Examining Distributed Leadership in Saudi Arabia, through the lens of Sociocultural Theory: Case studies of public and private girls' primary schools in Jeddah and AlMadinah.

Soha MohamadFuad AlFahal

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School of Education

The University of Nottingham

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ABSTRACT

There is limited literature on school leadership in the Arab region and, particularly, in Saudi Arabia. It is even more limited in respect of leadership practices in primary schools. This study is significant as it contributes to the research on school leadership in Saudi Arabia and serves to modify established theory on distributed leadership.

This study focuses on examining Distributed Leadership in Saudi Arabia, through the lens of Sociocultural Theory: Case studies of public and private girls' primary schools in Jeddah and AlMadinah. It employs a multiple case study design of public and private schools in two cities in the Western region of Saudi Arabia. It sought to build an understanding of the enactment of leadership in the case study schools by exploring the applied leadership models and styles, in particular the distributed leadership model. It also investigates the elements affecting school leadership in Saudi Arabia through the lens of sociocultural theory.

The findings show that there is evidence of leadership distribution in the case study schools. However, the nature and extent of distribution differs between the public and private schools, and the impact of centralisation, via the Ministry of Education, seems to constrain the level of distribution. The enactment of school leadership appears to be affected and influenced by the surrounding context; which is influenced by sociocultural factors, such as gendered roles and societal expectations.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Description
DL	Distributed Leadership.
GDEMP	General Directorate of Education in AlMadinah Province.
GEDNJ	General Education office in North Jeddah.
MoE	Ministry of Education.
SLT	Senior Leadership Team.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Little is known about the enactment of school leadership in the Arab world, particularly in Saudi Arabia (Hallinger and Hammad, 2019). Examining established western theories in a less studied context, with distinctive cultural characteristics, provides the potential for original findings which may provide better understanding of how theories could be contextualised, interpreted, and implemented, in other contexts and across cultures. The research may also offer insights into educational policy and practice in this under-published context.

My research seeks to provide an understanding of leadership practices in Saudi girls' primary schools, and whether it reflects some of the nuanced western school leadership models. Thus, the focus of this thesis is on distributed leadership (Bush, 2011; Bush and Glover, 2014), with the intention of contributing to the literature on school leadership in the Arab region. It offers a comparison between public and private girls' primary schools in two cities in the Western region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; Jeddah and AlMadinah, in terms of the enactment of leadership, seeking any evidence of applied distributed leadership, while examining the sociocultural factors that may influence how leadership is enacted in these schools.

Research Rationale

School Leadership and Management

There are many definitions of leadership. According to Bush and Glover (2003: 5) leadership is defined as:

> [A] process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes. Successful leaders develop a vision for their schools based on their personal

> and professional values. They articulate this vision at every opportunity and influence their staff and other stakeholders to share the vision. The philosophy, structures and activities of the school are geared towards the achievement of this shared vision. (Bush and Glover, 2003: 5)

In differing contexts, the leadership practices may vary. According to Khalifa *et al*. (2016: 1294), leadership in the post-colonial context may need to be more culturally responsive:

> [t]he practice of culturally responsive leadership is often dependent on the geographic and/or cultural setting of the school. Because of these differing circumstances, which can determine relevant strategies for dealing with cultural issues in schools, there is not necessarily a universal package of guidelines for becoming a CRSL [culturally responsive school leadership] leader. (Khalifa *et al*., 2016: 1294)

Kaplan and Kaiser (2003: 21) emphasize 'the essentially two-sided nature of leadership: For every truth there is an equal and opposing truth, and leadership models are more useful for respecting that reality'.

The field of educational leadership and management has evolved over the years. There is much recent work on how the discussion of this concept has shifted from valuing the heroic single leader (Bolden, 2011) to appreciating a more collective and shared approach to educational leadership (Crawford, 2012). After decades of the focus on traditional and formal leadership models (Bush, 2011, 2008), the movement was towards the development of leadership models that seem to favour individuals working together and sharing leadership responsibilities (Bush and Crawford, 2012; Harris, 2008; Gronn, 2010). Therefore, there are many leadership models, each of which has their advocates who claim their utility in helping school leaders and in improving school effectiveness and student outcomes (Bush, 2019c, 2011, 2008; Bush and Glover, 2014).

Leithwood et al. (2008: 27- 28) articulate seven aspects, which they 'strongly claim' identify successful school leadership. These claims are:

> 1. School leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning.
> 2. Almost all successful leaders draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices.
> 3. The ways in which leaders apply these basic leadership practices/ not the practices themselves/ demonstrate responsiveness to, rather than dictation by, the contexts in which they work.
> 4. School leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions.
> 5. School leadership has a greater influence on schools and students when it is widely distributed.
> 6. Some patterns of distribution are more effective than others.
> 7. A small handful of personal traits explains a high proportion of the variation in leadership effectiveness. (Leithwood et al., 2008: 27- 28)

Leadership models

Traditionally, school leadership is often discussed and represented as a solo activity (Afridi, 2013; Bush, 2019a; Crawford, 2019), since the hierarchical structures internal to schools and external to them (as seen in the local authorities or even the whole educational system) support this practice (Bush, 2019b; Crawford, 2012). Coleman and Glover (2010) make the distinction between leadership and management as they state that:

> [L]eadership [is] particularly associated with setting the values and the vision of an organisation or group, and management as the more day to day enactment of the vision. (Coleman and Glover, 2010: 3)

However, from the 1990s, there was a shift in focus from management and administration to educational leadership (Bush, 2011; Crawford, 2012). At that time, Crawford (2012: 611), argues that solo leadership was prominent.

Unlike traditional leadership models, according to which leadership is mostly practiced within hierarchical structures (Bush, 2011, 2008; Bush and Crawford, 2012; Gronn, 2010), collegial models emphasise distribution of power (Crawford, 2019). This model indicates that 'decision-making should be shared among some or all members of [staff]' (Bush, 2011: 72). In addition, Coleman and Glover (2010: 3) argue that the way individuals exercise leadership within an institute is highly dependent on the culture and the leader's leadership style. In other words, the applied leadership model seems to influence the enactment of leadership within organisations.

Distributed leadership is an emerging leadership model that has gained much attention and attracted many scholars (Bush et al., 2019, Bush and Glover, 2014; Davis, 2009; Gronn, 2002; Harris, 2013; Harris et al., 2007; Harris and Spillane, 2008; Spillane and Camburn, 2006; Spillane Halverson and Diamond, 2001). It is argued to be the normatively preferred leadership model in the twenty-first century (Bush, 2011; Bush and Glover, 2014). However, the concept of distribution may be seen just as 'a normative switch' (Bush, 2019c: 10) from 'from heroics to distribution' (Gronn, 2010: 70), or even that 'its popularity may be pragmatic: to ease the burden of overworked headteachers' (Hartley, 2010: 271). Indeed, Lumby (2013: 585) argues that the literature 'does not expansively engage with who holds power and why'.

According to Harris (2013: 545), '[t]he idea of distributed leadership as leadership practice has generated substantial interest among researchers, policy-makers and practitioners', unlike other leadership models which 'have provoked' less 'attention, debate, controversy or irritation within the school leadership field… Distributed leadership theory has provided an alternative and powerful empirical lens on a familiar theme' (ibid, emphasis added).

Definition and features of Distributed leadership

Distributed leadership emerged as one of the shared methods to leadership, in the sense that leadership is practiced amongst several individuals and not confined to those in formal positions. Although distributed leadership may be 'used somewhat interchangeably in the literature' with shared leadership (Ensley et al., 2006: 218), however, it is argued that there is an overlap between distributed leadership and other concepts including shared, collaborative and democratic leadership (Harris, 2008; Harris, 2003; Spillane, 2006).

School leadership may require the existence of multiple leaders rather than one heroic leader, in order for schools to succeed and achieve their goals (Harris, 2012; Shava. and Tlou., 2018), which is 'now accepted that leadership can be distributed among a range of people within the institution' after being confined to a 'titular leader' (Coleman and Glover, 2010: 3).

Distributed leadership in particular, discusses leaders in spite of the positions within the school hierarchy; leaders are the 'those with relevant knowledge' (Ensley et al., 2006: 218). So, it focuses on 'engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organization rather than seeking this only through formal position or role' (Harris, 2004: 13). Spillane et al. (2004) represents distributed leadership with the existence of multiple leaders, while Harris (2007) focuses on the shared activity within and between organisations. Similarly, Harris and Spillane (2008) add that the interactions between members are more valued than the actions. In addition, Spillane (2006) is concerned with the leadership practice and how it influences improvements within the organisation. Harris et al. (2007, 339) add, 'distributed leadership is concerned with the active distribution of leadership authority and agency'. However, Harris et al. (2007: 338) claims that 'Jim Spillane has provided the most developed theoretical model of distributed leadership'. His definition proposes that distributed leadership 'practice distributed over leaders, followers and their situation and incorporates the activities of multiple groups of individuals' (Spillane et al., 2001: 20).

Distributed leadership is often linked to with the concept of delegation. However, researchers distinguish between the two concepts. Bush and Ng (2019: 287) for example, define delegation as:

> Delegation is a management concept, a device for allotting tasks and responsibilities. It aligns strongly with allocative leadership and may be regarded as consistent with leaders' and followers' expectations in a hierarchical system. (Bush and Ng, 2019: 287)

Whereas Humphreys (2010: 137) states that:

> [D]elegation meant they [headteacher/ deputy head] asked a teacher to carry out a task or play a role, whereas distributed leadership meant that teachers throughout the school were empowered to exercise leadership through influencing others and using their own initiative. (Humphreys, 2010: 137)

Delegation is often known as a downward concept (Bush, 2011; Coleman and Glover, 2010) where a superior delegates to a subordinate. In this research, however, delegation is conceptualised as:

The act in which a staff member passes on a role or a responsibility to another colleague. The two could be subordinates and the delegation could be done both ways (upwards and downwards).

It is argued that 'any attempt at providing a definitive definition of DL would fail to capture the complexity and inherent paradoxes of the concept' (Shava and Tlou, 2018: 280), for the purpose of this research, distributed leadership is defined as:

The distribution of tasks and responsibilities from one colleague to another, this could be emergent or allocative as in the formation of teams. The degree of agency and accountability to be agreed upon between the individuals involved prior to accepting the task. When emergent distribution is required, all staff members are

given equal opportunities to take part and when it is allocative all recommended candidates have the right to either accept or deny the leadership task and responsibility.

It is, also, underpinned by five features:

1. Distributed leadership could be emergent (Bennett et al., 2003), or allocative (Bush, 2019: 10; Bush and Ng, 2019: 284).
2. It 'uncouple[s leadership] from positional authority' (Bush, 2019c) and independent of position (Bush, 2011; Harris 2004).
3. It focuses on the interactions between a number of individuals within the organisation including leaders, followers and their situation (Harris, 2013; Spillane et al., 2001).
4. With an emphasis on the situation (Spillane et al., 2004), distributed leadership focuses on the context and what is being distributed, 'functions or qualities' (Harris, 2008: 28).
5. Power representation, the level of agency (Harris et al., 2007), and accountability within the distribution (Harris and Spillane, 2008).

Scholars have examined various leadership models in western contexts and there is limited empirical evidence of similar studies conducted in non-Western contexts (Bush, 2011; Crawford, 2019; Leithwood et al., 1999), yet this gab is shrinking with the formation of research centres on educational leadership and management, the number of conducted studies is growing (Bush, 2020b). This research, hence, aims to contribute to the literature on distributed leadership in a centralised system, under published context of Saudi Arabia.

Focus of the Research

This research is from an emerging field of study and the researcher chose to focus on distributed leadership as a popular leadership model in an under-published context, Saudi Arabia. Through examining the relationship between school

leadership theory and practice, and sociocultural factors, the intention is to establish if sociocultural elements help to understand the enactment of leadership in Saudi primary girls' schools. I also aim to establish if distributed leadership is evident in these schools.

A qualitative stance was adopted in collecting the data, using a case study approach, to provide an in-depth examination of the leadership practices in Saudi girls' primary schools. It examines the social factors affecting school leadership. It also explores whether there is evidence of distributed leadership in the case study schools.

The study is focused on public and private primary schools located in two cities in the Western region of Saudi Arabia. These are Jeddah and AlMadina, which are rather different, both socially and economically.

Background and Research Context

Saudi Arabian Educational System

Educational and economic development gained much attention by the Saudi government after the kingdom's regions were unified. According to Al-Sadan (2000), formal education in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia was established in 1924. Al-Sadan (2000), however, continues that some people considered being able to read and write a privilege, due to the economic status of the country at that time. The number of students, therefore, in all forms of educational settings (formal and informal), was limited and mainly confined to boys. Several researchers (Al-Sadan, 2000; Hendrickson, n.d.; SACM, 2006) state that, in 1924, education started to become available for girls in formal settings, as well as boys, after the establishment of the Directorate of Education. In the 1950s, the Ministry of Education (MoE) replaced the Directorate of Education (Al-Sadan, 2000; MoE, 2008).

Education is segregated by gender in Saudi Arabia, 'with male and female [students] attending separate schools' (Alghamdi and Al-Salouli, 2013: 503). The Ministry of

Education (MoE) initially was concerned only with boys' schools and education. For girls, there was a division called General Presidency for Girls, which focused on girls' education (SACM, 2013). The functions of the latter body were 'dissolved and taken over by the Ministry [of Education]' by the year 2003 (ibid).

Before January 2015, the educational system in Saudi Arabia was led by two authorities: the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE). The MoE, which was established first, is responsible for the general education division (IOREW, 2013; MoHE, 2014a). The general education division oversees twelve years of education; six years elementary (primary) level, three years intermediate, and three years high school (or secondary) level (Alghamdi and Al-Salouli, 2013; Hendrickson, n.d.; SACM, 2006). Primary education is preceded by pre-school (locally known as kindergarten). According to Clark (2012), and Alghamdi and Al-Salouli (2012: 503), the first six years of general education (the elementary level) became 'mandatory for children' in the 1960s. In addition, adult education is also facilitated by the MOE (SACM, 2006).

The other educational sector is higher education, which was a segment of the MoE prior to the 1970s. By 1975, higher education came under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) (SACM, 2006). A major distinction between general and higher education is that the latter is not compulsory, while attending primary grades is mandatory. In addition to administering all higher education (universities and colleges) in the Kingdom, both public and private, the MoHE is responsible for 'proposing the establishment of higher education institutions and authorizing them'(SACM, 2006: 5). NCAAA (2009) suggests that MoHE is also accountable for technical and vocational colleges and training. Through the MoHE, many Saudi citizens have the opportunity to pursue their education for graduate studies; either Master's or Ph.D's, through King Abdullah Bin AbdulAziz's scholarship programme (MoE, 2016).

Those two educational authorities, (MoE and MoHE), were merged into one entity, as the Ministry of Education (MoE), after the appointment of King Salman as the new King of Saudi Arabia in January 2015 (SPA, 2015).

The Saudi education system has been through many changes (Al-Sadan, 2000; MoE, 2008). Two examples of the most recent changes relate to primary education. First, sports are allowed for girls in public schools (McKernan, 2017). Second, boys and girls will be admitted to the same school in the first two primary years, with some limitations (Shar, 2017), Third, preschool education is yet to become compulsory for children aged 3– 6 (AlEnizi, 2018), only then will boys be admitted to girls' schools to be taught by female teachers (Shar, 2017).

According to the World Bank (2019), 116,243 students were enrolled in primary grades in 2016 compared to 57,812 in 1979, an increase of more than 100%. In 2010, King Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz endorsed the initiative to develop the general educational system through introducing *Tatweer.* This project focuses on developing different elements of the public education sector (Clark, 2012; Elyas and Al-Ghamdi, 2018; MoE, 2008; Tatweer, 2010). The MoE (2008: 26) lists those elements as: the curriculum, teacher training and rehabilitation (which is focused on preparing and training teachers to begin teaching and then continue training them after appointment), the educational environment, and students' capabilities. It is noticeable that the Tatweer initiative does not discuss school leadership.

Sociocultural Features of Saudi Education

The nature of centralisation in the Saudi education system (Alkarni, 2009; Alkarni and Male, 2014), and the influence of centralisation on cultural practices and social expectations, provide a distinctive framework for understanding school leadership in Saudi Arabia. The potential for implementing a more distributed approach to school leadership in this context appears to be both limited and challenging. Similarly, Bush and Ng's (2019) research in Malaysia indicates that '[t]his systemic culture suggests that shifting leadership practice from solo to distributed leadership

will be difficult to achieve (Bush and Ng, 2019: 281). This study focuses on examining distributed leadership in Saudi Arabia, through the lens of sociocultural theory, by employing case studies of public and private girls' primary schools in Jeddah and AlMadinah, which might help in building an understanding of the social and cultural factors, and on their influence, if any, on the enactment of leadership in the case study schools.

The socio-economic element was a factor in selecting the case study schools, including choosing cities with different economic status, with Jeddah regarded as a richer city than AlMadinah (DMI, 2015a; DMI, 2015b). The research reflects the social and cultural factors affecting the enactment of leadership in respect of the economic status of the people involved (either school staff or parents). Hallinger (2018b: 7) stresses the importance of the wider context, or what he refers to as the community context:

> The 'community context' emerges out of features such as the socio-economic status of parents, parent and community involvement in the school, and the geographic location. (Hallinger, 2018b: 7)

However, the researcher does not consider religion as one of the cultural elements being examined here, although some might argue that religion is part of the culture as it affects every aspect of life in Saudi (Algarni and Male, 2014: 46).

There are broad contextual elements in Saudi Arabia, that have a strong influence on several aspects of life; some of these elements exist because of sociocultural issues which are distinctive in Saudi Arabia. One example of how sociocultural issues have affected the social life in Saudi Arabia relates to the issue of women driving in Saudi Arabia. The misconception about women driving was always associated with religion, Islam. However, this is wrong, for two reasons. First, in many societies where Islam is the dominant religion, women have the right to drive as equal partners to men, for example in Egypt, Bahrain, UAE, and Kuwait. In June 2018 (McKernan, 2018), moreover, women driving became official in Saudi Arabia.

Whilst Islam remains the national religion, some sociocultural aspects have changed.

Second, in every country, and each society, there are issues that are debated and would or could cause disturbance if enforced by the government or law with the existence of large number of opponents. In the field of sociological studies, therefore, there are some considerations to be acknowledged before implementing any change. For example, Thapa and Sarkar (2019) discuss how significant it is to consider the diverse social background when introducing universal elementary education in India.

Thus, in the Saudi context, the government was well aware of societal attitudes and the crown prince of Saudi Arabia explained that women will drive when the society is ready for them to drive (ArabicRT, 2016). As the Saudi crown prince, Mohammad Bin Salman, expressed:

> Today, the society is not convinced of women driving and believes that it has very negative consequences ... I assure you that this is a matter that is fully related to the desire of the Saudi society. We cannot impose something on the society that does not want it, but in the future changes happens, and we always hope for them to be positive. (ArabicRT, 2016)

Bogotch (2011: 29), in her chapter about US cultural history, and its influences on leadership for learning, argues that 'school leadership practices and K-12 policies have been and will continue to be influenced by a nation's history and culture'. The significance of embracing economic, social, historical, and cultural aspects to school leadership is becoming more evident (Alkarni, 2009; Bogotch, 2011; Bush and Ng, 2019; Close and Wainwright, 2010; Fuller et al., 2013; Gronn, 2010a). Therefore, 'it becomes critically important that our educational leaders bring historical and cultural perspectives to whatever contemporary school reforms are being proposed and implemented. [r]egardless of a particular era' (Bogotch, 2011: 31).

Two socio-cultural factors are significant in Saudi Arabia: parental expectations and involvement and gendered roles. In the literature, parental involvement, engagement, and parents' expectations have been examined in conjunction with academic progress, student performance, social skills, and achievements (Aldawsari, 2020; Harris and Goodall, 2008; Lindberg et al., 2019; Ntekane, 2018; Sapungan. and Sapungan, 2014; Yamamoto, and Holloway, 2010; Zhan, 2006). For example, Yamamoto and Holloway (2010: 189) examine the impact of parental expectations on children's academic performance in diverse sociocultural contexts. They argue that 'student achievement outcomes are weaker for racial/ethnic minority families than for European American families'. The discussion around parents, however, and the enactment of leadership and how they may influence or affect schools' policies is still to be conducted. According to Goodall (2018: 144), even though the 'field of parental engagement with learning is not new…, yet it remains undertheorized, characterised more by action than consolidated critique, or even clear evidence'.

In addition to parental engagement and expectations, gendered roles and societal expectations, or what some could refer to as predefined roles for males and females, seem to have a strong influence in Saudi society and culture (Al-bakr et al., 2017; alnahdi, 2014; Doumato, 1992). The Cultural atlas's (n. d.) narrative about the Saudi family structure illustrates that men are expected to work outside and women are expected to stay at home and take care of the children, as follow:

> Men hold the most authority and are responsible for the primary income, security and safety of the family. They are expected to work outside the home, earn money and to provide for their family. Women have traditionally taken responsibility for the domestic space as the nurturers and bedrocks of the family. They are expected to look after their husband and children, prepare food and provide love and warm-heartedness for the family. (Cultural atlas, n. d.)

Even though '[g]ender roles are highly patriarchal in Saudi Arabian culture' (Cultural atlas, n. d.), the society is changing, and those roles are becoming more flexible.

Rajkhan (2014:2) claims that most of the practices that ban females from some activities, or assign them to predefined roles, are based on what she refers to as 'tribal laws' or 'gender ideology'. which appear in 'contradictions between the basic law that is promoting gender equality in all of its articles and what really happens in real life' (Rajkhan, 2014: 2). Today, however, according to Alj (2018, no page), leading companies in the country are promoting gender equality, as they believe in 'the critical role of women in building a productive society and a thriving economy'.

These and other socio-cultural elements may have an influence on the enactment of school leadership and may also differ from other countries and from the broader literature on the subject. The discussion around social and cultural aspects in the Saudi Arabian context, therefore, includes social practices of individuals' interactions, which are also associated with societal expectations of roles and responsibilities based on gender (referred to as gendered roles). It also focuses on parents and their influence on school leadership practices through their expectations, participation, and communication with the school.

Types of Schools in the General Education Division

The educational system in Saudi Arabia has gone through many changes and reforms (Alnahdi, 2014), but one consistent aspect of the Saudi education system is the provision of free education as a right to all children living in Saudi Arabia. Alghamdi and Al-Salouli (2013: 503) state that '[t]he Saudi government has prioritized free education to all citizens without any discrimination'. With that vision, the government has contributed to make free education accessible for everyone in all areas of the kingdom by building public schools and making it possible for entrepreneurs and investors to build private schools.

There are now three types of schools in Saudi Arabia: public, private and international. The MoE distinguishes between these sectors in respect of, but not limited to, the taught curriculum, bureaucratic procedures, and school licensing requirements. The discussion below explains the similarities and differences between these three types in more detail.

Public schools

The public schools, sometimes referred to as government schools, are all those schools built and run by the government: ranging from day schools, evening schools and adult education for literacy classes (SACM, 2006). There is no fee required to attend these schools, and all textbooks are provided free of charge by the Ministry for every student. In order to enrol in public schools, parents express their interest to the school management team; however, placement decisions are usually taken by the district centres after successful submission of all required documents.

According to Alghamdi and Al-Salouli (2012), the main curriculum taught in public schools is the national curriculum prescribed by the MoE for the kindergarten level, and the elementary, intermediate and high school grades. All high school students choose one of the three available majors to study in years eleven and twelve, after studying a 'general curriculum' (SACM, 2006: 4) in the first year. The SACM report (2006: 4) states that the majors are: 'administration and social science, natural science, and sharia and Arabic studies'. Alghamdi and Al-Salouli (2012) also argue that, as part of the national curriculum; the MoE is seeking to improve and modify the content in some subject areas.

Alghamdi and Al-Salouli (2012) discuss elementary *science* curricula as an example of an improved subject area that has been developed and put into practice since 2008:

> …this curriculum is 'partly based on translation' of other books, and it has been introduced in 'collaboration with the Obeikan Research Department Company in 2008. [T]he [translated] science textbooks [were] produced by the American publishing company McGraw-Hill. (Alghamdi and Al-Salouli, 2012: 504)

Foreign languages tend not to gain as much attention in government schools as in private ones. However, English is taught as part of the national curriculum at public schools from grade seven until grade twelve. According to Abdan (1991), educators

argue that it might be a late age to start teaching a foreign language. When students are in grade seven, they are almost thirteen years old and that is considered too old to start learning a second language, to achieve a high standard of language proficiency by the time they graduate from high school aged eighteen.

The Ministry of Education (2014) states that it is promoting giftedness, maths and science competitions and awards, in collaboration with King Abdullah's centre for giftedness, as part of the extra-curricular activities in all grade levels. However, other activities such as sports are still limited and are offered only in boys' schools. There are also some students' clubs; for example, art, the school's newspaper and drama club, which are scheduled weekly, and supervised by a member of staff to provide participating students with guidance and assistance.

Private schools

According to Alghamdi and Al-Salouli (2012), the reason behind building private schools in Saudi Arabia is due to the rapid increase of birth rates. Correspondingly, public schools became unable to provide places for all the children, especially in the elementary years. Therefore, it is possible to claim that private schools are supporting public schools rather than competing with them. The term 'private school' refers to every school that is built and run by a private investor or entity. Some private schools specialise only in kindergarten years, or elementary grades. There are no private schools focusing only on the intermediate or high school levels, but all these grades can be found in one big private school and that is the common style of private schools in the kingdom.

The enrolment procedures differ between public and private schools. Although, in both school types, the required documents for reserving a place are similar, the decision to accept a student is based on a number of factors. MLK (2013) lists them as: successfully passing the entrance exam, providing all entry forms, and, in some schools, conducting a placement interview. According to MKL (2013), the registration documents required in both private and public schools usually include;

official form of identification, original birth certificate, copy of immunization record, six passport size photos and previous grades' transcripts. Unlike public schools, students in private schools need to pay enrolment fees, tuition fees and other expenses for school uniform, transportation services and after school clubs, if available. According to JAS (2014), and MLK (2013), the payment levels vary from one school to another.

English language is considered one of the core subjects in private schools and most private school students study it from grade one or before. In some schools, other languages, such as French and Spanish, are also taught as part of the school's extra-curricular programme (TIS 2019). Apart from language learning, MLK (2013) states that private schools still need to teach the Ministry's national curriculum for which it provides all the books free of charge. However, many private schools develop teams to rewrite the national curriculum to make it more presentable for students and to link it with the other parts of the curriculum they teach (AlFahal, 2012).

Many private schools in Saudi Arabia seek to obtain the licence to teach international curricula such as the International Baccalaureate (IB). This is linked to the factors leading to growing demands on private schools to teach an international curriculum. One such factor is the significant number of Saudi students joining King Abdullah's scholarship programme and returning home with their children (MoHE, 2014b). APS (2011b) states that some private schools offer an option for parents to choose between two pathways for their children; the national, which teaches the national curriculum, or the international path, which offers an international curriculum.

International schools

The term 'international' is used to identify two types of school. The first group are private schools which are certified and recognized for applying an international curriculum, for example, Jeddah Knowledge International School in the city of Jeddah (JKS,n.d.) and Advanced Generations Schools (AGS, 2014a). The second

group comprises schools in which a national curriculum of another country is taught, also known as expatriate schools. These include The American International School of Jeddah (AISJ, 2012) and the British/ Dutch international school; which is known as Jeddah Prep and Grammar School (JPGS, 2014) in the city of Jeddah. According to JKS (n.d.), such schools are 'authorized by [MoE] to offer international education. Their promise is that all graduate students 'will receive an American diploma, and IB diploma certificate or IB diploma'. As more private Schools are becoming categorised as 'international', for the international pathway they offer, it is becoming difficult to make a distinction between these two categories in Saudi Arabia.

The registration process in international schools varies, notably in respect of the entry age. For example, the accepted age of kindergarten applicants at AGS (2014b) is two and a half years, while it is three years old at JPGS (2014b). Enrolment in most international schools includes a non-refundable assessment fee, and completing an online application. In some schools, Saudi national students are required to have permission from the MoE to be able to attend such schools. The AISJ, for instance, states that 'students will not be permitted to attend classes until this approval has been granted'. Students also need to pay tuition fees following acceptance, and the fees differ between schools.

At international schools, the national curriculum of another country may be implemented, as with the Indian international school, and the Philippine international school, both in Jeddah (IISJ, 2014; IPSJ, n.d.). The other alternative is delivering international curricula such as the IB. The JKS (n.d.) curriculum is the IB while, in the AGS (2014a), it is the Cambridge International Curriculum.

Leadership and management structures in Saudi schools

There are district centres, referred to as the local authority throughout this study, which act as representatives of the MoE. These offices have supervisors assigned

for each school, who act as an intermediary between the school and the MoE in delivering the latter's regulations to the former (AlL-Sadan, 2000). This reflects the degree of centralization in the Saudi educational system.

Public schools are likely to follow a similar centralized hierarchical structure to align the positions with the responsibilities assigned by the Ministry (MoE, 2008: 25). In this hierarchical structure, specific positions are expected to be fulfilled. These are head teacher, deputy head, clerk, accountant, supporting staff, heads of departments, and then the rest of staff members with leadership and management tasks (MoE, 1437H).

The structure of private and international schools is not very different from that of public schools. Those schools reporting and acting under the supervision of the MoE are required to meet the Ministry's regulations for aspects of their managerial chart; as evident at the Pakistan international School (PIS, 2014), for example. This school's website states that the school functions in accordance with the rules and regulations set by the Ministry of Education [in the] Kingdom of Saudi Arabia'. They list the following positions in their organizational structure; headmistress, vice principal, director of finance, and administrative officer (ibid).

APS (2011c) shows that the spread of leadership positions is likely to be wider in large private and international schools, than those of smaller schools. International schools differ in respect of gender segregation. In some schools, such as the Indian international school in Jeddah (IISJ, 2014), students are segregated by gender and there are different campuses for boys and girls, which are located remotely from one another. In other schools, including AISJ (2012), IPSJ (n.d.) and JPGS (2014), boys and girls study in the same campus for all grade levels. Having two campuses for a school means having a duplicate leadership structure, one for each section (boys and girls) respectively. In such cases, however, schools are likely to share a general advisor or a supervisor who overlooks both sections of the school (IISJ, 2019).

The next section presents the study's aims and research questions.

Research Aims and Questions

Introduction

The empirical literature is growing in respect of leadership and management theories and practices worldwide (Bush, 2016; Bush, 2008; Bush and Glover, 2014; Eacott and Evers, 2015; John and Spillane, 2016; Spillane and Healey, 2010) with an increased emphasis on distributed leadership (Bush, 2019b; Harris, 2008). However, there is only limited literature on school leadership in Saudi Arabia, a gap that this research intends to address. The study explores the impact of social and cultural factors in two cities (Jeddah and AlMadinah) in Saudi Arabia on the enactment of school leadership and practices, with particular reference to distributed leadership and sociocultural factors.

This section discusses the aims of this study and then presents and justifies the research questions.

Research aim

The broad aim of this research is to explore leadership and management in the educational sector of Saudi Arabia. First, it aims to examine the extent to which school leadership in Saudi Arabia reflects the predominantly Western literature on leadership theories and, in particular, distributed leadership (Bush and Glover, 2014; Gronn, 2010a; Gunter et al., 2013).

Second, the study is approached through the lens of social constructivism theory, building upon a previous study conducted in one Saudi private school which indicated the importance of social aspects of leadership enactment (AlFahal 2012).

Coleman (2005: 63) argues that 'the culture of each organization will be affected by the national or societal culture in which it operates'. McColl (2003: 137) draws on sociocultural elements to explain the ways in which individuals internalize their culture, along with other elements, to help shape their occupation. Dimmock and Walker (2005: 13) define societal culture as the 'enduring sets of values, beliefs and practices that distinguish one group of people from another' which might mediate and filter 'the spread of ideas and practices across the globe'.

Saudi Arabia is known for being a conservative country, which takes pride in its traditions and culture. However, since the announcement of the Saudi Vision 2030 (AlSati, 2018), by the Saudi crown prince Mohammad Bin Salman, there have been many social and political changes, that may affect social norms and cultural beliefs.

This research aims to explore the social and cultural factors that may contribute to the formation of leadership enactment, by utilising the theory of social constructivism, in the collective Saudi society. The researcher also aims to examine some formal and informal Western models of leadership and explore the extent to which they are applicable in this Middle Eastern hierarchical, system.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the leadership practices applied in the case study schools?

This question intends to provide a better understanding of the leadership structures, roles and processes in the case study schools, comparing the private and the public sectors. In addition to leadership enactment, it aims to establish how leadership is perceived by different staff members and whether or not there is a relationship between participants' perceptions of leadership and the practice of leadership.

To approach this question, the researcher explored the applied structure in the case study schools and compared it with the formal structure required by the Ministry of Education. The researcher examined the fulfilled roles within the leadership structure and the nature of decision making, notably whether it is top-down or bottom-up. In addition, the researcher explored how staff members who enacted leadership roles, but with no formal leadership positions, perceive themselves and how others perceived them. Finally, the researcher examined what inspires staff members to take on leadership responsibilities and roles.

Research Question 2: To what extent, and in what ways, do headteachers and deputy heads share leadership tasks with other members of staff?

This question aims to examine the degree to which heads and deputy heads share their leadership responsibilities. The focus is to examine the extent of shared leadership, and whether it takes the form of delegation, distribution, or another model. The researcher approached this question by examining whether and how leadership is shared within the school, and if heads and deputy heads delegate some of their responsibilities. The researcher also explored the ways in which distribution and delegation were applied within the schools, and whether leadership responsibilities and roles were confined to certain staff members. In addition, the researcher examined the factors that influenced the enactment of shared or distributed leadership.

Research Question 3: To what extent, and in what ways, do the enacted leadership styles in the case study schools fit the distributed leadership model?

Building on research question 2, the aim here is to establish what might be considered the enactment of leadership distribution and what might be regarded as hierarchical or bureaucratic. The approach here was to examine how staff with no leadership responsibility perceive authority and accountability in the case study schools, whether and how distributed leadership is practiced, whether emergent or

allocative, and what factors seem to influence emergent and collaborative leadership to take place.

Research Question 4: To what extent, and in what ways, if any, is the enactment of leadership in the case study schools informed by the socio-cultural context?

This question aims to establish a relationship between social and cultural elements and the practice of leadership in the case study schools. The question relates to the findings, presented in AlFahal (2012), that a number of sociocultural factors appeared to influence the leadership practices within a private school located in the city of Jeddah. The approach to this question includes consideration of gendered roles and parental expectations, as two of the socio-cultural aspects that may be helpful in explaining the practice of leadership in the case study schools.

Thesis Structure

This thesis is divided into nine chapters. Following this introduction, chapter two which provides a review of the relevant literature around school leadership theories, with a specific focus on distributed leadership, shared leadership, hierarchical leadership and managerial leadership. It also discusses the limited previous research on school leadership in Saudi Arabia, and the wider Arab region. the review of the literature also includes a discussion around the empirical evidence of sociocultural factors and the enactment of leadership. Research methods and methodology are presented in chapter three, that is then followed by four chapters (four, five, six and seven), which present the data collected from the four case study schools. Chapter eight provides a cross-case analysis, and a discussion linked to the literature. Chapter nine is the conclusion in which the research questions have been answered, and makes claims about the significance of this study of distributed leadership in Saudi Arabia, through the lens of sociocultural theory, in four girls' primary schools in Jeddah and AlMadinah..

Overview

The focus of this research is leadership enactment in Saudi private and public girls' primary schools, with a particular reference to distributed leadership as one of the currently favoured leadership models in Western countries. It also examines the sociocultural elements affecting the enactment of leadership in the case study schools. The research adopts a multiple case study design with four girls' primary schools in two cities in the Western region of Saudi Arabia. The research also seeks to establish the utility of social constructivism theory in interpreting leadership practice in the case study schools.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

There are numerous school leadership models (Bush, 2011; Bush and Glover, 2014; Leithwood et al., 2009) but this project focuses on four such models; collaborative leadership (Hartley, 2010; Honingh and Hooge, 2014), distributed leadership (Bush and Glover, 2014; Gronn, 2010a; Gunter et al., 2013), bureaucratic, and hierarchical leadership (Bush, 2011). The justification for focusing only on these four models is based on two reasons. First, since Saudi Arabia is the context for this research and, according to the literature (Alameen et al., 2015; Algarni and Male, 2014; Al-Sadan, 2000; APS, 2011c; MoE, 2008), the Saudi educational system is built upon a relatively hierarchical structure with bureaucratic procedures, it seems appropriate to discuss hierarchical and bureaucratic leadership. The second reason to focus on these four models is that the main arguments around distributed leadership (DL) appear to draw on, and link to, the chosen models; collaborative leadership (Coleman, 2012; Hammersley-Fletcher and Brundrett, 2008; Hartley, 2010), bureaucratic and hierarchical leadership (Bush, 2011; Bush and Crawford, 2012; Gronn, 2010; Gunter et al., 2013). Lumby (2013) argues that the hierarchical and bureaucratic structures tend to limit the enactment of leadership, as they offer only limited autonomy. Higher levels of autonomy increase the scope for leadership.

In addition, certain scholars have under-estimated the contextual element while examining the exercise of distributed leadership in non-western settings (Bush and Ng, 2019; Hartley, 2009; Nguyen et al., 2017). Hallinger (2018a) examines how the context influences leadership practice within schools. He identifies different contextual elements; institutional, community, national cultural, economic, political, and school improvement. This present study -contributes to the knowledge formation of school leadership practices that focus on the contextual variations affecting the school leadership.

This chapter also draws on the sociocultural theory to provide further theoretical underpinning for this study. When examining school leadership in different contexts, Nguyen et al. (2017) argue that various elements should be taken into consideration, one of which is the cultural dimension. Similarly, Wanasika et al. (2011) suggest that there are cultural and individual differences which are found to affect the practice of school management. The sociocultural theory accentuates the important role played by social interactions and exchanges between people, and how that eventually affect the behaviours of the individual (Blunden, 1964: 223; Cole et. al., 1978; Miller, 2011; Stetsenko and Arievitch, 2014). As this study examines school leadership in a context where there are social and cultural factors, which are believed to influence the enactment of school leadership (AlFahal, 2012), it is appropriate to shape the conceptual framework around the sociocultural theory (Hartley, ,2007 and 2009; Sawyer, 2002).

This chapter begins by introducing formal leadership models, including: bureaucracy and hierarchy, and managerial, transactional and transformational leadership (Bush, 2008; Valentine and Prater, 2011), in school contexts. This is followed by a discussion on collegial leadership (Bush, 2011) and teacher leadership (Harris, 2003; Muijs and Harris, 2004), collaboration and shared leadership (Crawford, 2019; Gronn, 2010b), leading the discussion towards distributed leadership.

Distributed leadership (Bush and Glover, 2014; Davis, 2009; Harris, 2013; Harris et al., 2007; Harris and Spillane, 2008; Spillane and Camburn, 2006; Spillane Halverson and Diamond, 2001) is then discussed in greater details. Including: the definition of the concept, elements of distribution, power articulation and agency, implications for educational organisational and lastly, the critique of distributed leadership. The chapter then presents the sociocultural theory as it provides an explanation of how the social norms have an influence on the enactment of leadership in schools. The chapter concludes with a discussion on educational leadership research in Saudi Arabia.

Hierarchical, Bureaucratic and Managerial Leadership.

One the main features of what Bush refers to as formal organizations is the hierarchical structure of the organization 'which seeks maximum efficiency' (Bush, 2011: 47). The assumption in formal models of leadership is 'that organizations are hierarchical systems' (Bush, 2011: 40). The formal structure tends to appear as an organizational chart, according to Bush (2011: 40), who argues that:

> Formal models assume that organisations are hierarchical systems in which managers use rational means to pursue agreed goals. Heads possess authority legitimised by their formal positions within the organisation and are accountable to sponsoring bodies for the activities of their organisation (ibid).

'Interactions, therefore, follow a vertical line as work passes from senior to junior roles' (Bush, 2011: 41). However, accountability for the work 'passes in the reverse direction from junior to senior' (Bush: 2011: 53).

Lumby (2019: 10) argues that recent literature around bureaucracy:

> [A]cknowledges the existence of power as a vital element of both organisational functioning and leadership. [A]nalyses of bureaucracy have involved a complex understanding of power flows and power plays that are very far from the simplistic notions of the rigid management control and hyper-standardisation of popular thought. The ideal type of bureaucracy is a heuristic stimulating reflection, not a rigid formula preventing thought. (Lumby, 2019: 10)

Corresponding to Honingh and Hooge (2009: 405), bureaucracy and school leadership seem to raise the question of impact and influence, and how the inter-relationships between the headteacher or 'bureaucrats (school administrators)' and the teachers could be affected. Similarly, bureaucracy in the school context appears to suggest a more hierarchical structure of leadership (Fitzgerald 2009).

The literature around leadership structure and roles; the leadership structure of primary schools depends on different factors. For example, the school subjects (Spillane, 2005), or the applied framework (Cain and Gunter, 2012a and Steyn, 2014). Specifically in centralised contexts, leadership structures may be strongly influenced by the government, or local authority, initiatives and legislation, as in Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education manuals (TPM, 2019; MoE, 1437H). In addition, the link between managerial leadership and culture is significant. Wanasika et al (2011) argue that the prevailing culture supports the practice of managerial leadership, especially in centralised education systems.

According to Parlar and Cansoy (2017), bureaucracy affects the exercise of leadership in schools, and consequently could lead to major issues such as declining numbers of teachers pursuing headship positions (Al-Omari and Wuzynani, 2013). In the Saudi context, another example of school related bureaucracy relates to the appointment procedures for all staff members working in Saudi public schools. The procedure follows a national, centralised job advertisement which is conducted by the Ministry of Civil Services (MCS, 2019). This process grants no autonomy to head teachers, nor to the local authority, about who works in their schools. Buluc (2009) argues that there is a relationship between a school's leadership structure and the leadership style. Lennon (2009) links this claim to bureaucratic structures. However, Crawford (2012) argues that collaboration and shared leadership are linked to bureaucracy and hierarchy. One of the major strengths that bureaucracy can offer to educational organisations is that it provides defined organisational structures with identified roles (Bush and Middlewood, 2013). However, bureaucracy is limited and constrained by formality in the distribution of power, in other words, hierarchy (Lumby, 2019).

On the other hand, the leader's role often focuses on 'functions, tasks and behaviours' (Bush, 2008: 11) In managerial leadership, or what others may refer to as 'management [of] responsibilities' (Dressler, 2001: 175) or 'managerial functions' (Valentine and Prater, 2011: 6).

Instructional, Transactional and Transformational Leadership.

Vogel and Alhudithi (2021: 1-2) argue that, in order to define instructional leadership, one must consider the 'national context'. They refer to the 'ongoing supervision' from the school headteacher (principal) as one way of practicing instructional leadership, for example through attending classes to observe teacher performance (ibid: 10). Moreover, Vogel and Alhudithi (2021: 17) claim that focusing on teacher development, is part of the implementation of instructional leadership. Similarly, teacher empowerment, and support in decision making, from the headteacher, resonate with transformational leadership characteristics (Hallinger, 1992: 371). All four schools appear to apply transactional, instructional and transformational models of leadership, to some extent fostered by the MoE's regulations.

In addition, Bush (2008) discusses transactional and transformational leadership features. While transactional leadership is associated with the position of power within the school. Since principals have a higher stake at schools, compared to teachers, for example, the exercise of leadership ends by the end of the transaction between the headteacher and staff members. Hence, Bush (2007: 398) argues that:

> Principals possess authority arising from their positions as the formal leaders of their schools. However, the head requires the cooperation of educators to secure the effective management of the school. An exchange may secure benefits for both parties to the arrangement. The major limitation of such a process is that it does not engage staff beyond the immediate gains arising from the transaction. (Bush, 2007: 398)

According to Valentine and Prater (2011), transformational leadership is viewed as 'a result of the numerous changes facing schools, the view of the principal as transformational leader emerged' (Valentine and Prater, 2011: 7). This leadership model acts as an intellectual direction as it aims at innovating, empowering, and supporting teachers and other staff members in decision making (Hallinger, 1992:

371). Similarly, Bush (2008: 13) adds that the role of the leader here is rise staff members commitment and capabilities, this could be achieved by influencing school outcomes rather than focusing on the nature or direction of these outcomes (ibid). Therefore, some researchers, such as Hallinger (1992) refers to transformational leadership as the problem-solving leadership, as the leader enhances and 'motivate followers by raising their consciousness about the importance of organizational goals and by inspiring them to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the organization' (Marks and Printy, 2003: 375).

Collegial and Teacher leadership

While managerial, transactional, and transformational leadership models seem to confine the leadership duties to a single leader, or what Muijs and Harris (2004: 437) calls 'individual endeavour rather than collective action'; collegial leadership, appear to engage, the followers, more members of staff in the leadership enactment (Bush, 2011; Harris, 2003). The assumption in collegial models is that organisations make decisions and determine policies 'through a process of discussion leading to consensus' (Bush, 2011: 72), which implies that 'power is shared among some or all members of the organisation who are thought to have a shared understanding about the aims of the institution' (ibid). Not far from collegial leadership, participative leadership states that the main focus of the group should be making decisions (Bush, 2008; Leithwood et al., 1999). The shared leadership model, however, suggests that individuals share responsibilities and lead through their collective effort, one of the ways in which shared leadership can exist is through the formation of teams (Afridi, 2013; Crawford, 2019; Ensley et al., 2006; Gronn, 2010b). Teacher leadership (Harris, 2003; Muijs and Harris, 2004) is another example of leadership models where teachers are encouraged to collaborate in teams. In the US and Canada, for instance, teacher leadership has become very popular over the past decade, as 'number of teacher leadership programmes and initiatives has grown substantially in both countries, reflecting informal and formal leadership activities' (Muijs and Harris, 2004: 437). The informal leadership roles of

teachers are being conducted inside the classroom, or any other 'classroom-related functions' (Harris, 2003: 314), while formal leadership is carried outside the classroom doors, for instance by coordinating, being head of team/ department (ibid).

Collaborative and Shared leadership

Distributed leadership is sometimes confused with alternative concepts, such as shared or collaborative leadership, because of the potential for overlap in educational contexts. Hartley (2010: 349) argues that a collaborative framework of leadership would include notions of support, help, informal collaboration, and respect for the diversity of skills. Therefore, it seems relevant to include a discussion of collaborative leadership when addressing distributed leadership. Crawford (2012: 612), for example, argues that 'the idea of distributed leadership can be seen as part of a wider discussion on shared leadership'.

Collaboration seems be associated with democracy and equal empowerment (Hartley, 2010). In other words, a collaborative school community 'is a mode of regulation which seems not to be overtly regulatory' (Hartley, 2010: 353). Therefore, in a school environment where hierarchical structures are not shown to be applied, yet the work is done, the goals are met and responsibilities are clear and clarified, it could be argued that a concept of collaborative leadership might have been embraced by the school's leaders. Honingh and Hooge (2014), in their analysis of secondary data, found that there is a positive correlation between the school leader's encouragement and engagement with teachers and teachers' levels of collaboration. Gronn (2010b: 73) adds that 'empirically, single and shared leadership can be shown to coexist'.

Alfahal (2012: 54) suggests that the 'wide spread of shared leadership activities might affect the interrelationships between different staff members'. This resonates with Thomson and Holloway (1997: 317), who found that teachers felt supported in a 'collaborative [school] culture where there is acceptance and intermixture of

personal and professional lives'. This leads to exploring distributed leadership as an emerging approach which differs from other collegial leadership models. However, as noted above, the leadership context clearly makes a difference. Crawford (2012: 612) quotes Bolden (2011: 256) who speculates that contextual differences, across countries, may 'provide evidence of subtle differences in the ways in which leadership is conceived and enacted in different contexts'. This is a significant point, as the discussion of distributed leadership in the next section draws on Western literature, which might not be applicable in other contexts, such as Saudi Arabia.

Distributed Leadership

Definition and concepts

Distributed leadership is 'one of the most influential ideas to emerge in the field of educational leadership' (Harris, 2010: 55). It has been identified as 'the post heroic' representation of leadership (Bolden, 2011). Distributed leadership gained popularity amongst practitioners, researchers and policy makers (Bush and Glover, 2014; Davis, 2009; Harris, 2010, 2008; Hartley, 2010; Spillane, 2006; Thorpe et. al., 2011) and became the most fashionable and favourable leadership model of the twenty-first century (Bush, 2019b; Harris, 2010).

Harris (2010: 55) claims that unlike other leadership ideas, distributed leadership ideas 'have provoked . . . much attention, debate and controversy, in the school leadership field', as this model 'shifts the focus from attributes and behaviours of individual leaders to a more systematic perspective, whereby leadership is emerging through a collective social processes and interactions of multiple actors' (Bolden, 2011: 251). Torres (2019: 113) elaborates that 'several individuals may take part in leadership activities to accomplish shared goals within a shared context'. Likewise, Scribner et al. (2007) claims that successful application of distributed leadership depends on the interactions and influences between staff members as much as it depends on the individual's actions and performance.

There are many definitions of distributed leadership. Bush and Ng (2019: 282) argue that '[a]n important starting point for understanding distributed leadership is to uncouple it from positional authority'. According to Kruse (2021: 47) 'consensus within the literature suggests that distributed leadership is a multidimensional construct, where leadership can and should be understood as a fluid and emergent phenomenon' Also, distributed leadership has been considered an 'expansion of leadership roles in schools, beyond those in formal leadership or administrative posts' (Harris, 2010: 55). Bennett et. al. (2003: 3) elaborate:

> Distributed leadership is not something 'done' by an individual 'to' others, or a set of individual actions through which people contribute to a group or organization... [it] is a group activity that works through and within relationships, rather than individual action. (Bennett et. al., 2003: 3)

There seem to be a number of concepts underpinning the distributed leadership model, with no single definition. Distributed leadership could be emergent (Bennett et al., 2003), or allocative (Bush, 2019: 10; Bush and Ng, 2019: 284). Youngs (2009) refers to emergent and official distributed leadership stating:

> [The] two perspectives of distributed leadership as official distributed leadership where leadership is given out to others by official leaders and emergent distributed leadership where space is required to enable human agency to emerge in the form of influence irrespective of a person's organisational role. (Youngs, 2009: 381)

Since distributed leadership is 'uncouple[d]. . . from positional authority' (Bush, 2019c) and independent of position (Bush, 2011; Harris 2004), then leaders within the distributed perspective could be coming through formal positions and roles or even beyond anyone with an administrative role. Harris (2005, 258) claims that '[e]ngaging many people in leadership activity is at the core of distributed leadership in action'. In addition, it is implied that distributed leadership focuses on the interactions and social processes between leaders, followers and their situation

(Harris, 2013; Spillane et al., 2003, 2001). With an emphasis on the situation (Spillane et al., 2004), distributed leadership also focuses on the context and what is being distributed, 'functions or qualities' (Harris, 2008: 28).

According to Harris (2008: 28), quoting Copland (2003), distributed leadership has been viewed as:

> …a set of functions or qualities shared across a much broader segment of the school community that encompasses teachers and other professionals and community members both internal and external to the school. Such an approach imposes the need for school communities to create and sustain broadly distributed leadership, systems, processes and capacities. (Harris, 2008: 28)

Several aspects of distributed leadership emerge from Harris's comment, including what is being shared; 'functions or qualities', between whom; 'teachers and other professionals and community members', and where; 'internal and external to the school'. Harris looks at distributed leadership from the angle of interactions. 'Distributed leadership is primarily concerned with the interactions in *both formal and informal* leadership and the way they produce different patterns of activity' (Harris, 2008: 31). Similarly, Spillane (2006) states that a 'distributed perspective on leadership is an alternative to accounts that equate leadership with the gallant acts of one or more leaders in an organization (Spillane, 2006: 2). Spillane highlights that this framework is about leadership practice. He regards it as the outcome of interactions between the school's leaders, followers, and the situation:

> This [distributed Leadership] practice is framed in a very particular way, as a product of the joint interactions of school *leaders*, *followers*, and aspects of their *situation* such as tools and routines. (Spillane, 2006: 3)

This implies having more than one leader and different followers as they exchange positions depending on the situation. Spillane (2006: 3) notes that 'multiple individuals take responsibility for leadership'. Hulpia et al. (2010: 40) add that 'the leadership function is stretched over a number of individuals and the task is accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders'. Gronn (2002) argues that all school staff could be leaders at some point.

Harris (2008: 31) claims that, 'whatever one feels about distributed leadership, it has certainly created a new momentum of thinking about leadership practice in schools'. She also argues that there is a 'firm belief that the leadership models of the past are simply inadequate for the educational challenges of the future' (2008:29). Bush and Glover (2014) argue that it 'has become the normatively preferred leadership model in the twenty-first century, replacing collegiality as the favoured approach' (Bush, 2011: 88). Spillane and Diamond (2007) also claim that it provides a conceptual framework for examining how school leadership and management unfold through the daily interactions of school leaders. MØller (2009: 255) adds that '[this] approach takes into account that leadership is not necessarily synonymous with a particular position; it may come from administrators, teachers or others'. According to Spillane (2008: 144) '[s]ome uses of distributed leadership indicate that school leadership involves multiple leaders; others argue that leadership is an organizational quality, rather than an individual attribute'.

Even though distributed leadership appears not to favour the concept of one leader, it tends to suggest that one leader is responsible for the transformation from a formal to a distributed approach to leadership. Murphy et al. (2009) argue that, in the school context, formal administrative leadership could foster the practice of distributed leadership. This connects to Coleman and Glover's (2010: 3) suggestion that leadership practice 'will depend on the prevailing culture and leadership style which normally emanates from the senior leader(s)'.

Elements of distributed leadership

According to Spillane (2006: 4), three elements are 'essential' in distributed leadership:

- First, that leadership *practice* is the central and anchoring concern.
- Second, that leadership practice is generated in the *interactions* of leaders, followers, and their situation; each element is essential for leadership practice.
- Third, that the *situation* both defines leadership practice and is defined through leadership practice.

Similarly, Hulpia et al. (2010: 40) suggest that 'the social context and the interrelationships therein are an integral part of the leadership activity'. A key outcome of these comments is that the day-to-day leadership practices can provide evidence of the extent and nature of leadership distribution. Harris (2010: 56) adds:

> [D]istributed leadership *is framed by Scribner et al. (2007)* as *a* social influence where interactions are at the core of leadership practice. How leaders interact is considered to be more important than the nature of their formal leadership roles, responsibilities or functions. (ibid, emphasis added)

If the transformation from formal to distributed leadership relies heavily on school leaders (Harris, 2008; Harris, 2003), then it could be argued that headteachers could shape the desired interrelationships between their staff members, and work towards creating the social context that influence a distributed practice of leadership. In another words, it is argued, that headteachers can transform the concept of distributed leadership from ideas into practices (Gronn, 2002; Murphy et al., 2009). Gronn (2002: 425) discusses 'spontaneous collaboration, intuitive working relations, and institutionalised practices' as three forms of how distributed leadership practice could be implemented in schools.

Delegation, power articulation and agency

The concept of delegation has been discussed by many authors (e.g. Bush, 2011; Coleman and Glover, 2010). It usually refers to the act when a superior delegate a task or responsibility to a subordinate (Bush, 2011; Coleman and Glover, 2010), and it is known as downward delegation.

Delegation is often linked to accountability (Hammersley-Fletcher and Brundrett, 2008). Bush (2008: 27) argues that 'accountability pressures' usually come from governments, parents and the wider public'. The link between delegation, accountability, cultural factors and leaders' extent and nature of experience in schools, is yet to be examined in the Saudi Arabian context, helping to provide the warrant for the present author's research.

Distributed leadership relates to other concepts, including teacher leadership, power articulation, organizational structure and individual agency (Hartley, 2009). Formal leadership models focus on the heroic leader who, in the school context, plays the headteacher role. According to Murphy et al. (2009), the headteacher is presented as the power holder and/ or delegator. This depiction is being replaced with the growing call for distribution. Leadership is about power and authority and MØller (2009) suggests that, with the existing critique on human agency, a more distributed or shared leadership perspective might be suitable for application in schools. However, in the Saudi society, according to the Cultural atlas (n. d.) '[d]ecisions are made by the highest-ranking person' which presume that the leader is the most capable person and thus '[r]espect should be shown to the most senior person at all times' (ibid)

It could be argued that, in a school with a formal leadership model (a top-down line of authority), headteachers are the people capable of implementing the change and acting towards distributed practices of leadership. Harris (2008: 77) describes an example of a headteacher's views on her school's successful transformation to distributed leadership stating that 'the model of distributed leadership at the school

is strongly based on team working and team support within a very clear vision and strategic intent'. Teams, and the formation of school teams, are seen as one of the ways to practice distributed leadership. Sharpe and Templin (1997: 52) state, that by creating teachers' teams, this would enable teachers to practice delegation, as team formation is considered one of the ways according to which allocative delegation is seen in schools (Bush and Ng, 2019). However, Sharpe and Templin (1997: 52) argue that teachers' teams should allow for shared accountability and not 'individual accountability'.

One of the debates about distributed leadership relates to power articulation. Lumby (2013) argues that the concept of power has been theorized in three different ways. The first is when power is obtained and exercised by individuals or groups over other people to achieve a specific goal. The second acts in an opposite way to the first, where there tends to be 'not so much enforcement of people to act in ways desired by another' (Lumby, 2013: 585). The last way is the 'notion of power where people may think, hold values and act in ways that benefit others without being conscious' (ibid). Lumby (2019) argues that, in the study of distributed leadership, researchers need to focus on:

> More enduring frameworks – bureaucracy – and research the accommodations of power, decisions and actions made within authority framework… More account of cultural differences and of the enduring discrimination that has limited the potentialities of staff could be factored in. This would not shut the door on recognising emergent or spontaneous leadership, but would place it more accurately within a power system, acknowledging that its existence is ultimately facilitated by explicit or implicit allowance of those in authority roles, who gain power through enabling initiative. (Lumby, 2019: 15)

She adds that bureaucracy could provide a 'more enduring framework' in this case 'a multiplicity of approaches to leadership within such a framework could provide a rich resource in understanding power flows and their impact' (ibid).

Lumby (2013: 585) adds that this literature 'does not expansively engage with who holds power and why'. Similarly, Spillane (2006: 13) addresses the question of 'who does what in the work of leadership'. Bush and Glover (2014: 8) state that, quoting Harris (2005: 165), 'the central issue is 'who can exert influence over colleagues and in what domains?'. This discussion of power and agency in the enactment of leadership, particularly in relation to how these concepts are perceived, is central to the aims and research questions for the present study.

Bolden (2011: 264), however, appears to sum up how the application of distributed leadership in educational organisations would appear and be identifiable:

> The key contribution of distributed leadership, it would seem, is not in offering a replacement for other accounts, but in enabling the recognition of a variety of forms of leadership in a more integrated and systemic manner. The potential ability of distributed leadership to achieve this, however, is somewhat limited by its restriction to particular contexts and locations, which leaves it somewhat detached from the wider leadership literature, with the apparent juxtaposition with 'shared leadership' a particular area for concern. (Bolden, 2011: 264)

Similarly, Harris (2008: 177) argues that 'leadership, from this perspective, resides in the human potential available to be released within an organisation'. The level of agency available to those in-charge affects the leadership practice within schools, as there is a difference in the level of agency that shared leadership implies when compared to distributed leadership (Bush, 2011; Harris, 2009, 2010; Gunter, 2012a; Gunter et al., 2013; Spillane, 2005, 2006). Moreover, from a distributed perspective to leadership, agency is assumed to be widely shared across the organization (Harris, 2013; Kruse, 2021).

Implications of distributed leadership for educational organizations

Harris (2010: 61) argues that 'there is a growing number of studies' which focus 'explicitly on the impact of distributed leadership on teachers'. An example of these

studies is the research by Hulpia et al. (2010). This study focused on a number of aspects, both positive and negative, which appeared to play an important role in teachers' commitment to the school where they work. The former comprised aspects which had a positive impact and included: cooperative leadership team, the available leadership support, along with participative decision-making, and distribution of supportive leadership functions. However, the distribution of the supervisory leadership functions and teachers' job experience also had a significant negative impact on the level of teachers' commitment:

> Teachers who believed that support was equally distributed among the leadership team had a higher organizational commitment than did teachers who believed that support was centralized in one person of the leadership team. (ibid: 46)

Hulpia et al (2010) add that:

> the cooperative-leadership team and the amount of support were more important than teachers' opportunity to participate in school decision making. This implies that teachers' perceptions concerning their own empowerment to participate in school decision making are less influential in teachers' organizational commitment than are their perceptions concerning the operation of the team who leads the school and the amount of support they receive from this leading team. (ibid: 47)

Many scholars have examined the concept of distributed leadership within schools, for example in the UK, US and Canada (Camburn et. al., 2003; Bush and Crawford, 2012; Bush and Middlewood, 2013; Hall, 2013), or even within higher education (Bolden et. al., 2009; Floyd and Preston, 2018). In the US and Canada, distributed leadership has been linked to teacher leadership since the 1990s (Harris, 2003: 313-314). Internationally, likewise, the literature on distributed leadership is growing, outside the UK, US and Canada, notably in east Asia (Hallinger and Chen, 2015), in Africa (Hallinger, 2017; Hallinger, 2018), and in the Arab region (Hallinger and

Hammad, 2019). Spillane et. al. (2004: 10-11) argue that the leadership practice constitutes of three elements; the leaders, follower and the situation. From the distributed perspective, however, the interaction between these three elements appears to matter the most (ibid).

Hartley (2009) also links the organizational structure to distributed leadership, as he discusses how the structure could affect the exercise of leadership. But, this does not necessarily mean demolishing hierarchical structures, as Kruse (2021: 48) argues:

> it is important to stress that adopting a distributed leadership model does not automatically flatten the hierarchy of existing leadership practice nor does it erase longstanding concerns about equity in school organizations. (Kruse, 2021: 48)

Critiques of distributed leadership

The extensive research on distributed leadership suggests that distributed leadership is broadly accepted new terminology for a leadership practice of social and collective processes (Bolden, 2011; Diamond et al., 2016; Gronn, 2000; Kruse, 2021). However, it is argued that the concept is 'far from new' (Harris, 2005: 257). As for the implications of distributed leadership when applied in schools, the argument is that, while the evidence suggest that organizational change can be fostered through distributed leadership (Leithwood et al., 2009), poor implementation and application of this approach to leadership could result in damaging outcomes for school faculty and members of staff (Harris, 2013; Kruse, 2021).

Youngs (2009: 389) argues that:

> [T]he field has yet to articulate a critique of distributed leadership with respect to power relations and fully critique distributed leadership against the policy forces that shape it. . . . The evidence published so far should not

> be interpreted as conclusive until distributed leadership undergoes a full and extensive critique. (Youngs, 2009: 389)

In the discussion below the main critiques of distributed leadership are highlighted. These are: definition of the concept, power articulation issues, the role of formal leaders, overlap with other models of leadership, and advocacy from local and official bodies.

Definitional

The definition of distributed leadership remains contested. There are still some concerns about 'the lack of a definitive, shared definition of distributed leadership', according to Kruse (2021: 47). Lumby (2016: 162) argues that '[d]istributed [L]eadership is not a way of leading but a framework to support leadership research' and thus, by focusing on and continuing to conduct research and examine it empirically, this may shift attention from more important educational issues such as 'the persistent inequality of chances that children experience in school' (Lumby, 2016: 161).

Harris and Spillane (2008: 32) discuss the limitations of the concept of distributed leadership, they argue that:

> A first limitation concerns the fact that different terms and definitions are used interchangeably to refer to 'distributed leadership' resulting in both conceptual confusion and conceptual overlap. (Harris and Spillane, 2008: 32)

Similarly, Harris (2010: 59) argues that the empirical evidence seems to unveil that '[d]istributed leadership can be an elusive concept' as there is an issue with its definition, 'it is often used to descriptively mean different things' thus, it could convene 'descriptors for any form of shared, collaborative or extended leadership practice'.

Problems with how power is articulated

Lumby (2013) claims that one of the problems with distributed leadership, which is seen as 'the theory of choice for many' (2013: 582), is power articulation. She argues that in the discussion of distributed leadership, power seems to be always under theorised, and often referred to as being distributed (Lumby, 2019: 11). Similarly, in the discussion of power in relation to distributed leadership, Gunter et al. (2013: 566) argues that 'the impact of managerialism means that the dominance of the individual leader remains'.

Murphy et al. (2009: 187) add that, within distributed leadership practice, the formal leader and authority figure, i.e. the school head, is still the one selecting other leaders. For example, members of school leadership teams are almost always selected by the principal, leading Lumby (2019: 11) to argue that '[p]ower remains largely unaltered'. However, according to Hopkins and Jackson (2002), formal leaders still need to be there, as without the support and engagement from school heads, it would be difficult to implement distributed leadership, as they are considered the 'gate keepers' (Tian et al. 2016, 153). However, Gunter et al. (2013: 565) add that 'the lack of substantial and robust data can make exhortations to adopt distributed leadership problematic'.

The role of formal leaders

Even though distributed leadership may be treated as an antidote to the genre of heroic leaders, critics argue that it 'is nothing but a 'new orthodoxy' which reinforces managerialist principles' (Harris et al., 2007: 338). According to Harris (2010: 59), distributed leadership is treated as 'the antithesis of top-down, hierarchical leadership'. However, Lumby (2013: 583) argues that much related literature tends 'not to problematize power, nor its relationship to distributed leadership', adding that '[n]o mention is made of the kinds of structural barriers such as gender and race' (Lumby, 2013: 583).

Gunter et al. (2013: 561) raise a number of issues in relation to distributed leadership. They argue that leadership is shaped by 'the work of all individuals who have a hand in leadership practice' and that different leadership models could be applied at one school 'differing according to the leadership function or routine' (Gunter et al., 2013: 562). Similarly, Hartley (2010: 350) argues that distributed leadership 'tends very much towards the ''local'' form of collaboration', as it underpins means of loyalty, homogeneity, and informal cooperation.

Overlaps with other shared leadership models

There seems to be an overlap between distributed leadership, and other forms of leadership, for example shared leadership, collaborative leadership and democratic practices of leadership (Harris, 2008; Harris, 2003; Spillane, 2006). Lumby (2016: 162) argues that such overlaps occurred because distributed leadership is nothing but a 'semantic or rhetorical lever for change' to other leadership models, including shared and collaborative leadership. This overlap existed, perhaps, because distributed leadership was promoted as a leadership model with 'more communal alternatives, one that acknowledges the potential for leadership contributions beyond that of an autonomous figurehead' argues Kruse (2021: 47).

A normative construct with advocacy from official bodies

According to Gunter et al. (2013: 559), 'distributed leadership has become popular without the scientific data regarding utility'. In their study of knowledge production on distributed leadership, they argue that distributed leadership is advocated by 'powerful hierarchical roles in government' as accountability remains within these hierarchical forms (Gunter et al.,2013: 570). Similarly, Youngs (2009: 386) claims that most normative distributed leadership studies in schools locate authority in principals. This view is supported by Bush and Ng's (2019) review of the Malaysia Education Blueprint. They conclude that distributed leadership was featured strongly but:

> its focus is almost exclusively on distribution to official leaders, such as senior assistants, heads of department and subject leaders. This is a different interpretation from most of the established (mainly western) literature which stresses that distribution is emergent rather than being linked to the hierarchy, although this may be largely a normative view, even in the west. (Bush and Ng (2019: 286)

Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theory is popular across disciplines and several scholars have written about it in the fields of education, business and economics (e.g.: Chowdhury, 2017). In particular, sociocultural theory has helped to provide a better understanding of practices in educational settings (Zuengler and Miller, 2006). This section discusses how sociocultural theory is defined and the features underpinning this theory. It also presents constructivist theory and unveil how these two theories (sociocultural and constructivist) are interrelated (Scott and Palincsar, n.d.). The discussion continues to include critiques of sociocultural theory and social constructivism, before concluding by highlighting the significance of sociocultural theory for this research.

Definition and features

The definition and main features of sociocultural theory have been discussed extensively over the decades (Sawyer, 2002). This author argues that the 'sociocultural method focuses on situated social practices and denies that one can study individuals or social contexts separately' (Sawyer, 2002: 284). Sawyer (2002: 287) also cites Giddens's (1979: 94–95) sociocultural conception of development, which entails that:

> Socialization is never anything like a passive imprinting of 'society' upon each 'individual'. From its very earliest experiences, the infant is an active partner in the double contingency of interaction . . . the socialization

> involved is not simply that of the child, but of the parents and others with whom the child is in contact. (Sawyer, 2002: 287)

Therefore, this linkage between the individual and their contexts, or Sawyer's notion of inseparability (2002: 284), 'is what typifies the socio-cultural position', according to Hartley (2009: 144). Wegerif (2004) adds that the sociocultural approach views learning as a cultural process which is influenced socially. Citing Mercer (1992) to elaborate, '[t]he essence of this approach is to treat learning and cognitive development as culturally-based, not just culturally influenced, and as social rather than individualized processes' (Wegerif, 2004: 147).

In early childhood education, sociocultural theory was seen as helpful but Edwards (2003: 257) argues that it 'does not necessarily represent a straight and easily definable path'. She discusses three 'sociocultural pathways', to help clarify the role and use of sociocultural theory, one of which is the social constructivist path (ibid).

The social constructivist approach

Social Constructivism in Education has gained much attention over the years (Ebadi and Rahimi, 2019; Gash, 2014; Lin, 2018; Lynch, 2016). Gash (2014) argues that '[t]he importance of social constructivism or constructionism calls attention to the importance of the social milieu in providing conditions for constructions to grow' (Gash, 2014: 302). The underpinnings of social constructivism theory are best described by Lynch (2016), who states that '[a]ccording to the social constructivism theory, social worlds develop out of individuals' interactions with their culture and society'.

According to Scott and Palincsar (n.d.: 4), 'the lens of sociocultural theory is considerably wide when compared to constructivist theory' since the former is concerned more with the broader social context, the latter tends to focus on the

individual. Hence, to best serve the purpose of this study, the sociocultural theory is utilised. McKinley (2015: 158) explains:

> Social constructivist theory asserts that people's ideas coincide with their experiences and that writers build on their socio-cultural awareness, a key point in identity construction. (McKinley, 2015: 158)

It is argued (Fosnot and Perry, 2005: 23) that cultures develop 'as an adaptive mechanism' as humans 'attempt to survive collectively, rather than individually' (ibid). That said, the social and cultural environments are central elements, based on which cultural beliefs and societal norms are formed, and the individual as an entity is not independent of his/her surroundings. As Ameri (2020: 1538) elaborates, 'knowledge develops from individuals' interactions with their culture and society'. Therefore, the individual's actions, thoughts and perceptions ought to be influenced, affected, and informed by the context in which they act and interact (Scott and Palincsar, n.d.: 4-5). Indeed, Gash (2014) summarises that:

> *in research when the focus is on* the individual construction, the social side remains a part of the context; and alternatively, when the social context is emphasised, the individual interpretation plays a critical role. They are not alternatives, rather they are parts of the constructive process. (Gash, 2014: 303, emphasis added)

Critique of the sociocultural theory and social constructivism

Most of the criticisms of the sociocultural theory focus on the inseparability of the individual and the social, argues Sawyer (2002: 291). For example, Pathan et al. (2018: 234), in their critical review of sociocultural theory in second language acquisition, claim that the sociocultural approach states that learning is acquired through collaboration and interaction. Which indicates that the theory 'disregards the role of the individual, but regards the collective' argues (Ameri, 2020: 1533).

In addition, Wegerif (2004: 143) discusses sociocultural theory's weaknesses 'including that of a lack of reflexivity, connected with the charge of relativism'. Similarly, Fosnot and Perry (2005: 28) contend that the social constructivist theory is 'a theory about learning, not a description of teaching. No pat set of instructional techniques can be abstracted from the theory and proposed as a constructivist approach to teaching'. Hui and Mathews (2005: 386) elaborate that '[t]he bad side of constructivism lies in its tendency towards epistemological relativism (including individual and social community relativism)'.

Power, Culture and Societal Culture (Applications of sociocultural theory across disciplines including the field of Education Leadership and Management)

Several studies have adopted the interplay between culture and leadership (Dickson et al., 2012; Dickson et al., 2003; Shah, 2010; Timbalari, 2019; Tocar, 2019; Trompenaars, 2003; Tung and Alain, 2010; Warner-Søderholm, 2012) with particular reference to Hofstede's and Trompenaars's work and on cross cultural research. Hofstede's contribution and 'influence on the fields of IB [international business] and management is undeniable' (Tung and Alain, 2010: 1259). Educational researchers, in addition, had adopted Hofstede's cultural dimensions model in educational research (see: Ho, 2008).

Drawing on the discussion above, and specifically on that of Sawyer (2002: 284), in which it is explained that, to understand individuals (in this case: studying the enactment of leadership in Saudi schools), one should study the social context 'the social practices' (Sawyer, 2002: 284). In addition, the discussion on distributed leadership by Bolden (2011: 251), explains that the concept of distributed leadership is rising as 'a collective social processes and interactions of multiple actors'. Moreover, Hofstede (1993: 89) defines culture as:

> [A] construct that means, it is 'not directly accessible to observation but inferable from verbal statements and other behavior' and useful in

> predicting still other observable and measurable verbal and nonverbal behavior'. It should not be reified; it is an auxiliary concept that should be used as long as it proves useful but bypassed where we can predict behaviours without it (Hofstede, 1993: 89).

The inter-relationships between the individuals, their values and the process of forming their beliefs, informing their actions, which are culturally rooted, consequently shaping the leadership practices, and because of the integration between individuals and their context, the adopted theoretical framework in this study of school leadership in Saudi Arabian collective society, is the sociocultural theory. The sociocultural theory appears to provide a cohesive perspective to help understand the enactment of educational leadership across contexts. Likewise, Warner-Søderholm (2012: 7) concludes, after studying Scandinavian cultural practices that 'such research can reveal subtle but important cultural differences in nations that are similar yet dissimilar' and that '[t]hese differences need to be understood and appreciated to avoid misunderstandings' (ibid).

In their survey that aimed at studying power across cultures Hofstede et al. (2010b: 60) found out that the survey results show 'high power distance values … for arabic speaking countries'.

> The three survey items used for composing the power distance index were as follows:
>
> 1. Answers by nonmanagerial employees to the question "How frequently, in your experience, does the following problem occur: employees being afraid to express disagreement with their managers?"
> 2. Subordinates' perception of the boss's actual decision-making style [they choose] either an autocratic style or a paternalistic style, out of four possible styles plus a "none of these" alternative
> 3. Subordinates' preference for their boss's decision-making style (percentage preferring an autocratic or a paternalistic style, or, on the

> contrary, a style based on majority vote, but not a consultative style) (Hofstede et al., 2010b: 56).

According to Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory (Ho, 2008; Hofstede, 2015), '[n]ational cultures are perceived to affect the behaviours and attitudes of individuals' (Ho, 2008: 2). Likewise, Minkov et al. (2012: 1095) claim that studies have attempted to see if 'cultural values predict individuals' moral attitudes', the evidence suggests that '[t]he available indices of national culture in the best known large-scale cross-cultural studies so far usually pass this test with flying colors. If norms are part of culture, they should also pass this test' (ibid: 1095). In addition, Murphy (1999: 39) suggests that 'decisions regarding practice should ultimately be attentive to national culture'. Whereas Timbalari (2019: 221) discusses how 'each nation is a generator of unique and personal culture, possessing specific traits', which makes each culture 'laminated' in three layers, one that forms 'basic concepts about life', the other forms the 'virtues and standards' while the third layer is presented and expressed through the 'symbols and products' of a given culture (ibid).

Moreover, Minkov et al. (2013: 1096) add that:

> It is expected to reflect societal differences in tolerance of deviations from societal norms. Tighter cultures should be less likely to allow such deviations. The authors of the theory also indicate that the cultural dimension of tightness-looseness "captures unique cultural variance" (p. 1227) and differs from individualism versus collectivism (Minkov et al., 2012: 1096).

Also, in her discussion of Hofstede's cultural six dimensions, Timbalari (2019: 222) lists some characteristics which are associated with each cultural dimension. See the following table as presented by Timbalari (2019: 222):

Hofstede's cultural dimensions	Characteristics
(Power Distance Index)	Official or unofficial acceptance degree of the dominance phenomenon. Remoteness versus power > low chance of cultural development and low access to legacy Remoteness versus power < people equality regarding social development
(Individualism versus Collectivism)	Independence and freedom of an individual regarding the group he/she belongs to Individualism > developed country Collectivism > under-developed country
(Masculinity versus Femininity)	Equally distribution rights between genders Masculinity - performance and money Femininity- social assets and interpersonal relations
(Doubt versus Confidence)	The expansion degree of cultural programs for its members to feel comfortable or uncomfortable In cultures which avoid strong uncertainty: formal attitude, leadership model based on rules and policy In cultures which avoid low uncertainty: leadership model based on flexible standards, informal attitude
(Long term orientation versus Short term orientation)	Resources associated with long term orientation > control and persistance Resources associated with short term orientation < tradition and recognition
(Indulgence versus Constraint)	Indulgence - feelings and desires satisfaction (ex: free time, marriage, friends and shopping) Constraint - conditioning of desire fruition of its members and lack of life happiness

In light of the table presented by Timbalari (2019: 222), Minkov et al. (2012) argue that some cultural elements have:

> [P]ositive correlation with power distance and a negative one with integration. According to the theory associated with the power distance dimension (Hofstede, 1980, 2001; Hofstede et al., 2010b), powers-that-be in high-scoring countries often feel exempted from accountability to the citizens. In return, the powerless adopt either dependent or counter

> dependent (rebellious) attitudes toward their leaders (Minkov et al., 2012: 1100).

For example, the study of the Influence of National Culture on Entrepreneurial Orientation by Ho (2008: 2) suggests that:

> Using Hofstede's theory of national culture as a basis, it is proposed that countries in which power distance, uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation are low while simultaneously exhibiting high level of individualism and masculinity (Ho, 2008: 2).

Furthermore, Humphreys (2010: 152) argues that the reasons behind accepting a leadership position is not always to hold a position of power, but rather because, for instance 'teachers [would] accept that they play a leadership role' as they see leadership not to be confined to those in powerful positions. This reflects the concerns of Keaney (1999: n.p.) who claims that 'the concepts of "management" and "the manager" are themselves culturally conditioned, reflecting an Anglo-American assumption that there is a set of skills applicable to all people, tasks and organizations', Keaney (1999: n.p.) then adds '[r]ather than there being 'one best way of organising' there are several ways, some very much more culturally appropriate and effective than others' (ibid). The empirical evidence presented by Tung and Alain (2010: 1260) is concerned with how cultures should be measured and what does culture implies, since the latter seems relevant to this present study we will focus only on that, they state that '[c]ultural distance dimensions refer to national/ societal values on which nations or societies tend to differ'. At last, we conclude with Hofstede's (1993: 88-89) conclusion in his study of management across the world, that states:

> There is something in all countries called 'management', but its meaning differs to a larger or smaller extent from one country to other, and it takes considerable historical and cultural insight into local conditions to understand its processes, philosophies and problems. If already the world

> may so many different things, how can we expect one country's theories of management to apply abroad? One should be extremely careful in making this assumption, and test it before considering it proven. Management is not a phenomenon that can be isolated from other processes taking place in a society (Hofstede, 1993: 88-89).

Significance of Sociocultural Theory for this Study

Even though 'sociocultural theory, [and] constructivism emerged as a theory of knowledge' (Scott and Palincsar, n.d.: 4), utilizing those approaches to help build and understand other related concepts in educational research is evident in the literature (Ebadi and Rahimi, 2019; Scott and Palincsar, n.d.).

Sawyer (2002, 291) claims that '[s]ocioculturalism is based on both a process ontology and the inseparability of the individual and the social'. Similarly, the relationships between the individuals and the prevailing culture have been examined with a focus on how the broader culture helps in building that interaction (Scott and Palincsar, n.d.: 1). According to Hartley (2009), neither the individual nor the structure seems to be accountable for the activity alone; together the action is likely to be formed. Hartley (2009: 144) adds that 'neither macro-structural properties nor the individual has any separate ontological status or autonomy' (Hartley, 2009: 144). Equally, Gronn (2010a: 318) argues that the 'existing social structure is always a precondition for the actions…, it also represents the outcome of the purposive, generative (as well as unintended) actions'. Walker (2010: 179) adds that 'the context for social interactions is created by the culture'.

Coleman and Glover (2010) argue that the dominating school culture has an effect on how leadership is exercised by school leaders. Correspondingly, a participant in the longitudinal comparative case studies conducted by Murphy et al. (2009: 192) states that 'the culture has shifted' when asked about the school's culture following a specific initiative. However, the cultural features of a school could create an obstacle for distribution to be implemented. Likewise, Hofstede (2010a: 337) argues

that ‘regional societies generally assumed to differ culturally’. The way in which culture is transferred from one generation to another, is claimed to be ‘the social environment in which children grow up; their stable core consists of basic, largely unconscious values’ (ibid).

The influence of sociocultural factors on leadership practices in school contexts cannot be understated. For example, Shah (2010: 31), in her study of exploring the impact of cultural and belief systems on educational leadership in Pakistan, she states that ‘[d]iscourses of gender are located in cultural settings and national contexts’. She adds that ‘[t]he women leaders participating in this study emphasised aspects of professional life where family affected their role and practices’ (ibid: 34). The sociocultural factors become more important when studying collective societies, such as Saudi Arabia, where the practice of leadership tends to be strongly influenced by the prevailing societal culture and the social bonds between the members in these societies. Crawford (2012: 612) argues that ‘schools are a reflection of the culture they inhabit’.

This suggests that some of the structural aspects of the Saudi educational system cannot be ignored when seeking an understanding of the enactment of leadership. For example, the educational system in Saudi Arabia is relatively hierarchical and bureaucratic (Al-Sadan, 2000; APS, 2011c; MoE, 2008). Thus, Trompenaars (2011: 63) argues that ‘[w]e need a new paradigm of leadership. What we have found in our research is that one of the few competencies that go beyond culture is the competence to deal with cultural diversity’ (Trompenaars, 2011: 63), as he established his seven scale cultural dimensions model, he concludes that ‘different cultures have their own organizational pattern’ (Timbalari, 2019: 225).

The discussion around autonomy, power articulation, and the concept of the heroic leader (Gronn, 2003; Møller, 2012; Spillane, 2006), appears to be influenced by sociocultural factors. It has been argued that autonomy is seen as socially-situated agency (Toohey, 2007: 232), which raises questions about the limitations of

applying some of the popular Western leadership theories in dissimilar contexts, with distinctive social, political, cultural and language differences (Abrahamsen and Aas, 2016). Hashem (2020: n.p.), in addition, discusses one of the challenges that schools in highly centralised contexts might face while adopting a leadership theory that is developed in Western contexts; contrasting social and cultural values with the application of the theory. Thus, '[i]ndividual countries often have their own definition and books on leadership' (Trompenaars, 2011: 63).

Hashem (2020), for instance, discusses how that could affect the implementation of distributed leadership in public Jordanian schools:

> [I]n the Jordanian public schools signify the embodiment of the tribal social and cultural values of solidarity and kinship. These values can be incongruent with the core values underlying the education reform for knowledge economy's advocated distributed leadership programme (Hashem, 2020: n.p.).

There is a growing number of school leadership studies focused on understanding organizational cultures and social norms to help improve practice (Close and Wainwright, 2010). For example, in their study on culture, management and leadership patterns in 62 countries, Steers et al. (2012: 434) argue that:

> [I]f one pursued other distinctive cultures, such as those of the Middle East,… other notable differences would likely be found until we reached the inescapable conclusion that cultural differences and cognitive processes play a critical role in both leader behaviour and managerial action. (Steers et al., 2012: 434).

Miller (2018: 4) adds that '[n]ational culture has a strong influence on organisational practices and leadership behaviours'.

This research focuses on examining distributed leadership. According to Walker (2010: 179) '[t]he concept of culture and its influence on organisational life is clearly

established', yet in the study of distributed leadership model, even though the context seems highly significant in understanding what reinforces the practice, the literature on distributed leadership, however, tends to make 'few references to broader social trends' (Hartley, 2010: 354). Similarly, Hartley (2009), and Wanasika et al. (2011), argue that discussion of authority in societal culture (Dimmock and Walker, 2002), power and social status, and how that authority is perceived and treated, socially and culturally (Dimmock and Walker, 2000), are crucial in the study of distributed leadership. Hartley (2009: 142) adds that little attention has been given to theoretical insights of the sociocultural aspects of leadership.

Indeed, while it may seem clear that sociocultural factors have a significant impact on leadership enactment, this area still requires further study, as Walker (2010: 179) elaborates:

> [T]he literature is far too large and diverse. It should be noted, however, that without exception all these discussions underscore the importance of culture to meaningful learning and change. They also stress that one of the main reasons why some schools have not been as successful as hoped is because cultural, contextual and pedagogical aspects are out of alignment. (Walker, 2010: 179)

Hence, this research is highly significant for focusing on school leadership in Saudi Arabia, through a sociocultural lens.

Matusov and Hayes (2000: 217) state that '[f]rom a sociocultural perspective, the social is the aspect of any human activity together with other aspects such as individual, cultural, and historical'. In addition, societal culture was proved to have a major impact on how individuals act and shape their realities (Coleman, 2005: 63; McColl, 2003: 137). Dimmock and Walker's (2005: 13) definition of societal culture includes 'values, beliefs and practices' according to which groups of people are distinguished from others.

In summary, societal culture appears to inform individuals' values and belief systems. Gash (2014: 317) argues that '[c]ulture has a powerful effect on the behavior of human beings'. In a sociocultural approach, the individuals and their surrounding context, if it is a school or an organisation (Dauber et al., 2012) are integrated, hence in this study, a sociocultural approach appears to include societal culture as it appears to shape the individuals' perceptions, which accordingly affect the traditions and practices of those individuals.

Therefore, it seems relatively beneficial to elaborate that in this research, by sociocultural we refer to the cultural practices, the social norms, and expectations, those were shaped by the values and beliefs of the Saudi citizens over the years. The history and the contextual elements of Saudi Arabia include being a large country ruled by a monarchy, hence the centralized systems and sectors, with the nature of their life in the past or what Rajkhan (2014: 2) refers to as 'tribal laws' and 'gender ideology'. All those elements are believed to strongly affect different aspects of life; yet the social and cultural factors in the Saudi Arabian context, which are being operationalised in the study, are: parental expectations and their involvement with the school, and socially expected and designated gendered roles (Baki, 2004: 3; Cultural atlas, n. d.).

Suzuki (2002; 245), for instance, argues that parental involvement in their children's education takes several forms, for example, choosing the school for their children and participating in school development. Another way in which parents could get more involved in the development of their children's school is through participating in school governance. Thus, it is safe to say that the ways in which parents' involvement with schools, and their perceptions of schools and education in general, impacted on the enactment of leadership.

Research on School Leadership in Saudi Arabia

Literature examining school leadership in the Arab region is emerging (Hallinger and Hammad, 2019) but remains relatively small and fairly recent (ibid). Hallinger and

Hammad (2019) identified only one publication relating to school leadership in Saudi Arabia from the nine educational leadership and management core journals they recognise, as Saudi Arabia is not one of the 'largest contributors of Arab-related EDLM studies' (Hallinger and Hammad, 2019: 25). The paper they identified is by Algarni and Male (2014), who critically examine the role of the leader in supporting learning and development in Saudi public schools. However, Arabic language published work on school leadership in general, and distributed leadership, in particular, was not included in this study. It is relevant to state that here as Bush and Ng (2019: 281) claim that the systematic reviews tend to ignore the published work written in native languages, which, if included is likely to provide a 'a more robust starting point for the review of previous research on distributed leadership'.

In addition, Oplatka and Arar (2017) acknowledged the following articles on school leadership in Saudi Arabia; Abu-Nasser (2011), Abu-Nasser (2009), Alameen, Male and Palaiologou (2015), Alghamdi and Riddick (2011), Ibrahim et al. (2013) and Al-Omari and Wuzynani (2013).

Abu-Nasser (2011) discussed principals' perceptions of time management and how it is evaluated, while Abu-Nasser (2009) examined personal perceptions of 90 principals on the level of effectiveness of institutional performance in secondary schools in Saudi Arabia. Alameen, Male and Palaiologou (2015) focused on early years headteachers' leadership style. The implementation of pedagogical leadership in early years' settings was influenced by factors such as the relationships between school leaders and other involved parties, including parents.

Alghamdi and Riddick (2011) studied the role played by the school principal in strengthening the counsellors' role for students. Ibrahim et al. (2013) discussed primary school principals' attitudes towards the children's dental health programme, while Al-Omari and Wuzynani (2013) conducted a comparative study measuring teachers' motivation towards headship in Saudi Arabian and Jordanian schools.

In addition to the articles mentioned above, the researcher has widened the search outside of the nine educational leadership and management core journals recognised by Hallinger and Hammad (2019). The researcher used the university of Nottingham's NUsearch engine besides google scholar and searched for: educational leadership in Saudi Arabia. In addition to the work presented above, the following articles were accessible: (Aburizaizah et al., 2019; Aburizaizah et al., 2016; Alghulayqah, 2020; Alqahtani et al., 2021; Alyami and Floyd, 2019; Vogel and Alhudithi, 2021).

Both Aburizaizah et al. (2019) and Aburizaizah et al. (2016) examine secondary schools, however, the focus of the first article is on principal leadership in relation to student achievements, while the second article discusses diversity in types of secondary schools with arising questions about unequal qualities. Likewise, Alghulayqah (2020) presents generative school leadership and its impact on student performance in a high school in Riyadh.

In their paper, Alqahtani et al. (2021) they attempt to explore the leadership practices of school principals in four public schools in Saudi Arabia, while Vogel and Alhudithi (2021) on the other hand, focus their comparative study between Saudi Arabian and Qatari headteachers, they examine the definition and preparation of instructional leadership utilizing electronic survey.

Different from other discussed published articles, Alyami and Floyd (2019: 1) 'aim to address this knowledge gap and report on a study which examined female leaders' perceptions and experiences of the system' they claim that the suggested 'Tatweer system is what can be termed "semi-decentralised", which appears to be linked to issues of accountability, trust, and perceived staff competence'.

According to AlFahal (2012), sociocultural fundamentals appear to influence some of the school leadership practices. Based on her study of distributed leadership in a private school in Saudi Arabia, she claims that the Saudi society appears to act as a collective society, where the actions of the individuals are formed 'with a high level of social and ideological commitment' (Rosenboima et al., 2010: 31), Khalifa et al. (2016: 1274) summarizes, that 'cultural responsiveness cannot be decontextualized'.

However, it is important to note that between the data collection phase of this study and the final production of this thesis, there has been major sociocultural changes in Saudi Arabia (Shar, 2017). These changes could impact on the enactment of leadership in Saudi schools, including the case study schools. Therefore, building on the argument raised by Buluç (2009), and with reference to the influence of sociocultural factors on the practice of leadership (Steers et al., 2012), societal culture appears to play a significant role in the enactment of leadership in non-Western (Anglo-American) culture and context (Dimmock and Walker, 2000).

In addition, since the crown prince of Saudi Arabia, prince Mohammad Bin Salman Bin AbdulAziz announced the plan of development, or what is known as the Saudi Vision 2030 (AlSati, 2018), the country has witnessed many reforms and changes, both socially and politically. These reforms are ongoing, and more changes can be expected. The Saudi vision 2030 is relevant as such social changes are likely to influence social norms and cultural beliefs, leading to changes in the practice of leadership in the Saudi education system.

The World Bank (2019, 44) claims that there are 'social norms that hold back education'. It argues that '[t]o make any substantial changes in education, countries must tackle the inefficient social norms that inhibit reform. Changing social norms is not easy, but it can be done'.

According to Bogotch (2011: 31), it is crucial for 'educational leaders [to] bring historical and cultural perspectives to whatever contemporary school reforms are

being proposed and implemented'. Taleb (2010) examines gender and leadership style in a higher education institute in Saudi Arabia, noting that Saudi Arabia is undergoing major social and educational reforms. In Saudi Arabia, prior research on school leadership and management has established that school leadership enactment is affected by several factors, notably bureaucracy and bureaucratic systems. Algarni and Male (2014: 46) argue that the 'Saudi school system has been highly standardised and centralised'. The employment of distributed leadership as a theoretical framework, in Saudi Arabia with its highly hierarchical system is justified as Bush and Ng (2019: 282) argue that distributed leadership can coexist within a school with formal leadership positions and hierarchy 'only if formal leaders allow it to take root'. Thus, the limited research and literature on leadership in primary schools in Saudi Arabia, and the Arab region, provide a clear warrant for this presented study.

Overview

This chapter discusses the literature around leadership theories, structure and styles in hierarchical, bureaucratic centralised systems, directly relevant to the present study of one such context, Saudi Arabia. The chapter also suggests that the application of distributed leadership, linked to formal leadership models in highly centralised bureaucratic systems, should take into consideration cultural and social factors. The leadership models relevant to the Saudi context are, hierarchical and bureaucratic, managerial and instructional, shared, collaborative and distributed leadership.

The next chapter discusses the methodology and methods for this study.

CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Introduction

In this chapter, the interpretivist paradigm is discussed as the methodological framework for the study. Secondly, the research methods are examined in detail, with reference to discussion of the research approach (case study), the choice and design of data collection instruments, the sampling procedures, and issues around access. Thirdly, the data collection and data analysis procedures are addressed. The chapter concludes with ethical considerations and matters of authenticity and validity, as well as the research limitations.

The researcher examines the existing formal approaches to leadership in Saudi schools and assesses the applicability of distributed leadership in four primary case study schools, with reference to sociocultural theory, by addressing the following questions:

Research Question 1: What are the leadership practices applied in the case study schools?

Research Question 2: To what extent, and in what ways, do headteachers and deputy heads share leadership tasks with other members of staff?

Research Question 3: To what extent, and in what ways, do the enacted leadership styles in the case study schools fit the distributed leadership model?

Research Question 4: To what extent, and in what ways, if any, is the enactment of leadership in the case study schools informed by the socio-cultural context?

Research Paradigm and Methodology

The term paradigm is used when referring to the nature of knowledge construction informing the methodology (Newby, 2014) and how it links the research philosophy with the practice. He adds that the paradigm connects to the nature and type of

research, and the way that knowledge is formed. Hammersley (2012: 3) notes that, in educational research, the nature of the study may vary. Accordingly 'it is not possible to give a definitive list of social and educational research paradigms, … because the labels for different approaches are not used in standard ways and do not form part of a single, well-defined typology'. In order to identify the paradigm of a research project, it is important to first look at the nature of the study from three points; the ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives (Hammersley, 2012; Morrison, 2012; Newby, 2014; UoS, n.d.). It is important to first identify the phenomenon (*ontology*), look at how it could be understood (*epistemology*) and then decide upon what approach to follow in order to find out more about it (*methodology*) (Hammersley, 2012: 3). As Morrison argues (2012: 30) 'methodology provides a rationale for the ways in which researchers conduct research activities'. The current study, therefore, is best described within the interpretivist paradigm. According to Cohen et al. (2011), an interpretivist paradigm possesses particular distinguishing features, including:

> …situations are fluid and changing; events and behaviour evolve over time and are richly affected by context; fidelity to the phenomena being studied is fundamental; people interpret events, contexts and situations, and act on the bases of those events; there are multiple interpretations of, and perspectives on, single events and situations; reality is multi-layered and complex; many events are not reducible to simplistic interpretations. (Cohen et al., 2011: 17).

This research is developing as an explanatory, comparative qualitative case study (Yin, 2009) within the interpretivist paradigm. The researcher identifies a number of factors which would enable a theory, if any, to emerge from the collected data. Cohen et al. (2011: 22), claim that theory in an interpretivist piece of research 'should not precede research but follow it'. Hence, as there seems to be little theorization around the concept of distributed leadership in centralized systems

(Bush and Ng, 2019), this study, seeks to establish an understanding of that phenomenon in Saudi Arabia.

By the early 1970s, qualitative work started to grow largely in the social and educational research arena (Hammersley, 2012). There is no single definition of qualitative research as some writers argue that there are methodological variations in the field of educational research, by which the methodological approaches being used will define the type of study carried out (Morrison, 2012; Smith, 2006; Squires, 2009). From an epistemological (Newby, 2014), and a methodological (Cohen et al., 2011) perspective, this research project adopts a qualitative stance that deals more with the processes than the outcomes, and is concerned with words, attitudes, behaviours and experiences in meaning making (Bryman, 1988; Hammersley and Campbell, 2012; Newby, 2014).

The best way to approach building this understanding, considering the nature of the context, appears to be through a case study framework (Bassey, 1999; Bassey, 2012; Yin, 2009). The cases are four girls' primary schools located in the Western region of Saudi Arabia. The use of multiple case study design facilitates triangulation of findings (Stake, 2006), to be discussed later in this chapter.

Research Approach

One of the methodological approaches commonly associated with qualitative educational research, focusing on distributed leadership (Elzubeir, 2011; Law, et al., 2010; Liljenberg, 2015), or even leadership in general (Pashiardis, et al., 2011; Taleb, 2010; Yin and Yuli, 2012) in non-Western contexts, or in under-researched contexts (Elzubeir, 2011; Lima, J., 2008) is that of case study. The case study approach is defined as 'is one research approach that allows for a level of understanding and explanation not possible through conventional experimental or survey designs' (Merriam, 1985: 204).

A respected number of global studies on educational leadership are based on a case study approach (Kaparou and Bush, 2016; Rayner, 2018; Szeto, 2021). The rationale could be that the practice of leadership is a form of human behaviour which is regarded as a complex concept to understand. However, case studies allow a closer look at the phenomenon, making it possible to build an understanding of the human interactions which are central to leadership. Lincoln and Guba (2002: 206) argue that 'the goodness of alternative inquiry case reports' when compared to 'technical reports, are the logically best form for reporting on alternative paradigm work'. They explain that:

> [E]ssential to an understanding of context and situation; they [case reports] serve as metaphors useful to the reader to stretch and test his or her own knowledge; they provide the information and sophistication needed to challenge the reader's current construction and enable its reconstruction; they serve as "idea catalogs" from which the reader may pick and choose in ways relevant to his or her own situation; and, most important, they provide the vicarious experience from which the reader may learn (as we do from all experience). (Lincoln and Guba, 2002: 206)

The elements of distributed leadership identified by Spillane (2006), and Hulpia et al. (2010), include interaction, social context, interrelationships and practice. Therefore, it seems relevant for this study to be approached by conducting case studies where each school is a distinctive environment for observing leadership in action, in order to be able to interpret what has been found (Newby, 2014).

Distributed leadership is becoming widely discussed in Western contexts, notably in the US, Australia and the UK (Bush and Ng, 2019), but it is under-researched in the Middle East or the Arab region, especially in Saudi Arabia (Hallinger and Hammad, 2019). This research on leadership in public and private schools in Jeddah and AlMadinah involves four girls' primary case study schools. According to Yin and Yuli (2012), each school is a separate case, with a focus on distributed leadership and on the enactment of leadership in that school. Bryman (2012: 70) calls this kind of case

study an ‘exemplifying case’ as it aims to capture the daily practices in an identified place. Yin (2009: 22, 45) refers to it as ‘an explanatory case study’, for its proposition, and as ‘multiple-case studies’, for the replication of its design. As the context is under-researched, and under-published (Hallinger and Hammad, 2019), case study is a helpful approach for examining such unfamiliar phenomena. Case study is the most appropriate design for this research as it allows the researcher ‘to explore significant features of the case and to put forward interpretations for what is observed. [as it] is conducted mainly in its natural context’ (Bassey, 1999: 47).

Case study design could be applied to a single case or multiple cases (Bassey, 1999; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). Single case studies may be helpful to examine unique cases, as they help to provide defined units of analysis (ibid) for a study of singularity (Bassey, 1999). Yin (2014: 56) argues that single case studies should be used ‘where the case represents (a) a critical test of existing theory, (b) an extreme or unusual circumstance, or (c) a common case, or where the case serves a (d) revelatory or (e) longitudinal purpose’.

Multiple case study designs tend to have distinctive advantages, however, as they are believed to be more robust (Herriott and Firestone, 1983; Yin, 2014). Multiple case study designs allow for ensuring significant findings (Yin, 2014), by either predicting similar results or contrasting results but for anticipatable reasons. Further, Bassey (1999: 46) adds that multiple cases are good in examining phenomena if looking for ‘fuzzy generalizations’, a qualified generalization carrying the idea of possibility but not certainty. Merriam (1985: 206) adds ‘[a] case study can test theory as well as build theory’. Similarly, Miles and Huberman (1994: 172) discuss the practicality of multiple case studies, compared to one case, as the former provides the researcher with reassurance that the events in only one case are not ‘wholly idio-syncratic’. Case study approach is, therefore, the most suitable design to carry out this research.

Research Methods

The researcher employed three research methods in order to collect the data. These were semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011), observations with field notes (Briggs et al., 2012; Silverman, 2006), and documentary analysis (Cohen et al., 2018: 586; Newby, 2014: 159). The documents include official documents published by the Ministry of Education and schools' own documents.

The three methods helped the researcher to build an understanding of the enactment of leadership inside the schools. Each method played a significant part in answering specific research questions. The interviews were useful to assess how leadership is enacted and perceived in the school. They also helped to examine the extent to which leadership responsibilities are shared or delegated within the school. Observations were used to document the applied approaches to leadership and to assess how far they could be considered to reflect leadership distribution. The field notes were also used to document evidence of any relationship between socio-cultural elements and leadership practice in each case study. The analysis of the Ministry of Education's official documents (Bryman, 2012) was undertaken to provide a benchmark of official requirements, to compare with leadership practice in the public and private schools, notably through assessing how far the Ministry expects formal models of leadership.

The use of mixed methods in this research, according to Cohen et. al. (2018: 33) 'enable[d] a more comprehensive and complete understanding' of the enactment of school leadership in the case study schools. The semi-structured interviews (Newby, 2014) were helpful in guiding the participants to express their understanding of leadership in their specific school contexts.

The observations were spontaneous and unstructured (Briggs et al., 2012) in that the researcher was either invited to observe a leadership activity, and thus enabled to observe the situation, or the researcher's request to observe was accepted. In

either case, the observation targeted those participants who had already agreed to take part in the study, and had signed the consent form. In this sense, they were targeted observations. However, Newby (2014: 350) contends that 'there is possible more flexibility in how we collect data through observation than many other approaches' however, as they might be 'constrained by principle or by custom and practice. We should not, therefore, be afraid to test the limits of an observational approach' (ibid).

The researcher was able to access some documents in schools A, B and C, but no documents were available in school D. None of the schools granted permission for the researcher to acquire a copy, or photocopy, any of their documents. They were available only during the field work visits, and the researcher was only able to make notes.

The documentary analysis also includes policies and official documents, from the Ministry of Education. All documents were analysed in respect of leadership structure, roles, responsibilities and practice. Adopting this mixed-methods approach provided more information about leadership practices than a single method could do (Merriam, 1985; Newby, 2014). For example, combining interviews and observations with documentary analysis was helpful in forming a picture about how the assigned positions in the leadership structure, by the Ministry of Education, shaped the enactment of leadership in each school.

Sampling

Sampling the case studies

This project employs non-probability sampling (BRM, n.d.) for primary schools in two cities in the Western region of Saudi Arabia; Jeddah and AlMadinah. Purposive sampling (Creswell, 2020; Etikan et al., 2016) is used to select the cases, which are confined to girls' primary schools. This is because, as a female researcher, it would be difficult to access boys' schools. The criteria for selection were the geographic location of the school and the school sector. The focus is on primary schools, where

there is less research in Arab countries, when compared to secondary schools (Hallinger and Hammad, 2019). To select the schools, the researcher used a stratified sampling strategy (Cohen et al., 2011). The study stratifies the schools by city (Jeddah, AlMadinah) and by school sector (public and private). Stratifying the schools in this way facilitated in-depth comparisons across the cases, and between the two variables. According to Cohen et al. (2018: 218):

> [in] qualitative research, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristic(s) being sought. They assemble the sample to meet their specific needs (Cohen et al., 2018: 218)

Thus, purposive sampling was employed to pick the two cities and, subsequently, the case study schools. The criteria for selecting the geographical location of the schools were purpose and convenience. Jeddah and AlMadina represent two diverse locations, although they are both located in the Western region of Saudi Arabia. Jeddah is known for its cultural variation and diversity. The sampled schools in Jeddah were located in the Northern region of the city, which serves a middle class population. AlMadina is known for being more conservative in respect of social norms and traditions. The socio-economic status of the communities served by the schools in AlMadinah is lower than those in Northern Jeddah.

Table 3.1 displays the sampling frame of the case study schools, by city and school type:

School sector	**City**		**Total number of schools per sector**	
	Jeddah	AlMadinah		
Private	1	1	2	
Public	1	1	2	
Total number of school per city	2	2	**Total number of case study schools**	4

Table 3.1: Sampling frame for the case studies

As Saudi Arabia is the home country of the researcher, the two cities, Jeddah and Madinah, were chosen for reasons of accessibility as Jeddah is the home town of the researcher and AlMadinah is relatively close to it. Both cities also have a significant number of private schools. Moreover, the rationale for choosing these two cities is that they seem to have several contrasting features, which may have an effect on leadership practices. First, AlMadinah is quite small in size with a population of 1,271,812 (CDSI, 2015a), when compared to Jeddah with 3,750,941 people (CDSI, 2015b). Second, as AlMadinah hosts the second most holy mosque in Saudi Arabia (MFA, 2014), it is assumed to be more conservative than Jeddah. Third, the economic activity level differs, according to the Deputy Ministry of Industry's statistics (DMI, 2015a; DMI, 2015b), and Jeddah is regarded as a richer city than AlMadinah.

Sampling the participants

The researcher applied a non-probability, purposive sampling strategy (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2020: 68) to identify the interview participants in all schools. The purposive sampling, or what Newby (2014: 239) calls 'probability-based sampling', is utilized to identify participants who hold a leadership position and/or have a leadership responsibility. To enable respondent triangulation within each case (Bush, 2012), the researcher included participants with different levels of seniority in the school leadership hierarchy. Briggs, et al. (2012, 68) discuss interviews as an example for reaching respondent triangulation in a policy-related research, they argue:

> Conducting such interviews with different user groups (for example, teachers and school leaders) may lead to the conclusion that the policy impacted differentially on each group. (Briggs, et al., 2012, 68)

The sampling of participants was based on their positions, and included headteachers, deputy heads, administrators or management assistants, subject

coordinators and team leaders, and teachers. The participants in each school are identified in chapters 4-7.

Access

To secure access, the researcher submitted an official request to the Ministry of Education's regional offices in Jeddah and AlMadinah. The regional offices then issued a letter granting access to the researcher (see appendix B), informed the researcher of the names of the schools in their jurisdiction and notified the schools about the researcher's study and the possibility of the researcher's visit. In Jeddah, the researcher visited the closest public school to the MoE local representative office, known as the General Education office in North Jeddah (GEDNJ) office, an example of convenience sampling, which agreed to participate in the research. However, even though the researcher approached the school directly using personal networks, the closest private school declined participation, despite the local authority's letter of notification. This indicated that each school had a degree of autonomy in deciding whether or not to take part in this study, and that sampling was not overly influenced by the Ministry of Education or its regional offices. In AlMadinah, the situation was very similar to Jeddah, as the researcher visited the local authority, to seek access to schools. This was the MoE's representative office, known as the General Directorate of Education in AlMadinah Province (GDEMP). The researcher depended on recommendations from family and friends when selecting the private school. Yet, one private school declined to take part because it needed permission from the school board and the headteacher did not think that the research would be approved. The researcher subsequently visited another 'famous' private school, which agreed to take part. She then visited the nearest public school to the private school, which also agreed to become a case study school.

Understanding the contextual differences in obtaining accessibility to schools is important, not only in sampling the participating schools and people, but also in designing the research instruments and tools (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011). As

Cohen et al. (2014: 120) argue, the challenges researchers may face include the possibility that 'different cultures may raise questions of informed consent'. The following section highlights the design of data collection tools and the procedures employed for collecting the data.

Research Instrument Design and Data Collection

Instrument design

The researcher adopted a multi-methods approach as a way to ensure internal validity (Bush, 2012; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). Initially, two primary data collection methods; observations and semi-structured interviews (Newby, 2014: 356), and one secondary method, documentary analysis, have been utilised. Yet, during data collection, observations were very limited (Newby, 2014: 350), which consequently resulted in interviews being the primary data collection method that was second by documentary analysis and observations.

According to Merriam (1985: 208) '[t]he data for a case study are gathered through three major strategies: observation, interviewing, and document analysis'. The observations allowed the researcher to witness leadership in action. The interviews provided more depth and participants' perceptions. All the data were combined with the official documents to establish influences on leadership enactment within each school.

Interviews

The interviews were semi-structured (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011). Creswell, (2020) claims that employing semi-structured interviews for data collection is a powerful way that provides understanding of a human nature.

> Data were collected via semistructured interviews, which Fontana and Frey (2000) described as "one of the most powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow human beings" (p. 645). (Creswell, 2020: 69)

Th interview questions were developed from the literature on the Saudi context, and from the international literature on school leadership (Bush, 2011; Bush and Glover, 2014; Gronn, 2010b; Gunter et al., 2013; Hartley, 2010). In the usefulness in adopting a semi-structure interviews Newby (2014) states that:

> Interviews have the freedom to clarify people's understanding and to ask follow-up questions to explore a viewpoint, to determine knowledge or to open up other explanations and answers to questions that were not foreseen when the research questions were determined. (Newby, 2014: 356)

Research Questions	Interview Questions
Research Question 1: What are the leadership practices applied in the case study schools?	I.Q. 1: What is the applied structure of the case study schools? Is it different from the formal structure required by the ministry of education? If yes, why? And how is it different?
	I.Q. 2: What are the fulfilled roles within the school?
Research Question 2: To what extent, and in what ways, do headteachers and deputy heads share leadership tasks with other members of staff?	I.Q. 3: What is the procedural line of orders (whether it is top-down or bottom-up) according to which the structure tends to operate, and the roles are enacted?
	I.Q. 4: How do you (staff members with enacted leadership roles, but no formal leadership position) perceive yourself and why? How do others perceive you and why?
	I.Q. 5: What inspires you to take leadership responsibilities and roles without an assigned position?
Research Question 3: To what extent, and in what ways, do the enacted leadership styles in the case study schools fit the distributed leadership model?	I.Q. 6: How is the leadership shared within the school? Do heads and deputy heads tend to delegate some of their responsibilities? How and why?
	I.Q. 7: What are other possible ways of practicing delegation?
	I.Q. 8: How do members of staff with no leadership responsibility perceive authority and accountability in the case study schools?
Research Question 4: To what extent, and in what ways, if any, the enactment of leadership in the case study schools seemed informed by the socio-cultural context?	I.Q. 9: Do the views in question (1) seem to be affected by social norms? If so, how?
Research Question 3: To what extent, and in what ways, do the enacted leadership styles in the case study schools fit the distributed leadership model?	I.Q. 10: How emergent leadership is practiced within your schools? How is it perceived?
Research Question 4: To what extent, and in what ways, if any, is the enactment of leadership in the case study schools informed by the socio-cultural context?	I.Q. 11: Are there any social factors that influence emergent and collaborative leadership to take place? What and how?

Table 3.2: Research questions and interview questions

They were also linked to the research questions (see table 3.2 above). The questions address each school's leadership structure, formal positions, shared and collaborative work, and how leadership is perceived by the interviewees. As a form of 'respondent triangulation' (Bush, 2012: 85), the researcher asked the questions to all the interviewees, although not necessarily in the same order. Also, the participants were asked to describe the leadership style applied in their schools. Probes and prompts were applied on an individual basis in response to participants' answers and from other sources, such as observations or the official documents. Table 3.2 shows the research questions and the linked interview questions.

Observations

Observations with field notes (Newby, 2014; Silverman, 2006) were utilised for data collection. The researcher observed leadership enactment during each school's daily routine, with 'full field notes' (Bryman, 2012: 450). The researcher considered developing an observation framework to document and cluster the events of leadership (for example: administration meetings) within the school. However, this was not possible as the circumstances in each school were very different and unstructured observations were adopted on a limited and opportunistic basis (Briggs et al., 2012; Newby, 2014).

Documentary analysis

Documentary analysis (Cohen et al., 2018: 586; Newby, 2014: 159), depends on the availability of the relevant documents and their accessibility to the researcher. The documents included the Ministry of Education manuals (the Regulatory Manual and the Procedural Manual) (MoE, 1437H; TPM, 2019). There were also a few documents accessible to the researcher in schools A, B and C, but no documents in school D were available, however, there were some documents available on the school's website which were used. Permission to acquire a copy, or photocopy, any of their documents was not granted in any schools. The documents were made available only during the visit, and the researcher could only take notes.

Data Collection

To ensure voluntary participation and ethical conduct, during the first day at every school, the researcher had a meeting with the headteacher, and a deputy head or management assistant, to explain the study, the aims and research questions, the data collection procedure, and present the participant information form along with the participant consent form. Upon the headteacher's approval, the researcher agreed a time-table for the researcher's visits to each school. The researcher then left the school, after agreeing with the headteacher to notify the school staff about the study, and to ask for their intentions to participate. The researcher subsequently visited the school and introduced herself to each staff member who was willing to participate, and discussed the aims of the study, explained the data collection procedure, presented the forms while explaining the researcher's role, the participants' role and rights, and offered to answer any questions. Informed consent and confidentiality issues were discussed at the beginning of each interview. After answering the candidate's questions, the researcher collected the signed consent form before conducting the interview (see table 3.3).

	Time frame	Activity
The case study school	First day	• Introduction by the researcher to the headteacher. • Hand in information sheet and consent forms to the headteacher. • Plan the researcher's time at the school and arrange an interview schedule with participants according to their availability. • Meet with possible research candidates.
	During the week	• Explain the study to the participants, hand-in consent forms and information sheets to them, answer their questions and then start the interview. • Keep a daily journal. • Conduct observations (whenever possible) with detailed notes. • Accessing official documents was done with either the headteacher (at her office) or with a deputy head of academic affairs (at her office).

Table 3.3: Data collection strategy

Because of time restrictions for the researcher, and the timing of the visit (before the end of year assessment period), the researcher spent an average of one week in

every school. Table 3.3 above shows the data collection strategy applied in each school, based on three methods; observation, interviews and documentary analysis.

As the data collection began, in practice the research design appeared to have some limitations in relation to the research instruments. The following section discusses how the research design was realised, and how the changes in plans impacted the research and informed the final conclusions.

Interviews

The main language for communication (verbal and written) inside the schools, including forms and sheets given to the research participants, was Arabic. All the interviews were conducted in Arabic. The researcher used an audio recorder while conducting the interviews, subject to participants' agreement. The researcher then prepared transcriptions in Arabic, at first, then translated versions accordingly. Details on transcriptions are discussed in data analysis section below.

It is worth noting that, there was a variation in the numbers of participants between the four case study schools (see table 8.1, p: 202). This difference may have impacted the data collected from schools C and D in particular. As the total number of participants in each of these schools was: school C (6), school D (5), compared to (8) in both schools A and B.

Observations

For the targeted observations, intended to focus on the interview participants in action, the researcher opted for attending a meeting or witnessing the participants as they walked around the school. However, since the researcher was accompanied or even escorted from the headteacher's office to the interview room (which was different in every school), observations were very limited. Having said that, the journal kept by the researcher included comments and observations about several aspects from each school visit. These included notes about staff interactions (as in schools A, B and D), non-verbal communication between headteacher and staff

members (as in schools C and D), school staff and the researcher (as in school C). According to Merriam (1985), '[t]hrough interviewing participants, observing the phenomenon, or analyzing documents, four types of observational data most "relevant" to a case study can be obtained:

> I. Form and content of verbal interaction between participants
>
> 2. Form and content of verbal interaction with the researcher
>
> 3. Non-verbal behavior
>
> 4. Patterns of action and non-action. (Wilson, 1979, p. 198)'.

(Merriam, 1985: 208)

The different circumstances at in every school, however, led the researcher to adopt unstructured observations on a limited and opportunistic basis (Briggs et al., 2012; Newby, 2014). This has resulted in more limited data from observations compared to interviews.

School D

From a methodological perspective, compared to the other case study schools, there was an issue of access (Sarantakos, 2005) in school D. There was limited input from the leadership and management staff members at the school. Firstly, the headteacher did not agree to participate in the study, which has limited the input from the school in regard to getting an insight from the headteacher. The head of school D refused participation claiming that she was newly appointed to her position, therefore, would not have much to share about the school. Besides, she stated that she has her reputation and the school's reputation to consider.

Secondly, the school had no deputy heads, thus it was different from the other three case study schools. However, since the duties of the deputy heads are fulfilled by the company's supervisors, as stated by the participants; yet these limitations did not affect the quality of the data collected, rather, it had informed the outcomes of the study.

In addition, although the headteacher was not interviewed, she talked with the researcher generally about the school for almost an hour. All the information presented in the study was gathered from the participants at school D, some of which was also discussed with the headteacher. Hence, it is rather important to note that the researcher did not use any information that was discussed solely by the headteacher, since she did not sign a consent form.

With no input from deputy heads, as there are no deputy heads in school D. There were limited data from the participants, nonetheless, the assumption would be that there would be inadequate data to draw a conclusion about the school, that is not that case. Compared to the other case study schools, however, the amount of data about school D might be limited, and so the discussion of this case. A more thorough discussion of the findings on school D is presented in chapter Eight.

More details about school D and the participants from the school are discussed in chapter Seven (see pages: 178 – 201).

Data Analysis

Given the size and nature of the research sample, the intention here is not to generalise the findings but rather to establish their relatability to other similar contexts (Bell and Waters, 2014). After the data collection was complete, the researcher prepared a case study report for each school, in order to prepare for the data analysis stage, which was conducted at multiple levels. The multi-stage data analysis framework provided the analytical framework of the study (Bassey, 2012; Burstein, 1980; Stake, 2006). It is claimed that when data is analysed at different stages, this might help get a better understanding of the data as '[a]nalyses at several levels might help to explain the behavior' (Burstein, 1980: 182).

Data analysis process

Firstly: establishing a coding frame

Following the field work in each case study school, time was spent on first stage data analysis, or what Eisenhardt (2002: 19) refers to as 'site-analysis'. This was done by developing a provisional coding frame (it is referred to as *provisional,* because the themes were based, at the beginning, on the finding from the first case study school). As 'overall impressions, tentative themes, concepts, and possibly even relationships between variables begin to emerge' (ibid).

The codes and themes emerged from the collected data (Bryman, 2012), and are also linked to the research questions. The established coding frame (Silverman, 2006; Newby, 2014) was used for the interviews from all four case studies, which was done by clustering the interviews under common themes, linked to the research questions (see table 3.2, page: 69). The observations and documentary analysis, then, followed the same themes. Considering the limited opportunities for observations and the few notes collected, observations were included in the case study reports for each case study school, based on which the case study schools chapters were developed (see chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 respectively). 'Single practitioner researcher might use either structured or unstructured diaries to reflect' Briggs, et al. (2012: 325) claim. As researchers might like to keep '[a] less structured, more exploratory approach' as a mean to record run-on notes of the activity being observed (Briggs, et al., 2012: 326).

The documentary analysis, the documents discussed in the interviews with participants (mainly headteachers and deputy heads) were analysed in correspondence with the coding themes as well, and compared and contrasted across school sectors (a.k.a: public and private).

Newby (2014: 473) claims that 'the coding and tagging process refines, re-orders and reduces in scale the data we began with', accordingly, the coding themes those were developed are: leadership structure (it included school structures, roles and

the dynamic of the structure), delegation (included the discussion on accountability), social/ cultural (participants included the discussion about parental education and their involvement with the school under this theme), leadership perception and authority, agency – autonomy and teams, distributed leadership, inspiration to leadership, nomination and leadership appointment, and shared leadership). It is notable that, during the interviews, and in the data analysis phase as well, some themes emerged, for example: nomination and appointment to leadership, and agency – autonomy and teams. Lotto (1986: 330) claims that '[t]he re- searcher is urged to be systematic but to continually test and retest emerging conclusions against raw data' (see table 3.4, page: 82).

Coding Frame (the generated themes)	Interview question
Leadership structure	I.Q. 1, 2, and 3
Delegation	I.Q. 6, and 7
Social/ cultural	I.Q. 4, 9, and 11
Leadership perception – authority	I.Q. 4
Agency – autonomy – teams	Emerging in the interviews. I. Q. 6 and 10
Distributed leadership	Emerging in the interviews. I.Q. 3, 6, 7, 10, and 11
Inspiration to leadership – highlighted orange in the PDF	I.Q. 5
Nomination – leadership appointment	Emerging in the interviews. I.Q. 5
Shared leadership– highlighted light green in the PDF	I.Q. 1, 2, and 3

Table 3.4: Coding themes linked to interview questions

Secondly: transcriptions

The second step was transcribing the data. Silverman (2006) suggests that qualitative analysis provides researchers with rich text, and the researcher then applies the most appropriate analytical method to serve the research purpose.

Davidson (2009: 39) argues that, among researchers 'particularly within qualitative research' there are different variations of transcriptions. She elaborates:

> In the literature, differences about transcription play out further in relation to what is considered to be data and what is analysis. For some researchers transcription is a fundamental analytic tool (Bucholtz & Du Bois, 2006; ten Have, 2007), analytic procedure (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998), or "form of analysis" (Duranti, 1997, p. 137). For others, analysis begins after the development of atranscript (see Ochs, 1979, for example). Some accounts of transcription take research recordings to be data (Coates & Thornborrow, 1999; Mondada, 2007), whereas others view transcripts as data (see Johnson, 2000; Ochs, 1979). (ibid)

With interviews, the researcher developed a system for transcribing interviews, it was not identical to what is referred to as: transcription protocol (Clark et al., 2017: 6; Davidson, 2009: 44), it is, however not very far from it. The system was developed to overcome issues associated with 'translating across languages' claims Temple and Young (2004: 163). So, at first, since the interviews were conducted in Arabic, they were transcribed in Arabic. According to Clark et al. (2017: 6) transcription protocol is based on three decisions, they are:

> How complete must the transcript be to accomplish the research process? How much detail is needed for analysis? And how will we assure content accuracy? Answers to these questions supply budgetary detail and establish the nature of the transcripts forwarded for analysis. (ibid)

Davidson (2009: 38) discusses that:

> [T]ranscription is not merely the mechanical selection and application of notation symbols. Instead, researchers make choices (Kvale, 1996), and these represent some actions, in certain ways. Choices are integrally related to theoretical positions and how researchers locate themselves and others in the research process. (ibid)

Taking into consideration the points raised above, the researcher's transcribing system for interviews involved: transcribing participant's responses, occasionally omitting parts of the interview, for example: the interview questions, and run offs (irrelated discussion, i.e.: a participant once discussed how she was not paid a compensation by the MoE for obtaining her Master's degree) by the participants. Also, the researcher paid extra attention to transcribing the participant's exact words in Arabic, to make sure that the translation does not get jeopardised. Transcription was hand-written at first and then typed in the computer.

The second step was to translate the interviews. Initially, this involved translating the whole interview and typing it in the computer, but it was time consuming. Thus, selective translation was carried out to the related parts from the Arabic transcripts. It is worth noting that, as the researcher is bilingual, she conducted the translations personally, with the help of google translate, which was used occasionally. The researcher crossed-checked the translated vocabulary with other printed resources, especially for specific terminologies, such as the Procedural Manual and the Regulatory Manual. The researcher as the translator appears a method to assure validity of the data, presumably when compared to other approaches such as 'back translation [which is] used to ensure agreement of a 'correct' version of a text' (Temple and Young (2004: 163). In this regard, Temple and Young (2004: 164) argue:

> The situation where the researcher is fluent in the language of communities she is working with is rare. It offers opportunities in terms of research methods that are not open to other researchers in cross language research. The researcher can use the experience of translating to discuss points in the text where she has had to stop and think about meaning. Some researchers who also act as translators regard the discussion of the translation processes as a check to the validity of interpretations. (Temple and Young, 2004: 164)

Thirdly: combining data from different methods for methodological triangulation and then carry cross-case analysis

The researcher conducted the analysis manually, the data was integrated from different methods, to provide findings for each case study as an approach for reaching methodological triangulation (Briggs et al., 2012: 85). Following the discussion above on interviews, as observations were unstructured, opportunistic and limited. The researcher wrote selective descriptive notes of the situations and actions that were observed, revisited after leaving the school. The second step was to link the translated observations to the research themes.

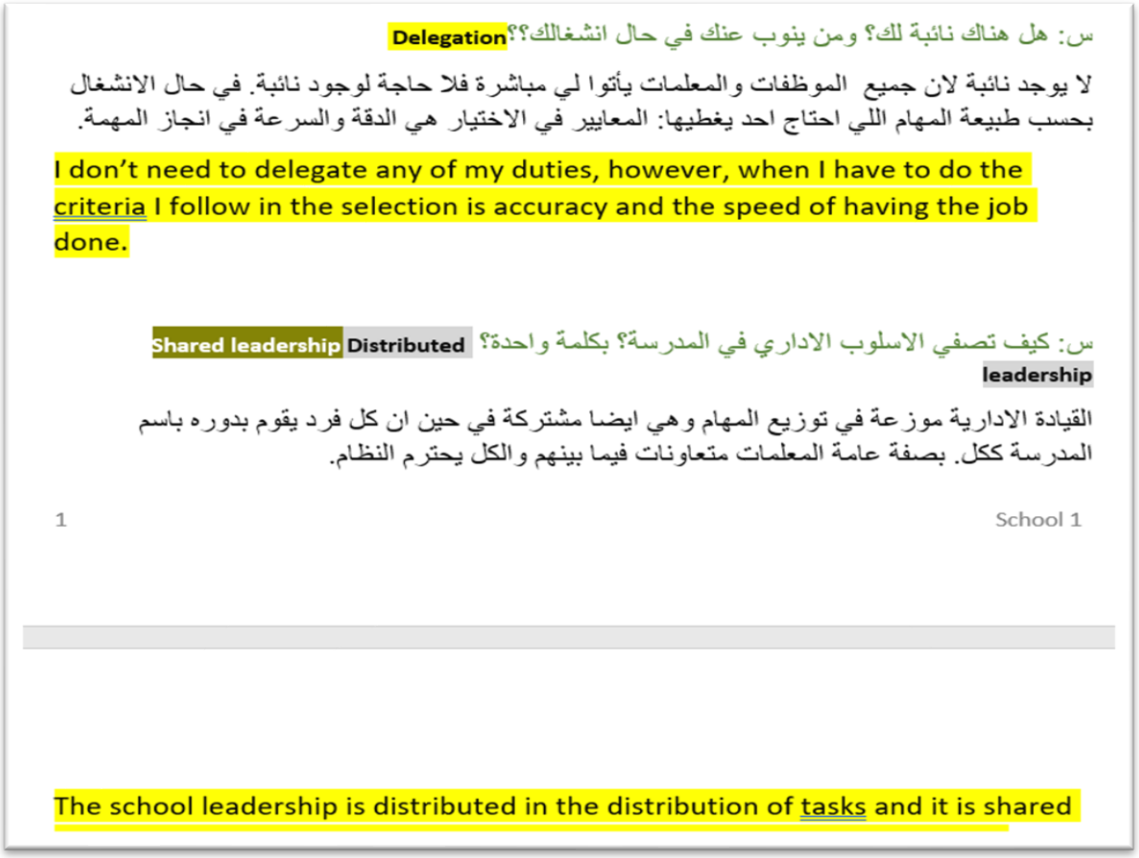
As for the documentary analysis, the documents used in the data collection were either the school's own documents (especially in the private schools B and D) or the Ministry of education's documents, the Regulatory Manual and the Procedural Manual (MoE, 1437H; TPM, 2019). For the school's documents, while the researcher was welcomed to examine them, the request to photocopy them was declined. The data gathered from the school's documents included a thorough description of the document, who is in-charge of and/or who needs to use it and where it is kept. For the latter, the researcher carried a cross-analysis of the document's copies available online and then translate the document, if needed (see for example Chapter 8, Table 8.2, p: 206, Formation of the Administrative Body for Public Schools as explained in the Regulatory manual (MOE, 1437H: 11), page: 198).

The final step of data analysis was cross-case comparison (House, 2002: 2). Using a thematic approach, the researcher compared and contrasted the case studies in terms of location and sector. The researcher, then, compared the two cities in terms of the observed and reported approaches to leadership. The analysis also explored connections between leadership enactment and any associated social aspects, arising from the field notes and interview data. This showed evidence of social differences according to the geographical and demographic differences between the two cities. Another comparison was made between public and private

schools in each city, and subsequently compared to the other city, to look for matching patterns and differences (Yin, 2009: 143).

Extracts from the interviews, observations and documents used for data analysis are included to illustrate the approach.

Sample (1): translated interview in English (School A- Teacher Asma)



س: هل هناك نائبة لك؟ ومن ينوب عنك في حال انشغالك؟؟ Delegation

لا يوجد نائبة لان جميع الموظفات والمعلمات يأتوا لي مباشرة فلا حاجة لوجود نائبة. في حال الانشغال بحسب طبيعة المهام اللي احتاج احد يغطيها: المعايير في الاختيار هي الدقة والسرعة في انجاز المهمة.

I don't need to delegate any of my duties, however, when I have to do the criteria I follow in the selection is accuracy and the speed of having the job done.

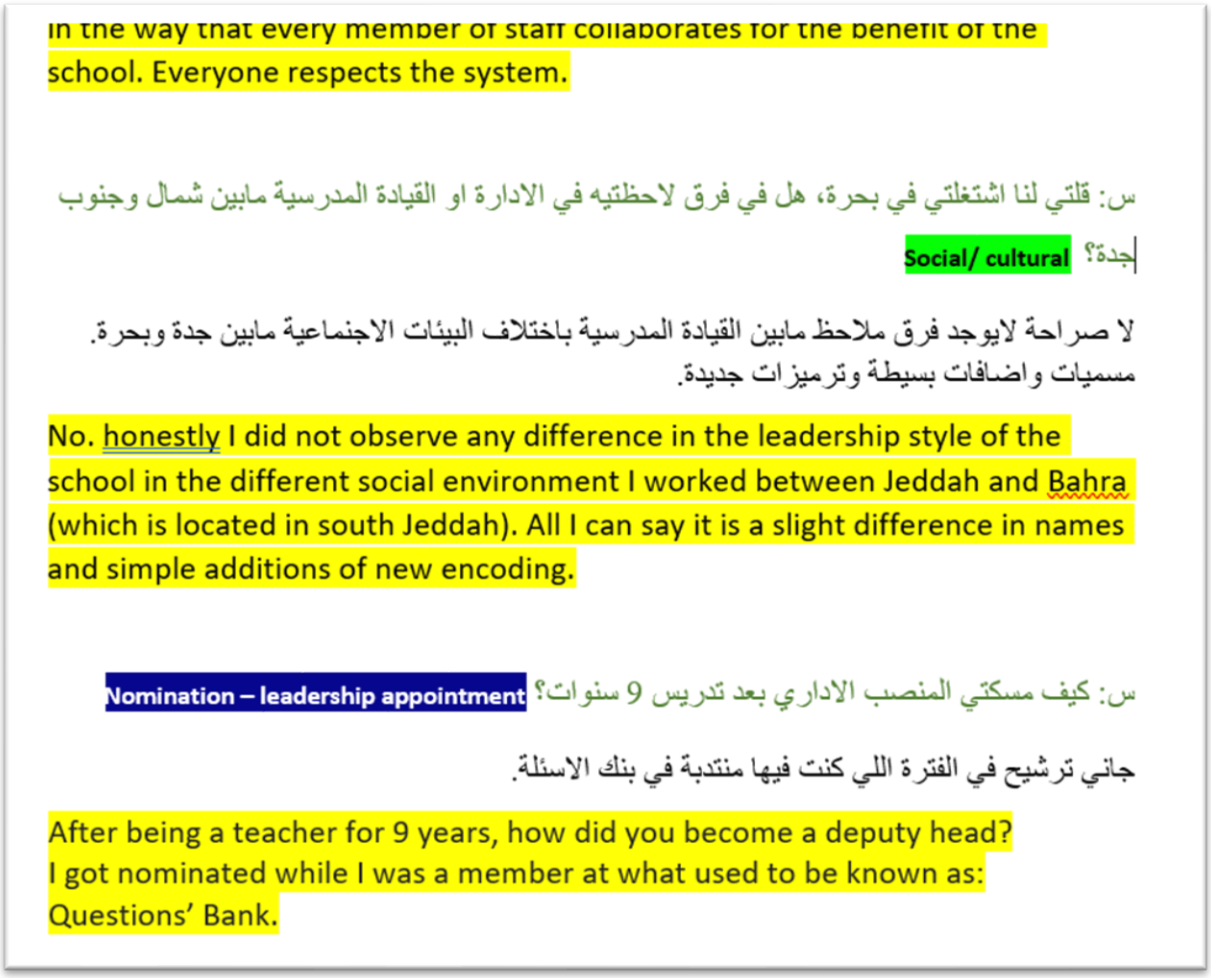
س: كيف تصفي الاسلوب الاداري في المدرسة؟ بكلمة واحدة؟ Shared leadership Distributed leadership

القيادة الادارية موزعة في توزيع المهام وهي ايضا مشتركة في حين ان كل فرد يقوم بدوره باسم المدرسة ككل. بصفة عامة المعلمات متعاونات فيما بينهم والكل يحترم النظام.

1 School 1

The school leadership is distributed in the distribution of tasks and it is shared

Sample (2): translated interview in English (School A- Teacher Asma, cont.)



in the way that every member of staff collaborates for the benefit of the school. Everyone respects the system.

س: قلتي لنا اشتغلتي في بحرة، هل في فرق لاحظتيه في الادارة او القيادة المدرسية مابين شمال وجنوب جدة؟ Social/ cultural

لا صراحة لايوجد فرق ملاحظ مابين القيادة المدرسية باختلاف البيئات الاجتماعية مابين جدة وبحرة. مسميات واضافات بسيطة وترميزات جديدة.

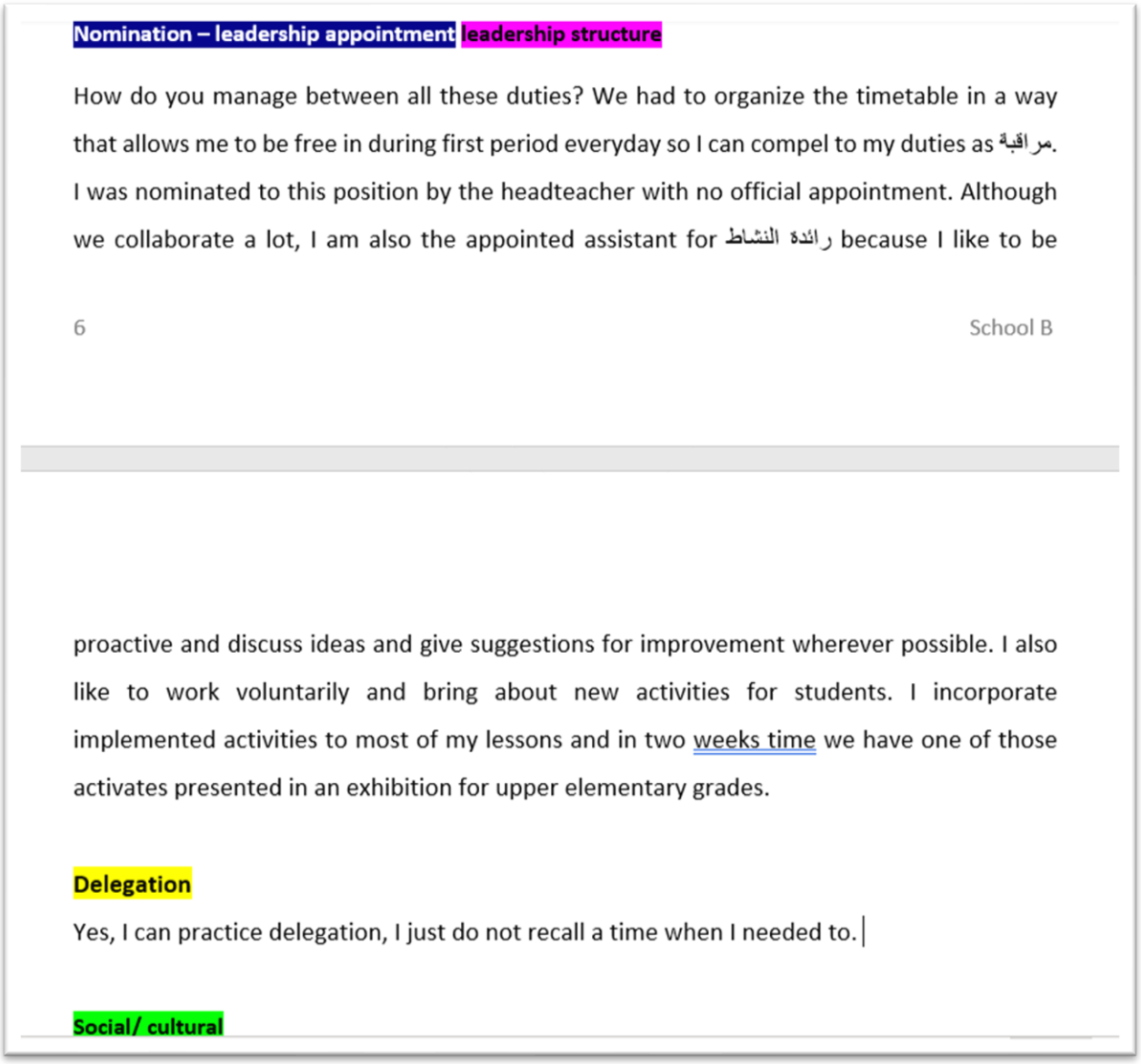
No. honestly I did not observe any difference in the leadership style of the school in the different social environment I worked between Jeddah and Bahra (which is located in south Jeddah). All I can say it is a slight difference in names and simple additions of new encoding.

س: كيف مسكتي المنصب الاداري بعد تدريس 9 سنوات؟ Nomination – leadership appointment

جاني ترشيح في الفترة اللي كنت فيها منتدبة في بنك الاسئلة.

After being a teacher for 9 years, how did you become a deputy head?
I got nominated while I was a member at what used to be known as: Questions' Bank.

Sample (3): selective translation (School B- Teacher Mariam)



Nomination – leadership appointment **leadership structure**

How do you manage between all these duties? We had to organize the timetable in a way that allows me to be free in during first period everyday so I can compel to my duties as مراقبة. I was nominated to this position by the headteacher with no official appointment. Although we collaborate a lot, I am also the appointed assistant for رائدة النشاط because I like to be

6 School B

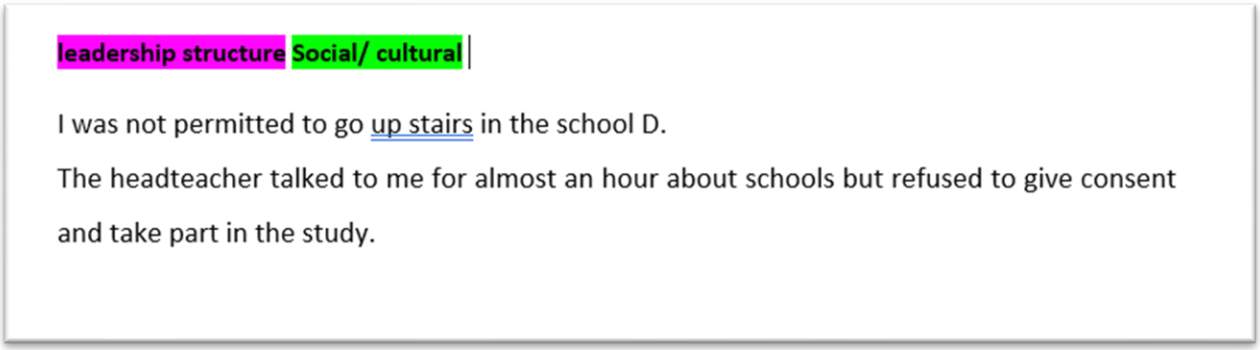
proactive and discuss ideas and give suggestions for improvement wherever possible. I also like to work voluntarily and bring about new activities for students. I incorporate implemented activities to most of my lessons and in two weeks time we have one of those activates presented in an exhibition for upper elementary grades.

Delegation

Yes, I can practice delegation, I just do not recall a time when I needed to.

Social/ cultural

Sample (4): observation note (School D)

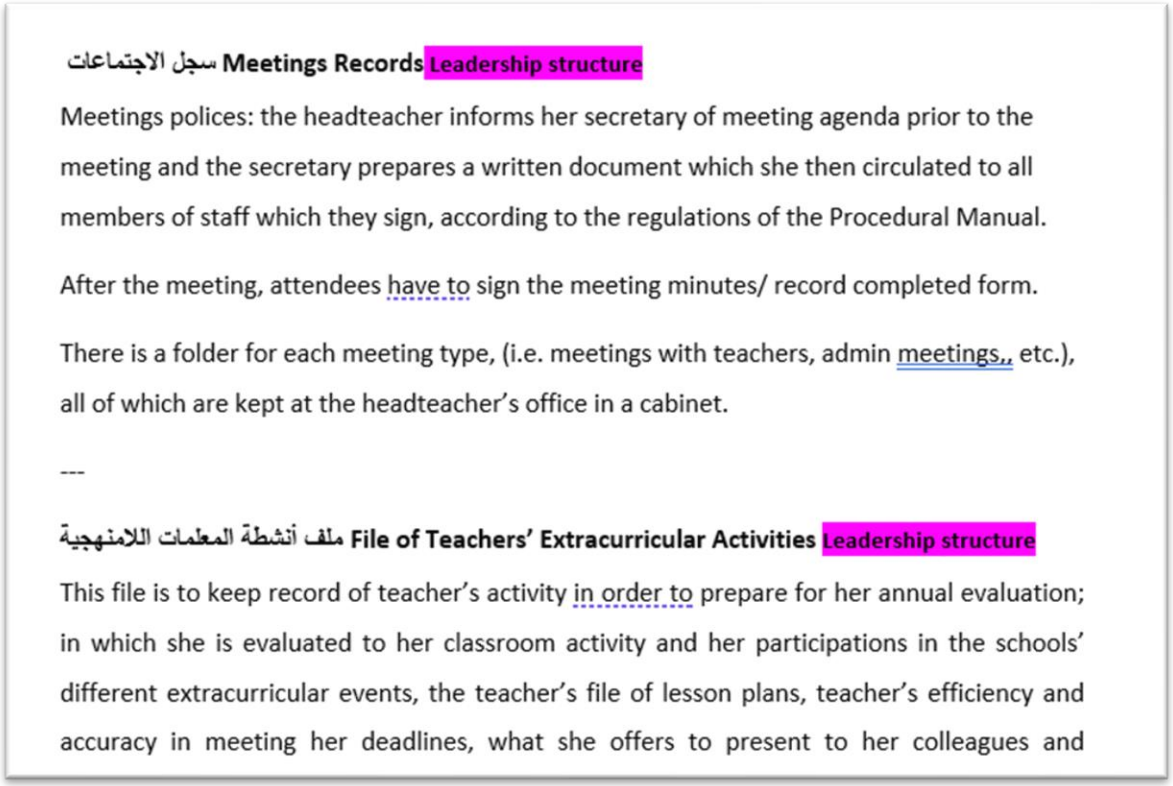


leadership structure **Social/ cultural**

I was not permitted to go up stairs in the school D.

The headteacher talked to me for almost an hour about schools but refused to give consent and take part in the study.

Sample (5): documentary analysis, a description of a document (meeting record from school A)



سجل الاجتماعات **Meetings Records** Leadership structure

Meetings polices: the headteacher informs her secretary of meeting agenda prior to the meeting and the secretary prepares a written document which she then circulated to all members of staff which they sign, according to the regulations of the Procedural Manual.

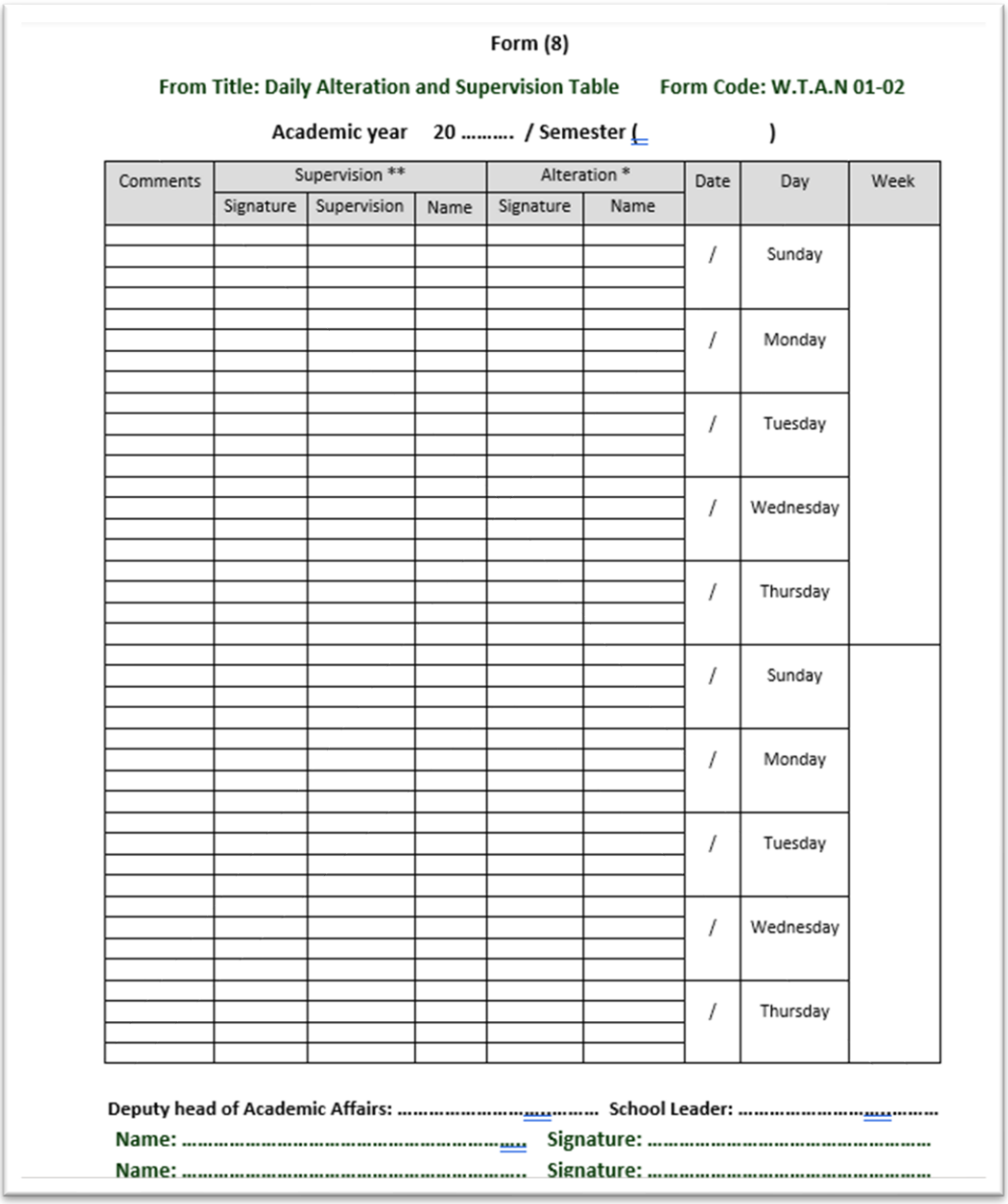
After the meeting, attendees have to sign the meeting minutes/ record completed form.

There is a folder for each meeting type, (i.e. meetings with teachers, admin meetings,, etc.), all of which are kept at the headteacher's office in a cabinet.

ملف أنشطة المعلمات اللامنهجية **File of Teachers' Extracurricular Activities** Leadership structure

This file is to keep record of teacher's activity in order to prepare for her annual evaluation; in which she is evaluated to her classroom activity and her participations in the schools' different extracurricular events, the teacher's file of lesson plans, teacher's efficiency and accuracy in meeting her deadlines, what she offers to present to her colleagues and

Sample (6): documentary analysis, a sample form that has been extracted from the Procedural Manual (TPM, 2019: 8-9) and then translated from Arabic to English. (p.s.: at a stage of the data analysis the form was translated as it seemed relevant, yet it was not included in the final version of the thesis)



Form (8)

From Title: Daily Alteration and Supervision Table **Form Code: W.T.A.N 01-02**

Academic year 20 ..... / Semester ( )

Comments	Supervision **			Alteration *		Date	Day	Week
	Signature	Supervision	Name	Signature	Name			
						/	Sunday	
						/	Monday	
						/	Tuesday	
						/	Wednesday	
						/	Thursday	
						/	Sunday	
						/	Monday	
						/	Tuesday	
						/	Wednesday	
						/	Thursday	

Deputy head of Academic Affairs: ..... School Leader: .....

Name: ..... Signature: .....

Name: ..... Signature: .....

Ethics and Ethical Approaches

Most ethical issues in research relate to participant consent, avoiding harm, confidentiality and anonymity. Hammersley and Traianou (2012: 2-3) refer to ethical principles as 'minimising harm, respecting autonomy, protecting privacy, offering reciprocity, treating people equitably'. The researcher sought voluntary informed consent (Gardner, 2011) from all participants. The researcher explained that participation is voluntary, following full information about the research aims and procedures, and participants were advised of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, without any consequences. This included providing all participants with a consent form and information sheet in which the details of the researcher, the supervisor, and the school's ethical department, were included (Gardner, 2011; Hammersley and Traianou, 2012). Participants were also assured that all necessary actions would be taken to ensure participants' confidentiality, anonymity and non-traceability. All necessary steps were also taken to minimise any discomfort participants may experience during the research process (Gardner, 2011: 7), and to take precautions to avoid participants' harm (physical and psychological).

Privacy in research projects is a sensitive topic, therefore the researcher abided by the Data Protection Act (1998) (Dale, 2005; Gardner, 2011: 7- 8). This procedure was superseded by the General Data Protection Regulation Compliance (GDPR) which became enforceable from May 2018. All data (written or recorded) were stored and kept safe by the researcher in a locked desk and password protected computer, to protect the identity, and to assure the anonymity of all participants and participating bodies (i.e.: schools). Moreover, apart from partial disclosure of the data between the researcher and her supervisors, that include electronic and hard copies, data were not shared with another party.

As this research is taking place within an academic institution within the UK, the researcher is obliged to follow the BERA guidelines (Gardner, 2011; Furlong, 2004), and the University of Nottingham's code of research conduct and research ethics

(The research committee, 2010). The latter involved gaining approval after submitting a satisfactory Statement of Research Ethics form, participant consent form and information sheet.

In addition to the procedures described above, the researcher was obliged to obtain consent from different Saudi bodies at various stages of the project. First, the researcher provided an official letter issued by the supervisor from the University of Nottingham, addressed to the Saudi Ministry of Education. This letter offered information about the research aims, question, duration, and the time required for field work.

After gaining consent from the Ministry of Education, the researcher obtained school-level consent. In the private sector, heads and/or members of the school's board of trustees are the gatekeepers. The researcher sought their consent first, before approaching the potential individual participants within the school. In public schools, following Ministry approval, the only consent required was from the participants within each school.

Credibility, Validity and Triangulation

According to Bryman (2012), reliability is more connected with quantitative research, as it deals with the stability of the measuring tools. This project seeks to assess the enactment of leadership in private and public schools in Saudi Arabia with no intention to generate generalizable findings outside the identified context for this project. However, the researcher applied the same method in all the studied cases to confirm the reliability of the applied methods (Bush, 2012). Bryman (2012: 69) argues that, in case study research, reliability is difficult to achieve, stating that reliability, validity and replicability depend in large part on how far the researcher feels that they are appropriate for the evaluation of' the case study project. Likewise, Maxwell (2002: 40) contends, '[a]ny account of validity in qualitative research, in order to be productive, should begin with an understanding of how

qualitative researchers actually think about validity'. For this research, the four case studies all involved a 'multi-methods approach' (Bush, 2012: 85).

The application of a multi-methods approach should help to overcome any issues of internal validity. Internal validity (Yin, 2014: 47) is concerned with 'the extent [to which the] research findings accurately represent the phenomenon' (Bush, 2012: 82). Bush (2012) argues, quoting Cohen and Manion (1994), that if one research method fails to fully describe a phenomenon, applying another method might help to fill the gaps. The researcher conducted interviews, as well as recording observations through field notes, and examining official Ministry documents. Bush (2012: 84) regards this as 'comparing many sources of evidence in order to determine the accuracy of information or phenomenon'.

The other type of validity is external, which deals with the generalizability of the findings to a wider population (Bush, 2012). The researcher's multiple case study design allows for 'fuzzy generalisation' (Bassey, 1999), leading to analytical, but not statistical, generalisations (Yin, 2014: 21). As discussed earlier, however, and because of the nature of this case study research, the intention is not to generalise the findings. However, the findings from these multiple case studies 'are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations' (Yin, 2014: 21), and thus they are replicable if another researcher conducts the same study in a similar setting.

When discussing validity in observations, Morrison (2012: 211) views the research 'as process and product' between the researcher and the collected data, and so it is up to the researcher to make an account of his/ her data which then could '[claim] transferability and/ or generalizability' (ibid).

As the researcher is bilingual, and since Arabic is the official language in the case study schools, all data were gathered in Arabic and then the researcher selectively translated the transcripts into English. To overcome this language barrier, and to

ensure the validity of the collected data, the researcher used a dictionary and also examined official documents published in English by the Ministry of Education.

To enhance validity, the researcher used methodological triangulation (Merriam, 1985: 208) and respondent triangulation (Bush, 2011). The employment of different research methods enabled methodological triangulation and the inclusion of different participants from across the hierarchy allowed for respondent triangulation.

Personal Reflections on the Data Collection Process

One aspect of my experience with the participants from the four case study schools, and I assume it is socially and culturally constrained, relates to the level of understanding and acceptance shown by the participants towards me, a complete stranger. The sort of relationship required depends on trust. Despite the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality, supported by the participants' information sheet, I was not allowed to photocopy documents in schools A and B, and the headteacher of school D did not allow me to take pictures of the displayed organisational structure of the school. The culture of researchers going to schools, and the chance given to teachers to share their experiences, is not common in Saudi schools, at least not until recently. However, my pre-research expectations did not match the practice. For example, the assumption was that, because of the social and cultural differences between Jeddah and AlMadinah, the schools in Jeddah would be more open to sharing than those in AlMadinah. However, the headteachers of both public schools (A and C) were very welcoming and cooperative and offered to show me any document I asked for. The headteacher of school C in AlMadinah, in particular, was very open and she wanted her voice to be heard. She also led me to her office, left me there with all the documents and gave me permission to take a photo of the organisational structure (see figure 6.2, page: 152).

Research Limitations

This research is a qualitative case study and it is subject to certain methodological limitations. From an epistemological stance, generalisations were not sought (Hammersley, 2012). However, Cohen et al. (2011: 17) argue that qualitative research, under the interpretive paradigm, tend to have distinguishing features, including but not limited to: the behaviour of the participant, the effects of the context and that events, contexts and situations are interpreted by people based on their different perspectives.

By examining the enactment of leadership in the participating schools, the researcher sought, not to make generalisations but rather to report her findings from the data collected to provides some insight into the enactment of school leadership in two cities of Saudi Arabia. Ahmed (2008: 69-70) claims that qualitative research, and particularly case study research '[t]he result does not allow inductive generalisation, because it is connected to the units of analysis'. The findings from this study are not to be used to draw conclusions or make generalisations about all primary schools located in the Western region of Saudi Arabia, as Boyko (2013: 645) argues:

> Effective observational research must recognize the potential for bias and attempt to minimize it in both the design and analysis, as well as accurately describing limitations of these data and the implications for study validity in reports of results (Boyko, 2013: 645).

Another limitation of this research is linked to issues with sampling the participants across the four case study schools (see sampling the participants section on page: 9 for the initial sampling plan). To elaborate, there are three headteachers participating in this research out of potential four. Also, the intention was to achieve a teacher and administration ratio from each school of 1:1 (e.g.: 4 admin members of staff, including the headteacher, and 4 teachers). In schools A and B, this worked out as planned, with a total number of 8 teachers and 8 admin staff from both schools (details of the participants are presented in chapters Four and

Five, pages: 122 and 122 respectively). However, in schools C and D, and because contextual variables, the number of participants was 2 teachers and 4 admin staff from school C and 4 teachers and 1 admin staff from school D (details of the participants are presented in chapters Six and Seven, pages: 148 and 171 respectively).

Time constraints were a consideration during the data collection period. Since data was collected near the student assessment period, the researcher did not could not spend more than a week in each school. If she had been allowed to spend more time at every school, to observe the participants in action, for instance, to attend meetings or to see the interaction between the admin and the teaching staff, additional data could have been collected.

Overview

This study employed a multiple case study design for data collection. It used non-probability purposive sampling and stratified sampling for girls' primary schools to select the cases, and non-probability purposive sampling to choose the participants for the study. The main aspects of the research design included utilising semi-structured interviews, limited application of observations and documentary analysis of the school's documents and those from the Ministry of Education. Using these three research tools enabled methodological triangulation. Respondent triangulation was achieved through including participants from across the school's leadership hierarchy, i.e.: headteachers, middle managers and teachers. Observations were unstructured and spontaneous, whenever the opportunity presented itself. The documentary analysis was mainly used to compare school-based documents with those designed by the Ministry of Education and to cross-check with other data sources.

The next four chapters (4, 5, 6, and 7) present the data from the case study schools.

CHAPTER FOUR CASE STUDY ONE: SCHOOL A

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the first case study school (school A). An integrated thematic approach is employed in presenting the data. The data sets used to develop the chapter are constructed from semi-structured interviews, the researcher's targeted observations of interviewees in action, the researcher's field notes, and documentary analysis of Ministry of Education documents, and school documents, including the meetings' record folder and the teachers' extra curricula activities folder.

The chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section presents the school's profile, which includes basic information about the school, including numbers of staff and students. This is followed by a section that describes the external and internal contexts of the school. Third, the research participants and their roles within the school are presented. Finally, and most important, is the discussion of the themes arising from the collected data. The emerging themes are leadership structure and roles, leadership models, delegation and accountability, authority and perceived authority, leadership and the leadership and management team, social norms, Saudi culture and traditions, and leadership enactment. A concluding section provides an overview of my overall experience in school A, and the implications of the data collected from the case study school, linked to the research questions and aims.

School A Participants

There were eight main participants in this research study, all of whom were interviewed and three were also observed in action; those are the headteacher, deputy head of academic affairs, and a management assistant. In addition, I made some field notes, which were recorded almost contemporaneously. Table 4.1 shows

the eight participants with their positions, duties and their pseudonyms used throughout the chapter.

	Participant	Description	Reference
1	Headteacher	She has been the headteacher in this primary school for the past 16 years.	Ms. Amal
2	Deputy head of academic affairs	She collaborates with two other deputy heads. She has 15 years experience; nine years in teaching and six years in management.	Ms. Asma
3	Management assistant	Responsible for recording and documenting staff and teachers' attendance and profile updates at the Ministry of Education's Portal. She reports to the deputy head of administrative affairs. Have 13 years of experience.	Ms. Areej
4	Management assistant	Her duties include school scout team and school building maintenance. She reports to the deputy head of school affairs. Have 8 years of experience in management.	Ms. Arwa
5	Geography teacher	A teacher for 30 years and was an acting deputy head of administrative affairs for the past three years.	Ms. Alaa
6	Arabic language teacher	Arabic language teacher for grade six for 21 years and the head of the internal audit team, she reports to the deputy head of administrative affairs.	Ms. Aseel
7	First grade teacher	First grade teacher (teaches Arabic language, math and science to first grade) for 15 years and a member of the internal audit team. Reports to Ms. Aseel.	Ms. Afnan
8	Social sciences teacher	Teaches social sciences to upper primary (grades 4, 5, &6) for 23 years and gives internal training for the school staff and sometimes outside teachers. She was awarded the Ideal Teacher Award for her outstanding teaching skills and proactivity.	Ms. Amany

Table 4. 1: Case study One: School (A) Participants

School Profile

My data collection journey started with School A, which is a girls' public primary school in Jeddah. This is also my first experience of primary public schools in Saudi Arabia. In general, public schools do not tend to have a good reputation but not this one, and after the time the researcher spent interacting with the school staff and head, they appear to be doing well. Factors such as the size of the school, the number of students, and the time of my visit, which was near the evaluation period for students, make the school a challenging environment for a headteacher to lead and manage.

The school is a public primary school located in North Jeddah and physically it is reasonably close to the General Education office in North Jeddah (GEDNJ), as they are only three streets away from one another. I wonder if this closeness could explain the school's good reputation, or is this just a coincidence. There are 607 students occupying 18 classrooms, from grades 1 to 6. The total number of staff in the school is 52, 36 of whom are teachers. According to the GEDNJ, this is considered to be a large primary school.

The headteacher, who even though I could not contact her before my visit to the school, seemed ready, and waiting for my visit. She informed me that she received an official email from the GEDNJ notifying her of my study and of my visit. The head seemed proud of her school and staff and talked to me about how collaborative they are. She was willing to share her experience and school documents, with no objections or limitations. I was invited to take notes as I wished but I was not allowed to photocopy any of these documents. However, both The Regulatory Manual and The Procedural Manual, which are published by The Ministry of Education for all General Education Schools, are used as part of the documentary analysis for this study.

As described in the opening sections of The Regulatory Manual, and The Procedural Manual, these documents are significant for schools to run their day to day routines

as well as guide them towards the best practice in accidental or improbable situations (Regulatory Manual, 3). They also play a role to stabilise and organize the operations and procedures within the school, to achieve the school's desired goals. Moreover, according to the Regulatory Manual, organizing the school procedures 'contributes to the distribution of responsibilities and tasks to activate and upgrade the capabilities of the school staff to achieve the vision and mission of the school'.

In more detail, the substantive role of The Regulatory Manual is:

> [that it is] a guide that explains the organizational relationships between the human elements in a school and identifies organizational links and relationships between them through organizational charts. It also identifies all responsibilities at the school and helps to clarify the goals and tasks of the various organizational elements within the school. Moreover, it introduces the employees of the school to the tasks assigned to them and contributes to removing the overlap in functional tasks between the various school elements. In addition, the Regulatory Manual specifies the responsibilities in a school and provides a basis for follow-up procedures and performance monitoring. (Regulatory Manual, 3)

The Procedural Manual is a collection of forms which are divided into chapters according to the name and nature of the procedure. In each form, the following information is provided in table format: the sequence, name, code and goal of the procedure, the work area, the related documents needed and used for documentation purposes, and then the person in-charge and a detailed description of the action.

Participants in these schools found these manuals to be helpful to give them a better understanding of their roles, what is expected from them, and their daily duties and responsibilities in the school. One example is form 4.1: Admission and Registration Procedure (see appendix). As Ms. Amal, the headteacher says 'the regulatory manual made the work more systematic, which resulted in a more

clarified and easier job to run a school'. Ms. Asma adds that 'those manuals made the work more systematic and gave each staff member a value [through stating their job descriptions and duties]. Although both the headteacher and deputy head seem satisfied with the regulatory and procedural manuals, the use of such documents in centralised systems seems to promote role taking, not role making (Hall 1997).

School Context

External context

The school is located in the northern region of the city of Jeddah. The building is located at a corner, with two street views, one of which is a main road in the neighbourhood. During rush hours, the school becomes less accessible. In terms of socioeconomic factors, even though this location is considered to be one of the main areas in north Jeddah, the surrounding area is not one of the richest areas in this district. The majority of the people living here are non-nationals and lower middle-class nationals.

Internal context

The internal structure of the school comprises a reasonable size open space (like a front yard) beyond the school's main gate. This leads to a gated entrance before the square building, which is located on three floors. There are several staircases that lead to the upper floors. The leadership team offices are located on the ground floor; these include the headteacher's office, two deputy heads' offices and all the management assistant staff. This location is argued to be suitable for easy access for all school visitors specifically the Ministry's official representatives and mothers. The ground floor also has a cafeteria and an indoor space plus a science lab, an art room, a kitchen and a number of storage rooms and toilets. The other two floors have classrooms, teachers' rooms, cleaners' sections, toilets, a kitchenette and a

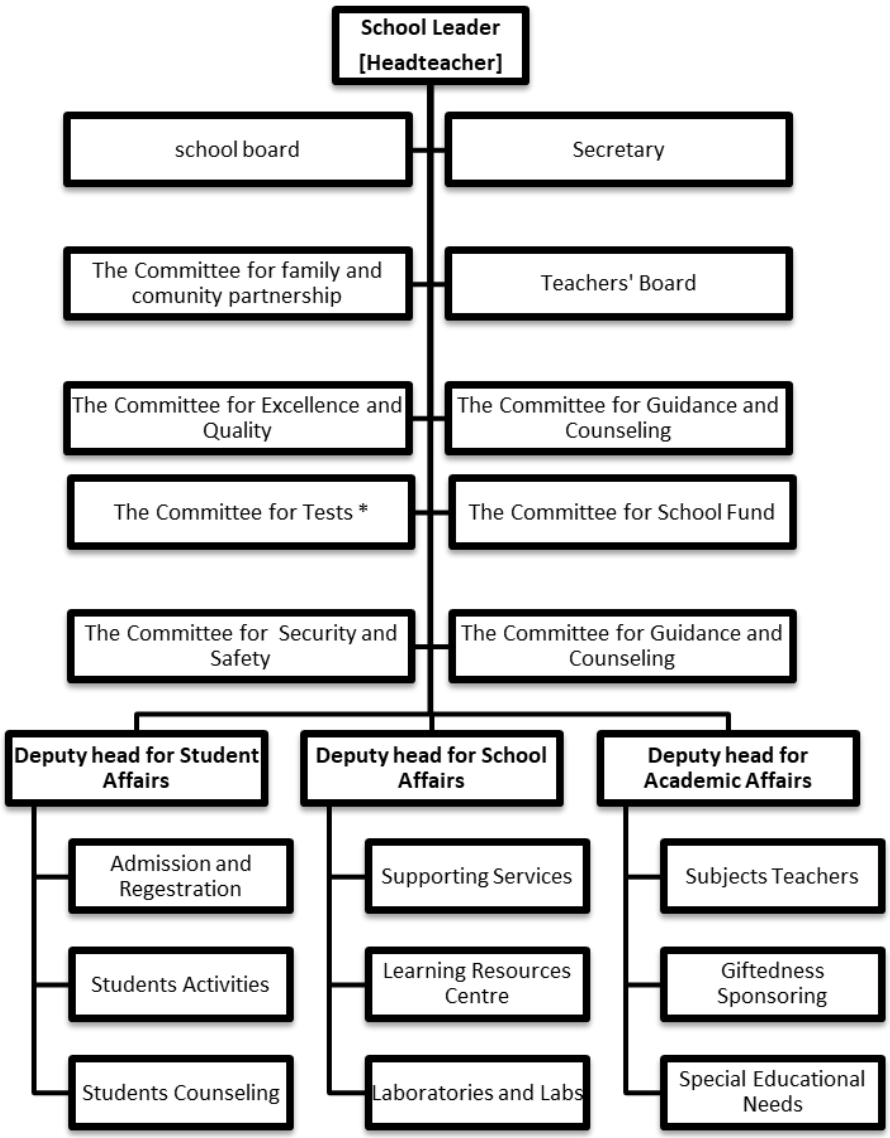
management office. The office of the deputy head of academic affairs is located on the second floor, presumably to be closer to teachers and students.

Considering the size of the school, and the few cleaners I observed, the school premises are very clean and neat. They have posters all over the building, some of which relate to student work and projects while others are signboards about various topics such as manners and behaviour. One unpleasant observation was a mosquito issue. There were a large number of mosquitoes everywhere, which the school head had reported to the office to solve, as it was caused by empty terraced land next to the school which was used to dump building waste, so as the researcher observed only one empty classroom which I was invited to enter while I was chatting with Ms. Amany, a teacher who was awarded the GEDNJ's Annual Ideal Teacher Award for her outstanding teaching skills and proactivity. She teaches social sciences to upper primary (grades 4, 5, &6) and gives internal training for the school staff and sometimes outside teachers.

The classroom door has a glass section, presumably for observation purposes. The classroom is a rectangular shaped room with two white boards hanging on the front wall beside a small cabinet. The desks are arranged in six columns in the following pattern: one desk – space – two desks – space – two desks – space – one desk, to fit forty students. Parallel to the door there is a teacher's small desk with a chair. One wall has four horizontal tilt-like windows; while the other, as well as the back wall, have a number of posters.

Leadership Structure and Roles

The first emerging theme from the data is leadership structure and leadership roles. This school follows the structure required by the MoE. According to the Regulatory Manual, if a school has a headteacher and three deputy heads and is a large school, the leadership structure of the school should follow the chart below. This chart is provided at the Regulatory Manual (MoE, 1437H: 7), figure 4.1 above is translated version of it.



*Excluded from application at the Primary schools of General Education Schools.

Figure 4. 1: Organizational Chart of School A.

This school structure is confirmed by the headteacher, Ms. Amal, who says that 'all roles [required by the Ministry] are fulfilled. We have no shortage in staff this year'. The head also explains the dynamics of this structure. 'All formal orders come through me to the three deputy heads and then they take it to their teams. However, centralization does not exist as it used to be. Previously, all teacher-related circulars had to come from me in a written form and teachers had to sign

for confirmation of notification. [But] this has changed' and either the deputy head of academic affairs or another deputy head (depending on the task) informs teachers and other staff members about the related rule or modifications in legislation. The Regulatory Manual, published by the Ministry of Education, confirms Ms. Amal's explanation. If the school has a headteacher and three deputy heads, as at school A, the duties are spread, and the responsibilities are shared.

Ms. Amany explains that the 'the educational system has changed' because 'now the teacher's involvement in management tasks is part of the teacher's annual assessment and management and leadership are no longer confined to heads and deputy heads. It is necessary for the teacher to get involved in administrative committees' within the school. She adds that the way these committees are formed when 'Ms. Asma (the deputy head of academic affairs) delegate some duties to teachers who then team up with her to complete these tasks'. Ms. Areej, a management assistant who is responsible for staff members' records and attendance, notes a change in her role and relationships, stating that 'I now work directly with the deputy head of administrative affairs' which is different from how she used to operate where she needed to go to the headteacher. She adds that 'however, the headteacher still has an essential role'.

Ms. Afnan and Ms. Asma gave the impression that they should not question the leadership structure of the school. Moreover, Ms. Alaa, who used to be an acting deputy head, as well as Ms. Aseel, who is the head of the internal audit team, broadly accepted the school's leadership organization with no further comments. Ms. Arwa just said that 'it's alright, interactions are smooth'.

It is notable to see how the eight participants had one of two responses when asked about the leadership structure of the school. One response was to accept it without further comments (i.e.: Ms. Afnan, Ms. Asma, Ms. Alaa, Ms. Aseel and Ms. Arwa) and the other was to justify it or provide an explanation (i.e.: Ms. Amal, Ms. Amany and Ms. Areej).

What was significant about these responses is that no participant seemed to question the leadership structure and the spread of roles within the school, nor how it is defined by the Ministry of Education. This may be explained by sociocultural factors, as all the participants come from the Saudi culture which tends to discourage questioning of the applied practices within centralized governmental systems such as education. Alternatively, this may be related to the substantial experience of all participants (all of them have more than 10 years experience, except Ms. Arwa, who has eight years) in education and that they believe that this is the best way to run the school.

Leadership Model

Cooperation and collaboration are the two words all eight participants used to describe the leadership style within their circle of interaction in the school. For example, one of the school management teams is the internal audit team. According to the Procedural Manual, the duties of this audit team are focused on making sure that all procedures followed in the application of internal quality school rules are applied systematically to all school functions. Ms. Afnan says the collaboration of the headship team in her school was the reason behind her acceptance to join the internal audit team. Similarly, Ms. Arwa, who is in charge of school maintenance and cleanliness, states that 'the team is three members who work collaboratively'.

In addition, Ms. Aseel, the Arabic language teacher, and the head of the internal audit team, replied to the question about whether the leadership in the team she leads is shared or distributed by explaining that the nature of the role played by the audit team is that '[it is] more like a follow up job that we do more than leading people' but within the team 'we [the team members] cooperate and collaborate a lot'. Similarly, Ms. Amany stressed how the change in the educational system allows the teacher to get more involved in the leadership and management tasks within

the school even if that means joining one of the school management teams. Ms. Alaa, formerly, the acting deputy head for administrative affairs, recalls that 'there was cooperation' between her and other staff members. Ms. Areej's only reflection about the leadership model implemented within the school is that it 'applies what's in the regulatory manual'.

The term 'distributed leadership', as well as sharing leadership tasks and responsibilities, was mentioned by the head, Ms. Amal: 'Because the headship of the school is commonly shared at most, and distributed somewhat, and because all deputy heads collaborate amongst themselves, things go smoothly even during my absence'. In addition, Ms. Asma, the deputy head of academic affairs, also refers to distributed and shared leadership, stating that 'school leadership is distributed in the distribution of tasks and it is shared in the way that every member of staff collaborates for the benefit of the school.

Delegation and Accountability

Accountability for the work, and the responsibility embedded with it, were the main reasons why most participants regarded delegation a very difficult practice. For example, Ms. Areej stresses that the confidentiality of the records she keeps on teachers and how that makes it hard to delegate. 'No, I cannot delegate. Most of my work is online with a username and a password so it is very critical. If necessary, I can check it from home once needed. I rarely give my login details to the headteacher.' In the same way, Ms. Alaa adds that 'when I was an acting deputy head I could not delegate any of the tasks because of the nature of its sensitivity and the consequences'. Moreover, Ms. Arwa claims that she has never needed to delegate.

I also asked team members about delegation to see if their replies are similar to, or different from, those of their supervisors. Upwards delegation was mentioned by Ms. Afnan, who replied that 'yes, I can delegate some tasks to my supervisor or a

colleague'. She regards this as 'a form of collaboration'. Ms. Aseel, who works as the head of the internal audit team, describes how delegation is done within her team:

> Honestly, we cooperate and collaborate a lot so we do not really need to delegate, neither me nor any of my team. I tend to check with the person before and after every task to avoid stress and to help teachers meet their deadlines… . We, in the team, develop a plan of our work and let everyone know when to expect us. Sometimes we agree to postpone some tasks but that has to be agreed upon with me first.

In contrast, the two most senior staff, Ms. Amal and Ms. Asma, agreed that they do delegate some of the tasks. The former states that 'it is done after an agreement between me and the three deputy heads', while the latter says that 'mostly I don't need to delegate any of my duties, however, when I have to; the criteria I follow in the selection [of the person] is accuracy and the speed of having the job done'. Ms. Amany confirms that Ms. Asma sometimes tends to delegate: 'Now Ms. Asma delegate some duties to teachers who then team up with her to complete these tasks'.

This is somewhat supported by the Ministry of Education's Regulatory Manual which seems to allow some scope for delegation, even though the Ministry's Procedural Manual specifies who does what for most duties. Form 4.3, from the Procedural Manual, this form is a table of the Daily Alteration and Supervisions. It appears to provide some scope for delegation by asking to have the form signed by either the school leader (as referred to the headteacher in the form) or the deputy head of academic affairs. However, in the event of the headteacher's absence, the deputy head of academic affairs substitutes her and one signature is considered to be sufficient. The same applies if the deputy head is not present. In this case, her delegate, who might be different depending on the task, is the one responsible for signing the form.

The headteacher claims that the leadership practices are shared and distributed in her school. This may seem to contradict what other participants are saying about delegation, for example Ms Alaa, Ms. Arwa and Ms. Areej. This may be because staff members with less managerial experience (such as Ms. Aseel and Ms. Alaa) tend to treat their jobs with more confidentiality. They may also be confusing delegating the task and delegating the authority, in other words the nature of delegation (Bush, 2011; Gunter et al., 2013), which may make them fear others taking credit for their own work. As a result, they practice no delegation or it appears to them that there is no room for delegation. In contrast, Ms. Amal and Ms. Asma, the two most senior people in the school, practice delegation as part of their exercise of power, which seems to justify their description of the school's leadership model as distributed and shared leadership.

Authority and Perceived Authority

In the discussion of authority and how it is perceived, the participants where asked about how others perceive them in their assigned responsibilities. Seven out of eight interviewees responded positively about how others perceive their authority, whether or not they have an official appointment. Ms. Afnan, for example, says that 'everyone accepted my supervisory role whether they are in a higher or lower position than myself'. She explained that 'the goal is to improve the level of services provided by the school'. Moreover, the headteacher's, Ms. Amal's, response to how others perceive her authority was that 'things go smoothly even during my absence'. She thinks that this is because school leadership is 'commonly shared and distributed'. Similarly, Ms. Areej's only comment on how her authority, as a management assistant keeping records of teachers' attendance and absence, is perceived is that 'they see me as an employee doing my job'.

Ms. Amany, who offers training to her colleagues, was asked whether her trainer duties create difficulties between her and her co-workers, and how they perceive her authority. She responds that:

> I speak for our school environment; my colleagues are welcoming, and we agree upon the time they require the training or the workshop or the seminar. They even ask me for a particular teaching strategy to give a workshop in or they ask about classroom management or any other skill or even a form required by ministry but they feel lost filling it correctly and so they seek help.

Ms. Aseel, the Arabic teacher and the head of the internal audit team, comments on how her colleagues perceive her leadership appointment while still being a teacher.

> My colleagues pity me [they feel sorry for me] for the work and responsibilities I have because they acknowledge the hard work of the teacher and they just cannot imagine another responsibility being added to this workload. However, everyone is collaborative with us… as part of my audit tasks, all teachers need to submit a number of forms over the academic year, which are consequently checked by the school's supervisor from the GEDNJ.

She explains that, 'at the end of the day I am a teacher so I feel for my colleagues, and I tend to remind them of their deadlines several times, so no one needs to be reported late to the GEDNJ'.

The one participant who had a different view is Ms. Alaa, who was an acting deputy head in the past three years. She states that, even though 'my role did not affect my relationship with my colleagues, I remember some of them rejected me at first but then they accepted it'. Ms. Alaa thinks this was because she was still a teacher, and an acting deputy head, without an official appointment from the Ministry of Education.

Emerging from two interviews, with the headteacher, Ms. Amal, and the deputy head of academic affairs, Ms. Asma, headteachers' empowerment was discussed, as empowerment might be regarded as one manifestation of authority. Ms. Amal says that 'the headteacher gets to choose the deputy head of academic affairs, as she will be her substitute, as she needs to be more acknowledged and experienced in administrative issues compared to her colleagues'. Moreover, 'all other roles are divided between the teachers and staff members by the head, [the Ministry has no control over it]. I do it with their agreement'. Ms. Asma adds that 'painting the walls [formerly] required permission from the GEDNJ office, this is now handled with the headteacher and the deputy head of school affairs'. The Procedural Manual provides schools with a ready designed form which includes the powers given to headteachers, under the title of: The powers of School Heads.

Participants were asked how they perceive themselves and what it means socially to be working in a school as a teacher, a headteacher, a deputy head, or a management assistant, in other words, what are their views on the cultural perception of their positions. Five out of eight responses were positive (Ms. Asma, Ms. Amal, Ms. Amany, Ms. Alaa and Ms. Afnan), and one had no comments (Ms. Aseel), while the other two participants had more nuanced responses: Ms. Areej says that 'I have faced injustice in my career, I have a college degree and I am paid less than my qualification', but Ms. Arwa's response was 'I always thought I will do something no one else has done before'. The discussion below draws on examples from the interviews.

However, the majority of the interviewees took pride in what they do and regarded teaching and working in schools as an honourable profession and gave comments on how this is reflected culturally. For example, Ms. Asma thinks that 'everyone respects the system' socially, as well as internally within the school. Ms. Arwa's thoughts on how authority is perceived go beyond the school campus to the community. She thinks that working as a management assistant is positive. 'When I introduce myself as a management assistant, it is acceptable socially and [people]

look at [it] in a positive way'. Meanwhile Ms. Amal replies that 'I say I am a headteacher [when I introduce myself] and it is fine'.

Ms. Amany take pride in being a teacher and seems gratified to be providing training sessions and workshops to her colleagues, as she explains:

> I honestly do not see an added value of the titles on the personality, however, socially this is what is required and needed. Still, I am a teacher and a proud teacher even though I give training to my colleagues. I do not need to be called by any other title [like a certified trainer] but a teacher.

Ms. Alaa explains that teaching should not be about what the job is worth because she thinks '[a] teacher has her reputation and cannot be compared to any other profession, especially for those teachers who take teaching out of love not just to receive the salary'. A proud teacher, Ms. Afnan, says that 'I do not see a social need to introduce myself as a teacher and school admin member; I only say I am a teacher'. Ms. Aseel had no comment on this issue, perhaps because she might not have thought about how her job is perceived culturally.

Leadership and the Leadership and Management Team

The researcher sought to establish how and why staff members took on leadership duties, with or without an official appointment. Ms. Amal, who has been a head for sixteen years, recalled her first three years in her early career as a deputy head and explained why she chose to become a head; 'firstly it is a personal desire and then I got nominated by my supervisor'.

Several other participants, including Ms. Asma, Ms. Alaa, Ms. Aseel and Ms. Afnan, state that they were nominated to their current leadership positions or duties. Ms. Asma comments that 'after being a teacher for 9 years, I got nominated to become a deputy head'. However, some of them had other reasons behind accepting these

positions. For example, Ms. Alaa states that her 'respect for the school headship team, and their collaboration, and [her] trust in them' were her inspiration to work as an acting deputy head for three years, while being a teacher, without an official appointment.

Similarly, Ms. Aseel's claims that leadership and management teams in schools are not about the exercise of power, it is the personality of the head and how understanding and collaborative the head is. She says if it was not for her headteacher, she could not have accepted the nomination at first:

> I liked my experience in headship [of the internal audit team], especially that I came to work with a very cooperative team and we tend to exchange experiences. I think, to succeed in a headship role or position, the person needs to be patient, accepting differences and understanding people and their circumstances. Accept your team and help the team to be open to suggestions and propositions from others.

Ms. Amany, who gives training workshops and seminars to her colleagues, adds that:

> I have a principle in life, if the teacher is comfortable with the headship team of a school, this would motivate her to work and put more effort to improve herself and her students. In our school, our headteacher and the deputy heads are a wonderful team and, when I come to school, I feel like home. This honestly makes us willing to give more and more to our students and the school.

Ms. Afnan thinks that the two important things for a successful headship are 'organisation and justice'. She adds that 'the school headship is what encourages teachers and staff members to cooperate. My headteacher is the main motivation for me to join the internal audit team'.

Unlike all the others, Ms. Areej was offered a choice between a teaching position outside Jeddah or a management position inside Jeddah, and she chose to stay in her home town. Ms. Arwa thinks that her personal motivations, and her 'love to improve and develop besides [her] leading personality', are her inspirations to become a management assistant.

In relation to what it takes to become a successful school leader, in a headship position like Ms. Amal and Ms. Asma, or a member of a leadership and management team within the school, like Ms. Aseel and Ms. Afnan, or even cooperating in an administrative task, like Ms. Amany, the majority of the participants used terms such as justice, kindness, loveable, and cooperative, to describe their leaders. Ms. Alaa, after experiencing being a deputy head for three years, says that 'working in a headship position requires someone to be loved by all'. This person has to be 'patient, tolerant, quiet, does not impose authority, and believes that love is earned by good words'.

When Ms. Afnan discussed her inspiration to join the internal audit team, she stated that the headteacher was her main reason to accept her nomination because Ms. Afnan thinks 'she [Ms. Amal] is very outstanding in cooperation and understanding'. Ms. Asma adds other elements to a successful school and leadership team, including 'organization in all of the professional practices within the school' and that, if co-workers do their jobs 'out of love and enjoyment not just because the work is imposed and has to be done,' this could lead to successful leadership. Ms. Arwa adds that 'it is important to be a role model and a leader'.

It may be significant that all participants from the school management team, including Ms. Amal, the headteacher, Ms. Asma, the deputy head of student affairs, and the two management assistants Ms. Areej and Ms. Afnan, have been appointed to their current positions based on nominations from their superiors and senior staff. This also includes the head of the school's internal audit team, Ms. Alaa, who was an acting deputy head as well as a teacher during the past three years.

This suggests that this is a sociocultural issue associated with Saudi public primary schools and is considered as normal practice within the system. My assumption is that, if a teacher has satisfied the required years of relative experience for a management or leadership position, or even if she has the relevant experience to fulfil any position and role in the school, I would expect her to apply for that desired position, of course with the support of her superiors. This support could come in various forms, including a letter of recommendation, that shows the superior's acknowledgment of the teacher's potential.

Ms. Amal, the headteacher, reflects on her experience, stating that:

> Some people don't have personal motivation but what I always say is that the good leader, if she feels that a member of her team has strong leadership skills, she then needs to talk to that person and nominate her and provide her with the support and motivation. So if that nominee is less encouraged or less confident then, with the leader's reinforcement, eventually the former's confidence will grow with time. However, what really matters is that the leader should be sure that this candidate has got what it takes to succeed in the new management or leadership role.

Social Norms, Saudi Culture and Traditions, and Leadership Enactment

The Saudi culture is known for its strong impact on its people and how sometimes it tends to fasten or slow down the implementation of change in Saudi society. In such a conservative community, cultural norms and traditions influence a range of responses and reactions in certain situations. The research participants split into three groups in their views on the impact of traditions and culture on the application and practice of school leadership.

The first group of views on the impact of Saudi culture and traditions on leadership practices in this primary school are those of the school's headteacher (Ms. Amal)

and two teachers (Ms. Afnan and Ms. Amany). All three agree that there are a number of factors which seem to affect the leadership and management of the school, including the society, the type of parents, the school location, and the school sector, whether it is a public or a private school.

Ms. Amal, the headteacher, says that 'mostly parents are respectful to the school and the school administration'. However, she remembers some incidents where she thought that 'parents in south Jeddah [where she used to work before] tend to be more respectful to the school rules than parents in north Jeddah [where she works right now]'. She gives an example of what she experienced with parents in her current school, stating that 'here in our school during assessment periods most of the day is dedicated to the assessment so not much teaching takes place. I remember a student was absent one day during the assessment period and, when she was asked about the reason, her response was that this assessment is not included in the final report and so her mother saw no point in the student coming to school'. When Ms. Amal reflects on her experience in the Northern and Southern regions in Jeddah, the assumption is that the sociocultural status of the people living in those two areas is distinctive.

Ms. Afnan also comments on the impact of parents on leadership practices. 'The majority of parents are acceptable and some of them question if the letters and the certificates of appreciation are coming from the teacher or from the school head'. For some parents, anything that comes from the head has a greater value and meaning when compared to anything that is given by the teacher, so it should be treated more seriously and with respect, because they fear their actions might have consequences. This seems to reflect the Saudi society's tradition of hierarchy and authority. Being a country that is rolled by a monarchy, means that society is used to the practice of power held by the person at the top of the hierarchy, and may believe that they must know better. This is specially found in older parents of students, who have been raised by parents with similar beliefs and ideologies, usually referred to as traditional parents.

Finally, from the first group who believe social factors affect the practice of leadership within a school, is Ms. Amany. She discusses several examples of how public and private schools are different, even if they are located in the same area, North or South Jeddah. She claims that these differences still exist because of social norms and traditions. This includes, but is not limited to, what kind of activities the students are allowed to have in the school. Sports and exercising, field trips, and open days, are all banned by the Ministry of Education in public schools but private schools practice more freedom in offering their students many kinds of sports, trips and events. When I asked about the reasons associated, Ms. Amany responded that:

> To be completely honest, since it is a public school, I wish we have sports outfit for students that includes cotton pants and T-shirts. So in the morning they can practice some activities to help improve their fitness and energise them at the beginning of the day. This is non-existent in public schools. You may also know that wearing pants for girls might be forbidden by parents, and those are likely to refuse allowing their daughters to play sports at school…. This is both caused by parents and regulations, but we have large spaces and we are a rich country, which has a good budget so honestly we should have different kinds of sports in our schools.

She recalls a personal experience with her daughters when they returned home one day all motivated and energized after having a swimming day at their private school, whereas while she was at a first grade's classroom to substitute for an absent teacher, she wished that there was a computer lab to take the students to, or if there was a prepared gym or area where they can run and wear cotton pants instead of their uniforms.

The participants from the second group think that social factors do not have an impact on how the school runs and that there is no difference between parents in different locations in Jeddah. Ms. Asma is from this group and she says 'no honestly I did not observe any difference in the leadership style of the school in the different

social environment I worked between Jeddah and Bahra (which is located in south Jeddah)'. Similarly, Ms. Arwa says that 'there is no difference between parents in north and south Jeddah (where I used to work before). Everyone is keen to benefit their children'. This might suggest the presence of sub-cultures, and one of the aims of this study is to examine the extent to which the socio-economic status could affect the enactment of school leadership and management.

The last group's views of social forces on school leadership are expressed by Ms. Alaa, Ms. Ms. Amany, Ms. Areej and Ms. Aseel whose perspectives focus on teachers' commitment and how cultural issues could affect teachers' performance in the school. Ms. Alaa comments that 'I see some social factors that affect the teacher's commitment to the school like, for instance, in bringing and handing in medical leave reports after a sick leave. The reason usually is because the teacher could not find someone to drop her to the medical center to collect it or even could not convene her father, brother, husband or driver to collect it on her behalf'. Ms. Amany adds that, 'yes, of course our traditions and norms accept and reject some actions and, as a teacher, I get to face some situations where I get lost because I am not ready to face it, nor our society is. For instance, when I have a student whose guardian is her father alone this means I have to have direct contact with the father, which I cannot do honestly. It is very difficult to receive a call from a student's father on my personal cell phone even during working hours'. Ms. Areej approached Saudi culture from a slightly different perspective, concerned mainly with how the traditions of each region could bring the society together, especially through celebrations of specific occasions.

Similarly, in respect of the parental role in students' learning, and how that might have an impact on the practice of school leadership in primary schools, Ms. Aseel thinks that technology is one social factor that cannot be denied. She explains that the onset of technology, and how the society is creating peer pressure on children to own smart phones and devices, had taken away the value behind these devices and even had taken them away from books and reading. She thinks that parents

need to collaborate with teachers to encourage students to use technologies as tools which could help in their learning and do not limit their desires to only owning one of these devices, but rather make them focus on how to incorporate them in their learning. Socially, there is a stereotype about young parents who are keen to have their children own tablets or even smart phones. According to Ms. Aseel, therefore, it is the Saudi citizens' obligation, as well as the teachers', to promote a culture that values the benefit of the device over the idea of its ownership.

Overview

This chapter presents the data from one public primary school (school A) in the city of Jeddah, located in the Western region of Saudi Arabia. The data presented appear to suggest that the leadership structure of school A follows the suggested structure by the Ministry of Education for all schools in similar circumstances; those schools with one headteacher and three deputy heads. The distribution of leadership roles within the school also seems to abide by the Ministry's Procedural and Regulatory Manuals. The participants from School A discussed several types of leadership models, including shared leadership, collaborative and distributed leadership, when they described the applied leadership model within the school. They used terms and phrases such as work collaboratively, collaborate amongst themselves, we cooperate and collaborate a lot, and the school leadership is distributed and shared. They also referred to their daily interactions and practices of leadership, using terms such as collaboration and cooperation. This suggests that the Ministry of Education guidelines promote specific tasks for every individual working in a school, as seen in the discussion of role taking and role making (Hall, 1997), and the significance of both the Procedural and Regulatory Manuals. However, the interactions between the school staff reveal a more collaborative and cooperative school environment in which leadership and management are, to some extent, distributed and shared between senior staff members, who in this school are the headteacher and the three deputy heads.

The data also show that delegation is one of the leadership and management practices in school A, although it seems to be based on personal choice and preference rather than being promoted by the headteacher or the Ministry of Education. Hence, there is a link between the distribution of tasks between senior staff and the exercise of delegation, which is argued to be one form of distributed leadership.

The participants' different views on delegation seem to show a relationship between practicing delegation and the seniority of the fulfilled role, along with the years of experience in school leadership and management positions. The leadership practices within the school seem to be perceived with respect, by the post-holder and her colleagues, with mutual understanding of the assigned roles for each member of staff and the authority that comes with it, as shown in the section discussing leadership and management teams.

Finally, cultural aspects appear to play a major role in informing peoples' interactions, behaviours and openness to rules and regulations. Although there were some contrasting views, the evidence shows the significance of traditions and cultural factors which may not have a direct impact on leadership enactment in schools, but affect the extent to which headteachers can implement new activities in their schools, such as sports, events and open days. Hence, it creates a specific school culture which then becomes the prevailing culture that shapes the school's leadership style.

The hierarchy and centralization in the educational system appear to promote a school culture that reflects the social culture where the person at the top of the hierarchy is assumed to know better, which may inhibit the practice of emergent distributed leadership. This might suggest that the heroic leader model could be associated with hierarchal systems (Bush, 2011: 59-60), such as the centralised Saudi Educational system.

CHAPTER FIVE CASE STUDY REPORT TWO: SCHOOL B

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the case study of the second school (school B). An integrated thematic approach is employed in presenting the data. The data sets used to develop the chapter are constructed from semi-structured interviews, the researcher's targeted observations of interviewees in action, the researcher's field notes, and documentary analysis of the school's documents prepared by the headteacher, which mirror the Ministry of Education documents, including some of the forms used to record teacher training, classroom observation and teachers' attendance records.

The chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section introduces the research participants and their roles within the school. The second section presents the school's profile, which includes basic information about the school, including numbers of staff and students. This is followed by a section that describes the external and internal contexts of the school. Finally, and most important, is the discussion of the themes arising from the collected data. The emerging themes are leadership structure and roles, leadership models, delegation and accountability, authority and perceived authority, leadership and the leadership and management team, social norms, Saudi culture and traditions, and leadership enactment.

A concluding section provides an overview of my overall experience in school B, and the implications of the data collected from this case study school, linked to the research questions and aims.

School B Participants

There were eight participants in this research study, all of whom were interviewed and three were also observed in action; the headteacher, deputy head of academic affairs for lower primary grades, and a management assistant. In addition, the

researcher made some field notes, which were recorded almost contemporaneously. Table 5.1 shows the eight participants with their positions, duties, and their pseudonyms used throughout the chapter.

	Participant	Description	Reference
1	Headteacher	She has 16 years experience, 8 as primary teacher, 2 as academic supervisor for primary grades, and 6 as a head teacher.	Ms. Mona
2	Deputy head of academic affairs for lower primary grades	She collaborates with the deputy head of academic affairs for upper primary grades. She has 22 years experience; 15 years teaching social sciences for primary and secondary grades, and 7 years in management (3 as academic supervisor and 4 as a deputy head of academic affairs).	Ms. Maram
3	Quraan teacher and Religion studies Coordinator and Activity leader	She has 14 years experience of teaching Quraan, two of which she has been a coordinator and an activity leader. She has been awarded The First Teacher Award for two consecutive years by the General Education office in North Jeddah (GEDNJ).	Ms. Malak
4	Management assistant	She has 14 years experience, and holds several responsibilities; headteacher's secretary, clerk, student grades' administration, in-charge of all written communication from/to the (GEDNJ) and the school.	Ms. Manal
5	Social studies teacher	She has 9 years mixed experience of both teaching and being a management assistant. Now she teaches upper primary grades as well as being the appointed assistant for the activity leader (Ms. Malak)	Ms. Mariam
6	First grade teacher	She has 15 years experience of being a first grade teacher for girls - 13 years, and teaching boys in grades 1 and 2 for two years. She reports to the deputy head of academic affairs.	Ms. Meral
7	Student advisor	She has 12 years mixed experience; she started her career as a first grade teacher (for 9 years) then moved to management in the past 3 years.	Ms. Maha
8	Religion studies teacher	She has 5 years experience as a teacher for both upper and lower primary grades. She reports to Ms. Maram and Ms. Malak.	Ms. Marwa

Table 5.1: Case study Two: School (B) Participants

School Profile

Background

School B is the primary school section of a larger private school located in North Jeddah, which is under the supervision of the General Education office in North Jeddah (GEDNJ). Like many private schools in Saudi Arabia, the larger school has two campuses, one for boys and one for girls. The girls' school comprises a nursery and pre-school section, a primary school section, an intermediate school section, and a high school section (the latter two sections are equivalent to a secondary school in the UK), while the boys' school has the same section except for the nursery and pre-school. The two campuses are located about two streets away from one another.

In the girls' schools, each school section has its own headteacher, management team and teachers; however, all schools are run by a single company with one shared senior leadership team. This company specialises in running and managing schools. It has its own supervisors, coordinators, manuals, regulations and forms. Although the company itself, and the work it does in schools, and related documents, are not the focus of this study, it has an impact on how the girls' primary section (school B) is managed. This will be explained in more detail in the leadership structures and roles section below. Some participants referred to the company's internal supervisor, so she features in discussion throughout the chapter. The role of the company, and its supervisors, was significant in revealing how leadership and management are practiced within school B.

School B, the girls' primary section of the larger school, which is the focus of this study, has 400 students occupying 20 classrooms, from grades 1 to 6. The total number of staff in school B is 48, 40 of whom are teachers. According to the GEDNJ, school B is considered to be a large primary school.

School documents and forms

The researcher was invited to look at many school documents, including the Educational Development Folder, and other forms which are used as part of the documentary analysis for this study. These are: teachers' training records, classroom visits, and school development workshops.

In addition to School B's documents, both The Regulatory Manual and The Procedural Manual (the manuals developed by the Ministry of Education) were included in the documentary analysis where applicable. School B uses its own documents (those provided by the company), the headteacher's personally developed forms, and those of the Ministry of Education.

The school's customised documents and forms cover many aspects including, but not limited to, daily routines, teachers' attendance, registration guidelines, and student in-class assessment. School B gained approval from their appointed supervisor from the GEDNJ to use these documents and forms after an evaluation process. The procedure is described by Ms. Mona, the headteacher:

> Because the manuals [Regulatory Manual and The Procedural Manual] have been developed in the past two to three years, and they keep changing, we asked the GEDNJ to use our [own] documents which we have been using for many years now, so the school's appointed supervisor from the GEDNJ looked at all the school's existing documents and forms, evaluated them, compared them to the forms [described or] made available at the Regulatory and Procedural manuals, gave us the time to apply required modifications and then approved them.

The headteacher adds that, 'for other forms, such as teachers' assessment and registration forms, they asked us to continue using the forms made available in the manuals for all future correspondence, but did not ask us to re-do the previous work'. When the researcher asked her if it was beneficial to switch to the Ministry's unified manuals, she replied that 'the manuals are very helpful but I personally like

to make the format of the forms we use in the school by myself, I personalise them by font, colours and paper design. It is just a personal preference'.

Despite assuring her of confidentiality and anonymity, the headteacher declined to let me photocopy the documents or to take a photo of the big pile of folders she had on her rectangular meeting table for midterm revision. She claims that 'these folders resemble treasure to schools and the competition between private schools rests on rather simple but foundation stones such as organization, regulations and forms'. Therefore, the researcher had to take notes of the documents used in this study to facilitate documentary analysis.

School Context

External context

The girls' school campus is located in one of the developed neighbourhoods in the northern region of the city of Jeddah. The streets are relatively wide and there is a rather small grassy playground area in almost every block. The location offers safe and easy access to the school, despite the traffic. Most of the people living in this area are upper middle-class nationals and all houses are villas.

The school has four street views, and the landscape looks like a big X shaped building, with three gates. One gate is for pre-school and primary grades, and one for secondary grades, which are meant to take students quickly to their classes. The third gate is the main entrance for visitors and mothers. Here, there is a reception desk, a school nurse/ clinic facility and a waiting area. Regardless of which gate is used, students and visitors can move from one section to the other within the building.

Internal context

The primary section of the girl's extended school is located on the first and second floors to the right side of the X shaped building (see figure 5. 1).

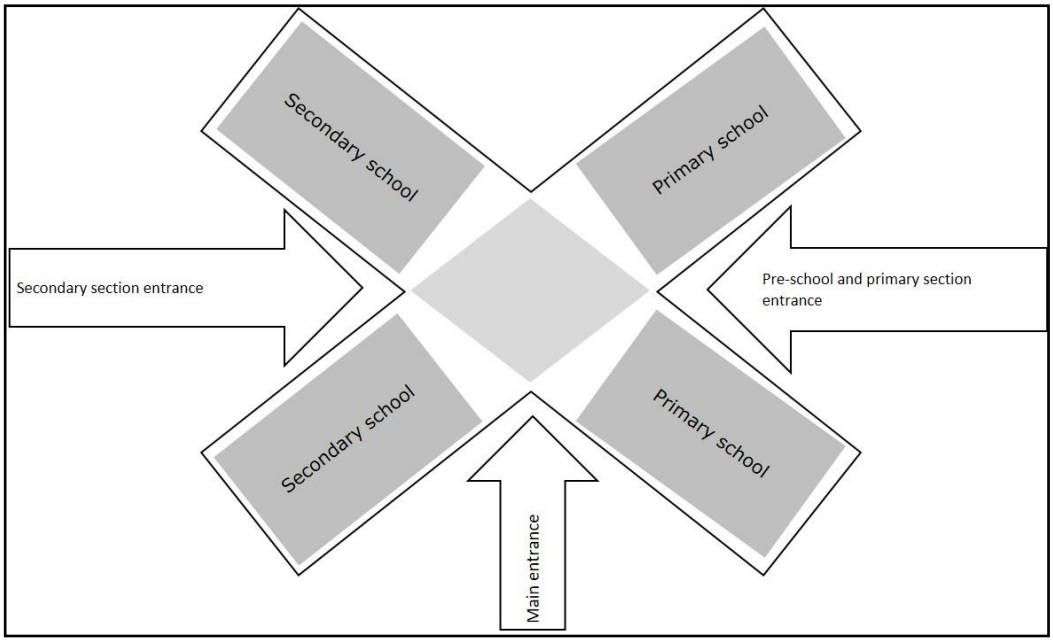


Figure 5. 1: Internal context of school B, within the girls' extended school.

The internal structure of the X shaped school building, from the main entrance, includes a staircase in the middle which takes you directly to the deputy heads' offices located on the first and second floors. Positioning the offices in this way helps the GEDNJ supervisors to reach the leadership and management offices faster, as Ms. Maram, the deputy head of academic affairs for lower primary, explains:

> The way the building and the offices of deputy heads, teachers' and the supervisors' rooms are; so when the school's appointed supervisors from the GEDNJ come for a visit, they do not need to go around the school to conduct all required meetings [and supervisions], but rather, they can reach

almost everyone, except the headteacher (because her office is located on the less noisy side of the school).

There are also other staircases located on either side of the X shaped building, as well as two lifts which give access to all floors. In the first arm on the right side of the school building, the headteacher's office, and several laboratories, are located on the first floor. The first floor of the second arm is where lower primary classrooms, and their teachers' rooms, are located, with an office for the deputy head of academic affairs for lower primary grades, a kitchen, and the primary section library. The second floor comprises upper primary subject rooms, a teachers' room, a resource room, a computer laboratory, language rooms, an art room, a small kitchenette, and an admin section, which includes a number of leadership team offices with the deputy head of academic affairs for upper primary, the student advisor, and other management assistants. On both floors, the admin section and the deputy heads' offices are located near the central area of the X shape (see figure 5. 2).

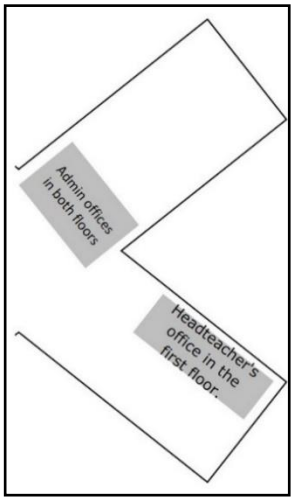


Figure 5. 2: The location of the headteacher's office and the admin offices of school B.

Both first and second floors have student lockers, toilets, and cleaners' sections. To the rear of the ground floor, there is a cafeteria, an indoor playground, and open

space for assembly, with several storage rooms and toilets. The corridors in all floors have bulletin boards with displayed students' work, messages for students and parents, some general advice and statements on collaboration, school rules, and desirable, acceptable, behaviours from students and staff members.

Students in the lower primary grades (grades 1, 2, and 3) have dedicated classrooms in which their lessons are usually held. In contrast, the upper primary students (grades 4, 5, and 6) have dedicated lockers, for student bags and belongings, as their lessons are held in related subject rooms or laboratories.

Each laboratory is equipped with the required materials and facilities. For example, the computer lab has a number of individual PCs, and the robotics lab has special electronic devices and materials. In the subject and language rooms, there are bulletin boards with displays of students' work, and other related posters. All rooms and labs have interactive white boards, made available at an adjustable length, to be easily approached by students.

Leadership Structure and Roles

As discussed in the school profile, there is a company, with a senior management team and staff, who set the school's strategies, implement changes and evaluate the performance of all staff members, including the headteachers. Therefore, the researcher found it useful to divide the discussion on the leadership structure of School B into two sub headings. Firstly, the external organization and leadership structure, which discusses the leadership roles and structure, and to which the headteacher is accountable (see figure 5.3). Secondly, the Internal leadership and organizational structure, which shows the structure and roles within the school (see figure 5.4).

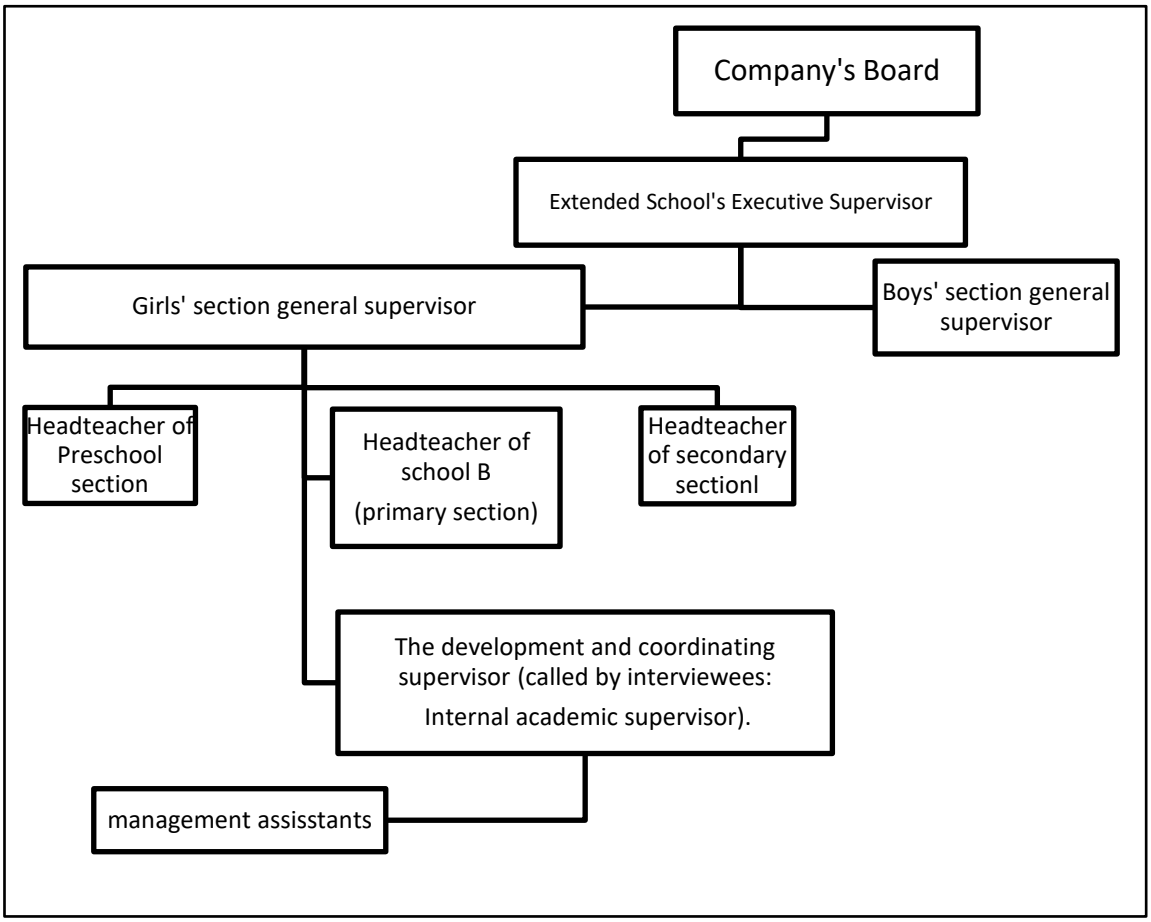


Figure 5. 3: The Organizational Chart of the Education Company personals working in School B, according to Ms. Mona.

External organization and leadership structure

As noted earlier, school B is led and managed by an education company 'working within the Consumer Services Sector Focusing on Education Service' (Decypha, 2017). Figure 5.3 shows the leadership and management structure external to school B. The figure is based on Ms. Mona's, the headteacher's, explanation of the dynamics between school B staff members and the company's team. This leadership structure will be referred to throughout the chapter as the external leadership structure of school B.

Figure 5.3 shows that Ms. Mona, the headteacher, works with, and reports to, different senior leaders within the company. First, she reports to the general supervisor of the girl's section of the extended school, with its three divisions; preschool, primary and secondary. Ms. Mona also reports to is the executive supervisor of the extended schools, who has responsibility for both boys' and girls' sections of the extended school, along with a number of other schools. Ms. Mona

clarifies that both senior leaders have annual meetings with her individually and as a group with the other headteachers of the pre-school and secondary sections. She also meets with the school's general supervisor quite often during the academic year.

The other members shown in figure 5.3 are the development and coordinating supervisor, or the internal academic supervisor, as referred to by the interviewees, and two of the company's management assistants. It is important to note that there is another internal academic supervisor, with management assistants, for the preschool section, as well as in the secondary section, however, since the focus here is the primary section, they are not discussed any further.

As explained by the headteacher, Ms. Mona, school B does not have deputy heads of school affairs, nor a deputy head of student affairs. Therefore, in order to fulfil the duties of those two positions, the internal supervisor from the company coordinates with the current deputy heads of academic affairs and other management assistants in each school section. The internal supervisor is also responsible for keeping and maintaining the company's vision and branding, and for building the school's reputation.

Some of those management assistants help the internal supervisor to take over the responsibilities of the deputy head of school affairs who, according to the Regulatory Manual (pages 4-7), takes care of providing school supplies and supporting services. These essential teaching supplies include tissues and cleaning equipment. The management assistants also follow-up on teachers' development plans and other teaching-related matters.

Ms. Mona, the school's head, notes that the internal supervisor also collaborates with the deputy heads of academic affairs and shares some of their responsibilities, for example evaluating teachers' performance and providing necessary training, covering some of the obligations of the deputy head of student affairs and teachers affairs. The duties of the deputy head of student affairs, according to the Regulatory

Manual (pages 4 -7), includes, but are not limited to, students' activities and advisory services. Therefore, the internal supervisor evaluates staff members' performance, as well as responding to their personal developmental needs. She follows up with subject supervisors from the GEDNJ and attends their meetings with teachers regularly. Moreover, the internal supervisor offers training and workshops for teachers and encourages them to arrange training sessions for each other, as part of providing necessary career development and support for teachers.

Despite all the collaboration and shared responsibilities between the internal academic supervisor and the different staff members in school B, she does not report to the headteacher but rather to the company's general supervisor, just as the headteacher does.

This discussion suggests that the role of the internal academic supervisor within school B is very significant. She seems to be quite involved in the daily operations of the school, while still reporting to the company, but, even though her role might seem parallel to the headteacher's, she does not need to abide by the regulations of the Ministry of Education. Her agency does not extend beyond the company's regulations, while the headteacher's does. The discussion below indicates the role of the headteacher in respect of both the external and internal leadership structures.

Internal organization and leadership structure

As well as the external structure, discussed above, school B also has its own internal structure, with staff accountable to headteacher.

Unlike other comparable private schools, school B has its own unique organizational structure, as shown in figure 5.4. In the Regulatory Manual (pages 6 -7), all schools of a similar size to school B should have three deputy heads (the deputy head of academic affairs, deputy head of school affairs and deputy head of student affairs). However, in school B, there are two deputy heads of academic affairs, and they are the only deputy heads working at the school. According to Ms. Mona, the school

head, those two deputy heads collaborate with the company's internal academic supervisor, and the management assistants, to fulfil the duties of the other deputy heads, as noted earlier. Ms. Mona explains that:

> In our school, we have two deputy heads of academic affairs instead of one, one of them is for upper primary, grades 4, 5 and 6, the other one is for lower primary, grades 1, 2 and 3. They are the only deputy heads we have in our school; therefore, they work with other management assistants.

Ms. Mona explains that the Regulatory Manual states who should cover for whom when a position is not being fulfilled. She elaborates that:

> if a school, for instance, does not have any deputy head, the headteacher should take over her responsibilities and then she is entitled to hire a management assistant and delegate officially some of her duties to be able to fulfil both roles… yet the headteacher is still accountable for all of the management assistant's work.

Subordinate to the deputy heads of academic affairs in the hierarchy are the subject coordinators, such as Ms. Malak. Parallel to the coordinators, there are a number of management assistants, who have various responsibilities, for example, Ms. Manal, who works as the headteacher's secretary and clerk. There are also subject coordinators and teachers. Figure 5.4 combines the external leadership structure of school B (figure 5.3) with the internal leadership structure.

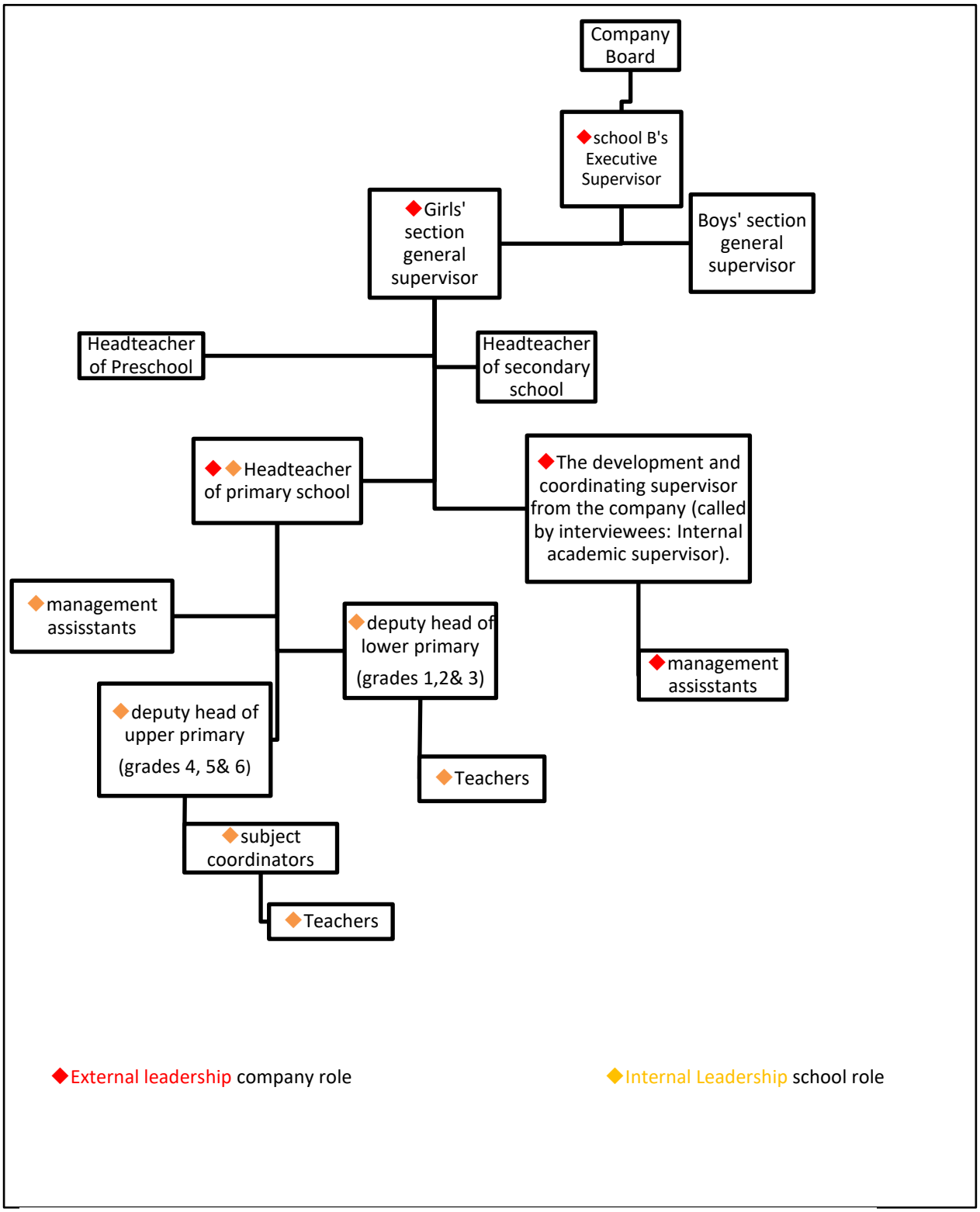


Figure 5. 4: The Organizational Chart of School B (source: Ms. Mona).

In figure 5.4, all the roles marked with a red diamond shape are hired by, and report to, the company and do not interact with the Ministry of Education or the General Education office in North Jeddah (GEDNJ). They also did not take part in the interviews. Those with the green diamond shape are internal roles. They are all teachers and administrative staff, who are hired by the company and report to both the company and the GEDNJ. Eight of these staff members were interviewed for the author's research.

According to Ms. Mona, the headteacher, Ms. Maram, deputy head of academic affairs, and Ms. Meral, a first grade teacher, the school's own leadership structure is based on re-distribution of tasks between different members of staff. For example, instead of having a deputy head of teacher affairs, the responsibilities of this position are fulfilled by the deputy heads of academic affairs and the internal supervisor from the company. Ms. Meral, explains that:

> The deputy heads are in charge of teacher affairs in showing-up leaves and absence and in any in-class student related situation. The internal academic advisor [the internal supervisor from the company] is the one who follows up with our lesson plans, teaching progress and academic performance.

The leadership structure of school B seems to satisfy the research participants within the school, even though it might seem complicated with the different supervisory roles and inter-relationships. For example, Ms. Malak, the religious subjects' coordinator, described the leadership structure as 'workable'. She thinks that 'some schools may apply a leadership structure with so many divisions but, on a daily basis, it is not very applicable, unlike the structure applied here in our school'. She adds that, 'in the religious subjects, I coordinate a team of 13 teachers and, with such a large number, we feel free to discuss issues as a whole group or in smaller ones. Such flexibility is very rewarding for teachers, and for me personally, as the subject coordinator'. This suggests that the leadership structure allows considerable agency for the staff members, especially those involved in both

teaching and leadership roles, which might be harder to achieve with a more formal hierarchical structure.

Ms. Mona, the headteacher, says that she is employed by the company and thus she receives orders from the school's general supervisor in the company, and reports to her, as well as reporting to the Ministry of Education. As noted earlier, this general supervisor is in-charge of the girls' section, and reports to an executive supervisor who has overall responsibility for school B. Ms. Mona adds that, 'despite all these people and positions, all members of the hierarchy . . . are very flexible and understanding'. As school B is part of an extended organisation, all the hiring procedures and policies abide by the company's rules, and the teachers and non-teaching staff need to report to the school's senior leaders while also responding to the regulations of the Ministry of Education. This might suggest that the structure is unwieldy, but Ms. Mona claims that this is not the case and that the work seems straightforward and smooth.

The hierarchical structure of school B is one of its distinctive features. The participants give examples of the interactions between the two structures. Ms. Mona, the school head, says that 'the dynamics of this hierarchy vary':

> The management roles in our school are ranked at three different levels; headteachers and deputy heads, then comes the so called managers but they have different positions, finally comes the management assistants.

Ms. Malak, Quraan teacher and religious studies coordinator, explains the reporting process at the school:

> Although we [teachers] have to report to many people for different reasons, which may be overwhelming for some, yet this structure allows staff members to use their time effectively as well as helping in resolving issues more quickly.

From a teacher's perspective, Ms. Meral, a first grade teacher, comments on the communication process, comparing the past with the present situation:

> Ten years ago all sorts of communication were top-down regardless of the school structure, however, in the recent five years there has been room for two-way communication, and I believe that our current school structure fosters the bottom-up direction especially in teachers' training and workshops.

She adds that:

> Nowadays almost any staff member could offer to give a training session, or lead the implementation of a new teacher developed project, after getting all required approvals from the internal academic advisor.

There are some differences in the views of participants about the leadership structure of school B, linked to their level of experience. For example, Ms. Marwa, a religious studies teacher, with five years' experience, and Ms. Maram, the deputy head of academic affairs for lower primary, with 22 years' experience, offer different views about the structure. Ms. Marwa thinks that, 'before [creating] the subject coordinator position, the work load was so much on the deputy head of academic affairs'. In contrast, Ms. Maram says that:

> Creating the Academic Supervisor position is better for teachers. This way, teachers can get back to the supervisor for any academic matter without the need to go to the head. Back at that time, schools had only one head, and one deputy head, who was in charge of all academic and non-academic matters. Therefore, by creating this position, it becomes much easier for the deputy head and the teachers. Nowadays, it is different though. Now you rarely see the academic supervisor position in schools, instead you expect to find subject coordinators like the case in our school. I believe the school structure applied is very effective.

The other three participants, Ms. Manal, Ms. Mariam and Ms. Maha broadly accepted the leadership structure of the school, and had little to add or to complain about. For example, Ms. Manal, a management assistant, comments that:

> Our school has a very welcoming environment where anyone and everyone can come to me and ask about or discuss with either me or go to the subject coordinator or even the headteacher to talk about any of the school circulars.

According to Ms. Mona, 'the management assistants term is very flexible which is created by the Ministry of Education under which every school could hire as many assistants as needed to help the managers in their duties'. She adds that 'the GEDNJ is flexible with private schools, however, we still have to fulfil four main positions according to their regulations, and these are: the headteacher, deputy heads, student advisor and the activity leader'.

The way that the senior leadership team (the company) places its people within the school's internal leadership structure appears to be working in maintaining the school's standards and in covering for the missing internal roles, such as the deputy heads.

Leadership Model

Because of the nature of the leadership structure in school B, and the enforced re-distribution of tasks amongst different members in the hierarchy, there is a degree of collaboration and cooperation between staff members at different levels and sections, on a daily basis. The unique leadership structure of the school, discussed previously, appeared to lead to a mixture of leadership models being applied.

Between the headteacher and the deputy heads, shared leadership is widely practiced. According to Ms. Maram, the deputy head of academic affairs, a lot of

her current duties were previously part of the headteacher's responsibilities. Ms. Maram explained that the headteacher shared some of her duties in order to prepare her for the headship responsibilities. She adds that, after her appointment as an academic advisor in her previous school, '[she] started to encourage others' to move to leadership positions. She takes her encouragement a step further and provides support and assistance to those who are in the early stages of their careers in management.

The implemented leadership model in school B appears to be flexible. According to Ms. Malak, a teacher, a subject coordinator, and an activity leader, 'having a position like the subject coordinators helps in creating collaboration amongst staff members'. In this way, teachers are encouraged to work together, and discuss subject issues, and perhaps overcome problems and obstacles when sharing their thoughts and concerns'.

Ms. Manal, the headteacher's secretary, adds that the leadership model of school B is reflected in the school's 'very welcoming environment where anyone and everyone can come to [her] and ask about or discuss any of the school's circulars'. Ms. Mariam, a social studies teacher, referred to the leadership model in the school as collaborative, while Ms. Meral, a first grade teacher, believes that 'as a teacher, we collaborate and share ideas and teaching strategies'. She explains how the internal leadership team collaborates with the external leadership team in a way to assure that all teachers have their required training during the school day, without missing any of the school's staff sessions or similar important events. Ms. Meral elaborates that:

> I also believe that the management team cooperates quite often to share some of their managerial duties because, when we [first grade teachers] have a training session, or a meeting or a group session, with the internal academic advisor, there is no headteacher led meetings for all members of staff.

Ms. Maha, the student advisor, had no specific views on the leadership model of school B but Ms. Marwa, a religion studies teacher, explains how the applied leadership model in school B differs from other leadership and management models:

> This is my second year in this school and it is better for everyone as the leadership model allow us to discuss all matters in a friendly environment to improve and develop ourselves as well as our students' academic progress.

She adds that '[she] has seen the difference between two leadership teams here and in her previous school', adding that:

> Here, the school leadership team wants to have creative teachers and thus they invest a lot in them and provide the necessary time and resources to do so. In the other school, however, all they cared about is having the work done.

Ms. Mona claims that her leadership style encourages staff to perceive themselves more positively, to boost their self-confidence and their loyalty to the school. When asked how she manages to give equal opportunities for all voices to be heard, Ms. Mona adds that:

> At the beginning of the year I hold a meeting to get to know my staff, especially with the known level of turn-over in private schools. We call it a welcoming meeting, but to me it is the meeting I get to say all I need from my staff and let them say what they have or want to say. This has been my way since I became a headteacher. I do that at the beginning of each year to say all I want and I give my staff the impression that I accept and have no problem to be open to all their suggestions. It was difficult in the first year but now all of them talk to me and some of them choose to write instead. We got to the point where the new members are encouraged to get involved.

Second, leadership practice also appears to be participative, especially during the meeting held by the headteacher during the induction period every year. This meeting focuses on engaging different staff members in the decision-making process. As we shall see later, Ms. Malak, a Quraan teacher and religious studies coordinator, manages a group of religious studies teachers, she talks about providing chances for colleagues to be heard and engaging all teachers and school staff in a meeting at the beginning of each year.

The practice of leadership in school B seems to be multi-directional. Ms. Mona, the school head, used the word 'collaborate' when she was referring to how she manages many staff, regarded as 'quite a large number for a primary private school with 48 employees, 40 of whom are teachers'.

Overall, the leadership model applied in school B appears to be a unique style that encourages collaboration, and sharing the practices of leadership, as well as focusing on providing a positive welcoming environment that motivates staff members and teachers to become self-learners. This suggests aspects of two leadership models. First, and according to the leadership structure of school B, the leadership practice looks as if it was designed to be distributed, amongst a number of people, and not confined to those in formal leadership positions. This suggests that distributed leadership is appropriate to describe how Ms. Mona, the headteacher, manages this large number of staff. Secondly, to be participative leadership, where all staff members are encourages to get engaged in leading their school.

Delegation and Accountability

Delegation seems to be widely accepted by senior leadership members such as the headteacher, Ms. Mona, and Ms. Maram. However, other staff members (e.g. Ms. Meral, Ms. Malak, and Ms.Manal) seem to reject the idea of delegation, or feel that it is impossible because of the nature of their work.

Ms. Mona's headship practices seem to be based on providing learning opportunities for her staff whenever possible. Consequently, she tends to delegate some of her off-campus meetings to one of her deputy heads. She explains that:

> None of my deputy heads worked in this position before. One was an academic advisor and the other was a first teacher for her annual evaluation for two consecutive years… they need to be well trained if they want to become heads one day.

Ms. Mona comments that, 'at the beginning, it was hard for the deputy heads to accept such a responsibility because with it comes accountability, however, with practice, they became more confident in doing so'.

Ms. Maram, the deputy head of academic affairs of lower primary, explains that:

> When I was an academic supervisor in my previous school, delegation was widely practiced between the headteacher and the academic supervisor of the primary section. Nowadays however, there is a degree to which delegation is practiced. For instance, I delegate some duties to the students' monitor [the person in charge of taking students' attendance and managing classes and recess times] and encourage the newly appointed teacher into a management position to use delegation as part of their daily routine until they become familiar and confident with the new positions.

She comments that, 'even though I might use the help of the students monitor, it is still me who is accountable for the work she helps me with'. She adds that:

> I used to encourage the newly appointed deputy head of the academic affairs for upper primary grades to delegate some of her daily duties to one of her colleagues who was the students' monitor. The delegation was temporary and was done verbally without any written document because I did not see the need to document it.

Similarly, when Ms. Mona was asked why she would delegate, and if she thinks all heads have to do so, she replies that:

> Of course, I practice delegation and it is a must, let's be honest. At the end of the day, the headteacher keeps receiving so many school circulars from the GEDNJ so she needs to use delegation... moreover, deputy heads need to practice making decisions and being held accountable for their consequences.

She says that both formal written, and informal verbal, forms of delegation are used, depending on the task:

> I do both, depending on the task, however my rule of thumb is that, at the beginning of the academic year, I sit with my deputy heads and we discuss the procedures they need to follow should an immediate action be taken during my absence from the school, or even during my presence, but at busy times. I verbally name them to take over my role in any circumstances for the entire year.

In contrast, Ms. Meral elaborates that, 'between the 1st grade teachers, delegation is not practiced. Each one of us does her job unless she is on sick or maternity leave. In this case, we all collaborate to cover her class so that her students do not miss out, and get behind other classes, until a cover teacher is appointed'.

Ms. Manal explains that 'practicing delegation in a job like mine is rather impossible. Even collaborating with someone else would be difficult because it has to do with students' grades, which is a crucial thing that requires one person only to have access to the username and password for accountability reasons and security issues'. Ms. Mariam, a social studies teacher, adds that, 'yes I can practice delegation, I just do not recall a time when I needed to'.

Ms. Malak adds that:

> In my subject coordinator position, there is no room for delegation as I have to meet up with many parties including the subject supervisor form GEDNJ, the school's deputy heads of academic affairs, and the school's academic supervisor from the company. This plus all the off-school meetings related to religious studies for primary grades held at other schools.

Ms. Maha, the student advisor, says that, 'no, my job is very sensitive and I should not consider delegation as an option. I cannot jeopardize losing the trust of my students'. Ms. Marwa adds that 'there is no room for delegation for teachers'.

From the discussion above, it seems that the practice of delegation in school B is confined to the school's leadership and management teams and those working in a management or leadership position, including Ms. Mona, the school head, and Ms. Maram, the deputy head of academic affairs. However, even though teachers such as Ms. Mariam, a social sciences teacher, and Ms. Meral, a first grade teacher, claim that delegation is possible for teachers, they do not seem able to put this into practice.

Authority and Perceived Authority

Authority is associated with power, and this makes it relevant to discuss teachers' assigned responsibilities with and without an official appointment. Five of the eight participants either currently, or previously, have the experience of being accountable for a leadership or management duty while still being teachers. When Ms. Malak, Ms. Maram, Ms. Mariam, Ms. Meral and Ms. Mona were asked about how others perceive them in their assigned responsibilities, their self-reported responses expressed positive reactions from their colleagues.

Ms. Malak says that 'my colleagues' reaction to my appointment was positive. I did not feel rejected in any shape or form, we are still equal'. Ms. Maram notes that, when she was the academic supervisor previously, that 'position was helpful for the

teachers in that school and it made following up easier for the management team back then'. She adds that 'I do not recall anyone reacting in any way to my appointment even though I was a teacher before that, on the other hand, the teachers were pleased that I got to be their supervisor rather than someone new to them who would not know them as well as I do'.

Ms. Manal and Ms. Maha are currently in management positions. Ms. Manal claims that 'our school has a very welcoming environment where anyone and everyone can come to me and ask about or discuss with either me or go to the subject coordinator, or even the headteacher, to talk about any of the school circulars'. Ms. Maha seemed focused on doing her job by collaborating with any of her colleagues whenever required. She comments that 'we all respect each other'. Ms. Marwa, who is a religious studies teacher, and reports to Ms. Malak, the religion studies coordinator, thinks that creating the subject coordinator position was very helpful for the teachers and the deputy head of academic affairs. She adds that 'now we discuss all matters [with Ms. Malak] in a friendly environment'.

However, Ms. Mona, the head, recalls that, because she tends to delegate some tasks to the deputy heads of academic affairs, in order to train them to become headteachers one day, some management assistants may prefer the formal procedure and ask for the requests to come directly from the headteacher:

> Within the primary section we did not have a problem with that, however, on rare occasions, the deputy heads needs to address a task to a management assistant, they state that it is an order coming from me, and later on, the formal written assignment is sent to them to sign.

The other participants, Ms. Manal, Ms. Maha and Ms. Marwa, have pride in what they do, and all of them seem to be satisfied with the roles they play within the school, despite their limited authority and power over colleagues; and with the duties they fulfil.

Overall, people in authority in school B seem to be accepted, respected and even admired by the school staff members. There are no signs of power struggles, even though the school head is obligated to report to two senior authorities, the company and the Ministry of Education. The leadership structure, and the practice of leadership within school B, have helped in shaping a school culture where authority is not questioned not because it is not allowed to question it but rather because each member of staff feels valued for who they are and the role they play appeared to be appreciated regardless of their formal status.

Leadership and the Leadership and Management Team

The aim here was to establish how and why staff members took on leadership duties, with or without an official appointment. Seven of the eight participants are either working in management or have a management and leadership responsibility in addition to their main role as teachers. The eight participants identified coincidence, high performance, personal choice, and nominations, as the main reasons for taking a leadership or management role.

The headteacher, Ms. Mona, discussed how she gradually moved from being a teacher to an academic supervisor and finally a head:

> I never thought I would be leaving teaching for a headship or management position. The headteacher, back in the first school where I worked, asked me if I was interested to become an academic supervisor and I accepted. In two years, I learned a lot about the nature of management work in schools.

Ms. Mona explains that, 'although I worked as an academic supervisor which is between a management and a teaching position but being a headteacher is purely management with a lot of paper work. It is a lot of work but I think I enjoy it'. After two years of holding the academic supervisor position, Ms. Mona had to leave the school she had been working at for ten years because of changing her home, and

thus she says 'the long daily journey between [her] new house and the school was unbearable'. As Ms. Mona was not working, she was approached by a friend who informed her of a school in an urgent need of a headteacher. Ms. Mona accepted the position because she recalled her positive previous experience in management:

> I ended up as a headteacher when a friend of mine recommended me a headship position in a private school. Although I had no knowledge or experience, that school's general supervisor was a very helpful and understanding mentor. I asked her for the probation period to be a testing period for both of us, and she taught me a lot and I owe her for where I am today.

Ms. Malak's was given the 'first teacher' award for two consecutive years and this led to her appointment as the religious studies subject coordinator:

> In the past I have always wanted to apply ideas for improvement but I could not because I didn't have the authority, as people tend not to accept what you suggest unless you have power which came with this new management position . . . I got appointed to those two duties by the headteacher since I was awarded the first teacher award for the past two years which is given to teachers based on a number of factors including teacher performance, attendance and punctuality. I would not choose to reject such opportunity because I am loyal to the school I work for.

Ms. Manal worked in management since she started her career in education 14 years before the field work, saying that this is what she enjoys. In contrast, Ms. Maha started as a teacher then moved to management as a student advisor. She says that 'I feel I can give more emotionally. I feel I sympathize a lot with my students, so I figured that I might be able to serve the students better by not being a teacher but rather as a student counsellor'.

Nomination is the process that led Ms. Maram, Ms. Mariam and Ms. Meral to their current positions in leadership and management. Ms. Maram explains that 'I got appointed [to become an academic supervisor while I was a social sciences teacher, through nomination by my direct boss who was the headteacher back then and the school's appointed supervisor from the General Education office in North Jeddah (GEDNJ)'. Ms. Mariam, a teacher and a management assistant, 'was nominated by the headteacher (to become the assistant for the activity leader) with no official appointment'. They both accepted the nomination and loved it, as Ms. Maram indicates; 'I think I wanted to change and I found it a positive step that was self-rewarding. Therefore, I started encouraging others to do it'. Ms. Mariam, a teacher and a management assistant, adds that being the assistant to the activity leader helped her as a teacher:

> I like to be proactive and discuss ideas and give suggestions for improvement wherever possible. I also like to work voluntarily and bring about new activities for students. I incorporate implemented activities to most of my lessons.

Similarly, Ms. Meral, who is a first grade teacher, says that 'I've been nominated to work in school committees, which I don't get to reject because it is a chance for me to get exposed and learn and gain new experiences'. She adds that, 'after 15 years of teaching, I think I would accept a non-teaching position in leadership and management':

> Nomination to leadership duties without appointment in our school is a positive act as it provides us [with] an environment to compete to give and exchange knowledge. It [also] changes the daily routine for teachers. Those stimulating meetings and workshops create a fun and enjoyment spirit for us within the school.

Participants' Views on Leadership

After discussing the reasons behind participants' motivations and inspirations to leadership, they were asked what makes a good leader. According to the participants, a successful leader requires several characteristics and qualities, including patience, wisdom, flexibility and understanding. The participants who are subordinates in the hierarchy believed that their school leaders, either their line manager or others, including the headteacher, the deputy heads and the subject coordinators, satisfy these characteristics. They think that this is what leads school B to be successful in terms of leading and managing its people.

The first leader in school B is the headteacher. According to Ms. Mona, the head needs to be 'patient, open minded, a good listener, and have a big heart, but above all justice is very important' (Ms. Mona).

Ms. Maram, the deputy head of academic affairs (lower primary) thinks that 'understanding the different characteristics of people and their needs' is what makes an effective leader. She makes the connection between that and appointments to leadership. She believes that:

> Internal appointment for management positions work best in schools, when compared to outsiders, as the new member will take longer to understand how things are run in that school and the different personalities to deal with and the key to each teacher. Unlike me, when I got the job, I knew everyone and they have trust in me and my decisions.

Making internal appointments appears to be the approach followed in school B, for example when Ms. Mona was seeking a deputy head of academic affairs (upper primary). She asked Ms. Maram for her opinion about current staff members, and she suggested one of her teachers.

Ms. Malak reflects on her current position as the religious studies coordinator and states that, in order to be a good subject coordinator, she needs to have 'flexibility, wisdom and be courteous to speak'. Ms. Manal, a management assistant, adds that:

> [Leaders need to] work under pressure, [be] collaborative, very patient. Usually managerial positions tend to be very stressful so the person who chooses to work there have to be unselfish and can bear pressure.

Ms. Mariam, a teacher and a management assistant, talks about the importance of having a focused leader, who is driven by purpose, and compares the current headteacher and the previous ones she worked with at another school stating that:

> One important lesson I learnt from our current headteacher is to focus on the reason why we all have chosen to become teachers and to keep away from personal disagreements and personal matters . . . Also to document and write every request you have from and to the school's management team and keep it safe for validity reasons.

This links to Ms. Mona's view about her school staff reporting to her. 'I am flexible, I listen and I encourage my teachers to give suggestions and share ideas. At the end of the day I want what is best for all of us but, of course, the benefit for our students comes first'.

Ms. Maha, the student advisor, says that people working in management need to 'respect each other' and to be 'calm and patient'. She aims to treat people with wisdom and to remain calm. She also thinks it is important to take urgent decisions when necessary, and she also values flexibility, which Ms. Meral, a first grade teacher, thinks is 'very critical'. 'I believe that, if a teacher moves to work in management, I assume she will be more understanding. For me personally, if I am in that position, I will consult teachers very often and consider their opinions and be forgiving to them'. (Ms. Meral). This links to the views of the religious studies teacher, Ms. Marwa, who states that:

> The person in management needs to be well acknowledged of teacher management and classroom management techniques and ways, open minded with strong personality, firm and follows-up with his/ her orders.

Social Norms, Saudi Culture and Traditions, and Leadership Enactment

Discussion of the sociocultural aspects of the school focused on parental involvement and engagement with the school, the school's status as a private school, the school location and parents' cultural beliefs.

The researcher views parental involvement as a social element because the focus here is Saudi society, the members of which act as a collective, where the actions of one affect the others. Those parents come with their own understanding of the cultural and traditional beliefs and norms. This justifies regarding parental engagement as a sociocultural aspect of the school and that could be reflected in the enactment of leadership.

One of the eight participants in school B offered no comments on Saudi norms and culture but the other seven divided into three groups on this topic. The first group represents the views of Ms. Mona and Ms. Mariam, who think that clear and specific school policies force parents to abide by what the school dictates.

Ms. Mona, the headteacher, does not think that the location of a school, or the educational qualifications that parents hold, should affect school life. She strongly emphasised that the headteacher should always remind parents of the choice when they registered their daughter in her school. She explains that most of the complaints from parents in the primary section are either to shorten the school day or to ask for engaging the students in more formal classes and fewer activities (which are used to reinforce the lessons):

> It is impossible for me to let a parent convince me to let-go of a teacher whom I am sure of her qualities but she deserves a chance, or change a daily routine. At the end of the day, if the headteacher's decisions and beliefs are

> consistent, she can convince parents with what she believes to be right. For example, in our school we have clear, straight forward and transparent school polices and, before a student is registered, parents get familiar with them and know our school day times and routines and what we offer, so I cannot accept a parent coming to complain about these things after a month of the school year. I remind them that this is our school and these are the reasons [that] made you choose it over other schools.

However, she indicates that the school polices are very clear and the procedure applied within the school is that the parents, usually mothers, needs to speak to the person in-charge of the matter she is wanting to discuss, which she usually delegates to the deputy heads. Ms. Mona states that they are still flexible and, when 'some parents react differently and refuse to accept talking to the deputy heads, in such times the parent might come to see me directly or if I am unavailable, she could make an appointment and come another day'.

Ms. Mariam, a social studies teacher, states that 'about 90% of parents in this school are collaborative and very understanding'. She discusses that most mothers come to pick up their daughters at school dismissal time and, through this, they get to see them and get to know them more. Such behaviour from mothers is more likely to be seen in private schools but not in the public ones. However, out of respect for school policies, Ms. Mariam, a teacher and a management assistant, states that 'the school's policy is not to discuss any student matter with parents without the presence of the deputy head of academic affairs to save rights for all parties'. The school's procedures are that communication between teachers and parents is through formal channels only 'including SMS, online school interactive portal for parents and students to communicate to their teachers about anything they wish, and sometimes to complete online home-work. [There is also a] daily diary for each student, to be filled by subject teachers and signed by parents on a daily basis to assure home follow-up'. Ms. Mariam adds that '[other] kinds of written communication with parents have to go through the deputy head, and to be

sent officially from her office, [to avoid] miscommunication or misunderstanding, especially in [reporting] student poor performance or delays'.

The second group, Ms. Maha, Ms. Malak, Ms. Manal and Ms. Meral, think that elements such as the location of the school, parents' education and background, as well as the school sector, make a difference in how parents react to the school's polices and what kind of action and dialogue they have with the school in times of home-school conflict. For example, Ms. Maha, the student advisor, articulates that:

> the main differences between parents are according to their backgrounds and where they come from I think. For example, parents from outside Jeddah tend to treat their daughters differently from those who are from Jeddah, in terms of how to speak to their girls and how to discuss girl-related matters. There are other traditional differences between those two groups of parents when it comes to topics like when does a girl need to start wearing Hejab (head veil) and to be decently covered in front of strange men. As parents from Jeddah tend to delay this until their daughters are in secondary schools, the former group raise their daughters to wear veil from grade 4. This is the policy we apply in here in our school, and sometimes it creates home- school conflict for some of our students.

Commenting on public and private schools, Ms. Malak gives the example of a mother's first-hand experience with her daughter's secondary public school and her own experience in all the private schools she worked at:

> There is a major difference between public and private schools. Yesterday my daughter had an incident where she felt unwell and the teacher kept asking her to stop pretending because she thought my daughter was lying. Even though my daughter asked her to contact me, she refused. By the time my daughter got home, we had to rush to the hospital and she had a very low blood pressure and she was in a very critical situation. This morning I went to her school and complained to the headteacher about the

> inappropriate reaction from the teacher because of which we could have lost my daughter. Sadly, the only response I got from the head was that the teacher shouldn't have don't anything differently and, if I am not pleased with that, I could report it officially to the Ministry of Education but that the head will support her teacher's claims. On the other hand, here in our school, if such a thing happens, the immediate response from the teacher would be to send the student to the school nurse and a member of the management team would contact the parents to come and pick up their daughter.

Ms. Manal, the headteacher's secretary, comments on how sometimes parents' cultural beliefs are reflected through their reactions to school registration and documentation:

> Previously, when I was in-charge of students' admission and registration, I used to get the weirdest reactions from parents. Like for instance when I had to call parents to fill in some missing documents or student information sheets some of them would just turn off their cell phones, while others tell me it is not important and even one mother told me once to make up the missing information about her daughter.

She also gave an example of how some parents still believe that everything has to come through the headteacher:

> We recently had two students in first grade who pushed each other and they both fell over. The following morning the mother of one of them came to school and wanted to talk to the headteacher to resolve the fight [as she called it], I tried to convince her otherwise but that did not work.

Ms. Meral, a first grade teacher, explains how the school location, as well as the school environment, plays a role in motivating and encouraging some expectations from mothers towards the school:

> [In] this school, parents follow up with their children's performance and school work is better than my previous school, which was in central Jeddah. However, some parents here expected you as a teacher to do everything with their daughters as if this is [our] obligation so they do nothing at home. I think the school environment is the factor here.

The last view is held by one participant, Ms. Maram, the deputy head of academic affairs for lower primary. With her 22 years of experience, Ms. Maram thinks that the school location, social class, and parents' educational level used to make a difference in the first ten years of her career in education. She claims that the reasons behind it are 'the limited number of students and the school tuition fees were very high that not every family can afford to pay'. But, since these factors are no longer true, she does not think that social forces affect the school as they used to.

Overall, the evidence presented suggests that more than half of the participants from school B seem to believe that factors such as the school location, parents' educational level, and school sector, have a sociocultural link as they appear to affect the practice of leadership in this school. Their views on these issues were shaped by three factors. These are the role they play in the school (e.g headteacher or teacher), the type of experience they have between the two school sectors (public and private), and their professional experience (more or less than 20 years).

Overview

The discussion of leadership in school B revealed a unique leadership structure that was designed specifically for this school and related parts of the company. Although the organizational chart appears to suggest a centralized model, the evidence indicates the presence of collegial models of leadership, including a degree of distribution. Delegation appears to be confined to management and leadership positions and is not practised by the teachers.

Leadership seems to be more distributed between administrative staff than between the teachers. The unique leadership structure of school B arises from having a senior leadership team (the company) which extended the leadership structure external to the school, with some coordinating and supervisory roles within the internal leadership structure of school B. This structure allowed space for internal appointments. It also does not seem to cause conflict with the obligations and regulations specified by the Ministry of Education.

The length of professional experience, the type of experience, and the roles participants play in the school, appeared to affect the interviewees' views about the sociocultural factors affecting the practice of leadership in school B. The main sociocultural aspects identified by the participants are the nature of parental engagement and the distinctive aspects arising from being in the private sector.

The next chapter presents the findings from the third case study school, school C.

CHAPTER SIX CASE STUDY THREE: SCHOOL C

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the case study of the third school (school C). School C is a girls' primary public school in the city of AlMadinah. An integrated thematic approach is employed in presenting the data. The data sets used to develop the chapter are constructed from semi-structured interviews, the researcher's field notes, and documentary analysis of the school's documents, which are based on the Ministry of Education manuals.

The chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section introduces the research participants and their roles within the school. The second section presents the school's profile, which includes basic information about the school, with numbers of staff and students. This is followed by a section that describes the external and internal contexts of the school. Finally, and most important, is the discussion of the themes arising from the collected data. The emerging themes are leadership structure and roles, leadership models and the Ministry of Education Manuals, delegation and accountability, authority and perceived authority, leadership and the leadership and management teams and social norms, Saudi culture and traditions, and leadership enactment.

A concluding section provides an overview of my overall experience in school C, and the implications of the data collected from this case study school, linked to the research questions and aims.

School C Participants

Due to the particular circumstances of school C, which will be discussed later in the chapter, there were six participants in this case study school, instead of eight, all of whom were interviewed. In addition, I made some field notes, which were recorded

almost contemporaneously. Table 6.1 shows the six participants with their positions, duties, and pseudonyms used throughout the chapter.

	Participant	Description	Reference
1	Headteacher	She has 28 years experience, 11 as primary teacher, 12 as deputy head and 5 as a headteacher.	Ms. Noha
2	Management assistant for teachers' affairs and headteacher substitute	She has 3 years experience. She is the management assistant of teachers' affairs (covering partly the responsibilities of the deputy head of teacher affairs) as well as being the students' monitor (the person in charge of taking students' attendance and managing classes and recess times)	Ms. Nawal
3	Management assistant	She has 5 years experience in management duties. She holds several responsibilities in school C; clerk, students' grades entering as well as registration and administration, in-charge of all written communication between the school and the General Directorate of Education in AlMadinah Province (GDEMP).	Ms. Nada
4	Management assistant for students' affairs	She has 4 years experience. She is the current management assistant for students' affairs for upper primary grades (4, 5 and 6), besides covering partial duties of the deputy head of academic affairs and deputy head of school affairs.	Ms. Nermeen
5	Math teacher	She has 15 years experience of teaching maths. In the first 3 years of her career, she was a maths teacher for secondary grades. This is her 13th year teaching maths in the primary grades. She has also taught two other subjects for the past two years: arts and family education.	Ms. Norah
6	Learning difficulties teacher	She has 5 years' experience. She collaborates with all teachers in the school to make individual plans for students with special learning needs.	Ms. Noor

Table 6. 1: Case study Three: School (C) Participants.

The special circumstances of school C are partly related to staff shortages, but there are also other aspects (see school profile section below). It seems that the relationship between the headteacher and some staff members is problematic. The

shortages of both teachers and non-teaching staff have created a noticeable tension in this relationship. Both parties seem to be working together while avoiding talking to one another. Some of the teachers, according to Ms. Noha, and Ms. Nawal, would rather talk to the management assistant (Ms. Nawal) rather than address their needs directly to the head. The head is very aware of such behaviour; she comments with frustration that she thinks there is nothing she can do to improve the situation.

School Profile

Background

School C is a girls' public primary school located in the city of AlMadinah. It is under the supervision of the General Directorate of Education in AlMadinah Province (GDEMP). Although school C might appear to be similar to other girls' public schools in AlMadinah, it is distinctive in several respects. Firstly, it is a large school with 470 students, occupying 13 classrooms, from grades 1 to 6. The total number of staff in the primary school is 34, 11 of whom are teachers. Secondly, the school building is shared between school C (the case study school) and another girls' school for grades 7, 8 and 9, with approximately 300 students. Thirdly, at the time of the fieldwork, school C was suffering from a shortage of teaching and non-teaching staff, as noted above. They did not have any deputy heads, as one is on sick leave, while the other is on maternity leave, and the school is waiting for substitutes to be appointed. This situation created additional workloads for current teachers, leading to commitment issues and several stressed staff.

Because of the factors outlined above, the six research participants were the only staff members available, physically and psychologically, to take part in this study. The consequences and implications of school C's circumstances will be discussed under related themes throughout the chapter.

School documents and forms

I went to school C with the assumption that, since it is a public school, this would mean that I would not gain access to the school's documents and files. To my surprise, Ms. Noha, the headteacher, was very welcoming. She invited me to look at all the folders she keeps, as required by the Ministry of Education, in locked cabinets. The templates for these forms are available in The Procedural Manual, which is developed by the Ministry of Education, is publicly available, and ready to use for all schools in the general education sector. This means that I could access them at any time, at my convenience. However, I was a little disappointed not to be granted permission to photograph or photocopy these documents. This is because I wanted to have a closer look at these forms, as part of my documentary analysis, to see how they compare with the templates, and to check if they match the practical daily life of school leadership and management in school C. In addition, I wanted to build an understanding of how flexible the forms are when implemented in schools similar to school C, in respect of school leadership and management.

Despite this limited access, it is notable that some of the participants voluntarily showed me their documents to help in explaining the nature of their work. These included Ms. Noor, the learning difficulties teacher, and Ms. Nada, a management assistant. This indicates the level of confidence and pride those two participants have in their work, despite the general atmosphere of frustration within the school. Staff members seemed to be trying their best to deliver at a good, if not outstanding, level. This act of sharing documents is unusual in a public school, especially one in challenging circumstances, such as school C.

School Context

External context

School C is located in one of the new neighbourhoods in the city of AlMadinah. The school building is fenced with brick walls, like all girls' public schools in the kingdom

of Saudi Arabia. The school premises are adjacent to an unpaved sandy road, illustrating that this is a recently developed neighbourhood.

Internal context

The school has three street views, and the building is a rectangular shape. From the main gate, there is a small outdoor open space, then there is a second gate leading to the school building, which is a quadrilateral shape. The ground floor comprises the school's cafeteria, an indoor hall for school assemblies and morning routines, labs, toilets, storage rooms, and the school's leadership and management department, with the school head's office.

There are two staircases that lead to upper floors. There is a kitchen on the first floor, and students' and teachers' toilets on all floors. The first and second floors have class rooms, a teachers' room, a resource room, a storage room, and one management room. The management rooms are usually used by the student advisor, the deputy head of academic affairs, and the special learning needs teacher but, because the school building is shared between two schools, in practice each school occupies one floor, with the ground floor being shared between the two schools.

Leadership Structure and Roles

At the entrance of school C, before the headship offices (which comprise two rooms, the headteacher's office and the management assistants' room), the chart in figure 6.1 was displayed on the wall. According to Ms. Noha, the headteacher, displaying the organizational structure at the school entrance is a requirement by the GDEMP.



Figure 6.1: The Organizational Chart of School C displayed at the school entrance.

Figure 6.2 provides a translated version of figure 6.1. The chart shows the official positions, but does not indicate that some positions are unfilled.

The Organizational Chart of Primary School C		
The School Leader		
Deputy head	Clerk	
Students' Monitor	Student advisor	
Management assistants		
Grade 1 teachers		
Grade 2 teachers		
Grade 3 teachers		
Religious studies teachers		
Arabic language teachers		
Math teachers	Science teachers	
Family education teachers	Secretary of learning resources	
Social studies teacher	English language teacher	Learning difficulties teacher
School helping staff		
School Guard		

Figure 6.2: The Organizational Chart of School C translated from figure 6.1.

Current positions unfilled in school C include the deputy heads, and other teachers, including, but not limited to, the family education teacher. However, regardless of the unusual leadership structure in school C, the current structure requires the headteacher to fulfill the roles of all the missing deputy heads, while still carrying out her regular duties as the school head. Therefore, Ms. Noha, the headteacher, collaborates with Ms. Nawal, the management assistant for teachers' affairs, to cover for the deputy head of teachers' affairs. She also collaborates with Ms. Nermeen, management assistant for students' affairs, to fulfill the duties of the deputy head of academic affairs.

Ms. Noha, the headteacher, claims that it would have been possible for her to manage all these responsibilities, if it was not for recent amendments to the regulations, and the additional paper work, according to the new manuals, that the headteacher needs to respond to and to report accordingly:

> Now I find that the increased paper work on headteachers is due to documentation reasons, besides I feel it is because of lack of teachers' keenness. As a result, headteachers have an increased work on the managing and leading side, as well as on the writing and documenting one.

With all these responsibilities, there may be implications for the headteacher's performance. However, she responds that the absence of deputy heads in her school caused her to hire a personal assistant whose only responsibility is 'to complete the bureaucratic paper work' required by the Ministry. Without this support, she would not be able to carry out the duties of the headteacher. Ms. Noha explains that, in the past (before the development of the manuals), and before the Ministry of Education started being extra keen about documentation, and unifying the documentation process across schools, the duties of the headteacher were more manageable. She believes that, without these changes, and

despite her school's current staff situation, Ms. Noha would have been able to manage it all by herself, without the need to hire a personal assistant, because the existing management assistants would be sufficient for the job.

Leadership Model and the Ministry of Education Manuals

The leadership structure of school C appears to affect the dynamics and enactment of leadership in the school, and this makes it difficult to label the leadership model applied within the school. The staff shortages seem to affect the professional relationships between the headteacher and the management staff, just as it is affecting teachers' relationships, and the overall school environment.

Ms. Noha, the headteacher, argues that 'the job description for the management assistant role, as it appears in the Regulatory Manual, where one can find all the job descriptions for school staff, is minimal', implying that it is not helpful. In school C, those generic job descriptions have created problems between staff members. The Regulatory Manual (pages 61 -63) does not differentiate between the job descriptions of the management assistants in schools where there are deputy heads, from those schools with no deputy heads. Similarly, it shows no differences in the duties of the management assistants in those schools with four management assistants, for example, and those with 11 management assistants. As a result, 'schools end up in a messy state' (Ms. Noha). She explained that 'most of the assistants want to stick to what is in the book [when it comes to their duties] and refuse to work outside that' (Ms. Noha). This means that they may refuse to respond to the headteacher's requests.

The head explains how this situation could be resolved, if it was not for the current system followed in the GDEMP:

> I am not asking for a more centralised management model but, if headteachers are given a say in how to divide the tasks between the available members of staff, schools will be in a better place. [again] I am not pro centralization, what I am asking for is control [besides authority for heads] and offer a better way to organize it.

My understanding here is that Ms. Noha does not support the centralized system but that she is not promoting a decentralized model either. She respects the current system but she thinks that schools could benefit from some flexibility for headteachers, and trust in their judgement and opinions, so that they can make their own decisions based on what they believe would be better for their schools. This suggests that headteachers' empowerment needs to be re-defined and, in a later section, I will discuss how heads' empowerment appears to create an issue in respect of the expectations associated with gendered roles within the society.

On a different note, Ms. Noha, headteacher, discusses one of the new regulations by the Ministry in Education, relating to staff absence. She compares the procedure they used to follow in the past and the current instructions. She explains that, in the past, medical reports were not acceptable unless they come from a clinic authenticated by the Ministry of Education. Ms. Noha expresses her dissatisfaction with the revised regulations:

> Now, I am obligated to accept every excuse and any excuse [the staff member claims] yet, at the same time, if I am paid a visit from the monitoring and supervision committee of the Ministry, the school's rating

> and evaluation could decline due to repetitive staff absence [regardless of the reasons for absence]…

As a result, Ms. Noha feels helpless, as she does not have the authority to stop members of staff from becoming careless about the need to be absent from the school for an emergency only, while at the same time maintaining a good outcome for her school in every assessment carried out by the evaluation committee.

The Procedural Manual (TPM, 2019: 40) addresses staff performance evaluation, but it is vague and generic. The procedural manual is intended to provide guidelines for headteachers. Ms. Noha's response suggests that it is the responsibility of the school's supervisor from the Ministry, or even the local authority (the GDEMP in this case), to dictate to headteachers what indicators to consider and what to ignore. This seems to be fair, as it allows the opportunity for all staff members working in similar schools to be evaluated equally, but it also seems to ignore special circumstances and the specific situation of individual schools.

Despite the issues discussed above, and the difficulty of identifying a distinct leadership model in school C, there are some occasions where teachers decide to collaborate and work together on one of the school events, such as the 'Arabic Language Day'. On such occasions, all members of staff collaborate and cooperate to have a successful event. According to Ms. Noha, the headteacher, this is one of the ways in which emergent leadership is seen in practice. The tasks are divided and everyone takes a share in leading and managing. Other examples include the formation of school teams and committees. Ms. Noha explains that:

> Emergent leadership is practiced through activities, like Arabic Language Day, because, for such events and projects, we create boards and committees.

Ms. Noor, the learning difficulties teacher, states that she works in a committee that involves three members from the school, in addition to the student and her parent or guardian. She describe the dynamics of the committee, and the roles played by each member:

> The committee involves the headteacher, the subject teacher, the student advisor, the student and her guardian. We collaborate, however I am the member who conducts the evaluation at the beginning of the academic year and then develops a suggested plan and carries out the implementation of it. Yet, I cannot take any action unless approved by the student's parents or guardians.

Despite Ms. Noor's collaborative work with the group, she says that:

> I work in isolation with the students most of the time [yet] I need to collaborate with the head when reporting the assessment results to students' parents or guardians twice a year [at the beginning and at the end of the academic year], before students' results are finalised.

Ms. Nada, one of the management assistants, states that her circle of daily interaction involves collaborating with the headteacher and the management assistants for students' affairs. Similarly, Ms. Nawal, the management assistant for teachers' affairs, states that her work with the headteacher is very close on a daily basis. She is also the headteacher's substitute in case of the former's absence. Therefore, they collaborate a lot and cover for each other as well:

> Because we are still waiting for the substitute of the deputy head, who has been on a sick leave for over a year now, the headteacher and us [the management assistants] have to take over some of her responsibilities.

Ms. Nawal also works closely with teachers on a daily basis. For example, 'teachers who need to leave early, or take a day off, come to talk to me and then I take their requests to the headteacher, I work as a link between teachers and the head'. Ms. Nermeen, the management assistant for students' affairs, works closely with both Ms. Noha, the head and Ms. Nada, another management assistant. Ms. Nermeen argues that 'the duties of the management assistant role [as described in the Managerial Manual] are flexible and are not fixed'. She explains that ' the duties are distributed between a number of management assistants and that the quality of distribution is not satisfactory to all involved members'.

The examples discussed above illustrate the normal dynamics in schools, with some jobs within the school requiring more interactions with colleagues than others, therefore the nature of one's role in a school does not necessarily indicate the nature of the leadership model in practice.

As noted earlier, the Ministry of Education's Manuals appear to be generic and not designed to engage all types of schools, and specific school conditions This contributes to the headteacher's dissatisfaction, and her expressed belief in the value of some flexibility in terms of headteachers' empowerment and the use of forms and manuals. She complains about the increased paper work for school heads, which appears to correlate with the development of the new regulations from the Ministry of Education, their stress on documentation and using the templates provided in the manuals for this purpose. Ms. Noha elaborates that:

> Headteachers are asked to follow-up more with teachers, follow-up with their attendance, performance, and lesson plans. Even the number of classroom visits has doubled, now we have to have four classroom visits for every teacher in our school.

In addition to that, and because of the new regulations as they appear in the Regulatory Manual, the headteacher should accept all reasons for a teacher's absence with no further questioning:

> I should accept all and any excuse the teacher writes down in the absence report. Such actions caused our school to lose points in the school's annual assessment visit conducted by the GDEMP.

Ms. Norah, maths teacher, admires the headteacher's attitude and leadership style:

> With the crowded classrooms situation we have, teachers feel more stressed because there is no place to leave our teaching materials and teaching aids but the library. There is no place for staff meetings... however, Ms. Noha, our headteacher, is open to all suggestions and proposals. She accepts anything that we suggest to make us feel more comfortable and relaxed. Generally, she responds to us as much as she can, because of the limited resources she has.

Ms. Norah adds that 'all my colleagues and other staff members are collaborative and we always help each other'.

The evidence presented in this section suggests two models of leadership in school C. There are references to limited collaboration between and among the teachers, with some examples of emergent leadership. There is also some evidence of duties being distributed by the headteacher, between herself and other management assistants, but this does not seem acceptable to all of them. It is not clear if these leadership approaches are constrained because of the overall centralised bureaucratic educational system, or due to other factors.

Delegation and Accountability

The discussion on delegation and accountability with the participants revealed more about the nature of professional relationships among the staff members in school C.

The exercise of delegation in school C is very limited due to the shortage of staff and the absence of deputy heads. However, Ms. Noha, the headteacher, practices delegation with Ms. Nawal, the management assistant for teachers' affairs, and with two other student advisors, depending on the situation: 'I have a management assistant and the student advisor of upper primary grades and the student advisor of lower primary grades, I count on those three during my absence' (Ms. Noha). However, even with these practices, the headteacher is still accountable for her role as head, as well as being the acting deputy head of the school.

Delegation usually refers to the act when a manager delegates to a subordinate, but some of the participants in school C thought of delegation as upwards act. In practice, delegation is not an option for most staff, except for Ms. Nada, a management assistant, and Ms. Nawal, the management assistant for teachers' affairs. The former can delegate only to the headteacher and that is for accountability reasons. Ms. Nada explains the reason behind that stating:

> The headteacher can check the emergency email if I was not available, but that is it. The rest of my work requires a password which I should keep to myself.

Ms. Nawal, the management assistant for teachers' affairs, and the headteacher's substitute, comments that:

> I am in-charge of teachers' attendance and punctuality; thus, it is a sensitive role to delegate to anyone else but the headteacher, which is also very rare.

The rest of the participants cannot easily delegate, as they have no substitutes to carry out their duties. However, this is not the only reason why the participants did not practice delegation. They believe that they do not need to delegate even if they had the additional staff. For example, Ms. Norah, maths teacher, says that 'I do not need to delegate because I am a subject teacher and if I miss a class or two I can still manage to complete the curriculum, so I do not need to delegate'. Ms. Noor, the

learning difficulties teacher, discussed that her duties are straightforward, so that there is no need to delegate. Ms. Nermeen, the management assistant, had no comments on delegation.

Overall, considering the level of frustration in the school, I assume that teachers and other staff members refuse to respond to any chance for delegation because they already have enough work to do, or because they do not feel like taking on extra work.

It is important to note that the discussion in this section stretches the meaning of delegation, because the way the participants conceptualize it does not necessarily reflect this notion as stated in the management literature. What the participants appear to be discussing relates to collaboration in the work place.

Authority and Perceived Authority

Some management assistants in school C, as discussed earlier, seem to be able to reject requests from the headteacher, by choosing to abide by their job description as set out in the Managerial Manual. This shows how authority is seen and perceived within the school.

As discussed earlier, Ms. Noha, the headteacher expresses the stress she is facing because of the shortage of staff and because she feels that she cannot rely on the management assistants at her school. For example, Ms. Nermeen, management assistant for students' affairs, complains that 'the headteacher can stretch [their] duties and add more responsibilities to [them]'. This is not acceptable to Ms. Nermeen, who states that 'I refuse to accept responsibilities without an official appointment', referring to her duties to cover partly for the vacant deputy head position in the school.

In contrast, Ms. Norah, a maths teacher, was one of the first teachers to respond to the headteacher's request to accept another teaching duty to help cover the shortage of teaching staff. As a result, Ms. Norah now teaches maths to grade five, family education to grade one, and arts to grade four.

From the discussion above, it seems that, with the tension between the head and her staff, some members choose to treat authority by the book, and only respond to their duties as described by the school's supervisor from the Ministry, regardless of the consequences. Those staff members appear to be holding non-teaching roles in the school and they did not appear to be concerned about the consequences of their actions, even if they resulted in the school missing the Ministry's deadlines or, worse, affect the school's status in the annual assessment procedures[1]. However, some teachers were more aware of the critical situation of school C and they accepted the headteacher's authority, supported her in her decisions, and were cooperative.

Overall, the different attitudes towards authority, and how it is perceived in school C, illustrate the extent to which staff members are willing to test the headteacher's authority. It also explains the frustration and helplessness she expressed in her interview. These factors appear to have influenced Ms. Noha's intention to seek early retirement because it is evident that her authority is limited.

Leadership and the Leadership and Management Team

According to The Procedural Manual, when a school has no deputy heads and 15 teachers or less, the headteacher has the right to cluster all school committees and boards:

[1] This annual assessment is conducted by the Ministry's representative office in each city and it but the school into categories according to their performance, students passing rate and other factors (it is very similar to the Ofsted reports for schools in the UK).

> One of the granted powers to the school leader, the school council has the right to merge the school boards and committees - if necessary - in the organizational guide of public education schools - except for the school council and the steering committee – without affecting its functions. This is an exception in schools where the number of teachers is 15 teachers or less.
>
> (TPM, 2019: 9)

The participants in school C appear to rely on Ms. Noha, the headteacher, to gain an appointment for a leadership or management position.

Ms Norah, who has been a teacher for the past 15 years, does not have any plans to leave teaching for a job in management, but rather she is considering an early retirement. However, Ms. Nermeen, management assistant for students' affairs, is hoping that the headteacher recommends her for a deputy head position. However, her colleague, Ms. Nawal, also a management assistant, is not seeking appointment to a deputy head position.

Ms. Nada, another management assistant, trusts the headteacher's judgement: 'Ms. Noha [the headteacher] knows me well and knows my skills. She is the headteacher and she will know if I can do a higher job in the scale'.

The data suggest that there are certain issues affecting leadership enactment within school C and the level of trust the headteacher has in her team. Ms. Noha, headteacher, complains that her duties have increased due to the new regulations and 'lack of teachers' keenness'. Ms. Nawal, a management assistant for teachers'

affairs, who works closely with both the head and the teachers, reflects on how the school's staff members work as a team: ‘We collaborate and fear god in dealing with our students'.

The evidence suggests that participants perceive the same situation in different ways. Based on the time spent in the school, and the observed interactions, I believe there is a communication problem between the school head and her staff. These actions appear to result in a relationship that is based on mistrust and avoidance. Each person seems to focus only on their own benefits, and not necessarily the benefits for the school as a whole. The teachers are focusing on finishing their assigned curriculum while the school leadership is keen on managing the Ministry of Education regulations until the end of the academic year.

Ms. Noor, the learning difficulties teacher, explains how these problems affect her work:

> the majority of staff members, particularly the teaching staff, do not understand the nature of students with learning difficulties… I play an essential role but I go under a lot of pressure and it requires everyone to collaborate, but that is unfortunately not the case.

Social Norms, Saudi Culture and Traditions, and Leadership Enactment

Gender role issues seem to be a problem within the society in Madinah. Although headteachers’ empowerment might be expected in the 21st century, sociocultural approved empowerment measures appear to be a necessity in societies where gender roles are treated as the backbone of the social structure by its people. Ms. Noha, the headteacher, explains how, at home, she does not deal with workers and

electricians, as these are the responsibility of the male figure at home, the father, the husband or the son. However, when the Ministry gave headteachers more control over their schools, and made them accountable for the work that needs to be carried out within their schools, as a step towards heateachers' empowerment, this led to a declining number of female deputy heads desiring to become heads, and in the number of heads seeking early retirement, because of the additional responsibilities associated with the extra power. The headteacher emphasises that:

> Now headteachers receive operating cash from the GDEMP for all the school maintenance and supplies costs… which forces heads to deal with builders and workers. As a result of that, a large number of headteachers are dropping out from headship, including myself. Now, as for this year, I have applied for my retirement.

This extra workload expected to be carried out by female headteachers seems to be rejected by many education practitioners, including Ms. Noha, school C head. The empowerment of headteachers needs to consider the sociocultural implications. The Ministry could have provided alternative solutions or allowed some flexibility, so that each head can serve her school as they see fit. In this regard, Ms. Noha suggests that:

> Since the Ministry has divided their supervisory role amongst three offices here in AlMadinah, I suggest that each office develops their own maintenance department for the schools they supervise. This way we get to save wasted money and efforts because, as far as the way things run now, all resources are wasted.

Another point raised by the headteacher relates to societal pressures on school C and schools in general. She explains that 'the culture of always going to the person

at the top of the hierarchy is a culture that fosters a wrong practice'. However, she also discusses why, as a parent, she might choose to go to the headteacher directly when reporting an issue about her daughter's school. She explains that this action would be based purely on her personal relationship with the headteacher, and that she would not mind if the head then asks her to take the issue to the appropriate person within the school.

Another sociocultural practice is the social bond in collective societies such as the one in AlMadinah. According to Ms. Noha, social ties and bonds are so strong in Al Madinah society and these bonds are respected and admired, almost by all. Her perspective on the social bonds helped the researcher to understand an incident that happened during school dismissal time, as recorded in my field notes:

> I had to wait for my driver to pick me up for almost an hour. I was surprised by the fact that almost every member of staff offered me a ride back home as they did not want me to be left behind alone. This act would not have happened if I was in the city of Jeddah. This type of social responsibility towards the safety and security of others is a major component in the society in Madinah. They tend to act like one big extended family.

This kind of connection, and social responsibility, may be what keeps school C operational. Despite the disagreements between the headteacher, and the members of staff, they all appear to believe that what matters is not how well they get along, but how to serve their students the best way they can. This illustrates how powerful the sociocultural factors can be.

In addition to headteachers' empowerment, and how it has been reflected socially, according to school C participants, and the powerful impact of social expectations and beliefs, Ms. Norah, the math teacher, discusses how the education level of parents, and their ambitions for their children, could be regarded as a sociocultural element. She reflects on how this issue has social links by recalling her days as a student:

> Most mothers were not educated and may be illiterate, however, they used to follow up and encourage us to read, study and learn. But nowadays, with the majority of parents educated and almost all with university degrees, the students' levels' of achievement are declining and they are less enthusiastic about learning. Parents do not follow up with us and seem to care less.

When Ms. Norah was asked about the reasons behind this trend, she responds that:

> Text books and the formation of the curriculum play a role, but also religious reasons lay behind [the change]. Socially, it is not acceptable for parents to be busy away from their children from teaching them and caring about their education. Parents are occupied with social media and electronics and they do not even care to teach their children about religion and its practices.

My understanding here is that Ms. Norah discussed social elements and religion as one entity because the society in AlMadinah is known for being overly religious. This means that parents are expected to teach their children about religion and religious practices, including helping children to have a passion for learning and a love for reading. I assume that this is changing, according to Ms. Norah. She claims that students' lack of interest in learning and involvement in education, compared with earlier generations, is because parents are busy with less important issues, such as electronics and social media.

Overview

I explained to the participants that involvement in this study was voluntary, and that they can decide to take part, or not, without any adverse consequences. However, it appears that most of the participants just wanted to complete their interviews. This reluctance led to a limited number of participants, and limited data

from those who agreed to be involved. The participants knew that involvement was voluntary, but it felt uncomfortable conducting research in school C, which I assumed was due to the school's special circumstances.

The headteacher, Ms. Noha, was pleased to take part, wanted to extend the interview and did not mind having her books examined by the researcher. She appeared to appreciate the opportunity and was very thankful that she had the chance to share her thoughts with me hoping, perhaps, that one day her voice will be valued and she will be heard. The special circumstances of school C, including a teacher shortage, no deputy heads and uncooperative management assistants, and another intermediate school sharing the same building, meant that the leadership of the school was tested and stretched.

One way to describe the situation at school C is that it has a leadership crisis. The many responsibilities of the headteacher, including extensive paper-work, managing the day-to- day work of the school, with student evaluations and assessment, staff members with contempt about her leadership and management approach, combined to create an unhealthy work environment and affected the relationships between school staff.

The leadership structure of school C has a number of un-filled positions. The headteacher was dissatisfied about the shortage of teachers, with such a large number of students. The two teachers who participated in this study were also under pressure to handle the consequences of staff shortages.

Because of school C's leadership structure, and the linked dynamics, the applied model of leadership is rather hard to define. There is some evidence of emergent collaborative leadership models but the shortage of staff appears to affect the enactment of leadership within the school, notably in respect of staff's professional relationships and the overall school climate.

The empowerment of headteachers by the Ministry of Education seems to have led to the early resignation of headteachers in the city of Madinah, including the head of school C, notably because of the requirement to engage with male workers. Ms. Noha, the headteacher, expressed that the requirement to be in charge of school renovation responsibilities was uncomfortable for heads and their families. Consequently, Ms. Noha, along with other headteachers she knows, is planning to resign.

Social bonds seem to be strongly rooted in Madinah's society. Gender roles, and social responsibility and expectations, appear to be the main sociocultural elements affecting school leadership and the practice of leadership in school C.

The next chapter presents the findings from the last case study school, school D.

CHAPTER SEVEN CASE STUDY FOUR: SCHOOL D

Introduction

This chapter discusses the fourth and last case study school, School D, which is a private girls' primary school in Madinah. An integrated thematic approach is employed in presenting the data. The data sets used to develop the chapter are constructed from semi-structured interviews, the researcher's field notes, the school's website and documentary analysis of Ministry of Education documents.

The chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section introduces the research participants and their roles within the school. The second section presents the school's profile, which includes basic information about the school, including numbers of staff and students. This is followed by a section that describes the external and internal contexts of the school. Finally, and most important, is the discussion of the themes arising from the collected data. The emerging themes are leadership structure and roles, leadership models, delegation and accountability, authority and perceived authority, leadership and the leadership and management team, employment stability and social norms, and Saudi culture and traditions.

A concluding section provides an overview of my overall experience in school D, and the implications of the data collected from this case study school, linked to the research questions and aims.

School D Participants

There were five participants in this case study school, all of whom were interviewed. In addition, I made some field notes, which were recorded almost contemporaneously. There were fewer participants in school D than in the previous case study schools, due to the school's special circumstances. The headteacher is newly appointed, with less than one year in school D, and she declined to take part

in the study. In addition, the school has a shortage of teachers, and non-teaching staff. A fuller discussion about staffing will follow in a later section (leadership, and the leadership and management team). However, despite the limited number of participants, and the non-involvement of the headteacher in an interview, the interviewees were able to build an understanding of leadership practices and enactment in school D. Table 7.1 shows the five participants with their positions, duties, and their pseudonyms used throughout the chapter.

Table 7.1 shows that there is limited input from school leaders. This is because school D has very few leadership staff in post, caused by the school's current employment situation with no deputy heads and only one officially appointed management assistant (Ms. Rana).

	Participant	Description	Reference
1	Management assistant	She has 14 years experience, all of them at school D as a management assistant. She worked as a clerk, student advisor, and students' monitor [the person in charge of taking students' attendance and managing classes and recess times].	Ms. Rana
2	Maths teacher	She has 6 years teaching experience for lower primary grades.	Ms. Reem
3	Classroom teacher for grade 3	She has 5 years experience of teaching grade 3 at school D.	Ms. Randah
4	English language teacher.	She has 3 years experience as a teacher and 1 year's experience as a management assistant. She is the current school's health coordinator as well as the safety and security coordinator.	Ms. Renad
5	Religion and Social studies teacher	She has 6 years experience in teaching grades 1 – 6.	Ms. Rafa

Table 7. 1: Case study Four: School (D) Participants.

Although the headteacher did not agree to a formal interview, she discussed her school with me for more than an hour. The discussion features in my field notes and informs data analysis, as shown below.

The headteacher's decision not to take part in the formal interview may be because of cultural features and strains. The head comes from a well-known family in the community, the school has a well-established reputation, and she was newly appointed at the time of the research. These factors, and related cultural considerations, may have led the head to decide to have an informal conversation about my research, and her school, rather than take part in a formal interview.

School Profile

Background

School D is the primary section of a larger school which has a pre-school, a primary section, an intermediate school section, and a high school section. Each school has its own buildings and staff. The school has several campuses, which were initially divided by gender, and currently, by gender and the implemented curriculum. Boys' and girls' campuses are physically located remote from one another. The larger school has developed a strong reputation for academic excellence since its establishment in 1972 as a private school with two sections, one for boys and one for girls (Maarif, 2012). It started as a private school teaching the Saudi National curriculum (now known as the Arabic section), it is now licenced to deliver some international curricula such as the American diploma, the SAT and A levels, which has been newly named as the international section.

As part of the larger organisation, school D is a girls' private primary school located in the city of Madinah, under the supervision of the General Directorate of Education in AlMadinah Province (GDEMP) that teaches the Saudi national curriculum. As noted earlier, school D has a newly appointed headteacher, with no deputy heads. There are 27 staff members, of whom four are in management (the headteacher, a management assistant, a student monitor and a student advisor)

and 23 are teachers. The school has 277 students, occupying 12 classrooms, from grades 1 to 6.

School documents and forms

The participants in school D were very conservative about their documents and forms, the researcher's request to look at school documents, was denied by the headteacher. Therefore, the documents referred to in this chapter are limited to The Regulatory Manual, and The Procedural Manual, which are developed by the Ministry of Education, and documents available through the school's website.

School Context

External context

The girls' campus that I visited is part of the Arabic section and is located on the main road, with a side entrance. It comprises two separate buildings. One building is for the primary section, which is the focus of this study. The other building is for intermediate and high school grades (7 until 12). After passing the gate, heading towards the primary building, there is a wide rectangular outdoor grassy area, an outdoor cafeteria and a waiting room with glass walls, where students stay during the summer time while waiting for their parents to collect them. The outdoor area, and the school building, look quite old, with evidence of refurbishment work at different locations.

Internal context

The building of school D is rectangular, with a hall in the middle. It has three floors, with the headteacher and management department on the ground floor along with art and science labs, a kitchenette and storage rooms. I was not allowed to go to the

upper floors, and all the time I spent in the school was in the headteacher's office, and management department or the science lab, where all the interviews took place. My field notes suggest that the headteacher was not confident about showing me around the school, perhaps because she was new to the school.

Leadership Structure and Roles

The leadership structure of the collective schools

All research participants in school D discussed a form of senior leadership with a hierarchy above the headteacher with an unusual structure and roles. As my notes from the conversation with the headteacher, this leadership authority is a company that runs a number of schools, including the larger school that incorporates school D. My field notes with the headteacher suggest that the company's role is important and fundamental. Ms. Rana, the management assistant, elaborates that the school staff's tasks are usually allocated by the company 'all assignments come to us from the senior management team at the company' (Ms. Rana).

The dynamics between the school and the company take place at two levels; a leadership and management level and an operational level, as the company has its own supervisors and academic advisors. The first aspect appears to be confined to the school's management team, and includes assigning tasks and setting the organizational structure of the school. The second level relates to the school's daily circulars. Both the supervisors and the advisors from the company are involved with the school as a matter of routine. Ms. Rana, the management assistant, adds that 'the company follows our daily routine through an on-line portal and assignments… they have their own supervisors who come to visit us monthly'. The next section on school D's leadership structure will discuss the role of the company's academic supervisors. The organizational chart of the large school featuring school D’s

leadership structure is displayed on the school's website (see figure 7.1) with school D shown as one of the sections. Ms. Rana confirms that senior company leaders manage and supervise all school sections.

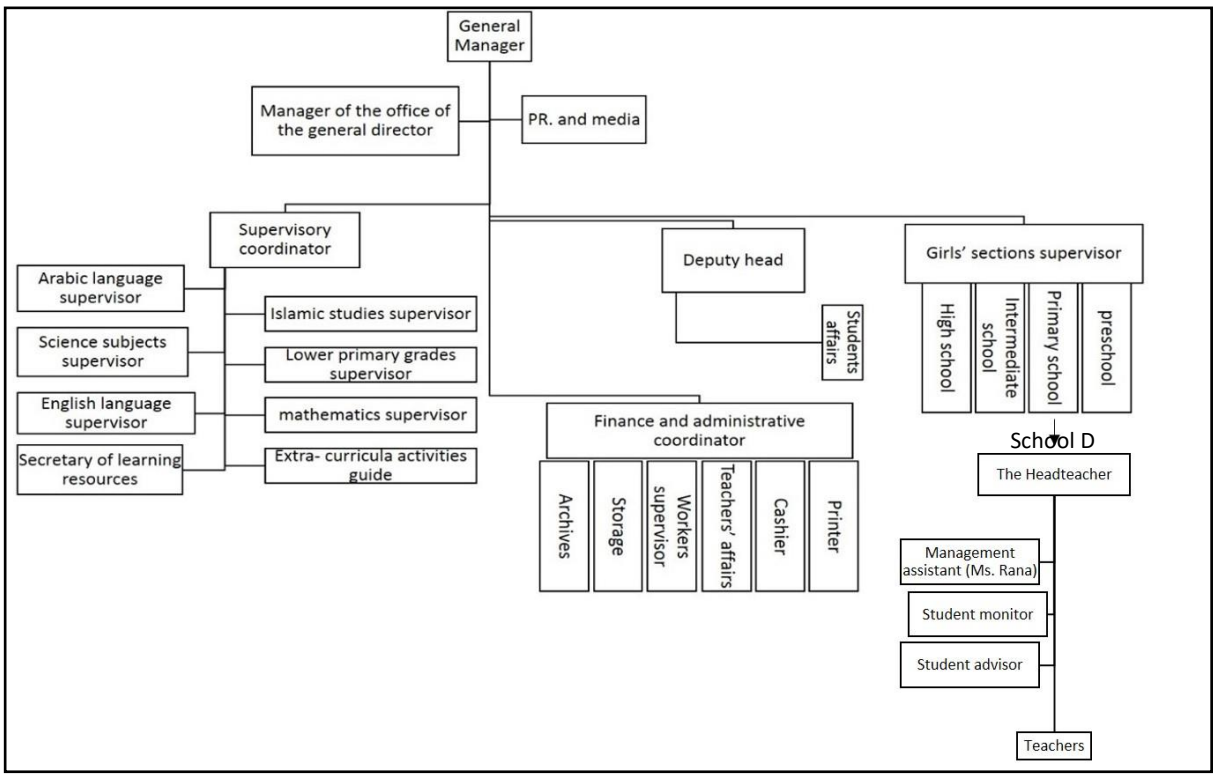


Figure 7. 1 Organizational Chart of the larger school featuring school D

Figure 7.1 shows that school D should have a senior supervisor from the company who would be in-charge of all girls' schools, but this senior supervisor was not mentioned by any of the interviewees, or by the headteacher. This may indicate that the company also has staff shortages.

Leadership structure of School D and the dynamics of that structure

The leadership structure of school D during field work was lacking many teaching and non-teaching positions. The organizational chart displayed in the school, next to the school's leadership and management department, which I was not allowed to copy or photograph, indicates all the positions that should be filled. However, the actual leadership structure at the time of the research was much simpler, according to the participants (see figure 7.2):

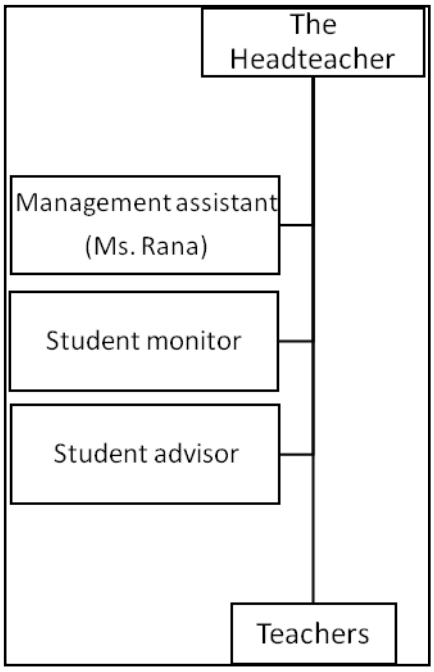


Figure 7. 2 The Organizational Chart of school D.

Figure 7.2 shows that school D has no deputy heads, and Ms. Rana, the management assistant, adds 'this has been the case for the past two years'. Therefore, the management team comprised only the headteacher, a management assistant, a student monitor and a student advisor. There was also 'a headteacher's personal assistant [whom] was hired personally by the head' (Ms. Rana). Because of the vacant deputy heads' positions, the newly appointed headteacher hired her

niece privately, as a management assistant or secretary to help her with paper work and documentation. This means that the assistant is only there for the headteacher and the latter is responsible for paying her salary. Considering the sociocultural context, and the staff situation at school D, this decision by the headteacher is understandable.

Ms. Rana holds a position as management assistant because she is covering the duties for the school's clerk, secretary, and is responsible for data entry. She also sometimes acts as student monitor and has some responsibility for teachers' affairs. Ms. Rafa, religion and social studies teacher, comments that:

> The headteacher came to our school this year, we have no deputy heads. Ms. Rana holds many of the deputy heads' responsibilities. She used to follow-up with teachers' punctuality, medical absences and so on [usually are carried out by the deputy head of teachers' affairs]. [In the hierarchy] after the headteacher, we have the headteacher's personal management assistant, who was hired after our new head came.

In addition to Ms. Rafa's input, three participants, Ms. Reem, maths teacher, Ms. Randah, classroom teacher, and Ms. Renad, English language teacher, described the leadership structure of their school based on their daily interactions. These participants gave the impression that teachers work in isolation from the management team. This was also suggested by Ms. Reem.

> My daily interactions are with colleagues and the internal maths supervisor [the company's supervisor], other than that I do not deal with management unless there is something coming from them.

Ms. Randah adds that 'it is true that our headteacher is new but we have no deputy heads, the administrative affairs are kind of away from us'. She adds that:

> Usually I interact with the teachers with whom I share the teachers' room. I do not interact with anyone from the management team unless there is a staff meeting or a formal gathering.

Similarly, Ms. Renad notes that:

> I work with the management assistants when I enter the school in the morning and when I leave or even if I want to be excused to leave early. Most of my communications are with the students' advisor.

Because the school has a teacher shortage, some teachers are teaching more than one subject, regardless of their qualifications. For example, Ms. Rafa, religion and social studies teacher, who holds a master's degree in religion studies, teaches both religion studies and social studies for upper primary and intermediate grades (grades 4 - 9). Ms. Rafa explains her responsibilities:

> We have a shortage of teachers. That is why I am now teaching four subjects in religion for primary and intermediate grades and social studies for primary grades.

Similarly, Ms. Randah, a classroom teacher, has taken on additional roles: 'I am working as a teacher, student advisor and a deputy head of students' affairs for my

class [grade three]'. Ms. Renad, an English language teacher, says that 'I have worked as students' supervisor for one year'.

On a different note, the role of the company within the school's internal leadership structure was discussed by one participant, Ms. Renad, an English language teacher, with no inputs from other interviewees. She states that the leadership structure of school D comprises:

> The headteacher, management assistants and internal supervisors. The English language supervisor [my supervisor] also works as an academic coordinator [for the primary grades teachers]. We have internal subject supervisors in our school because we have no deputy heads but there are management assistants like Ms. Rana, who is holding some of the deputy heads' responsibilities.

The discussion above suggests that the exercise of power in school D is top-down. The external leadership team (the company) appears to be remotely managing school D's daily routines. However, the internal evidence suggests that teachers play a major role in the school's structure and functions, despite the shortage of teachers. The headteacher appears to be juggling tasks, running the school, fulfilling the deputy heads' responsibilities, and managing and leading the staff members.

Leadership Model

When the participants were asked to describe the applied leadership model, their responses appeared to be contradictory, although they were discussing similar concepts using different terms. However, the term used to identify the leadership style was the same among teachers, but different from that of the non-teaching

staff member. One participant from the management staff describes the school's leadership model as shared while the other participants, who are all teachers, prefer to use collaboration and cooperation.

Ms. Rana, management assistant, discusses how the headteacher shares and engages with her staff in a friendly way. 'Leadership is shared in our school. The headteacher physically shares with us all the field work, it happens in a friendly way'. Similarly, Ms. Renad, an English language teacher and the school's health, safety and security coordinator, thinks that school leadership is shared because 'some teachers hold little managerial roles like myself'. She adds that 'my colleagues and I collaborate but, at the end of the day, each one has her role within the school'.

In contrast, Ms. Rafa, religion and social studies teacher, seems to strongly disagree with these perceptions, stating that 'leadership is not shared here, everyone just does their job without sharing or collaborating'. She also refers to a lack of communication channels between the teachers and the management. She notes that the arrangements were different with the former headteacher, and adds that:

> Now our management is all about orders…until you feel if you have a suggestion you choose to keep the door shut… my interactions with the school management are only if there is an official announcement or so.

She elaborates that 'the problem with school management in the private sector is that there is no cooperation or a proper way of communication'. During the interview, Ms. Rafa was interrupted by a management assistant asking her to go to class. Ms. Rafa claims that she did not have a class at this time and comments that 'this is a live example of miscommunication'.

Ms. Randah, a classroom teacher, offers a different view. Even though her interactions are between her colleagues and the internal supervisor for lower

primary grades, she says that 'we talk to each other and to the management, especially our headteacher. Her door is open for all and she listens to all of us'.

Ms. Reem, maths teacher, thinks that leadership is not shared but that there is collaboration between subject teachers. She explains that ' there is no shared leadership but we [maths teachers] collaborate with each other and we are friendly'.

Overall, the perceptions of participants about the leadership model applied in school D differ in a number of respects; the role of the participant, the experience of their interactions with school management, and the school's leadership structure. This suggests that the leadership model may be seen differently by teachers and non-teaching staff, as the former described it with terms such as collaborative and cooperative, while the latter called it shared; although 'shared' and 'collaboration' may imply certain similarities.

Delegation and Accountability

Accountability at school D appears to be treated 'by the book', and that is no surprise as this is consistent with the sociocultural context. Four participants expressed their acceptance of delegation as a concept, but none of them had practiced it. This may be due to the way that leadership is structured within the school, internally and externally. The influence of the external structure, the company, seems to be particularly significant.

Ms. Rana, management assistant, strongly emphasised that delegation is not an option. 'Of course, I cannot delegate. Any work under my name I will be accountable for, thus I can never delegate it to anyone'. Ms. Renad, English language teacher, says that she 'didn't delegate to anyone . . . or been asked to fulfil [duties] for someone else'.

Ms. Rafa, religion and social studies teacher, comments that 'I do not need to practice delegation and no one has delegated anything to me'. Similarly, Ms. Randah, classroom teacher, notes that 'I assume it is possible [to delegate] but it never happened before'.

Ms. Reem, maths teacher, thinks there is no room for delegation as maths teachers are busy for the whole day:

> We have no time. We start with the first period, stop for the recess, then [during] the last teaching periods, I have to correct students' work and go over their books.

The overall evidence suggests that the senior leadership exerts strong influence in school D. This includes close supervision meetings and visits, during which every staff member is held accountable for her work, either as a teacher or as management staff. This means that the company appears to promote specific leadership practices where delegation is not exercised within the school.

Authority and Perceived Authority

The earlier discussion of school D's staff situation and the applied leadership structures, shed light on the impact of social and cultural influences on the school staff. These factors combine to leave limited room for members of staff to take any responsibility without an official appointment. The interviewees' comments support this view, as shown below.

Ms. Renad is an English teacher and also the school's health, safety and security coordinator. She is the only research participant holding both a teaching and a non-teaching role. She sets an example of how authority is exercised within school D. Ms. Renad explains the reason behind her appointment for the coordinator's position stating that 'I am the coordinator because I have more free time than my

other colleagues'. When asked about how her colleagues reacted to her appointment, she says that:

> The coordinator's job is pretty managerial. So my role in relation to my colleagues is based on collaborating during fire drills or whenever there is an awareness programme or event. I ask them if they would like to collaborate and participate. Some of them do but others just encourage the students to take part in the event.

All the other participants note that their work is confined to meeting with the internal supervisors from the company and that those supervisors are the means of authority through which they are assessed, and to whom they report. For example, Ms. Reem, maths teacher, explains that:

> We have weekly meetings in the supervisors' room with the internal maths supervisor and all maths teachers at the school [all grade levels]. She [the supervisor] checks what we have done during the week and [what are] our needs. [She provides] training bags and workshops whenever needed.

Ms. Randah, classroom teacher, notes that one of the ways in which the senior team shows its authority is by developing a school policy on teaching performance and expectations. These polices and evaluation forms, according to Ms. Randah, are different from the teachers' performance charts and forms developed and required for teachers' performance assessment by the Ministry of Education. She states that:

> Generally, the school's policy requires more requirements than the Ministry. For example, we have level tests for our students which are not required by the Ministry. Plus, the Ministry's supervisor attends a (typical lesson[2]) only

[2] A 'typical lesson' is a term used to describe an assessed lesson where the teacher is assessed and graded for her application of all teaching strategies in the assessment form. The lesson usually has guests, including a number of ministry supervisors, the school's head, deputy heads and other subject teachers.

> for few teachers. In our school, all teachers have to present and prepare one lesson where our teaching strategies are assessed. As well as [we get assessed for the] extra-curricular activities [we plan for our students] and the exchange visits [we conduct] between teachers.

Ms. Rana, the management assistant, sums up how authority is perceived within the school by stressing the roles of the academic advisors.

> Externally, it comes from the academic advisors to the subject teachers. They follow up with the teachers and their lesson plans, classes and needs. They conduct weekly meetings in this regard.

Ms. Rafa, religion and social studies teacher, has a different view about authority in school D. She believes that 'successful management is the reason behind leading the education process, furthermore, even teachers' performance improves'. She adds that this is not just her personal view. She claims that this is what every teacher, who was at the school in the time of the former school head, thinks. 'It's not just me, ask anyone who is old here'.

Overall, the discussion above shows that authority in school D is controlled by the company (the senior leadership structure). With several internal supervisors and advisory roles, the company stresses its authority and leaves no room for school staff to question it. I believe that the senior leadership team is well aware of the sociocultural beliefs about authority, and what is known as common practice; that one should not attempt to question the responsibilities allocated and assigned by their superiors.

In addition, authority and the way it is perceived, seems to be defined mostly by the individual and it was interpreted by all the participants that authority is somehow taken for granted and not discussed, at least publicly, in a way where it could be questioned or judged. This may be because the leadership structure, and related

processes, has created a more obedient attitude amongst staff members as they may be concerned about job stability and the possibility of losing their jobs, in case they decline an additional task, as discussed in a later section. However, it was clear that the participants they showed much respect and acceptance, with one exception, about the way that authority is exercised. This could be caused by the culture of the school, but it also relates to the wider sociocultural elements of Saudi culture, which will be discussed in chapter eight.

Leadership and the Leadership and Management Team

The aim here was to establish how and why staff members took on leadership duties, with or without an official appointment; what motives the interviewees to take a leadership role. The participants in school D had diverse views on this matter. Four out of the five expressed their motivation to access leadership positions but Ms. Reem, maths teacher, had a different view.

The participants identified love for the job, a desire for leadership, being the most suitable candidate for the job, and a sense of social responsibility, as motivators to access leadership. Ms. Rana, management assistant, says that she is motivated to move into another managerial position because of the following: ‘my love for my work and my colleagues'. This motivates her to continue what she has been doing for the past 14 years. She also has applied for a higher position. 'I already have requested to be assigned to the students' affairs assistant position'.

The English language teacher, Ms. Renad, believes that she was appointed to health, safety and security duties because she was the most suitable person for the job. As noted earlier, her teaching hours are lower than those of other teachers and that results in more free time, which is now being used in her coordinator role. She adds that 'I plan on working in management [only] but not now, [because] I enjoy teaching'.

Ms. Randah, classroom teacher, thinks that working in management or leadership is not just about motivation but also about the person's experience and that the personality of the individual matters:

> The teacher who works as a deputy head or headteacher would be better than the one who gets to the position without any teaching experience, yet her personality may never work.

She adds that:

> I want and plan to work in management [why] well, listen it is not because of the workload of the teacher but I personally love to work on computers and what is beautiful about managerial work is that it ends by the end of the business day unlike the teachers' work, [which] does not end when I leave the school.

Ms. Rafa, religion and social science teacher, expresses her strong motivation to leadership and states that her ambitions go beyond becoming a school head:

> I am very ambitious for a role bigger than the teacher's. I want to go to management and even to the Shura council [3][why] honestly, [to provide] social service. I feel I want to benefit more than one place, the whole society.

[3] The Shura Council is a consultative council that is 'consists of a speaker and 150 members, representing people of knowledge, experience, and competence' from the diverse kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Ms. Reem has a very different view, preferring to remain as a teacher and declining any leadership or management role:

> No, I love teaching and I love the role I play as a teacher. We suffer from shortage of staff and there are so many classes and teaching material to be covered.

The discussion of the leadership and management team is minimal due to the gaps among leadership and management staff, and a corresponding lack of management team representation among the participants. However, from my informal discussion with the headteacher, it appears that leadership practice at school D is clear for school staff. It also appears that, although some participants are considering pursuing their ambitions in leadership and management, those who were in teaching roles during the field work were reluctant to move to leadership in the near future.

Social Norms, Culture and Leadership Enactment

The five participants agreed that Saudi society is highly influenced by cultural beliefs and traditions. The factors considered to be cultural by the participants include parental involvement, communication between the family (home) and the school, and the school sector (if it is a public or private school). These elements are considered cultural as they relate to social norms in Saudi society.

In order to understand how the concept of leadership is perceived and the enactment of leadership in school D, we need to understand the sociocultural context of the school. During my field work, I made a cultural link between the

actions of the individuals involved and their motives. I believe in acknowledging the importance of the context, and that building an understanding of it is important in revealing how leadership is enacted within school D.

Many social and cultural fundamentals appear to affect the leadership of school D and how it is practiced. For example, the headteacher of school D accepted to openly discuss her school with me, and its leadership and management situation, but not to be considered a participant in the study for personal reasons, which are shaped by social and cultural expectations. These include that the head come from a well-known family, and because of the reputation of the school in the community.

Ms. Renad, English language teacher, thinks that parents play a role in shaping the relationships within the school as they influence the school's management by their actions and whether and how they complain about a teacher. The cultural link here is that, in private schools, such as school D, the school's leadership and management members try to satisfy parents' needs, which may mean taking actions which are perceived to be unfair on teachers. For example, Ms. Renad discusses how parents' attitudes towards teachers might relate to the time during the school year and whether teachers are established or new in the school, and how their views might have an impact on the type of relationship between teachers and the school's management:

> Parents might be cautious and have complaints, especially if you are new in the school and then by the end of the year they come to thank you.

Similarly, Ms. Randah, a classroom teacher, explains how home–school communication could affect students' performance, and how the lack of communication, because of social beliefs, or to avoid societal judgments, could result in poor student performance. She gives an example:

> I had a student who was very lazy. She always forgets her books, and does not do her homework. All teachers complain about her. I then learnt that

> her parents got divorced and she needed attention. I guess if the school's management knew earlier, and informed us, we could have helped her more.

Ms. Rana, management assistant, thinks that peer pressure might affect the relationships in the school, and therefore also inform the leadership practices:

> Yes. I believe there are some social factors affecting the practice of leadership in schools such as when some colleagues see you helping out with duties that are not part of your job. They try to persuade you not to help and [tell you] that you are only helping because your friend has pressured you to.

Ms. Rafa, religion and social studies teacher, thinks that it is a common belief in society that the manager is always right and therefore has to be obeyed:

> The social norm is affected widely by traditions, like for example it is common knowledge here that as long as the manager [school head] says: (follow the policy of…) as long as I am the manager then what I say happens.

Ms. Rafa thinks that this cultural element influences leadership enactment in schools, especially private schools. Similarly, Ms. Reem, maths teacher, agrees that the workload on teachers working in private and public schools is different and, therefore, the enactment of leadership between the two school sectors varies. She comments that 'there might be [social factors] but here in our school we are under pressure unlike other schools [including] public ones'. This links to the earlier discussion about authority and perceived authority.

Employment stability in public and private schools

The discussion of leadership practice and authority at school D, and the impact of the company on shaping how authority is perceived by staff members, includes expressions of concern by some participants. Ms. Reem, Ms. Randah, and Ms.

Renad all feared losing their jobs if they reacted in a specific way. This observation suggests a possible link between social factors and leadership enactment in school D.

These three participants are teachers with between three and six years' experience. As noted earlier, school D has a shortage of teachers. However, it is not clear if this is a result of a high rate of turnover or because of staff dismissal by the school's management.

Ms. Reem discussed her hopes for employment stability by noting that 'I wish I could get appointed in a public school [why] for employment financial stability'. Similarly, Ms. Randah, expressed her hope that 'we [teachers] in private schools could one day get to the financial stability of those in the public schools'.

Ms. Renad's response took the form of a message to the Minister of Education:

> I ask for teachers in private schools to be guaranteed they won't get fired once appointed [unless breaking the employment law] and that they get similar salaries, [and] holidays [benefits] to teachers working in public schools.

Ms. Renad adds that teachers in private schools may not receive the benefits available to those obtained by teachers working in public schools, including holidays, number of classes per week, special leave days, minimum wages and salary scales.

Ms. Reem, maths teacher, mentions that a public school is more stable financially than those in private schools. She argues that, no matter how long teachers work in

the private sector, there is always the fear of losing their job. 'It is true that this is my seventh year here in AlMadiah but the public sector is better in regard to this [job stability]'. Ms. Rafa suggests that the government should cover the differences in salaries between public and private schools.

On a different point, Ms. Renad, English language teacher, thinks that the difference between public and private schools sometimes occur in the implementation of the curriculum and in the time it gets introduced to the students. She explains that:

> Yes, between public and private may be because I teach English so there is a difference from that side. But their curriculum is good; it is more suitable to teach it from grade 1 not grades 4 or 5.

Overall, it is clear that the four teacher participants are hoping to receive payments at least equal to the teachers in the public schools, not less, as is the current position.

Overview

Although there is only limited evidence about the senior leadership and management team of school D (represented by the company in the school's organizational structure.), the enactment of leadership in school D appears to be highly influenced by the company and its advisors. The impact of the company has on school daily routine and staff members seems to be central. The effects of sociocultural factors on the enactment of leadership within the school are implicit in some respects and explicit in others. However, with no access to the school's documents, and no interviews with a representative from the company, there is insufficient data to reach a firm conclusion about the influence of the company on leadership practices in school D.

The collected data from school D shows that the headteacher is juggling her responsibilities as a head who has been newly appointed to a school with no deputy heads and few management assistants. She was accountable for the deputy heads' work, until a deputy head is appointed, while still being asked to respond to the school's higher management; the company and its internal supervisors and academic advisors. The teachers seem to be struggling between responding to their new head, finding common ground with her, and fulfilling their teaching responsibilities and obligations towards their students, while reporting to the company's subject supervisors and to the Ministry of Education.

The circumstances in school D suggest that the nature of leadership in school D is unique. Understanding it requires consideration of the sociocultural elements surrounding the school, with an inadequate number of official leadership posts and a shortage of teachers.

School leadership in school D differs from the other case studies because of the dual external and internal leadership structures. The teachers are supervised by the company's advisors, seeming to result in two isolated groups of staffs, teachers and non-teaching members, with each group acting separately.

The management team, as well as the teachers, receive their assignments from the company through the on-line portal and the company is the authority to which they report, and which conducts performance evaluation and assessment. Perhaps as a consequence, the two groups focus on their own work and there is not much communication between them.

In relation to the leadership model, the participants seemed to prefer cooperating with those colleagues who have similar responsibilities. However, there was not much evidence of delegation, because of concerns about accountability. Some participants expressed concern about employment stability and there may be links

between that and their ambitions for practicing leadership in private schools. The evidence suggests that sociocultural aspects are seen differently by the participants as some think that these relate to co-worker relationships while others believe that it relates more widely to the school sector and how the exercise of authority may be stretched in private schools when compared to public schools.

The next chapter presents a cross-case analysis, linked to a discussion of the literature. The themes emerging from the data from all four schools will inform the structure of this chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter provides a cross-case analysis (Bassey, 1999; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014) of the data collected from the four case study schools. The study employs a multi-method approach to achieve methodological triangulation (Briggs et al., 2012: 85). The analysis discusses the findings from the semi-structured interviews, observations and documentary analysis from all four case studies, linked to the relevant literature.

To achieve respondent triangulation (Briggs, et al., 2012; Bush, 2012), the interviewees included: headteachers, deputy heads, management assistants, teachers without any leadership or management duties and teachers with leadership or management duties (see table 8.1).

Case study school	**Teachers**		**Deputy heads**	**Management assistants**
	With leadership or management duties	Without leadership or management duties		
A	4	0	1	2
B	3	1	1	2
C	0	2	0	3
D	1	3	0	1
Total	8	6	2	8
headteachers	School A = 1	School B = 1	School C = 1	School D =0
Total number of interview participants				27

Table 8.1: Number of interview participants

The chapter is structured by the themes identified in the finding chapters, and by other emergent themes, for cross-case analysis. Within each theme, the four case

study schools are compared, drawing out the similarities and differences between them. A multi-level approach is deployed in analysing the data. The discussion provides a fine-grained analysis of the cases at two levels; school location (Jeddah: schools A& B and AlMadinah: schools C& D), and school sector (public: schools A& C and private: schools B& D). The case study schools were chosen through purposive sampling (Creswell, 2020; Etikan et al., 2016). Table 3.1 (see page: 64) displays the sampling frame of the case study schools and the total number of participating schools.

The structure of the chapter is as follows:

- Leadership structure of the case study schools (it discusses the organisational charts of the case study schools combined, the leadership structure and roles, and the dynamics of that structure).
- Leadership models (it discusses the applied leadership models in the case study schools along with the implications of these models for the practice of leadership).
- Issues related to delegation, agency and accountability arise from the discussions on leadership styles.
- Authority and perceived authority.
- Sociocultural Influences on school leadership, including parents' perceptions and involvement and leadership practices, headteachers empowerment, gendered roles and societal expectations, along with a discussion of participants' views on leadership enactment in Saudi primary schools).

Algarni and Male (2014: 46) argue that 'very few studies have explored the application of leadership and management principles developed in a western democratised environment to other cultures, and especially to Arab states dominated by Islam', one of which is Saudi Arabia. The aim of this study is to contribute to the empirical evidence and published research on primary school leadership in Saudi Arabia, particularly that which examines the relationship between the enactment of leadership and sociocultural aspects. According to

Hallinger and Hammad (2019), only four sources in their systematic review of research on educational leadership and management in Arab societies, relate to school leadership in Saudi Arabia were identified. These articles are Algarni and Male (2014), Alameen, Male and Palaiologou (2015), Al-Omari and Wuzynani (2013) and Talib (2010).

To address the limited literature, the researcher widened the scope to include other Arab countries, such as Jordan, Kuwait, and Lebanon, on which there is empirical published research on the concept and practice of school leadership in public or private, primary, or secondary, schools.

Leadership Structure

The interviews revealed that the leadership structures within the schools are hierarchical and fostered by the centralised system of the MoE, supporting the findings of Algarni and Male (2014: 46) that 'the Saudi school system has been highly standardised and centralised'. Similarly, Alameen et al. (2015) argue that centralisation is evident across the Saudi educational system, for example, the development of the national curriculum. This is also represented in the production of the Procedural Manual (TPM, 2019) and the Regulatory Manual (MOE, 1437H).

Organisational charts of the case study schools

The researcher noted that the organisational chart of schools C and D were displayed at the entrance of the schools. (For example, see figures 6.1 and 6.2, page: 152) but this was not observed in schools A and B. Briggs et al. argue that 'all research observations have important implications' (2012: 213). However, the data from the interviews and documentary analysis indicate that the leadership charts of the four schools were not that different and that they were determined externally. For instance, according to the Regulatory manual (MOE, 1437H: 5-6), all schools in the general education sector are mandated to follow one of the pre-designed organisational charts available in the manual (MOE, 1437H: 7-10). The manual

differentiates the mandated structure according to the number of staff in the school, especially the number of deputy heads. Similarly, the number of staff in the school depends on the number of students and classrooms, as also mandated in the Regulatory manual (MOE, 1437H: 11). It is noticeable in the Regulatory manual that the number of students and classrooms, and the corresponding number of staff members required, is different across primary (elementary), intermediate and high schools. For example: for a school to have three deputy heads, there have to be 651 or more students in a primary school, compared to 601 in a middle school, and 501 in a high school. Table 8.2 presents in detail the various circumstances for the staff situation, in public schools, and the corresponding required number of staff, based on the number of classrooms and students, as stated in the Regulatory manual (MOE, 1437H: 11).

However, the manual permits some limited flexibility, as it allows headteachers with schools with fifteen teachers or less to make informed decisions to merge school councils and committees 'in a way that does not affect its tasks' (MOE, 1437H: 10).

Second: Formation of the administrative body for public education schools

The table below shows the formation of the administrative body for the schools of the Ministry of Education according to Ministerial Resolution No. (333) dated 19/11/1432H

Occupation	Number	Elementary schools	Intermediate schools	High schools
		School category	School category	School category
School leader (headteacher)	Teacher with low teaching load	1-5 classrooms	1-2 classrooms	1-2 classrooms
	1	6 classrooms or more	3 classrooms or more	3 classrooms or more
Deputy head	1	200 – 400 students	150 – 350 students	100 – 250 students
	2	401 – 650 students	351 – 600 students	251 – 500 students
	3	651 students or more	601 students or more	501 students or more
Counsellor	1	100 – 250 students	100 – 250 students	100 – 250 students
	2	251 – 500 students	251 – 500 students	251 – 500 students
	3	501 students or more	501 students or more	501 students or more
Laboratory officer*	Subject teacher	1 – 10 classrooms	1 – 6 classrooms	1 – 5 classrooms
	1	11 classrooms or more	7 – 18 classrooms	6 – 17 classrooms
	2		19 classrooms or more	18 classrooms or more
Administrator of learning resources	1	12 classrooms or more	9 classrooms or more	6 classrooms or more
Activity leaders	1	300 students or more	250 students or more	200 students or more
Management assistant	1	50 – 450 students	50 – 350 students	50 – 250 students
	2	451 – 700 students	351 – 600 students	251 – 500 students
	3	701 students or more	601 students or more	501 students or more
Clerk	1	200 students or more	150 – 500 students	100 – 400 students
	2		501 students or more	401 students or more
School leader secretary	1	550 students or more	450 students or more	350 students or more
School guard	1	All schools	All schools	All schools
Services worker	1	250 students or less	250 students or less	250 students or less
	2	251 students or more	251 students or more	251 students or more

* If the school's leadership structure is not completed, one of the teachers within the schools is assigned to lead the school with a low teaching load.
* If the school deserves one deputy head, the deputy head should undertake all the tasks assigned to the school's deputy heads of (academic affairs, student affairs and school affairs).
* In the school deserves two deputy heads, the first deputy head should undertake the tasks and duties of academic and school affairs, and the second one should undertake the tasks of student affairs.

Table 8.2: Formation of the Administrative Body for Public Schools as explained in the Regulatory manual (MOE, 1437H: 11).

The two private schools, B and D, had different structures, notably in respect of their external dimensions. The leadership structure above to the headteacher, is referred to as the company. The company has its own senior management team and staff. It is an educational company that is 'working within the Consumer Services Sector Focusing on Education Service' (Decypha, 2017).

The interviewees in both schools B and D discussed that the organisational charts of the schools were developed by the company that runs and manages each school, in accordance with the MoE's regulations in the Regulatory manual (MOE, 1437H: 5-6). This means that the structures of both public and private schools may seem different, yet the difference only relates to the external structure (above the headteacher). This indicates dual accountability to the leadership companies that manage schools B and D, as well as to the MoE.

Leadership structure and roles

Having established that the four case study schools have similar organisational charts, except in respect of external accountability, the charts represent the leadership structure in the case study schools. From both interviews and observations, the leadership structures, from the headteacher onwards, in all schools A, B, C, and D are similar, as they all follow the same hierarchical structure. This resonates with Bush's (2011: 40) claim 'that organizations are hierarchical systems'. Within the Saudi educational system, which is highly centralised (Aburizaizah et al., 2019; Alameen et al., 2015; Algarni and Male, 2014) schools, as organisations, are expected to be centralised.

The traditional hierarchical structure regulated by the MoE, is discussed by many scholars (Bush, 2011; Bush and Crawford, 2012; Gronn, 2010). The hierarchical structure as prescribed by MoE (MOE, 1437H: 5-10) consists of the following positions: headteacher, deputy head of academic affairs, deputy head of students' affairs, deputy head of school affairs, management assistants, student advisor, student monitor, subject teachers and classroom teachers. For a full list of staff members in the case study schools see table 9.1 (page: 237).

The analysis of the leadership structures of the four case studies is based on the organisational chart of each school, the school's website, and the interview data. Despite the similarity of these structures, there were a few differences between the schools' structures, as a consequence of individual variables.

Comparing the two cities, schools A and B in Jeddah have all the roles in their leadership structure fulfilled, but schools C and D in AlMadinah experienced teaching and non-teaching staff shortages. Table 8.1 (page 194) shows the number of interviewees. Differences in the numbers across cases was due to staff shortages. The leadership structure of school D appears to show severe staff shortages, with no deputy heads, and the headteacher is a newly appointed head, with less than a year in the school.

In the same sector comparison, the extended roles above the headteacher in both private schools: B and D, a.k.a. the senior leadership team, appears to be similar. Both schools are run by a company, which, according to the participants, specialises in managing schools and educational organisations. The superordinate company structures created other roles within the hierarchy, including subject coordinator, internal supervisor, and general supervisor.

One example of differences between the schools' leadership structures, is that of school B. Even with no shortage of staff, the school's leadership structure does not have a deputy head of school affairs role, nor a deputy head of student affairs. However, there was no shortage of staff, as the school had two deputy heads of academic affairs, one for lower primary and one for upper primary. The school covers the missing positions by sharing their duties among three parties; the deputy heads of academic affairs, the company's internal supervisor and other school management assistants, as explained in chapter five. Such differences between public and private schools, and in some cases international schools as well, are referred to as 'diversity of organisations' Aburizaizah et al. (2019: 811) within 'central governments' overall policies (Aburizaizah et al., 2016: 37).

Overall, in all four case study schools, the leadership structures seemed to be consistent with the regulations of MoE. However, in the private schools, the leadership structures appear to abide by the regulations of the ministry but with some personalisation based on the company's view of the schools' particular needs and standards.

The dynamics of the leadership structure, top-down or bottom-up

The data show that, even though the leadership structures in the case study schools were inevitably hierarchical, the dynamics of those structures in each school were different, and not necessarily top-down, in contrast to the views of Bush, (2011) who argues that schools in centralised systems, are expected to have hierarchical structures, where the communication tends to be vertical and top-down, or what (Muijs and Harris, 2003: 442) refer to as 'traditional top–down leadership styles'.

When they were asked about the dynamics within their schools, the participants' views vary. To some, the dynamics have shifted from the centralised top-down line of orders to a more autonomous structure. On the other hand, to other participants, the top-down dynamic of the structure seems to be satisfactory.

Lumby, (2013) argues that hierarchical and bureaucratic structures tend to limit the enactment of leadership, as they offer only limited autonomy. However, in school A, for example, despite the fostered centralisation by the MoE's regional offices, the participants argue otherwise. They compared the current exercise of leadership, in light of the Procedural manual, either through the distribution of tasks among different school staff members or through the creation of teams. Within teams, the nature of work is in accordance with the structure, but with full autonomy, and minimum reference to the headteacher or the MoE's supervisor.

Another example of how the participants interpreted the shift of the dynamics of the centralised leadership structure stretches the concept to include teachers' training and staff development. One participant explains that, after years of having workshops and training provided to teachers from the MoE representative offices (a.k.a.: the local authority) only, the extended agency of the local authority allowed qualified staff members to offer training sessions and/or lead the implementation of new teacher- developed projects to their colleagues.

On the other hand, participants from the two schools in AlMadinah (C and D) described the dynamics of the structure as a top-down, either from the headteacher, the MoE, or even from the senior management team at the company. In light of the interviewees' input, in public schools, it appears that when all roles are fulfilled, there is more room for a multi-directional dynamic within the leadership structure, whereas, when there is a staff shortage, the assumption is that all members of staff are overworked and they just stick to having the job done, like the case in school C. This is supported by the documentary analysis. The leadership structure suggested by the MoE for primary schools is an 'ideal structure', applicable only in those schools where all the specified roles are fulfilled (MOE, 1437H: 6), which is applicable to school A in Jeddah. The situation, in the comparable school in AlMadinah, was different, due to the shortages of staff. By comparing those two public schools, the evidence suggests a connection between the school's fulfilled roles and the dynamics of the leadership structure.

In the private schools (B and D), the extended structure implies that the dynamics for the school head are different, and the dynamics of the leadership structure differ due to the embedded roles of the company's supervisors and staff. This has different implications for the two private schools. It allows for extended agency in school B but only helps in getting the job done in school D, where there are staff shortages.

Overall, the four case study schools show that the dynamics of the leadership structure are strongly influenced by the centralised top-down system of the MoE, either directly, by the regulations in the manuals, or indirectly through the local authority. The variations are attributable partly to how the participants in each school interpreted the limited opportunities for extended agency (which could be central, from the MoE and its representative offices, or institutional, that is initiated within the school, embedded within this bureaucratic system). Alghulayqah (2020 :5) argues that schools are obliged 'to adhere to the educational standards of Saudi Arabia', even though it might be constraining the improvement of practice.

The applied leadership models in the case study schools

Some studies suggest a correlation between school leadership structure and the style of leadership, or what is referred to here as the applied leadership model (e.g.: Buluç, 2009). The data revealed that, in the case study schools, formal models of leadership such as: hierarchical and managerial leadership (Bush, 2008; 2011) are evident. In addition to that, some references to instructional (Bush, 2007) and transactional leadership (Alhudithi, 2021) were presented. Other collegial leadership models were also discussed by the participants, notably collaborative and shared leadership (Crawford, 2019; Gronn, 2010b), in addition to distributed leadership (Bush and Glover, 2014; Davis, 2009; Harris, 2013; Harris et al., 2007; Harris and Spillane, 2008; Spillane and Camburn, 2006; Spillane Halverson and Diamond, 2001).

The following sections discuss each of these models, noting variations across the cases, based on participants' assessments of how these leadership models are applied in their school, linked to issues of accountability, autonomy, and agency.

Hierarchical, Bureaucratic and Managerial Leadership

As established above, the leadership structures in Saudi primary schools appear to be influenced mainly by the Ministry of Education, through its standardised national regulations and manuals, and its regional offices. In addition, the educational companies have a significant influence on the management of the two private schools (B and D).

In the case study schools, the influence of the Ministry was evident through their leadership structures (MOE, 1437H: 7-10). According to Alameen et al (2015), centralisation constrains the enactment of school leadership. Bush and Middlewood (2013: 62-63), citing Lumby (2001), also state that hierarchical and bureaucratic structures tend to limit the enactment of leadership'. Despite some participants from schools A and B claiming levels of autonomy, the dominant practice seems to

allow little autonomy to school leaders. Alameen et al. (2015) argue that the centralised system of the Ministry of Education has 'left little room for manoeuvre' (ibid: 121) for school leaders and heads.

That resonates with the practices of MoE which appear to promote and expect a managerial role for school leaders. For example, headteachers argue that their classroom visits, to evaluate teachers' performance, have increased. Such central agency of the MoE, in determining how many visits a headteacher needs to conduct per teacher every year, seems to be accepted differently by headteachers. The overall perspective is that, with such agency, headteachers feel either socially constrained by the local authority (for example: school C) or institutionally enabled (as in school B).

In addition to the requirements of the MoE, other factors, such as the school type and the leadership structure external to the school, appear to influence the applied leadership model and the headteacher's role. Wanasika et al (2011: 234) argue that managerial leadership is connected to the prevailing culture within centralised educational systems. They conclude that cultural and individual differences affect the practice of management (ibid), which seems to resonate with the case study schools.

Instructional, Transactional and Transformational Leadership

Instructional leadership is usually associated in the literature with 'ongoing supervision' (Vogel and Alhudithi, 2021: 10), teacher development (Vogel and Alhudithi, 2021: 17) and teacher empowerment (Hallinger, 1992: 371). Evidence from the four schools suggest that transactional leadership is practiced along with instructional and transformational models of leadership, as they appear, to some extent, to be fostered by the MoE's regulations.

For example, one headteacher (of school A) discussed the way the MoE offers staff training and on-going development. The approach is controlled by the MoE,

through a website for teachers across the general education sector, while for non-teaching staff it is also centralised but extended to be offered and monitored by the local authorities.

Despite the bureaucracy and managerialism of the MoE, the discussion above reveals that the new regulations of MoE appear to be leaning towards slightly less centralised educational practices, including empowering teachers as leaders, and engaging them in the decision making, also focusing more on staff development and training. Such approaches are discussed below.

Collaborative, Shared and Distributed Leadership

The participants from the four case study schools claimed that they collaborate a lot. Coleman (2012: 83) suggests that 'the relationship between structure and agency is itself dynamic and reflexive', as the leader's values, characteristics and beliefs are linked in shaping the context and reflected in how agentic the structure can be. Whereas this might be a discussion of a more collegial model of leadership, rather than the formal one applied in the case study schools, the evidence suggests that the current school structure in the case study schools allows some scope for agency.

From the documentary analysis, which was based heavily on the manuals developed by the MoE, there appears to be a call to shift the direction towards a more decentralised education system in Saudi Arabia, although this is modest by international standards. Based on the discussion earlier of the leadership structure suggested by the MoE through the Procedural manual, and according to the job descriptions of school staff, in the Regulatory manual (MoE, 1437H: 22-69) the MoE appears to aim for a less centralised more autonomic leadership practice. For example, the distribution of tasks amongst three deputy heads (TPM, 2019), instead of one with all the duties of the current three: deputy head of student affairs, deputy head of school affairs, and deputy head of academic affairs (MOE, 1437H: 7). However, Aburizaizah et al. (2019: 799) argue that 'implementation of

decentralising strategies can be stymied by entrenched bureaucracy and hierarchical notions of social authority'.

In the two schools in Jeddah (A and B), the participants used the terms collaborate, share and distribute to describe the school leaders' approach to leadership. However, there were differences in the chosen terms between teachers and non-teaching staff. In school A, and in spite of the hierarchical structure of the school, the teaching staff used collaborative and cooperative to define the applied leadership style in the school, while the administrative team used shared and distributed. Regardless of the terms used, there is an overlap between these collegial models of leadership (Bush, 2011; Bush and Crawford, 2012). Thus, as school A is a public school in a highly centralised education system, the headteacher is still a dominant leader. Bush and Middlewood (2013: 63) argue that, 'even in ostensibly collaborative frameworks, such as teams, hierarchy remains a powerful determinant of structure and process'. Whereas, in school B, the leadership model discussed by those in administrative roles was 'shared', while the term collaborative was chosen by the teachers

Harris's (2008: 177) argument about who is engaged in leadership practice claims that '[l]eadership, from this perspective, resides in the human potential available to be released within an organisation'. This appears to relate to the leadership structure of the private school B, where the leadership structure seems to be designed to allow room for the practice of leadership to be distributed between different staff members and not confined to those in formal leadership positions. This is not the case in the comparable school D, where there is a SLT and some middle leaders, but those leaders hold formal positions and are working for the SLT as their internal supervisors and coordinators.

The overlap between distributed, shared and collaborative leadership (Harris, 2008; Harris, 2003; Spillane, 2006), in addition to the highly centralised and hierarchical educational system in Saudi Arabia, suggests that the limited shifts to a distributed practice of leadership is not emergent but rather allocative, in terms of distributing

tasks and extending the current limitations of agency compared to what the hierarchy allows for, now. In a similar hierarchical education system to the one of Saudi Arabia, Bush and Ng (2019: 286) discuss the Malaysian Education Blueprint, and conclude that:

> Distributed leadership features prominently in the MEB [Malaysian Education Blueprint], although its focus is almost exclusively on distribution to official leaders, such as senior assistants, heads of department and subject leaders. This is a different interpretation from most of the established (mainly western) literature which stresses that distribution is emergent rather than being linked to the hierarchy, although this may be largely a normative view, even in the west. (Bush and Ng, 2019: 286)

Hashem (2020: n.p.) argues that 'growing evidence in cross-cultural research shows the influence of local culture on implementation of foreign reform programmes'. Similarly, Bush and Ng (2019: 286) list six themes which reveal how the concept of DL is interpreted by the participants from their 14 case study schools. These 'distinctive features of distributed leadership in Malaysia are: delegation, sharing the workload, decision-making, trust, consultation and autonomy'. The influence of the local culture discussed by Hashem (2020) was evident in Bush and Ng (2019) work, where the participants' understanding, and interpretation of DL appeared to be affected by their local culture.

The distinction between school A and school B is that the former is a public school, in a centralised educational system, with a traditional hierarchical leadership structure (Bush 2011), while the latter is a private school in the same educational system with a unique leadership structure that satisfies the traditional hierarchical expectations but also allows for the multi-directional dynamics of the structure. Despite this difference, participants from both schools seem to share similar thoughts about the leadership model applied within their school, while a more significant difference might have been anticipated. It is not expected to see the word distributed, shared or collaborative used when describing the leadership

model in such a centralised educational system. However, these were the terms used by the participants to describe the enacted leadership at their schools, an indication of the enactment of leadership practices in these schools (Hammersley-Fletcher and Brundrett, 2008).

When comparing Jeddah to AlMadinah, the participants from the public school have rather different views about their applied leadership models to those in the private school. Even though both schools had staff difficulties, it was challenging for the participants to put a label on the leadership style within their school, yet the headteacher discussed the limitations of The Regulatory Manual developed by the MoE (MOE, 1437H). She believes that the manuals were initially developed to help headteachers to lead their schools. However, a limitation is that they do not seem to differentiate between schools with special circumstances, for example those with major staff shortages.

Instead of empowering heads, the regulatory manual appears to be restraining them by favouring the subordinates over the benefit of the whole school, even in critical situations where the school's assessment might be affected. In such cases, even though the headteacher is willing to adapt to the situation, and take special measures and actions, the system appears to fail them. The headteacher of school C, for example, discussed how she wanted to address the staff situation in her school, by either redistributing the duties of the missing deputy heads among management assistants or even appoint someone of her staff internally, but with limited agency that was not possible to achieve. This links to Alsaeedi and Male's (2013: 652-3) claim that the education system could be the barrier between headteachers and the changes they want to implement, especially in what seems to be a 'high stakes policy environment' (Crow, 2006: 310). Consequently, the manuals leave space only for managerial leadership (Bush, 2011) and instructional leadership (Bush, 2007) to take place.

When there are school events, teachers decide to collaborate and cooperate, allowing emergent leadership practices, as teachers take charge and act as leaders

of groups or activities. The headteacher of school C discussed redistributing some tasks between herself and the management assistants in her school, but the extent and nature of distribution seemed unsatisfactory to some participants. When the headteacher admits that she needs to redistribute the tasks or to even delegate because she cannot do it alone, this resonates with what Bush and Ng (2019: 288) refer to as 'sharing the workload'.

At the private school in AlMadinah, teachers tend to use terms that express collaboration, whereas the participants with administrative responsibilities, describe their leadership style as shared. Yet, with the dominant presence of the SLT members and with their close supervision and assignment procedures and accountability; it appears that the dominance of the hierarchy affects the leadership practice within the case study schools.

The data show that there is a distinction between how teachers and non-teaching staff members in primary schools perceive leadership, based on how they describe the leadership model in their schools (schools B and D). However, the difference here lies in the chosen phrasing and terminology based on the nature of each group's work, but does not essentially reveal a different leadership model. When the participants stated that the leadership style of their schools is shared, collaborative or even cooperative, they may be referring to similar practices. Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008: 332) discuss institutionalised authority, and the significance of hierarchy, arguing that:

> Labels such as 'teacher', 'leader', 'manager' or 'administrator' are part of the commodification of teaching and learning processes, i.e.: attaching labels to the particular work, authority and status of teachers is a discursive process that signals the role and identity of those adults within the bureaucracy of schools. (Fitzgerald and Gunter, 2008: 332)

The significance here is that, when the participants used the term 'distributed' rather than 'shared', the analysis suggests that there is a difference in the level of

agency that shared leadership implies when compared to distributed leadership (Bush, 2011; Harris, 2009, 2010; Gunter, 2012; Gunter et al., 2013; Spillane, 2005, 2006). For example, in school A, the headteacher and the deputy head stated that leadership in their school is distributed (as in the distribution of tasks, and related accountability) and shared (in a way that allows all members of staff to work collaboratively) although the differences could have been more semantic than substantive.

In both private schools (B and D), there is a senior leadership team (SLT). The SLT in school B in Jeddah appears to create a multi-directional practice of leadership, between teachers and administrative staff within the internal leadership structure, and across the internal and the external leadership structure. This is very different from school D, where the external leadership structure seems to promote control over the internal leadership structure, fostering top-down leadership, from the SLT to the school's headship team and beyond. This does not contradict school D's participants' views on the leadership model as collaborative, as this orientation is cultural. The societal norms and values encourage and respect working within the known structure where the subordinates are expected to follow the orders of their superiors with no comments, questions or resentment. Therefore, the participants' contextual interpretation appears to mean that following orders is understood as a form of collaboration.

However, the situation in the two public schools is different. In school A in Jeddah, there appear to be limitations to the practice of leadership which might not be linked to the leadership structure directly but seem constrained by the centralised system of the Ministry of Education. Despite the influence of the centralised educational system, the head of school A seems to manage a way to follow the orders of the regional office (the local authority) while still promoting an environment where teachers feel empowered and involved in leading their school. On the contrary, in school C, the public school in AlMadinah, the leadership structure of the school appeared to affect the relationship between the staff

members, because of the limited agency it allows for the head, which consequently impacted on the leadership practice in school C. The overall conclusion is that the approach to leadership in Saudi primary public schools appears to be constrained by the prevailing centralised bureaucratic educational system. This is similar to the position in Lebanon, as 'there is a limited authority given to the principal to lead and administer' (Chibani and Chibani, 2003: 175).

Indeed, it is evident that, in the case study schools, tasks and responsibilities are being distributed between colleagues in accordance with the job descriptions of staff members, as stated in the Regulatory manual (MoE, 1437H: 22-69), this distribution, when compared to the past prior to the development of the manuals, did not exist, as discussed by the headteacher of school A, since tasks and responsibilities were confined to those in formal leadership positions, such as the headteacher and deputy heads. This distribution sometimes appears as an emergent act, especially during school events (like the case in school C), while other times it is allocative from the beginning of the academic year, in the creation of teams (like schools A and B). The degree of agency is constrained by the MoE's centralised system and enabled within schools or by the local authority's supervisor.

Delegation, Power Articulation and Agency

The case study data show a confused understanding of delegating tasks and delegating the authority, which is also discussed in the literature (Bush, 2011). All the participants who refused to practice delegation raised accountability as an issue. Accountability pressures (Bush, 2008), and the responsibility embedded within them, were the main reasons why most participants regarded delegation as a very difficult practice. Bush (2008: 27) argues that:

> [T]he accountability pressures facing principals are immense and growing. In many countries. governments, parents and the wider public expect a great deal from their schools and most of these expectations are transmitted via the principals. (Bush, 2008: 27)

Bush's views appear to reflect the situation in the case study schools. For example, in school B, the participants discussed how parents sometimes refuse to speak to anyone but the headteacher so, even if the headteacher practices delegation, there are some cases where she needs to respond personally to stakeholders.

In addition, the impact of the leadership structure of the school on the exercise of delegation was evident. In the public schools, the participants expressed that the sensitivity of the role, and the confidentiality of the task, are reasons for not practising delegation. While, in the private schools, due to the extended leadership structure (the company), accountability is treated very strictly. The internal and external structures of the case study school appear to foster an environment where everyone is accountable and responsible for their work, and this may indicate why the participants are reluctant to practice or encourage delegation. Even when some participants accepted delegation as a concept, they never practised it.

Across the four schools, most of the teacher participants appeared to agree that there is no room for delegation. However, the participants who accepted the notion of delegation, and responded positively to practising delegation, held senior non-teaching positions in their schools, as headteachers, deputy heads or even academic supervisors. Furthermore, the data show that the years of experiences affected the participants' perceptions about delegation. Participants with less experience were more resistant towards delegation when compared to those with more experience.

Although delegation is usually seen as a downward practice (Coleman and Glover, 2010), where a senior person in the hierarchy delegates to a subordinate (Anon, 1992; Bush, 2011), some participants in junior managerial positions seemed to practise upwards delegation. In two of the case study schools (school A and C), which happened to be public schools, delegation was believed to be a kind of collaboration; thus, delegating to a superior/ supervisor or to a colleague appeared to be an acceptable practice. For example, a teacher (from school A) who is also a member of the internal audit team explains that she can delegate to the head of the audit team, or to a colleague, she considers this act a form of collaboration.

Also, as accountability is linked closely with delegation (Hammersley-Fletcher and Brundrett, 2008) other participants expressed that delegation can only be done to someone with a higher level of accountability, i.e.: from a deputy head or a management assistant to the headteacher. One management assistant (in school C) explains that for accountability reasons, she can only practice delegation with the headteacher.

The possible sociocultural underpinning to such practice relates to the organisational culture (Dauber et al., 2012) which is shaped by the 'national or societal culture' (Coleman, 2005: 63). It is argued (Dimmock and Walker, 2005: 13; McColl, 2003: 137) that individuals tend to internalise their culture to help shape their occupation through their values and beliefs and practices. In other words, the subordinates appear to have issues trusting a colleague or even a subordinate, as when delegating tasks, they will be accountable for the work being delegated. In the case of delegating to a superior, the assumption is that the superior already has a wider degree of agency and thus is accountable for more, then accordingly, that superior is trustworthy to be delegated to.

One headteacher (of school B), moreover, illustrated how she practises delegation to train her subordinates to build their confidence in taking a more senior role in the future, in order to develop the school as a whole (Day et al., 2001). This may be an example of practising distributed leadership through delegation from the headteacher when she 'invites colleagues to adopt leadership roles or behaviours…[and] [e]ncourage[s] others to initiate leadership actions' Bush (2011: 89), as she sends them to attend meetings with the MoE on her behalf, with full accountability and autonomy of their actions and the consequences of them. In this way, she is empowering others to use their potential. Humphreys (2010: 137) argues that 'distributed leadership meant that teachers throughout the school were empowered to exercise leadership through influencing others and using their own initiative'.

Overall, within the Saudi Arabian context, with strong sociocultural elements, the view of delegation is a means of collaboration between a subordinate and their superior, with attention to accountability. The strong belief school staff tend to have in their heads (superior) explains such practices. When distributed leadership is practiced, all staff members have equal opportunities, however, as seen from the evidence from school B, the nature of the work being distributed and the experiences of the staff members, along with the potential future opportunities for them, may prevent a staff member exerting authority over other colleagues. For example, the headteacher of school B practiced delegation with her deputy heads, who are willing to become heads in the future, rather than delegating to the management assistants.

Agency and accountability within teams

While the four schools follow a similar leadership structure, the level of agency varies. The impact of the MoE differs across schools based on the school's type and location, which means that the supervisors from the local authority, in this case the regional offices in Jeddah (GEDNJ) and AlMadinah (GDEMP), tend to practice agency differently. The participants from the case study schools discussed agency in relation to the leadership structure, the leadership model, and accountability (see below).

One example of how agency is exercised differently between public and private schools is linked to the appointment procedures. To fill the roles shown in the private schools' organisational charts, the assignment usually happens internally first, by the SLT. This means that the person filling a position might change from one academic year to another, and as seen in school B, this role has been extended from the SLT to the school headteacher. This is different from the public schools, where assignments are substantive and ongoing, unless a teacher wants to move into management or headship, which applies to both schools A and C.

The appointment procedures in Saudi public schools (including schools A and C from the case study) usually follow a national process, centralised and conducted by the Ministry of Civil Services (MCS, 2019). Head teachers and local authorities have no say in who gets what role. Once a staff member is assigned, all the local authority has to do is to assign that person to the nominated school and then the headteacher is required to follow the job description of that position, as stated by the MoE in the Procedural Manual (TPM, 2019). The headteacher cannot deploy her staff in the ways she thinks are best for the school. This links to Lumby's (2013) view that higher levels of autonomy increase the scope for leadership.

Aburizaizah et al, 2019: 796) argue that 'governments around the globe express faith in decentralising school management by empowering local principals' However, one headteacher (of school C) claims that the extended headteacher's roles and duties, through decentralisation, make it appear as if headteachers have more agency than they did in the past. Headteachers' autonomy, in reality, is constrained and limited by the local authority. Such bureaucracy (Parlar and Cansoy, 2017) affects the exercise of leadership in schools. Moreover, the data indicate a lack of clarity about the accountability implications of those hierarchical procedures upon which the local authority appears to function with minimal autonomy for school leaders and heads. For example, the head of school C requested more agency for school heads, and more support from the local authority, when she experienced staff shortages. Lack of support from the regional or district offices was noted, by Al-Omari and Wuzynani (2013), as one factor discouraging teachers from pursuing headship positions.

A practical example of central agency of the MoE, and how it affects schools, is in the use of the forms provided in the manuals. The evidence shows that the public schools (A and C) use the manuals 'by the book' and treat them with respect. In contrast, the private schools (B and D) tend to use the manuals as guidelines, re-designing the official forms and templates in accordance with their own requirements, and providing additional guidelines, dictated by the school's senior

leadership team (SLT). In both private schools, the headteacher is accountable to both the senior leadership team (a.k.a: the company) and the local authority's supervisors (who is a representative of the MoE). In the public schools (A and C), the headteacher is accountable only to the local authority supervisor.

Toohey (2007: 232) linked agency to social situations. In this study, participants from two schools (B and C) discussed agency in relation to the leadership model applied in their schools. Those in school B believed that the leadership style in their schools promoted a school environment that allowed teachers to discuss their views and raise questions, to provide room for personal growth and learning, and to give them some control over their own career development, which appeared to them to be agency. There may be a link between the leadership model and how much the individual member of staff (especially teachers) feels supported, accepted and cared for. Thomson and Holloway (1997: 317) found that teachers felt supported in a 'collaborative [school] culture where there is acceptance and intermixture of personal and professional lives'. This appears to be the headteacher's strategy at school B, as she was trying to build her staff's loyalty, confidence and positive self-image. Similarly, Coleman (2012) implies that the leadership structure is dynamic. In the case study schools, in addition to the leader, there are other elements which could determine the level of agency allowed by the leadership structure, including stakeholders, such as the companies (institutional agency), and the local authority offices (central agency).

On another note, there are some different requirements, which appear to be regional and linked to the Ministry's representative offices in different locations across the country. For example, the two schools located in AlMadinah (schools C and D) were required to display the school's leadership structure chart close to the school entrance. This represents an example of local authority regional agency. The headteacher of school C explained that displaying the organizational structure is a requirement of the General Directorate of Education in AlMadinah Province

(GDEMP). The structure was not displayed in the same way in the case study schools in Jeddah (schools A and B) but it is unclear whether that was not a requirement by the General Education office in North Jeddah (GEDNJ), or if it was the headteachers' decision not to have the organisational chart displayed in their schools.

In addition, the creation of school committees and teams, have allowed teachers to become more involved in leadership practices within their schools. The participants expressed that, within teams, the tasks are distributed, and the work is shared among the team members.

Sharpe and Templin (1997) state that creating teachers' teams is one way to enable teachers to engage in activities, thus practicing delegation would be a necessity for teachers. However, an organisational change in schools is required to enable the formation and function of these teams. Although the participants in schools A, B, and D discussed teams of subject teachers, those teams do not seem to have the dynamics that allow for shared leadership rather than delegation of individual tasks because, as Sharpe and Templin (1997: 52) argued, those teams should have shared accountability and not 'individual accountability' as the evidence suggests in the case study schools:

> Characteristics of effective teams include shared leadership roles rather than the individual delegation of professional tasks, shared individual purposes by the larger professional group, and internally and communally designed professional goals and job performance criteria. (ibid: 54)

Implications of Leadership Enactment in the Case Study Schools

Across the four case study schools, the data show a number of factors affecting the enactment of school leadership. The list below shows those factors:

1. Saudi Arabia's bureaucratic hierarchical system with its standardised regulations (Aburizaizah et al., 2019; Alameen et al., 2015; Algarni and Male, 2014; Bush, 2011).
2. Agency (either central: from the MoE and local authority, or institutional: within schools).
3. Staff issues, e.g.: staff shortages. (Kraft et al., 2016; LPI,2017).
4. Inter relationships between the headteacher and staff members (Podolsky et al., 2016).
5. Staff members' beliefs in their leader's judgement on their readiness to leadership, i.e.: nomination.

The participants used diverse terms to describe the leadership style of their school's headship team. However, the leadership style did not seem to influence the practice of leadership in the school as much as the relationship between the school staff and the headteacher. The discussion below focuses on headteacher's and staff relationships.

Authority and Perceived Authority

There are underpinning cultural understandings and societal norms related to authority, power and social status (Wanasika et al., 2011) The participants across the case study schools discussed different manifestations of authority. For example, headteachers' empowerment was discussed by headteacher and deputy heads in the interviews, who explained the differences in powers granted to headteachers by the MoE in the past, and the extended current agency that allow them to make decisions about their schools' maintenance and decoration, with assigned budgets for each school from the local authority.

As discussed earlier, school D's SLT seemed aware of the sociocultural underpinnings (Hartley, 2009) of authority, including how it is perceived and treated socially and culturally. They believe that authority is confined to those in senior administrative positions and should not be questioned, because it is assigned by

superiors to their subordinates. The participants in school D expressed the view that, through the development of personalised school policies, teachers' evaluation charts, and performance assessments, by the company, authority should only come through formal channels, enforced by the company's advisors through the internal leadership structure of the school.

Unlike school D, the school A and B participants discussed how the school environment is respectful of all and that authority within their schools produces a positive bond between all staff members. The participants expressed that such respectful environment leads to staff agency, encouraging them to accept internal appointment opportunities, rather than external appointments.

The participants in schools A and B seem to believe that authority is not confined to those in formal senior positions but rather involves all staff (including teachers). In responding to how teachers perceived school leadership, Humphreys (2010: 152) resounds that '[the study] yielded a very broad interpretation of leadership but identified the fact that teachers accept that they play a leadership role – leadership is not the sole prerogative of the principal and deputy principal'.

However, for sociocultural reasons, the participants express that sometimes they feel the need to address people by their position or title. For example, one participant stated that the way authority is assigned may be verbal and informal, or written and formal, but they need to go through formal channels, with written assignments, from time to time. Formal procedures, and 'playing by the book', appear to be the only ways that participants in school C respond to authority. This relates not to the headteacher but rather to the MoE and the Ministry's manuals, with staff refusing to respond to the tasks assigned by the headteacher. However, being given responsibility without an official appointment seemed to be an accepted practice in school A but not in school D, due to the external leadership structure, as discussed earlier.

Headteacher and staff relationships

Across the four schools, what seemed to motivate the participants to take additional roles and responsibilities, even without official appointments, was how they perceived their headteachers. The participants in schools A and B in Jeddah seemed to be highly influenced by their headteacher and the school's headship team, resulting in teachers trusting the head and accepting an administrative role alongside their teaching duties. That is because of the collaborative approach of the headship team, according to participants in both schools. LPI (2017: 1) justifies that 'teachers often identify the quality of administrative support as more important to their decision than salaries'.

In contrast, in schools C and D, there were shortages of teaching and non-teaching staff. The staff situation appeared to strongly disturb the workload for all parties involved. In school C, this jeopardised the relationship between the head and her staff. In school D, the relationship between the head and some staff members was not ideal but that could be because the head is newly appointed, with no deputy heads to support her in getting to know her staff members. However, the roles played by the company's staff seemed to be crucial and very helpful in creating a positive atmosphere in school D. This implies that the dynamics of the leadership structure of school D, with the existence of the SLT, had led to minimal input from the school's headship and management team in shaping the school's leadership practices. In addition to salaries, LPI (2017: 1) lists 'collegial relationships' as an important factor that affects teachers' retention.

The troublesome relationship between school staff and the school headship team in both schools in AlMadinah (schools C and D) resulted in some staff members refusing to follow the orders of their headteacher (in school C) and caused lack of communication between the administrative team and the teachers (in school D). Therefore, the way subordinates in schools C and D responded to their superiors is different from those in schools A and B. the claim here is that if headteachers had the degree of autonomy that allows them to solve the current staff situation within

their schools, hence, provide the needed support to their teachers, then and only then the relationships between the headteacher and her staff could've improved. Podolsky et al. (2016: 39) discussed an example of how various kinds of support are valuable to teachers, adding that 'teachers who expected to remain teaching in their school rated emotional and environmental support as the attributes they valued most highly from their principals'.

As discussed earlier, if headteachers are empowered to deploy and reappoint their staff internally, as expressed in the interview, or even hire someone externally to work for them, which is constrained by the agency and accountability given to school heads; school heads would have been able to provide their staff with the support they need. LPI (2017; 1) claims that 'talented principals who remain in their schools can be associated with retaining more effective teachers, even when controlling for student and school characteristics'.

However, this is not achievable in a highly centralised system where staff appointments are decided externally, and with no input from the school head, as in Saudi Arabia, Aburizaizah et al. (2019: 798) show that, in their study of 86 principals in Jeddah secondary schools, principals referred to the 'lack of authority [they have] to undertake responsibilities, such as acquiring instructional resources and making staffing decisions'.

Nomination and how it affects the practice of leadership

In schools A and B, nomination by headteachers, and other superiors, was the main way by which participants accepted additional roles and leadership responsibilities, with or without official appointment. None of the nominated participants rejected their nominations, suggesting that the participants trusted their superiors' judgments and believed that this offers them good opportunities to flourish. This resonates with Minkov et al. (2012: 1100) views on how power relations and the orientation of power within a society either result in 'dependent or counter dependent (rebellious) attitudes toward their leaders', as in such countries the

individuals 'often feel exempted from accountability' (ibid). In this particular case with the participants, they appear to become dependent on their superiors for taking major steps in their career in education.

The faith subordinates appear to have in their superiors' judgments reveals a wider culturally rooted practice of respect for elders. Cultural atlas (n. d.) argues that '[t]hroughout all sectors of Saudi society, parents and elders are highly respected'. Similarly, Zibenberg and Da'as (2020: 14) in their study of the implications of personal values on perceptions of the effective principal, focused on 'self-enhancement and self-transcendence values', claiming that principals' values are reflected in teachers' performance.

In school A, five participants out of eight ere appointed to their current leadership positions or duties through nomination (including the headteacher). In school B, three participants out of six, plus the headteacher, were appointed by recommendation. In contrast, in schools C and D, nomination did not seem as popular among school staff in relation to how they were appointed to their positions. In light of the previous arguments (Cultural atlas, n. d.; Zibenberg and Da'as, 2020), the absence of favouritism of nomination could be an indication that, with staff difficulties (either shortage or newly appointed head), the staff members lack the type of relationship that gets built over time, between members working in the same place which allow all members of staff to build a trusting relationship that is based on common grounds and understanding.

As in schools A and B in Jeddah. Podolsky et al. (2016: 39) discuss that school leadership is highly influential on teachers' decision to leave or remain in the school. They state that:

> [T]eachers are more likely to remain teaching when they feel supported by administrators. Support from administrators can take many forms, including providing emotional, environmental, and instructional support. (Podolsky et al., 2016: 39)

Headteachers in the case study schools cannot be as effective if their autonomy is constrained, as they require a degree of agency that allows them to evaluate their school's special circumstances and act accordingly. Bush and Ng (2019: 290) discuss the importance of a degree of autonomy given to teachers stating that:

> Teachers need a degree of agency to initiate and enact new ideas. As professionals, they have specialist knowledge and skills but they also require the confidence and encouragement to act autonomously, and to understand how their autonomy may be constrained. (Bush and Ng, 2019: 290)

Influences of sociocultural theory in the case study schools

The findings of Hashem (2020) resonate with this current study, which sought to highlight the importance of acknowledging the sociocultural elements in the context that is aiming to apply leadership theories, for example distributed leadership. The data collected from the case study schools show some social and cultural features which appear to affect the enactment of school leadership. Starting from the data collection process, one of the headteachers refused to take part in the study because of 'situated social practices' (Sawyer, 2002: 284) including the school's staff situation and that she was a newly appointed head, with a personal and school reputation that she has to protect, where the influence of Hofstede's collectivism cultural dimension that is associated with 'the relationship between the individual and collective' is vivid (Timbalari, 2019: 222).

Hartley (2009) and Sawyer (2002) discuss the inseparability of the individual and the context. Similarly, in the case study schools, the participants' perceptions on school leadership appear to be influenced by their context. As discussed earlier in the chapter, the data revealed the following aspects, which are believed to be fostered by related sociocultural elements:

- How authority is perceived and treated socially and culturally.

- Participants' faith in their headteachers' judgement of their ability to lead and manage.
- The way in which participants from the private school considered the top-down dynamics of the leadership structure as a collaborative practice of leadership. The sociocultural forces encourage individuals to work and to respect working within a defined structure where subordinates are expected to follow the orders of their superiors with no comments, questions or resentment.
- How the concept of delegation appears to make sense to some participants if it is practiced by someone with more agency, for accountability reasons, as this is shaped by a 'national or societal culture' that locates power at the top of the hierarchy.

Like other cultures, according to Minkov et al. (2013: 1096), the traditional conservative Saudi community, cultural norms and traditions appear to influence a range of responses and actions. The case study participants shed light on several themes that they believe link social aspects to the enactment and formation of leadership in the Saudi primary schools. The data highlighted school location (Jeddah or AlMadinah), socio-economic factors in the same location, the school sector (public or private), and parents' education level, cultural beliefs and backgrounds, as sociocultural factors. This argument indicates the limitations of Western leadership models when applying them to contexts that have different social, political, cultural and language (in this case: Arabic) variations (Abrahamsen and Aas, 2016).

Two of the main sociocultural factors which are believed to affect the enactment of school leadership in Saudi Arabia, and emerged from the data, are:

(1) Parents' perceptions and parental involvement.
(2) Gendered roles, societal expectations, and headteachers' empowerment.

Parents' perceptions and parental involvement

In the city of Jeddah, most of the participants expressed that, parents and their perceptions and understandings of school leadership, affect leadership enactment within primary schools. For instance, participants from school A discussed that parents with less economic status tend to be more respectful of the school's rules and procedures than those slightly wealthier parents, who tend to question certain procedures. The majority of participants from school B described how parents sometimes insist on speaking to the headteacher to raise any issue or solve any problem. This appear to be influenced by sociocultural factors, as from one hand: wanting to interact with the person at the top of the hierarchy, or believing in the powers of the heroic leader (Gronn, 2003; Møller, 2012; Spillane, 2006), is linked to sociocultural reasons because the prevailing culture of the society views power to be confined to the heroic leader, which is usually believed to be the person at the top of the school or organization. This resonates with the Cultural atlas (n. d.) '[d]ecisions are made by the highest-ranking person'. In a country with a monarchical political system, and a centralised educational system, such behaviour may be understandable. From the other hand, it resonates with Hofstede's (2010a: 337) argument about the 'unconscious values' which have cultural roost and get transferred between generations through the environment.

The implication of such sociocultural elements for the case study schools differs. For one school (school A), all participants from the leadership team explained that this means that all important communications need to be addressed by the headteacher, if the school wants a response from parents. In contrast, in school B, the headteacher explained how in her school there is a strict school policy to which all parents have to abide by, or in case they are not pleased with the school's procedures they can withdraw their children from the school.

Similarly, the participants discussed the way parents react to letters and notes addressed from the school to them. They distinguish that letters and notes from headteacher are usually respected, and regarded as important, while those

addressed to them by a teacher, or another staff member are less important and less valuable.

Walker (2010: 179) argues that 'the context for social interactions is created by the culture', hence, the participants differentiate between parents who are originally from Jeddah and those coming from outside the city, probably because Jeddah is known to be less conservative than other cities, including AlMadinah. In addition, it was noted by the interviewees that the older and more traditional the parents are, the higher the likelihood for them to be respectful and responsive to school letters, or even certificates, if they are addressed or signed by the school headteacher, when compared to those signed or addressed by a teacher. Moreover, headteachers of private schools' face parents who mostly expect to get things done their way. The participants explained that it is challenging for them to comply with every parent's wish. The headteacher of school B expressed that, from her experience with some private schools' parents, in her current school they developed an extensive and clear school rules and policies that prevent parents from interfering with their regulations, and in the case of when parents are not satisfied, they will be asked to withdraw their children from the school. The school B headteacher states that this policy has been very effective.

Elaborating on the differences in the leadership practices between public and private schools located in the same area, participants discuss, drawing on their personal experiences, major differences between public and private schools. These include the procedure for reporting student illness, and the activities allowed for students in public and private schools. However, this may change, as the latest reforms in the education system in Saudi Arabia now allow sport in girls' public schools after a long era of it being banned, as reported by McKernan (2017).

Gendered roles, societal expectations, and headteachers' empowerment

From the data, it was evident that one of the ways the MoE is promoting a decentralised educational system relates to headteacher empowerment (Aburizaizah et al., 2019), 'vesting principals with greater authority' (Aburizaizah et al, 2016: 37). This includes extending headteachers' duties and responsibilities, but not essentially their agency and accountability, as explained in the job descriptions presented in the Procedural manual (TPM, 2019).

In the filed of educational leadership, cultural considerations should be accounted for (Bogotch, 2011; Taleb, 2010; Warner-Søderholm, 2012) especially when studying distinctive cultures from the Anglo-American's. As social expectations seemed to affect the enactment of leadership in the case study schools, in respect of headteacher power, agency and empowerment, at two levels. The first relates to the school type, as there are some actions which are socially and culturally acceptable as a practice from a private school but considered undesirable if seen in a public school. For example, the participants list examples like sole guardianship of girls by their fathers regulates different limits of communication between the school and the father. For example, they discuss that communication between the father and the teachers might be challenging and unacceptable for either party, if it was a girls' public school, whereas, if it was a private school, it could be unquestionable and considered completely normal for the father to call the school and ask about his daughter. In addition, in a public school, a headteacher cannot force the teacher to communicate with the father against her will. Yet, in a private school, the teacher would not think of contradicting the headteacher if she asked her to talk to the father. The social and cultural forces within the segregated Saudi society appear to promote some actions among some communities and ban them from others.

Since schools reflect the cultures they inhabit (Crawford, 2012: 612), and according to the interviewees, the reason for the discussed differences is because, socially and culturally, there is a belief that public schools should be more conservative, hence

fostering gender segregation, when compared to private schools. Such societal norms, as the participants claim, lead to teachers refusing to deal with fathers (males), asking about their daughters (at a girls only) public schools, but considering it to be more acceptable in a comparable private school.

The second dimension of how social and cultural features seemed to affect the enactment relates to school location. According to the evidence, the empowerment of headteachers did not consider social norms in respect of gendered roles. Ones should consider the national culture (Minkov et al., 2012; Murphy, 1999; Timbalari, 2019), as there must have been greater considerations of the sociocultural context in Saudi Arabia, where there tends to be cultural underpinning affecting the practice. Al-bakr et al., (2017), Alnahdi (2014) and Doumato, (1992) argue that gendered roles for males and females appear to affect Saudi society and culture. While males are supposed to go out and work outside the house, females are intended to take care of the family and children inside the house. Thus, females are not used to dealing with workers for their households (i.e.: drivers, gardeners, etc.) and the majority of domestic helpers are usually females. Similarly, Shah (2010: 31) declares that gender discourses appear at different national and cultural context, as she explains that female leadership is determined not just by biological gender 'but by how biological gender is constructed in a particular society at a particular time in history' (ibid).

When the MoE seeks to empower female heads, and extend their duties to include dealing with school maintenance, painter, plumbers and other male dominant jobs, the participants discuss how this contradicts social expectations and societal norm. Al-Omari and Wuzynani (2013) argue that this represents 'too much accountability' for headteachers. Al-bakr et al. (2017: 55) add that, Saudi women in leadership, not only in education but across sectors, face 'limited resources and cultural and personal challenges'. Likewise, the female participants expressed how family obligations and duties affected their professional life (Shah, 2010: 34). As a result of increased pressure on headteachers, the participants explained the declining

numbers of deputy heads applying for headship and the increased number of headteachers seeking early retirement, including one headteacher from the participants in this study. Timperley (2009: 722) argues that 'leading schools as a principal or head teacher is becoming increasingly unattractive, rendering our present system unsustainable'. Similarly, Alhazmi (2010: 127) discusses attributes that caused job dissatisfaction for secondary headteachers, she states:

> The factors of job dissatisfaction included: lack of cooperation from the educational administration, inconsistent decisions, and lack of authority, budget, training programmes, supervision, workload, and school conditions. (Alhazmi, 2010: 127)

Participants' Views on Leadership Enactment in Saudi Primary Schools

Participants working in a public school, who have their own children studying in private schools, or those participants working in a private school, with their children studying in a public school, which represents a minority from the list of participants, were able to provide comments based on their experiences as parents, as well as teachers. They highlight that one of the major differences between public and private schools, located in the same area (North Jeddah), is the freedom that private schools have, compared to public schools, in planning extra-curricular events and activities for the students and that this is beneficial for students' performance and overall wellbeing. This could be linked to the discussion of cultural norms (Minkov et al., 2013) and Hofstede's (2010a) claim about regional societies and how they may differ, taking into consideration that each school/ organisation represents a culture of its own (Coleman, 2005).

The other difference relates to the ways that parents are treated and how students are taken care of in times of illness or complaints. The participants believe that these differences exist because of sociocultural reasons, including the mentality of the people who work in these schools, the ideologies of the parents (their cultural

and educational backgrounds), and what is considered by those people as traditionally acceptable or abnormal behaviour (personal differences).

Algarni and Male (2014: 46) claim that, in Saudi Arabia, the 'context is significant'. Citing Alameen, Male & Palaiologou (2014), they argue that:

> The context is significant, it is argued, when exploring the ways in which formal leaders are able to operate, as most decision-making, particularly in policy terms, has previously been centralised and culturally constrained. (Algarni and Male, 2014: 46)

Participants from different schools had a variety of opinions on leadership enactment in primary schools. For example, participants from schools C and D believed that the school management team is responsible for improving the leadership practices in any school, but when there are issues, conflicts or communication problems (for example: schools C and D), the enactment of leadership would be jeopardised (Steyn, 2014; Thomson and Holloway, 1997). In contrast, the headteacher of school A wanted a legislative change where the Ministry of Education gives more agency to school heads to plan their extra-curricular activities and events, yet this comes with a cultural price where some parents might accept and respect the school head's decisions and others would not do so.

The evidence shows that the participants were highly influenced by the school leader, although this is not necessarily positive. In schools A and B, the headteacher played a major role in shaping a school environment where all staff members felt appreciated and valued. School A's participants described their leader using characteristics such as justice, kindness, loveable, cooperative, having a desire to lead, patient, quiet, does not impose authority, and a role model. Similarly, in school B, the participants viewed that the qualities of their leader included patience, wisdom, flexibility, collaborative, good listener, being respectful to others, driven by purpose, focused, with justice and understanding.

In contrast, in school C, where there were staffing issues and special circumstances, there were a number of factors affecting relationships between staff members. There was a lack of trust between the headteacher and her staff. It appeared that everyone in the school acted selfishly and in isolation from the others, which led to staff members refusing to follow the instructions of their headteacher. In school D, the participants compared the current headteacher with the previous one (the latter seemed to be favoured by some participants). Based on their experience with their previous headteacher, they expressed how the school head could be a successful leader and the personal qualities that could affect the enactment of leadership in their school, by implementing an open-door policy, listening to them and trying to understand their personal circumstances. They discussed how the previous head supported them and worked together with them to achieve what is best for the school, while everyone was satisfied and content.

This discussion reveals that the participants at Jeddah's schools (A and B) seem to have successful leaders (Coleman, 2012) or effective leaders (Leithwood, 2001: 229). In the two schools in AlMadinah (C and D), the situation is different, but this does not appear to relate to school type or geographical location but rather to the staff situation in these schools; as school C is suffering from a severe shortage of both teaching and non-teaching staff while school D has no deputy heads and a newly appointed headteacher.

Overview

This research is from an emerging field of study, Saudi Arabia, and its significance relates to two factors. First, the practice of distributed leadership primary schools in Saudi Arabia. Second, is the sociocultural context affecting the practice of leadership in Saudi Arabian primary schools. The conceptual framework of this thesis relates to sociocultural theory (Hartley, 2009; Sawyer, 2002) and social constructivism (Gash, 2014; Lynch, 2016). These provide the basis for interpreting the enactment of leadership in Saudi primary schools, in particular how DL is interpreted and the nature of distribution in this specific setting.

The social and cultural aspects are significant in shaping and informing the enactment of leadership in Saudi Arabia. In addition, the bureaucratic centralised education system appears to constrain the enactment of leadership in the case study schools, through the limited agency and autonomy granted to headteachers. The level of agency varied, across the two cities and across the four schools and the reforms announced by the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2018) suggest modifications to the centralised Saudi educational system.

Distributed leadership, shared leadership, managerial leadership, collaborative leadership and hierarchical leadership appeared to be evident in the case study schools, but the first two appeared to overlap because of how the participants interpreted them linguistically. Moreover, the leadership structures, and the inter-relationships between the headteacher and the school staff, appeared to play a major role in informing the enactment of leadership within the schools.

Sociocultural factors continue to have an impact on the practice of leadership in the case study schools. Firstly, parents' perceptions and parental involvement, and secondly, gendered roles, societal expectations, and headteachers' empowerment are discussed as examples of social and cultural elements affecting the enactment of school leadership in Saudi Arabia, in the light of sociocultural theory.

CHAPTER NINE CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter aims to answer the research questions based on the evidence collected from the four case study schools to help build an understanding of leadership enactment and practices in Saudi Arabia. It also shows the links between the enactment of leadership and the sociocultural theory, as well as discussing the significance of this research to the field of educational leadership and management, especially in Saudi Arabia and the wider Arab region.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. It begins with answering the research questions. Then it presents the study's contribution to knowledge at three levels, contextual, empirical, and theoretical significance. Finally, it highlights the implications of this research, leading to recommendations.

Answering the Research Questions

The empirical literature is growing in respect of school leadership and management theories and practices worldwide (Bush, 2008), notably in regard to the increased popularity of distributed leadership (Bush, 2019; Harris, 2008). However, there is very limited literature on school leadership in Saudi Arabia, so this research exploring the impact of social and cultural factors in two cities (Jeddah and AlMadinah) in Saudi Arabia, on the enactment of school leadership, makes an important contribution. The findings arise from case studies of four girls' primary schools (two public and two private) utilising interviews, targeted observations and documentary analysis.

The section shows how the four research questions have been addressed.

RQ 1. What are the leadership practices applied in the case study schools?

RQ 2. To what extent, and in what ways, do headteachers and deputy heads share leadership tasks with other members of staff?

RQ 3. To what extent, and in what ways, do the enacted leadership styles in the case study schools fit the distributed leadership model?

RQ 4. To what extent, and in what ways, if any, is the enactment of leadership in the case study schools informed by the socio-cultural context?

Research Question 1: What are the leadership practices applied in the case study schools?

It appeared to be a compulsory for all schools in the General Education System to follow the leadership structure prescribed by the Ministry of Education (MoE), with some differences linked to the school size. For example, the number of deputy heads required depends on the student numbers which also indicate whether a school is considered to be a large school or a small school, as stated in the organisational manual (Tatweer, 1437a: 11-15).

There was one major structural difference between the public schools (A and C) and the private schools (B and D) in this study. In both private schools, there was a leadership structure above the headteacher which has autonomy from the MoE, does not need to abide by any of the MoE regulations, and does not need to have an assigned supervisor from the local authority to monitor with their work. This superordinate leadership structure was called the senior leadership team (SLT) and the company by participants in school B, while those in school D mostly referred to it as the company. In both schools, however, this senior leadership structure has its own supervisors, academic advisors, coordinators and other senior staff, who work with teachers and other school staff, separately from the MoE. The participants in both schools referred to those colleagues as internal supervisors, internal subject

supervisors, internal academic supervisors, internal academic advisors, subject supervisors and the school's academic supervisor from the company, depending on the participant's role within the school. However, a lot of these differences appear to be just semantic. The main significant difference relates to whether the person is a subject supervisor, as in school D, or a general supervisor, as in school B.

In practice, there was a significant difference between the two schools in Jeddah compared to those in AlMadinah relating to the fulfilled roles within each school during the data collection period. While schools A and B in Jeddah had no staff shortages, schools C and D in AlMadinah had significant staff shortages for both teaching and non-teaching staff. Table 9.1 shows the roles filled in all four schools during the field work period.

	Jeddah schools		AlMadinah schools	
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**
Headteacher	✓	✓	✓	✓
Deputy head of academic affairs (DHAA)	✓	✓	×	×
Deputy head of student affairs	✓	×*	×	×
Deputy head of school affairs	✓	×*	×	×
Student advisor	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internal (subject) supervisor / internal academic advisor	×	✓	×	✓
Subject coordinator / academic coordinator	×	✓	×	✓
Management assistants (MA)	✓	✓	✓*	✓*
Subject teachers	✓	✓	✓*	✓*
Classroom teachers	✓	✓	✓*	✓*
Students monitor	✓	✓	✓	✓
Learning difficulties teacher	==	==	✓	==
Total number of staff	52	48	34	27
Number of teachers	36	40	11	23
Total number of students	607	400	470	277

Table 9.1: Comparative table of the fulfilled roles across the four case study schools

Table 9.2 provides the key to explain table 9.1.

Required by the Ministry of Education	
Not required by the Ministry of Education	
Required by the SLT of the school	
Position filled	✓
Position not filled	×
Information not available	==
Staff shortage	✓*
The job title does not exist because the duties are shared between (DHAA) and (MA)	×*

Table 9.2: The key for table 9.1

The leadership practices in the four schools were highly influenced by the leadership structure. The structure of the four schools tends to be hierarchical, with top-down communication, notably in respect of any circulars from the MoE. Moreover, within the schools, in the past, all communications had to be addressed from the headteacher to the rest of the school staff. Yet, according to the evidence in schools A, B and C, that has changed, as orders could come from the headteacher, the deputy heads or a superior (who could be a coordinator), depending on the task. Also, in the case of school events, the lines of communication could be multi-directional as the person in-charge would be informing others of their roles in the event regardless of their positions in the school leadership structure. In school D, however, with no deputy heads and a newly appointed headteacher, all communications were top-down from the company and/ or the local authority, depending on the topic.

The two private schools also differed. In school B, the leadership structure seemed to allow for multi-directional interactions within and between both leadership structures (above and below the headteacher). On the contrary, in school D, interactions were centralised to the SLT (the company) and were invariably top-down.

Leadership roles

Participants' perceptions of leadership roles, their own and those of colleagues, impact on the dynamics of the leadership structure. In school A, for example, the majority of participants, teachers and administrators, expressed pride in what they do and that translated into positive self-perceptions, which was reflected in leadership activities within the school. Those who experienced taking a role in management without an official appointment expressed how this could be challenging at times, especially at the beginning, as their colleagues were not used to seeing them in this new role. A few participants responded that they would not accept such a role again because of sensitivities between them and their colleagues.

However, the majority had positive experiences and stated that their colleagues were supportive and collaborative.

In the other comparable public school, school C, the relationship between the headteacher and the staff members appeared to strongly influence staff decisions about accepting any leadership responsibility, with or without an official appointment. For example, some management assistants refused to cooperate with the school head, for example in taking on more responsibilities than those required by the MoE's manuals, in order to address staff shortages. This had a significant negative impact on leadership practices within the school.

In the private schools B and D, the relationship between the school leadership team and staff members differed. In school B, the dynamics of leadership between the headteacher and deputy heads played a major role in shaping the participants' decisions in accepting any managerial duties, with or without an official appointment. There was mutual respect between staff members in school B regardless of their roles within the hierarchy. In contrast, in school D, authority was strictly linked to the company's internal coordination roles and supervision meetings. The dynamics within the leadership structure left no room for the participants to take on any duties without an official appointment. Thus, the relationships between the school staff members were more formal in nature, when compared to the other case study schools.

Overall, relationships between and among the school staff played a distinctive role in whether the participants accepted additional administrative responsibilities, with or without an official appointment. Trust in the head's or superior's judgement, as in schools A and B, or mistrust, as in schools C and D, strongly influenced participants' readiness to take on responsibility within the hierarchy.

Research Question 2: To what extent, and in what ways, do headteachers and deputy heads share leadership tasks with other members of staff?

As the aim of this question was to examine the degree to which heads and deputy heads share their leadership responsibilities, the researcher focused on exploring the nature of shared responsibilities, and whether this took the form of delegation, as might be expected in a centralised system. The discussion with the participants raised issues around agency, delegation and accountability.

It appeared that senior leaders, notably heads and deputy heads, felt more comfortable sharing their responsibilities, compared to teachers and management assistants. Teachers expressed that the need to delegate does not apply to them, as the nature of their work involves collaboration and cooperation, so they do not need to practice delegation.

The extent to which headteachers and deputy heads shared their responsibilities varied across the four schools. In school A, for example, the headteacher and deputy head of academic affairs believe that sharing and delegating their responsibilities is a common practice. However, sharing was limited, and restricted by the formalities enforced by the MoE's manuals. In school B, the headteacher showed more confidence in practicing delegation widely with the deputy heads. She saw this as part of her role to prepare them to become headteachers in the future. Within teams, in addition, team leaders and coordinators talked about how the members usually collaborate and the leaders delegate some of their duties to a team member if needed.

In schools A and C, because of accountability considerations, the management assistants and deputy heads, who believe they are responsible for sensitive student or staff information, talked about upwards delegation to their superior, who happened to be the headteacher in both cases. Distinctively, in school D, accountability appeared to be interpreted strictly, preventing the participants from delegating any of their work to another member of staff. Generally, within the four

schools, teachers explained that they normally collaborate and cooperate, so that they do not need to delegate or share any of their duties.

Formal authorities within the schools appeared to discourage the practice of sharing responsibilities, or even delegation. For example, in school D, where accountability was highly controlled by the company, the participants were precise about their responsibilities and roles, and how they leave no room for delegation. However, in the other schools the nature of delegation appeared to be more associated with the participant's role within the school, and their experience. For example, in school A, the headteacher explained how they share some responsibilities within her school's leadership team but added that this is limited by the regulations of the MoE. The specified duties and job descriptions for some positions frame the accountability limits for these roles.

Similarly, in school B, the more senior the participant's role within the hierarchy the more open they were to the concept of delegation, which was also influenced by their years of experience, and the accountability and sensitivity of the tasks. Overall, delegation is not a common practice amongst those with leadership responsibilities who are not in senior positions.

In addition, according to the literature, delegation usually refers to the managerial concept when a person in a senior position within a hierarchy delegates to a subordinate (Anon, 1992; Bush 2011; Bush and Ng, 2019), or what is recognised as downward delegation (Coleman and Glover, 2010). In contrast, however, upwards delegation was practiced in school C, as one of the participants used that term to describe what was known as a common practice she is used to with her superior (the headteacher in her case), when she needed to delegate any of her tasks. The participant explained that this was the case because of the sensitivity of the work, and for security reasons, she could not trust anyone else with the information apart from the headteacher. This was significant as this example tends to challenge the well established view about delegation as a managerial concept which stresses downwards delegation. It provides a practical example of how contextual

differences might lead to different understanding and implementation of school leadership.

One of the ways in which leadership is shared within the schools is through school teams. Team leaders were generally nominated by the superior, who could be the headteacher, or the subject coordinator, or even the internal supervisor (as in school B). Across the cases, the participants expressed how nomination is considered to be the normal practice to move into leadership positions, or to progress through the leadership hierarchy, as most of them were appointed to their positions through nomination. Moreover, those who are seeking promotion are waiting for their superiors to nominate them, as the common belief is that their superiors are well placed to make that judgement.

Research Question 3: To what extent, and in what ways, do the enacted leadership styles in the case study schools fit the distributed leadership (DL) model?

This question sought to find evidence of distributed leadership practices in the case study schools or, alternatively, find what leadership models are being applied in these schools. The data show that there are elements of formal models, including hierarchical and managerial leadership. Beside distributed leadership, there is also evidence of collegial models, such as shared and collaborative leadership.

As the participants were discussing DL, agency and the given agency by the local authority to each school seemed to affect the exercise of DL. Hence, the influence of centralisation is quite profound, leading to more managerial, and quite hierarchical, leadership practices rather than distributed leadership, for example in school C. The local authority's officers and supervisors played a key role in fostering de-centralisation, notably in school B.

Despite this common background, the role of the local authority resulted in different degrees of agency and autonomy. In school B in Jeddah, the school's representative supervisor from the local authority appeared to extend her agency

to the school head and allowed her to use the school's own templates for some of the documentation. Similarly, in school D, the private school in AlMadinah, the headteacher privately hired a personal assistant and the local authority's supervisor did not question it. This was perceived to constitute approval, perhaps because this assistant helped the school to meet the deadlines for all the required documentation. In contrast, in school C, the local authority was not as cooperative as the headteacher wanted, in helping her to overcome staff shortages by allowing her to modify the job descriptions for the management assistants.

Those examples showed how the local authority played an essential role in fostering centralisation or in extending a school's autonomy and headteachers' agency, as in school C, where more hierarchical and managerial leadership models were presented, because of the overall situation of the school. In addition to the local authority, the senior leadership team (SLT) and the company in the private schools are also examples of external bodies, which play a role in forming the leadership style applied within schools. The role of the SLT was evident in school B where some practices were seen which are associated with leadership distribution. Moreover, in school D where the evidence presented some constraints, the participants discussed sharing and collaboration as common practices amongst teachers.

Collegial models of leadership (Bush, 2011) appeared to be more evident in Jeddah, than in AlMadinah. In school A, for example, the evidence suggests a degree of sharing and distribution of leadership between the headteacher and senior leaders, and collaborative practices among teachers. Similarly, in school B, there was evidence of distribution, as the leadership structure seemed to encourage distribution of tasks and create an environment where practices of leadership are based on collaboration. It was also evident that the modifications in the leadership structure were intended to allow for engaging those who hold formal roles, as well as those without such roles. In school C, there was only limited collaboration, and failed attempts to distribute by the headteacher.

Moreover, emergent leadership was evident in one school (school C), where there are staff shortages and conflicts between the staff members and the headteacher. Yet, during school special events some of the school staff would volunteer to take the lead and be in-charge but only during the events. Distributed leadership could be allocative (Bolden et al, 2009) or emergent. (Bennett et al, 2003). The present study seems to challenge what is already known about 'emergent' distributed leadership with distribution being mostly allocative, with the modest exception of school C, where the headteacher appeared to play no role in the distribution which took place during special events.

Several participants used the terms shared leadership and distributed leadership to describe the enacted leadership model in their school, for example in school D. However, it is not clear if the use of such language is just semantic or represents a genuinely distributed approach.

Research Question 4: To what extent, and in what ways, if any, is the enactment of leadership in the case study schools informed by the socio-cultural context?

Oplatka and Arar (2017: 284) argue that 'culture has a significant impact on the principal's leadership style'. The present research shows that in some schools, for example in school C, authority was linked to the associated sociocultural beliefs regarding leaders in formal positions, that they should be treated with respect, with no questioning. However, participants in schools A and B expressed that the school environment is where their perceptions about authority are formed. These schools have a very welcoming environment where everyone feels valued regardless of whether they hold a senior leadership position or not. This appears to link to Oplatka and Arar's (2017: 284) view that 'this explanation is probably dependent on how each culture perceives power, authority and relationships in the workplace. Principals in cultures that emphasise hierarchical power (such as Kuwait) exercise their authoritative role more than their interpersonal role'.

Several sociocultural features appeared to affect the enactment of leadership in the case-study schools, although in different ways. These are school location (Jeddah or

AlMadinah), socio-economic factors, school sector (public or private), and parents' education level, cultural beliefs and backgrounds.

The public and private schools were different in how they handled and reported students' accidents and incidents. Where private schools appeared to be more supportive and cautious in addressing and informing parents, public schools seemed more rigid and judgmental, often accusing students to be at fault for any incident, even sickness.

The participants believe that there is a gap between the policies for empowering headteachers and the surrounding sociocultural context. One aspect of the enhanced agency for school heads (both male and female) involves dealing with school maintenance and refurbishment work. This is usually regarded as an area dominated by male workers, linked to socially constructed gendered roles. Saudi women would not commonly deal with plumbers, painter and other workers. This would be handled by the male figure in the house. Extending the agency of female heads, as an act of empowerment, without taking into consideration the wider sociocultural context in which these heads operate, has resulted in declining numbers of deputy heads applying for headships in Saudi primary schools, and in current heads applying for early retirement.

The sociocultural theory and social constructivism appear to reveal how the individual's values are likely to be shaped and influenced by the surrounding societal culture. This was evident in respect of the sole guardianship of students by their fathers in girls' schools. The participants in school A, which is a public school, claim that it is not the social norm for female teachers to have direct contact with fathers, yet this inevitable when the father is the only guardian of a student. However, this may be less of an issue for teachers working in a private school, as this is more accepted socially.

Another difference between public and private schools relates to staff members' job security and the social expectations and boundaries between males and

females. It is considered 'common knowledge' to expect fathers to be more comfortable dealing with teachers and other female staff members in a private school compared to the public sector. However, the participants believe that the teachers in a private school may feel pressured to do so due to fear of losing their job and not necessarily because of acceptance of extending the boundaries with fathers or any male figures.

The impact of societal culture and norms sometimes affected the participants, for example in respect of feeling the need to be addressed, and to address others, formally by their positions and titles, for social reasons, as this would mean they would be treated more seriously by parents or colleagues, because this is more formal and consequently more respectful, as discussed by the participants in schools A and B.

As schools are part of their communities, and parents usually help to shape such communities, the nature of parents' involvement with schools also affected their leadership practices. The evidence shows that the level of parents' involvement, and the nature of engagement, with their daughters' schools, is influenced by how parents respond to the school's rules and regulations, especially in times of conflict or disapproval. The data indicate that they differ according to parents' backgrounds, level of education, and cultural beliefs. For example, parents responded differently to letters, awards and certificates from the school, according to who signed that letter or formal written communication, as the prevailing culture means that there is more respect for those at the top of the hierarchy than those in less senior positions.

In light of Walker's (2010: 179) argument that claims, 'the context for social interactions is created by the culture', the interaction between individuals and the prevailing culture, appear to be affected by broader cultural environment (Scott and Palincsar, n.d.). The emphasis on social exchanges between people and how they ultimately shape the individual's behaviour (Blunden, 1964: 223; Cole et. al., 1978; Miller, 2011; Stetsenko and Arievitch, 2014; Vygotsky, 1978) is evident in the case

studies. As Hartley (2009: 144) argues that the individual is inseparable from the 'macro-structural properties'. Consequently, 'existing social structure is always a precondition for the actions' claims Gronn (2010a: 318).

The fundamental role of social interactions in a collective community, such as Saudi Arabia, with its deep-rooted cultural beliefs and traditions, were evident in this study, for example in links between schools and parents, where the headteacher of school B, for example, stressed formal channels of communication. Similarly, school D's headteacher's refusal to take part in the study, while being content to comment 'off the record', also relates to sociocultural considerations, linked to her personal and professional reputation.

Significance of the Study

Introduction

This research focuses on leadership enactment in girls' public and private primary schools in Saudi Arabia, with particular reference to distributed leadership. It contributes to the literature relating to primary schools' leadership practices, notably in filling the gap on school leadership in the Arab region, particularly in Saudi Arabia. It also contributes to the literature on distributed leadership and provides insights into the sociocultural aspects of leadership in this context. The research contributes to knowledge in terms of contextual, methodological and theoretical significance.

Contextual significance

There is a limited literature on school leadership in non-Western societies (Gronn, 2010; Harris, 2010; Hartley, 2009), specifically in the Arab region (Hallinger and Hammad, 2019), and is particularly inadequate in respect of primary schools in Saudi Arabia. Addressing this gap in the literature provides the warrant for this

research on leadership in girls' primary public and private schools in Jeddah and AlMadinah.

Hallinger and Hammad's (2019) important review of educational leadership and management in the Arab region identified only three published sources relating to Saudi Arabia (Alameen, Male and Palaiologou, 2015; Algarni and Male, 2014; Taleb, 2010), focusing mainly on early years or higher education. Algarni and Male's (2014) article was the only one focused on public schools and was informed by one theoretical model (pedagogical leadership). However, Algarni and Male (2014) work is classified as commentary and not empirical evidence by (Hallinger and Hammad, 2019: 27), their purpose, none the less, was to '[investigate] the challenges and possibilities presented to school leaders in Saudi Arabia. By a new vision and strategy that has been proposed by the government for the future of education' (Algarni and Male, 2014: 45).

The present researcher reviewed the references cited in the three articles and found that most focused on secondary schools (Al-Buraidi, 2006; Algarfi, 2010; Alhazmi, 2010; Alkarni, 2009; Al-Maini, 2006; Almannie, 2015). The smaller number addressing primary schools focused on pedagogical studies, managing teaching and learning, assessment, organisation and evaluation (Al-Dawod, 2004; Al-Yahya, 2004; Webb, 2005), rather than shared or distributed leadership. This study, therefore, presents the first empirical evidence focusing on leadership in both public and private girls' primary schools in two cities (Jeddah and AlMadinah) in Saudi Arabia.

In the wider Arab region, Hallinger and Hammad (2019) state that only 11% of the published work focuses on primary schools, yet they do not state specifically how many articles relate to primary schools. They also refer to 21 articles discussing leadership, and 18 relating to cultural context. They discuss only one paper on the Saudi context (Algarni and Male, 2014), focused on challenges facing leaders in public schools, but without a specific focus on primary or secondary schools.

None of the published work on primary schools in the Arab region, as noted by Oplatka and Arar, 2017), combined a discussion of distributed leadership and the sociocultural aspects of primary schools drawing on data collected from both public and private schools, as in the present researcher's study in Saudi Arabia.

Some other studies focus only on one school sector, i.e. only public or private schools (Alsaeedi and Male, 2013; Al-Omari and Wuzynani, 2013; Nabhani *et. al*., 2012). The present study focuses on primary schools, in contrast to Alhazmi, 2010; Al-Hamdan. and Al-Yacoub, 2005; Elmelegy, 2015; Hammad and Norris, 2009, that relate to secondary schools, or higher education, while Alameen, Male and Palaiologou, 2015, and Aljabreen and Lash, 2016, focused on early childhood education.

As can be seen from this brief overview of previous school leadership research in Saudi Arabia, and the wider Arab region, the present study breaks new ground in being the first major research on school leadership, and specifically distributed leadership, in public and private primary schools in Saudi Arabia and the wider Arab world. It is also significant in being the first to explore school leadership with reference to the sociocultural theory, in this context.

Methodological significance

As noted above, there is only limited literature on school leadership in the Arab region, and this is even more sparse in Saudi Arabia (Hallinger and Hammad, 2019; Oplatka and Arar, 2017). The present study is also significant in respect of its research design. It is a qualitative study that employed a multiple case study design. The sampling frame included public and private girls' primary schools in two cities, Jeddah and AlMadinah. Within each school, interviews were conducted with a wide range of participants; headteachers, deputy heads, administrators or

management assistants, subject coordinators and team leaders, and teachers, facilitating respondent triangulation (Bush, 2012).

The present author's research design contrasts with that of Taleb (2010), which discussed a single case-study. It is also unusual in being a qualitative study while much previous work in the region is quantitative (Abu-Tineh, 2013; Al-Husseini and Elbeltagi, 2017); (Alhazmi, 2010; Al-Omari and Wuzynani, 2013; Abu-Tineh, 2013).

The design of this study stratifies the schools by city (Jeddah, AlMadinah) and by school sector (public and private). By facilitating cross-sector and cross-city comparisons, and providing rich description through the use of semi-structured interviews and targeted observations, along with the documentary analysis, the research provides methodological triangulation. In addition, the inclusion of participants from several locations across the hierarchy with headteachers, deputy heads, administrators or management assistants, subject coordinators and team leaders, and teachers, offers respondent triangulation, leading to in-depth analysis, contributing to the methodological significance of this study.

Theoretical significance

This study has theoretical significance at two levels. First, the findings show that the conventional (mostly western) literature around distributed leadership requires modification when applied in highly centralised contexts, such as Saudi Arabia. It indicates that the enacted model of distributed leadership in Saudi Arabia challenges the assumption that it is an 'emergent model', as assumed in the literature. Instead, it should be regarded as an allocative model (Bush and Ng, 2019) as distribution, where it exists, depends on senior leaders within and beyond the school.

Second, this research is one of the first studies to investigate distributed leadership linked to the sociocultural theory. The sociocultural theory (Matusov and Hayes, 2000) combines the individual with the surrounding context, including all aspects of

the context which appears to shape the individuals' perceptions. That said, Miller (2018: 4) explains that '[n]ational culture has a strong influence on organisational practices and leadership behaviours'. Walker (2010: 179) adds, '[t]he concept of culture and its influence on organisational life is clearly established'. With Dimmock and Walker's (2005: 13) definition of societal culture which indicates the importance of 'values, beliefs and practices' in people's life that make them unique from one another. To conclude, the study of distributed leadership through the lens of sociocultural theory appears valuable.

The theoretical implications of this study are two-fold. First, in the application of some of the Western popular leadership models, such as distributed leadership, a greater consideration of context is needed, as leadership in Saudi Arabian schools is very different from the assumptions underpinning current leadership theory. Second, in these case study schools, employing the sociocultural theory was helpful in providing in-depth understanding of the factors that affect the implementation of leadership in different contexts.

Implications for Policy, Practice and Research

This study provides insights into leadership enactment in four case study primary schools in two cities, Jeddah and AlMadinah, and two school sectors (public and private). However, it does not seek to generalise the findings to all primary schools in Saudi Arabia. The study has implications for policy as it revealed how the Ministry of Education's procedures (the Regulatory Manual and the Procedural Manual) can constrain leadership practice for headteachers. It also serves to draw the attention of stakeholders and policy makers towards the social and cultural considerations affecting the enactment of leadership in primary schools. The policy implication is that that the role of the Ministry's representative offices, or what is known as the local authority, should be reviewed to consider the extent to which they should be

enforcing the enactment of these manuals rather than allowing headteachers to interpret them for application in their own school contexts.

A significant implication for practice is that school leaders, teachers, and administrators need to develop a heightened awareness of the impact of the prevailing sociocultural factors on leadership enactment, notably in respect of relationships with parents and other stakeholders. Depending on the school type, either public or private, leaders may need to act and respond in different ways, in accordance with the anticipated sociocultural rules.

Given the limited research and literature on school leadership in Saudi Arabia, noted above, and the significance of the prevailing societal culture identified in this study, further research is required. Future studies might, for example, include surveys of primary school practice, case study work in other cities and regions, and further work in other sectors, including secondary schools. It would also be valuable to extend the research on primary schools to those providing for boys, where the leadership issues may be different. Such studies could also provide evidence about the significance of sociocultural factors for the enactment of leadership in Saudi Arabian schools.

Overview

This chapter shows how the research questions were addressed. There is evidence of leadership distribution in the case study schools. The nature of distribution, however, varies across public and private schools in Jeddah and AlMadinah, and is very different from that assumed in the (mostly western) literature. In particular, the role played by the local authority, and the enforcement of the MoE's manuals, seem to constrain the level of distribution. The impact of the Saudi Arabian context on the enactment of school leadership shows the influence of sociocultural factors. In both cities included in this study, Jeddah and AlMadinah, there appear to be some sociocultural elements affecting the leadership practices in the case study schools, such as gendered roles and societal expectations.

This study contributes to the limited research on school leadership in Saudi Arabia and serves to modify established theory on distributed leadership. With the knowledge and experience gained from conducting this study, the researcher is looking forward to making further contributions to research on school leadership in Saudi Arabia, including investigating the sociocultural factors in this distinctive context.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethical Approval

Research Aims and Questions and Methods of Data Generation

Research Aims

To examine the extent to which school leadership in Saudi Arabia reflects the predominantly Western literature on leadership theories, in particular, hierarchical, shared or collaborative and distributed leadership.

To look at the current practices of leadership in two main cities in the western region of Saudi Arabia and to compare public and private school sectors in relation to leadership enactment.

To evaluate the impact of sociocultural theory, as well as Durkheim's functionalist theory, on the enactment of leadership in Saudi schools and, if applicable, to assess the extent to which these theories seems to influence or affect the practice of leadership in the case study schools.

Research Questions

RQ 1. What are the leadership practices applied in the case study schools?

RQ 2. To what extent, and in what ways, do headteachers and deputy heads share leadership tasks with other members of staff?

RQ 3. To what extent, and in what ways, do the enacted leadership styles in the case study schools fit the distributed leadership model?

RQ 4. To what extent, and in what ways, if any, is the enactment of leadership in the case study schools informed by the socio-cultural context?

Research Methods

Semi-structured interviews, observation, documentary analysis.

Sites of Data Collection

Two private and two public primary schools in Jeddah and AlMadinah; located at the western region of Saudi Arabia.

Method of Sampling:

Non-probability purposive sampling and stratified sampling for elementary schools. The researcher will apply non-probability, purposive, sampling to identify the interview participants in each school.

Approaching Participants

To approach the participating schools, the researcher has to submit an official request to the Ministry of Education, about the schools she wishes to visit. Then the Ministry's representative offices informs the schools about the researcher's potential visit. For private sector schools, the researcher approaches the schools using personal networks and recommendations.

Approaching the participants in each school requires them to be involved in a leadership position and/ or responsibility. This is required as the researcher deliberately seeks to understand the leadership activity in the selected schools. Therefore, the participants are likely to be headteachers, deputy heads, middle managers and teachers.

The researcher's initial intention is to conduct eight interviews in each school; as far as the school's structure allows; the participants are the headteacher, the deputy head, two middle managers and four teachers. These people have been selected as they seem the most appropriate to help in answering the research questions.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title

School Leadership in Saudi Arabia: Case Studies of public and Private Schools.

Researcher's Name
Soha AlFahal.
Supervisor's Name
Professor Tony Bush.

Project Aims

To examine the extent to which school leadership in Saudi Arabia reflects the predominantly Western literature on leadership theories, in particular, hierarchical, bureaucratic, collaborative and distributed leadership.

To look at the current practices of leadership in two main cities in the western region of Saudi Arabia and to compare public and private school sectors in relation to leadership enactment.

To evaluate the impact of sociocultural theory, as well as Durkheim's functionalist theory, on the enactment of leadership in Saudi schools and, if applicable, to assess the extent to which these theories seems to influence or affect the practice of leadership in the case study schools.

Participant's Contribution and Involvement

In all four schools, the eight research participants will be interviewed for at least one hour by the researcher, who will also be conducting observations of those interviewees to understand the leadership activity of the schools. As the participants are likely to be headteachers, deputy heads, middle managers and teachers; the time for conducting the interviews will be agreed upon by both the interviewer and interviewee ahead of time to fit in the participants' schedules.

The Rights of the Research Participants and Confidentiality

The anonymity of the research participants is ensured. Neither the names of the participants nor any information which might potentially identify the schools or the participating individuals will not be used in published materials. To overcome the issue of anonymity, he researcher plans to use different (made up) names to refer to the schools and the participants in her research. Confidentiality and security of collected data is ensured as all the data will be stored (electronically accessible with

password. Hard copies will be stored in a locked cabinet). As one way of showing how researcher is protecting privacy; only the researcher and her two supervisors will have access to the personal information and the collected data before any modifications are made to the names of the schools and participants, by which they can be identified.

The research participants are at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice or negative consequences. It is the right of the participant to be treated equitably and they have the right to ask questions and not sign the consent from until being fully informed about the research aims and procedures as well as receiving the participant information sheet.

Voluntary Informed Consent

This project takes into account voluntary informed consent for all participants taking part in the study. All research participants are taking part in this research completely voluntarily.

Risks, Harm and Benefits to Participants

The researcher will take precautions to avoid participants' harm (physical and psychological) as the welfare of the participants if highly important. Necessary steps are being considered to minimise possible distress or discomfort participants may encounter during the research process. At any time, during the research, if the participants experience any sort of distress or harm; they are encouraged to talk it over with the researcher as this might have an impact on their participation or may influence the pace and the progression of the research. By participating in this research, the main benefit to the participant is to help them reflect upon their own practices and knowledge in educational leadership. Besides that the will be contributing to fill in the research gap and development of the field of educational leadership and management in Saudi Arabia.

Contact Details (if further information is required)
Researcher: soha.alfahal@nottingham.ac.uk Mobile: +996 556 639 393
Supervisor: tony.bush@nottingham.ac.uk
School of Education Research Ethics Coordinator:
educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Project Title
School Leadership in Saudi Arabia: Case Studies of Private and Public Schools.
Researcher's Name
Soha AlFahal.
Supervisor's Name
Professor Tony Bush.

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that I will be audiotaped during the interview.
- I understand that data will be stored. {*Electronically accessible with password. Hard copies will be stored in a locked cabinet*}.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.
- I have been informed of and understand the purposes of the study.
- I have been given an opportunity to ask questions.
- I understand I can withdraw at any time without prejudice.
- Any information which might potentially identify me will not be used in published material.

Signed …… (research participant)
Print Name …… Date ……

Contact Details
Researcher: soha.alfahal@nottingham.ac.uk Mobile: +996 556 639 393
Supervisor: tony.bush@nottingham.ac.uk
School of Education Research Ethics Coordinator:
educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

2015/56/MO

School of Education – Research Ethics Approval Form

The University of Nottingham

Name Soha Alfahal
Main Supervisor Tony Bush
Course of Study PhD
Title of Research Project: School leadership in selected Saudi Arabian Schools in two cities in the western region of Saudi Arabia (Jeddah and Madinah)
Is this a resubmission? No **Date statement of research ethics received by PGR Office: 26/10/15**

Research Ethics Coordinator Comments:

Thank you for your revised documents and updating /.amending the information letter and consent form.

Happy for this to be approved and we wish you well with your research.

I consider this research to be above minimum risk ☐

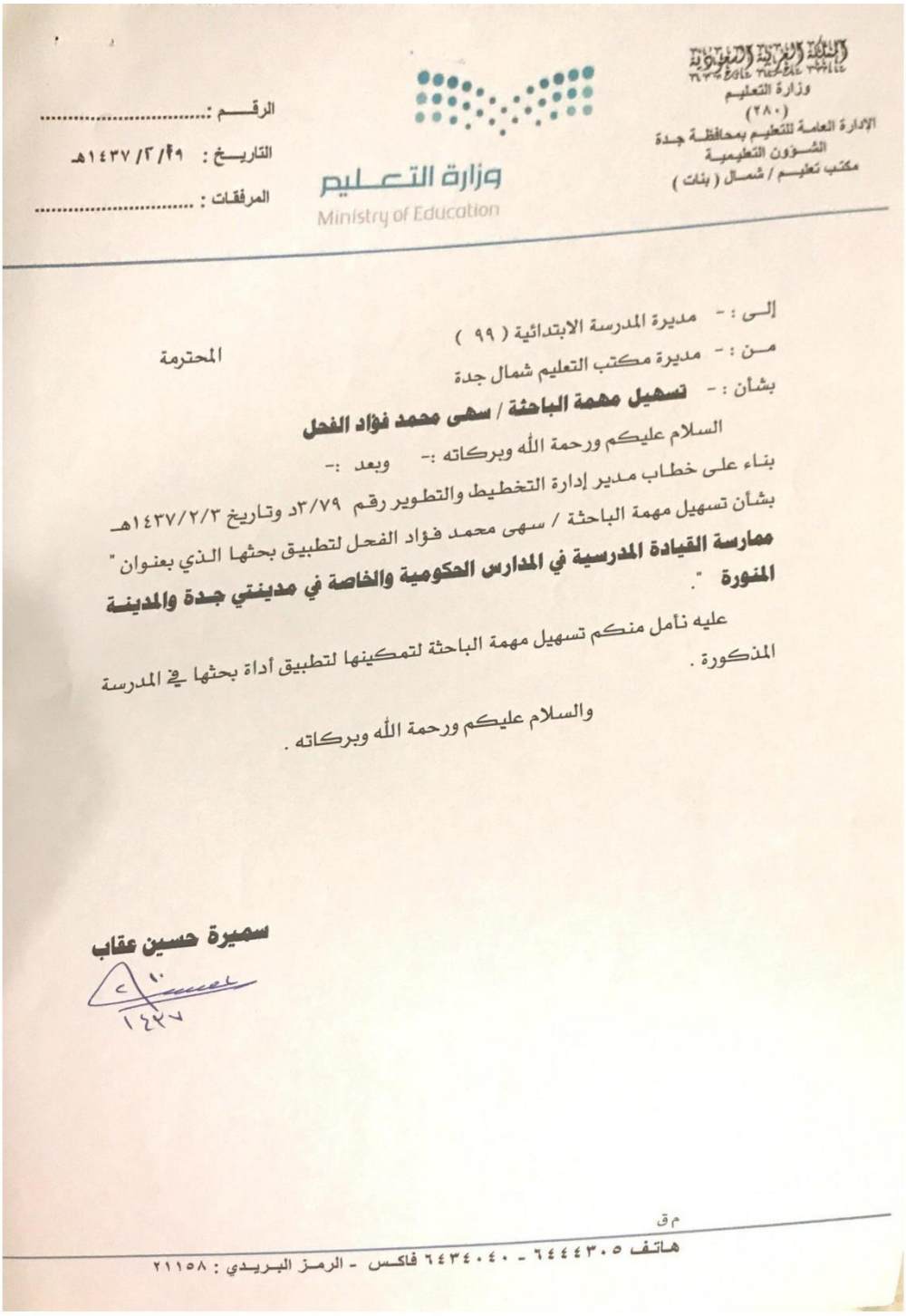
Final responsibility for ethical conduct of your research rests with you and your supervisor. The Codes of Practice setting out these responsibilities have been published by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) and the University Research Ethics Committee.
http://www/educationstudentintranet/researchethics/index.aspx http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/Ethical%20Guidelines *If you have any concerns during the conduct of your research then you should consult those Codes of Practice and refer again to the School of Education's Research Ethics Committee.*

Independently of the Ethics Committee procedures, supervisors also have responsibilities for the risk assessment of projects as detailed in the safety pages of the University web site. Ethics Committee approval does not alter, replace, or remove those responsibilities, nor does it certify that they have been met.

Outcome:
Approved [X] Revise and Resubmit [ ]

Signed: *Mary Oliver* Name: Dr Mary Oliver (Research Ethics Coordinator) Date: 9/11/2015

Appendix B: The General Education office in North Jeddah (GEDNJ)'s Access Letter



المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم
(٢٨٠)
الإدارة العامة للتعليم بمحافظة جدة
الشؤون التعليمية
مكتب تعليم / شمال (بنات)

وزارة التعليم
Ministry of Education

الرقم : .....
التاريخ : ٢٩/ ٣/ ١٤٣٧هـ
المرفقات : .....

إلى : - مديرة المدرسة الابتدائية (٩٩)
من : - مديرة مكتب التعليم شمال جدة
بشأن : - **تسهيل مهمة الباحثة / سهى محمد فؤاد الفحل**

المحترمة

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته :- وبعد :-

بناء على خطاب مدير إدارة التخطيط والتطوير رقم ٣/٧٩د وتاريخ ١٤٣٧/٢/٣هـ بشأن تسهيل مهمة الباحثة / سهى محمد فؤاد الفحل لتطبيق بحثها الذي بعنوان " **ممارسة القيادة المدرسية في المدارس الحكومية والخاصة في مدينتي جدة والمدينة المنورة** ".

عليه نأمل منكم تسهيل مهمة الباحثة لتمكينها لتطبيق أداة بحثها في المدرسة المذكورة .

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته .

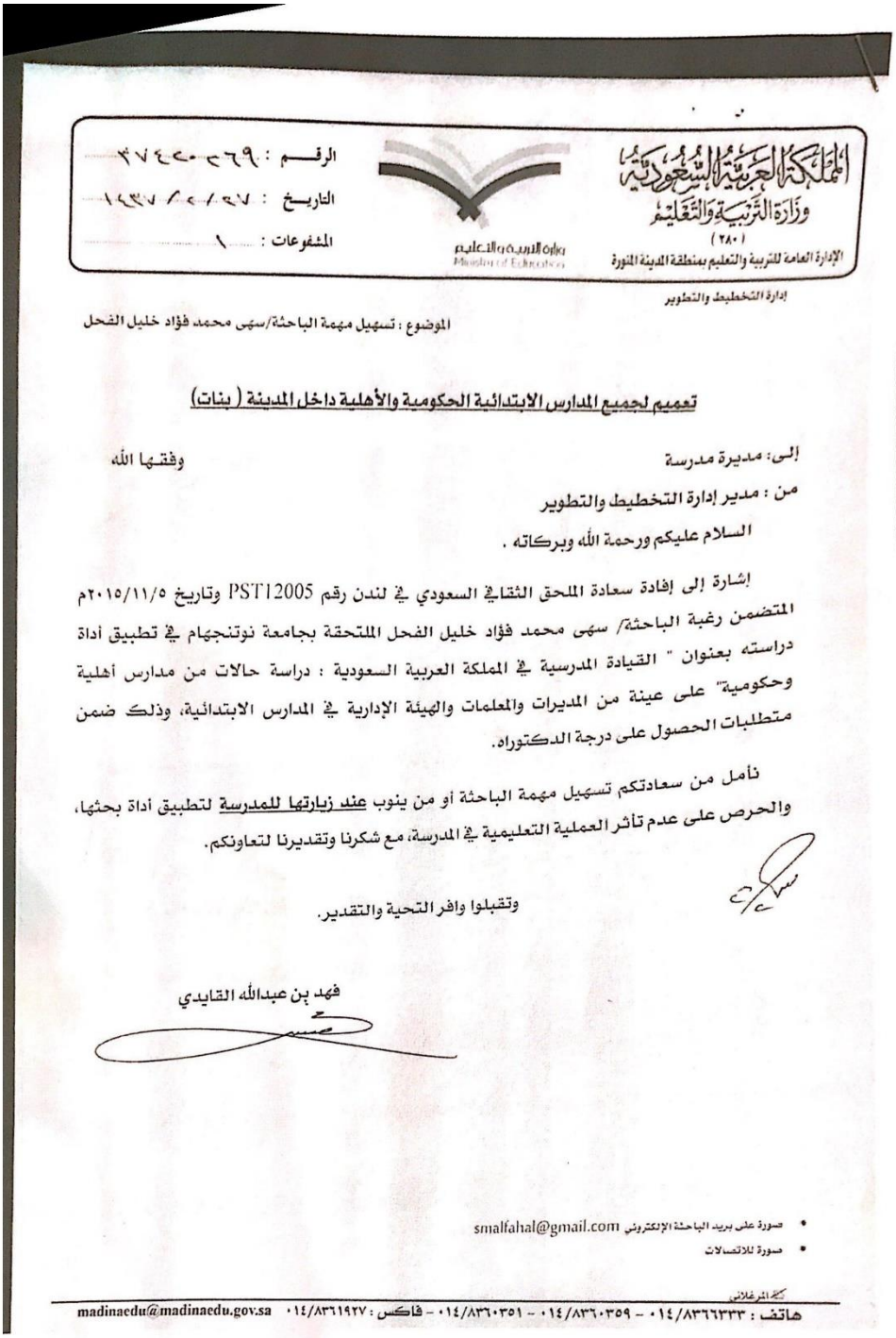
سميرة حسين عقاب

١٤٢٧

م ق

هاتف ٦٤٤٤٣٠٥ - ٦٤٣٤٠٤٠ فاكس - الرمز البريدي : ٢١١٥٨

Appendix C: The General Directorate of Education in AlMadinah Province (GDEMP)'s Access Letter



المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التربية والتعليم
(٢٨٠)
الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم بمنطقة المدينة المنورة
وزارة التربية والتعليم
Ministry of Education

الرقم : ٣٧٤٤٠٠٤٦٩
التاريخ : ١٤٣٧/٠٢/٢٧
المشفوعات : ١

إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

الموضوع : تسهيل مهمة الباحثة/سهى محمد فؤاد خليل الفحل

تعميم لجميع المدارس الابتدائية الحكومية والأهلية داخل المدينة (بنات)

إلى: مديرة مدرسة وفقها الله

من : مدير إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته .

إشارة إلى إفادة سعادة الملحق الثقافي السعودي في لندن رقم PST12005 وتاريخ ٢٠١٥/١١/٥م المتضمن رغبة الباحثة/ سهى محمد فؤاد خليل الفحل الملتحقة بجامعة نوتنجهام في تطبيق أداة دراسته بعنوان " القيادة المدرسية في المملكة العربية السعودية : دراسة حالات من مدارس أهلية وحكومية" على عينة من المديرات والمعلمات والهيئة الإدارية في المدارس الابتدائية، وذلك ضمن متطلبات الحصول على درجة الدكتوراه.

نأمل من سعادتكم تسهيل مهمة الباحثة أو من ينوب عند زيارتها للمدرسة لتطبيق أداة بحثها، والحرص على عدم تأثر العملية التعليمية في المدرسة، مع شكرنا وتقديرنا لتعاونكم.

وتقبلوا وافر التحية والتقدير.

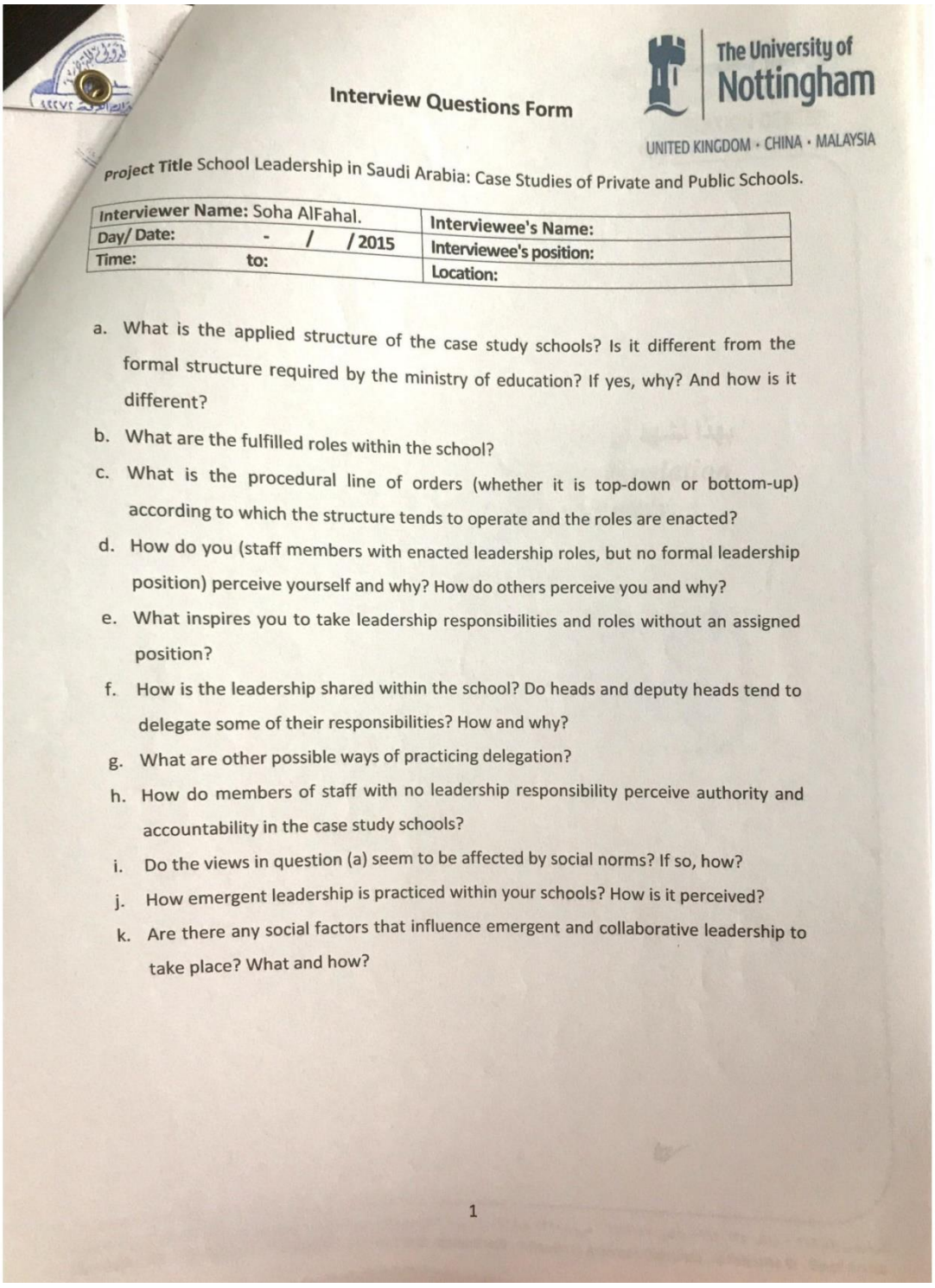
فهد بن عبدالله القايدي

- صورة على بريد الباحثة الإلكتروني smalfahal@gmail.com
- صورة للاتصالات

مكة المكرمة

هاتف : ٠١٤/٨٣٦٦٣٣٣ - ٠١٤/٨٣٦٠٣٥٩ - ٠١٤/٨٣٦٠٣٥١ - فاكس : ٠١٤/٨٣٦١٩٢٧ madinaedu@madinaedu.gov.sa

Appendix D: Interview Guide



Interview Questions Form

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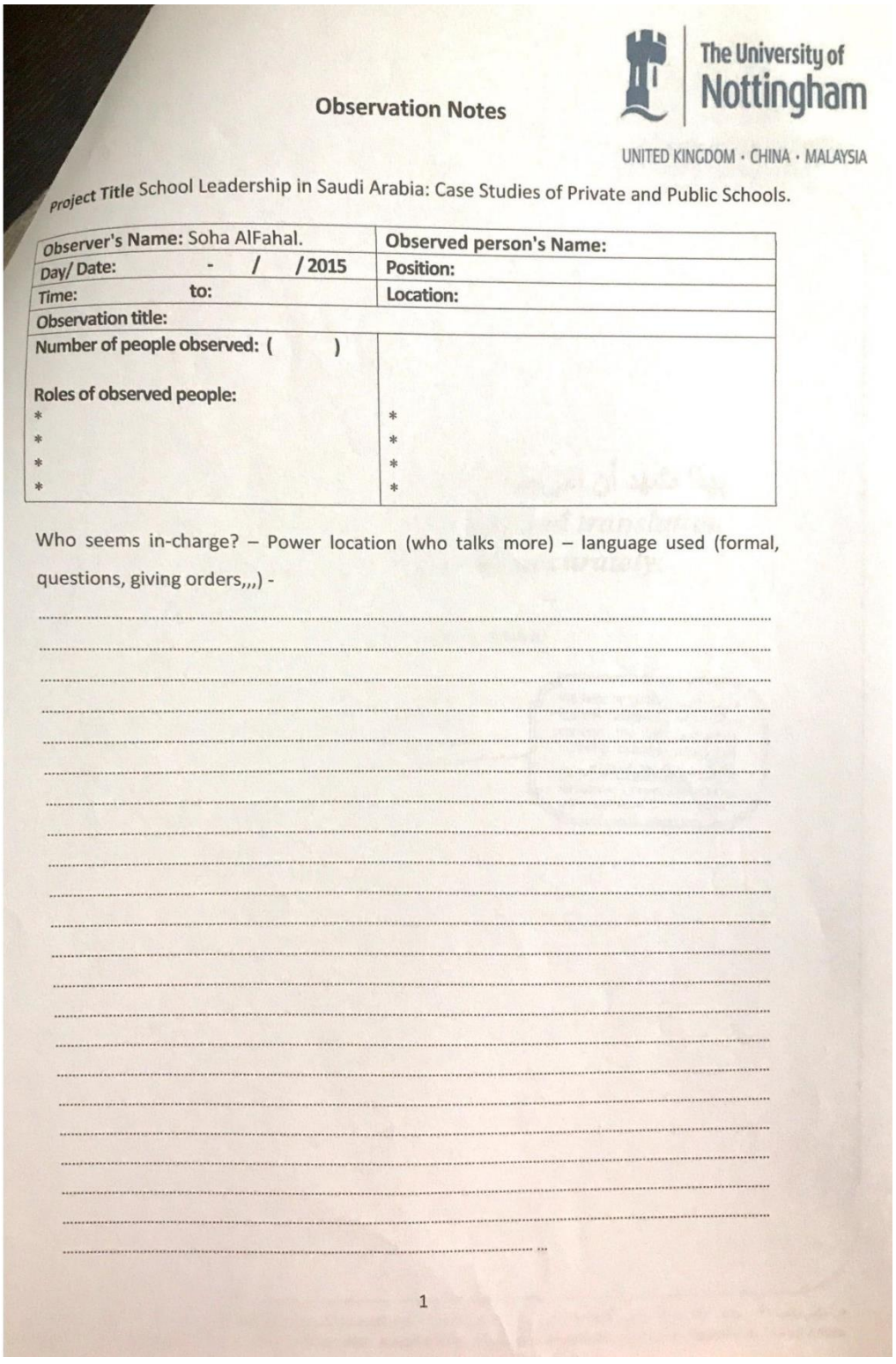
Project **Title** School Leadership in Saudi Arabia: Case Studies of Private and Public Schools.

Interviewer Name: Soha AlFahal.	**Interviewee's Name:**
Day/ Date: - / / 2015	**Interviewee's position:**
Time: **to:**	**Location:**

a. What is the applied structure of the case study schools? Is it different from the formal structure required by the ministry of education? If yes, why? And how is it different?
b. What are the fulfilled roles within the school?
c. What is the procedural line of orders (whether it is top-down or bottom-up) according to which the structure tends to operate and the roles are enacted?
d. How do you (staff members with enacted leadership roles, but no formal leadership position) perceive yourself and why? How do others perceive you and why?
e. What inspires you to take leadership responsibilities and roles without an assigned position?
f. How is the leadership shared within the school? Do heads and deputy heads tend to delegate some of their responsibilities? How and why?
g. What are other possible ways of practicing delegation?
h. How do members of staff with no leadership responsibility perceive authority and accountability in the case study schools?
i. Do the views in question (a) seem to be affected by social norms? If so, how?
j. How emergent leadership is practiced within your schools? How is it perceived?
k. Are there any social factors that influence emergent and collaborative leadership to take place? What and how?

1

Appendix E: Observation Framework



Observation Notes

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Project Title School Leadership in Saudi Arabia: Case Studies of Private and Public Schools.

Observer's Name: Soha AlFahal.	**Observed person's Name:**
Day/ Date: - / /2015	**Position:**
Time: to:	**Location:**
Observation title:	
Number of people observed: ( ) **Roles of observed people:** * * * *	 * * * *

Who seems in-charge? – Power location (who talks more) – language used (formal, questions, giving orders,,,) -

1