way to break the ice and tension between people.

Sometimes I go to consult a teacher to break the ice or I ask people to have a meeting to have them communicate (Khalid, Principal, interview).

Quick consultations and short meetings are seen by the Principal as being effective ways to engage people. This was confirmed during an observation session:

The Principal was walking through the corridor and came upon a group of teachers and his Deputy chatting. He engaged with them and then consulted them on a couple of issues regarding upcoming exams. He turned to me after leaving them and said: "by consulting them you are engaging them. Quick simple and informal meetings can sometimes yield greater results than formal meetings" (School Corridor, observations).

The human side of the organisation is manifested in the Principal trust of those who work with him and his belief in what they do.

One of the staff members entered the Principal's office and gave him a letter and the Principal signed it straightaway without reading it. I asked why he did not read it, the Principal replied: "Because we trust each other here. [...] this degree of trust is what pushes us to have very good standards. Humans need to be trusted in order to be effective" (Principal's Office, observations).

People on the leadership board supported the impression that the Principal is keen on engagement and distributed leadership.

He [the Principal] does not have the attitude of "I am the Principal I make the decisions" [...] Everyone in this organisation makes decision regarding his work and we as a community have to respect such decisions. (Sami, Deputy, interview).

The Safer Social Instructor stated:

People share decision making and everyone who is affected by a decision is invited to participate, even students (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

The teachers also felt engaged in the leadership process as they feel that their opinions are valued by the leadership board, particularly by the Principal.

We are consulted and our opinion is valued [...] When I go to the people on the management board, especially our Principal, with a suggestion they always take it seriously (Teacher, Group 3, group interview).

The teachers acknowledge that the distributed and shared leadership style has a positive effect on their work. As one of the teachers put it, it helps teachers have a sense of ownership within the school community.

We have shared leadership. If there is a noise problem or an issue of misbehaviour, for example, we all try to fix it. [...] If there were no shared leadership, there would be no cooperation. I believe this. The Principal has engaged us to a degree that makes us feel that we're in charge (Teacher, Group 1, group interview).

However, leadership distribution is not always seen in a completely positive light. The length of time meetings, discussions and the process of convincing can take is seen by a senior teacher as being a negative aspect.

[...] it takes time. What used to take five minutes to decide can now take weeks (Teacher, Group 5, group interview).

Another negative point according to a teacher from a different group is the diminishing role and reduction of the absolute power of the Principal in places which practice distributed leadership.

When schools practice distributed leadership where everybody has a voice the Principal is no longer a powerful person. We grew up and started our profession where school Principals were seen as being neighbourhood mayors, it is no longer the case (Teacher, Group 2, group interview).

Regarding the Principal's leadership qualities, the data suggests that a mixture of charismatic and transformational qualities were found. For the charismatic qualities, it was evident that the Principal, Khalid, has an influence on his staff as he appeared to be loved, admired and was looked at as a role model for them.

[Khalid] is very good at persuading people [...] (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

The Deputy was also in admiration of how he could convince the local authority to send resources.

Our Principal always makes me wonder how he could do that, what would take me weeks to achieve he can do it in a matter of days (Sami, Deputy, interview).

Some of the teachers report that the Principal is respected by the school members in which he (the teacher) would find it difficult to take a leave for unimportant matters.

When I taught in another school years ago, I used to take a leave or unauthorised absence for various reasons some are important and some

are not. In this school, I find it difficult to continue doing so, because I respect him and I want to look good in front of him (Teacher, Group 3, group interview).

Some teachers, however, find some of these charismatic qualities as negative. One teacher stated that the Principal does not convince him, but he (the Principal) would rather be assertive.

I wanted to teach younger school age for three or more years, but every time I mentioned that to him he would start with long conversation that I would feel discomforted to say no to afterward (Teacher, Group 1, group interview).

The other leadership quality is a transformational one which is motivation. It seems that Khalid, the Principal, pay attention to the psychology of humans.

We are all human and we psychologically need motivation and appreciation (Khalid, Principal, interview).

In an observed occasion, the Principal implicitly showed that he valued opinions, stressing the motivational aspect.

During a staff meeting the Principal several times revealed ideas and suggestions and mentioned the name of the person who had put forward the ideas (Meeting Room, observations).

When asked about this after the meeting, the Principal replied:

First, people hate it when you put forward their ideas without mentioning their names and second this is my way of saying "I value your opinion" (Meeting Room, observations).

The Deputy argues that there is a motivational culture within school.

We have a culture of motivation, we try to celebrate the good practice and results (Sami, Deputy, interview).

It seems that motivation in the school was inclusive, as the Social Instructor stated.

I learnt from the Principal that he motivates everyone not only high performers (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

A teacher added:

When you hear motivation, the first thing you think of is students. But in this school, we as well as the staff receive some type of motivation (Teacher, Group 4, group interview).

Communication

An example was given earlier of how the Principal uses communication to engage people. This section looks at communication at the Safer school, how communication is used to establish good relationships, the tone of communication used and how communication is used to do a better job.

It appears that verbal and, especially, face-to-face communication is the most commonly means of communication used at the school, since emails are rarely used. Communication is seen by the school community as an important tool to establish relationships. During an observation, the Principal demonstrated good communication skills even in front of the Head of the Local Educational Authority during the school event mentioned earlier.

Before the 14/04/2015 event started he managed to find a chance to speak to the guests one by one. He seems to be quite relaxed [...]

He thanked the businessmen in front of the educational officials and spoke freely about school-private sector partnerships (Principal's Office, observations).

The Principal explained the importance of communication between members of staff and why he prefers face-to-face communication rather than other, more distant means:

Through good communication people are likely to develop strong relationships. For example, I prefer face-to-face discussion and I never use text messages or emails to notify people about important stuff, because such means are poor when it comes to expressing emotions (Khalid, Principal, interview).

Using verbal face-to-face communication brings about a sense of involvement and closeness.

When we have an announcement, we like to spread the word verbally before putting it on the notice board. By doing so we ensure that everybody feels involved and no one feels left behind (Sami, Deputy, interview).

The school Social Instructor links having positive relationships between school members to good communication.

Strong inner relationships in the school were achieved through good communication (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

The data suggests that the tone used in most communications can be described as respectful and calm. An internal note sent by the school Principal to his Deputy about a parent who was appealing on behalf of his son who was facing disciplinary actions (which had the names blanked out when given to me) shows respect to the Deputy. The tone used is the kind of tone one expects to see in down-up communications rather than in top-down ones.

The note, which was written and signed by the Principal, started off with the appellation:

HE Professor: [Sami] The respected school Deputy (internal note, document).

The note explains the situation and concludes with the Principal's recommendation:

My suggestion is to accept his request because of the family's financial and social status but it is entirely at your discretion (internal note, document).

Not only does this document show distribution of leadership in action, it also indicates a level of respect.

Another source of data shows a level of calm in the tone used by school members. In a staff meeting which I observed:

The tone of voice used is very calm and focused. The teachers expressed their opinion freely, although there were differing opinions. The teachers call each other by nickname. (Meeting Room, observations)

Another aspect of communication is how it affects work effectiveness. The school's approach to communication based on the premise that when people are aware of issues related to their workplace they are likely to work more effectively. It appears that the school has a culture of sharing information with its community. This was apparent during my experience in the school:

During the first few hours of my first day in school, it was obvious that the school members were aware of my presence and the reason for it. Teachers and other staff members came up to me and introduced themselves and occasionally mentioned that the Principal, Deputy or a colleague had told them about the research (multiple locations observations).

According to the Deputy, this culture was created intentionally:

In this school, we try to make people aware of what's going on. We do not hide information unless it is, of course, confidential (Sami, Deputy, interview).

According to the school community the benefits of communication range from facilitating advanced planning, helping to homogenise work and helping to identify problems. The Principal stresses the link between communication and planning ahead:

Advanced planning cannot be achieved unless people get together and communicate their needs and respond to them (Khalid, Principal, interview).

Some teachers see the benefit of having regular class-specific meetings especially when it comes to identifying underachievers.

[...] it is important [...] to identify underachievers, students with family problems and to prevent bullying (Teacher, Group 1, group interview).

Another side of communication which is perceived as negative, especially by teachers and the Deputy, is the large volume of letters from the local authority to schools which have to be distributed to all school members and for which receipt logs have to be kept.

We receive tens of letters on a weekly basis from the local authority notifying teachers about changes in educational policy and we are obliged to circulate these letters to all teachers and keep a record of their signatures (Khalid, Principal, interview).

The large volume of letters sometimes causes teachers to miss important letters-

It is too much and sometimes we miss important and relevant stuff because of the huge volume (Teacher, Group 5, group interview).

It seems that relevance is an issue as letters are sometimes sent to everyone even if they concern only a few people. Therefore, filtering was suggested by teachers.

Some are relevant and the majority are not. There should be letter classification so letters are sent only to the people they concern (Teacher, Group 3, group interview).

Strategic planning

Another point that emerged from the analysed data is that the school makes plans for the year ahead in advance, before the end of the current year. The school builds a programme which addresses issues which came up during the year which need to be addressed e.g. lateness, the need to improve spelling and the need to improve maths skills (see Figure 5:3). For each project, the following are specified:

Person in charge, assistant, general goal, detailed aims, targeted participants, application method, period, motivation and performance indicators. (Issue of: Coming Late to school, document)



Figure 5: 3 Issue of: Coming Late to school project, document.

During data collection (around 10 weeks before the end of the academic year) I observed the following:

The Principal was handed a large folder and a CD. He looked at them and said, "This is our plan for next year. We are finalising everything".
(Principal's Office, observations)

When asked why they plan ahead, the Principal replied:

"This is the norm of contemporary schools because with advanced planning you are more likely to identify the most critical issues to deal with" (Principal's Office, observations).

The school Deputy explains how advanced planning works:

At the end of each year the school community puts a plan of what our needs are and what we need to do about them (Sami, Deputy, interview).

Sami explains their role as leaders:

Our main role is mentoring and supervising the planning and application process (Sami, Deputy, interview).

Safeer's Social Instructor stated that the school uses advanced means when constructing the programme for the coming year.

We do surveys, workshops, brainstorming sessions etc. involving the whole school community. Once we know what we need to focus on in the following year we have meetings involving people on the leadership board, teachers, administrators and student representatives. Then, during these meetings, people decide who does what (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

Since tasks are planned in advance there is a certain level of freedom of choice. Teachers can construct their timetables and classes according to preference and they believe this freedom of choice has a good effect on performance.

It has a great effect. When you choose to do something you are more likely to do it effectively (Teacher, Group 4, group interview).

Quality assurance

The analysis of the data collected from the Safeer school reveals two qualities which stand out: the quality of the school's day to day operations as an organisation and the quality of the school's teaching and learning.

Organisational quality

The school pays attention to quality; it celebrates Quality Day in Education.

(School days, school one, 2013) As mentioned above, in June 2015 the Safer School was awarded the International Organisation for Standardisation or ISO 9001:2008 certification for Quality Management. There was a great deal in the documents I collected on maintaining quality within the school community.



Figure 5: 4 Total Quality Management flyer, document, (quotation highlighted).

The flyer above contains these lines:

TQM is an advanced approach toward management [...] It is a continuous journey and race without a finishing line. Continuously aspiring to improvement and total development to meet beneficiaries' changing expectations (Flyer, Document).

The word “beneficiaries” is more commonly usually used in the private sector. Viewing the general public as customers in governmental services and especially in schools was seen in Chapter Two as reflecting the impact of globalization on

education. As discussed in Chapter Two, as a result of globalization, the notion of New Public Management puts pressure on public services to become more market-like and entrepreneurial.

The Principal insists that explicitly communicating an idea with the school community helps ensure that the idea is implemented.

We communicate quality aspects intensively with students, parents, teachers and staff and we have it at the centre of our vision because we want to create a culture of qualitative work (Khalid, Principal, interview).

The Deputy explains what quality means to the school:

I can describe our vision as a combination of process and product quality. For us doing the work right is as important as getting the result right; [...] we believe that the quality of a product is linked to quality in the process (Sami, Deputy, interview).

Again, the concepts of process and product are more likely to be used in the private sectors than in the public sector.

Ensuring quality in teaching and learning

Several points were mentioned by members of the school community regarding ensuring quality in teaching and learning. One of the issues mentioned by the school Principal is that the recruitment of teachers is centralised and is thus the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. Therefore, schools have no power over the teachers they employ. This school works with teachers to ensure that their work is up to its standards.

Since we don't have power over who we recruit we have to ensure that the good ones stay, urge the underperforming to develop or try to let go of those who are disappointing (Khalid, Principal, interview).

The school prioritises quality in teaching and learning. They take several steps to ensure quality, one of which is putting teaching and learning first. In an occasion observed by me:

During event day, the Principal held a morning meeting with all teachers and said: "Although we are very busy today, we don't need to disrupt teaching and learning and we need to compensate those who are participating in the event by providing them with what they missed. As you know learning comes first" (School Hall, observations).

Another point that this school does to ensure quality is measuring performance through:

- Class visits carried out by the Principal, the Deputy and teacher supervisors. (the most experienced teacher in each subject)

*We do regular class visits ourselves in conjunction with the teacher supervisors to ensure that the teaching and learning programme is followed and to make sure that good practice is being followed.
(Sami, Deputy, interview)*

- Using students' examination results and statistics, such as attendance rate, to measure performance and responding accordingly.

We measure performance after each test and exam and we use statistics to help us identify our weaknesses and where we stand in comparison to others and we make our plans accordingly (Khalid, Principal, interview).

Combining statistics, class visits, observations and students' opinions is seen by the school's Social Instructor as a fair way to measure teacher performance.

It is not fair on the teacher to measure his performance using only student achievement because classes vary. Therefore, we use a combination of current and previous statistics, teacher visits, students' opinions and our observations (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

As this school pays attention to ensuring quality it also pays attention to raising standards. Several steps are taken by the school to achieve this, including:

- Encouraging teachers to go on exchange visits to widen their experience.

We encourage teachers to go on exchange visits inside or outside school to help them to learn from others (Khalid, Principal, interview).

- Facilitating access to resources by the school, students and teachers.

Our rule is to facilitate access to resources. We have resources available from the Ministry but we also have facilities that are self-funded such as the English language [...] when a teacher asks for something, we do it (Sami, Deputy, interview).

- Helping underachievers.

They try to tackle underachievement in specific subjects such as maths or a specific skill such as spelling (Teacher, Group 2, group interview).

- Enhancing teachers' skills by introducing motivational projects.

The school performed a project called "initiatives for various teaching strategies".

The project's general goal was to enable teachers to acquire a set of capabilities and skills essential for the practice of teaching. Among its goals were] to enable the student's voice, develop teacher performance and raise student achievement (Project summary: initiatives for diverse teaching strategies, document).



Figure 5: 5 Initiatives for diverse teaching strategies, document.

5.4.2 Culture

This study set out to find answers to the research question regarding school culture, namely:

How is culture perceived and experienced by the school community in these cases?

The participants were asked several sub-questions on this topic and this data combined with the outcome of several hours of observation revealed several themes and sub-themes on analysis, namely:

- Globalization
- National Culture
- Organisational culture
 - Sub cultures
- Reciprocal effect
 - School culture and effectiveness
 - School culture in case of problems and difficulties
 - Principal's role

Globalization

It was established in the theoretical framework that there are different levels of culture: global, religious, national, school and micro cultures.

In terms of global culture, there is no direct reference to globalization in the documents collected, yet there are indirect influences. Total Quality Management, for example, is a Western originated philosophy and being ISO certified by an organisation which is international is another example of this influence. In addition, in a flyer explaining Total Quality in education several quotations and interpretations were referenced to Western scholars and literature including the Rhodes' interpretation of Total Quality Management, Edwards Deming's 14 key principles for management and the American Society's definition of quality.



Figure 5: 6 Total Quality in Education leaflet, document (quotations highlighted).

However, the Principal has a cautious stand point in terms of globalization as a Western ideology.

It should have limited effect, because I believe that globalization is a Western ideology which, when accepted, can obliterate local culture and religion (Khalid, Principal, interview).

The Deputy has a more moderate view, but still feels that globalization is a Western ideology that comes at a price.

It has a notable effect. For example, years ago, we used to deal with students according to what we believe is right for them and for school regardless of whether or not this is according to the Ministry's code of practice. But now they know it all so we have to stick with the code of practice. (Sami, Deputy, interview).

Globalization is also evident in particular social media and the use of new technologies. The Social Instructor leans towards the negative aspects of globalization as it impacts education.

Constant criticism of teachers and the curriculum has shaken parents' trust in their competence (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

His views are supported by one of the teachers who believes that new technologies are crowding students' lives leaving little space for learning.

students used to have limited options to fill their days, now they have so much to do and care about [...] Therefore, learning and school is no longer a first priority (Teacher, Group 4, group interview).

On the other hand, the Deputy and some teachers view technology from a positive angle. A teacher mentioned the benefits that such technologies have on the classroom.

I teach English and I use Internet to search for YouTube clips to use as a teaching aid using some clips from the UK, some from America (Teacher Group 5, group interview).

The Deputy also mentioned using such new technologies as a teaching medium.

We use them as educational aids. We have WhatsApp groups for home works, for example (Sami, Deputy, interview).

One of the teachers balanced the two arguments by saying:

Globalization is a two-edged sword [Arabic proverb] with negative and positive impact, so we try to benefit from the good it can bring (Teacher Group 5, group interview).

National culture

The other level of culture is national culture. From the documents I perused, it appears that the school tries to bring in the Islamic point of view in order to be in line with the nation's cultural orientation. A Total Quality flyer produced by a teacher and supervised by the Principal says:

The term quality is not new to our Islamic culture. The prophet Mohammad says, "God is pleased when one of you is doing his work perfectly" (Total Quality Management in Education leaflet, document).

A six-week project to raise awareness about the importance of praying and among its objectives:

is to encourage 90% of the students to take the initiative to go to the school prayer hall (Importance of Praying leaflet, document).

The Principal mentioned that the effect of Islam is noticeable because the educational policy is shaped according to Islamic teachings.

The national educational policy was created in light of Islam so it has had a great impact (Khalid, Principal, interview).

This influence was evident, as mentioned above, in the operetta entitled "In the [Safeer School], I lightened my spirit" and the Principal's comment on the responsibility he has taken upon his shoulders to guide the students' relationship with Islam. During an observation session:

a student called for afternoon prayer and 10 minutes later the school bell rang. All the students and teachers went to the praying hall where they assembled and prayed (School Main Hall, observations).

The Deputy and Social Instructor referred to self-monitoring and religious motivation as Islamic values.

Self-monitoring is an explicit effect of Islam on teachers (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

Religious motivation is a great factor in enhancing the majority of our teachers' performance (Sami, Deputy, interview).

Organisational culture

Participants described the school culture from two main angles: the relationship between adults including teachers, staff and leaders and the school as a learning environment.

The relationships between adults were interpreted as being generally positive. A large number of the letters on the notice board were signed off by the Principal as "your brother, Khalid" without giving an indication of his position. (Note: the word "brother" is acceptably used in work environments in the Saudi culture to reflect the reduced gap between leaders and followers.) Teamwork and professional relationships are the school norm according the Principal.

The teachers are members of one team. There is a sense of collegiality and people are free to be themselves (Khalid, Principal, interview).

During an observation:

I sat with several teachers and the Principal in his office during the 30 minutes break. There was visible respect between them, they exchanged jokes and made reference to things that happened outside school. I asked

whether they see each other outside school they replied that they have a monthly gathering where all staff and teachers have dinner together and they visit each other's homes and private places (Principal's Office, observations).

One of the teachers remarked that this positive environment has existed at this school for a long time.

It is an excellent environment to be in. I have been a teacher in this school for 20 years. This is a distinct school. There is collaboration and homogeneity among teachers and a team spirit (Teachers, Group 2, group interview).

The Social Instructor attributes the positive environment to teacher involvement and regular social meetings.

[...] teachers are involved in school matters. Another reason is down to the regular social meetings outside school which provide a good opportunity for people to get to know each other away from work (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

However, when it comes to total teacher collaboration not everyone is involved according to the Deputy since being part of an outstanding school requires extra work.

We have some teachers who do not collaborate with us and do not help with school activities and programmes. They are not obliged to do so according to their job description. But we are lucky to have the majority of teachers who cooperates to help even volunteering to come in in the

evening especially to prepare for the Educational Excellence Award (Sami, Deputy, interview).

One of the teachers is all for collaboration but not outside school hours.

I am a 7 am to 1pm person [typical school day]. I work hard in school but do not work outside school hours (Teacher, Group 3, group interview).

The second aspect of school culture as interpreted by the school community is school as a learning environment. Data shows that the school is trying to build an environment, which is suitable for teaching and learning. The school message printed on some of the school walls and other documents alongside the school vision states that the school's aim is:

[...] creating an attractive school environment suitable for teaching and learning and able to prepare students who can face challenges (Medium sized sign on the side of the assembly hall, document).

A sense of calm and quietness was observed on most occasions and when asked about it the Principal said:

It is a school policy we have all agreed upon, so it is something we work hard to achieve (Khalid, Principal, interview).

The Deputy suggest that newcomers create a challenge at the beginning.

We face challenges with new students but they soon get used to the environment (Sami, Deputy, interview).

Facilitation of access to resources was seen by the Principal as being important for the teaching and learning environment.

It [the school] is a facility full of resources. Some we requested from the Ministry, some we got from private partners and some I got myself out of my own pocket (Khalid, Principal, interview).

Some function rooms were still provided although they were not planned for in the school's development.

We created the English lab, the Qur'an room and the teachers' common room because teachers asked for them. If you look at the Ministry's planning design you would not find them (Sami, Deputy, interview).

Sub cultures

The interpretation of micro cultures differs among people. In the Deputy and some teachers' view micro cultures are small groups created among people who work together so they are seen in a negative light. The Deputy was adamant in saying:

We do not allow smaller groups to emerge (Sami, Deputy, interview).

One of the teachers explained micro cultures with a metaphor:

Micro cultures are negative because they are like a wound in the school body (Teacher, Group 2, group interview).

These views are also supported by the Principal who stated that micro cultures threaten the concept of having one community.

We do not like small groups and we have managed to create one community (Khalid, Principal, interview).

On several observed occasions, teachers in the function room or in the common room were generally found to be participating in the same discussion and were rarely observed having side conversations in small groups.

One of the teachers reported on his experience in different schools:

I noticed the difference when I came to this school. No small groups and only one place for coffee. (Teacher, Group 1, group interview).

The Principal and Social Instructor referred to different kinds of micro cultures which can be called professional micro cultures.

[...] if there are professional micro cultures we welcome and support them, such as a group of teachers from the same subject area who meet to exchange skills and knowledge (Khalid, Principal, interview).

Reciprocal effects

As established in the literature, the relationship between culture, school effectiveness and the Principal's role is reciprocal. The following sections will discuss these three aspects:

- School culture and effectiveness.
- School culture in case of problems and difficulties.
- The Principal's role in establishing the school culture.

School culture and effectiveness

I asked direct questions to try and find out whether the school culture has helped the school to become outstanding. The data shows that the effect of the school culture can be two-fold: on the students and on the teachers.

The effects on students were noticed by both the school Deputy and the Social Instructor. The Deputy sees the effect on behaviour.

[...] for example the calmness in our school is an apparent result of having a good environment (Sami, Deputy, interview).

The Social Instructor spoke about the impact on academic achievement.

If students do not feel safe or feel that they are not getting their rights this will have negative consequences on their academic achievement (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

The teachers view working in an outstanding environment as added pressure to perform well.

[it] puts pressure on each one of us to perform well and do our best. Each of us thinks, "I will not be the weakest point" (Teacher, Group 1, group interview).

Being known for having an outstanding environment can have a snowball effect as it attracts bright students, according to the Deputy.

[...] we have outstanding students apply for our school from outside our catchment area who we make exemption for and that contributes to our effectiveness (Sami, Deputy, interview).

It seems, however, that the workload created by the school's outstanding reputation demands extra work that can impact class scheduling. The cancellation of classes is a matter of conflict.

We should have class "glorification" where class cannot be dismissed unless there is a substantial reason. Classes in our schools can be

dismissed for any reason and this is wrong. If classes are cancelled they should be made up later (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

The Principal believes that the right work environment generally facilitates teachers' effective performance.

A good school environment promotes effective performance. It is motivating for someone to be in a positive environment and vice versa (Khalid, Principal, interview).

Specifically, he believes that job security and stability is an important factor in establishing a positive environment that leads to good teacher performance.

I try to build a culture of job security. If employees lack stability their performance and creativity will certainly be affected. Therefore, we have a good rate of staff stability (Khalid, Principal, interview).

His view was supported by the Social Instructor who said:

A positive environment creates a relaxed atmosphere which results in job security and good productivity and creativity (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

One of the teachers commented that a strict atmosphere would prevent him from being creative and performing well.

If there are too many red lines which must not be crossed the teacher becomes cautious and it is impossible for a cautious person to be innovative (Teacher, Group 2, group interview).

This view is supported by another teacher.

We feel relaxed doing our jobs, no stress or arbitrary decisions... (Teacher, Group 5, group interview).

School culture in case of problems and difficulties

The data yielded some interesting information on the role of the school culture in case of difficulties. Having a positive relationship environment is a way of preventing problems, according to the Social Instructor.

[it] helps to tackle problems and keep them from happening in the first place because of a shared understanding and homogeneity (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

Teachers were trying to prove how collaborative the school culture was when it came to solving problems by giving examples.

Last year a teacher had an accident and the Social Instructor raised money from teachers to help him. We managed to collect a large amount of money which covered his loss and more. That had a major positive effect on that teacher's performance (Teacher, Group 5, group interview).

Each school has its own culture of how to deal with problems and difficulties. As one teacher put it, in this school:

We do not have problems, thankfully, we face difficulties and the Principal is the main person in charge of solving them (Teacher, Group 3, group interview).

The Principal's response centred on understanding problems.

It depends on the problem. We classify problems with regard to their seriousness and the effects they might have on learning (Khalid, Principal, interview).

His personal approach was about distancing personal factors from work factors.

I do not take it personally. Work comes first. If I reach a point of conflict with someone that would not prevent me from having good relationship with him (Khalid, Principal, interview).

It seems that the school has a culture of mediation to solve problems. Generally, a person close to the concerned person is sent to mediate.

If a problem arises between two teachers, we sometimes send a third person who is also a teacher who has a good relationship with them both to try and solve the matter (Deputy, Sami, interview).

A group of "respected people" within the school are also used to mediate when there are problems.

We have people within the leadership team and other widely respected people who we can use as mediators (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

Some teachers fully agree with this approach.

Sometimes the person concerned doesn't feel that the colleague was sent by the Principal (Teacher, Group 1, group interview).

However, other teachers do not think this approach is acceptable because it can publicise the matter.

I was involved in a misunderstanding last year. They asked a friend of mine to talk to me. It was not good. I wish they had not done so because you do not want your friends to know about every matter (Teacher, Group 2, group interview).

Confining the problem to a limited circle of people is seen by another teacher as an easier approach to reaching a solution.

It is sometimes better to confine problems to a limited number of people and then they become easier to solve (Teacher, Group 3, group interview).

Principal's role in relation to school culture

One of the most frequently discussed school culture aspects among members of the school community is the level of homogeneity and collegiality among them. As discussed above, the Principal uses meetings to establish communication and “break the ice” between school members.

To the Deputy, Principal-staff relationships are important in building a strong and positive school culture and, according to him, good performance is a way of paying back the Principal.

He [the Principal] has a good rapport with all of us; he understands our professional needs as well as our personal needs. He is there if any person faces problems or difficulties. As a result, a lot of what you see in terms of good performance is part of the process of reciprocating his good gestures (Sami, Deputy, interview).

Other teachers expressed similar thoughts.

The Principal is the leader, therefore, he plays a major role in building a positive culture (Teacher, Group 5, group interview).

Another teacher added:

Our Principal is very close to us and the rest of the staff, he understands our issues and offers support (Teacher, Group 4, group interview).

To one teacher, the Principal's participation in social school meetings is a key factor in building good relationships.

In our monthly social meeting, the Principal is very supportive and very keen on such meetings (Teacher, Group 3, group interview).

The issues of transparency and justice were also raised by the school community as factors of a positive work environment. As the Deputy put it:

Transparency in everything we do is a key factor in maintaining a good relationship with everyone. We do not hide our work and we explain what we do (Sami, Deputy, interview).

Justice to the Social Instructor is important because it avoids conflict between people.

Justice is great factor because when there is no justice people start to raise questions about equality and so on and a conflict builds up between those who are favoured and those who are no. (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

These claims were also supported by some teachers.

Equality between teachers is great factor in creating a positive culture (Teacher, Group 4, group interview).

The relationship between justice and having a positive relationship was also commented upon by another teacher.

Because the Principal is just and deals with teachers equally, the result is homogeneity (Teacher, Group 1, group interview).

5.4.3 Professional development

This theme is divided into four parts: the first part provides an insight into the school's professional development; the second and the third part investigate how school leaders and teachers (respectively) received professional development; and the last part provides an insight into the role of the local educational authority in terms of professional development.

School professional development

From the examined data, Safer School has managed to create a culture of professional development among its teachers and leaders by facilitating, supporting and encouraging members of the school community to engage in professional development opportunities. To some extent, there is a belief that professional development is the norm for this school. The Safer School has a significant way of organising professional development. Each aspect mentioned above will be discussed using information gathered from field data.

In the teachers' room there is a large sign highlighting the necessity of professional development. It says:

Educational knowledge is developing fast and professional development is your way to catch up (a sign in teachers' room, document).

The school Principal links the status of his achievement and the school's outstanding position to professional development as a way of showing the importance of such culture.

I would not be here without it and my school would not have this status without it. (Khalid, Principal, interview).

As important professional development is to the Principal on a personal and school level, it is important to him on an individual level.

Sometimes I immediately see the difference between before and after training. It gives the person the ability to reflect upon his practices and change. Sometimes it opens new horizons for a person. (Khalid, Principal, interview)

It seems that this school provides an encouraging professional development environment and a good rate of engagement in professional development opportunities. It tries to help and support those who have a desire for professional development.

Over the last three years we have had 100% staff training. We try to be a platform for professional development [...] Now, I have three teachers doing fulltime MA courses. We shifted their timetables and we gave them a free couple of days so they can manage their studies. Although it was logistically hard, we allowed it and encouraged it (Khalid, Principal, interview).

During an observation, the Principal tried to convince teachers to take part in professional development opportunities. He believes that getting into the habit of learning requires practice.

The Principal has a list of the next year's training programme run by the local authority. He talks passionately to anyone entering his office and tries to convince teachers about the importance of such training events. When asked, he said: "I believe that nothing has changed from this year to last year's lists but we have to use what we have and convince staff to take part so they can get the habit of being active and seeking knowledge and skills". (Principal's office, observations)

The school Deputy believes that the Safer school provides a:

good environment for professional development. We never say no to a person who wants to engage with a professional development opportunity. (Sami, Deputy, interview)

The teachers support this claim and believe that not only is the school environment encouraging, but professional development is the school norm.

We have reached a point where we feel ashamed if a whole term passes without engaging in such courses because everyone is doing it and everyone feels it is important (Teacher, Group 3, group interview).

The teachers believe that professional development is important.

Engaging in training courses is important. It opens up new horizons and extends knowledge of curriculum and teaching aids, for example (Teacher, Group 2, group interview).

Another teacher explained how short courses have enhanced his experience as a senior teacher.

The Maths curriculum nowadays is very different from when I started teaching 28 years ago. I was not taught the current version at University so without such courses it would be very difficult for me to cope (Teacher, Group 2, group interview).

Some teachers, however, feel that going outside school for training courses creates a heavier workload for other teachers.

Our schedules are very tight. Imagine when two or three teachers go for training courses (Teacher, Group 4, group interview).

It is also seen by some teachers as having a negative effect on student learning.

For example, Maths classes are six a week. How can a teacher compensate his students for the classes he missed when he goes on a three-day training course? (Teacher, Group 4, group interview)

School leaders' professional development

The data for this theme are mainly driven by face-to-face interviews with the Principal, the Deputy and the Social Instructor. Three aspects were raised when discussing professional development with school leaders: their journey, reflection and obstacles they may have encountered.

The school Principal's professional development journey comprises a combination of short and long courses.

Many leadership courses, visits, conferences and workshops before and during my 17 years work as a Principal in addition to a Diploma in School Management (Khalid, Principal, interview).

He is a certified trainer in the leadership and management field.

I worked as a trainer in the Saudi Canadian Institute for leadership teaching two modules: managerial innovation and educational leadership (Khalid, Principal, interview).

He was self-motivated to spend three years working hard in order to develop himself.

I spent three years at the beginning of my journey going to [a large city 400km away] every weekend to engage in leadership development programmes and in doing so I was self-motivated (Khalid, Principal, interview).

The Deputy's journey started when he moved to the city and to the Safeer school in particular and experienced a different context.

When I came to this city in 2002, I came directly to Safeer school. I was shocked about how serious people were and they worked hard compared to where I had come from (Sami, Deputy, interview).

His response was to work closely with his Principal in order to develop himself.

I worked with the previous Principal. I spent a considerable amount of time trying to develop myself (Sami, Deputy, interview).

He subsequently enrolled in a Deputy's Diploma run by the Imam University in Riyadh and he has since focused on issues related to Deputies' work.

Because my work is mainly with students I read a lot about personalities, individual differences and understanding individuals (Sami, Deputy, interview).

Like the Principal, he chose this route as a matter of personal interest and he also went through a process of doing it alone.

I cannot recall a particular person or organisation who, for example, orientated me. It was all a personal choice and a trial and error process (Sami, Deputy, interview).

The journey for the Social Instructor was both similar and different from the others'. He explains his reasons for pursuing professional development.

I have a passion for knowledge, which I always try to pursue (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

The main difference is that he worked in different posts prior to becoming a Social Instructor which, in his view, has enriched his skills.

I worked as a teacher, Principal, Deputy and Social Instructor which helped me to shape my personal and professional characteristics. It helped me to understand my Principal and my Deputy's behaviours (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

He also mentioned some indirect motivation for development.

When I am nominated for something, e.g. to represent the school or the city in an event, it is a motivation that leads me to develop myself in order to be able to take up such a responsibility (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

The other aspect to be covered in this section is reflection as a sort of professional development medium. From the participants' responses it is clear

that they use reflection to a different degree both in terms of personal reflection and also in the form of feedback from others to reflect upon.

The Principal reflects as he reads.

When I read a book on leadership or any other field I pause from time to time to think about my habits and my way of doing things in comparison with what I have read (Khalid, Principal, interview).

He sends questionnaires to his fellow teachers and benefits from their anonymous feedback.

I do regular surveys with my teachers about my work in order to have a clear understanding about myself (Khalid, Principal, interview).

At the school level, annual questionnaires are distributed to a wider and more inclusive circle of participants.

We have a yearly survey we distribute to students, teachers and parents about the school itself (Khalid, Principal, interview).

Reflection for the Deputy is a personal process.

When I go back home I reflect upon my day "tape" on what is good to keep doing and what is not that good and needs to be developed (Sami, Deputy, interview).

A combination of both personal reflection and feedback from people is used by the Social Instructor.

I try to reflect upon my practice and I ask people about my work and I sometimes get honest and constructive feedback (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

Teachers' professional development

In terms of how the teachers' professional development is organised in school, they are offered different types of training. Some training is organised by the local authorities so the leadership board has the role of matching the teachers' needs with the training.

Before the end of every year we receive lists of training courses and workshops from the local authority. Sometimes I suggest courses to my teachers individually according to their needs (Khalid, Principal, interview).

They also have an open platform of choice where teachers are able to choose what they feel is appropriate for them. The Principal thinks personal achievement for individuals is achievement in itself.

I allow them and encourage them to break boundaries and to explore. Some say if you allow your staff to train and chase degrees some day they will find a better opportunity and leave you. For me that is a form of achievement because I helped somebody to chase his dreams. At the same time, we try to balance what the school needs with what the staff needs (Khalid, Principal, interview).

Another type of training is compulsory training given by the Ministry itself. The Ministry uses it when introducing new schemes or when it needs to familiarise teachers with changes in the curriculum.

We have compulsory training from the Ministry itself. From time to time they send letters individually addressed to the teachers so they are obliged to attend. They mainly target new teachers and those whose curriculum is being developed to inform them and train them (Sami, Deputy, interview).

What is unique about the Safer School is that, because the school community believes that the training provided by local educational authorities does not meet their expectations and because of the additional workload resulting from sending teachers outside the school for training, the school brings in professionals in the evenings to train staff.

I believe the training courses run by the local authority are out dated. So, in order to solve the problem each year we invite professors to train our staff in the school. Some are from Saudi Arabia and others from abroad. We secure funds for some and for others we use our connections (Khalid, Principal, interview).

In addition, this is a way of solving the workload problem when a teacher is sent to training during school hours.

By doing so [bringing in professionals], not only does the entire school staff benefit but also students do not miss out because of teachers being away on training (Sami, Deputy, interview).

The Deputy believes that, from a local culture point of view, bringing outsiders into the school creates a sense of obligation among staff to treat the person as a guest, with respect and generosity.

[...] and also teachers would have sense of commitment because the professional is coming to them in their school as a guest so they would

feel obliged to look after them and engage with the training (Sami, Deputy, interview).

Some teachers though, are in favour of bringing in professionals but are not happy with the evening sessions.

I was very excited at the beginning. Then I realised that evening classes are not for me because we already have had a full day at work and we have families and social lives that we care about (Teacher, Group 5, group interview).

Local educational authority's role

The role of the local educational authority in relation to school professional development is a open to argument. The school Principal does not seem too keen on their role.

The role of the local authority is negative in relation to development in general. I depended on myself for the whole of my journey (Khalid, Principal, interview).

The reasons behind the Principal's attitude are:

There is no attraction, outcomes are weak and focus on quantity rather than quality (Khalid, Principal, interview).

The Social Instructor shares the Principal's concerns and adds:

The timing is not right as their activities are during working hours and, more importantly, they lack competence (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

The Deputy balances the argument saying that these courses can serve as a foundation for learners.

Such opportunities are good to shape the base for professionals, but for more than that a person needs to pursue for himself (Sami, Deputy, interview).

However, for teachers the argument is quite different. Some are in favour since this training gives them an opportunity to update their professional knowledge and skills, especially when it comes to senior teachers.

It helped me to cope with each curriculum change as the curriculum now is more challenging than before (Teacher, Group3, group interview).

The role of the local educational authority regarding new teachers was seen as effective by new teachers.

The training is focused on what the new teacher needs to know. For me it was a help (Teacher, Group1, group interview).

The teachers named some downsides regarding the educational authority's role in their professional development. One is that it seems to be very hard to engage in long term courses such as Masters Degrees or PhDs.

Gaining permission to enrol in a full time postgraduate course is very hard (Teacher, Group2, group interview).

Some teachers wished to develop their knowledge and skills but were thwarted by the process to gain permission.

Since it has always been my dream to gain an MA or a PhD, I tried several times to gain permission but to no avail (Teacher, Group5, group interview).

Some feel that this lack of authorisation to teachers to further studies is because the teachers are needed in the classroom.

The local authority sees postgraduate studies as unnecessary for teachers because having a BA degree and other short courses is enough (Teacher, Group 4, group interview).

Others think this is a way of keeping teachers in their profession, since further education can open professional opportunities for them to pursue.

It is obvious to the local authority that when a teacher has an MA or PhD he will seek other opportunities such as posts within Universities or the private sector (Teacher, Group1, group interview).

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed and analysed the findings gathered from the Safeer school. It started by explaining the context in which the school is embedded and giving some general information about the participants. The findings made from the data gathered at this school are summarised below. The main themes developed for analysis were: leadership practices and cultural and professional development, with each theme having sub-themes.

The sub-themes under leadership practices were the school vision, organisational structure, leadership style, communication, strategic planning and quality assurance. The culture theme's sub-themes were globalization, national culture,

organisational culture and reciprocal effects. Professional development had four sub-themes, namely school professional development, school leaders' professional development, teachers' professional development and the role that the local authority may have in the school and the school community's professional development.

Next, there will be Wazeer School and King's School presentation of findings and analysis in separate chapters followed by a discussion and conclusion.

Chapter Six: Wazeer School - Findings and Analysis

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the data collected at Wazeer school. It will be organised, as was the previous chapter: context to understand the school's background and current status, a list of participants giving some detail about their age, experience and qualifications, findings presenting analysis of the data and a chapter summary. The city, school and participants' names will not be revealed to ensure anonymity: "Wazeer" has been assigned arbitrarily as a name for the case.

6.2 Context

Wazeer school is located in a major city, just a few kilometres from the city centre and has 24 teachers and 145 students resulting in a teacher to student ratio of 1:6. Most students come from low socioeconomic status backgrounds, with a minority representing middle or upper-class families. Many students travel to school from the villages around the city. The school was established and built in 1982; the building has benefited from multiple refurbishment projects and received an acceptable level of maintenance (Our School in a Few Pages, document).

Entering through the school gate, many features were added by the school community, which were inconsistent with the Ministry of Education's standardised design, such as an artificial fountain and a garden.

The school sits on a large parcel of land, with the building itself taking up roughly 20% of the land surface. The building sits at the southern side of the property leaving space between the outer wall and the building itself. The grounds contain a football pitch, a tennis court and a volleyball area. The school gate and the door to the building are not guarded and remain open during school hours; CCTV is not available (field notes).

Upon entry to the school building, the facility looks bright and airy and feels cool as it benefits from air conditioning. On the left-hand side, the Principal’s office features a glass wall facing the main hall, allowing easy monitoring of goings-on. The general atmosphere is both lively and organised; visitors are likely to wait several minutes before being approached and usually the greeter would not introduce himself. The leadership team are seldom all in the school at the same time; during the researcher’s visits, one or two of them were usually away at training or other outside engagements.

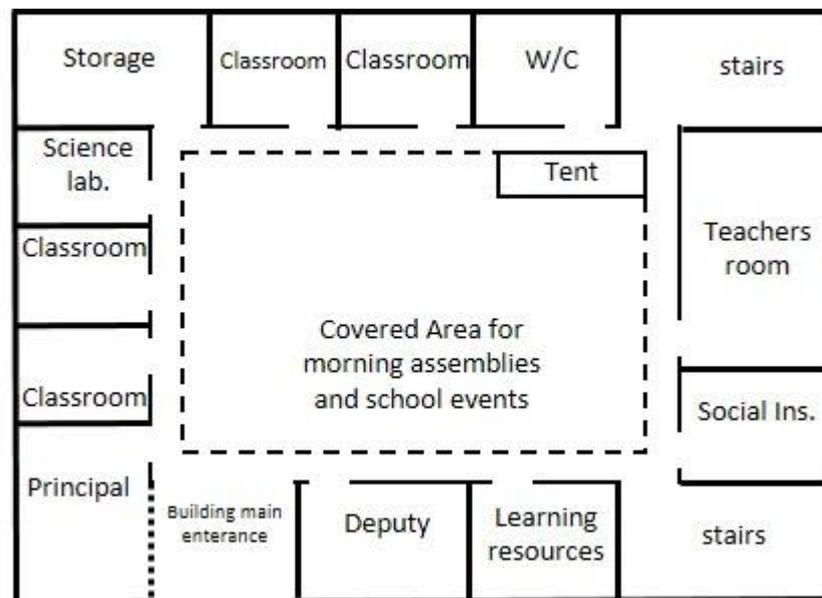


Figure 6: 1 Wazeer School floorplan, ground floor (field notes).

The school has a large, covered air-conditioned hall in the centre, used for daily morning assemblies and for other school events. At the far-right corner (from the main entrance) sits a modern tent, facing the hall and featuring floor-based Arabic seating, where traditional tea and coffee are available. When the Principal first introduced the researcher to the tent, the Social Instructor and four students were inside. The Principal explained to me:

As we are approaching exams, we connect underperforming students with high achievers in each subject. So, in the tent now you can see one talented student exchanging skills with three underperformers under the supervision of the Social Instructor (School hall, observations).

The school has 14 classrooms, three different laboratories, libraries and a learning resources room. Offices for the Principal (see figure 6:2), Deputy and Social Instructor are very spacious, with sofas seating more than ten people. Teachers have one large room, which is used as both a function room and a common room. The school also has a well-equipped meeting room, along with an empty room used by teachers to have late breakfast and to relax.



Figure 6: 2 Representative picture of the Principal's office.

This school has been rated as outstanding by the local authority for 7 years, and has won the Education Excellence Award on one occasion since it was launched in 2010 (*Education Excellence Award, 2016*). In 2005, one of the students from this school placed third in an international competition for innovation. In 2008, the Principal represented Saudi Arabia in an international educational event in South Africa. In 2015, the school won the local authority's prize for distinction in extracurricular activities (Malek, Principal, interview).

According to the Principal, the school has reduced dramatically the gap between student achievement at the school and the national average in tests (Qiyas) administered by the National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education. Qiyas is an independent assessment for students heading for higher education. It has two main sections: verbal and mathematical sections. Students take both sections together, but the focus of the test differs depends on student background. If the student is studying social studies subjects, then the verbal result is the main focus. Conversely, if the student is pursuing science then the mathematical

section is of greater interest. All Saudi universities require Qiyas as an entry requirement but they differ in how they weigh the results (Qiyas, 2016).

The “reduced gap” mentioned by the Principal represents the difference between the average final assessment of students at Wazeer school and those assessed in Qiays as a whole; this has declined. Qiyas results are used by the school as an independent evaluation to ensure that assessment procedures within the school are accurate and that academic standards are high (Malek, Principal, interview).

6.3 Participants

Participant	Post/Number	Age	Experience*1	Duties*2	Qualifications
Malek (Malek, Principal)	Principal	56	Teacher (7 years) Principal (13 years) Principal at this school (7 years) (4 years as Principal in Qatar)	Leading the school to achieve the teaching and learning goals set by the Ministry of Education	Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics, Diploma in School Management and participation in long and short leadership courses
Saud (Saud, Deputy)	Deputy	39	Teacher (8 years) Principal at another school (3 years) Deputy in this school (6 years)	Participating in school leadership and management, developing teaching and learning and ensuring quality	Bachelor's Degree in Arabic and a Deputy's Diploma.
Shadi (Shadi, Social Instructor)	Social Instructor	41	Teacher (5 years) Principal (2 years) Deputy (4 years) Social Instructor (2 years) Social Instructor in this school (4 years)	To support the balanced psychological, educational, social and professional development of students, helping them to develop their character and to solve problems they may face.	Bachelor's Degree in Arabic, Social Instructor's Diploma and MA in Educational Psychology
Teachers' Group 1 (Teacher group 1)	4	25-59	Teaching experience; some have leadership roles	Organise and deliver classes as set by the national curriculum	Bachelor's Degree in their subject areas; one teacher is studying towards an MA in Educational Physics
Teachers' Group 2 (Teacher group 2)	5	28-51	Teaching experience; one used to have leadership roles in other schools	Organise and deliver classes as set by the national curriculum	Bachelor's Degree in their subject areas
Teachers' Group 3 (Teacher group 3)	5	22-43	Teaching experience; some had leadership roles	Organise and deliver classes as set by the national curriculum	Bachelor's Degree in their subject areas; one teacher has an MA in Curriculum and Teaching Methods
Teachers' Group 4 (Teacher group 4)	6	22-49	Teaching experience.	Organise and deliver classes as set by the national curriculum	Bachelor's Degree in their subject areas.

Table 6: 1 Wazeer School participant information list (field notes)

*1 Accurate as of May 2015

*2 From Tatweer. (2013)

Table 6:1 shows the participants in this case study, including their position, age, duties and qualifications. Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were organised with the Principal, Deputy and Social Instructor. These individuals were chosen for these interviews because they serve as the leadership board in

the school. In addition, there were group interviews with five groups of teachers ranging from 4-6 teachers per group, totalling 20 teachers out of 24 on staff. The day-to-day activities of the Principal were also observed. In this school, the researcher managed to make two and a half days of observations. A large number of documents and information was collected from the school, ranging from flyers, letters, brochures and leaflets to posters and notice boards observed in the school, from which the researcher took notes.

This Principal has been in the education sector for his entire career since becoming a teacher in 1984. He taught for seven years, then became Principal and joined Wazeer school as Principal in 2008. Previously, he had been a Principal in Qatar for four years. The Deputy, Saud, worked as a teacher for eight years, became Principal at another school for three years and then joined Wazeer as Deputy since 2009. The Social Instructor, Shadi, had worked as a teacher for five years, Principal for two years, Deputy for four years, Social Instructor at another school for one year, before becoming Social Instructor at Wazeer school four years ago.

6.4 Findings and analysis

As previously discussed, Wazeer data will be organised around three themes: leadership practices, culture and professional development. Each one of these themes will be discussed in separate sections, with subsections.

6.4.1 Leadership practices

Several questions were asked to investigate what this outstanding school Principal does in his daily work. Several sub-themes have emerged from the data:

- Vision
- Organisational structure
- Leadership styles
- Communication
- Strategic planning
- Quality assurance

Each theme will be presented in a separate, short section.

Vision

Discussion about a school's vision concerns what it is, what it means to the school community, how visible it is and how it was created and developed?

The school vision is translated as:

High quality education – attractive educational environment – innovative outcomes (School General Guidelines, document)

The Principal, Malek, explains this:

We try to have a reasonable vision that can be achieved (Malek, Principal, interview).

The Deputy, Saud, mentioned the logic behind each aspect of the vision and showed the interconnections among its three parts as a balance between

processes and outcomes, recognising the environment as crucial for human learning.

Excellent education represents a process, innovative outcomes represent products and because it is education and we are dealing with humans, learning the environment must be attractive (Saud, Deputy, interview).

The environment being “attractive” is what appeals the most to the Social Instructor, Shadi, who placed this into context.

We really work to achieve that. Starting from simple things, for example, students’ self-discipline, and continuing to the more complex issues (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Some of the teachers are motivated by “high quality education” as the work that they are responsible for.

It is not an easy task. The time and effort we invest as teachers is mainly to achieve this aspect (Teacher group 2, group interview).

The other aspect concerns how visible the school vision is. Most documents collected at Wazeer school contained references to this vision. For example, a leaflet for a project called “What Around You is Your Property” has the school vision inscribed at the bottom. This project is designed to raise awareness among students about school and public property.

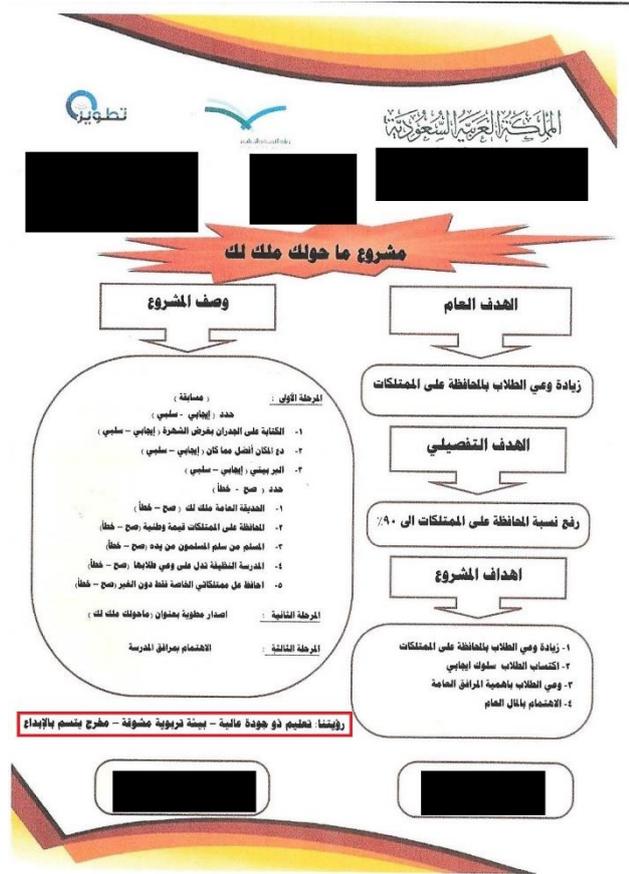


Figure 6: 3 What Around You is Your Property, document (vision highlighted in red).

From on-site observations, the vision was also displayed in several locations around the school.

The most notable places where the vision is displayed are, on the left side of the students’ morning assembly hall (the school’s main hall), on the school fence outside, to the right of the main entrance and inside the Principal’s office (observations, multiple locations)

To the Deputy, visibility helps keep the school vision fresh in student and staff minds, and has the potential to link it to practical projects.

We spot opportunities where we can display the vision, to keep it fresh in people’s minds. When introducing a project to students or staff I would

typically say, since our vision is such-and-such, we have this project [...]
(Saud, Deputy, interview).

However, the Principal's approach to vision awareness is balanced with the notion that more is not always better.

We do not want it to be too present or not visible at all; we certainly include it in every important document. We want it to be meaningful to our students and staff (Malek, Principal, interview).

Having a vision is a new concept for schools, which arrived as a part of the *Tatweer* programme.

In the past, we used to work without a written and agreed-upon vision, but with Tatweer it is a requirement (Malek, Principal, interview).

To the Principal, the vision provides an orientation for the school.

Having a vision makes the school more effective, focusing work on particular issues (Malek, Principal, interview).

At Wazeer School, the vision seems to be revised every three years as a part of a three-year programme, which will be highlighted in the strategic planning section. This programme is created by an inclusive team.

The vision was created as a part of the whole school programme. It was a big task. Every three years we create a team to design the overall programme of the school, including people in leadership, teachers and staff (Saud, Deputy, interview).

Shadi, the Social Instructor, argues that achieving such an appropriate text resulted from listening to various ideas and suggestions.

We as a leadership team, and especially our leader, are open to any suggestions or feedback (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

The inclusion of teachers in the process of creating the vision is apparent from their descriptions.

Created by teamwork, not just a matter of personal preference (Teacher group 1, group interview).

We are fully included with programme design. We worked as a team with the leaders (Teacher group 3, group interview).

The Principal concluded the discussion of the school vision by placing more responsibility on the school community. He wants the vision to be not just a slogan but rather something practical for everyone to participate in.

I think we have not achieved our vision yet; from the outside, it may seem to be achieved, but I really want it reflected in the behaviour of the whole school community (Malek, Principal, interview).

Organisational structure

Looking at the organisational structure of this school, a conflict tends to arise between what the staff believe in, and what they can actually do. The Principal and Deputy were quite clear about this.

It would be inaccurate if I said we have a non-hierarchical organisation (Malek, Principal, interview)

The reason provided for this limitation was the Ministry's policy.

The Ministry's policy instructs us to have a hierarchy. The first person in charge is the Principal, then the Deputy and the Social Instructor (Malek, Principal, interview).

The Ministry's documentation supported these claims, describing clearly how the school hierarchy is supposed to look.

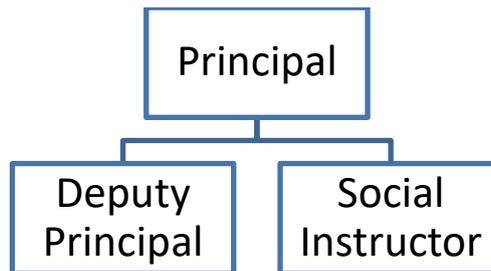


Figure 6: 4 The Regulatory Guide for Public Schools, Tatweer (2013).

Two issues were mentioned by the Principal and his Deputy about levelling the organisation: accountability and public acceptance.

The Ministry requirement of a hierarchical leadership structure was interpreted by the Deputy as a way to reduce the number of persons accountable for decisions and outcomes. Although *Tatweer* aims to level the organisational structure of schools, the Ministry has yet to distribute responsibilities meaningfully.

Tatweer is a great development, but has not yet accepted the decentralisation of schools. For example, it encourages a more decentralised organisation but still, when it comes to accountability, financial or important matters, one-person leadership is required (Saud, Deputy, interview).

Regarding public acceptance, according to the Principal, parents and the wider community would only accept the school Principal as the person in charge.

For example, if a parent would like to discuss his son's academic achievement, and you refer him to the Deputy he would agree but would like to discuss it with you also as you are the person in charge (Malek, Principal, interview).

This can result in the perception of the Principal as a one-person leader by the staff, as well. The Principal stated:

To the Deputy, that would create a conflict between what I say and what I do when agreeing to discuss matters on his behalf (Malek, Principal, interview).

Having presented the limitations of what this school can do, the next few paragraphs will discuss what the school is able to achieve.

According to the school's guidelines, the entire staff is working as a team to develop the school.

All members of the administrative and teaching staff are working as a team for the betterment of the school to reach the top (School Guidelines, document).

It seems that the school leaders, particularly the Deputy and the Social Instructor, see themselves as a part of a team.

As a leadership team, we are part of the team. We work as a team, not as a leader and followers: there are no solo decisions (Saud, Deputy, interview).

The Social Instructor reported a meeting where the Principal stated clearly that he is a part of the team.

A couple of weeks ago the Principal summoned me and the Deputy and said to us, "I am one of you and would not be able to do anything alone". That is good to hear from the boss it gives you encouragement and motivation (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

To some teachers, the leaders' attempt to level the organisation was visible, but the Principal's role in cases of conflict was also clear.

The leadership team try their best to decentralise leadership. The Principal's role is apparent when it comes to conflict or equally divided views (Teacher group 4, group interview).

Some members of the school community understand the balance between centralised and non-hierarchical organisations.

There is no centralisation in this school, but not fully horizontally-structured. Most responsibilities are distributed but some matters require the Principal's authorisation and acceptance (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Some teachers also understand that bureaucracy is required to some extent because of the Ministry's policy.

There is a democracy and there is a bureaucracy. We understand that schools are administrative organisations that apply rules and regulations (Teacher group 2, group interview).

To some teachers, non-hierarchical organisations would lack the charisma of the leader to whom people turn in case of difficulty.

Fully flat organisations can be chaotic. People naturally need somebody in authority to turn to (Teacher group 4, group interview).

Leadership style/s

From the data collected, two leadership styles have been identified in Wazeer School: the first is leadership as a set of practices, including distributed leadership, engagement and collaboration among the school staff. The other side is leadership as a personal quality of the Principal, which may involve transformational behaviour. Both aspects will be discussed and supported by evidence from the data.

The distribution of leadership at Wazeer School is quite visible. Tasks are distributed widely, and the Principal believes that the leader should give autonomy to his staff to reach the results desired. From a field observation:

A group of five teachers were in the process of finalising the exam schedule when the Principal passed by their meeting room and said, "God gives you health; do you need anything?" They said, "Thank you. We will give you the final version by the end of the day." He said to me, "The real leadership distribution is to distance yourself to show confidence in people who work with you. Otherwise you will end up doing everything yourself" (School hallway and meeting room, observations).

According to the Principal, leadership is distributed within the school.

Distributed leadership is there; a lot of leadership tasks are distributed among school members (Malek, Principal, interview).

As mentioned previously, in the discussion of organisational structure, the Deputy stated that the leaders are also part of the team. The Social Instructor

also reinforced the point made by the Principal, about how he would distance himself when a task has been assigned.

The Principal will let you do your work without intervening (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

The Social Instructor gave an example to illustrate this point:

Last week we finalised the programme for next year while the Principal was away, because the Principal believed in us (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Teachers agree that the school has distributed leadership.

I would say that the school shows distributed leadership (Teacher group 1, group interview).

Some teachers pointed to sources of resilience in the process of leadership distribution.

Distributing responsibilities and tasks is a flexible process; you can choose what you are good at and you are free to say no (Teacher group 2, group interview).

Resilience in leadership distribution can also result in task commitment.

According to teachers.

Such flexibility allows us to commit to our tasks because you are likely to take the task that you like or are good at (Teacher group 2, group interview).

Engagement in decision making is noticeable at the Wazeer School. Informative decision making was used by the Principal in one observed instance.

A teacher did not attend a school meeting and the Principal took a reasonable amount of time updating him about what happened in that meeting and asking him to share his thoughts (Principal's office, observations)

The Principal described decision-making as being transparent and inclusive.

Decision-making is transparent and inclusive; we even include students in decision making (Malek, Principal, interview).

He stressed that it is important to include administrative staff in such processes.

We try our best to engage them and as a result we have had so many amazing ideas from them (Malek, Principal, interview).

The Deputy stated that collective decisions are likely to be embraced by the school community.

Solo decisions are very ineffective, the opposite of the collective decisions where most people are likely to embrace them (Saud, Deputy, interview).

He argues that sense of belonging to such decisions are the reason why they are embraced.

Collective decisions give people a sense of belonging, as they all work hard to show that this is the right decision (Saud, Deputy, interview).

Such a sense of belonging was also seen by the Social Instructor.

When you consult someone, he would feel that he is important to the school (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Teachers also value being consulted.

Teacher engagement is always there; we are consulted and our opinion is very important to the leaders (Teacher group 1, group interview).

According to the teachers, engagement can be achieved through simple gestures.

Feeling engaged is not a big task; sometimes being informed itself provides a sense of engagement (Teacher group 4, group interview).

Regarding teamwork, there is a culture in Wazeer School that interprets teamwork as related to transparency and collective effort.

We do our work in a transparent way in which anybody would be able to complete the job. That is teamwork (Malek, Principal, interview).

To the Social Instructor, such a culture is created through sophisticated planning.

When we plan for a programme, it is planned for as if someone else will do it (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

According to the Principal, the process of building teamwork and gaining collaboration is sensitive.

You can build teams easily, but getting people to collaborate is a very sensitive task (Malek, Principal, interview).

Again, according to the Principal, the Ministry's policy is the reason that collaboration is hard to gain in schools.

Teachers are only required to do their classes; as you know, schools consist of far more than classes. So, the only way to gain teacher collaboration is to appeal to the human factor (Malek, Principal, interview).

The Deputy support the claim that the human dimension is the way to gain collaboration.

It is essential to be nice to them, gain their confidence and foster a shared sense of appreciation (Saud, Deputy, interview).

This appreciation was evidently found in documents. For example, in the project titled My Way to University, designed to explore options for students when they graduate from school and which was 22 pages long, a whole page consisted of acknowledgments, listing people who worked on the project and not mentioning either the Principal or the Deputy as contributors.



Figure 6: 5 My Way to University, acknowledgements page, document.

Good teamwork may be achieved with teachers by empowering teams just as they reported that the Principal typically does.

Building teams is not difficult, but the real test when it comes to empowering such teams consists in accepting their verdicts and their work, which our leader is very good at (Teacher group 2, group interview).

Another group of teachers agreed with the statement.

Any outcome from such teams is very likely to be taken on board (Teacher group 1, group interview).

From this data, two transformational leadership qualities were found to be present in the Principal's behaviour: individual consideration and motivation. Students are both considered and cared about.

He said to exam invigilators: "do not watch the clock while students do their exam, and do not start talking if you are tired of waiting. Let the students take as much time as they need within the allowed exam time" (Principal's office, observations).

Individual consideration directed at teachers was also evident from the data.

He tries to convince a teacher not to move to another school closer to his home (Principal's office, observations).

The Deputy had also experienced such personal consideration himself, when his mother suffered from illness.

When my mum became ill he gave me options to take care of her far beyond what the Ministry allows (Saud, Deputy, interview).

The Social Instructor, because of the nature of his work, witnessed the Principal individual consideration for unfortunate students.

He gives a good deal of attention to those in difficult circumstances such, as those whose parents have separated, orphan students and those with low socioeconomic status (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Teachers themselves reported how this quality affects them.

Each of us thinks he is the Principal's favourite (Teacher group 4, group interview).

The other quality is motivation of others. As mentioned above, there is a visible culture of appreciation. In one observed instance:

While I was sitting in the Principal's office, news came that the school became the first in extracurricular activities among all schools in the city. The Principal called the person in charge and thanked him in front of me and the other visitors, and said that this is a result of your hard work (Principal's office observations)

The Principal has argued that such appreciation is matter of justice and is also essential for school achievement.

It is understood that any school achievement is going to be connected to the Principal in one way or another, so why would I not also relate every achievement to the person in charge of it in particular. It is their right and is also necessary for success to continue (Malek, Principal, interview).

The Deputy acknowledged that the Principal was able to create a culture of celebrating success while also believing in the importance of adult motivation.

The Principal managed to bring a culture of motivation and a celebration of best practices. He believes that motivation is as important to adults as it is to students (Saud, Deputy, interview).

Simple practices were also mentioned by the Social Instructor as valuable motivational tools.

Applause and support for ideas and initiatives do not always involve a financial commitment; sometimes thankful words or certificates of appreciation are enough (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Communication

This section will discuss how school members communicate with each other, in terms of the systems and language used. The Deputy described that the school uses a variety of media of communication.

We use verbal communication, emails, texts and letters for in-school communication and a closed, web-based system for parents (Saud, Deputy, interview).

Teachers mentioned that staff often use mobile-based applications, such as WhatsApp, for informal conversations.

We have a WhatsApp group for all school members including admins and leaders. We use it for informal communications (Teacher group 3, group interview).

However, the Principal expressed certain reservations regarding modern technology used in work, in which he tries to observe boundaries around the staff's own time.

With modern technology, it is possible to get in touch with staff at any time after work, but I do not allow it because people have lives, and work should be within working hours (Malek, Principal, interview).

This practice was noticeable for teachers, who see it positively.

The good thing about our school is we try not to discuss work-related matters outside work (Teacher group 2, group interview).

Engagement with parents uses a system of two-way communication. The school uses a web-based application to communicate with parents.

We have a school web-based application especially designed for school-parent communication (Malek, Principal, interview).

The Deputy, Saud, stated that such communication is better than earlier systems.

It is better than emails and texts, because you can see whether your messages have been read, and parents have the opportunity to comment and offer feedback (Saud, Deputy, interview).

According to the Social Instructor, this system is not limited to notifying parents about their children's misbehaviour.

We also inform them about good behaviour, improvement and accomplishments (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Stronger teacher-parent communication was noticed by some teachers.

I can send a message to all class parents or specified parents where they can read and comment; sometimes, this leads to a conversation when we

meet face to face, which creates stronger relationships (Teacher group 4, group interview).

However, other teachers spotted a flaw in the system by which those with limited Internet experience can be left behind.

There are some parents who have no Internet connection, who may miss important information (Teacher group 3, group interview).

The last point to be considered in this section is the type of language used within school communication. It can be described as simple, informal or local Arabic. An email circulation sent by the Deputy to staff showed the simple language used.

Translated as:

Greetings and appreciation for all colleagues,

[...] I am happy to tell you that the folks of the examination team are in the process of putting the final touches in place. I have attached for you a preliminary version of the invigilation agenda and test timetable. Please see me or see [Shadi] for any a suggestions or comments.

Greetings,

[Saud]

He used his nickname, instead of his name and that of the Social Instructor as a way to maintain informality.

From the observations, it seems that Wazeer School staff members use simple language when communicating with each other.

In a school meeting, which includes the Principal, his Deputy and around 10 teachers, the language used was simple and informal (Meeting room, observations).

The Principal gives conscious emphasis to the use of such language; the justification he offers is that simple language breaks boundaries.

I am aware about using informal language but we use it for a good reason. We try to break boundaries between people, especially leaders, teachers and administrators (Malek, Principal, interview).

The Deputy's point of view is not far from that of the Principal, as he mentioned that less formal language can help flatten the hierarchy.

It is a way of showing that we are all human; we are not leaders or followers – we are all on one team (Saud, Deputy, interview).

To some teachers, this form of communication can close the gap between leaders and staff.

When the Principal uses such language, it bridges the leader-staff gap as it shows the real person behind these words (Teacher group 2, group interview).

However, the Arabic language teacher was not equally impressed by the language used, because important messages communicated using informal expressions can result in confusion.

Well, as an Arabic teacher it is hard for me to comprehend. It is also very difficult to receive an email with very important information but written informally. If I wanted to show it to my students or use it as a supporting

example, it would not be up to standard (Teacher group 1, group interview).

The Social Instructor, however, believes that the language used is not far from Classical Arabic.

It is an exaggeration to say that we are too far from Classical Arabic, we are using Arabic, but with a local twist (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Strategic planning

Wazeer School's guidelines recognise two forms of planning. One takes place on a three-year basis, involving general strategies and planning including revision of the school guidelines, the vision, etc. The second type is annual planning, carried out in the same direction as the former but more specific, including "detailed plans and projects".

The Social Instructor defines the distinction between the three-year and the annual plans as follows.

The three-year plan draws a general vision, guidelines and objectives for the school while the annual plan puts that into action (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

These planning processes seem to be important to the school community as a whole. The Principal argues that planning makes a difference.

By planning, we manage to work efficiently at a high level of quality. When you leave things to the last minute, you may produce satisfactory work

but may miss the touches that take you to the next level (Malek, Principal, interview).

Achieving the school vision through consistent work is a result of good planning, as the Deputy argued.

Consistency, relevance and efficacy are very important results of good planning and implementation (Saud, Deputy, interview).

To teachers, the annual plan works as a way of directing their work.

The annual plan is very important to me as a teacher because it provides signposts for me and guides me as I plan for my lessons (Teacher group 3, group interview).

However, some teachers see a gap between projects and the classroom.

For example, the public property awareness project should be discussed by teachers with their students, not only applied as an extracurricular project (Teacher group 4, group interview).

Since the curriculum is centralised by the Ministry, schools seem to have very minimal authority over it, so other projects are typically realised as extracurricular activities.

The Wazeer School seems to have a range of objectives when it comes to planning, ranging from curricular goals to individual development projects.

We have curriculum-oriented projects to help students with their learning, such as mathematics, spelling, reading etc. We also have projects aiming to develop the student as a person. To raise awareness about things is very important, especially because these subjects are often neglected,

such as caring about trees, public property awareness, road safety awareness, health and safety awareness etc. In addition, we have projects designed to help students with their future development, such as My Way to University (Malek, Principal, interview).

The Deputy also believes that schools should care more about the different aspects of students' development.

We have a belief that the school should target many aspects of student development, far more than just learning (Saud, Deputy, interview).

Two projects will be presented to give an understanding of the variety of projects planned and undertaken. One is Tree Awareness and the other is My Way to University.

A leaflet was produced in time with Arbor (tree) Week to raise awareness about tree care. Four headings were used: Tree Week, trees and life necessities, trees as symbols of generosity and trees as shadow and beauty.



Figure 6: 6 Tree Awareness leaflet, document.

The project My Way to University, by contrast, is a yearlong project intended to reduce the gap between school and university. The school conducted visits to universities and organised conferences, issued leaflets and held seminars (My Way to University report, document).

The project's aims were as follows:

1. *Introduce students to the Saudi university system.*
2. *Introduce subject areas that are available in [a neighbouring] university.*
3. *Explain the acceptance criteria at colleges of the [neighbouring] university.*
4. *Establish seriousness, industriousness and initiative among students.*
5. *Create a spirit of competition among students. (My Way to University report, document).*

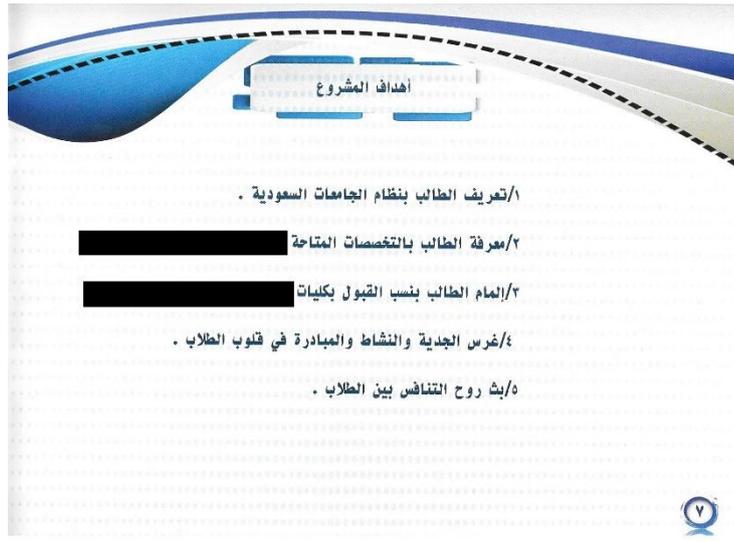


Figure 6: 7 My Way to University project - aims section, document.

Quality assurance

Two aspects of quality assurance concern Wazeer School leaders: organisational quality and teaching and learning quality. The two aspects will be addressed in the following sections.

Organisational quality

The school leaders pay attention to the school's appearance: not only how it looks, but what quality represents to participants, as discussed over the next few paragraphs. From the documents I collected, the design and material used to produce them communicates quality in their appearance. For example, the report of the project, My Way to University, is an A5-sized 22-pages laminated document produced in high-quality colour printing. The paper used is thick and of high quality. The report was also mass printed.



Figure 6: 8 My Way to University project - front page, document.

Upon entering the school, it is notable that the school community has added elements to the school's original design (As a standardised design is the norm for such institutions, the additional features are quite noticeable). The front yard between the school gates is full of features such as an artificial fountain, painted elements and designs.



Figure 6: 9 A representative picture of school features.

The Principal explained why this quality appearance is important and affects the school's performance.

How organised the school is and how attractive the school is can affect the performance of staff and students alike (Malek, Principal, interview).

The Deputy reported how concerned the Principal regards the school's appearance.

The Principal always stresses the importance of presentation; He emphasises the quality of content as well as that of appearance (Saud, Deputy, interview).

Working in an organised environment offers motivation to work effectively, according to the Social Instructor.

When you work in an organised environment you push yourself to meet those standards (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Teachers also agree with this link between quality of appearance and performance.

At the classroom level, it is important for the classroom to look professional for the sake of learning quality (Teacher group 1, group interview).

Some noted, as mentioned by the Deputy stated, that the Principal would comment on presentation quality.

The Principal would offer feedback about classroom presentation when he did classroom visits (Teacher group 4, group interview).

Quality in teaching and learning

Wazeer School is keen to improve standards by ensuring quality in teaching and learning. The school's General Guidelines state:

The student is the focus of the educational process. He should be paid attention to and cared about (Wazeer School's General Guidelines, document).

Staffing the school is not the responsibility of school leaders, but the Principal pays attention to ensuring that teacher motivation and therefore effectiveness is high.

We try to get the most of what we have and encourage any underperformers to develop as much as we can (Malek, Principal, interview).

In case of an underperforming teacher, the Principal tends to engage in one-on-one mentoring.

I would sit down with him and discuss. I might suggest that he visit another teacher or assign him to a training course (Malek, Principal, interview).

Malek, the Principal, aims to address teaching problems if they occur with a calculated approach.

I take an indirect approach to do something about an underperforming teacher without him feeling threatened (Malek, Principal, interview).

Regarding his approach, he stated that understanding individuals is important for him to deal with people according to their personality.

There has to be measurement for teachers' personalities and I deal with them according to that (Malek, Principal, interview).

One of the main methods that the school uses to ensure quality in teaching is classroom visits.

Classroom visits are one of the indicators that we use in order to make sure that our teaching procedures are in good shape (Malek, Principal, interview).

The number of school visits per teacher per term is quite high.

We visit each teacher twice a term (Saud, Deputy, interview).

The school aims to offer feedback after each classroom visit.

After each visit, we give honest feedback that includes both ups and downs. We do not concentrate on negatives (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Teachers described the feedback they received as objective.

They would give you feedback on the lesson they attended regardless of the perception they might have of you from past visits. They would, however, highlight improvement (Teacher group 3, group interview).

So far, the first aspect of Wazeer School data has been discussed, namely leadership practices. The following sections will discuss the other two dimensions of interest: culture and leadership development.

6.4.2 Culture

After analysing data related to culture, four main themes have been identified; some of these themes have one or more sub-themes. Data in this section will be presented in respect to the following themes:

- Globalization
- National culture
- Organisational culture
- Reciprocal effects

Globalization

The data presented above, especially relating to educational quality, shows that the school community is interacting positively with Western concepts. Although there is no direct reference to Total Quality Management in Wazeer School documents, the concept of "quality", especially in an organisational context, remains a substantially Western concept. There is, however, a direct and explicit reference to Western concepts in one of the documents collected from this school: the document Giftedness is strongly impacted by the influence of globalization and Western educational thought.

Three levels of influence have been identified through the analysis of this document. "Giftedness" itself is a concept originating in the West; embracing it and producing a document about it is therefore a sign of Western influence. A second type of influence is shown by using some terms related to giftedness as they appeared in English, and translating them directly into Arabic, such as

giftedness, enrichment and acceleration (these words will be highlighted in the Figures below).

The most explicit influence in this text consists in references to Western scholars, offering their interpretation of this concept through direct quotations. The front draft of the document uses Joseph Renzulli's Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness: Above Average Ability, Creativity and Task Commitment along with its illustration of three circles overlapping and crossing each other (this is also highlighted in the Figures below). The document also quoted definitions of the concept from Lewis Terman, Joseph Renzulli, Sidney Marland and Howard Gardner. Indeed, there is only one reference to an Arabic scholar, Taisir Subhi-Yamin, who is Jordanian.



Figure 6: 10 Giftedness (1), document, (Red squares are highlights; names of scholars also in red, have been translated into English).



Figure 6: 11 Giftedness (2), document, (key terms are highlighted in red).

The school community seems to view globalization through its real-life applications, such as international media and social media. There seems to be general agreement on the assessment that globalization has positive and negative aspects. New devices and computer-based applications are manifestations of globalization as are the developing economic and personal connections across national borders.

The positives are more. We have devices that bring us news, new innovations, etc. They help us to explore and know more about others (Teacher group 1, group interview).

According to some teachers however, schools should pay the most attention to its matters, while distant connections are not necessary.

Schools should be about what exists within their parameters, and I can't see the effect of globalization within our school (Teacher group 3, group interview).

Other teachers do not agree that globalization is responsible for concepts such as democracy and TQM.

It is not true that democracy is a Western ideology. Islam taught us to be considerate, to consult and to engage with others. The West gave us terminology but the concept was already there (Teacher group 2, group interview).

School leaders, however, tend to have a more dynamic view of globalization. Their approach reflects the need to prepare students to engage positively with and to benefit from this concept, leaving aside what is negative.

We are engaging rather positively with globalization, taking its good aspects such as global connection and leaving behind negative ones such as Western ideologies which are not in agreement with our faith (Saud, Deputy, interview).

Equipping students to be able to deal with globalization is what the Principal believes to be important.

We are a part of this world affecting and affected by what happens out there. Our duty is to make sure that our students are ready to interact with such new developments (Malek, Principal, interview).

Such a view is also supported by the Social Instructor.

Students should be equipped with the ability to correctly engage with such applications morally, socially, legally etc. (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

National culture

The other level at which culture is operative in this study, is national culture. The data shows that two aspects of national culture are present in Wazeer School: religion and patriotism. The impact of each aspect on Wazeer School will be discussed in the next section.

A statement found in several documents produced by the school combined these two elements together. Although the documents did not attribute this statement, it appears to be the school motto. The statement read:

Pride of religion. Loyalty to the king. Belonging to the homeland (What Around You is Your Property, document).



Figure 6: 12 What Around You is Your Property, document (statement is circled in red).

Regarding the religious dimension, the school seems to be attached to Islam. This attachment is not expressed primarily through direct teaching of Islamic traditions (although some such teaching is mandatory through the curriculum) but rather by embracing its values by linking them to applicable projects. One example is a project intended to encourage students to come early to school

every day. The school used a saying by the Prophet Mohammed, encouraging Muslims to benefit from early mornings, as the project title. The title was:

My nation is blessed at its earliness (document and a saying by the Prophet Mohammad)

The Principal supported the claim that the school takes an implicit approach to highlighting Islamic values. He explains the method which he believes is appropriate to communicate such values.

I have always believed that such values are better transferred through practice than through direct teaching (Malek, Principal, interview).

For the Social Instructor, being a role model is seen as an appropriate way to transfer Islamic values to students.

When students see me going to pray early, in practice, it is better than a three-hour lecture talking about the importance of praying (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

To sum up, some teachers believe that the school is not only affected by Islam but also serves as a reflection of the Islamic community in which it is embedded.

Our school is a miniature picture of our wider Muslim community. It has Amanah [integrity] and synergy (Teacher group 3, group interview).

The other aspect of national culture is patriotism or loyalty to the nation. It seems that both explicit and implicit approaches are used to promote a sense of patriotism. An example of the explicit approach is a banner hanging in the assembly hall decorated in green (the national colour) along with the Saudi flag, which says:

The nation [...] the love that cannot be measured (A board in the assembly hall, document).



Figure 6: 13 School assembly hall (the board is highlighted in red).

Another explicit example of promoting patriotism takes place daily at the morning assembly, as the Deputy explained:

We have a specified time to cover national news with students (Saud, Deputy, interview).

The Principal stated:

We promote patriotism especially in relation to national events (Malek, Principal, interview).

This implicit approach seems to be concerned with what is best for the nation. For example, the project What Around You is Your Property is designed to promote awareness of public property. Among the project aims:

Raise students' awareness to:

1. Care about public property.
2. Take care of public money (What Around You is Your Property, document).



Figure 6: 14 What Around You is Your Property (document).

The Deputy made the argument that patriotism is about the duty of the individual and the school to develop the nation.

It is what we do for the nation as individuals and as a school (Saud, Deputy, interview).

Also, the Social Instructor believes that promoting patriotism can go beyond expressing loyalty.

Beyond talking about the nation's love, we promote qualities that help national solidarity (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Organisational culture

This section aims to describe the culture of the Wazeer School. From the evidence collected, two main aspects of school culture were communicated by participants: the relationships between staff and the school leaders and a description of the school as a learning environment.

Human relationships at the Wazeer School seems to reflect a mixture of professional and informal relationships. In one instance:

I was invited to a weekly gathering in the evening outside the school, where two people brought dinner for the group. There were 21 people in attendance, including teachers, leaders and administrators. The atmosphere reflected a combination of brotherhood and collegiality. Jokes were exchanged throughout the meeting. Work matters were rarely mentioned (outside school gathering, observations).

The Principal, however, maintained a professional personality.

The Principal kept his charisma at all times. He smiled and seemed to be approachable but still retained his strong personality (outside school gathering, observations).

Harmony is the word mentioned by the Principal to describe school relationships. He linked this description to productivity.

We have total harmony in our school so our productivity is high (Malek, Principal, interview).

Harmony was also used by the Deputy, as linked to another type of work related matter, teamwork.

There is harmony and people work as a team (Saud, Deputy, interview).

Relationships between the school leaders and other staff were defined by the Social Instructor as positive.

The relationship between staff and the Principal is more than good. There is no distance (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Teachers seem to respond in a very positive way to this school environment.

An attractive environment – I am very happy here (Teacher group 2, group interview).

One teacher explained how this positive relationship could be a motivation to go to work.

When I wake up first thing in the morning I feel that I am looking forward to something good (Teacher group 4, group interview).

Such an environment seems to be a reason to stay in school even when work responsibilities are finished, according to some teachers.

I sometimes have half a day free but I do not go home; I stay until the school closes, because of the strong relationships among us all (Teacher group 4, group interview).

The Principal and the Social Instructor also mentioned an understanding of the difference between professional and personal relationships.

We respond to their needs, motivate them and support them, and at the same time there is accountability. They understand the difference between work and personal relationships (Malek, Principal, interview).

The Social Instructor stated that accountability is part of the school culture and will rarely be taken personally.

We have a culture of accountability and do not take feedback personally (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

The other aspect of school culture at Wazeer School concerns the educational environment. The section tries to explain this culture.

As mentioned before, the school vision articulates a keenness to achieve an "attractive educational environment". The Social Instructor explained that, to achieve such an environment, support and justice are important.

To achieve an "attractive educational environment", the school has to be supportive and do justice to its members, which is something we are working on achieving (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Two clauses of the school's General Guidelines state clearly that learning is understood to be continuous. In one clause:

This school is an important stage of student life, linked to what came before and introducing what comes after, and should not be taken as a standalone stage (Wazeer School General Guidelines, document).

As students are encouraged to learn continuously, the same is also promoted in the case of adults at the school, staff and leaders alike. Another clause states:

Learning does not stop when certificate is achieved, but rather continues lifelong. Teachers, staff and the Principal are still learning and earning new experiences (Wazeer School General Guidelines, document).

The final aspect of school culture, is the culture of encouraging outstanding performance. The Principal explains what this:

we have a culture of promoting high achievers and making them stars (Malek, Principal, interview).

The Deputy explains that such culture benefits both underperformers and high achievers.

Because outstanding achievement is the norm, it helps high performers to continue in their success and the underperforming to develop (Saud, Deputy, interview).

The Social Instructor, however, believes that such a strong culture of achievement can lead to some people being left behind.

I feel that these students [underachievers] sometimes do not receive the support they need (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Sub cultures

This subsection investigates whether subcultures exist at Wazeer School. The school community seems to be confident that there are no small groups in their school. The Deputy explains that having one large group that contains all teachers can create harmony.

There are no rival groups; we only have one staff room in order to maintain harmony among all colleagues (Saud, Deputy, interview).

From the observations made of interactions in the staff room, it does appear that the teaching staff form one cohesive group.

Teachers in the staff room were observed to sit together, and usually a common topic is discussed (Staff room, observations).

The question is why the participants see sub-cultures as potentially negative. The Social Instructor believes that:

Small groups exist when people are not happy with their leaders. Because people are happy at our school, no such groups exist (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Injustice was seen by teachers as a reason to allow such subcultures to exist.

Justice tackles such sub-groups. Injustice creates sub-groups and usually these groups become a source of trouble for the Principal (Teacher group 2, group interview).

Teachers explained, based on their experience, how such subcultures operated in other schools.

Sub-groups occupy unused classroom space and move in, to appropriate their own space. Only members of such groups are welcome in such places (Teacher group 2, group interview).

In Wazeer School, however, teachers feel that school spaces are for all.

No small groups, any place in the school I feel it is mine (Teacher group 4, group interview).

Some teachers see subcultures as negative because they affect collaboration.

Smaller groups distance teachers and affect collaboration (Teacher group 2, group interview).

Others believe that such groups affect productivity and morale.

Small groups affect productivity, create gossip and affect teachers morale (Teacher group 4, group interview).

Reciprocal effects

This section aims to show the findings from Wazeer School in relation to the connection between school culture and school effectiveness, problems and difficulties and the role of the Principal. Each of the above points will be discussed in the subsections that follow.

School culture and effectiveness

Direct questions were asked about the relationship between a positive school environment and school effectiveness, and why. The next few paragraphs illustrate these findings.

It seems that the Wazeer School community is confident in identifying a link between school culture and school effectiveness. The Principal believes in a strong connection.

Positive school culture is a main contributor to school effectiveness (Malek, Principal, interview).

Some teachers stated that they believe their school to have the right culture.

It creates the right environment for effectiveness (Teacher group 3, group interview).

The analytical question, however, is why positive culture would contribute to school effectiveness. Participants argued that the culture promotes values that are important for success. Collective work, for example, was seen by the Principal as an important result of a positive culture, as good relationships allow people to work with each other. With positive school culture, he argues:

Instead of the work being individual it becomes collective (Malek, Principal, interview).

The Deputy insists that effectiveness requires teamwork, which in turn requires a positive culture.

Effectiveness does not happen because of one or two people working. It requires teamwork, and teamwork cannot exist without a positive work environment (Saud, Deputy, interview).

For teachers, positive relationships allow people to accept feedback, which is important to team work.

Sure, positive relationships among teachers leads them to accept opinions, critiques and feedback from others (Teacher group 3, group interview).

Positive culture promotes a stress-free environment, according to the Deputy and some teachers. Being in such an environment can encourage enthusiasm and foster initiatives, as the Deputy stated:

When you go to work stress-free, that leads to taking initiative, enthusiasm and creativity (Saud, Deputy, interview).

Productivity, creativity and innovation were mentioned by teachers as resulting from a stress-free environment.

The more stress-free the teacher is, the likely he will become productive (Teacher group 4, group interview).

To the Principal, effectiveness requires creativity, which requires the right environment for it to evolve, including freedom and security.

It promotes creativity, and creativity does not happen without freedom, trust, security and support, because creativity is usually against the stream (Malek, Principal, interview).

Job security was mentioned by some teachers as being promoted by the positive environment.

Job security was mentioned by some teachers (Teacher group 1, group interview).

School culture in case of problems and difficulties

The next section reveals the findings from Wazeer School concerning what the school does in the case of problems and difficulties. Participants revealed that problems exist in their school.

In any environment, there are problems and difficulties; so too in our school (Malek, Principal, interview).

They argued that problems tend to expand and develop when they occur in an already tense environment.

Problems in an unsettled school are likely to get bigger and to be perceived differently than issues that arise where relationships are basically positive (Teacher group 1, group interview).

The Deputy argue that in Wazeer School strong relationships help problems to be solved among the various parties themselves.

[Staff] tend to solve their problems themselves, so that usually problems are solved before they reach us (Saud, Deputy, interview).

One teacher supports such a claim:

Harmony eases solving problems (Teacher group 1, group interview).

Another teacher revealed how they are even involved in solving personal issues through the connections among staff.

Our tea man had a family problem back in his country last term and we raised [£10,000] from the staff in a very short time (Teacher group 4, group interview).

The Principal revealed that the school preferred to solve problems by containing them and then dealing with them internally, with mutual respect.

Problems are contained and we do not go back to the Ministry's guidelines although we put them clearly between the two parties. We talk about them and try to solve the problem. So, we do not [officially] raise any issues (Malek, Principal, interview).

The Deputy stated that influential people within the school sometimes get involved to solve issues.

People of influence within school usually get involved so we solve our own problems (Saud, Deputy, interview).

To the Social Instructor, adding new faces to the matter, especially when there is an issue between a member of the leadership team and a teacher, offers a way of releasing tension.

If there is a tension between one leader and a teacher we tend to release the tension by exchanging that leader with another one. So, if the problem were between me and a teacher, I would be asked to step aside and the Deputy would get involved (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Solving issues urgently was seen by the Social Instructor as a healthy way to deal with them.

We try to solve problems as soon as they occur, because when they are left unresolved, they expand and develop (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

If there is no solution to the issue, the school is left with no choice but to refer to the official guidelines.

If there is no an agreement, we refer to the Ministry's guidelines (Malek, Principal, interview).

Principal's role in relation to school culture

Three aspects mentioned by Wazeer School participants highlighted the role of the Principal in relation to school culture: namely, thinking collectively, being transparent and acting justly. In general, the Deputy and the Social Instructor both believe that the Principal plays a significant role in establishing school culture.

Our Principal plays a major role in establishing this positive culture (Saud, Deputy, interview).

The Principal was mentioned by the Social Instructor as a significant player, from whom he is still learning.

He plays a major role. He has a vast experience in leadership. We still learn from him (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

According to participants, the Principal tries to ensure that the school community as a whole is included.

He is a collective not selective. He contains everyone in the school. No one feels left behind (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Transparency is another aspect mentioned by participants to highlight the Principal's role in creating the school culture. From observations:

On more than one occasion, the Principal talked to one or two teachers about a meeting they did not attend (multiple locations, observations).

The Deputy described the Principal's approach to work as clear and transparent.

Clarity, there are no deals under the table. Everything is clear and transparent (Saud, Deputy, interview).

A teacher explained why transparency is important in creating positive culture.

A Principal may work hard, but when his work is not transparent people could assume things the wrong way (Teacher group 4, group interview).

The last point mentioned by participants, which indeed seems to be quite important to them, was justice. As mentioned earlier, injustice leads to the existence of sub-groups in school, according to participants, which takes on a potential negative aspect because such groups may play the role of opposition to the Principal.

One teacher argued that the Principal acts justly regardless of being emotionally close to the teachers.

The Principal is my personal friend, but that does not affect my work (Teacher group 3, group interview).

To the Principal, justice is a significant factor in relationships within the school.

Justice is the most important aspect that affects teachers' relationships with each other and with their leaders (Malek, Principal, interview).

Teachers argued that injustice can divide people among the school staff.

Any favouritism present affects relationships, creating a favoured group and disfavoured group (Teacher group 2, group interview).

In addition, justice seems to be important to the Principal; adhering to this principle helps keep the school away from distractions.

It [justice] tackles maximising problems, gossips etc. things that derail the organisation from its real purpose (Malek, Principal, interview).

This section has discussed the evidence from Wazeer School regarding culture in its broad signification, including globalization, national culture and religion, and also in its narrower meaning in relation to school culture and sub-cultures. The school culture has now been illustrated and the effect of culture on effectiveness and problem solving has been examined, along with the role of the Principal in creating such a positive culture. The next section will set out the findings regarding professional development at Wazeer School.

6.4.3 Professional development

This section will show data collected from Wazeer School regarding professional development. Four main subthemes have emerged from the evidence: how professional development is perceived in the Wazeer School, how teachers' and leaders' professional development are organised and the role of the local educational authority. Each one of the above themes will be discussed in a separate subsection.

School professional development

This subsection will reveal data about professional development at Wazeer School and how is it perceived by the school community. Wazeer School leaders

seem to be very keen on having professional development take place in their school, so the training rate is quite high, according to the Social Instructor.

We have a 100% training rate this year (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

According to him, training is important to the school.

We take professional development very seriously for teachers and leaders (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

The Principal believes that professional development for leaders and teachers helps the school to run smoothly.

It eases the school's work. Teachers are better off under a qualified Principal and vice versa (Malek, Principal, interview).

School improvement was seen by the Deputy as an outcome of professional development.

Professional development is important, since if you continue without it you'll stay still (Saud, Deputy, interview).

He argues that professional development allows schools to learn from other schools, perhaps ones with deeper experience.

[...] it gives you the opportunity to develop and explore other successful examples and learn from more experiences (Saud, Deputy, interview).

Modern education is continuously developing, and so it requires practitioners to develop themselves to cope with such escalations, according to the Social Instructor.

Schools are no longer as they used to be. They are more complex as organisations and learning institutes (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Therefore, Wazeer School leaders are emphatic in encouraging school practitioners to engage in professional development opportunities. As mentioned earlier in the discussion of the school's learning environment, it seems to encourage learning for adults as well as for students.

Learning does not stop when a certificate is achieved, but rather continues lifelong. Teachers, staff and the Principal are still learning and earning new experiences (Wazeer School General Guidelines, document).

From this statement, it appears that the school aims to treat learning as not being limited to age, experience or occupation. All are encouraged to continue learning. The other aspect of this statement arises from the word "earn" as a way to show the importance of gaining new experiences.

The Principal argues that encouraging professional development benefits both the school and its individual staff.

Teachers or leaders who engage in such learning opportunities will not only return to help improve the school, they will also gain experience themselves and may enhance their careers (Malek, Principal, interview).

To some teachers, such training opportunities are beneficial especially to learn about developing or emerging pedagogical movements. A senior teacher stated:

I had the opportunity to learn how to use computers in the classroom (Teacher group 3, group interview).

Teachers, however, seem to be under pressure from the school leaders to engage in these professional development opportunities; some appear not to be happy about this.

It reached a point that you would think such training is more important to them [leaders] than teaching (Teacher group 1, group interview).

Others expressed concern about the possible effects of professional development timing on student learning.

Training usually takes place within school hours, so attending training means missing classes and that affects students' learning (Teacher group 2, group interview).

Concerning the goals of professional development in schools, participants in the study report that they design their training programmes according to the school's general plan.

We have goals and they are in line with the school plans, programme and vision (Malek, Principal, interview).

According to the Social Instructor, the general three-year plan is accompanied by a training programme to prepare practitioners for new features of school programming.

We do analysis when we design our training programme so everyone should engage in some type of training related to the new elements (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

The Deputy gave an example from his experience preparing teachers and staff for emerging technologies.

When we introduced the school–parents application to our programme years ago, we designed a training programme for leaders and teachers specifically related to the new application (Saud, Deputy, interview).

More about the organisation of professional development for leaders and teachers will follow, in the next sections.

School leaders' professional development

This section will discuss the findings from Wazeer School regarding the professional development of school leaders (namely: Principal, Deputy and Social Instructor). This discussion will include their journey, motivation, the use of reflection and obstacles.

The Principal reported that he:

Taught for 7 years, was a Principal for 13 years and has been a Principal at this school for 7 years (Malek, Principal, interview).

He also:

Attended short and long courses. I did a diploma in school Principalship, which lasted half an academic year (Malek, Principal, interview).

He attended academic and practitioners' conferences, exchanged visits with fellow Principals in and outside the city and read specialised books, such as in the area of education and educational psychology (Malek, Principal, interview).

His most noteworthy experience was being a Principal in Qatar.

I benefited from being a Principal in Qatar for four years, which gave me a rare opportunity to experience a different environment (Malek, Principal, interview).

To the Deputy, experiencing teaching at different levels and holding a position as Principal previously have been rich experiences.

I have taught in primary, secondary and high schools and I worked as a Principal at another school for 3 years. So far, I have been Deputy at this school for 6 years. All that gives you experience, and a deeper understanding of different situations (Saud, Deputy, interview).

In addition, he also undertook several short courses and completed a diploma in school Deputyship (Saud, Deputy, interview). Remarkably, he offered a reflection on the difference between his early years in teaching and his current situation. The experience started from a need to prove himself but has reached the stage of wanting to make a difference for others.

At the beginning, there was impulsion but now I feel mature. Earlier in one's career, you need to prove yourself regardless of whether you are right or wrong, but later you can achieve comprehension and wisdom. So, now you look to make a difference for students and for the school (Saud, Deputy, interview).

In his career, the Social Instructor:

Taught for five years, was a Principal for 2 years, Deputy for 4 years and have been a Social Instructor at this school for 4 years (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

He extended his diploma in social studies instruction, earning a higher degree.

I did a Social Instructor diploma and extended it to gain an MA in Educational Psychology (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

He saw learning from the experience of others as important for his journey.

One of the most important factors is learning from the experience of others, especially senior teachers (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

When I asked each school leader about what had motivated them to develop, they offered slightly different responses. The Principal stated that his journey has been “internally motivated” (Malek, Principal, interview).

The Deputy, however, mentioned a combination of motivations. Family status and social statuses were important to him.

I am the eldest son and have brothers and sisters, so I wanted to set an example for them. People also pay more attention if I say I work as a Deputy (Saud, Deputy, interview).

The Social Instructor stated that the nature of his job motivated him to explore human behaviour.

The nature of my work as a Social Instructor requires me to be passionate about human behaviour so when I am not sure about anything, I go read about it (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

The Principal saw reflection to be an important professional development tool because:

It allows you to see and judge your behaviour in your peaceful space (Malek, Principal, interview).

Also, the Principal would distribute anonymised surveys asking for staff opinions as a way to gain insight from others on his work.

I use anonymous teacher's surveys to measure attitudes towards me and my decisions (Malek, Principal, interview).

Learning from his experiences was the Deputy's strategy for reflection.

Learning from past experiences, either positives or negative, especially learning from mistakes (Saud, Deputy, interview).

Keeping a journal for reflection helped the Social Instructor to guide him through his journey.

I write a reflective journal about my experiences, about what I have done and about what needs to be done in terms of my skills and behaviour (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Reflection helps him to achieve work-life balance.

Reflection helps me to make sure that I have work-life balance, because when I think back about what I have done so far, I would say: good, but what about my family (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

The last point regarding the professional development of school leaders is the obstacles they faced during their journeys. The Principal and his Deputy stated that work had been an obstacle for their development.

There is a clash between professional development and work. There is not enough time for both, and you can scarcely find any programmes in the evening (Malek, Principal, interview).

Meanwhile, the Deputy stated:

One of the biggest obstacles is juggling professional development and work (Saud, Deputy, interview).

The Ministry procedures were seen by the Social Instructor as an obstacle to his pursuit of a higher degree.

I would like to apply for a PhD, but they refused my request to apply (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Lack of motivation resulting from Ministry requirements is an obstacle, according to the Principal. Financially, he observed the current equality between teachers and school leaders regardless of their experience, qualifications and previous employment.

To those who have hundreds of course shops, those with courses and diplomas are the same as those with nothing. Even as a Principal, my wage is the same as my teaching colleagues who are similar in age and years of experience (Malek, Principal, interview).

Teachers' professional development

This subsection aims to discuss the organisation of teachers' professional development in Wazeer School. Participants distinguished two types of training offered by the local educational authority. The first is general training, which contains courses such as self-development, social interaction and communication, and other courses including delivering modules, assessment and behavioural management (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Teachers can choose what seems appropriate to them, but are encouraged by the school leaders to prioritise courses according to the school's plans.

We are encouraged to choose such training that is in line with the school objectives (Teacher group 3, group interview).

The Deputy explained his role as a leader in relation to this type of training.

As a leader, when I receive the training list from the local authority I try to match the offerings to the needs of teachers, which I know about through my visits and evaluations (Saud, Deputy, interview).

Some teachers described matching courses to needs as a nomination process, expressing no hard feelings as they are nominated to develop.

Schools sometimes nominate teachers with specific weaknesses for relevant training, e.g. classroom management, and there is no discomfort involved (Teacher group 4, group interview).

The Principal explained his approach when dealing with an underperforming teacher.

I would sit with him and explain the issue to him and give him support. Then, I might suggest visiting other teachers, visiting another school or enrolling in a training course. There is usually a positive collaboration (Malek, Principal, interview).

The other type of training is compulsory training, which is offered by the local authority. The Deputy explains special circumstances leading to such training taking place.

The compulsory ones are for those who are new, or when the curriculum they teach has been improved (Saud, Deputy, interview).

The school is planning to offer another type of professional development, in which they are planning to bring in professionals to run courses at the school. This initiative would allow people to learn in their setting, according to the Principal.

We are planning to bring in doctors from [a neighbouring] university to perform in-school courses. That would allow us to learn in our own environment (Malek, Principal, interview).

The Social Instructor believed that this type of learning would be tailored to school's needs.

[...] it will be linked to our school requirements (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

Some teachers are worried about this initiative, as their workload might increase.

I do not know about timing. If it is during school hours, what about students. But evenings and weekends are our time (Teacher group 1, group interview).

Local educational authority's role

The role of the local authority in schools' professional development ranges from being satisfactory to being believed as entirely negative, according to various participants. The Deputy sees the local authority as making an effort.

There is effort made by the local authority. They have a centre for training and offer courses and materials (Saud, Deputy, interview).

The Principal believes that the role of these authorities is negative because of a lack of motivation and recognition.

There is no difference between people with regards to training. So, those who engage in training and those who do not are the same. There are no motivations either financial nor intangible (Malek, Principal, interview).

Repeated content, underqualified presenters and a lack of development were observed by teachers as they considered the local authority training centre.

So much repetition, little effort is made to develop content (Teacher group 3, group interview).

Regarding presenters, they stated:

The course presenters are sometimes underqualified and not being specialised in what they are presenting (Teacher group 2, group interview).

They stated regarding the lack of development:

For five years, almost everything has remained the same, even spelling mistakes (Teacher group 4, group interview).

There seems to be a lack of communication between local authorities and teachers, so that training offerings are not needs-based and impact measurement is not the norm. According to the Principal and some teachers:

There are no connections between teachers and training providers within the local authority (Teacher group 3, group interview).

Both teachers and the Principal expressed similar opinions regarding impact measurement and needs-tailored training.

No impact measurement implies that training is not attached to needs (Malek, Principal, interview).

Some teachers stated:

There are no needs analysis and effectiveness measurement (Teacher group 3, group interview).

In addition, teacher training within school hours was seen by the Deputy to increase work load.

Training is effort-consuming and exhausting because they are done within normal hours so the school compensates teachers for their absences, which increases the workload on other teachers (Saud, Deputy, interview).

He suggested evening training with motivation.

I would suggest putting training after school times with overtime pay (Saud, Deputy, interview).

It been presented in this section evidence regarding professional development at Wazeer School. The development of both leaders and teachers have been presented here, along with the role of the local educational authority regarding such professional development.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings from Wazeer School, first presenting the school's context along with descriptive statistics. The main themes into which data was organised included leadership practices, culture and professional development.

The discussion about leadership practices included several subthemes: the school vision, organisational structure, leadership style, communication, strategic planning and quality assurance. The section examining school culture has revealed how the school interacts with the larger culture, as well as the role of micro-cultures. The last section discussed how professional development is perceived and organised at Wazeer School, in addition to reflective thoughts offered by its leaders on their journeys of professional development.

Chapter Seven: King's School - Findings and Analysis

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present and analyse data collected from King's School. Data will be presented in respect to three themes: leadership practices, culture and professional development, with sub-themes emerging within each theme. Each of these aspects will be discussed in its own section. Before discussing the evidence collected, the chapter will provide information about the context of this school and the participants in the study, in two separate sections. The names of the city, school and individual participants in the study will not be revealed, to ensure anonymity; "King's School" is a nominal name.

7.2 Context

King's School is located in the main urban area, in the heart of the city centre. It employs 28 teachers with an enrolment of 150 students for a student to teacher ratio of approximately 1:5. A high percentage of these students come from low socioeconomic status families. The school was established in 1967, built in 1978 and extended in 1989. The school benefits from having an extension for administrators and leaders, as well as a large auditorium, which is used as a theatre and for school events (King's School: Past, Present and Future, document).

Entering through the school gate, the refurbished 1978 building is located near the gate, leaving enough room for sports pitches behind the building. The age of this building cannot be missed, as cracks are prominent in several places.

The school benefits from being located on a large land; the Principal is therefore appealing to the school community to support a new building beside the existing one. The school has a fairly large library, a learning resources centre, three science labs and 15 classrooms with smartboards. The school employs a gatekeeper at all times but has no CCTV system.

From inside, the multiple refurbishment projects the school has undergone seem to have given the facility life. Ministry standards of building are prominently followed in this facility, so unique touches are not evident (field notes). According to the Principal, they have not been modifying the existing facility recently because of their hope for a new building.

The interior of the building looks and feels bright, cool and airy, as the covered area inside is well-ventilated. The extension contains the reception area, the Principal's office on the right-hand side, offices for administrators, a wooden door leading to the auditorium and a large door leading to the covered interior space (see Figure 7.1). Visitors are likely to be met by the gatekeeper; indeed, advance appointments are usually required for entry. The Principal is likely to be found in his office or in the administrative area.

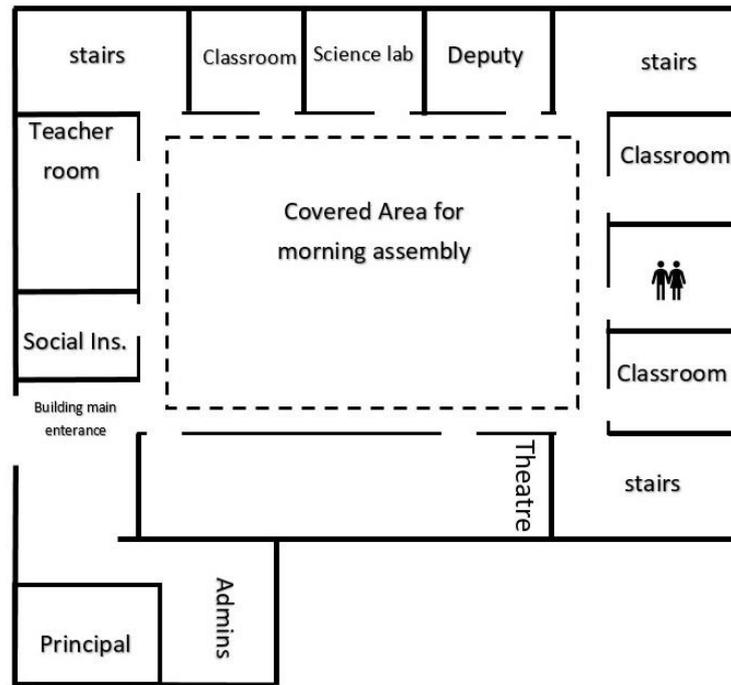


Figure 7: 1 King's School floorplan, ground floor (field notes).

The Principal's office is fairly large, with a back door leading to the administrative area and large extended sofas to sit approximately 20 people. The Deputy has a smaller office, and the Social Instructor's office is even smaller than the Deputy's. The teachers' room, is large and contains two sections: a functional section with desks, chairs and computers for each teacher and a nondescript section offering Arabic seating.

The school has been rated as outstanding by the local authority for 6 years and won the Education Excellence Award once since the award was launched in 2010 (Education Excellence Award, 2016).

7.3 Participants

Participant	Post/Number	Age	Experience*1	Duties*2	Qualifications
Nayif (Nayif, Principal)	Principal	59	Teacher (21 years) Social instructor in this school (3 years) Deputy in this school (5 years) Principal in this school (9 years)	Leading the school to achieve the teaching and learning goals set by the Ministry of Education	Bachelor's. Degree in Arabic and Social Sciences, Diploma in School Management and participation in long and short leadership courses.
Turky (Turky, Deputy Principal)	Deputy	47	Teacher (10 Years) Deputy at another school (11 years) Deputy at this school (5 years)	Participating in school leadership and management; developing teaching and learning and ensuring quality.	Bachelor's Degree in Islamic Studies and a Deputy's Diploma.
Bader (Bader, Social Instructor)	Social Instructor	48	Teacher 11 Years Social Instructor (8 years) Social Instructor in this school (7 years)	To work towards achieving psychological, educational, social and professional balance for students, helping them to develop their characters and to solve problems they may face.	Bachelor's Degree in Arabic Language and Social Instructor's Diploma
Teachers' Group 1 (Teacher group 1)	4	21-35	Teaching experience, some have leadership courses.	Organise and deliver classes as set by the national curriculum	Bachelor's Degree in their subject areas; one has a Deputy's Diploma.
Teachers' Group 2 (Teacher group 2)	6	25-52	Teaching experience.	Organise and deliver classes as set by the national curriculum	Bachelor Degree in their subject areas
Teachers Group 3 (Teacher group 3)	5	35-59	Teaching experience, some had leadership courses	Organise and deliver classes as set by the national curriculum	Bachelor Degree in their subject areas and one has Diploma in Education
Teachers Group 4 (Teacher group 4)	4	23-41	Teaching experience.	Organise and deliver classes as set by the national curriculum	Bachelor Degree in their subject areas.
Teachers Group 5 (Teacher group 5)	4	28-45	Teaching experience.	Organise and deliver classes as set by the national curriculum	Bachelor Degree in their subject areas.

Table 7: 1 King's School participants information list (field notes).

*1 Accurate as of May 2015

*2 From Tatweer. (2013)

Table 7.1 shows information about people participating in this study from King's School. The Deputy scheduled face-to-face interviews with the Principal, Deputy and Social Instructor, while the latter organised group interviews with teachers.

23 teachers participated in the study, divided into five groups according to their scheduled availability. I observed the Principal for a day and a half. The documents collected were a rich source of information that included flyers, books, reports, magazines and notice board listings.

The Principal has worked in the education sector for his entire career and, indeed, has been employed at King's School since he became a teacher in 1977. He taught for 21 years, then became a Social Instructor for 3 years, Deputy for 5 years and in 2006 was appointed as a Principal. The Deputy, however, served all of his career outside King's School until he became its Deputy. He taught for 10 years, became a Deputy at another school for 11 years and has been Deputy at this school for 5 years. The Social Instructor was a teacher for 11 years, then a Social Instructor for 8 years elsewhere and a Social Instructor at this school for 7 years.

7.4 Findings and analysis

Data collected from King's School will be presented in relation to the same three themes as used for the Safer and Wazeer Schools. Data related to the themes of leadership practices, culture and professional development will be discussed in three different sections. Emerging subthemes will also be discussed in subsections.

7.4.1 Leadership practices

The evidence about leadership practices at King's School will be discussed in six subthemes, to enhance the understanding of these practices:

- Vision
- Organisational structure
- Leadership styles
- Communication
- Strategic planning
- Quality assurance

Each theme will be presented in a separate section.

Vision

The evidence collected admirably answers questions about what is the school vision is? How is it communicated in the school? And how is it perceived within the school community?

The school vision is as follows:

Modern education coincided with the 21st century through local and Islamic perspectives (Grounding Principles for [King] School Community, document).

I asked the Principal to explain the logic behind the school vision. He said:

Our vision is to have a modern and advanced school and at the same time to maintain a peaceful relationship with our values and customs (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Deputy offered an interesting insight into what is known as a conflict between traditionalists and modernists.

Unfortunately, some people think that to be successful you need to copy everything the West does. We have a rich culture and religion and people

respect these two aspects. So, there is nothing wrong in taking what suits us (Turky, Deputy, interview).

He then gave a very specific example from East Asia, trying to argue his case of adopting what suits the country instead of indiscriminate policy borrowing.

Take American firms in Japan, for example. They have American concepts of management, leadership and capitalism while still attached to and respecting Japanese traditions (Turky, Deputy, interview).

Arguments like this will follow in the discussion about culture and the school in relation to macro cultures.

The other aspect is how the vision is communicated in the school. In this case, the school vision is placed on a large board at the main building entrance. Several documents also had the vision printed on them.

The Principal has argued that for such vision to work, it has to be communicated through actions not through memorisation.

If I said, "I need modern teaching" and still offer chalkboards for my classrooms I would not be helping my vision. However, we have classrooms equipped with smartboards, Internet connections, media banks, etc. (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Social Instructor argued that making the technology available is not the goal. The aim, rather, is to encourage a readiness to explore and develop.

Having smartboards is not enough. The teachers – and we, ourselves – need to be ready and willing to think outside the box and work effectively (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

Some teachers reported that offering such new technologies helped them deliver more effective classes.

As a History teacher, I use visual aids and films provided by the school to bring students to understanding (Teacher group 3, group interview).

An English teacher benefits from access to native speakers of English from around the world.

I am not always limited to what the school provides me. I have the Internet: there are lots of teaching materials available from native speakers (Teacher group 5, group interview).

The Principal described the school's vision as ambitious, offering a wide window for exploration.

Our vision is ambitious because it is full of opportunities and is suitable for many years to come (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Some teachers find that the vision is too ambitious and has no focus.

In my opinion, the vision is not realistic and it has a very wide scope (Teacher group 3, group interview).

Organisational structure

This subsection explains the school's structure from an organisational perspective. The community of King's School seems to pay attention to how it is organised. Documents show how the school community has tried to widen its organisational basis, and insists that job titles serve an organisational purpose. The school's Grounding Principles state:

The school is built upon sharing responsibilities with all its members. The presence of the leader, his Deputy and the Social Instructor serve to facilitate the organisation's work (Grounding Principles for [King] School Community, document).

The Social Instructor explains his view on sole leadership:

In a modern school, one-person leadership is very difficult and is likely to be unsuccessful (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

Such an opinion was supported by some teachers who argued that flat organisation is a more effective way to run a school because:

It combines the time and effort of many persons instead of depending on just one (Teacher group 1, group interview).

Other teachers claim that as schools have become more complex, the Principal needs to focus on the needs of the organisation as a whole.

The Principal cannot do everything at the school, because there is too much; instead, he should concentrate on supervising the entire process (Teacher group 2, group interview).

Similarly, the Principal believes that an emphasis on details may deter him from more important tasks.

When a Principal engages himself in details he is likely to lose sight of the whole (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Regarding how flat the organisation is within King's School, the Principal believes that the Ministry's policy prevents movement towards less centralisation of authority within the school.

The current policies make non-hierarchical organisation impossible for schools, because the Principal is the primary contact and the person holding responsibility (Nayif, Principal, interview).

This Principal described his role at the school to be organising tasks and monitoring activity at the school, as well as offering accountability.

My main role is to distribute responsibilities, do general supervision and provide accountability (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Participants reported some phenomena at their school that they believe reflect flat organisation: namely being trusted and feeling safe to make decisions responsibly. As an example of the former, one observation showed a level of trust being given to the Deputy and the Social Instructor.

The Principal asks the Deputy and the Social Instructor to meet with representatives of the local authority to discuss some of the school's requirements (Principal's office, observations).

When asked about this, he said:

It is about trust and feelings of ownership towards the school. When you include people in discussions of school business they become more likely to take initiative, to take responsibility and to care about the school (Principal's office, observations).

Further discussion about staff engagement will follow under the subsection exploring the effect of leadership styles.

The Deputy stated that he feels trusted by the Principal.

Sometimes I would write a letter to the local authority and sign it on his behalf, send it off and give him a copy afterwards (Turky, Deputy, interview).

The Principal argues that the balance between accountability and delegation involves taking risks.

Flattening the organisation within the school while remaining accountable always requires me to take some risks; otherwise I would end up doing everything myself (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Meanwhile, participants explained how safe and how confident they felt when delegated a responsible task. According to the Principal:

I always say, you are under my responsibility; just do the work and I will be your representative in front of the local authority (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Social Instructor emphasised the contrast between this Principal and previous negative experiences, in which other Principals would delegate high-risk tasks to colleagues to avoid responsibility.

Under some managements, a Principal would give you responsibility for a high-risk job. So, if something went wrong, the person with the task would be held responsible. But [Nayif], gives you responsibility with trust and assurance (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

The Deputy expressed how important this feeling of safety is.

If you feel safe and covered would work more effectively (Turky, Deputy, interview).

Leadership style/s

It has thus been established that the school community seems supportive of a less hierarchical organisation, as they believe that solo leadership is not sufficient for modern schools. The next discussion concerns how leadership is distributed among different people at King's school, how teachers are engaged in the process and how collaboration is built. Another aspect concerns transformational leadership behaviours linked to the Principal himself, namely his approach to motivation and intellectual stimulation.

From the interview data, it appears that participants view distributed leadership and teacher engagement as similar terms. While the discussion on distributed leadership often shifted quickly to focus on the engagement of teachers in decision making (which the literature describes as one manifestation of distributed leadership), I did manage to collect some thoughts from participants about distributed leadership in general.

Within the school, staff members seem to be aware of how tasks and responsibilities have been assigned. In one observed instance:

A parent was asking a member of the administrative team:

"Is the Deputy the person to speak to regarding students unauthorised absence?"

The administrator replied, yes, he is the one in charge of that (Reception area, observations).

The Principal argues that this structure of delegation serves to enhance the school's work.

It is about specialisation. The Deputy and all other staff members know their work better than I do. Therefore, it is better to assign each one to his tasks (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Deputy and some teachers reported that distributed leadership occurs at the school.

If you ask me whether there is distributed leadership in our school, I would say yes, to a great extent (Turky, Deputy, interview).

When I asked teachers about how they see distributed leadership within the school, they discussed issues related to decentralising responsibility among the school leaders.

Any member of the leadership team would be able to help with your enquiries (Teacher group 2, group interview).

The Social Instructor gave insight into the psychology of leadership distribution, suggesting that the power of the Principal is important when he delegates power to fellow leaders.

Internal power is very important when it comes to distributed leadership. As humans, we need to feel that we are important. With distributed leadership, it means that work could be done without the Principal. It is a strength, but some people in that role might think, I would no longer be needed then (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

The Principal and the Deputy take different positions regarding why teachers should be engaged. The Principal reasons that their engagement is important to them being close to students and involved in their learning process.

They are involved in student learning and are aware of the changes students are going through (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Deputy, meanwhile, argues that teacher engagement could mean better decision making, in a proactive sense.

Teachers are very close to students and engaging them helps decision making to be the best for students (Turky, Deputy, interview).

Many participants reported positive effects from teacher engagement. The Deputy believes it promotes enthusiasm.

Engagement results in people being enthusiastic about their work since they see their suggestions, comments or ideas applied in real life (Turky, Deputy, interview).

The Social Instructor sees teacher engagement as promoting innovative and critical thinking.

It [Engagement] results in innovative thinking, problem solving and even thinking about what could go wrong and solving it before it becomes an issue (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

Teachers argue that being active and taking initiative results from engagement.

We become active and do not just wait to be told what to do (Teacher group 5, group interview).

Other teachers identified a sense of ownership resulting from when they become engaged.

When I am involved in decision making I feel part of the school and work for the success of this organisation (Teacher group 1, group interview).

Regarding collaboration and teamwork, it was mentioned above that the school's Grounding Principles emphasise collaboration between school members as essential to the school's values.

The school is built upon sharing responsibilities with all its members [...] (Grounding Principles for [King] School Community, document).

The Principal argued that teacher collaboration is linked to how they are engaged in the school.

Engagement and collaboration are linked together. When you engage people in decision making they are likely to collaborate and work together (Nayif, Principal, interview).

However, collaboration can be a sensitive issue for teachers, as some of the activities involved are not listed in teachers' job descriptions, according to the Deputy.

Collaboration is a very delicate task, because teachers are only contractually obliged to teach their classes. They are not required to monitor students [during school breaks or at the start or end of the day] or even to help with extracurricular activities [such as open days] (Turky, Deputy, interview).

The Principal preferred to approach this issue from a human perspective.

The best and most appropriate way to gain their collaboration is to build stronger relationships, respect, professionalism, etc. (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The other point about leadership style concerns the Principal's transformational leadership behaviour, namely his emphasis on motivation and intellectual stimulation. According to the documents collected, King's School appears to be keen to motivate highly performing students. The school has a programme to celebrate those who reach an outstanding level of achievement: at the end of each term, they are honoured in the school closing ceremony covering its activities during the term ([King's School] Past, Present and Future, document).

The Principal stated that motivation is not limited to students; teachers and other staff are also to be motivated under this programme.

We also celebrate the achievement of teachers, leaders and administrative staff (Nayif, Principal, interview).

According to him:

Everybody needs motivation, even me. One word of gratitude from a parent or an official is worth so much to me (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Teachers expressed their feelings regarding this form of motivation:

It is a nice feeling when they call your name because you have done outstanding work (Teacher group 5, group interview).

Another teacher added:

It is a symbol of recognition and appreciation (Teacher group 5, group interview).

The Deputy argues that motivation is important to the school, and argues against contemporary research because treating all students the same can have a negative effect on smart students.

Modern researchers have urged us to promote equality among students; they have eliminated student rankings and celebrations of high achievement [...] they want every person in the classroom to feel the same, to help underachievers [...] However, this has a negative effect on genius students [...] they need motivation, competition and the need to feel they are unique (Turky, Deputy, interview).

The Social Instructor suggested introducing another project for under-achievers.

My opinion is, as there are projects for celebrating high achievers, there should be others to helping underachievers (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

Regarding intellectual stimulation, one of this school's projects consisted in "Knowledge Activities", in which students competed each week to test their knowledge of various subjects, usually ones outside the curriculum (2015 [King's] School Report, document). The school's Grounding Principles state:

Always think differently from how others are thinking and you will inevitably be creative (Grounding Principles for [King] School Community, document).

From one observation:

There was a class converted to be like an "ideas generator", with a large oval table in the middle and no chairs. The walls of the room are full of inspirational pictures and sketches (Brainstorming room, observations).

I asked the Principal how the room is used? And he replied:

We come to this room for brainstorming, to work on new projects and ideas (Brainstorming room, observations).

The Deputy stated that the Principal encourages creative thinking.

The Principal always says to think outside the box, to be creative (Turky, Deputy, interview).

As the Principal was known to be committed to a safe working environment for his fellow leaders and staff (please refer to the organisational structure section), teachers reported that they felt safe to suggest new ideas.

We are free to suggest anything and are not afraid to do so (Teacher group 3, group interview).

Another teacher related a negative experience in the past, from another Principal.

On one occasion, I was attacked verbally by a Principal because I suggested an idea different from his beliefs (Teacher group 3, group interview).

Communication

Data collected from King's School reveals how the school community communicates and the tone used in their communication.

The school seems interested in communicating with the wider community outside its borders. From the document collected, the school does some work expressing its social responsibility. It produces at least five leaflets a year, making an average of 5000 copies and distributing them in the community ([King's] School Past, Present and Future, document).

One of the leaflets produced by the school was about safety in transportation. The leaflet discussed how to be safe as a driver, a passenger and a pedestrian.



Figure 7: 2 Safety in Transportation, document.

Another leaflet provided health and safety advice from the Fire Brigade. It offered advice about safety in children's toys, the dangers of prohibited fireworks, the danger of drowning in swimming pools and safety advice for home appliances.



Figure 7: 3 Fire Brigade Work, document

Such leaflets were produced to be distributed outside the school, which explains the language used that was directed to adults and parents (i.e. "Dear reader, if anything happens to your child do not forget to call 998" [fire services] (Fire Brigade Work, document)

When I asked about his views on social responsibility, the Principal explained that he was interested in having a strong relationship with the wider community.

The school-community relationship must be strong. They need to believe in it, trust it and see its results (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Principal explained how strong school-community relationships could help the school in case of crisis.

Such attachment gives us strength. In any difficult situation, we turn to the community for help. We faced relocation five years ago, but that proposal was dismissed because the community stands with us (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Regarding how the school community communicates internally – among teachers, staff and leaders – they have a WhatsApp group in which all staff and teachers are participants. This is used as an official means of communication.

Our WhatsApp group is very important; we hold some meetings and discussion about work (Nayif, Principal, interview).

To the Deputy, this electronic medium is helpful.

The group is a shortcut for time and effort. I can send PDF files and share pictures and documents (Turky, Deputy, interview).

The Social Instructor mentioned some similar uses of this technology.

The school timetable was completed and distributed this year mainly using WhatsApp (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

He explains how the WhatsApp group helped to create the school timetable.

We use the main group to announce that the time now is open to register your preferences, and we send a link for them to register what year, class and subject they would like to teach (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

To teachers, using such electronic means holds a mixture of positive and negative impacts. Some stated that using the mobile application in this way eased communication with their leader.

It is good, because it eases the way we communicate with the Principal (Teacher group 2, group interview).

Others, however, have expressed a negative evaluation of this online group. The more the application is used as an official means of communication, the less enjoyable it may be as a social media environment.

[The group] ruins the application for me. It is not for fun anymore. Before the group, it was exciting to receive a text, but now you know you could

have a text from the Principal at night to say that a teacher will be on sick leave tomorrow and that you need to cover for him (Teacher group 4, group interview).

Others agree to the group's benefits but suggest a limitation to its usage time.

It is good, but should be limited to working hours (Teacher group 4, group interview).

Regarding the tone of communication at the school, I was given the opportunity to read roughly two days worth of communication on the WhatsApp group, when the Social Instructor gave me his phone to read through the conversations. The group name was "Professors Group". There were some jokes shared inside the group. The Principal's tone was consistently respectful; he would say "I am one of you" as they discussed a dinner gathering after school (Social Instructor's office, field notes).

Based on the documents read, the school designed a project called Discuss with an Official. This project takes place twice a month for 45 minutes; at this time, students ask "an Official" questions about school matters. The Principal, his Deputy, the Social Instructor and some teachers with some administrative responsibilities each participate in rotation (2015 [King's] School Report, document).

According to the Principal, this project aimed to use communication to reduce power difference.

It reduces the gap between us, as leaders, and our students. Power difference contributes negatively to relationships between people (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Social Instructor also mentioned future goals related to power differences.

It sends a message to them that I am your Principal and you can question me, so when you become an official in the future it will be okay to be questioned (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

To the Deputy, the point of such communication initiative is to allow students to discuss school issues.

It gives our students the opportunity to discuss matters with their school leaders (Turky, Deputy, interview).

Strategic planning

Planning at King's School takes place at the end of each academic year for the year ahead. In this subsection, data will be revealed on how they plan and what planning means to the participants.

As the Principal stated, the school is committed to commencing its plan as early as they can.

It is our unwritten policy that we start to implement our plans as soon as the new year begins. Planning itself must be done before we close for the summer holiday (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The planning process starts by selecting committees responsible to put projects together.

We select three or four committees, combining teachers and leaders, to study our needs, to choose appropriate projects or suggest new ones and develop a plan for the next year (Turky, Deputy, interview).

Every year the Principal selects different people to build the school plan.

We select fresh people every year, while those selected are likely to have their workload reduced to allow them to concentrate (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

The committees work to select projects already proposed at the school or suggest new projects as the Deputy mentioned previously. These projects are chosen to guide the school towards its vision.

The annual plan consists of programmes that help us to approach our vision (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Principal explained how projects are built. According to him, anyone can suggest a new project, on condition that the initiative is in line with the school vision.

We have a form that the person who has a new idea can fill in. Anyone or anything is acceptable, so long as it proposes a reasonable connection to the school vision (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The form is offered by the school for anyone proposing a new project. It shows, among other sections, the relationship between the new project and the school's vision. In addition, the school vision was printed on the top left corner to serve as a reminder.

Regarding links to the school vision, as mentioned on the form, teachers seem also to be required to link their daily lesson plans to the school's vision.

When we plan our lessons, we are required by the Principal to link them to the school vision (Teacher group 1, group interview).

Some are happy about this and feel it offers motivation to innovate.

When you think about the school's vision, it encourages you to be innovative also and bear 21-century educational approaches in mind (Teacher group 1, group interview).

Others were not happy about this, believing that not all goals can or should be linked.

I am an Arabic teacher; I understand how an English teacher would link his lessons to 21st-century educational principles, but how would I do that? It is Arabic – it has always been that way (Teacher group 4, group interview).

One of his fellow teachers suggested a way for that Arabic teacher to make peace with modern teaching.

You could use innovative teaching techniques instead of lecturing. It is about benefiting from the knowledge boom and making an accommodation with it (Teacher group 4, group interview).

When I asked why planning is important to the school community, the Principal suggested that planning allows the school to assess its performance.

The most important factor is that with planning you can measure performance (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Deputy believes that planning is essential to orientate the school towards its vision.

Planning is the thread that takes you to your vision. Because you could have the most beautiful vision, but with no plan, you go nowhere (Turky, Deputy, interview).

Quality assurance

The evidence collected suggests that quality assurance at King's School takes place in two aspects: organisational quality in terms of its function and educational quality in teaching and learning.

Organisational quality

This aspect concerns the quality of day-to-day processes. The school seems to be keen to improve its procedures, and uses electronic means, such as emails, texts and wall-mounted screens, to communicate. It seems that increasing organisational effectiveness and standardising procedures are two of the goals of these measures.

An observation shows how simple technologies, such as email from a smart phone, were used to discuss matters effectively.

A number of teachers, the Principal and his Deputy are planning the end-of-year ceremony. The Deputy wanted to share a file with the others and immediately emailed them the file from his smart phone. They began discussing the file immediately after opening it on their own smart phones (Meeting room, observations).

When I asked why electronic sharing is popular in the school, the Principal replied.

Our intention in using such techniques is to speed up processes, save time and with electronic sharing also to find things more easily, reducing the possibility of losing documents (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Deputy stressed the efficiency of this approach, arguing that the use of electronic technologies results in faster and more effective school procedures.

When parents want to apply for their kids to enrol at our school or to transfer from another school, it is all paperless. We save time and effort by not having a period where the school is full of parents with their children's files. That's only one example of many (Turky, Deputy, interview).

Using information technology results in the school applying more uniform procedures, according to the Social Instructor.

With paper processing, somebody could receive one decision from me, another from the Deputy and a third from the Principal himself. We once had a student who took two periods off from school for the same health issue, from two different persons (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

For teachers, however, relying on technology can result in excluding the human side from the school day-to-day operations, as the school intends to introduce biometric monitoring of staff logging in and logging out.

It is not a way to motivate people!! I need to be believed and trusted (Teacher group 1, group interview).

Another teacher flagged an issue related to work arrangements.

When I need to take my child to a medical appointment I would be registered as absent. Up until now, we speak to the Principal and re-arrange classes, with no problem (Teacher group 3, group interview).

Quality in teaching and learning

The King's School is strongly committed to ensuring quality in teaching and learning using statistics and exam results.

In the Principal's office, there is a large white board approximately 2 meters by 3 meters full of numbers. It includes students' high achievements, linked to their teachers. It also includes a list of high performing teachers, etc. (Principal's office, observations).

The reason to use such statistics is to help the school community to know their status and trend, according to the Principal.

Numbers are visual signs that we use, among other measures, to make sure that we are on the right track (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Deputy stated that such statistics offer a fair means of evaluation.

Using numbers is an objective way of evaluation, which is fairer to students as well as teachers (Turky, Deputy, interview).

The person in charge of producing these numbers is the Social Instructor.

I am in charge of producing and analysing such statistics. I then share them with the Principal and relevant people. I produce reports every week, month and term (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

The Social Instructor also noted that among the statistics is an indicator for motivation that compares a student's results over time.

We compare how well the student is doing over a period of time. If he improves, a motivational reward will be offered (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

Since reports are produced and sent to teachers regarding how well their students did, some teachers raised concerns about the average results in different subjects. The school bases its calculations on an expected average for

each subject. For example, for math classes, an average mark of 87% is expected.

As a teacher of Physics, which is proven to be a difficult subject for students, the average score they expect is not very different from Physical Education or poetry. Although they do take this into consideration, they should lower the expected average (Teacher group 2, group interview).

7.4.2 Culture

This section will discuss the evidence concerning culture at King's School. As in the other cases, the analysis will consider culture in its wider and narrower conceptualisations, starting from globalization, examining religion and national culture and finally investigating school culture and subcultures. In this case, the sections will be as follows:

- Globalization
- National Culture
- Organisational culture
- Reciprocal effects

Some of these contain subthemes.

Globalization

It has been mentioned above that the school's vision clearly endorses a modern orientation towards education, while recognising both local culture and Islamic values. The vision is as follows:

Modern education coincided with 21st century through local and Islamic perspectives (Grounding Principles for [King] School Community, document).

The balance between modern, Western values on one side and Islamic and local culture on the other were made clear when analysing the school’s vision and how it is communicated. The same balance is also evident from other documents. A leaflet was designed by the school about TQM in education to coincide with Quality in Education Day (see figure 7:4). The two boxes highlighted explain this balance in practice. The upper box talks about quality in Islam, quoting a verse from Qur’an and saying of the prophet Mohammed. The lower box introduces the concept of quality in education as promoted by the UNESCO educational conference in Paris 1998.



Figure 7: 4 Conceptualising TQM in Education, document

The Deputy has argued that the term “Western Ideologies” is incorrect, and that these concepts are general human knowledge, which cannot be claimed by certain cultural communities.

Leadership and management theories are human knowledge so no race can claim them as theirs (Turky, Deputy, interview).

He continued to support his claim by giving as example from the early Islamic era.

The first Islamic community [the prophet Mohammad's community] used to have aspects of consultative and democratic leadership (Turky, Deputy, interview).

Globalization and its technological manifestations (i.e. the Internet and smart phones) were discussed by participants, who debated the extent to which they affected the school environment, either negatively or positively. The Social Instructor mentioned a negative effect on student concentration, citing high rates of students sleeping during classes.

Sometimes I ask students what time they go to bed and the reply is "2 o'clock in the morning". When I asked why, they would reply "on the Internet or playing with mobile phones" (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

To the Principal, such new technologies are beneficial as students use them to access information.

Getting information has become easier, so teachers are no longer the only source of information (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Aside from viewing globalization through its technological manifestations, a younger teacher, 26, mentioned an interesting point. He argued that globalization positively affected him and his younger colleagues in the way they

view their leaders. He offered a comparison between younger and older colleagues.

Our older colleagues do not question what the Principal says. They are used to being under authoritarian management style where the Principal is everything in the school, with no negotiation, or consultation, or even open communication. But now it is completely different (Teacher group 1, group interview).

He argued that younger teachers in this school are affected by globalization more than their senior teachers, and that therefore, the management style they expect is different.

As young teachers, we are affected the most by globalization and do not accept authoritarian leadership (Teacher group 1, group interview).

This insight will be discussed in the discussion chapter of the thesis.

National culture

The evidence collected from King's School shows that the national culture was communicated by participants within two main subthemes: religion and sense of belonging to a homeland, or patriotism.

As mentioned before, King's school balances religion and modern perspectives and tries to introduce Western concepts while citing Islamic quotations in favour of such ideologies. The school vision discussed earlier also balances these two different perspectives. The first Grounding Principle of the King School community states that Islam is the school's policy.

Islam and The General Educational Policy are our policy to which we refer in all our principles and projects (Grounding Principles for [King] School Community, document).

An observed instance shows the observance of Islamic principles by the Principal and his Deputy.

The Principal and his Deputy were in a conversation when the call for prayer sounded. They stopped immediately and proceeded to the main hall to perform the afternoon prayer with students and all other school members (Principal's office, observations).

When I asked the Principal why he paid such attention to religion, he stated that it is about parents expectations.

One of the reasons parents bring their children to school every day, besides education, is to be raised as good Muslims (Nayif, Principal, interview).

To the Social Instructor, paying attention to religious observance is also a way to ensure that students follow the right path within Islam, away from extremism.

We need to make sure that students follow the true religion not the extreme version which is falsified by radical organisations (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

The other subtheme is patriotism. The documents collected include a leaflet and a book produced to coincide with the Saudi National Day. Two aspects were visible from these documents. First, the book tries to link patriotism to religion,

deriving a sense of belonging to the nation from religion. The other aspect is that the book mentioned in several passages the state of the country before it was unified under the King, and the benefits the royal family has brought to the nation.

The Principal says that is emphasis is to remind the school community of the blessing that the country is experiencing.

We remind ourselves and our students of the privilege we have received; we aim to do that and to raise the level of patriotism to do what is best for our nation (Nayif, Principal, interview).

From observations, the sense of patriotism is visible in the school, from raising the national flag to paintings and wall arts.

The Saudi flag is visible upon school gates and in several locations. There are pictures of the royal family and several boards are painted green with sayings by one of the kings written on them (King's School, field notes).

Deeper patriotism was interpreted by the Deputy as a sense of belonging to the homeland by working hard to develop the country each in their own way.

The person who has patriotic feeling would not break things in the school or draw on walls. To the teacher, it is about respecting work and caring about his students and classes. To the Principal, it is about making sure that he serves the school with sincerity and dedication (Turky, Deputy, interview).

One teacher viewed national culture according to the way it affects schools. He stated that national customs and traditions are visible in school management.

For example, older teachers, especially those approaching retirement, are likely to be respected and given a lesser work load than junior teachers (Teacher group 4, group interview).

Another teacher argued that these ideas might be valid but not the example.

It is not about work load because it would clash with justice, but they [senior teachers] are rather to be consulted and their opinion should be valued (Teacher group 4, group interview).

Organisational culture

The Principal and some teachers offered insight into how the school culture had undergone a transition from what was deemed to be a negative prior situation to its current status. The Deputy and the Social Instructor could not describe this process as they were at a different school at that time. Nayif became Principal at King's School in 2007, and the school was not rated outstanding until 2010. There had been a culture of division between teachers and school leaders (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Relationships were not good at all; there were some teachers who would spend years not talking to the Principal (Teacher group 5, group interview).

Relationships among teachers also used to be negative. Sub-groups would have special relationships among themselves, but have a different attitude towards other groups.

There are like three different groups among teachers, every group has their own meetings and gatherings outside the school and shared its own place in the school to relax (Teacher group 2, group interview)

Another teacher added:

You would meet your colleague in the same group with a great smile and laughter but give a cold face to people from other groups (Teacher group 2, group interview).

Groups at that time were built on ideological differences between members. Every group has its own philosophy, according to the Principal.

People engaged with people who had similar ideologies, so groups were established (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Principal stated that he benefited from being a Social Instructor at that time and gained experience out of the disorder.

I was watching and studying the problems in our school (Nayif, Principal, interview).

He believed that one of the reasons this transpired is that the Principal was involved with one of the groups and chose favourites among this group.

The Principals used to favour one group over the other, so they chose fellow leaders among their favourite group (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Other groups would feel wronged and left behind.

When the Principal favoured your colleague because he was among the preferred group it was devastating and frustrating. We felt the injustice and were outside the Principal's circle (Teacher group 3, group interview).

The Principal stated that it took a number of years before he managed to change the school culture.

The process of turning the school around took me a good three years with the help of some senior teachers (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The ways in which the Principal managed to change school culture will be discussed below.

Teachers described the current school culture as positive with strong, healthy relationships among colleagues.

We now have balanced relationships. Teachers are friendlier to each other (Teacher group 1, group interview).

The culture now existing was collaborative, according to the Social Instructor.

Staff collaborate with each other and with the leaders (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

The Deputy stated that staff would now take initiative.

No one would say this is not my job, and the majority take initiative (Turky, Deputy, interview)

How these differing moments in school culture affected school performance will be discussed in the relevant subsection below.

Regarding the school learning environment, this matter seems to be taken seriously. The Grounding Principles for [King] School Community state that the school provides a positive learning environment and they work to keep it positive.

Our school environment is a fertile environment for learning [...] we are keen to keep away anything that adversely affects such an environment (Grounding Principles for [King] School Community, document).

The Principal believes that although contemporary schools offer more than direct learning and teaching as they involve programmes and activities, learning outcomes are still the most important factor.

Schools nowadays are required to do extracurricular activities, trips, open days etc. so we can report to the local authority and the Ministry. The most important factor in schools to me is student learning and development, and creating the right environment for this to happen is equally important (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Learning resources were provided by the school, according to teachers.

We have a variety of learning aids and resources and when we ask for equipment the Principal is always responsive (Teacher group 4, group interview).

The Deputy mentioned that he keeps record of the number of visits to learning resource centres within the school and makes the data available to teachers and leaders.

I arrange with the administrative staff who run the labs, the library, the learning centres etc. to keep a record with the names of teachers and classes who use them. We make the data available to teachers and the Principal so we can encourage everyone to make the most of them (Turky, Deputy, interview).

The Social Instructor mentioned an initiative that he took three years previously. He suggested and organised an annual event for ex-students who became successful after graduation.

We invite 15 alumni every year and organise an in-school event. Those invited can be judges, lawyers, high ranked soldiers or policemen, successful businessmen or people who have high social status such as religious scholars (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

He argued that such initiative motivates students.

It inspires and motivates students to do well in their education. The three events were successful and we have seen students stimulated by the events (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

Sub cultures

From the discussion above it appears that this school used to have subgroups within the organisation. It is also evident from the evidence that the school has since turned around to become more effective. The following section will discuss the notion of subcultures and how they were perceived.

It appears that subcultures still exist at King's School, as according to participants in the study. The Principal believes that such cultures are part of the school based on their history.

Our school is made from these groups. These groups form the foundation of our school culture. Some of them have existed for more than 30 years (Nayif, Principal, interview).

An observation showed subgroups divided in the staff room.

There were clearly three groups in the teachers' room, following their traditional sitting arrangements. One place appeared to be for senior teachers, another for junior teachers and a third for social sciences teachers (staff room, observations).

Some teachers explained the Principal's attitude towards subgroups upon his appointment as a Principal.

Previous Principals either affiliated themselves with one group or tried to demolish all groups upon getting the post. His approach, however, was better. He said, let us work together effectively despite our differences (Teacher group 5, group interview).

To support this claim, the Principal also stated:

It is the essence of this school, so I see no harm in having many groups as long as they work together and have no negative attitudes towards each other (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Social Instructor explained that these groups now interact with each other positively, and people work across groups cooperatively.

These groups interact with each other perfectly and they perform teamwork and collaboration (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

The Deputy, however, believes that multiple groups create a fragile environment in case of problems or difficulties.

Sub-groups can work when times are relaxed, but when problems arise, everyone will turn to his group for help and support, which will create a chaotic atmosphere (Turky, Deputy, interview).

Some teachers also believe something similar – a unified staff is argued to lead to collaboration, teamwork and effectiveness.

Unified schools are better in teamwork and collaboration. Their members work with each other effectively to achieve their vision (Teacher group 1, group interview).

The Principal cannot deny that potential, but is concerned with what is best for this school in particular.

As I said, sub-groups are the spirit of this school and I believe that the only way this school could be effective is by working with these subgroups effectively (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Reciprocal effects

In this subsection, data regarding the mutual effects of culture and the school environment will be revealed. This subsection contains three subthemes:

- School culture and school effectiveness.
- The role of school culture in case of problems and difficulties.
- The Principal's role in relation to school culture.

School culture and effectiveness

The evidence regarding the impact of school culture on effectiveness will be presented by drawing from the experience of participants and what aspects of culture participants believed contribute to school effectiveness

The Principal argues that when a Principal involves himself in one group against another, he will likely end up with an uncollaborative culture:

Only the favoured group will work with the Principal while other groups either watch dispassionately or even try to demolish what the Principal and his group do (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Teachers stated that in the past, collaboration and teamwork were not the main way of doing school activities.

Usually one or two teachers would help the Principal for one or two terms, get exhausted and then usually ask to go back to their normal teaching (Teacher group 3, group interview).

Some also reported that people in isolated groups were likely not to take school activities seriously.

School projects used not to be taken very seriously by teachers, especially the less favoured ones. They would say, "let's see what they are trying to do!!" in a taunting way (Teacher group 2, group interview).

Regarding aspects of school culture that were believed to contribute to school effectiveness, justice was viewed by teachers as a way of bringing collaboration to the school.

People affected by the Principal's favouritism are not ready to work for the success of this school because they know the Principal will benefit from this success. Justice, however, allows people to come together and work for the school success (Teacher group 1, group interview).

In addition, motivation was seen by some participants as a positive contributor. The Social Instructor stated that:

The positive culture in our school promotes working effectively (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

Similarly, teachers said:

Being in an effective environment is a motivation for teachers and students (Teacher group 2, group interview).

They argued that effective schools appeal to competent people, which promotes school effectiveness.

Effective and active schools attract effective teachers, leaders and students, which has a snowball effect on school success (Teacher group 4, group interview).

The school's Deputy views accreditation as a way of motivating people to work for the school's success.

One important point is relating achievement to those who worked hard to achieve what has been achieved. In other cases, success will be related to the Principal regardless of those who worked with him (Turky, Deputy, interview).

A culture of involvement in decision making becomes a motivating factor for staff to work to develop the school, according to the Social Instructor.

The more people are involved in the school, the more they work hard to promote the success of this school and vice versa (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

School culture in case of problems and difficulties

The following paragraphs will analyse the role of school culture in case of problems in the school. The Principal offered an insight into the situation before he was appointed in the role. Lack of trust and relationships led to a fragile environment in which problems could start easily.

Because there was no foundation of trust and good relationships, every tiny issue could spark a big problem (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Principal stated that some staff used to create problems to have a space of poor discipline.

People would sometimes look for problems because it could distract the Principal's attention so they could slip other issues through the net (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Problems were not contained within the school.

We had people who escalated issues and would write complaints beyond the school and the local authority (Teacher group 5, group interview).

The Principal argued that problems should be isolated and the Principal should not rely on stereotypes.

I deal with each problem in isolation. I would not say yes, it is typical of those people to do such and such (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Solving problems the friendly way is the Principal's first choice.

*I always maintain rules in front of the person or between the two parties.
But we start by trying to reach reconciliation (Nayif, Principal, interview).*

Some teachers believe that solving problems in the present is easier than in the school's more negative past.

What use to take 3 or more months to solve, disciplinary action and inspectors visiting many times now takes a matter of hours, or at most a couple of days (Teacher group 5, group interview).

Supporting this claim, the Principal stated that staff now solve their problems independently.

People who have an issue resolve conflict themselves, sometimes without referring to the school leaders (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Deputy and the Social Instructor believe that preventing problems by predicting them is important for the school.

Prevention is better than treatment. So, we try to predict problems before they occur by good planning and reflection (Turky, Deputy, interview).

Principal's role in relation to school culture

This subsection sets out important points noted by the Principal, that helped him change the school culture. After each point, I will include what other participants mentioned regarding this approach.

The first point he mentioned was regarding his efforts not to attach himself to a particular group within the school.

I go to every group and spend some time with them either outside or inside the school (Nayif, Principal, interview).

He explained this point further as he even asked the local authority to appoint new leaders from outside the school.

I asked the local educational authority to appoint a Deputy and a Social Instructor from outside the school to prove to my staff that I have no preferred group (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Teachers confirmed this point, stating:

He does not affiliate himself with a group (Teacher group 4, group interview).

The second key decision was allowing these sub-groups to continue.

I believe that these groups are the essence of our school so I did not touch them but tried to reshape them from being negative groups to positive ones (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Teachers mentioned that some previous Principals tried and failed to discontinue these groups' existence.

Many Principals tried before to dismantle these groups, but they failed (Teacher group 5, group interview).

The third point is acting justly in his decisions.

Doing justice to all and not favouring one over the other (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Deputy confirmed this point by stating:

He enacts justice between people which is an important factor (Turky, Deputy, interview).

The last point mentioned by the Principal was communicating his intentions to his staff.

I summoned all the staff for an official meeting during my first month of appointment and I explained the situation that our school was going through and I committed myself to change for the best (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The evidence about culture at King's School started with globalization and national culture as wider angles of culture, and reached the narrower angle which is school culture and its subcultures. The analysis of the effects of school culture on school effectiveness and problem-solving has been followed by a discussion of the Principal's role in building such cultures. The next section will examine professional development at King's School.

7.4.3 Professional development

This section presents data regarding professional development in King's School, following four main themes:

- How professional development is perceived in King's school
- Professional development of leaders
- Professional development of teachers
- The role of the local educational authority

Each of the themes will be presented in a separate subsection.

School professional development

Professional development seems to be important to the school community as it is believed to be a key in educational development, according to the school's Grounding Principles.

It [professional development] is the main driver for the educational development wheel (Grounding Principles for [King] School Community, document).

The Principal and his Deputy defend the importance of professional development for leaders and teachers. The Principal grounds this in the dynamic nature of education.

Training is very important to leaders and teachers because education is developing and evolving through the years (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Deputy suggested that leaders without training will be likely to learn as they go and sometimes learn from mistakes.

People without training do their job on a trial and error basis, which is not acceptable in real life education (Turky, Deputy, interview).

To support this claim, the Social Instructor revealed the professional development rate.

85% of school staff have engaged in training this year and we have 100% if we combine last year and this year (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

Teachers are encouraged by the Principal to engage in professional development.

We try to put pressure on teachers to engage in training (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Similarly, teachers stated:

We are encouraged by our leaders, especially the Principal and the Deputy, to apply for the training courses (Teacher group 2, group interview).

Reasons why professional development is important to the school vary. To the Principal, it is about the opportunity of learning concepts from their origin, the West.

In training, we learn from the West a lot, because leadership and management are Western concepts in the first place. We should not be afraid of saying that and using what is suitable for us among their findings (Nayif, Principal, interview).

To the Deputy, professional development offers a way to benefit from the latest findings of research and practice.

Training brings to professionals the conclusions that people have reached from studies and experiences, which could serve as short cuts for us (Turky, Deputy, interview).

To a senior teacher, training is even important for experienced teachers, as he benefited from a course he attended after years of practical experience.

I attended two years ago a course on effective class management and realised that for the last 35 years I was missing something that is valuable to class management (Teacher group 1, group interview).

To other teachers, it is about keeping up with the evolving nature of education.

It is no longer lecturing and memorising, teaching nowadays is more about using new techniques and innovation (Teacher group 4, group interview).

However, the Social Instructor expressed concerns regarding the disadvantages of teachers leaving school for training. He calculated missed classes, and they are considerable.

We have 28 teachers and in this year 23 teachers attended courses. I calculated the missed classes it was around 207 classes missed, which has consequences for learning and school organisation (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

He suggested that:

It should be done outside school hours with overtime payment (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

Regarding its professional development goals, King's School aims for professional development to be in line with the school vision.

We compare our vision and goals to the courses available and suggest courses (Turky, Deputy, interview).

The Social Instructor distinguished between two types of goals:

One reflects our vision and goals and the other tries to work on weaknesses that we might have (*Bader, Social Instructor, interview*).

The Deputy stated that there is a limitation to what the local authority offers and some of the school's goals are not reflected in the training lists.

We are limited to what the Ministry and the local authority offer. We have goals for which no training is available to us, such as private sector-school relations, etc. (Turky, Deputy, interview).

The Principal claimed that there is a balance between personal-based and school-based goals.

I like to balance individual-based and organisational-based courses, because individual development benefits the school and we encourage that (Nayif, Principal, interview).

School leaders' professional development

In this subsection, data regarding leaders' professional development will be examined. Four main subthemes have emerged in relation to this issue: their journey through professional development, their motivation, the use of reflection as a tool and obstacles they may experience.

The leaders' journeys to professional development are consistent in certain aspects and are different in others. The Principal, as mentioned, learned by experiencing the difficulties that his school went through before he became a Principal.

During the troubled period of our school I was learning from that. I used to go to Riyadh [the capital] from time to time to buy books, attend self-funded courses and meet experts and consultants (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Social Instructor mentioned benefiting from reading Western books:

I read many Western books about leadership and management (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

He also stated that the Ministry's website and teachers' forums on the Internet were helpful for him as a Social Instructor.

I read through the Ministry's website and teachers' Internet forums, especially during my first days as a Social Instructor. I found these very valuable (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

All three leaders mentioned attending the diploma programme offered to leaders by the Ministry. The Principal mentioned this, along with other courses which he funded himself.

I attended the Principals' diploma and several short and long courses; apart from the diploma all the rest were self-funded (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Social Instructor also mentioned that he found the diploma helpful.

I did the Social Instructor diploma which is very beneficial (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

The Deputy insisted on the benefits he gained from the diploma, as well.

I saw a great difference in my attitude towards leadership (Turky, Deputy, interview).

He mentioned that he was enthusiastic about it so he:

did not miss any of the classes (Turky, Deputy, interview).

Their motivation to seek professional development also varied. The Principal wanted to change the environment of his school.

I have been passionate about effective leadership and how I could make my school better (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Social Instructor mentioned that being close to students motivated him to pursue Social Instruction.

I was very close to students, so I developed the confidence to apply for the post (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

The Deputy mentioned that he learned the hard way as he became an acting Principal.

After I taught for couple of years our Principal had to take sick leave for a term so he asked me to be an Acting Principal for a term. I thought the role was about strong personality, strict instructions and authoritarian behaviour. Then, I realised that because the Ministry's rules are not inclusive I ended up with so many things for which I needed teachers' cooperation, but they were not willing to do so because of my attitude towards them. So, I spent several years reading and reflecting on my work and attending short leadership courses trying to learn how to be a good leader (Turky, Deputy, interview).

He added:

I wanted to be a good and beloved leader. As I learnt the hard way that my approach to management was not sufficient (Turky, Deputy, interview).

Regarding the use of reflection as a professional development tool, the Principal mentioned that he reflects upon his work regularly.

I keep reflective journals weekly. I go to my farm on Thursday [last day of the Saudi week] and spend a reasonable amount of time reflecting and trying to learn (Nayif, Principal, interview).

He included literature review to his journals.

I sometimes write down my thoughts and read the relevant literature and add to my journals what the literature says (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Social Instructor mentioned that he learned reflection from the Principal.

I do reflect upon my work and I learnt that from our Principal (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

He mentioned that he also asks students to feedback on his work.

I sometimes ask students who come to my office to fill in a questionnaire to evaluate my work and their experience (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

The Deputy mentioned that reflection helps him to control his reactions and his behaviour.

Reflection encouraged me to redesign my reaction towards teachers who are irritated by students. In the beginning, when a teacher would enter my office angry and started telling me a story I would become as angry as he was, and approach the student quite aggressively. But with reflection I managed to gain some distance (Turky, Deputy, interview).

The Social Instructor suggested that systematic reflection is better than open reflection as a matter of self-confidence keeping.

Systematic reflection is better than open reflection. Open reflection could lead to a personality lacking confidence, in which one always thinks, what did I do, what did I say, did I upset anybody, etc. (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

The element is the obstacles the leaders may have faced. Some mentioned that combining a full-time job and professional development is not manageable.

Juggling work and professional development is a major obstacle, because a full-time job would not leave time and energy for training and development (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Asking for an official leave from the Ministry is a concern for the Deputy.

Getting an approval for professional development leave from the Ministry has proven to be difficult (Turky, Deputy, interview).

He also mentioned the shortage of Arabic texts on leadership and management:

Lack of Arabic books in leadership and management, while translated books are difficult to comprehend (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

The Social Instructor argues that equality between those who engage in professional development and those who do not does not encourage professional development.

If I invest a large amount of money, time and effort on myself to develop professionally, I would not get it back because there is hardly any difference from others (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

This is the end of this subsection discussing leaders' professional development. The next subsection will be about the professional development of teachers.

Teachers' professional development

In this subsection, evidence on teachers' professional development at King's School will be analysed. Two types of professional development have been identified: one presented by the local authority and the other, which the Principal called the "new initiative".

The Deputy stated that he is responsible for organising teachers' engagement in the local authority's courses.

I receive a course list for each term and make them available for teachers (Turky, Deputy, interview).

He tried to identify needs and assign teachers to courses accordingly.

I study the needs for each teacher and discuss the matter with them in one-to-one meetings (Turky, Deputy, interview).

Similarly, the Principal stated that:

He [the Deputy] acts as a resident supervisor, in which he assesses each teacher's needs and suggest training according to that (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Some teachers think that:

The Deputy does good work in organising training (Teacher group 1, group interview).

However, the Social Instructor argues that teachers should be engaged more in identifying their needs.

Teachers should have a training profile and evaluate their needs themselves with the help of the school leaders (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

The Principal explained a new initiative that the school took with a private investor.

We secured a fund to send teachers to the capital on training. We managed to send 11 teachers and leaders over the last three years (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The training provided by the private investor is limited to three areas.

The training area is around private-public relations, excellence in education and organisational development (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Only outstanding teachers were chosen for such training.

We chose outstanding teachers, who we believed would benefit the school because these courses are specialised in very important areas to the school (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Teachers have some reservations about this initiative. The main concern has been inequality regarding training nominations.

There has not been an equality with arranging these courses. The leaders sent their chosen ones to go to them (Teacher group 2, group interview).

The idea of sending the most active people leads some to question the criteria for that label.

They sent "active" teachers that they say work collaboratively with the leaders. But we all worked hard. There is no logic with that (Teacher group 4, group interview).

Some argue that course participants should be chosen according to needs not according to how active they are in school.

Such training courses should not be given as reward for activity, they should be assigned to those who need them (Teacher group 4, group interview).

The Principal defended his criteria and stated that the courses call for outstanding teachers and are designed for this purpose.

These courses are designed to be delivered to outstanding teachers who are excellent in their schools (Nayif, Principal, interview).

He also defended his choice of using such training as a reward for outstanding teachers, as that the only motivation that he has.

If we are doing this as a reward to outstanding teachers, this all we have, as we have nothing else tangible (Nayif, Principal, interview).

The Social Instructor believes that professional development should be more than training and the school should establish a culture of professional development.

There should be a culture of professional development in school, such as distributing materials, reading books, learning groups, seminars etc. (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

Local educational authority's role

Interpretations of the role of the local educational authority regarding professional development at King's School vary. Some participants view it as adequate to some extent.

The local authority's courses are good to have good teaching and better schools, but I also believe that they are not adequate to have excellent and outstanding ones (Teacher group 2, group interview).

Others believe that there is room for improvement. For example, the Principal stated that their professional development lacks cohesion.

There is no clear planning by the local authority they work year by year every year is separate from the previous and the following years (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Also, he stated that it is budget dependent and not at the top priority of their budgeting process.

Professional development expands and shrinks according to what money is left from the budget. So, they deal with it as a low priority (Nayif, Principal, interview).

Short courses were viewed by the Social Instructor as not being organised correctly, as there is no specialisation for courses and who is eligible to attend them.

Courses are not organised properly. Everyone is able to apply to any course. For example, leaders could apply for courses in exam-making techniques, which they do not need unless they go back to teaching (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

Teachers mentioned that local authorities are concerned with quantity not quality.

They think about how many courses you attend not about the value of each course (Teacher group 5, group interview).

They suggested better communication between schools and the local authority to establish needs.

We are in the field, so our voice should be heard. We should be able to suggest new courses and offer feedback on the ones we attend (Teacher group 5, group interview).

This the end of the professional development section for King's School, which is the last section for this school.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented data related to King's School. The chapter has been organised as introduction, context, participants, findings and analysis and conclusion, as were the previous two chapters. The findings and analysis section has three main themes: leadership practices, culture and professional development.

The leadership practices section showed how the Principal tried to establish a vision mediating between local and international perspectives and how he was viewed as having some qualities of transformational leadership. The culture section revealed how the Principal managed to turn the school culture around from conflict over ideologies to collaboration. The professional development subsection showed the effort made by the school and its leadership to engage not only themselves but also the teachers in professional development. In addition, some problems the school has faced have also been raised throughout the chapter.

This is the end of the empirical chapters; the next chapter will compare these three schools with each other and against the existing literature.

Chapter Eight: Discussion

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings from the three schools—Safeer, Wazeer and King’s are brought together. These findings will be compared to the current literature and research on educational leadership and development, which were discussed in depth in the conceptual framework and literature review. Then, the similarities and differences between the schools are highlighted in order to create a holistic understanding of how the schools function in light of the three main concepts: leadership practices, culture and professional development. The organisation of this chapter follows the one used in the findings and analysis chapters for meaningful comparison and discussion according to the emergent themes: leadership practices, culture and professional development.

8.2 Discussion

8.2.1 Leadership practices

Vision

This subsection discusses what the school vision means to these schools, how visible the visions were, whether or not religion is mentioned and how these visions originated.

The findings from the three schools support the theories and research examined in the literature review. In terms of theory, it has been previously established that the ability to develop a shared vision and moral or religious values and

beliefs is one of the important qualities transformational leaders have (Nan and Swamy, 2014).

The data from the three schools make it apparent that the schools' vision means something to the school communities. It is not just a slogan that was created and forgotten. Interestingly, the Deputies of Wazeer and King's offered deep and meaningful insights into their school visions. Saud, the Wazeer School Deputy, argued the logic behind the vision and showed the link between various aspects of the school vision. Turky, the King's School Deputy, described the school's vision in terms of how the school stands between modernists and traditionalists regarding Western ideologies. These two examples explain how important vision is to these schools, in which it is a topic of explanation and discussion.

In addition, this study supports the empirical research done by Day et al. (2011) and Day, Gu and Sammons (2016) regarding the importance of vision clarity and visibility in effective schools and how these schools share and communicate their visions.

In terms of the visibility of the vision and how well it is communicated within the school, Safeer has shown itself to be deeply interested in vision visibility and presence; King's preferred to communicate its vision through actions, as described by its Principal, Nayif. Wazeer also stood moderately, as Principal Malek explained how he wanted to find a balance for the school's vision between overexposure and invisibility.

This study has also confirmed a study conducted by Deenmamode (2012), showing that vision based on shared values and beliefs, especially religious values, was found in effective schools. For example, Safeer and King's Schools explicitly mentioned religion in their vision. Principal Khalid of Safeer argued that

ensuring students' commitment to faith was very important to the school, along with protecting them from radicalisation. King's School, however, referred to religion in their vision as an assurance to the school community that traditions and customs would not be compromised in favour of Western ideologies; rather, they were trying to create a balance.

Regarding the creation of a vision, Wazeer was the only school that discussed the process. The Principal, Malek, mentioned the fact that the school did not develop a vision until it became a *Tatweer* school in recent years (no date is available).

The findings revealed that the vision was created by teamwork, teacher involvement and openness to suggestions and new ideas.

Organisational structure

This study supports the theories of leadership and management regarding the importance of flattening the hierarchy of schools in response to their increasingly complex organisational structures (Brundrett, 2010). The three schools, Safeer, Wazeer and King's, have organisational structures that are quite similar. They all believe that a flat structure is more suitable to running modern schools, with the increased complexity and expectations of such schools.

The findings of this research support the findings of Leithwood and Mascall (2008) regarding flattening the hierarchy and distributing power among a number of people. They concluded that high performing schools tend to include more people in decision making than low achieving schools.

Although these schools all had a strong interest in flattening the hierarchy, each had a different idea of how flat to make it. Safeer seemed to have the flattest structure, as described by its Principal and Deputy. The Deputy argued that he exercised more power than his role was given. Wazeer was clear about the effect

of the ministry's policy; hence, the Principal stated that they do not have a completely flat structure. However, they had teamwork in which their leaders took part while the Principal's role was visible in case of disagreement. Data regarding King's School were not confirmed, but participants mentioned that they felt safe and trusted to take responsibilities which they believed were linked to a flat structure.

The findings suggest that there was a common argument raised among these schools with regard to flattening the organisational structure. The three schools argued that the ministry's policy instructed them to implement a hierarchical structure; this was supported by the ministry's document. The instruction was aimed at reducing the number of accountable persons; hence, it addressed manageable accountability measures.

Despite the ministry's instructions and their link to accountability, these schools manage to work with flat structure; Safer explicitly mentioned they do so regardless of the ministry's policy because they believe it is the right thing to do. The school responded to the flat structure and accountability balance by the Principal trusts his staff.

While King's School also deemed it necessary to flatten the organisational structure, balance between flat structure and accountability for that school was found in risk-taking. Wazeer, however, tried to find a balance between what they believed in and what they could do. The school, therefore, appeared to flatten the organisational structure as much as it could in accordance with the ministry's instructions.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge in that these Principals believed in flattening the hierarchy and redesigned their schools' organisational structure

despite the instruction of the Ministry of Education's. They believed this to be worth the risk when compared to the benefits this step might bring.

Leadership style/s

Findings from the three schools regarding leadership style cover two main parts: leadership style as practices that include distributed leadership, teacher engagement and building teamwork and collaboration; and the leadership qualities of the schools' Principals.

This study supports the theory of effectiveness in which effective schools tend to have norms of distributed leadership (Leithwood et al., 2006). Prior studies have also found distributed leadership in high-achieving schools (Leithwood and Mascall, 2008). Furthermore, Heck and Hallinger (2009) linked distributed leadership to school improvement and students' academic achievement.

The findings suggest that all three schools have implemented a distributed leadership model. The difference among the schools is a matter of degree. Of the three schools, Safeer appeared to be the most developed in this respect, as evidence of highly distributed leadership was found during the course of the present study. For example, in matters regarding fellow leaders, they were allowed to sign internal and external letters on behalf of Principal Khalid, who clearly stated that he "usually do[es] not make decisions". Additional evidence identified in the study indicated that the Principal would distance himself to allow the staff to do their work without his intervention.

Wazeer School was not far behind. The data suggested that not only did the Principal distance himself when tasks were assigned, but also important tasks such as the annual programme were finalised by the school community while he was away. King's School also employed a distributed leadership model. This was

evident in the clear assignment of tasks and responsibilities; tasks between leaders were decentralised such that different members of the leadership team would be able to help with teachers' enquiries.

In the same vein, Hulpia, Devos and Keer (2011) showed the positive impact of distributed leadership on teachers' commitment to the school and tasks assigned to them. For example, teachers from Wazeer argued that distributed leadership offers a resilient, flexible process in which each teacher could choose his area of competency, resulting in a deeper commitment to the task. Similarly, the King's School Principal believed that such distribution results in better job performance, as tasks were more likely to be assigned to the most suitable person.

Some teachers in Safeer were not completely in agreement with distributed leadership. They raised concerns regarding the length of time for which issues and their solutions could be negotiated, in comparison with one-person leadership. Another point raised by a senior teacher was that he was accustomed to the Principal being the absolute authority in school, not a member of a leadership team.

Regarding teacher engagement, it was also evident from the study's findings that teachers were engaged in decision-making in all three schools. The manifestations of teacher engagement were used to determine the degree to which teachers were engaged in the school.

Wazeer seemed to lead the three schools in this respect, as its leaders described decision-making as transparent and inclusive; furthermore, it was the only school that mentioned the inclusion of administrative staff. Participants from Safeer and Wazeer mentioned that they were consulted and their opinions were

valued, while those of King’s School stated that their suggestions were taken into consideration.

Regarding the benefits that distributed leadership and teacher engagement may bring to a school, Muijs and Harris (2006) concluded that teachers under distributed leadership felt involved in the school, had a sense of ownership and felt motivated. Teacher knowledge added value to the school as a result of teacher involvement in decision-making.

Table 8:1 below shows the benefits of teacher engagement, as reported by the staff of the three schools. Safeer participants stressed that teacher engagement serves as internal motivation through ownership and commitment to the school. Wazeer stressed the idea that decisions were more likely to be embraced when they were collectively made. King’s School argued that such engagement resulted in better decisions, as teachers were closer to students and were therefore more likely to offer useful insights.

Safeer School	Wazeer School	King’s School
Teacher ownership	Decisions are embraced	Brings teachers’ knowledge of students to decision-making
Commitment	Ownership to such decisions	Makes better decisions
Internal motivation		Teacher enthusiasm
Builds communication		Being active
		Taking initiatives

Table 8: 1 Advantages of teachers’ engagement.

Another aspect of leadership style as a practice is building collaboration and teamwork. The study's data suggest that Wazeer and King's School benefit from collaboration and teamwork. The three schools strongly agreed that teacher collaboration cannot be achieved through applying a teacher's job description, as it does not serve collaboration in non-classroom activities such as open days and events. Rather, all three schools made it clear that collaboration occurred because teachers wanted it to; that is, the human element carried more weight than the job description in collaboration.

The human element was interpreted by the three schools differently. Trust and motivation were the two main aspects of the human element that Safeer argued led to collaboration. Wazeer stated that respect for teachers, gaining their confidence and showing appreciation were the keys to teamwork. King's School mentioned that stronger relationships, respect, professionalism and sharing a vision would lead to collaboration. It was interesting to note both Wazeer and King's Schools stated that collaboration and empowering people go hand and hand, especially with regard to accepting the work or opinions of assigned teams.

One of the main contributions of this study is that the data suggest the human element had a strong influence on the steps each school took to achieve teacher collaboration; such collaboration was not part of the teachers' job descriptions, or was not considered a "must do" issue. The human element includes trust, motivation, respect, appreciation and stronger relationships.

The second part is in the leadership qualities embraced by the Principals. The three Principals each had some transformational qualities. Transformational behaviour was evident from the observation that all three Principals had the skills to motivate their staff. The Principals understood the importance of motivation,

for both high and low performers and paid attention to adult motivation for both teaching and non-teaching staff.

Khalid, the Safeer Principal, showed a combination of transformational and charismatic qualities. In addition, he stood out because he was aware of the psychology of motivation. The Principals of Wazeer and King's Schools displayed more than one transformational quality in addition to motivation. Malek, the Wazeer Principal, showed individual consideration to fellow leaders, teachers and students, as some teachers stated that "everyone thinks he is the Principal's favourite". Nayif, the King's School Principal, appeared to have intellectual stimulation skills, as he encouraged creative thinking and established a safe working environment in which ideas could evolve.

As mentioned, the Safeer Principal, Khalid, showed some charismatic qualities in addition to his transformational qualities. He was clearly admired and loved by his fellow leaders and staff, he had the ability to influence others and was able to persuade the local authority to send resources in a timely fashion. However, his charismatic qualities did not appeal to everyone, as some teachers stated that his persuasion skills were too much to take.

Communication

This subsection discusses communication in the Safeer, Wazeer and King's Schools. The tone used in the schools' communications, their own purpose for communications and the use of technology will be examined.

Regarding the tone used in school communications, it was evident that the tone in the three schools ranged from very formal to informal. Safeer staff employed a very formal means of communicating with each other, as the internal note showed how the Principal communicated with his Deputy very respectfully and

formally, as would be expected from bottom-up communications. Wazeer, however, used informal language and even used the local Arabic lingo in their written communication. King's School also used informal language, as well as a WhatsApp group to discuss important school matters and conduct casual communications. This supports the findings of Leithwood et al. (2007), that informal leaders were able to exercise more of the "good practice standards" than formal leaders.

Each of the three schools used communications to reach goals other than sharing information. Safeer used and preferred face-to-face communications to increase human interactions and establish relationships; hence, it did not use electronic communications. Wazeer used informal language to reduce the power gap between leaders and staff. King's School used communications with students in a project called "Ask an Official" to close the gap between the students and the school leaders and staff.

In support of the research by (Moos et al., 2005), this study found that the Principals of the three schools paid attention to communication within their schools; hence, they not only used it as a means of transferring information, but also as a medium to reach more complex goals such as power reduction and building relationships. Indeed, this research revealed that some of the studied school Principals purposefully used informal language in school communications to reduce the perception of power exerted in the school and bridge the gap between themselves as leaders and their fellow leaders and staff. This is one of the main contributions this study may offer to the body of knowledge about this field.

Regarding the use of technology, Safeer did not use electronic communications such as email or WhatsApp to discuss school matters; this choice was made in order to increase human interaction, as mentioned above. Wazeer used email and social media groups to discuss school matters and increase productivity. However, they used these methods sparingly, so as not to encroach on the staff's personal time; this decision was appreciated by teachers. King's School used electronic communication for the same reason; complaints were made, however, about work-related communications that occurred outside school hours.

The unique quality of King's School was its interest in communicating with the wider community as an expression of social responsibility. The school designs, produces and distributes around five leaflets a year to the public covering a wide range of topics on safety, including road safety, fireworks safety and swimming pools safety awareness.

Strategic planning

This subsection discusses strategic planning at the three schools. The schools all plan for the year ahead before the end of the current year. Wazeer, however, used two planning methods: annual planning, similar to the other schools, and three-year planning, which includes revision of the school's vision and policies.

The current findings support theoretical writings such as that of Davies and Davies (2010) on the importance of strategic planning for effective schools, including long-term strategic and short-term detailed planning. This study also supports research conducted in the field of school effectiveness and how such planning is essential to effective schools (Bouchamma, 2012).

The schools argued the importance of planning ahead. Wazeer viewed it as the element that makes the difference between outstanding and ordinary schools,

and that ensures consistent work. For teachers, planning provides orientation and signposts for their work. King's School stated that planning makes performance assessment possible and guides the school towards its proposed vision. Safeer stated that planning makes it possible to care about the fine details.

Regarding who makes the schools' annual plan, Safeer and King's Schools mentioned that the plans were created by committees comprising staff members. Safeer mentioned clearly that the leader's role was to supervise planning and implementation. Both Safeer and King's Schools mentioned systematic procedures for their planning. Safeer mentioned using surveys, workshops and brainstorming, while King's School mentioned the use of a form (see figure 7:4), which can be completed by anyone among the school community to suggest a project.

Regarding the types of programmes outlined by such plans, Wazeer was the most advanced school of the three. It covered a range of students' development areas, including individual development and learning, students' professional development and caring about the environment and public property. King's School planning was tied to its vision, while Safeer programmes were designed to address issues and solve problems that occurred during the previous year.

Quality assurance

This subsection discusses the findings regarding various aspects of quality in the three schools. Two types of quality assurance were evident: organisational quality of day-to-day processes and quality in teaching and learning.

Organisational quality

This study supports the theoretical discussion on the effect of globalization on education. As discussed in Chapter 2, globalization has led to the development of the New Public Management (NPM) approach, in which public sectors have moved towards dealing with citizens as customers and their services as products (Hesapcioglu, 2003; Jarl, Fredriksson and Persson, 2012). The Alsaeedi and Male (2013) study on the effects of globalization on education in Kuwait revealed how education has become an increasingly complex matter for the studied schools after being linked to economic issues, such as issues related to NPM. Alsaeedi and Male study did not show how these schools responded to such challenges. Another Australian study (Klenowski, 2009) measured the effects of NPM on schools and concluded that it resulted in more self-governance, competitiveness and market-like schools and an increased level of quality in services provided by these schools.

The three schools looked at the quality of their everyday processes as being important but they approached the concept of quality differently. Safer viewed the concept from a more complex angle, as they added a global and Western orientation to the equation. For example, they applied and achieved the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certification for Quality Management. It was evident from the findings that they used terminology which is commonly used in the private sector, such as "beneficiaries", "process" and "products", which is consistent with New Public Management theory.

Wazeer school community emphasised the importance of the quality of appearance. They mentioned how their school and products should look professional and argued how the appearance of quality can lead to core quality.

They mentioned that working in an organised environment can lead to effectiveness. King's School highlighted the use of technology to speed up processes, increase productivity and homogenise procedures.

Ensuring quality in teaching and learning

This study supports research on effective schools regarding quality assurance for teaching and learning, including curricular matters such as assessment, programme delivery and resources, as well as teacher development based on coaching, training and peer feedback (Bouchamma, 2012; Day et al., 2011; Klar and Brewer, 2013).

All three schools took appropriate measures to ensure quality in the teaching and learning programme, including steps to measure performance. Wazeer made the most of classroom visits to assess teaching. They visited each teacher twice per term and leaders gave feedback after each visit. King's School relied on statistics, including exam results, to evaluate teaching and learning.

Safeer, however, viewed reliance on statistics alone as unfair, because students and subjects are all different. They used a combination of class visits, statistics, observations and students' opinions.

Both Safeer and King's Schools were aware of the importance of staffing the school. They mentioned that as teacher recruitment was centralized, they had no power over who was sent to the school. However, they both stated there were steps they could take if an underperforming teacher were assigned to the school.

They explained they would respond to the matter by trying to develop the teacher's and improve his performance. Wazeer said they would respond by using mentoring, visiting another teacher or being assigned to a training course.

Safeer stated that in addition to exchanging visits with another teacher, they would make the most of the teacher's supervisor and facilitate access to resources. Safeer also argued that simply being in an effective environment is motivation in and of itself for underperformers to improve.

8.2.2 Culture

Globalization

This study supports the data from prior studies on school effectiveness in the West, regarding the notion that effective schools do connect and communicate with the outside environment (Crum and Sherman, 2008; Klar and Brewer, 2013; Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins, 2008; Leithwood and Massey, 2010; Moos et al., 2005; Odhiambo and Hii, 2012; Raihani, 2008; Salfi, 2011).

This study suggests that there has been a notable globalization effect on the Safeer, Wazeer and King's Schools. The following paragraphs discuss the ways in which these schools were affected by globalization and how they viewed it.

Globalization was manifested in these schools in different ways, some implicit and others explicit. The implicit types were evident in all three schools and included aspects of indirect influence of globalization, such as embracing Western ideologies of quality in education and giftedness or using English words and terms in their documents.

The explicit effects of globalization on these schools took different forms. It was evident that the three schools referred to Western literature, Western scholars and international organisations when communicating Western philosophies, such as TQM.

The most explicit examples were found in Safeer and King's Schools. Safeer applied for and achieved the ISO certification for quality management; the ISO is an international organisation. King's, however, explicitly included its global interest in its vision as they aimed to create a modern educational programme that was more suitable for the current century.

How these schools viewed globalization as a concept varied. Safeer, which obtained the ISO certificate, was very cautious about globalization. Some argued that embracing such a concept could harm local customs and religious traditions, although others viewed using technology as beneficial to schools. On the other hand, King's School was very clear about its orientation and showed that they found a balance between the benefits of globalization and ensuring the protection of traditions.

Wazeer was divided. Some viewed schools as isolated from what happens outside their walls, while others believed that denying the problem cannot be a solution and that preparing students to cope with such concepts is the answer.

Some participants from Wazeer and King's Schools argued that ideologies such as TQM and democracy are not Western in the first place; rather, they are human knowledge and no one race can claim their invention.

However, in an isolated discussion, a teacher at King's School explained how globalization has affected him and his junior colleagues. He argued that globalization made it possible for him, through transferring the idea of democracy, to question his Principal and demand inclusion in decision-making. This was, he explained, very different to what his senior colleagues had experienced. This finding supports the conclusions of Alsaedi and Male (2013)

regarding the presence of a globalization effect on education, especially in terms of democratic values.

It was clear from the above discussion that that the three schools interacted with globalization both intentionally and unintentionally; hence, some were open to discuss the effects of globalization on their school and others were reserved about such effects. Documents, however, tell otherwise.

Although some studies have found that effective schools do connect with their outside environment and Kuwaiti schools from the Persian Gulf region have been influenced by globalization (as indicated above), this study is unique regarding the existence of the globalization effect on outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia.

National culture

Two subthemes were identified with regard to discussions of the national culture: Islam as a religion and the sense of belonging to a homeland (patriotism).

Regarding religion, the following paragraphs examine why they chose to embrace Islamic values within their schools and how they tried to connect Islamic values to the school as an organisation.

Although teaching Islamic values and traditions is mandatory in the national curriculum, the schools offered more logic to them beyond it being mandatory. Safeer and King's Schools stated that teaching students true Islam would save them from radicalisation. In addition, King's School argued that it was about meeting parents' expectations, as parents would expect their children to be raised as good Muslims. Supporting this argument, Wazeer explained that their school mirrored the community in which it is embedded.

One of the interesting phenomena revealed by this study was the establishment of a connection between Western ideologies and Islamic teachings. It was found mainly in Safer and King's School, as they introduce Western ideology (i.e., TQM) and use quotations from the Quran or the Prophet's sayings to support the idea.

This study on Saudi schools offers a unique perspective in which these outstanding schools tried to find the roots of Western ideology in Islamic values in order to be more consistent with the culture and context.

The other phenomenon is that some Islamic qualities that believers are encouraged to practice in their daily and personal activities are being reshaped as organisational qualities, such as punctuality, self-monitoring and religious motivation. This study supports the findings of Raihani (2008) on successful Indonesian schools, as that study concluded integrity and self-monitoring were practiced as Islamic values in successful schools.

The other micro-theme was patriotism. This research supports Gnyman (2008), who concluded that promoting national and cultural traditions and customs was seen by teachers and Principals as an effective leadership practice.

The study's data suggest the existence of two types of loyalty to the nation: explicit and implicit. The explicit type was about raising the Saudi flag, producing documents coinciding with the national day and displaying photos of the royal family. The implicit type was about what these schools can do for the nation to develop and support it. Wazeer and King's Schools argued that real patriotism goes beyond slogans; rather, it is helping the nation to develop and thrive by working hard with integrity and by dealing responsibly with public money and property.

One interesting aspect mentioned briefly by King's School was the impact of national culture on the school as an organisation. They argued that the national culture has a significant impact on the school culture, with regard to behaviour and attitude. As an example, they explained how senior teachers are respected in the school in that they would be given some privilege over other teachers. This is in line with the GLOBE project results as researchers have tried to identify the leadership styles and practices (i.e. team orientation or self-protection) commonly used in certain countries and cultures (Schedlitzki and Edwards, 2014).

Organisational culture

This subtheme concerns the findings of the three schools regarding organisational culture. Two main subcategories have emerged in the three schools: the relationships between adults in the schools and the schools as leaning environments.

This study supports the findings of Klar and Brewer (2013) regarding the existence of positive school cultures in effective schools, such as strong relationships, teamwork and collegiality. The three schools, Safeer, Wazeer and King's generally showed a positive environment where relationships were deemed to be strong. Safeer showed teamwork, professional relations and respect. The relations in Wazeer were deemed to be a mixture of informal and professional. King's School showed homogeneity and collaboration, although some deep, unspoken tension was evident.

One distinct characteristic may explain the tension: the school was turned around by the Principal in 2010. Until then, relations were clashing, negative and troubled. The school had a long history of ideologically-based division, where

teachers would bond only with those who share the same ideologies. The previous Principals used to lean towards one group over the others, which created an even more destructive culture. How the Principal managed to turn this school around will be discussed below.

The schools had slightly different attitudes towards their learning environments. Safeer had a disciplined school culture in which they managed to create a calm environment to facilitate learning; this supports Westhuizen, Oosthuizen and Wolhuter (2007) study, who examined the effects of school culture on student discipline.

The current study's findings support those of Lomos, Hofman and Bosker (2011), who concluded that a positive learning environment that promotes high performance, celebrates success and has high expectations and motivation is associated with effective schools. For example, Wazeer promoted adult learning as well as student learning, and encouraged outstanding performance by celebrating success. King's School prioritised learning, facilitated resources and motivated students by hosting events for successful school graduates.

Sub cultures

This research supports the theoretical writings of Cameron and Quinn (2011), regarding the existence of micro-cultures in organisations. According to their theory, some micro-cultures are considered to be positive and others are deemed to be negative, depending on shared values and beliefs.

The existence of subcultures within the schools were seen by Safeer and Wazeer Schools as negative, so they simply denied the existence of such subcultures. They saw the subcultures as cracks in the school community that affected harmony, collaboration and productivity. In addition, Wazeer School explained

how these groups emerged in schools. They argued that when there is injustice in school, people bond with one another and create groups that oppose the leader. If people are happy, however, they do not need to create such groups, according to Wazeer School.

King's School had a completely different attitude towards subgroups. As revealed earlier, the school had a history of clashing cultures and many Principals tried and failed to turn it around by deconstructing the groups and building a one-size-fits-all community. Nayif, the King's School Principal, had a different attitude when he came to the post. He viewed such subgroups as the school spirit, as they form the school. He then began to work effectively to bring people together despite their differences, while allowing their groups to exist. Some within the school argued that the school would be better off without these subcultures; however, he argued that while this could not be denied, he believed that this was the only way the school could be effective.

There is no research available to suggest or deny the existence of micro-cultures in effective schools. This issue was addressed here and it was concluded that micro-cultures were viewed as negative in the effective schools that were studied in Saudi Arabia.

Reciprocal effects

This subsection concerns the exchanged effects between school culture and the school. It contains three subcategories:

- School culture and effectiveness
- School culture in the event of problems and difficulties
- The Principal's role in relation to school culture

School culture and effectiveness

The current study's data supports other theoretical (Leithwood and Levin, 2005) and empirical studies mentioned in the literature review regarding the importance that school culture has with regard to school effectiveness. Other studies have concluded that effective schools are associated with effective and positive cultures, in which culture serves as a mediating factor that allows the Principal and his school community to work effectively (Day et al., 2011; Simkins et al, 2009).

The three schools seemed to be in agreement over the influence of school culture on school effectiveness. The conclusion drawn here matches that of Day et al. (2011) and Bouchamma (2012), that shielding staff from distractions and outside pressure and facilitating a safe environment for them is also associated with school effectiveness. For example, Safeer argued that teachers' job security and stability is a main contributor to good performance as a relaxed atmosphere would facilitate creativity and productivity. Similarly, Wazeer School argued that a positive culture of job security and a stress-free environment are important factors for productivity, creativity and innovation.

Safeer offered some insight into the effect of positive culture on students. They argued that the school's calm environment, for example, affected students' behaviour. They added that attending an outstanding school served as a motivational factor for students to perform well; it also had a snowball effect in attracting high-achieving students. Some, however, argued that a higher number of classes were cancelled since the school's outstanding status demanded more activities and programmes; this was seen to affect students' learning.

In addition, this study also supports Klar and Brewer (2013) with regard to the importance of relationships within a school to its effectiveness. They concluded that teamwork, strong relationships and collegiality are important indications of positive school cultures. For instance, Wazeer School stated that positive relationships within the school allowed them to work collaboratively in teams. King's School added that an effective environment of strong relationships appeals to outstanding teachers and influences their decision to join the school, which has a snowball effect.

The most interesting factor stated by all three schools was the importance of justice within schools. They argued that when there is justice in the school, people are more likely to have stronger relationships since they feel they are equals. However, when justice is lacking, as King's School once experienced, negative subgroups are likely to emerge that oppose the Principal's behaviour. In the past, the school experienced a non-collaborative culture in which teachers from the out-of-favour groups did not take school matters seriously.

This study has a unique finding with regard to the link between justice and fairness as practised by the school Principal and the strong, positive relationships among teachers. Participants stated that Principals' justice was essential for them to have strong relationships. Participants also argued that perceived inequality would damage their relationships.

School culture in case of problems and difficulties

Just as Dongjiao (2015) argued that a positive culture can prevent problems, this research made it clear that the schools believed that their positive environment served to prevent problems. They argued that having positive relationships within the schools resulted in trust and homogeneity, which helped to prevent

problems. It was also argued that in a positive environment, teachers solved their problems independently, without referring to the leaders.

This research supports the theoretical writings of Dongjiao (2015), who stated school problems can occur because of the conflicted values and assumptions between people and subgroups within the organisation. For example, before King's School was turned around by the Principal, the ideological conflict between subgroups was tense and school culture was destructive.

Wazeer School stated that if the school environment is tense, problems are likely to occur and become exaggerated. That was true in King's School's past experience, in which a lack of trust resulted in a fragile environment where problems sparked easily.

This research is consistent with the findings of the Saiti (2015) study. That researcher found that where positive culture is the norm, people within schools are likely to solve their problems independently, without relying on leaders, mutually and internally, without revering to the district's educational management.

While problems may occur in these schools, it seems the schools approached such problems effectively. Both Wazeer and King's School discussed containing their problems within the school. They argued that containing their problems helped in finding solutions, as taking the school issues outside the school walls would only complicate matters further. Both schools also mentioned starting with friendly conversations before taking the official route. The King's School Principal stated that he dealt with problems in their isolated environment. He stated that he would not stereotype people or groups connected to the school.

Both Safer and Wazeer mentioned using influential people within the school to solve problems. These people would be asked to mediate between those involved in a problem to find a solution. However, some teachers did not agree to that approach as they believed it publicised the issue and did not contain it.

Principals' role in relation to school culture

This study is in agreement with the findings of Dinham et al. (1995) and Moos et al. (2005), with regard to the importance of the Principal's role in the formation of school culture. They concluded that the Principals' communication skills and leadership skills affected the nature and effectiveness of communication systems and behaviours within schools.

The three school communities believed that the Principals were major factors in creating and maintaining school culture. A number of practices by the Principals were deemed to contribute to the establishment of a positive culture.

Transparency and justice were mentioned by all three schools. Since the Principals communicated their intentions openly to their schools, communities tackled any misunderstanding or speculation. Justice, as mentioned earlier, was deemed to be a very important practice by the Principals, contributing to the establishment of a positive culture. Injustice created tense relations between teachers, as they felt unequal.

The Safer Principal was found to establish communication between school members in order to build relations. He had good relationships with his colleagues and tried to be close to them as he engaged in social meetings. The Wazeer and King's Principals were found to have a collective approach to their staff. Everyone was included and the Principals neither favoured nor disliked anyone.

Regarding culture change, this study's findings support theoretical writings mentioned in the literature review regarding the vital role that a Principal has in relation to changing culture (Leithwood et al., 2006; Onea, 2012; Turan, 2013). One essential step was to understand the culture to be changed (Busher, 2006). It was necessary to understand the importance of people's assumptions and beliefs and start to work towards change slowly and cautiously (Schein, 2010). Similar to this study, Sheppard (2013) showed that a newly appointed Principal was able to turn his troubled school around by engaging and gaining trust and developing relationships with the teachers fomented trouble in the school.

Nayif, the King's School Principal, managed to turn his school culture around because of his attitude towards subgroups. He believed he could turn the school around by allowing these groups to exist, as they were the essence of the school. At the same time, he did not involve himself in one group over others. He positioned himself such that he appeared equal to all groups, he was trusted by all groups and he had equal relationships with all groups.

This section has discussed the school culture that existed in Safeer, Wazeer and King's schools. It examined how globalization was viewed and approached differently and how national culture and religion were involved deeply in these schools. The aspects of organisational culture and micro-cultures within schools were thoroughly discussed. Then, the reciprocal effects that schools and school cultures exchanged were analysed across the schools. The next section will discuss the findings concerning professional development in the three schools.

8.2.3 Professional development

The professional development that the three schools and their staff experienced is the third main theme. This theme is divided into four subthemes:

- Schools' professional development
- School leaders' professional development
- Teachers' professional development
- Local educational authorities' role

School professional development

This subsection discusses the ways in which the three schools viewed professional development and why, what their goals were and whether there were any downsides.

Theories about the importance of professional development for school effectiveness and school improvement (Bubb Earley, 2007) and research on effective schools are consistent with this study's findings. Research shows that effective schools pay significant attention to raising standards by engaging school staff in professional development programmes; a culture of professional development is the norm for such schools (Gurr and Drysdale, 2007; Moller et al., 2007; Salfi, 2011; Sanzo, Sherman and Clayton, 2011). The three schools, Safeer, Wazeer and King's, were found to view professional development as an important aspect of their schools.

Safeer and King's Schools saw improvement as a result of professional development since it connects professionals to successful examples. To the two schools as well as Wazeer School, developing individuals within the schools was

seen as a step in developing the schools themselves, as the individuals would be likely to return and benefit their schools.

To Wazeer School, professional development smooths the school processes because it leads to qualified leaders and teachers. In a similar vein, King's School stated that leaders without training could end up learning as they go, which can be costly.

King's School participants argued that the importance of professional development resulted from the dynamic nature of contemporary education, which requires professionals to be informed about current issues on an ongoing basis.

They raised an interesting issue regarding professional development and modern issues such as those related to leadership and management. They argued that as these ideologies were Western in origin, professionals should learn directly from the West and people should not be afraid of doing so.

Regarding the role of leaders in teachers' professional development, this study supports the theoretical writings of Bubb and Earley (2007), which place great responsibility on the Principal and other school leaders to facilitate and encourage professional development for teachers. Research on effective leadership shows that successful school leaders fulfil such responsibility effectively (Moller et al., 2007).

Teachers in all three schools were encouraged by leaders, especially by Principals, to engage in professional development. Hence, the Safer training rate was 100% in a three-year period with three teachers studying for Masters

degrees. The rate for Wazeer School was 100% in the current year; the rate for King's School was 100% in the last two years (data are accurate as of 2015).

In Safeer, it was widely argued that professional development was not only encouraged and supported but was also the school norm and culture. Some participants expressed shame for not engaging in professional development for a long time.

Research also showed that effective schools combine school goals and individuals goals when designing their professional development programmes (Moller et al., 2007); designing these programmes is aligned with the school's overall vision and objectives (Gurr and Drysdale, 2007).

Wazeer School seemed to organise professional development around its goals. They stated that professional development was designed beside its general three-year planning to prepare teachers for its new programmes. King's School distinguished between two types of training in terms of goals: one was related to its vision, where professional development was designed to complement its planning; the other was designed to overcome any weaknesses related to individuals.

However, some downsides were expressed by the three schools' communities. The main negative aspect had to do with the effect of teachers' professional development on students' learning. They stated that as training took place during school hours, classes were cancelled when teachers left for training. Indeed, in King's School the number of cancelled classes in 2015 was around 207.

In Safeer, teachers were unhappy with the workload they experienced when a fellow colleague went for training. Some suggested overcoming both this issue

and the previous one by conducting the training outside school hours, with a motivation such as overtime payment.

One interesting concern mentioned by the Wazeer School Principal and the King's School Social Instructor had to do with professionalism among teachers and leaders. They argued that professional development should be more than attending courses. There should be learning communities that help each other to transfer skills and support each other to develop professionally. They also argued that there should be a minimum professional development requirement that everyone in the school should meet or exceed every year; they further argued that individuals should be responsible for tracking their professional development and that it should not be the responsibility of the school.

School leaders' professional development

This subsection discusses how leaders have developed professionally across the three schools. Four subthemes were discussed in the analysis of the three schools:

- Leaders' journey through professional development
- Their motivation
- Reflection as a tool for development
- Obstacles they might have faced

The leaders' journeys through professional development was similar in some respects and different regarding other respects. Bush (2008) insisted on the importance of formal leadership development programmes that are designed and delivered by the government or universities. A study by Simkins et al. (2009) on NCTL formal programmes showed promise in terms of effectiveness.

The three Principals attended the school management courses offered by the ministry and run by universities across the country. They also attended short courses which they self-funded. The Safer and Wazeer Principals stated that they benefited from reading specialised books related to school management.

The three Principals mentioned a unique aspect from which they benefited during their professional development. The Safer Principal, Khalid, mentioned being a certified trainer for the Saudi-Canadian Institute for leadership. He taught modules related to school leadership and management. Malek, the Wazeer School Principal, mentioned getting the most out of his assignment to Qatar [the neighbouring country] as a School Principal for four years. King's School Principal, Nayif, stated he benefited from learning through his school's tough times as when he worked as a Social Instructor. He used to travel to see consultants in the educational sector and buy books relating to problem solving, effective management etc.

The Deputies also attended the diploma course run by the ministry regarding Deputies' work. Sami, the Safer Deputy, moved to the city from a rural area where he taught for some time; he soon realised that he needed to develop himself professionally as education in the city was different from his past experience. Therefore, he attached himself to his Principal for some time.

The Wazeer and King's School Deputies reflected on how professional development helped them. The Wazeer Deputy, Saud, compared the early years of teaching to his current days. He mentioned there had been a transition from self-proof to trying to make difference and from impulsivity to maturity. The King's School Deputy reflected upon his coursework for the Deputies Diploma as

he came across aspects of leadership that would have benefited him prior to the course.

Social instructors across the three schools also completed the Social Instructors Diploma while Shadi from Wazeer School extended his diploma into a Masters' Degree in Educational Psychology. He mentioned learning from experience and that the experiences of his leaders were important. Fahad, the Safeer Social Instructor, stated that he benefited from the various roles he had held: a teacher, a Principal and a Deputy prior to becoming a Social Instructor in his school. Bader from King's School said that he found reading Western books and accessing the ministry's website and teachers' forums on the Internet very helpful.

Regarding leaders' motivation, the Principals primarily expressed self and internal motivation to pursue professional development. Nayif, the King's School Principal, stated that he wanted to change his troubled school and was determined to turn the school around. He therefore insisted on remaining in the school and chose not to move to another school.

The motivations of the Deputies were varied. Sami from Safeer expressed internal motivation towards development. Saud, the Wazeer School Deputy, was motivated by pursuing social and family status; they were important to him and his family, as he was the eldest son. The Deputy of King's School learned the hard way—he was named acting Principal for a term in his school and thought that a strict, authoritarian, strong personality was the basis of effective management. He subsequently spent years trying to learn and develop.

Social instructors found motivation in different ways. Fahad from Safeer said that the need to fulfil his responsibilities was motivation for him to develop

professionally. The nature of their work motivated the Social Instructors at Wazeer and King's Schools. Shadi from Wazeer School mentioned that the work of Social Instructors motivated him to pursue knowledge and skills regarding human behaviour, while Bader from King's School mentioned the close relationship with students as motivation to pursue professional development as a Social Instructor.

Regarding the use of reflection as a professional development tool, this study supports Densten and Gray's (2001) statement that reflection in leadership development is the individual's ability to evaluate and learn from his or her behaviours and actions.

All the leaders that were examined engaged in reflection to some extent. The Principals displayed a notable level of reflection, as the Safeer and Wazeer Principals sent surveys to fellow teachers and leaders to judge their work anonymously. The Safeer Principals also sent questionnaires to teachers, students and parents to measure school performance. He also reflected upon his work as he read books and relevant literature. The King's School Principal, Nayif, kept a weekly journal in which he reviewed the books he read about leadership and development.

In a study about reflection as a leadership development tool, Raffo (2012) concluded that reflection helped leaders to understand leadership materials, monitor their practices and better understand their competencies. However, Raffo's study tested reflection as a module in a leadership development programme, not as a lifelong process of learning.

The Safeer and Wazeer Deputies stated that reflection is about learning from the past or from daily experiences, whether negative or positive. Turkey, the King's

School Deputy, said that he used reflection to control his reactions towards irritated teachers; in the past, he had taken their irritation on himself, resulting on aggressive attitudes towards students.

Shadi, the Social Instructor from Wazeer, kept a reflective journal. He argued that the practice helped him maintain a work-life balance because keeping track of his work allowed him to know whether he did enough for his family. Fahad, the Safer Social Instructor, used personal reflection and asked for feedback from people. Bader, from King's School, asked students who came to his office to complete a questionnaire; he believed that systematic reflection is far better than personal reflection, as the latter could result in a loss of personal confidence by under evaluating abilities.

This study is unique regarding the use of reflection as a leadership development tool in the studied schools in Saudi Arabia.

The obstacles leaders faced during their professional development ranged from personal to work-related matters. Leaders of Safer mentioned obstacles related to the courses offered by the ministry and the local authorities; these will be discussed below.

This study is also consistent with that of Nicolaidou and Petridou, 2011) Nicolaidou and Petridou (2011), which addressed how centralised systems can cap professional development for leaders and teachers. The King's School Deputy found it difficult to ask for leave to pursue a course; similarly, Wazeer's Social Instructor found it difficult to gain permission to study for his Ph.D. In addition, the Wazeer and King's Principals and the Wazeer Deputy expressed difficulties in juggling work commitments and a desire for professional development.

Malek, the Wazeer Principal, and Bader, the King's School Social Instructor, both cited a lack of motivation among those who pursue professional development. They both mentioned that leaders or teachers who gain further qualifications are treated the same as those who have the minimum required qualifications.

Teachers' professional development

This subsection examines the professional development of teachers at Safeer, Wazeer and King's School. It describes how the development was organised across the three schools and elucidates the leaders' role in relation to teachers' professional development. It was clear that the three schools shared two types of training: one was compulsory training by the ministry and the other was training courses run by the local authority.

The compulsory training by the ministry was designed to train teachers, especially new teachers, and to inform and train teachers who would be affected by changes in the curriculum. Failure to attend the course was counted as absence from work.

The second type was run by the local authority. At the beginning of every term, schools were sent lists of available courses for that term. Courses about self-development, communication, class management, etc. were offered by the local authority. Teachers from the three schools were free to choose whatever they desired from these courses. However, it was evident in all three schools that leaders might suggest some courses to specific teachers according to their needs. However, some argued that teachers should be more engaged in analysing their needs, and that this analysis must not be limited to leaders' evaluation.

Due to the limitations of the above training offered by the ministry and its local authority, these three schools went beyond that training and implemented their own initiatives. Safeer brought professionals to train teachers within the school rather than send them to external training to solve workload issues.

Wazeer planned a similar course, as they argued that bringing in professionals would allow teachers to learn in their own environment and enable tailoring the training to the school's needs. Some, however, expressed concerns regarding unpaid evening sessions after a full day at work as teachers have social and family duties to fulfil.

This study aligns with those of Grimmett (2014) and Bai (2014) on the effectiveness of school-based professional development for teachers; however, this study highlighted some of the drawbacks as well, which is missing from Bai's research.

King's School implemented an initiative they called "new entitative" as they received funding from a private investor. This initiative allowed them to send leaders and some teachers to the capital. Only outstanding teachers were sent to these courses as the courses were very specific and important to the school, according to the school's Principal.

The teachers were unhappy about this criterion; they argued that sending only outstanding teachers is like a reward for them and punishment for others. They were also unhappy about labelling teachers as "outstanding", which meant others were not even if they worked just as hard. The Principal defended his position by stating that the courses were designed for outstanding teachers only and he had little else to do regarding teachers' motivation if this was counted as a reward. A study by Chattopadhyay and Nogueira (2014) on public-private sector

partnerships supported this initiative and showed such initiatives may help schools develop similar to market-like organisations.

Local educational authorities' role

Regarding professional development for schools, the work of the local educational authority in the city is a bone of contention. Some stated that the local authority does its work and the training it provided would help learners to shape their knowledge and skills (Sami and Saud, the Deputies of Safeer and Wazeer, respectively).

However, other leaders expressed some concerns. The Safeer and Wazeer Principals argued that their role was negative as they lacked motivation or recognition. As stated before, those who attend courses and gain skills are treated the same and receive the same salary as those who do not.

The Safeer Principal, Khalid, argued that the training was unattractive, its outcomes were weak and the focus was on quantity rather than quality. Some concerns were raised regarding the lack of planning. To Nayif, the King's School Principal, the training needed to be adequately planned. While the current training seemed to be each year programme is detached from its following and previous year.

One of the major downsides for leaders was the timing of the training. They mentioned that the workload created by teachers leaving the school during school hours was unbearable. They argued that not only did such absence create a larger temporary workload, it also created added work for teachers when they returned to school as they tried to compensate for missed lessons (Nayif, Principal, King's School and Fahad, Social Instructor, Safeer).

Training courses were seen by the King's School Deputy as lacking assessment after delivery. The King's School Deputy argued that critical assessment was needed to determine whether trainees had comprehended the delivered material. Some also called for impact measurement where impact would be measured when trainees returned to their schools (Malek, Principal, Wazeer School).

Some teachers viewed the training by the local authority as beneficial as it included the latest changes in curriculum and was geared towards new teachers.

This study concurs, however, with Alharbi and Almahdi, (2012) writings regarding the difficulties teachers face when they want to pursue professional development. This study's findings are also consistent with those of Nicolaidou Petridou (2011) regarding how centralised systems can cap professional development for teachers. Safer teachers mentioned how difficult it is to gain permission to do postgraduate courses and they feared that such tightening procedures would prevent teachers from pursuing a career beyond teaching.

This study's data confirms the writings of Alharbi and Almahdi (2012), regarding the lack of communication between the local authority and people benefiting from these courses in Saudi Arabia. Lack of communication between training providers and teachers was mentioned by teachers from Wazeer and King's School. They stated they were not asked for their feedback after training nor they were asked to suggest a new course or new materials.

Indeed, the Wazeer teachers stated that the courses lacked development. According to them, course materials were not updated or developed for a long period of time. They also mentioned issues related to repeated contents, and presenters lacked competence.

8.3 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to compare the data from the three schools, Safeer, Wazeer and King's. Similarities and differences were found, which were outlined above. Conclusions regarding each theme and its subthemes were compared to the relevant theoretical writings and recent studies.

As in the findings and analysis chapters, this chapter presented data relevant to the cases studied according to three main themes: leadership practices, culture and professional development.

With regard to leadership practices, the chapter revealed how vision was created and communicated in these schools and how important and essential such steps were to the school communities. It also showed how these schools were structured as flat and cooperative and how leadership was distributed over a number of people including leaders and teachers. Communication was seen as a tool to build collaboration and bridge the gap between leaders, teachers, staff and students. Informal communication was used as a medium to reduce power exerted over teachers. These schools planned their tasks strategically and put measures in place to ensure quality in organisational process as well in teaching and learning.

Another theme was culture, which discussed the effects of globalization, nationalism and religion as macro cultures and addressed school culture and subcultures within the schools as micro cultures. The reciprocal effect of school culture was revealed in these schools that including the effect of school culture on school effectiveness, the role of school culture in the event of problems and difficulties and the role of the Principal on building school culture.

The last theme was professional development, which had four subthemes. The first subtheme showed how professional development was organised in these schools; the second subtheme revealed how school leaders have developed professionally; the third highlighted how teachers' professional development was organised and perceived; lastly, the role of the local educational authority in relation to the school communities' professional development.

There were a number of contributions this research wants to acknowledge. These will be highlighted and presented with more detail in the next chapter:

- The Principals believed in flattening the hierarchy and redesigned the schools' organisational structure, despite the Ministry of Education's instructions and the fact that flattening the organisation under the bureaucratic system seemed to be working, at least in these schools.
- All three schools used human factors to achieve teacher collaboration; it was seen by the Principals as the only way, since teacher job descriptions do not make them obliged to collaborate.
- Some of the Principals deliberately used informal language in school communications to reduce the power they exerted in the school and bridge the gap between themselves and their staff.
- This study has paid unique attention to the effects of globalization on outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia, where the national and local cultures differ significantly from the West where many global ideologies originated.
- A unique perspective on Saudi schools is offered here, in which these outstanding schools tried to find the roots of Western ideology in Islamic values in order to be more consistent with the culture and context.

- There is no research available to suggest or deny the existence of micro-cultures in effective schools. This issue was addressed here and it was concluded that existence of micro-cultures was perceived to be negative in the studied schools in Saudi Arabia.
- A unique finding is presented regarding the link between justice and fairness practised by the school Principal and the strong, positive relationships among teachers. Participants stated that Principals' justice is essential for them to have strong relationships and vice versa, as injustice would lead to damaged relationships and some would feel unequal.
- This study is unique regarding the use of reflection by leaders as a leadership development tool in the studied schools in Saudi Arabia.

The next chapter concludes this thesis, again highlighting these contributions to knowledge.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

This thesis has investigated the work of three outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia from three perspectives: leadership practices, culture and professional development. This chapter aims to conclude the study and consists of several sections: the first summarises in brief the research project and brings together a summary of the findings of the three cases. The subsequent section highlights the study's original contributions. The third section reveals some of the study's limitations, while the final section discusses the implications of its findings and recommendations arising from the study.

9.1 Summary of the study

This study aimed to understand the nature of outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia in terms of three aspects: leadership practices, culture and professional development. Three main research questions were developed to help reach a thorough understanding according to each of these perspectives:

1. What are the leadership practices of school leaders in outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia?
2. How is culture perceived and experienced by the school community in these cases?
3. How is professional development perceived and experienced by the leaders and staff of these institutions?

This study understands members of the school staff, including leaders and teachers, as active social participants who create and recreate their social reality. This study thereby employs a constructivist orientation to ontology. As this

research project has gone about describing, understanding and interpreting the characteristics of outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia, it has approached epistemological questions from an interpretivist point of view. Qualitative methodology was, therefore, taken as the most appropriate approach, using multiple case studies chosen for their intrinsic interest, not generalisability.

The specific context for this study is a medium-sized city in Saudi Arabia which has a reputation for excellent educational institutions and offers public ratings for schools. Three high schools for boys, which were rated as outstanding by the local authority and sustained such a rating for the last five years, provided the cases selected for study. In addition, each school had won the national Educational Excellence Award at least one time. Participants included Principals, Deputies, Social Instructors and teachers, using multiple methods of data collection, including documents analysis, observations, face-to-face interviews and group interviews. Data were analysed using thematic analysis, and quotations were translated from Arabic and checked by two multilingual Arabic-English speakers.

The findings from this study can be summarised in three aspects related to the themes generated: leadership practices, culture and professional development. The next section will summarise each of the themes.

School leaders, especially Principals, played a significant role regarding leadership practices. They were keen to establish a common vision to align their school with the pursuit of academic achievement. They each established an organisational structure, which is relatively horizontal, refraining from hierarchical and bureaucratic processes. Distributed leadership was practiced by Principals and other school leaders and they established effective communication

systems where, in some schools, communication meant more than simply delivering information. All three schools plan their programming ahead of time and they strive for quality in their organisational processes as well as in teaching and learning. The evidence regarding each of the six aspects will be summarised in the next few paragraphs.

The three schools established visions that were meaningful to them and not simply slogans or catch-phrases. They offered explanations and logic behind these visions. Visioning was clearly a way that these schools could reveal both their orientation (goal) and their identity (who they are). They communicated the visions visibly through signs and implicitly through actions. References to religion differed among leaders of the three schools: some believed that the school is responsible to enforce religious precepts, while others perceived religion more as part of the wider community environment. Also, the vision composed recently for Wazeer School (the only school who discussed the initial process) was created in a team process that included both school leaders and teachers.

As far as organisational structure is concerned, all three schools argued that a more horizontal, non-hierarchical structure is more appropriate to run modern schools. They were keen to horizontal structure within the organisation despite the instructions of the Ministry. Some schools show more hierarchy than others, as Safeer showed signs of being the most non-hierarchical followed by Wazeer and then King's. While the Ministry instructs schools to retain hierarchies for accountability reasons, these schools pursued a more horizontal structure while their Principals balanced accountability and sharing responsibilities with staff through risk taking and trust effects.

Distributed leadership was identified by these three schools as the practiced leadership style in the schools. Although the schools varied in the extent to which leadership is distributed, they all showed significant signs of leadership distribution. Principals allowed people the space they needed to work, while important steps were sometimes finalised without the Principal's presence. With clear tasks and lines of responsibility, tasks can be delegated effectively and as leaders subscribe to a team-based approach.

The evidence collected for this study has shown that teachers in these schools are engaged in decision making. Participants described the process of decision making as transparent and inclusive while teachers were consulted and their opinions were valued. Teachers stated that such engagement resulted in internal motivation, a personal sense of ownership and heightened commitment to the school. They also argued that their engagement led to improved decision making in the school as a result of their clearer knowledge of the classroom and of students' needs.

The three schools benefit from collaborative cultures, while participants argued that such collaboration was facilitated through teachers' engagement and people skills (e.g. the Principal being respectful, having strong relationships with them and being professional) and not through the Ministry's job description for teachers, which had failed to recognise this priority.

Among the findings of this study, the leadership qualities of the three schools' Principals. Transformational qualities were evident in all three Principals. They believed in motivation and acted frequently to motivate their staff effectively. They showed a combination of individual consideration and intellectual stimulation. Khalid, Principal of Safeer School, showed charismatic qualities such

that he was admired and loved by his staff and exercised personal influence on them.

The tone of communication used in these schools ranged from very formal to informal, and communication often meant more in this case than merely transferring information. Communication was used to reduce the power exerted over staff, to enhance human interaction and to reduce the gap between leaders and teachers on the one hand and students on the other. The use of technology varied in these schools; some schools viewed it as tending to decrease human interaction, while others viewed it as a way to speed up processes.

Strategic planning was seen as an essential leadership practice for effective schools. School leaders believed that this was the main difference between ordinary and effective schools. They used systematic approaches to planning including surveys and workshops. While the school communities were widely engaged and informed, leaders had the key roles of directing and monitoring these processes.

The final leadership practice discussed concerns quality assurance, including assessment of the quality of day to day processes and quality in teaching and learning. Forms of organisational quality assurance varied from school to school, but all were very keen on the concept. Safeer School had the most advanced measures of quality in place, as it had received ISO certification for quality management. The language of the private sector was also used in this school, such as "beneficiaries", "process" and "product". Manifestations of organisational quality at the other schools included quality as reflected in the school's appearance and organisation, and results-oriented adaptation of new technologies.

The three schools viewed quality in teaching and learning as a very important issue. Each took measures to ensure quality in education by measuring performance, using a combination of classroom visits, statistics, observations and student outcome measures. As school staffing in Saudi Arabia is centralised and outside the authority of school leaders, they respond to this situation by ensuring that teacher quality and effectiveness is raised by encouraging professional development, mentoring, teacher-teacher peer exchanges visits and access to other resources.

The second theme that this research project has emphasised was culture. The study investigated the effects of culture within these three effective schools in different aspects. At the macro scale, globalization, along with cultural impacts that were national or religious in inspiration. Meanwhile, on a micro-cultural scale, school cultures and subcultures within these outstanding schools were also revealed. The reciprocal effects between school culture and other school dynamics were noted, including its relationships to school effectiveness as well as to school problems and difficulties and, indeed, to the role of Principals as well.

The manifestations of globalization in these schools were apparent, but some remained implicit while others were explicit. The most implicit example was the incorporation of terms originating in Western ideological frameworks within school documents, such as "TQM" and "giftedness". Other more explicit examples were also found, including direct references to Western scholars, literature and international organisations. The most explicit example of all was the ISO certification of Safer School. Interesting arguments were raised on a number of occasions, where some elements featured in Western ideologies were argued to be more broadly human and beyond the reach of a particular cultural tradition.

Some attributed to globalization the effect that junior teachers are more likely to question what Principals say than do senior teachers.

Islam as an element of national culture has a major influence on these schools; they teach this religious tradition both as a requirement of the national curriculum and to meet parents' expectations. Some interesting phenomena were observed regarding this issue: leaders in some schools brought in religion to support or to neutralise elements of Western ideology, such as bringing in quotations from the Quran about quality in the discussion about TQM. Another observed phenomenon was the reshaping of Islamic teachings to adapt their principles in organisational settings such as punctuality, self-monitoring and religious motivation.

The other aspect of national culture to be investigated was patriotism. This factor received explicit manifestations such as raising the national flag, green (the national colour) posters and banners and portraits of members of the royal family. Other, more implicit examples, which were nonetheless meaningful, included teaching students how to be good citizens and how to take care of public money and property.

At a micro level, the study also examined school culture. Each outstanding school exhibited positive working relationships, characterised by teamwork, professionalism and respect. Some schools mixed informal and professional relationships to create positive culture. A culture of calmness, to facilitate learning, was sometimes found, as well as support for adult learning as a way to model and motivate student learning. Other aspects found in these schools included mechanisms to encourage outstanding performance, to prioritise

learning and to motivate students, such as facilitating visits by successful graduates.

In Safeer and Wazeer Schools, subcultures were seen as negative, creating fissures in the school community that would ultimately affect social harmony. King's School, however, viewed subcultures as an inevitable part of the spirit of their school, perhaps because these particular subcultures had existed for more than 30 years. Some teachers argued nonetheless that the school would be better off without them.

The effect of school culture on school effectiveness was clear to participants, as they argued that positive culture promotes effective practices, which in turn leads to outstanding performance. For example, job security and stability for teachers can lead to creativity and productivity by promoting a more relaxed and supportive atmosphere. A culture of positive relationships can also lead to collaboration. The factor that participants saw as most important to the quality of school relationships was justice and fairness (especially as exercised by the Principal), as unjust treatment was understood as potentially dividing the school community.

The role of culture in case of problems and difficulties, participants argued that a positive environment of trust and homogeneity could serve to prevent emerging problems. Tense relationships and lack of trust could result in problems becoming exaggerated and promote a generally fragile atmosphere. They stated that they deal with problems more effectively by containing them within the school and using typically informal mutual solutions to resolve them. Some schools had an approach by which influential people intervene to solve issues,

but this approach was unpopular with certain teachers as it could raise the profile of conflicts.

The role of Principals in creating and sustaining positive school cultures was seen as significant. Transparency and justice were seen as the most important practices by which Principals could establish a positive school culture. By communicating their intentions transparently, they allowed misunderstandings or speculation to be challenged, while acts of justice brought people together. Other leadership practices seen to be important to positive school cultures included the engagement of Principals in the schools social events and an egalitarian, collective approach to the social group (where no members were favoured or disliked).

The last theme this study covered was professional development. Participants in all three school communities viewed professional development as important. One of the reasons offered was the complicated dynamics of contemporary schools, requiring highly skilled professionals to manage and lead them.

Professional development also connects local schools to best practises and examples of success, which is essential to promote school effectiveness. It was also observed that developing the capacities of individuals within the school through professional development holds benefits for the school in return. This process also makes school processes go more smoothly as a result of improved skills and qualifications of leaders and teachers, which are essential for effective schools.

School leaders promote professional development in schools by encouraging and supporting teachers and fellow leaders to engage in such opportunities.

Therefore, professional development rates in the three schools were very high.

These professional development opportunities were usually designed around the school goals and visions, as well as to overcome any individual weaknesses.

Some downsides were mentioned in this connection, including the workload that is incurred for various staff members when a teacher goes away for training. Another related downside is that when teachers miss classes, student learning is also affected. Some have suggested that training offered outside of working hours could solve this problem, with sufficient motivation.

Leaders at all three schools seemed to share rich professional lives, with each participant having a diploma in their speciality (e.g. as a Principal or Deputy). Most leaders had accomplished their professional journey independently through attending short courses, reading books and reflection. The motivation for such professional development varies and includes internal motivation, seeking social and family status, love of what they do and promoting change.

Meanwhile, all leaders used reflection as a tool for their individual professional development. Some leaders read books and reflected upon their practice in an informal and personal way. Some undertook systematic reflection, through reflective journals, for example. Others undertook more systematic reflection by using anonymous surveys to ask others about their work. Participants stated that reflection had helped them to learn from their past actions, to manage behaviour and to achieve work-life balance.

School leaders raised some concerns regarding professional development. One is the difficulty of balancing work with professional development. Gaining permission from the Ministry of Education was identified as an obstacle for those interested in a longer course such as an MA or PhD. The final obstacle mentioned

was a lack of motivation, as Principals with extended qualifications are treated (and paid) the same as those meeting only minimum qualifications.

Two types of teacher training were discussed: compulsory training, and that offered by the local educational authority. Compulsory training is designed for newly appointed teachers and those facing changes to the national curriculum. The other type of programme is offered by the educational authority, featuring a range of courses that teachers can enrol in and attend. Courses offered addressed such topics as self-development, communication and classroom management.

Due to the limitations of courses available, all three schools in this study had undertaken initiatives of their own in the area of professional development. Some schools were able to bring in professionals in the evening, which solved workload problems during the day but proved unpopular because it created additional unpaid work for teachers. Some initiatives enlisted funds from the private sector to send teachers away for training courses; this faced resistance as teachers resisted or resented the criteria used by school leaders to select teachers to be sent for training.

Regarding the role of local authorities, some leaders viewed their contribution as positive, because the training they provided could help develop participants' knowledge and skills. However, other leaders expressed concerns, such as lack of motivation, attraction and planning, as these courses did not seem designed with a long-term plan or long-term objectives in mind. They also noted that such courses lacked assessment and impact measurement.

Some teachers viewed the work of local educational authorities as satisfactory, especially for new teachers and those facing curriculum changes. Other teachers,

however, expressed concerns about the lack of communication between providers and schools: no needs assessment is offered in these cases nor is feedback received. They also mentioned that course content is not updated regularly, that some is repetitive and that some presenters lack competence.

9.2 Original contributions

When discussing the original contributions of this research, it is important to highlight the early research undertaken which helped the researcher to establish a better understanding of outstanding schools, hoping this research would, at the same time, provide a more fully developed framework for understanding outstanding schools from the angles: leadership practices, culture and professional development.

One of the early models for school development was that developed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), which argued for an instructional (teaching and learning) centred model of leadership. Two decades later, Leithwood et al. (2006) developed a more varied model of leadership for school development, including instructional and transformational leadership, which as they argued combined teaching and learning aspects with leadership qualities help school leaders to lead their schools effectively.

This model was further developed empirically by Day et al. (2011), as a set of four main practices were identified by researchers, to be commonly practiced by leaders of outstanding schools in England. The four practices identified were: setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organisation and managing the instructional programme (Day et al., 2011). Several studies from different countries followed suit, including researchers from Sweden, Norway, Denmark,

England, Canada, the US, Australia and China. All the researchers had a goal in common, informing the quest to understand the common practices employed by the leaders of outstanding schools in these countries.

What made this research unique and different from previous studies was that its core aim was to assess cultural differences, while stressing the importance of the context being studied. This study was conducted in a unique environment, with different cultures, values, religion, educational policy, etc. from the Western context, in which the majority of former studies were conducted. Therefore, as there was no guarantee that what works in the West would work in Saudi Arabia, a specific framework was developed to understand the environment of these schools.

In addition, equally as important to cultural norms were the unique experiences that schools' leaders and teachers recollected in relation to their professional development. Bringing together the three concepts of leadership practices, culture and professional development contributed further to the originality of the study, and helped reveal significant features of the outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia studied.

Regarding its specific contributions, this research projects claims three key contributions, at the levels of theory, empirical context, and disciplinary knowledge. Its theoretical contribution takes place in the framework established by this research to understand the work of effective schools. The combination of leadership practices, culture and professional development does not appear to have previously been used as a three-part model to explore school effectiveness in Arabic contexts.

This study employed the original framework to understand effective schools from these different perspectives, so as to widen the scope of discussion about school effectiveness. Leadership practices are one essential aspect, but they could not be effective without a responsive school environment. Professional development, in fact, is one of the most effective ways to cultivate the practices necessary for effective school leadership. While, due to its interpretative epistemology, this research project cannot claim that leadership practices, culture and professional development have caused outstanding school performance, it has nevertheless described key aspects of this process and helped achieve a more nuanced understanding of effective schools.

The study's contribution to the context of this research, Saudi Arabia, takes two different forms. First, the research project uses a qualitative methodology to investigate the work of effective schools; to the best of the researcher knowledge, this is the first-time school effectiveness has been investigated thoroughly through qualitative enquiries in the country. The other contribution is the use of semi-structured observations to follow the day-to-day work of Principals to gain insight into their leadership practices, their perspectives on culture and their professional development journeys.

The third contribution of this project is to knowledge itself. The specific contributions will be listed below, based on the order in which they appeared in the discussion chapter.

- Principals believed in levelling the school's hierarchy and effectively redesigned the schools' organisational structures despite the policies of the Ministry of Education. Adopting more horizontal forms of organisation

under a centralized system seemed to be working, at least in these schools.

- All three schools used human factors to achieve teacher collaboration; Principals saw this as essential, since teacher job descriptions do not make them obliged to collaborate.
- Some Principals deliberately used informal language in school communications to reduce power differentials within the school and to bridge the gap between themselves and their staff.
- This study has paid unique attention to the effects of globalization on outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia, where the national and local cultures differ significantly from the West where many global ideologies originated.
- This study on Saudi schools has offered a unique perspective, whereby these outstanding schools have tried to balance between Western ideologies and Islamic values to align their practices with their culture and context, such as quoting phrases from Quran to support the use of TQM.
- There is no prior research available to support or to deny the existence of sub-cultures within effective schools in the context of Saudi Arabia. This study has examined this issue and concluded that micro-cultures were viewed negatively in two of the three outstanding schools studied.
- This study has established a unique insight regarding the link between justice and fairness as practised by school Principals and positive and strong working relationships among teachers. Participants stated that Principals' practices of justice and fairness are essential for them to establish and maintain strong working relationships, while injustice would lead to fractured relationships as an effect of inequality.

- This study has uniquely emphasised the use of various forms of reflection by leaders as a leadership development tool in outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia.

9.3 Limitations

The limitations of this research project are as follows. One of the limitations is the non-generalisability of the study, arising from the nature of qualitative enquiry as discussed in the methodology chapter. However, as outlined in that chapter, the researcher undertook many steps to ensure rigour in the research process. Another limitation of this research relates to the conceptual framework. As mentioned when defining outstanding schools in section 3.2 earlier in this research, I mentioned that the Education Excellence Award has seven domains for assessing nominated schools for the award. These seven domains were: effective leadership, school culture, quality, teaching and learning community, professional development, digital schooling and community partnership. This research would clearly have benefitted from covering these seven domains. However, it was beyond my abilities as a solo researcher, as I was already conducting a detailed data collection from three case studies and from multiple participants using diverse methods. This is perhaps something for future researchers in this area to consider.

In addition, this research would benefit from adding more schools to reach better-informed conclusions. However, as the work of one researcher, the limited time, resources and word count for this research project made it impossible to add more schools at this stage. Also, including students and parents in the circle of participants for this research would improve the understanding of the

phenomena under study. However, at the current stage of this research, adding additional participants of different kinds seemed to be neither feasible nor affordable, and would have expanded the project beyond the researcher's abilities. The final limitation to be noted is the lack of available and accessible research in Arabic or concerning Saudi Arabia related to this topic, particularly as there is no database available to allow a search of related theses, dissertations and journal articles.

9.4 Implications and recommendations

This section will discuss the implications of and recommendations arising from this study. It will discuss the possible generalisability and significance of the study, along with its implications for practice and some recommendations for future research.

9.4.1 The significance of the study

As it mentioned in the section above concerning limitations, this study did not generate generalisable results; rather, it aimed to understand outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia in their context to inform further development of theory, research and practice. Nevertheless, the findings from this study are important in two ways.

The first aspect of their significance is to inform theory and research in the West regarding school effectiveness in different contexts and circumstances, and including different systems of government and governance. The other aspect of significance concerns the Saudi Arabian context. As the country is seeking

economic development in a globalised world in pursuit of a knowledge economy; hence, education has become a tradable activity. As a result, competitiveness in education and the shift towards market dynamics have become central to the discussion of education in developed countries.

Excellence in education has been identified as a factor that can drive Saudi Arabia to become more closely integrated into global markets and to the developed world. Therefore, this study is significant not only to present and evaluate the effectiveness of theories and examples from the West, but also to examine outstanding examples from within a Saudi national context.

The study thus presents three outstanding cases within the Saudi context, highlighting the importance of leadership practices, cultures and professional development.

Although these cases were deemed to be outstanding under the current policy in Saudi Arabia, some changes need to be made to encourage other schools to follow their example. These schools have achieved outstanding results but express difficulties especially as they distribute leadership and responsibility, levelling school hierarchies and cultivate professional development. These aspects will be discussed more concretely in the next subsection, concerning the study's implication for practice.

9.4.2 Implications for practice

The findings of this study lead to a number of implications that could helpfully inform educational practitioners, especially school leaders. School leadership, especially the practices of Principals, is crucially important to school

effectiveness. Although the methodology of this study could not establish causal links, participants in this study deemed these practices to be essential in their specific cases.

Principals and other school leaders should cultivate a collective vision of the purpose and values of the school that brings people together and guides them towards their objectives. Organisational structures should be as non-hierarchical as possible, including more people such as teachers in school decision making. Distributed leadership has worked very well in the schools studied; therefore, leaders could learn from these cases how to delegate tasks and responsibilities among a larger number of participants to cope with the requirements of school excellence and gain teacher collaboration. Building collaborative practices should also be an area of concern, as effective schools demonstrate collaborative cultures.

Effective communication skills are also important for the leaders. Effective communication systems can ease the difficulty of organisational tasks and encourage effectiveness. Effective communication can bring people together, bridge the power gap between leaders and teachers and bring them closer to students. Planning was deemed to be an important factor, as it helped schools to raise their standards, direct their attention to important details and establish consistency in their work. Ensuring the quality of an organisation's processes is important to raise standards and to enhance performance, while ensuring quality in teaching and learning is essential to fulfil a school's main objective in terms of student experience and outcomes.

School leaders need to cultivate the awareness that their schools do not exist in isolation from the outside world; they interact with, affect and are effected by

their outside environment. Globalization and national cultures affected schools, and these outstanding schools dealt with such matters well. School leaders are urged to work to establish an effective culture which incorporates strong relationships, respect and professionalism. School culture plays a significant role in school effectiveness as it facilitates or hinders those relationships. It has a role in preventing problems and contributing to effective solutions when problems occur.

Professional development is important for school effectiveness, and should be encouraged and facilitated. The professional development of teachers is important to both themselves and their schools, and is likely to enhance their performance. The professional development of school leaders should be supported, as it assists them in leading their schools effectively and professionally.

The recommendations for policy makers contain two main elements. The first suggestion would be to grant schools more autonomy to allow them to work more independently. Schools, therefore, would be empowered to assume more horizontal structures while Principals would assume additional control over human resources. As a result, leaders would have other resources, in addition to positive relationships, to encourage teacher collaboration.

The second aspect concerns professional development policies. For teachers, professional development should be more systematic, whereby needs are analysed and appropriate steps can then take place. Needs analysis can be encouraged by enhancing communication between schools and training providers. Perhaps such professional development could be delegated, so that schools are autonomously responsible for tailored training programmes.

Meanwhile, professional development for leaders should be enhanced by making more programmes available and allowing stronger motivation for such development, in the form of new salary increments or forms of professional recognition. Allowing professional development, by freeing time for it to take place, is another key step.

9.4.3 Recommendations for future research

This study should be expanded to girls' schools in Saudi Arabia, as the researcher was unable to access such schools. Furthermore, the study concentrated on outstanding high schools and further studies should explore both primary and secondary schools in the country. A team of mixed-gender researchers would be effective in order to increase the scale of the research and to access both boys' and girls' primary, secondary, and high schools.

Then, this study needs to be generalised and to include a wider research community. Effective schooling in Saudi Arabia would benefit from using this framework to carry out a national study on school effectiveness, perhaps using the schools who won the National Excellence Award in Education as a study population.

9.5 Reflection

As I mentioned when discussing the origin of this research project, I had (and still have) a passion for effectiveness and for identifying the qualities and aspects that distinguish effective people. Looking at the work of these three outstanding schools I have learned important things about effectiveness in education. I learnt

that school leaders plan thoroughly and work hard to achieve and maintain outstanding performance. Schools and their Principals, meanwhile, have looked beyond policies and borders to learn and develop, thereby exceeding school, city and national parameters. School leaders and especially Principals have worked hard, often on their own, to develop professionally while overcoming financial, social and bureaucratic obstacles.

Throughout this journey of studying in the UK since 2009, I learned new skills I would have been unlikely to learn without leaving home and settling in another country for a long time. Learning about the culture and traditions of England has been a once in a lifetime opportunity. I learnt so much about punctuality, professionalism, productivity, equality, justice, democracy, respect, politeness, and so on.

Research skills represent another very important aspect that I have learned from this experience. Not only have I developed my understanding of research and the skills needed to carry it out, I have also realised to what extent research is valued in the West where national economies are now driven by knowledge. This insight has important consequences for me professionally as an academic in a Saudi university.

Learning English has been very significant for me, opening the horizon for me to engage with others to explore more about culture and knowledge and to ease social and professional networking with people on a global scale.

The next stage for my work will be to conducting other research in this area, with the hope of developing my career as an expert in this topic.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethical approval

B: I consider that this project may have ethical implications that should be brought before the Institute's Ethics Committee.	
Please provide all the further information listed below in a separate attachment.	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. title of project2. purpose of project and its academic rationale3. brief description of methods and measurements4. participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria5. consent and participant information arrangements, debriefing (attach forms where necessary)6. a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with them.7. estimated start date and duration of project	
<i>This form and any attachments should now be submitted to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration. Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.</i>	

☒ SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm that ethical good practice will be followed within the project.

Signed:  Print Name: Muteb Alhammadi Date 17/02/2015

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE ETHICS COMMITTEE

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed:  Print Name Andy Kempe Date 10.3.15
(IoE Research Ethics Committee representative)*

* A decision to allow a project to proceed is not an expert assessment of its content or of the possible risks involved in the investigation, nor does it detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility which students/investigators must themselves have for these matters. Approval is granted on the basis of the information declared by the applicant.

Appendix 2: Risk assessment

University of Reading
Institute of Education
Risk Assessment Form for Research Activities February 2014



Select one:

Staff project: PGR project: MA/UG project:

Name of applicant (s): Muteb Alhammadi

Title of project: Outstanding Schools in Saudi Arabia: leadership practices, culture and professional development

Name of supervisor (for student projects): Dr Alan Floyd and Tony Macfadyen

A: Please complete the form below

Brief outline of Work/activity:	The researcher will visit 3 Saudi Arabian high schools. The researcher will observe the principals day-to-day work in three occasions and then will interview them, their Deputies and the school social instructors separately. All teachers of the three schools will then be interviewed as groups (7-10 a group).	
Where will data be collected?	[REDACTED]	
Significant hazards:	None identified. The schools themselves have a duty to maintain a safe area of work within the school.	
Who might be exposed to hazards?	N/A	
Existing control measures:	The rooms fall within the school's Health & Safety responsibilities.	
Are risks adequately controlled:	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If NO, list additional controls and actions required:	Additional controls	Action by:

B: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

I have read the Health and Safety booklet posted on Blackboard, and the guidelines overleaf.
I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm risks have been adequately assessed and will be minimized as far as possible during the course of the project.

Signed:

Print Name Muteb Alhammadi

Date: 17/02/2015

STATEMENT OF APPROVAL TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISOR (FOR UG AND MA STUDENTS) OR BY IOE ETHICS COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE (FOR PGR AND STAFF RESEARCH).

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed: Print Name..... Date.....

* A decision to allow a project to proceed is not an expert assessment of its content or of the possible risks involved in the investigation, nor does it detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility which students/investigators must themselves have for these matters. Approval is granted on the basis of the information declared by the applicant.

Appendix 3: Principals information sheet



Supervisor: Dr Alan Floyd
Phone: 0118 378 2680
Email: alan.floyd@reading.ac.uk
Researcher: Muteb Alhammadi
Mobile: 078 0127 7187
Email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Principal information sheet

Research Project: Outstanding Schools in Saudi Arabia: leadership practices, culture and professional development

Dear Principal

I am writing to invite your school to take part in a research study about Outstanding schools.

What is the study?

I am conducting a study at the University of Reading with funding from Imam University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. This research aims to explore and understand the nature of three outstanding case study schools in Saudi Arabia from three main perspectives: leadership practices, culture and professional development. It aims to provide insight into these schools, helping researchers, policy makers and practitioners in Saudi Arabia to understand these schools and learn from them.

Why has this school been chosen to take part?

I have been in touch with the Local Authority in your city enquiring about outstanding schools in the city and they provided me with their rating list of schools and your school has been chosen as being rated outstanding for the last five years. The Local Authority rates schools with regard to their performance against certain criteria (e.g. staff and leadership stability, student performance, quality of teaching) and your school has been rated as outstanding. Therefore, I would like to learn from your school's achievement in order to gain a new understanding of outstanding schools.

Does the school have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether you give permission for the school to participate. You may also withdraw your consent to participation at any time during the project, without any repercussions to you, by contacting the researcher, Muteb Alhammadi, Mob: 07801277187 email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk

What will happen if the school takes part?

At your comfort, there will be three days observation of your day-to-day work (please note that I will not observe meetings and discussions which may be confidential to the institution). Then, face-to-face interview with you taking place in school at school times will follow. The interview is scheduled to take one hour. The aim of the interview is to learn from your expertise with regard to school leadership and how you have been able to lead the school effectively and successfully. Topics of the interview will be on and around school effective leadership covering the dimensions mentioned above: your leadership practices, school culture and professional development. Then, with their consent, the school Deputy and the school Social Instructor will be interviewed separately while teachers will be interviewed in groups. Procedures, topics and structure of the interviews will be similar to your interview. With your permission,



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Email: alan.floyd@reading.ac.uk
Researcher: Muteb Alhammadi
Mobile: 078 0127 7187
Email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk

the interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, a copy of the transcript will be sent to you to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish.

If you agree to the school's participation, I will seek further consent from the school Deputy, the school social instructor and teachers.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part?

The information given by participants in the study will remain confidential and will only be seen by the researcher. Neither you, school Deputy, school social instructor, teachers or the school will be identifiable in any published report resulting from the study. Information about individuals will not be shared with the school.

Participants in similar studies have found it interesting to take part. I anticipate that the findings of the study will be useful for school effectiveness.

What will happen to the data?

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you, your Deputy, the social instructor, the teachers or the school to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Participants will be assigned a number and will be referred to by that number in all records. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Research records will be stored securely on a password-protected computer and only the researcher will have access to the records. The data will be destroyed securely once the findings of the study are written up, after two years. The results of the study will be presented at the researcher's own doctoral thesis. I can send you electronic copies of the thesis, after gaining permission from the University of Reading, if you wish.

What happens if I change my mind?

You can change your mind at any time without any repercussions. If you change your mind after data collection has ended, we will discard the school's data.

What happens if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact the Project Supervisor, Dr Alan Floyd, Tel: 0118 378 2680, email: alan.floyd@reading.ac.uk

Where can I get more information?

If you would like more information, please contact Muteb Alhammadi

Mobile: 07801277187 Email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk



Supervisor: Dr Alan Floyd
Phone: 0118 378 2680
Email: alan.floyd@reading.ac.uk
Researcher: Muteb Alhammadi
Mobile: 078 0127 7187
Email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk

I do hope that you will agree to your participation in the study. If you do, please complete the attached consent form and return it, sealed, in the pre-paid envelope provided, to me.

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Muteb Alhammadi", enclosed within a large, hand-drawn oval.

Muteb Alhammadi

Appendix 4: Principals consent form



Supervisor: Dr Alan Floyd
Phone: 0118 378 2680
Email: alan.floyd@reading.ac.uk
Researcher: Muteb Alhammadi
Mobile: 078 0127 7187
Email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Principal Consent Form

I have read the Information Sheet about the project and received a copy of it.

I understand what the purpose of the project is and what is required of me. All my questions have been answered.

Name of Principal: _____

Name of school: _____

Please tick as appropriate:

I consent to the involvement of my school in the project as outlined in the Information Sheet

YES NO

I agree to being interviewed.

YES NO

I agree to have my interview audio-recorded.

YES NO

I agree to being observed.

YES NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

YES NO

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 5: Deputies information sheet



Supervisor: Dr Alan Floyd
Phone: 0118 378 2680
Email: alan.floyd@reading.ac.uk
Researcher: Muteb Alhammadi
Mobile: 078 0127 7187
Email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk

School Deputy information sheet

Research Project: Outstanding Schools in Saudi Arabia: leadership practices, culture and professional development

Dear School Deputy

I am writing to invite you to take part in a research study about Outstanding schools.

What is the study?

I am conducting a study at the University of Reading with funding from Imam University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. This research aims to explore and understand the nature of three outstanding case study schools in Saudi Arabia from three main perspectives: leadership practices, culture and professional development. It aims to provide insight into these schools, helping researchers, policy makers and practitioners in Saudi Arabia to understand these schools and learn from them.

Why has this school been chosen to take part?

I have been in touch with the Local Authority in your city enquiring about outstanding schools in the city and they provided me with their rating list of schools and your school has been chosen as being rated outstanding for the last five years. The Local Authority rates schools with regard to their performance against certain criteria (e.g. staff and leadership stability, student performance, quality of teaching) and your school has been rated as outstanding. Therefore, I would like to learn from your school's achievement in order to gain a new understanding of outstanding schools.

Do you have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether you participate in this study. You may also withdraw your consent to participation at any time during the project, without any repercussions to you, by contacting the researcher, Muteb Alhammadi, Mob: 07801277187 email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk

What will happen if you take part?

At your comfort, there will be face-to-face interview with you taking place in school at school times. The interview is scheduled to take one hour. The aim of the interview is to learn from your expertise with regard to school leadership and how you have been able to lead the school effectively and successfully as member of the leadership team. Topics of the interview will be on and around school effective leadership covering the dimensions mentioned above: your leadership practices, school culture and leadership development. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, a copy of the transcript will be sent to you to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part?

The information given by participants in the study will remain confidential and will only be seen by the researcher. Information about individuals will not be shared with the school nor the Local Authorities.

Participants in similar studies have found it interesting to take part. I anticipate that the findings of the study will be useful for school effectiveness.

What will happen to the data?

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you, your Deputy, the teachers or the school to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Participants will be assigned a number and will be referred to by that number in all records. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Research records will be stored securely on a password-protected computer and only the researcher will have access to the records. The data will be destroyed securely once the findings of the study are written up, after two years. The results of the study will be presented at the researcher's own doctoral thesis. I can send you electronic copies of the thesis, after gaining permission from the University of Reading, if you wish.

What happens if I change my mind?

You can change your mind at any time without any repercussions. If you change your mind after data collection has ended, we will discard the school's data.

What happens if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact the Project Supervisor, Dr Alan Floyd, Tel: 0118 378 2680, email: alan.floyd@reading.ac.uk

Where can I get more information?

If you would like more information, please contact Muteb Alhammadi

Mobile: 07801277187 Email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk



Supervisor: Dr Alan Floyd
Phone: 0118 378 2680
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Researcher: Muteb Alhammadi
Mobile: 078 0127 7187
Email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk

I do hope that you will agree to your participation in the study. If you do, please complete the attached consent form and return it, sealed, in the pre-paid envelope provided, to me.

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Muteb Alhammadi", written over a large, light-colored oval shape.

Muteb Alhammadi

Appendix 6: Deputies consent form



Supervisor: Dr Alan Floyd
Phone: 0118 378 2680
Email: alan.floyd@reading.ac.uk
Researcher: Muteb Alhammadi
Mobile: 078 0127 7187
Email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk

School Deputy Consent Form

I have read the Information Sheet about the project and received a copy of it.

I understand what the purpose of the project is and what is required of me. All my questions have been answered.

Name of School Deputy: _____

Name of school: _____

Please tick as appropriate:

I agree to being interviewed

YES NO

I agree to have my interview audio-recorded.

YES NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

YES NO

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 7: Social Instructors information sheet



Supervisor: Dr Alan Floyd
Phone: 0118 378 2680
Email: alan.floyd@reading.ac.uk
Researcher: Muteb Alhammadi
Mobile: 078 0127 7187
Email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk

School social instructor information sheet

Research Project: Outstanding Schools in Saudi Arabia: leadership practices, culture and professional development

Dear school Social Instructor

I am writing to invite you to take part in a research study about Outstanding schools.

What is the study?

I am conducting a study at the University of Reading with funding from Imam University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. This research aims to explore and understand the nature of three outstanding case study schools in Saudi Arabia from three main perspectives: leadership practices, culture and professional development. It aims to provide insight into these schools, helping researchers, policy makers and practitioners in Saudi Arabia to understand these schools and learn from them.

Why has this school been chosen to take part?

I have been in touch with the Local Authority in your city enquiring about outstanding schools in the city and they provided me with their rating list of schools and your school has been chosen as being rated outstanding for the last five years. The Local Authority rates schools with regard to their performance against certain criteria (e.g. staff and leadership stability, student performance, quality of teaching) and your school has been rated as outstanding. Therefore, I would like to learn from your school's achievement in order to gain a new understanding of outstanding schools.

Do you have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether you participate in this study. You may also withdraw your consent to participation at any time during the project, without any repercussions to you, by contacting the researcher, Muteb Alhammadi, Mob: 07801277187 email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk

What will happen if you take part?

At your comfort, there will be face-to-face interview with you taking place in school at school times. The interview is schedule to take one hour. The aim of the interview is to learn from your expertise with regard to school leadership and how you have been able to lead the school effectively and successfully as a member of the leadership team. Topics of the interview will be on and around school effective leadership covering the dimensions mentioned above: your leadership practices, school culture and leadership development. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, a copy of the transcript will be sent to you to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part?

The information given by participants in the study will remain confidential and will only be seen by the researcher. Information about individuals will not be shared with the school nor the Local Authorities.

Participants in similar studies have found it interesting to take part. I anticipate that the findings of the study will be useful for principals' leadership effectiveness.

What will happen to the data?

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you, your Deputy, the teachers or the school to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Participants will be assigned a number and will be referred to by that number in all records. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Research records will be stored securely on a password-protected computer and only the researcher will have access to the records. The data will be destroyed securely once the findings of the study are written up, after two years. The results of the study will be presented at the researcher's own doctoral thesis. I can send you electronic copies of the thesis, after gaining permission from the University of Reading, if you wish.

What happens if I change my mind?

You can change your mind at any time without any repercussions. If you change your mind after data collection has ended, we will discard the school's data.

What happens if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact the Project Supervisor, Dr Alan Floyd, Tel: 0118 378 2680, email: alan.floyd@reading.ac.uk

Where can I get more information?

If you would like more information, please contact Muteb Alhammadi

Mobile: 07801277187 Email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk

I do hope that you will agree to your participation in the study. If you do, please complete the attached consent form and return it, sealed, in the pre-paid envelope provided, to me.



Supervisor: Dr Alan Floyd
Phone: 0118 378 2680
Email: alan.floyd@reading.ac.uk
Researcher: Muteb Alhammadi
Mobile: 078 0127 7187
Email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized oval shape with a vertical line through it and some smaller scribbles below.

Muteb Alhammadi

Appendix 8: Social Instructors consent form



Supervisor: Dr Alan Floyd
Phone: 0118 378 2680
Email: alan.floyd@reading.ac.uk
Researcher: Muteb Alhammadi
Mobile: 078 0127 7187
Email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk

School Social Instructor Consent Form

I have read the Information Sheet about the project and received a copy of it.

I understand what the purpose of the project is and what is required of me. All my questions have been answered.

Name of school social instructor: _____

Name of school: _____

Please tick as appropriate:

I agree to being interviewed

YES NO

I agree to have my interview audio-recorded.

YES NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

YES NO

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 9: Teachers information sheet



Supervisor: Dr Alan Floyd
Phone: 0118 378 2680
Email: alan.floyd@reading.ac.uk
Researcher: Muteb Alhammadi
Mobile: 078 0127 7187
Email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Teachers information sheet

Research Project: Outstanding Schools in Saudi Arabia: leadership practices, culture and professional development

Dear teacher

I am writing to invite you to take part in a research study about outstanding schools.

What is the study?

I am conducting a study at the University of Reading with funding from Imam University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. This research aims to explore and understand the nature of three outstanding case study schools in Saudi Arabia from three main perspectives: leadership practices, culture and professional development. It aims to provide insight into these schools, helping researchers, policy makers and practitioners in Saudi Arabia to understand these schools and learn from them.

Why has this school been chosen to take part?

I have been in touch with the Local Authority in your city enquiring about outstanding schools in the city and they provided me with their rating list of schools and your school has been chosen as being rated outstanding for the last five years. The Local Authority rates schools with regard to their performance against certain criteria (e.g. staff and leadership stability, student performance, quality of teaching) and your school has been rated as outstanding. Therefore, I would like to learn from your school's achievement in order to gain a new understanding of outstanding schools.

Do you have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether you participate in this study. You may also withdraw your consent to participation at any time during the project, without any repercussions to you, by contacting the researcher, Muteb Alhammadi, Mob: 07801277187 email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk

What will happen if you take part?

At your comfort, there will be group interviews with all teachers (5-7 teachers in each group) taking place in school at school times. The interview is scheduled to take one hour. The aim of the interviews is to learn from your expertise with regard to school leadership and how you have been able to lead the school effectively and successfully as a leadership team. Topics of the interview will be on and around school effective leadership covering the dimensions mentioned above: leadership practices, school culture and leadership development. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, a copy of the transcript will be sent to you to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish



Supervisor: Dr Alan Floyd
Phone: 0118 378 2680
Email: alan.floyd@reading.ac.uk
Researcher: Muteb Alhammadi
Mobile: 078 0127 7187
Email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk

What are the risks and benefits of taking part?

The information given by participants in the study will remain confidential and will only be seen by the researcher. Information about individuals will not be shared with the school or the Local Authorities.

Participants in similar studies have found it interesting to take part. I anticipate that the findings of the study will be useful for principals' leadership effectiveness.

What will happen to the data?

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you, your Deputy, the teachers or the school to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Participants will be assigned a number and will be referred to by that number in all records. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Research records will be stored securely on a password-protected computer and only the researcher will have access to the records. The data will be destroyed securely once the findings of the study are written up, after two years. The results of the study will be presented at the researcher's own doctoral thesis. I can send you electronic copies of the thesis, after gaining permission from the University of Reading, if you wish.

What happens if I change my mind?

You can change your mind at any time without any repercussions. If you change your mind after data collection has ended, we will discard the school's data.

What happens if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact the Project Supervisor, Dr Alan Floyd, Tel: 0118 378 2680, email: alan.floyd@reading.ac.uk

Where can I get more information?

If you would like more information, please contact Muteb Alhammadi

Mobile: 07801277187 Email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk

I do hope that you will agree to your participation in the study. If you do, please complete the attached consent form and return it, sealed, in the pre-paid envelope provided, to me.

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.



Supervisor: Dr Alan Floyd
Phone: 0118 378 2680
Email: alan.floyd@reading.ac.uk
Researcher: Muteb Alhammadi
Mobile: 078 0127 7187
Email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized oval shape with a vertical line through it and some smaller scribbles below.

Muteb Alhammadi

Appendix 10: Teachers consent form



Supervisor: Dr Alan Floyd
Phone: 0118 378 2680
Email: alan.floyd@reading.ac.uk
Researcher: Muteb Alhammadi
Mobile: 078 0127 7187
Email: m.a.z.alhammadi@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Teacher Consent Form

I have read the Information Sheet about the project and received a copy of it.

I understand what the purpose of the project is and what is required of me. All my questions have been answered.

Name of Teacher: _____

Name of school: _____

Please tick as appropriate:

I agree to being interviewed

YES NO

I agree to have my interview audio-recorded.

YES NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

YES NO

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 11: Initial observation schedule for Principals

School		Principal	
Date		Time	

What are the leadership practices of school leaders in outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia?		
Points	Observation notes/Location	Check
Vision development and communication		
Teacher development		
Organisational structure		
Leadership style		
Teacher engagement		
Quality		

School		Principal	
Date		Time	

How is culture perceived and experienced by the school community in such schools?		
Points	Observation notes/Location	Check
School culture, sub cultures		
Globalization		
National Culture		
Religion		
Problems and difficulties		
Culture and effectiveness		

School		Principal	
Date		Time	

How is professional development perceived and experienced by leaders and staff in these schools?			
Points		Observation notes/Location	Check
School PD	Organisation		
	Importance		
Leaders PD	Journey		
	Reflection		
	Motivation		
	Difficulties		
Teachers LD	Types		
	Principal pole		
Local authority's role			

Several copies are available for more space.

Appendix 12: Revised observation schedule for Principals

School		Principal	
Date		Time	
General Field Notes:			

School		Principal	
Date		Time	
What are the leadership practices of school leaders in outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia?			
Points	Observation notes		Location
Vision development and communication			
Organisational structure			
Leadership style and distributed leadership			
Teacher engagement			
Communication			
Planning			
Organisational quality			
Quality in teaching and learning			

School		Principal
Date		Time
How is culture perceived and experienced by the school community in such schools?		
Points	Observation notes	Location
Globalization		
National Culture and religion		
School culture		
Subcultures		
Culture and effectiveness		
Problems and difficulties		
Establishing culture		

School			Principal	
Date			Time	
How is professional development perceived and experienced by leaders and staff in these schools?				
Points		Observation notes		Location
School PD	Description			
	Organisation			
	Importance			
	Principal role			
Leaders PD	Journey			
	Motivation			
	Reflection			
	Obstacles			
Teachers LD	Types			
	Principal pole			
Local authority's role				

Several copies are available for more space.

Appendix 13: Initial interview schedule for Principals, Deputies and Social Instructors

Research questions	Interview Themes	Discussed
<p>What are the leadership practices of school leaders in outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe your school vision? • What is your role in developing the school vision? • What do you think about school staff development? • What is your role in relation to your staff development? • How would you describe your school (as an organisation)? • How roles and responsibilities are distributed? • How school members are engaged in decision making? • What steps do you take to ensure quality in teaching and learning? 	<p style="text-align: center;"> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> </p>
<p>How is culture perceived and experienced by the school community in such schools?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe your school culture? • Would do describe your school culture as a single culture or multi cultures? • What is your role in developing this culture? • How present macro cultures are in your school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Globalization 	<p style="text-align: center;"> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> </p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Religion - National culture • How would you describe your school culture in case of problems and difficulties? • What is your school approach to solve them? • What is the connection between school culture and your school success? • Does this culture facilitate the environment for you to work effectively? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>How is professional development perceived and experienced by leaders and staff in these schools?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe your journey with regard to leadership development? • How would you describe your role in shaping your professional development? • Has reflection played a role in your leadership development? • Have you faced difficulties in your leadership development journey? • How would you describe leadership development in your school? • How leadership development is organised in your school? • What are the leadership development goals in the school? • Are they personal or organisational goals? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How would you describe the Ministry of Education's role with regard to your leadership development?	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Appendix 14: Revised interview schedule for Principals, Deputies and Social Instructors

Research questions	Interview Themes	Discussed
<p>What are the leadership practices of school leaders in outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe your school vision? • What is your role in developing the school vision? • How would you describe your school (as an organisation)? • What do you think about distributed leadership? • How roles and responsibilities are distributed? • Do teachers have role in decision making? How and why? • How would you describe communication in your school? • How planning works in your school? • What steps do you take to ensure organisational quality? • What steps do you take to ensure quality in teaching and learning? 	<p style="text-align: center;"> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> </p>
<p>How is culture perceived and experienced by the school community in such schools?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How present macro cultures are in your school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Globalization - Religion - National culture • How would you describe your school culture? 	<p style="text-align: center;"> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> </p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would do describe your school culture as a single culture or multi cultures? • What do you think about subgroups? • Is there a relationship between school culture and the school’s outstanding performance? • How would you describe your school culture in case of problems and difficulties? • What is your school approach to solve them? • What is your role in building, managing, and changing your school culture? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>How is professional development perceived and experienced by leaders and staff in these schools?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe professional development in your school? • How professional development is organised in your school? • What are the professional development goals in the school? • Are they personal or organisational goals? • What do you think about school staff development? • What is your role in relation to your staff development? • How would you describe your journey with regard to professional development? • How would you describe your role in shaping your career? • Do you use reflection as a PD tool, if so, how? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have you faced difficulties in your professional development journey?• How would you describe the Ministry of Education's role with regard to your professional development?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
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Appendix 15: Initial teachers interview schedule

Research questions	Interview Themes	Discussed
<p>What are the leadership practices of school leaders in outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe your school vision? • What is your leaders' role in developing the school vision? • How would you describe your school Principal attitude to staff development? • How would you describe your school (as an organisation)? • How roles and responsibilities are distributed? • How engaged are you in decision making? • What steps do your leaders take to ensure quality in teaching and learning? 	<p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>How is culture perceived and experienced by the school community in such schools?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe your school culture? • Would do describe your school culture as a single culture or multi cultures? • What is done to develop this culture? • What is your role in developing this culture? • How present macro cultures are in your school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Globalization 	<p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Religion - National culture • How would you describe your school culture in case of problems and difficulties? • What is your school approach to solve them? • What is the connection between school culture and your school success? • Does this culture facilitate the environment for your school to be effective? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>How is professional development perceived and experienced by leaders and staff in these schools?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe leadership development in your school? • How important leadership development is in your school? • How leadership development is organised? • What are the leadership development goals in the school? • Are they personal or organisational goals? • Any problems or difficulties regarding this matter? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 16: Revised interview schedule for teachers

Research questions	Interview Themes	Discussed
<p>What are the leadership practices of school leaders in outstanding schools in Saudi Arabia?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe your school vision? • What is your role in developing the school vision? • What is your leaders' role in developing the school vision? • How would you describe your school (as an organisation)? • How roles and responsibilities are distributed? • How engaged are you in decision making? • How would you describe communication in your school? • How planning works in your school? • What steps do your leaders take to ensure organisational quality? • What steps do your leaders take to ensure quality in teaching and learning? 	<p style="text-align: center;">□</p>
<p>How is culture perceived and experienced by the</p>	<p>How present macro cultures are in your school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Globalization 	<p style="text-align: center;">□</p> <p style="text-align: center;">□</p>

<p>school community in such schools?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Religion - National culture • How would you describe your school culture? • What is done to develop this culture? • What is your role in developing this culture? • Would do describe your school culture as a single culture or multi cultures? • What do you think about subgroups? • Is there a relationship between school culture and the school’s outstanding performance? • How would you describe your school culture in case of problems and difficulties? • What is your school approach to solve them? • What is your leaders’ role in building, managing, and changing your school culture? 	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>How is professional development perceived and experienced by leaders and staff in these schools?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe professional development in your school? • How professional development is organised in your school? • What are the professional development goals in the school? 	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

Appendix 17: Examples of original quotations – Safer School

رؤية هذه المدرسة معروضة بوضوح بما يزيد عن 15 مكان حول المدرسة وفي كل مستند نقوم بتصميمه (خالد، المدير، مقابلة).

This school vision is clearly posted in more than 15 spots around the school and in every single document we produce (Khalid, Principal, interview).

حينما يغيب لأي سبب من الأسباب رأس الهرم في المدارس الهرمية، كل شيء يتوقف حتى يرجع لعمله (مجموعة معلمين 2، مقابلة مجموعة).

In hierarchical schools, when the top person is absent for any reason everything has to wait until he comes back (Teacher group 2, group interview).

شخصياً أستمتع بتسطيح الهرم، لأنني إذا صرت خارج المدرسة للتدريب أو في إجازة ما أنزعج باتصالات زملائي من المدرسة، نادراً ما يتم الاتصال علي (خالد، المدير، مقابلة).

For me I enjoy flattening the organisation because when I am away for training or when I am on leave I do not get disrupted by colleagues' phone calls back in the school, I barely get calls (Khalid, Principal, interview).

المدارس الهرمية من الممكن أن تنجح لكن ليس لوقت طويل، لأن العاملين في رأس الهرم لهم حد فما يستطيعون أن يواصلوا للأبد (فهد، المرشد الطلابي، مقابلة).

Hierarchical schools can work but not for a long time because people in power have limitations, they cannot continue for ever (Fahad, Social Instructor, interview).

كمدرسة متميزة وطامحة للاستمرار بالتميز المسؤوليات موزعة على عدد من الأشخاص (سامي، وكيل، مقابلة).

As an outstanding school and we plan to continue to be so, responsibilities have to distributed over a number of people (Sami, Deputy, interview).

يتم استشارتنا ورأينا له قيمة، وما قد حصل إنني صار لي موقف إنني أخجلت لأنني قلت رأيي، لما اقترح على فريق الإدارة وخصوصا المدير اقتراح دائما يؤخذ بجدية (مجموعة معلمين 3، مقابلة مجموعة).

We are consulted and our opinion is valued. I have never had occasion to feel put down because I expressed my opinion. When I go to the people on the management board, especially our Principal, with a suggestion they always take it seriously (Teacher, Group 3, group interview).

تقسيم الإدارة أمر عادل لأنها تشمل أشخاص واجد لكنها تأخذ وقت. القرار اللي بالسابق كان يأخذ خمس دقائق الآن يمكن يأخذ أسابيع (مجموعة معلمين 5، مقابلة مجموعة).

Distributed leadership is fair for everybody since it includes different people, but it takes time. What used to take five minutes to decide can now take weeks (Teacher, Group 5, group interview).

بعض الأحيان تكون المعلومات موجودة، لكن مالها فائدة إذا ما تم مشاركتها مع الآخرين، في هذي المدرسة نحاول أن نخلي الناس على علم بالشيء، ما نخفي معلومات الا اذا كانت سرية طبعا (سامي، وكيل، مقابلة).

Sometimes information is available but if it is not shared with others it has no benefit. In this school, we try to make people aware of what's going on. We do not hide information unless it is, of course, confidential (Sami, Deputy, interview).

Appendix 18: Examples of original quotations – Wazeer School

الإيجابيات أكثر. لدينا أجهزة نعلم من خلالها عن الأخبار والاختراعات الجديدة إلخ. هذه الأجهزة تساعدنا للاستكشاف و معرفة الكثير عن الآخرين (مجموعة معلمين 1، مقابلة مجموعة).

The positives are more. We have devices that bring us news, new innovations, etc. They help us to explore and know more about others (Teacher group 1, group interview).

عندي إيمان أن نقل هذه القيم يكون أفضل عن طريق الفعل وليس التعليم المباشر (مالك، المدير، مقابلة).

I have always believed that such values are better transferred through practice than through direct teaching (Malek, Principal, interview).

العلاقات ممتازة وهي تختلف عن المدارس التي عملت بها قبل. لما أصحو الصباح أشعر أنني أتوق لشيء مميز (مجموعة معلمين 4، مقابلة مجموعة).

Relationships are excellent. It is different from any other school I have worked for. When I wake up first thing in the morning I feel that I am looking forward to something good (Teacher group 4, group interview).

لا يوجد شلبية. لدينا غرفة معلمين واحدة للحفاظ على انسجام المعلمين (سعود، وكيل، مقابلة).

There are no rival groups; we only have one staff room in order to maintain harmony among all colleagues (Saud, Deputy, interview).

القروبات الصغيرة تنشأ عندما يكون الناس ليسوا مرتاحين مع قائدهم، لأن الناس مرتاحين في مدرستنا ما فيه مثل هذه القروبات (شادي، المرشد الطلابي، مقابلة).

Small groups exist when people are not happy with their leaders. Because people are happy at our school, no such groups exist (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

بدلاً من أن يكون الشغل عملاً فردياً يصبح جماعياً. وبدلاً من دماغ واحد يعمل، يكون من خلال العديد من العقول، لذلك الأفكار تتدفق من عدة أطراف (مالك، المدير، مقابلة).

Instead of the work being individual it becomes collective, and instead of one brain it operates through many intellects, so ideas flow from many participants (Malek, Principal, interview).

يلعب دور رئيسي. عنده خبرة كبيرة في القيادة. ما زلنا نتعلم منه (شادي، مرشد طلابي، مقابلة).

He plays a major role. He has a vast experience in leadership. We still learn from him (Shadi, Social Instructor, interview).

الوضوح. ما فيه صفقات تحت الطاولة. كل شيء واضح وشفاف (سعود، وكيل، مقابلة).

Clarity, there are no deals under the table. Everything is clear and transparent (Saud, Deputy, interview).

Appendix 19: Examples of original quotations – King’s School

أقترح بقوة أنه لا ينبغي لأحد أن يشارك في القيادة من دون تدريب. الناس دون تدريب يقومون بعملهم على أساس التجربة والخطأ. وهذا أمر غير مقبول في واقع التعليم (تركي، وكيل، مقابلة).

I would strongly suggest that no one should engage in leadership without training. People without training do their job on a trial and error basis, which is not acceptable in real life education (Turky, Deputy, interview).

قادتنا يشجعوننا وخاصة المدير والوكيل على التقديم على الدورات التدريبية (مجموعة معلمين 2، مقابلة مجموعة).

We are encouraged by our leaders, especially the Principal and the Deputy, to apply for the training courses (Teacher group 2, group interview).

في التدريب، نتعلم من الغرب كثيرا، لأن القيادة والإدارة هي مفاهيم غربية في المقام الأول. يجب ألا نخاف من قول واستخدام ما هو مناسب لنا بين النتائج التي توصلوا إليها (نايف، المدير، مقابلة).

In training, we learn from the West a lot, because leadership and management are Western concepts in the first place. We should not be afraid of saying that and using what is suitable for us among their findings (Nayif, Principal, interview).

حضرت قبل عامين دورة حول إدارة الصف الفعالة وأدركت أنه خلال السنوات الـ 35 الماضية كنت أفقد شيء مهم في إدارة الصف، لذلك، يجب ألا يقتصر التدريب على المعلمين الجدد ولا المعلمين الذين يحتاجون إلى التدريب لعلاج نقص. يجب أن تكون إلزامية للجميع، لأن الجميع بحاجة للتدريب كما يحتاج أي شخص (مجموعة معلمين 1، مقابلة مجموعة).

I attended two years ago a course on effective class management and realised that for the last 35 years I was missing something that is valuable to class management. So, training should not be limited to newly appointed teachers nor those who are felt to be in need of remedial training. It should be mandatory for everyone as anyone needs it (Teacher group 1, group interview).

عدد المعلمين 28 معلم وفي هذا العام 23 معلم حضروا الدورات. لقد حسبت الحصص المتغيب عنها على أساس متوسط يوم ونصف لكل معلم كان الناتج حوالي 207 حصة في العام مما له عواقب على التعليم وتنظيم المدرسة (بدر، المرشد الطلابي، مقابلة)

We have 28 teachers and in this year 23 teachers attended courses. I calculated the missed classes based on an average of a day and a half for each teacher. It was around 207 classes missed, which has consequences for learning and school organisation (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).

نقارن الدورات المتاحة برؤيتنا وأهدافنا وعلى ضوءه نقترح الدورات (تركي، وكيل، مقابلة).

We compare our vision and goals to the courses available and suggest courses (Turky, Deputy, interview).

يعمل كمشرف مقيم، حيث يقيم احتياجات كل معلم ويقترح تدريبه وفقا لذلك (نایف، المدير، مقابلة).

He [the Deputy] acts as a resident supervisor, in which he assesses each teacher's needs and suggest training according to that (Nayif, Principal, interview).

لا يتم تنظيم الدورات بشكل صحيح. الجميع قادر على التقديم على أي دورة. على سبيل المثال يمكن للقادة التقديم على دورات في تقنيات إعداد الاختبارات، والتي لا يحتاجونها إلا إذا عادوا إلى التدريس (بدر، المرشد الطلابي، مقابلة).

Courses are not organised properly. Everyone is able to apply to any course. For example, leaders could apply for courses in exam-making techniques, which they do not need unless they go back to teaching (Bader, Social Instructor, interview).