A STUDY OF PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP AND ITS ROLE IN EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION IN GIRLS' SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SAUDI ARABIA

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A Study of Perceptions of Leadership and its Role in Educational Transformation in Girls' Secondary Schools in Saudi Arabia

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Declaration and Statement

I declare that I have not, whilst being registered for the PhD programme in Manchester Metropolitan University, been a registered candidate for another award of a university.

The material in the thesis has not been used in any other submissions for an academic award.

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DEDICATION

The central dedication of this research goes to my mother, my husband and my children.

I am truly thankful to my mother, for her encouragement and her support, to my brothers and sisters, and to my husband, Yosef, for his constant help and support and being there for me throughout the years. This is also true of my children, Abdulaziz, Fahad, Bader, Hussah and Salman for their patience and consideration, and especially for their dedication of prayers.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates perceptions of school leadership and management held by participants in eight secondary, girls schools in Saudi Arabia. Education is at the centre of far-reaching strategic goals set out in Vision 2030 by the Ministry of Education. The Vision recognised that if schools were to improve and become fit for the twenty first century economy, teachers would have to act as leaders rather than managers who enact centralised, top-down, policies. The study reviewed literature on leadership models in education and explored how participants recognised differences between management and leadership and what kinds of leadership models and practice they purported to enact in their everyday practices. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight head teachers and seven deputy head teachers. The case study involved one school and interviews were conducted with one school head teacher, two deputy head teachers and three teachers from different subject specialisms. Semi-structured interview questions asked participants about a range of issues that align with current models of distributed leadership found in the mainly western educational literature and explored to what extent such models were emergent or could be adapted for and by women head teachers in Saudi Arabia. Data analysis looked for emergent themes and revealed that most participants perceived a distinction between management and leadership. A range of challenges was found and specifically the lack of autonomy entrusted to head teachers, which made enacting distributed leadership very challenging under present policy conditions. Findings identified three primary barriers (i) school head teachers' performance was hampered by the lack of autonomy provided by the Ministry of Education, (ii) a lack of sufficient leadership training programs and (iii) insufficiency of opportunities for continuing professional development. Some policy recommendations and possibilities for change are set out.

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List of Terms and Acronyms

ANT   Actor-Network Theory

CEO   Chief Executive Officer

CHAT   Cultural-Historical Activity Theory

CPD   Continuing Professional Development

DHT   Deputy Head Teacher

DoE   Department for Education

GPA   Grade Point Average

IT   Information Technology

KSA   The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

MoE   Ministry of Education

NCTL   The National College for Teaching and Leadership

SA   Saudi Arabia

UK   The United Kingdom

USA   United States of America

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1. Background

The study was designed to explore practitioners' perceptions of the difference between management and leadership, and whether women head teachers in Saudi Arabia are beginning to adopt leadership qualities in line with the Ministry of Education's Vision 2030, or otherwise. Overall, the study aims to comprehend the extent to which head teachers in girls' schools understand leadership, as opposed to management, and to explore the type of leadership models that may be adopted within the Education System in Saudi Arabia. This chapter provides contextual information about the culture of Saudi Arabia and development of the education system.

This chapter starts by setting the scene by providing a brief history of the historical phases across which Saudi Arabia was established as a country and the development of its education system over three centuries with a specific focus on girls' schools. This provides the background against which two significant educational reforms were created. The first was the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Project for Developing Public Education in 2007 and the second was the Saudi Arabia Vision 2030 introduced in 2015 and is the reform which provides the educational framework within which this study took place. After Vision 2030 has been described there follows a detailed description of how head teachers, deputy head teachers and classroom teachers are assessed annually as these details are important for understanding some of the terminology that will be used throughout the thesis, and specifically the category 'excellent' head teacher.

1.1 The History of Saudi Arabia

1.1.2 Geographical background

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is commonly known as Saudi Arabia (SA) or The Kingdom, which is an Arab Islamic country located in southwestern Asia and which occupies the largest land area of the Arabian Peninsula. It is characterised by its strategic location between the three continents Asia, Africa and Europe, with a land area of 2,149,790 sq. km (or 830,039 sq. miles) (Ministry of Culture and Information, 2016). The population in 2016 was approximately 31,742,308 people (Central Department of Statistics and Information, 2016), with Saudi nationals numbering approximately 21 million and the remainder comprising foreign expatriates from various nations worldwide.

Saudi Arabia consists of 13 administrative provinces including more than 5,000 cities and villages. The major cities in the country are the capital Riyadh, which is situated in the centre of the country; Makkah, which is known for major Islamic holy places, such as the Grand Mosque; and Medina, where the Prophet's Mosque is situated. In total, millions of Muslims from around the world visit these two holy cities each year to perform the rituals of Hajj and Umrah (Ministry of Culture and Information, 2016), Also, on the east and west coasts lie the cities of Dammam and Jeddah, while in addition there are the main cities of Hail in the north and Jizan in the south (Ministry of Education, 2017) (Figure 1.1).

1.2 The History of Education Over Three Centuries

The following three sections describe the formation and development of the Saudi state starting in the 18th century up to the present day.

1.2.1 The First Saudi State (1744 - 1818)

In 1744, the first Saudi states were established with their capital, Diriyah, in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula (Ministry of Foreign, 2016; Darah, 2016), starting a new era characterised by stability, the spread of security and the application of Islamic law in all aspects of life. As a result, the Saudi state emerged with the support of many scientists, such that innovation, scientific and economic knowledge flourished (Foreign Ministry, 2016; Alalose, 2005) in addition to urban and agricultural practices (Alalose, 2005). At the end of the era of the first Saudi state in 1818, as a result of campaigns instigated by the Ottoman Empire from the road to Egypt by Mohamed Ali, Ibrahim Pasha managed to raze Diriyah and bring about the downfall of many of the countries, such as Qasim and Hail, in the first Saudi state regions across the Arabian Peninsula (Ministry of Foreign, 2016).

Figure 1.1: Map of Saudi Arabia (Khalil, *et. al.*, 2017)

1.2.2 The Second Saudi State (1824-1891)

Two years later, despite the destruction and devastation caused by Mohamed Ali's forces, as led by Ibrahim Pasha in the Arabian Peninsula region including in Diriyah, in 1824, as led by Imam Turki bin Abdullah Ibn Muhammad Ibn Saud, a successful attempt to re-establish Al Saudi rule in Diriyah was made, and which led to the founding of the second Saudi state and its capital, Riyadh (Foreign Ministry, 2016). This situation was based on "the same grounds, and indeed the pillars, upon which the first Saudi state was built in terms of its reliance on Islam, the deployment of security and stability, and the application of Islamic law. It flourished in relation to the Arts and Sciences under the second Saudi state" (Darah, 2016; Foreign Ministry, 2016, Para. 5).

In 1891, Imam Abdurrahman bin Faisal bin Turki (father of King Abdulaziz) left Riyadh following dissension between the sons of Imam Faisal bin Turki, and Mohammed bin Rashid, who was the governor of the Hail (Ministry of Foreign, 2016) and who was loyal to the Ottoman State (Alalose, 2005, AlOthaimeen, 1996). This led to the end of the second Saudi state. In this covenant, scientific work was largely weak due to the absence of political unity and educational activity. Education was limited to the big cities Makkah, Riyadh and Alahsa, and was limited to teaching children the religious basics and principles of writing only in Katateb. The role of teachers was one of managing a group of students in a small room that was for boys only. Those teachers graduated from Katateb but held no formal teaching qualifications.

It seems that the foundations of an education system began during the reign of King Abdulaziz, who fought to unify the countries. The following section presents a brief history of King Abdulaziz's role in establishing the Kingdom.

1.2.3 The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)

The most important historical events with regard to the foundation of The Kingdom's modern education systems stem from its unification by King Abdulaziz Al Saud, The Kingdom's founder (Ministry of Education, 2016). In 1902, King Abdulaziz bin

Abdulrahman Al Saud was able to recover Riyadh city and continued over more than thirty years to unite the country, renaming it "Saudi Arabia" in 1932 (Darah, 2016; Foreign Ministry, 2016).

The education system during the reign of King Abdulaziz passed through two major phases. First, the pre-World War II phase, which began with the entry of the Hijaz during the reign of King Abdulaziz in the year 1924, until the end of World War II in 1945. The education system during this phase was slow to develop due to the economic circumstances of the country and its inability to provide the materials and technical resources required for a widespread education system (Al Salman, 1994). The second phase was the post-World War II phase, starting in 1945 and lasting until the death of King Abdulaziz in 1953. During this stage, the education system improved at a steady pace due to the discovery of oil and the Saudi Arabian engagement in global markets. This provided sufficient money for the country to generously spend on its education system (Alshahyl, 1985). Since then, the major aim has been to teach the emerging principles of Islam and the Arabic language, as well as the requirements of the country's developmental needs in the fields of administration, economy, and technology. A number of factors have helped to achieve this goal including a drive to spread knowledge, the large budget allocation for education, as well as supplying the demand for skilled workers following the emergence of economic development and urbanisation.

Overall, King Abdulaziz's achievements stem from an interest in education and the dissemination of knowledge through the promotion of science. In previous phases, education was based purely on religious studies and Arabic language and there was little education in the field of the sciences (Darah, 2016). In 1925, the Directorate of Education attempted to enhance scientific knowledge and crafts by opening offices, schools and colleges (Foreign Ministry, 2016) and expanding education beyond the principles of religion (Al-sheikh, 1992); it further appointed Salah Shata, who was a teacher in school as the first director of the Directorate of Knowledge in Makkah (Al

Salman, 1994; Hakeem, 2012). Research suggests that recognition of the need to develop educational leaders may have started during the period in which Salah Shata was appointed as a director. There were no school leaders prior to the establishment of modern education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; indeed, there were no private institutions to train teachers. Until this point, the "Sheikh" took the role of the teacher and organised the educational process in an informal way without the qualifications or competencies related to the modern education profession (AlAnziء, 2015).

A scholarship system started in 1927 when the first secondary school in Makkah was established, under the name "Prepare mission schools" (Al-Khareef, 2004; Al-Salman, 1994). Scholarships were designed to enable students to study abroad. In 1927, fourteen students from various cities of Hejaz were sent to Egypt. In 1936, ten students were sent to Egypt, two to Switzerland to study law and political science, and one to Istanbul to study engineering. Later scholarships enabled students to study in Europe and America, especially after the discovery of oil and the associated increase in resources. By 1949, one hundred and ninety-seven student scholarships were provided for boys (Al-Sheikh, 1992).

In the time of the directorate-supervised education in the Hijaz, there were no formal schools in Najd. This situation continued until the unification of the Kingdom in 1932 (Al Salman, 1994). Living conditions changed and new schools opened, broadly spreading knowledge and learning across the state (Al-Sheikh, 1992).

Up to this point, education was focussed entirely on boys, and enhancing individuals' experiences in the various knowledge that would support the country in building a workforce to address different specialities, such as law, politics and engineering. Before the establishment of the education system in Saudi Arabia in 1954, girls were educated by parents and were dependent on home learning via private tutorials. The first girls' schools opened after the establishment of the Ministry of Education in the 1960s.

1.3 The Modern Education System

The Ministry of Education was established in Makkah in 1954, and was transferred to Riyadh in 1956 (Alalmaee, 2012) during the reign of King Saud bin Abdulaziz Al Saud - the second king (Ministry of Education, 2016). This was part of a plan to expand and develop the Directorate of Education. The main aim in establishing the Ministry of Education in 1954 was to develop formal and informal education institutions at various stages (primary and secondary), specialties, activities and in all education sectors with the exception of military education (Hoqail, 1994).

During the reign of King Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud in 1961, the General Presidency for Girls' Education was established and was headed by Sheikh Abdulaziz Al-Rashid. It had a budget allocation equivalent to £197,806.19, and there were 15 primary schools and one intermediate teachers' institute. In 2003, the government issued a royal decree which annexed the presidency of public education for girls' education to the Ministry of Education. A year later, the name "Ministry of Education" was changed to the Ministry of Education and Instruction. In 2016, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Education and Instruction were merged to (re)form the Ministry of Education, for which the Minister of Education was Dr. Azzam Al-Dakhil (Ministry of Education, 2016).

1.3.1 Girls' Education in Saudi Arabia

This section focuses on girls' schools and the beginning of women's education in Saudi Arabia. The General Presidency for Girls' Education was initially founded in 1960 under the name of the General Presidency of Girls' Schools but, in the following year, became the General Presidency for Girls' Education (Hakeem, 2012). The first central administrative body constituted to oversee girls' education in public and private

schools also developed a curriculum that girls' schools started to follow (Hakeem, 2012). Girls' education faced opposition from some parents, yet the state was able to overcome this by appointing General Mufti, the President to head the education of girls (Hakeem, 2012). The General Presidency for Girls' Education provided an integrated system for education ranging from primary to intermediate to secondary education which started in 1964. Over a period of about ten years, institutes for teachers and colleges of education were established and supervised the improvement of pre-primary education (Hakeem, 2012). At this time, a number of departments of education emerged within regions overseeing education in small villages and similar areas. These finally merged in 2002 into the Ministry of Education under the Deputy of His Excellency, the Minister of Education for Girls' Education Management (Hakeem, 2012).

As far back as the fourteenth century, there had been a royal order to establish the Education Council, which supervised and supported Directorate tasks. In addition, an education budget was approved, and the Scientific Institute and the School of Missions' Preparation were established as supported by King Abdulaziz. In terms of women's education, King Abdulaziz recognised that it was going to be difficult to establish girls' education within the Saudi Arabian society. Therefore, he encouraged private schools and the informal Katateb "Quran schools'' based on a groups of different ages of girls and women learning together that were prevalent at the time in the west of the country (in the Makkah, Medina and Jeddah regions) (Al Daoud, 2003) (pictures of the girls' katateb are shown below in Figure 1.2 and Figure 1.3). There were many katatebs in Makkah, for example, Alsoltah for girls which was the first school for girls, Fiqihh Fatima Baghdadi, and Alhzazih, Aisha Majunah. It is also worth mentioning that some of these katatebs turned into private schools. According to historical sources, the Almajunah School and the Alhzazih School of Alsoltah were established before the General Presidency for Girls in 1946 (Hakeem, 2012; Ministry of Education, 2012).

Figure 1.2: Girls' Education in the Past (2006) Riyadh Journal www.alriyadh.com/134346

Figure 1.3: Katateb (2016) Alqabas Journal, alqabas.com/article

The Alsoltah School in Makkah focused on educating girls between 1946 and 1963. The Alsoltah School was established seventy-four years after the establishment of boys schools in 1873 (a picture of the Alsoltah School building is shown below in Figure 1.4). This school was the only school to have an independent systemic administration in Makkah (Hakeem, 2012). The school took into account the fact that girls' education should be conducted according to Islamic law, and this is why girls were educated

separately from boys and required their own schools. The school administration chose two of the teachers who were proficient in teaching the Quran and the curriculum of Primary Schools for Girls to manage these girls schools. Khadija Mohammed Sayrafi was the first teacher in the school, and she taught until 1961 (Hakeem, 2012). Parents' awareness of the importance of educating girls was evidenced by the increasing number of girls attending schools over time. The School of Alsoltah for Girls, which opened in 1946 with 46 students, had risen to 130 girls by the end of the same year (Ministry of Education, 2012).

Interestingly, after girls graduated from school many would then take on the role of teachers themselves in different schools and katatebs both inside and outside Makkah. This encouraged the establishment of schools across the state and the spread of girls' education (Hakeem, 2012).

Figure 1.4: Alsoltah School (2017) Aleqtisadiah, www.aleqt.com/2017/02/10/article

In 1960, a royal order was issued to open schools for girls. A panel of top scientists supervised and organised these schools. In 1960/1961, a budget of two million Riyals was allocated to start this process (AlOthaimeen, 1986). This was seen as a new era in

the education process, which created great resonance in the country and was considered a point of transformation that leads to the rapid development of girls' education (AlDaoud, 2003). In 1980, the General Presidency for Girls' Education was established; books were chosen by the Ministry of Education working from the boys' curriculum. Meanwhile, to ensure that the education system functioned in the correct manner, the General Presidency appointed teachers who were teaching in private girls' schools, and worked to secure furniture and books and seats for girls' schools (AlDaoud, 2003). In the same year, preparations were made for the education of young children. Seventeen primary schools and three institutes for training teachers were opened, spread over three major cities, as well as thirty private schools. The number of students totalled 16,960. In 1961/1962, a total of 4146 students graduated from primary school (AlDaoud, 2003). From my own experience as a researcher employed by the Ministry of Education, I witnessed how the students who graduated from the Teaching Institutes were directly appointed as teachers in primary schools and took up administrative positions in schools. Many of these graduate students were expected to undertake management positions in girls' school with no experience or knowledge of management studies. New school directors have been expected to gain experience from their predecessors, who themselves learned to manage by practicing the role. This has been the case until now.

1.4 The Education System

In Saudi Arabia, the public education system is divided into four sectors: primary schools, intermediate schools, secondary schools and various higher education institutions. General education starts at the age of six, and continues for 12 academic years. Higher education includes the universities, vocational training institutions and colleges that provide the appropriate training programmes. The total enrolled in public school represents over 90 per cent of Saudi Arabia's student age population.

The Saudi Arabian education system has a three-tiered management structure. The top level includes the Minister, the intermediate tier includes the Deputy Minister of Education who is responsible for 13 educational districts, which are called 'administrations of education', which manage 'education offices'. These offices comprise the bottom tier and are responsible for the direct supervision of work in schools (Al-Aqeel, 2005).

1.4.1 Primary School

The primary stage of education aims to prepare pupils for the next stages of their lives. All children are supposed to attend public education, which provides them with the basics of Islamic religion, healthy morals and values, information about the social and geographic environment around them, and kinetic, cognitive, linguistic, and numerical skills. Altogether, primary education in Saudi Arabia lasts for six years, as stipulated in the education policy in The Kingdom. Children usually enter schooling at age six and complete this stage at the age of twelve.

1.4.2 Intermediate School

Intermediate education takes place between the ages of thirteen to fifteen years old and constitutes the period of three years study following the primary stage for girls as well as boys (Al Ghamdi, 2010). Intermediate education, like other levels of education in The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has been free since 1959. During this stage, the curriculum focuses on imparting a basic knowledge of Islamic and Arabic language studies, social sciences, mathematics and science. It is also generally possible to study English as a second language. Overall, there are no differences between boys' and girls' curricula and pedagogy. However, girls also focus on family planning education. Intermediate schools' function both through the day and evening for boys only, whereas for girls they only function during the day (AlGhamdi, 2010).

1.4.3 Secondary school

The high school system is for students aged sixteen to eighteen years old. It is considered the gateway to both the university and the labour market. High schools have different curricula for boys and girls, although the Ministry for Education is working on revising the curriculum in order to be compatible with policy, social and economic developments within the country (Al megabel, 2009). Secondary school education has two tracks: The Annual System and the Course System for both boys and girls.

The Course system has two compulsory semesters and an optional summer semester. It depends on the total amount of hours in each semester that students have chosen. The assessment depends on the grade point average (GPA) (Agency of Planning and Development, 2102), which starts from the first semester. It consists of hours that represent a joint programme studied by all students and two disciplines: the humanities and the natural sciences. Students must study one of these as consistent with their capabilities (Agency of Planning and Development, 2102).

The Annual system is the dominant system for secondary education. It consists of three years, each year consisting of two semesters. The curriculum is divided into two parts: one for the first semester and one for the second semester. The final examination is calculated according to the results of the courses followed in each of the semesters.

1.4.4 Higher Education

Universities in Saudi Arabia are single sex, with female students studying in separate buildings to male students. The women's sections are managed by female administrators and staff, except in medical departments in the medical sciences where men and women are taught together. In the plan of developing higher education, the Ministry of Education often collaborates with foreign universities in many countries, e.g., the US, UK and Australia, to facilitate exchange experiences and develop the

workforce knowledge that provides places for scientific research, and facilitates the provision of scholarships to Saudi students to study various graduate, Bachelors, Masters and Doctorate programmes (Burton, 2012).

Higher education has expanded rapidly in recent years with the creation of new universities with large scientific and practical faculties. A substantial education budget has led to a total of 25 public universities, nine private universities and 34 community colleges, many with scientific and applied disciplines in various fields for men and women alike. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education has adopted modern approaches to scientific research (Ministry of Education, 2016).

1.5 Teachers

There is a considerable shortage of indigenous Saudi Arabian teachers. The lack of standardised qualification requirements for Saudi principals (head teachers), the centralised bureaucratic educational system, and the student drop-out rates are the most important issues reported by researchers who have studied education administration in Saudi Arabia within the last decade. Al-Salloom (1996) stated, "rapid growth, strong centralisation, shortages of specially trained personal, inadequate and ineffective administration are the features of the Arabian educational administration system" (p.12).

According to a bulletin issued by the Ministry of Education in 1986, indigenous Saudi Arabian teachers between the years 1984-85 represented only 32% of the total teachers in intermediate schools and only 20% of the total number of teachers in secondary schools. Al Hoqail (1982), quoting Alhajy, former Deputy Minister of Education, stated that the shortage of post-elementary school teachers in Saudi Arabia is acute. He further noted that The Kingdom is working to alleviate this shortage by employing teachers from other Arab and Islamic countries. Nevertheless, the solution to the shortage problem creates another problem. Saudi Arabia relies heavily on non-

Saudi teachers and administrators. Najai (1987) commented that many teachers who come to work in Saudi Arabia face problems adjusting to the culture. These problems derive from ways they were prepared and the different social climate in which they grew up (Najai 1987, p.84). The fourth development plan (1985-1990) addressed the problem of teacher shortages and the recruitment of Saudi Arabians to the teaching profession. The plan recognised that the underlying problems stems from the fact that teaching is perceived as a low-status occupation. Accordingly, teacher recruitment, training and retention are 'serious problems'. (Najai 1987, p.272). Furthermore, poor relationships among the Ministry of Education members and between principals, teachers, students, and parents have been recognised as further problems (Al Hoqail, 1982). In Aldaihan's study, teachers reported the problem of poor relationships as one of the most important reasons for the teacher shortage.

1.5.1 Teachers' Role

*The Organisational Guide for Schools of General Education (*Ministry of Education, 2020) states that the overall objective of the teacher is to teach courses at school and to raise the quality of teaching and learning. The main tasks are stated as teaching materials and curricula and applying modern teaching methods. Teachers are also expected to participate in the development of students' creativity, look out for cases of vulnerability, adopt educational and counselling roles, manage student behaviour and social integration and participate in school boards and committees as well as carry out any other tasks assigned to them by their head teacher (The Organisational Guide: 35). Accordingly, the expectations on teachers are very high and the role is quite prescriptive.

1.6 Education Reforms

The two major projects have sought to reform education. The first is King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz's Project for the Development of Public Education. The second consists

largely of reforms associated with the country's Vision 2030. The latter addresses the transitions relating to the global economic scene, of which Saudi Arabia is an integral part (Al-Issa, 2017). Al-Issa (2017) has pointed out that the new economic structure, which is based on a new social and economic culture, does not resemble the structure that prevailed in the country for decades. First and foremost, oil production has a central place in the "Vision" while the "transformation programme" (another element of the economic component) is a secondary feature. The discovery of vast oil reserves and being a member of the global economy has created the need to educate the population in a very different way to that imagined in the past, and this is proving to be a major national challenge. The following section briefly describes the two major recent education reforms aimed at tackling this challenge.

1.6.1 Tatweer - Developing the Educational system (2007)

The King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Project for the Development of Public Education, also known as "Tatweer" (in English, "Development") is a pilot programme designed to align Saudi Arabian standards of education to those of other nations (Thumairi, 2014). The programme was launched in 2007 with a budget of $2.4 billion (Tatweer, 2015) with the aim of transforming the country's education system according to a more modern model by building an integrated system of educational standards, evaluation and accounting. It also addresses curricula, learning materials, the school environment and recognises the need to prepare educational leaders to improve educational achievement (Tatweer, 2015). The Tatweer targets a specific school (experimental school), and provides it with advanced devices, equipment and learning tools. Each student is provided with a laptop to help them in their study. In terms of supporting the school administrators' team, the Tatweer project provides the head teachers with two external consultants to provide guidance to the head teacher and deputy head teachers in school (Alyamy & Floyd, 2019).

The Tatweer project focuses on strengthening leadership capacity via the development of tools for all levels of the education system (Aldhasi, 2015). To achieve

this policy, a National Centre for Educational Leadership has been created whose focus is on increasing the leadership capacity in the education system. It also seeks to develop private educational leadership centres and to attract talent with educational leaders at multiple levels of the system. Tatweer aims to develop male and female teachers and motivate them to take up leadership positions. It also aims to strengthen training programmes and empower school head teachers (Tatweer, 2015). However, seven years after the plan was released it is recognised that the associated implementation has been slow. The General Supervisor of the King Abdullah Project for Developing Public Education noted that the implementation of the plans requires 10 years (Trar, 2014).

1.6.2 Vision 2030

Saudi Arabia adopted Vision 2030 as a roadmap for economic and development work within The Kingdom. The vision outlines public policies for The Kingdom, as well as its goals and commitments (Saudi Arabia Vision 2030, 2016). The vision is based on three main themes. The first is the vision to build a vibrant society on the basis of moderate Islam in an attractive environment. The second is to create a "booming economy focused on providing opportunities for all through an educational system linked to the needs of the labour market and developing opportunities for entrepreneurs, small enterprises and large corporations" (Saudi Arabia Vision 2030, 2016, Para. 17). The third includes ambitions for production and economic achievements. Vision 2030 suggests how the implementation of the three themes should be organised according to two executive programmes: The Fiscal Balance Programme and the National Transformation Programme (Saudi Arabia Vision 2030, 2016).

1.6.2.1 The National Transformation Programme 2020

The National Transformation Programme 2020 is considered the mechanism for implementing Vision 2030 (Al-Issa, 2017) according to a four-year programme. The

first stage of the five stages of the vision was set to take place between 2016 and 2020 with a budget of 270 billion Rials. The aims of the National Transformation Programme are to improve government performance and establish the necessary infrastructure to achieve Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 through increasing the capacity of the educational system. Key to this was the launch of a global partnership to enhance teacher professional development through a programme known as "Khebrat" (Khebrat, 2017). As stated by Al-Issa (2017), the Minister of Education, the National Transformation Plan prioritises education, emphasising the provision of educational opportunities in appropriate learning environments for all.

The Khebrat programme will focus on developing teachers' professional practices, school leaders and supervisors in accordance with global standards, basic educational requirements, and the needs for development and change within the Ministry of Education. The programme was to be implemented through a framework of international partnerships intended to build the expertise and experience necessary for a rich and distinct education system (Khebrat, 2017).

In 2018, the Ministry of Education began to support teachers, head teachers and supervisors to obtain practical training in education abroad. The aim was to enable teachers and supervisors to gain first-hand experience in professional practices through working school environments in a range of other countries, which would be based on peer learning in dedicated training centres run by partner universities in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, Finland, Singapore, New Zealand, Ireland and Sweden (Khebrat, 2017). Teachers and supervisors were expected to be in situ for between six to seven months. By the beginning of 2020, the Ministry of Education was preparing for the fourth group of teachers to take up their places on these training programmes by providing language programmes for two months (The Ministry of Education, 2019).

1.7 The Role of School Head Teachers in Saudi Arabia

It is important to recognise that the Ministry of Education sets the roles of secondary school head teachers in Saudi Arabia, providing a prescriptive account of how a school should be managed effectively. These fundamental rules are derived from education policies and presented in simplified forms. There are also system indicators of leadership performance for supervisors and head teachers.

The Ministry of Education launched two guides for public school management. Those to facilitate the work, and to explain schools' tasks through simple methods. These two guides were prepared by a group of educational specialists and administrative experts. They were reviewed by consultants, education managers, school administrators, educational supervisors, teachers and specialists from the Institute of Management and various universities (The Organisational Guide for Schools of General Education, 2016, p. 7). The procedures set out in *the Organizational and Procedures guides* are supposed to help schools to achieve the goals set out in the Khebrat programme. School leaders must understand the guides which describe how to use information technology (IT) to communicate with employees, to record students' data, facilitate staff enquiries, and record students' examination results.

1.7.1 The System of Indicators Leadership Performance of Supervisory and School

The Ministry of Education, as represented by the General Administration of Educational Supervision, aimed to design a system of indicators of leadership performance for supervisors and school head teachers. This was to be a strategic approach used by all organisations to scrutinise effective performance, to guide efforts, and ensure that educational standards would rise (Ministry of Education, p. 5). The design also included performance indicators for teachers to scrutinise effective performance.

1. 7.2 The Organisational and Procedural Guides for Schools of General Education

The Organisational Guide explains the organisational relationships between a school's human elements (Figure 1.5), defines the organisational links and relationships between them, and the responsibilities of the school. The school head teacher involves various councils and committees that enable them to supervise the schoolwork (Figure 1.6). This helps to clarify the goals and tasks of the various organisational elements within the school. The school staff should know their functions, and work to eliminate overlap in functional tasks between different school elements, establish the foundations and rules regarding specific responsibilities, and enable monitoring and performance monitoring (Organisational Guide for Schools of General Education, 2016, p.7).

The organisational link represented by the school head teacher is to the Department of Education/ Educational Office. The Direct Office of the school leader is the Director of the Education Department/ Director of Educational Office. Within the school itself, the school leader is officially responsible for all school staff. The general goal of the school leader is to lead the school pedagogically and educationally to achieve the desired goals (The Organisational Guide for Schools of General Education, 2016, p. 36).

The Procedural Guide for Schools of General Education aims to provide user-friendly work procedures, identify relevant specialists and encourage efficiency in easy follow-up instructions (The Procedural Guide for Schools of General Education, 2016, p. 10).

1.8 The Role of Deputy Head teachers in Saudi Arabia

the Ministry of Education specifies the roles that each deputy head teacher should undertake which can be summarised as follows.

1) A deputy head teacher for **educational affairs** participates in the management and leadership of the school, improving teaching and learning, as well as undertaking

quality assurance. The main duties are supervising teachers, gifted (talented) education programmes, and special education.

2) A deputy head teacher for **school affairs** has the role of overseeing staffing and looking after furniture, appliances and educational supplies, together with the cleanliness of the school and the safety of its facilities and budget. The main duties are support services, learning resource centres and laboratories.

3) A deputy head teacher for **students' affairs** includes duties of caring for students' affairs in the school and addressing all issues related to them and achieving educational objectives. The main duties are admissions, registration, student activities, and student counselling.

Figure 1.5: Organisational Structure of High School Leader (2016) The Ministry of Education.
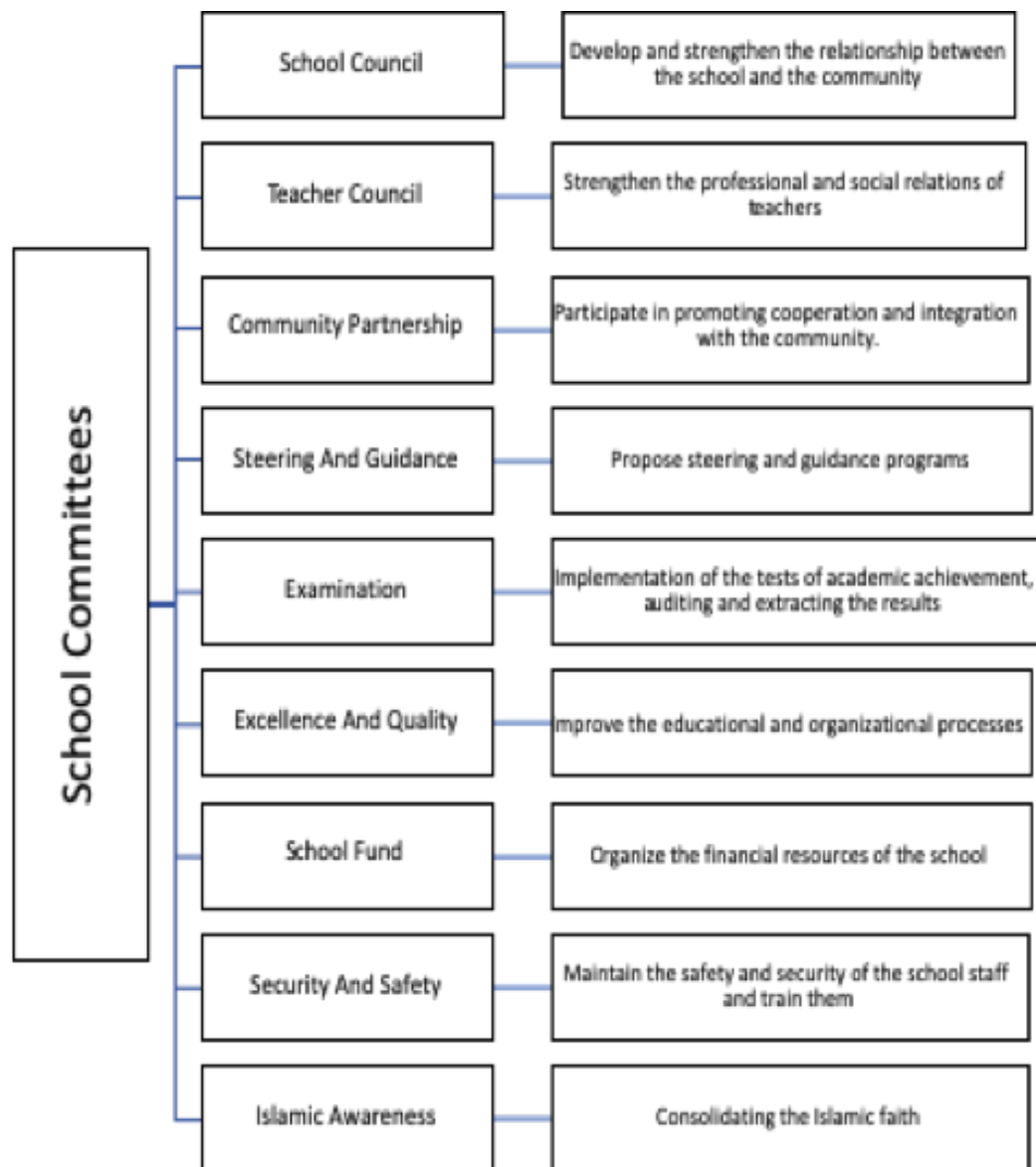
Figure 1.6: School Committees (Source: Author)

1.9. The Process of Assessing School Staff

1.9.1 School Head Teachers' Assessments

The regional supervisor is responsible for assessing head teachers' performances based on specific forms provided by the Ministry of Education. The assessment is performed through visiting the school and investigating how tasks are undertaken. In addition, the supervisor inspects school records, such as files detailing the operational budget, as well as reports that track the development of teachers and deputy head teachers. She also has to monitor school processes in order to ensure the school functions effectively and that the head teachers are following official guidance, organising meetings, and undertaking classroom observations. The number of visits to the school depends on the level of a head teacher's performance. There are several levels: the category of "excellent" is awarded when a teacher achieves a score of between 90-100% on all assessments; very good is awarded when the score is between 80-89 %; good is between 70-79 % and satisfactory is between 60-69 %. If the head teacher has an excellence score, usually the supervisors visit her school twice a year; the frequency of school visits by the supervisor depends on a head teacher's score.

If the head teacher has an excellent score, then the number of visits will be between two to three times every year and may vary depending on circumstances; for example, if she has to implement new rules or undertake new activities. Head teachers who have very good or good scores, will have frequent visits to highlight weak aspects of her management, and to help her improve. The supervisor guides head teachers, points to appropriate training courses, and arranges visits to other schools to share good practice. In addition, supervisors arrange meetings with groups of head teachers to discuss challenges and difficulties. WhatsApp groups are used to organise meetings and can be utilised to ask the supervisor questions at any given moment. During exam periods there is always at least one supervisor assigned to each school to support the

head teacher and supervise the process of preparing and setting exams on time, as well as to ensure students undertake them safely.

1.9.2 Deputy Head Teachers' Assessments

The head teacher is responsible for assessing the performance of the deputy head teachers in her school. She follows their daily work during the year, and provides them with guidance on how to improve. The assessment is based on a specific form from the Ministry of Education, which includes criteria such as how their duties are undertaken. Deputy head teachers also have supervisors who oversee their work throughout the year, support them to develop skills by providing guidance, and by directing them to appropriate training courses. The score is decided through a discussion between the head teacher and the deputy head teacher's supervisor.

1.9.3 Teachers' Assessments

One of the head teacher's roles is to assess teachers' performance, which is achieved by checking achievement documents and files, through classroom observation and by how they become involved with various school activities. The head teacher undertakes classroom observations to assess a teacher's general performance and her ability to implement learning methods and her use of supportive tools and educational resources. The deputy head teacher, who is responsible for developing teachers' professional performance, also has to undertake classroom observations more than once a year to support teachers to improve. The head teacher assesses teachers' performances using official forms with specific criteria that include measures of her work both in and out of the classroom. In addition, specialist subject (discipline) supervisors undertake classroom observations in order to make sure teachers are covering the syllabus and using good teaching methods and resources during lessons. Moreover, the head teacher consults the supervisor when making the final decision regarding teachers' assessment scores.

1.10 Conclusion

Recently, Saudi Arabia has created highly ambitious plans to develop the country, taking its status to that of a global player, and to move the country from being economically dependent on oil by diversifying its sources of revenue. Transforming the education system is a key element of Vision 2030. To implement such educational reforms requires skilled educational leadership. Yet, there remain many challenges within the education system such as an insufficient number of qualified school leaders. This study seeks to understand the extent to which head teachers in girls' schools understand leadership, as opposed to management, and to explore the kind of leadership models they may be able to prepare and be able to adopt.

The literature review in Chapter Two examines models of leadership in the educational contexts and queries whether these can be adapted to the Saudi Arabian cultural context and what the associated challenges might be. The following chapter reviews the literature on leadership in education, and the subsequent chapter then focuses on leadership and management theories; it describes programmes developed with the aim to prepare leaders in developed countries, such as Saudi Arabia, as well as attempt to envisage what more needs to be considered as part of the formal training programmes being developed in Saudi Arabia, in order to suggest what kinds of programmes could work with the Saudi Arabian educational leadership system and within Saudi culture, with a specific recognition that most of the Saudi educational system is single sex.

Chapter Three presents the research methodology, which begins with a discussion of the underlying philosophical issues, presenting the rationale for a qualitative method, and providing a guide to the selection of the sample. It includes a discussion of methods and ethics issues are also considered.

Chapters Four, Five and Six present findings from the qualitative data gained from interviews with head teachers, deputy head teachers and the case study. Several themes were identified and are described.

Chapter Seven presents a discussion of the findings from Chapters Four, Five and Six, and discusses them in light of previous empirical studies reviewed in Chapter Two, in order to answer the research questions. The contributions and implications of the study are also highlighted. This is followed by a discussion of the limitations of the study and the chapter concludes with policy recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Introduction

With the launch of the Saudi Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia, the government has sought to reform and restructure the Ministry of Education (MoE). The aim has been to develop and reform the educational system for societal needs, including developing skilled workers for the labour market. Such reforms require effective school leadership and Saudi Arabia has developed many international partnerships that focus on educational leadership training, such as Oxford University and Cambridge University in the UK and Harvard University in the USA. Nonetheless, the Ministry of Education recognises that there is a shortage of skilled educational leaders to undertake its mission. Hence, this chapter will review a range of theories, explore the difference between educational leadership and management, as well as provide a brief history of leadership and management in education. Additionally, it is important to note that schooling in Saudi Arabia is segregated by gender; thus, part of the literature review will refer to issues relating to gender and leadership.

This chapter has seven main sections. In the first the terms used to conduct a literature review of educational leadership are discussed. This is followed by a review of concepts of power, the difference between management and leadership. In an attempt to obtain a deeper understanding of the elements that may impact the head teacher's performance, the local, national and cultural contexts of leadership are also examined. To understand how the concept of head teachers developed, a brief history of leadership and management development is presented. This is followed by a review of prior studies of school effectiveness and effective school leaders to gain a deeper understanding of the best practices of leadership, and in particular concepts of effective school and school effectiveness, distributed leadership, delegated

leadership, middle leader and teacher leadership. Moreover, as the current study focuses entirely on women head teachers, gender and leadership are explored. Studies of leadership that have been conducted in Saudi Arabia are also reviewed.

2.1 Conducting a Literature Review of Educational Leadership

A literature search used the terms: 'effective school leadership', 'effective school', 'effective leadership practices', 'successful school leadership', 'successful schools', 'leadership development', 'developing educational leader', 'effective teacher', and 'effective school environment', using the Manchester Metropolitan University Library website- advanced research, Saudi Digital Library and Google Scholar. The search produced 26 articles, from hundreds of articles covering nine countries: UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, China, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. These journal articles included 26 empirical studies, which adopted a range of methods, such as mixed methods, as well as interviews, observations, case studies, data analysis, surveys and questionnaires. By paying attention to the theoretical framework of each study, the review provided guidance and insight into the variety of models of educational leadership and supported the development of the research questions.

In many parts of the world, including Saudi Arabia, there is an acknowledgement that to provide high-quality education a school is required to have effective leaders (Bush, 2007). In the modern world of unrelenting changes in technology and partnerships, increasing global competitiveness, and social diversity, leadership has to be a central focus for everyone (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). The next section considers issues that relate to changing societies and the challenges of creating effective schools within the changing context of the Saudi Arabian educational system by discussing power. In Saudi Arabia the segregated social structure which divides schools and public institutions into male and female realms is intrinsic to issues of power and change.

2.2 Power

What constitutes power is contested yet the field of education has been greatly influenced by the works of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic power, Michel Foucault's concept of discursive power and more recently Gilles Deleuze's concept of control society. Each deal with the elusive, we might say, distributed nature of power in modern societies. I will focus on Foucault's concept of power.

Foucault's genealogy traced a shift from power exerted by rulers in feudal times which involved controlling subjects through acts of suppression and domination as a top-down process, to self-governing citizens controlled by discursive norms. In feudal times a monarch-controlled people according to top-down laws, physical discipline, punishment and bonuses in what Foucault referred to as 'sovereign power' (Taylor, 2010, 42). In modern societies, instead of authority invested in God, the Mosque or kings, Foucault suggested that it operates through bodies. He used the phrase bio power to indicate the significance of bodily controls. Rather than citizens being subjugated by the state and its institutions, power was imagined as a fine network of micro-scale or capillary relations that linked objects, events and people at different levels of society, through positive regulations concerned with for example, improving living standards, education and health (McDowell, 1990). Accordingly, power was not considered as opposed to freedom.

Foucault pointed to a new kind of disciplinary power that came into being in the 18th century with administrative systems. These systems of surveillance do not rely on force and instead people learn to discipline themselves to behave in socially expected ways. He expanded this view through the concept of governmentality, a neologism for government rationality. An archetypal example came from a prison designed by Jeremy Bentham in the 18th century known as a panopticon. The prison was designed with a central watchtower with cells for inmates forming a circle around it. All the cells could be observed by one guard. Because the prisoners could see the guard they lived as if

they were under constant surveillance, and so internalised the gaze of the guard and so came to police themselves. This is a notion of power as always there, all pervasive and embodied. The mechanism used to control is 'the gaze' (Fendler, 2010, p. 25)

> *"The concept of the gaze is important because it shows that it is not necessary to watch people constantly because people will regulate themselves even when they think they are being watched. The gaze gives people the feeling that they are being watched, and that feeling is a mechanism of our self-discipline" (Fendler, 2010 p. 25).*

In schools, regulation is achieved at a distance through, technologies such as statistical data gathering. For example, the record of students' performance in examinations is a tool of disciplinary power. Examination scores are data that signal the invisible or distant gaze of the state or government and points to what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. A good examination grade signals academic success and a bad grade signals academic failure. Accordingly, students and teachers internalise feelings by which they self-discipline their attitudes and behaviour based on an internalised and constant fear of being judged as a failure (Taylor, 2010). In societies, a multiplicity of discourses anchored by various social institutions construct the person according to the needs, for example, on tax forms, school report cards or medical certificates. These multiple ways of categorising the citizens pull, align and contradict the moral norms that created social solidarity in prior feudal times. Bio-power is a notion of power as always there, all pervasive and embodied.

Cronin (1996) points out that Foucault's concept of discursive power posits so many indeterminate social locations for the exercise of power that it is difficult to locate the source of power or of resistance. Even so, there have been numerous poststructuralists, Foucauldian accounts of schooling (e.g., Ball, 2013, Taylor, 2010) and many feminist post-structuralist accounts that demonstrate how patriarchal power is enacted in school practices in ways that actors are rarely consciously aware of (Weiner, Arnot and Davies,

1997). Post-structuralist, feminist approaches suggest how historical, patriarchal legacies are part of the dominant discourses or regimes of truth that are recreated through the daily practices of schooling. Social norms of masculinity or femininity are said to circulate as 'truths' or hegemonic norms (Butler, 1990; Connell, 1987). For example, subjects of the curriculum are made up of a multiplicity of discourse including hegemonic masculinity especially in science and mathematics (Walkerdine, 1989). The very nature of these subjects then can create barriers for girls and women in the ways they learn. Henriques et al. (2002) pointed to the psychological effort required by girls to conform to institutional 'truths' that privilege masculinity in schools. As girls conform to practices required to achieve in schools so they inadvertently recreate the historical public-private division. Accordingly, processes of subjectification constitute and reconstitute people through the discourse and the practices of schooling (Davies, 2003; Blackman *et al*. 2008).

Foucault's (1972) disciplinary matrix of truth and power as it applies to schooling, becomes a very gloomy story of how regulative systems perpetuate legacies from the past. Connell (1987) pointed out that school practices can either reinforce or disrupt gendered legacies, yet much current empirical work suggests that the past weighs heavily on the present and, for example, boys still tend to conform to, or feel pressure to conform to, hegemonic masculinity (e.g., Jackson, 2006; Ivinson and Murphy, 2007; Skelton, 2010). In Western societies, women and girls are no longer excluded from public institutions. However, research has shown how in the West, they become excluded once inside schools and academies, through less visible systems.

We could suggest that the single sex education system in Saudi Arabia breaks this pattern of patriarchal power. The education system in Saudi Arabia is single sex from nurseries, through schools and universities to the regional educational administrative offices. In Saudi Arabia the sex segregation might be seen to resist hegemonic masculinity as the all-girls and all-women spaces create environments in which girls have

access, for example, to science and are not completing with boys for teachers' attention or resources (Kenway *et al.,* 1997).

Yet, Foucault's concept of governmentality ensures that discourses that circulate in schools cannot be entirely disconnected from societal norms. Accordingly, patriarchal and gender power dynamics work differently in Saudi Arabia than in the UK for example. Research in single sex girls' schools in Western counties suggests that girls do better in science and other subjects that have masculine inflections than in co-educational schools, partly because they are not competing with boys for resources or attention (Dale, 1974). It could be argued that teachers and girls have access to male territories that they are often excluded from in co-educational schools (Ivinson and Murphy, 2007). Yet when considering the matrix of discourses involved in governmentality, the strong patriarchal culture, history and customs in Saudi Arabia cannot be denied. Women teachers carry their values and beliefs into schools and head teachers have to pay attention to how parents expect their daughters to be disciplined and regulated and these involve issues about legitimate forms of femininity in Saudi Arabian culture. How gendered discourses are played out in girls' schools as compared to boys' schools is not something that could be researched in this study, because as a woman I am literally excluded from entering boys' schools and male centres of administration. Only a few women have been accepted into previously exclusive male decision-making bodies governing education at the highest level of the Kingdom.

Although in this study I had no access to boys' schools, as will be apparent later in the thesis, women head teachers spoke about being disempower by failing to have access to the highest levels of decision-making in the education system. Issues of patriarchy and how it infuses schools cannot be ignored especially in a society in which women's liberties are controlled far more than men.

Niesche (2015) suggests that Foucault's notion of governmentality is helpful for understanding power in educational contexts.

"Government concerns not only practices of government but also practices of the self. To analyse government is to analyses those practices that try to shape, sculpt, mobilise and work through the choices, desires, aspirations, needs, wants and lifestyles of individuals and groups." (Dean, 1999, p. 12, cited in Niesche, 2015, p.135)

Elements of sovereignty, disciplinary practices and governmentality can be helpful when thinking about how schools' leaders are implicated in multiple networks. Teachers are empowered by all kinds of power, for example, they are empowered by the position of authority in schools, which Busher (2006, p. 37) refers to as 'delegated' authority. We might consider this a form of sovereign power, if staff agree to be controlled by those in positions of authority. I encountered this a great deal in interviews with leaders and deputy head teachers in the interviews. Deputy head teachers and teachers stressed that in the end the head teacher carries the ultimate responsibility for what happens in the school. Head teachers spoke of being constrained by rules and guidance documents coming from a heavily centralised education system, where the rules are a form of government by rationality. Accordingly, being empowered to lead a school carries the burden of a high level of accountability. In interview accounts this became particularly apparent when things went wrong. In the Saudi Arabia school system, a head teacher is blamed even when a problem is due to the actions of a teacher or administrator.

On a positive note, a strong head teacher can have considerable influence over the atmosphere in the school. We can consider the multiplicity of discourses that align, clash and jostle in what we might call the internal culture of a school. There are discourses that might be voiced about teachers' personal beliefs and values, discourses around students' welfare or about what constituted good teaching, as well as discourses that head teachers articulate to share the school vision. Busher *et al.* (2007) point out that schools work well when head teachers create a school vision by involving staff, so staff have a sense of ownership and so are committed to the vision. This requires a collegiate

approach, which has to be negotiated with staff rather than imposed. Accordingly, head teachers are caught in capillary networks where they have to negotiate with others to get things done. They are subjected to forms of governmentality because their school will be judged by data such as examination and attendance results. They can exert sovereign power only in some circumstances.

In seems particularly helpful to work with Foucault's concepts of governmentality, sovereign and discursive modes of control in Saudi Arabia to think through how the Kingdom attempts to shift from a highly prescriptive, top-down system of control, where power works more like a sovereign mode, to a modern education system outlined in Vision 2030. This requires a shift away from modes of control in which head teachers follow recipes and texts produced by the Kingdom. For example, detailed prescriptive guidance itemises every function attached to each position in the schools, such as the three deputy heads' jobs. Making sure everyone is following and enacting prescribes roles arguably reduces head teachers to managers. The term leader was introduced in Vision 2030 to reflect the need to recalibrate control away from the centre and towards schools. It was recognised that school needed to, for example, experiment with a wider range of teaching methods with an underlying sense of the need to move beyond rote learning to more engaged teaching and learning in a bid to modernise society. Such a move requires releasing teachers from classroom duties and prescribed administrative jobs to undertake training. While this shift aims to give head teachers and staff more flexibility, other challenges open up.

When everyone's role and duties are known according to publicly available texts and guidance documents, control is governed by rules rather than personalities. There is transparency in the system that enables members to know their place and their role. The downside is the place and role may be too prescriptive. By only following the rulebook, teachers can act as automatons taking no initiatives and can lack motivation to change. Yet, publicly available texts mitigate against head teachers coercing staff or

imposing personal views. Having roles and duties available in publicly available texts gives teachers resources to refer to so they can resist a head teacher who acts as a despot or bully. Publicly available guidance is a check to a head teachers' sovereign power. Publicly available texts can also mitigate against some of the worst effects of modern governmentality. For example, when schools are mainly controlled by the compulsory collection of data such as examination and attendance data to a central system. Head teachers and their staff often experience an insidious, indirect form of state control referred to as control at a distance, which acts like the panopticon (Ball, 1999). If this is not balanced by publicly available descriptions of roles, and duties, then bio-power becomes strong. In state control at a distance, teachers internalise a judgmental gaze and internalise fear and feelings of being continuously under surveillance. The tyranny of control at a distance specifically via performance data can lead to unintended effects such as narrowing the curriculum so teachers only teach what can be examined or exclude students who they judge will fail an examination. Governmentality, the performing practices of self, can work both ways, for the betterment of the school in an emancipatory way enabling teachers to exercise more autonomy, and for the worst by closing down innovation through fear of being judged (Niesche, 2015). It can cause feelings of being oppressed or liberated. In thinking about power in schools, we probably need to recognise complex entanglements of different modes of power and control. Many women head teachers in this study spoke of the need for care and control. The next section will consider the difference between leadership and management.

2.3 Differences between Management and Leadership

Up until relatively recently, school head teachers in Saudi Arabia were described as managers; the term leadership has entered the policy agenda in Saudi Arabia following Vision 2030. The reason for the need to think about leadership and management in this study relates to the educational reforms outlined in Vision 2030, which explicitly describe head teachers in Saudi Arabia as leaders. This is an important shift from

describing head teachers as managers and is tied up with the broader aim to develop a modern education system. At the heart of this change in description is the recognition and acknowledgement of the role of head teachers in processes of change.

Leadership and management have often been viewed as interchangeable and there are numerous definitions of both (Law and Glover, 2000, p. 15). For any institution to set off on a path of change, there needs to be a stable foundation from which effective or successful development can be built. If an institution is not stable change can happen yet not for the better (Leithwood, 2006). Management is often described as a way to retain the smooth working of processes and routine practices that create institutional stability.

> Stability is the goal of what is often called "management." Improvement is the goal of leadership. (Leithwood, 2006, p. 180).

Leadership is sometimes described as having an emphasis on change in a positive direction, and in schools this usually means improving student achievement. Student achievement is usually measured according to tests and public examination scores. Some scholars including Leithwood make a clear distinction between management and leadership as the quote above suggests. His approach is often referred to as transformational leadership, to emphasis the need for skills needed to meet the challenges of the 21ˢᵗ century.

Kotter (1989) suggests that leaders are involved with strategic development and change, while managers deal with day-to-day processes and problem solving, such as staffing, students' absences and timetabling. Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) suggest that management involves carrying out plans and getting things done with others. Building and maintaining an organisational structure is often considered a management issue (Schein, 1985). Being preoccupied with the here and now is another feature of management according to Bryman (1986). Armstrong (1994) argues that all managers

are leaders because they cannot solve even small problems without the support of other staff. Teachers need to be inspired to follow leaders or managers and so neither can function without having effective teamwork. The need for managers and leaders to be sensitive to the specific area and community where a school is located requires flexibility as well as having a vision (Gronn, 1996). Hargreaves and Hopkins (1994) argue that management involves more than following systems, and emphasise human elements such as developing trust and people oriented systems rather than function oriented systems.

While leadership is often associated with institutional change and building an organisational culture, Armstrong (1994) and others argue that leaders also have to be good managers and many suggest that the line between leadership and management cannot be drawn easily. Furthermore, Armstrong stresses the need for leaders to be seen to act well and fairly, that is not only to have values, but to enable those values to be visibly in practice. Many suggest that leaders have to forge a vision and a direction for the school and keep all staff on track in the directional of change. Some argue that leaders need a wide range of skills and especially people skills, including the ability to create trust (Louis and Miles, 1990), and the ability to release people's potential and enable them to feel confident about their capacities as teachers. Accordingly, Leithwood (2006) argues that leaders have to know their staff well, understand why some resist change and nurture their confidence. These latter features are sometimes said to relate to emotional intelligence (Conley and Goldman, 1994). Others would argue that all staff and especially classroom teachers need emotional intelligence and so this is not a feature unique to leaders. Law and Glover (2000, p. 15) outline a list of leadership, management and administrative activities that all staff at different positions in the school undertake. For example, they suggest classroom teachers lead through their approach and pedagogic style in classrooms, they manage and develop course material and they have administrative tasks such as tracking curriculum, recording test scores, and keeping teaching and learning records (Law and Glover, 2000, p. 15).

The reason why I will make a distinction between management and leadership in this study is to do with the educational reform context in Saudi Arabia. In Saudi Arabia, the roles for each position in a school have been very heavily prescribed and described in guidance documents. The guidance can almost be seen as recipes for carrying out the jobs that each person at each position in the school is responsible for. See, for example, descriptions of the three distinct deputy head's roles in Chapter One, page 20. In Saudi Arabia, the emphasis on head teachers following centralise prescriptive directives has been described as management. In practice, it is of course not possible to simply follow a rule; practice is always more complicated than that as the above literature review suggests. No manager can follow a plan without the cooperation of others. While the role descriptions go some way to ensuring stability within schools, they are now seen as overly prescriptive and inflexible. Vision 2030 refers to head teachers as leaders in recognition of their roles as change agents. Accordingly, the shift is more than a label switch, it extends head teachers more autonomy, and enables them to act flexibly according to the needs of their communities, to empower staff by releasing their potential to do more than follow specific guidance and it encourages people to take initiatives. There are some potential pitfalls as well. For example, if a head teacher is not a good leader, she may become authoritarian and rule through fear. As shall become apparent in the findings chapters that follow, head teachers are in a process of transitioning from managers to leaders. In sum, while the distinction between manager and leader is blurred and controversial it serves an important purpose in this study in which Vision 2030 is focused on transforming schools for the 21ˢᵗ Century.

2.4 Definitions of Leadership

In the leadership world, "there is no agreed definition of the concept of leadership" (Bush, 2003, p. 5). Yukl (2002) argues that "the definition of leadership is arbitrary and very subjective; some definitions are more useful than others, but there is no 'correct' definition" (pp.4-5). Bush and Glover (2014) also suggest that "leadership models are

subject to fashion, but often serve to reflect, and to inform, changes in school leadership practice" (p.553). Nonetheless, Bush and Glover (2003) provide a working definition of leadership as follows:

> Leadership is 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 (p.5).

In addition, Bush (2007) highlights that leadership can be understood as a process of influence based on clear values and beliefs leading to a 'vision' for the school. The vision is articulated by leaders who seek to gain the commitment of staff members and stakeholders for the ideal of a better future for the school, as well as its learners and stakeholders (2007, P. 403). Therefore, for the purpose of this research, the definition put forward by Bush and Glover (2003), and Bush (2007) will be adopted. Subsequently, based on these definitions, Bush (2007), together with Bush and Glover (2003), identified three dimensions of leadership which are: leadership as an influence; leadership and values; leadership and vision.

2.4.1 Influence through Leadership

A process of influence is a central element in several leadership definitions (Bush & Glover, 2014). This assumes "leadership as influence involves a social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person [or group] over other people [or group] to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organization" (Yukl, 2002, p.3; Cambridge International Examinations, 2015; Northouse, 2013). Cambridge International Examinations' (2015) state four specific dimensions: who exerts influence; the aim for exercising the influence; the nature and

the outcome of the influence; this assumes that leadership is an intentional process where "the person seeking to exercise influence is doing so in order to achieve certain purposes" (Bush & Glover, 2014, p. 554). Meanwhile, Cambridge International Examinations (2015) noted that leadership is not necessarily linked to an authority position or role and can be seen as a process. Additionally, Louis *et al.* (2010) outlined two core functions of the leadership process as providing direction, with a function to influence practice.

2.4.2 Leadership and Values

One dictionary definition of values shows that they are "important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable; values have a major influence on a person's behaviour and attitude and serve as broad guidelines in all situations; some common business values are fairness, innovation and community involvement" (Business Dictionary, 2017, Para, 1). Rosch and Anthony (2012), however, suggest that values stem from spirituality; spirituality is widely defined as, "the deepest values and meanings by which people live" (Sheldrake, 2007, in Rosch & Anthony, 2012 p. 40). Therefore, leaders are expected to direct their actions from clear personal and professional values (Bush & Glover, 2014 p.555). Research conducted in 12 schools in England and Wales by Day, Harris and Hadfield (2001) reported that that leaders spoke in regard to their schools' mission as being based on an intelligible set of personal and educational values.

However, Bush and Glover (2014) critique this sense of school leaders' values by suggesting that any leader's value is influenced by policymakers. The values that may be imposed upon school leaders are the government's values (Bush, 2008). He stated that when values are imposed, leaders and teachers may not respond to change positively. A study of Canadian schools by Hargreaves & Fink (2004) found that in self-initiated change teachers experience positive emotions, while they are mainly

negative in relation to mandated change. Hence, teachers need to have a positive view of new initiatives in order to act effectively (Bush & Glover, 2014). In Saudi Arabia, school leaders are not able to express their values and they have to implement the specific orders that come from the Ministry of Education (Al-Megabel, 2009). School leaders are challenged with trying to convince staff members to implement change that in turn is supposed to lead to improvements in school performance.

2.4.3 Leadership, Vision and Setting Directions

'Setting goals', 'creating a shared vision', and 'framing goals', are several phrases used to describe leadership. At least seven leadership styles have been explicitly written about in the educational leadership literature (Leithwood & Duke, 1999); one of these relates to having a vision (Bush & Glover, 2003, p. 5). The capacity to visualise the future is a significant element of leadership (Kouzes & Posner 2008; Morrison 2013); they described the term "vision" as a clear understanding by the individual or group regarding the school's future and having an action plan to achieve the goal. Individuals are stimulated by objectives that are personally compelling, challenging, whilst simultaneously achievable (Leithwood *et al*., 2008). Accordingly, this requires developing clear priorities in the short-term (Harris, 2002).

2.5 The Local, National and Cultural Contexts of Leadership

There is a requirement to consider how any model of leadership has to be sensitive to the local, national and cultural contexts in which schools are embedded. Leithwood, Harris and Leithwood *et al*., (2008), Day *et al*. (2010) and Hallinger and Heck (2011) all report findings that relate to school leaders' practices with school context. Likewise, the evidence presented by Leithwood *et al*. (2008) suggests that individual leaders behave completely differently based on the people whom they are working with, and the circumstances they are facing. In addition, Leithwood et al. (2008) question a

widespread belief that there can be a single best model of leadership. They suggest that "we need to be developing leaders with large repertoires of practices and the capacity to choose from that repertoire as needed, not leaders trained in the delivery of one 'ideal' set of practices" (Leithwood *et al.*, 2008, p.10). Accordingly, they suggest that leaders need to be flexible and take account of diverse schooling contexts. For instance, in many countries, autonomy in schools is of a high level; whereas, in other countries, autonomy may not be valued within the culture. In addition, in several systems, teachers are appointed by school leaders, and in other countries, such as in Saudi Arabia, it is the Government and the Ministry of Human Resource that are responsible for employing teachers (Cambridge International Examinations, 2015).

Leithwood *et al.* (2008) also mention the geographic location (cities, suburban, countryside), level of education (primary, secondary), and the size of the school and the region as important contextual issues. They suggest that, for example, in inner-city schools, successful head teachers usually utilise top-down forms of leadership, while in suburban settings successful head teachers do not require this type of leadership style, which is potentially due to the school size, which is smaller than in urban areas. In terms of knowledge, successful elementary head teachers and their teachers frequently share curricular knowledge. In contrast, the knowledge in secondary schools relies on department head teachers, rather than head teachers. Similarly, leaders in small schools have opportunities to engage directly in monitoring teachers' practices and modelling desirable instruction forms. In large schools, equally successful leaders often only have an indirect influence on their teachers. Leithwood *et al*. (2008) also stated that:

> "This evidence challenges the wisdom of leadership development initiatives that attempt to be all things to all leaders or refuse to acknowledge differences in leadership practices required by the differences in organisational contexts. Being the principal of a large secondary school, for example, really does require quite different

capacities than being the principal of a small elementary school" (Leithwood *et al.*, 2008, p.10).

Good leaders demonstrate responsiveness to the contexts in which they work. They motivate staff, share a vision and pay attention to teachers' working conditions, whilst also tending to use distributed models of leadership (Leithwood; Harris & Hopkins, 2008, Leithwood *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, Day *et al.* (2010) summarised the results of a three-year research study as part of a national project comparing the impact of leadership on student performances. The research found that the success of leaders contributes to a wide range of issues and not only to examinations and tests results. They can also influence personal and social matters, staff and student motivation, the quality of teaching and learning quality, as well as the wellbeing of the school's participation in society. In addition, effective principals develop students' performances through their personality, virtues, values, characteristics and competencies, as well as through their actions; effective leaders adapt their leadership practices to the school context.

2.6 The History of Leadership and Management Development

The literature search found that most of the studies on school leadership were undertaken in the UK and the USA, as these two countries have a relatively long history of research in this area. Comparatively, the concept of school leadership is new in Saudi Arabia, and thus, the following section traces the development of leadership theory generally within the UK and the USA frameworks.

In the UK, the last Labour government came to office in 1997 and built a 'modernisation' agenda on the back of the previous Conservative Party's framework that had increased accountability and autonomy of school leaders. This modernising agenda provided powerful orientation in initiating change in the public sector in general and specifically in education (Newman, 2005; O'Reilly & Reed, 2010, 2011). As

part of this progress, The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) was established in 2000, with the aim of providing a uniformed national leadership programme based on research and innovation (NCTL, 2001).

Leadership in the USA in the 1990s was offered as an element of both pre-service and in-service teacher education. Professional associations offered in-service coaching and cooperation between universities and school areas grew (Young & Grogan, 2008). Education providers offered pre-service leadership training through Master's Degrees, specialisation and Doctoral curricula (Baker, Orr & Young 2005). A Master's Degree in educational administration became a required element for the post of principal in numerous states of the USA.

In Saudi Arabia, the state was working to establish its education system at this time, while the UK and the USA were focusing on developing and improving school leadership and management. Now that Vision 2030 has reoriented the education agenda from establishing a system in Saudi Arabia to the process of transforming it, it is necessary to understand leadership theory, as experiences of leadership practices become more urgent (Green, 2013)

2.7 Studies of Effective School Leaders

This section reviews studies of what makes an effective school and school-effectiveness, leadership styles, leadership as a means to sustain school success, change, developing a skilled workforce, time related issues, trust, and distributed leadership.

2.7.1 What makes an effective school and school-effectiveness

Broadly, "school-effectiveness" is a term associated with economic models of productivity that use measurable variables to understand inputs and outputs. The term "effective" often signals a wider range of issues that cannot be reduced to measurable variables when describing what makes a school a good school. School-effectiveness is a

measurable rate of transformation based on an input-output model in which output is higher than predicted given the input. There are many different ways to measure input and output. Scheerens (2000) refers to economic models of productiveness in organisations. Accordingly, the school is an economic unit and resources such as spending per student is an input measure and an output measure is achievement in terms of examination results. Empirical research of school-effectiveness focuses on variables such as school leadership strategies, classroom management, instructional strategies and numbers of students per teacher, and researchers try to work out which combination of variables increase output (Scheerens, 2000). Inputs include students with specific characteristics such as socioeconomic features of their families and their cultural or symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1972, 1979). An important output is students' attainment at the end of schooling. It would be possible to use other output measures such as students' sense of wellbeing, or levels of confidence so long as these could be measured, yet usually these issues are given lower priority than academic achievement indicators. Yet, writing in a time when students' mental health is deteriorating due to the global coronavirus pandemic, suggests these issues may become more important in the future. Educational researchers who use economic models seek to find out what kinds of processes inside the school organisation improve productivity and these might include content of curriculum, modes of instruction and extra support for students with social and emotional challenges and needs. Scheerens suggests that longer-term outputs can be referred to as 'outcomes' (2000, p. 18). When economic models are used to judge schools, the term school-effectiveness applies. Yet, the considerable research that draws on economic models and methods for defining clusters of variables that lead to school-effectiveness has not yielded a definite answer about which clusters of variables create school effectiveness. Furthermore, there are considerable critiques of how measures are constructed, the content and design of examinations and how scores are created (Gorard, 2000; Gipps and Murphy, 1994). An alternative way to define an effective school starts with the school's vision stated in terms of its objectives. A school is judged effective if there is congruence between what the school said it planned to do,

stated perhaps at the beginning of a school year, and what it actually did by the end of the school year. Accordingly, the school is 'effective to the extent that it accomplishes what it sets out to do' (Pedulla *et al*. 1980, p. 22). In this second case, objectives may include an ambition to raise levels of academic achievement measured by examination scores and it would be surprising if this was not a stated objective, yet this is considered to be one measure within what might be a range of objectives. For example, Mortimore's (1993) definition of effective school foregrounds measures of academic achievement. A school is said to be effective if the majority of students make progress at a level or rate higher than expected taking account of the socioeconomic conditions of the children and young people attending the school. This definition starts with a standardised measure, examination scores, and introduces contextual sensitivity. Contextual sensitivity might refer to levels of poverty in the school catchment area.

This second definition provides a wider and less instrumental definition of effective and tends to refer more broadly to what makes a 'good school' (Shreerens, 2000). While school-effectiveness models refer to a finite number of measurable variables, striving to become an effective school requires concepts that cannot be reduced to discrete variables. What makes a school effective, or what makes a good school is difficult to define because there are so many contextual issues that can bear on how a school function. Contexts range from national and cultural contexts such as the sex-segregated education system in Saudi Arabia at one end of the spectrum to very specific local issues at the other. "'Environments' shift', situations change and unexpected events arise so leaders can not follow set systems and 'preconceive plans'" (Busher, 2006, p. 5). Recently, we have become more aware of catastrophic events such as a pandemic, a flood, forest fires and other global and environmental issues that cannot be predicted. Internal school contexts are also important and Busher *et al.* (2007) suggest that good schools recognise the importance of teachers' emotional states. Increasingly students' mental health and well-being are recognised to have an influence on examination performance and effectiveness. While situational and contextual issues

ensure that what makes a school effective is complex, scholars have outlined a framework that includes 31 characteristics that need to be understood for a school to be effective (Townsend, 2013). Many scholars agree that leadership is critical to a school being effective, where effective is broadly about the decisions being made that 'will have an effect on the people working at the school site level' (Townsend, 2013, p. 57). Many governments around the globe seek to support effective schools by giving more autonomy to school leaders. This is an important feature of educational policies in Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. Shifting to localised control of school decision-making and school management is motivated by the notion that leaders are best placed to understand the local context and to figure out which combinations of the numerous issues relating to creating a good school need to be prioritised for a specific school to be effective. There is recognition that one approach does not suit all schools. In some countries, such as the UK and the United States, affording school leaders greater autonomy at a local level was introduced with simultaneous moves to tighten accountability controlled by a central governmental body (Townsend, 2013) referring to the Foucauldian notion of state "control at a distance".

While there is some consensus that leadership is vital for an effective school, what constitutes good leadership remains highly contested. For example, Townsend (2013) points out that in some contexts teachers, students and community members may be reassured by having an authoritarian leader because everyone knows there is a single decision-maker. The school might well be effective. Yet, if the same leader moves to a new school where teachers, administrators and community members are used to being consulted and involved in decision-making, being authoritarian will make the school ineffective. Understanding what makes a school effective probably requires ethnographic work within the school to recognise and make visible the processes it uses. These processes are likely to be complex and not easily defined in terms of the kind of variables used in economic models of school-effectiveness as described earlier.

2.7.2   Leadership Style

Many studies focus on the importance of using various leadership styles based on a certain school's requirements. Studies conducted by Creemersa and Kyriakides (2006), and Grissom and Loeb (2011), found that school leaders need to adopt a different leadership style in the pursuit of better performance levels. For example, Creemersa and Kyriakides' (2006) critical meta-analysis of educational effectiveness styles, found that Teacher Effectiveness Research revealed that leaders who could adapt to specific needs of their school were able to positively influence student learning and examination results. Specifically, Creemersa and Kyriakides provide an example of why school leaders need to possess more than one style. They argued that instructional leadership is not recognised as valuable for all the teachers at a school. Principles are, therefore, "expected to adapt their leadership to the specific needs of the teachers by taking into account the extent to which they are ready to implement a task" (Creemersa & Kyriakides, 2006, p.355).

Grissom and Loeb (2011) studied primary measures of principal effectiveness using an online survey and examination data collected from district administrative records. The authors identified the skills of the principal that significantly affect school outcomes. Their study included 314 participants, including principals, assistant principals, teachers, and parents, as well as rich administrative data. The authors identified five skill groups, although only the organisation management skills group impacted upon raising student achievement. However, the researchers found this result to be inconsistent with the importance of instructional leadership; organisational management only supports curriculum and instruction work. Overall, the findings by Grissom and Loeb (2011) suggested that a combination of effective instructional leadership and good day-to-day management contribute to a successful school, along with undertaking classrooms observations, understanding the school's needs, using good educational tools, the ability to direct school resources (e.g., keep the school running smoothly), as well as hiring the best available teachers.

2.7.3   Sustaining School Success

A range of studies suggest that sustaining school success is one of the significant aspects of any leadership role (Garza *et al.*, 2014; Day & Sammons, 2014; Leithwood *et al.*, 2008). Garza *et al.* (2014) discuss the importance of training for aspiring school leaders if they are to sustain school successes. Additionally, four case studies were examined from the International Successful School Principalship Project in the USA and Australia, for a period of over five years. Researchers used multiple methods to collect data, including documents and interviews with a diversity of educators, consist of head teachers, other school head teachers, teachers, members of the school council/board, students and parents, and they found reasons for sustained school success. Even though principals were all instructional leaders who influenced learning and teaching, they practiced a variety of different elements that led to successful leadership, including their ability to clearly articulate a vision that enabled them to set appropriate directions for their school. It was shown that principals who were interested in teachers' professional development, and who worked to build capacity leadership were most successful. Some of the qualities exhibited by these leaders included flexibility and sustaining their efforts through continuous motivation. Additionally, these principals demonstrated that they build relationships with their communities, as they understand that success is impossible to achieve in isolation (Garza at el., 2014). Other studies (e.g. Day & Sammons, 2014; Leithwood *et al.*, 2008) confirm that one of the effective leadership practices that sustains school success involves creating fertile working conditions for educators, which is achieved by enhancing both the stability in the organisation and the infrastructure of the school. These successful leaders include staff members in developing teaching programmes, who monitor school activities and protect teachers against anxiety in their work (Leithwood *et al.,* 2008; Duke, 2004; Hallinger, 2003).

2.7.4   The Role of Leadership in Change Processes

The role of leadership during the change process is critical. To develop a contextualised understanding of the impact of leadership practices on changes in various school settings, Hallinger and Huber (2012) proposed a study to reveal the existing conceptual and empirical research upon leadership practices, as well as their influence on schools globally. The authors focused on literature relating to principals in China, whilst exploring three other national contexts: the USA, The Netherlands, and Hong Kong. They undertook a literature review of studies in China and Hong Kong to lay the groundwork for an empirical investigation. The findings show that a school's capacity for improvement is linked to the use of several leadership models (e.g., instructional, transformational and distributed). Successful leadership practices were related to the significant difference in teachers' beliefs regarding their work conditions and how teachers respond to them. Successful leaders, who establish work conditions that enable teachers to maximise their motivations, capacities, and commitments, develop collaborative cultures and build good relations with parents and the community, and thus, are able to restructure a school and link it with local communities (Louis & Kruse, 1998; Chrisman, 2005; Leithwood and Jantzi, 2006). Furthermore, Hilaire (2004) determined that to achieve high performance, leaders need to set new criteria for performance culture and exercise distributed leadership.

Hallinger and Heck (2011) designed a study that sought to build on earlier proposals by Hopkins and Jackson (2002) to investigate whether schools, during improvement journeys, could be classified according to various styles of academic growth. The study found that schools could be classified successfully depending on a range of predominant styles of school improvements. These styles were associated with school context features, and subsequently, collaborative leadership was found to be a significant factor in motivating changes in schools with poor levels of performance.

2.7.5 Staff Development

Developing a skilled workforce is an essential element in leading a school effectively. Several studies emphasise the significance of the school leader's practice (Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Jeffrey *et al*., 2014; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; 2005; Horng, Klasik & Loeb, 2010; Sinnema, Ludlow & Robinson, 2016; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013). The core practices necessary to improve student outcomes and to sustain school improvement were examined in a study by Jeffrey *et al.* (2014), who highlighted the capacity of leaders to develop skills in Tier III in Arizona schools. A mixed-method study included surveys of 62 individuals and semi-structured interviews of 29 principals, teachers, trainers and assistants. The results indicate that many school principals used directive leadership approaches, in which the leader makes a decision and provides the direction based on his/her vision (Fiedler, 1968 and Sagie, 1994), and it was concluded that to develop high performing schools they are required to be a part of professional learning societies. The socio-cultural dimensions identified by Leithwood and Riehl (2003; 2005) included four core practices: "setting directions", "developing people", "redesigning the organisation", and "managing the instructional program". Day and Sammons (2014) and Leithwood *et al.* (2008) both confirm that leadership practices that promote intellectual stimulation, and that model beliefs, values, behaviours, are some of the best practices that are able to develop a school.

2.7.6   Time Management

To determine the effects of time spent by principals, Horng, Klasik and Loeb (2010) used an observational method to examine "the relationship between the time spent by principals on different activities and school outcomes, including student achievement, teacher and parent assessments of the school, and teacher satisfaction" (p. 491). Different school levels were involved in this study of 65 high school principals. The researchers also identified six task categories: "administration, organisation management, day-to-day instruction, instructional program, internal relations, and external relations" (p.494). The study indicated both positive and negative impacts of

the principal's use of time on school outcomes. Consequently, the positive impact upon school outcomes was associated with the principal spending their time on organisation management activities, such as: managing resources, personal recruitment, dealing with teachers' anxiety, managing non-instructional staff, networking with partners, managing school schedules, preserving school facilities, alongside developing and maintaining the school environment. Contrastingly, the activities that negatively impacted school outcomes were day-to-day practices, such as: coaching teachers to improve teaching processes, formally assessing teachers, observing teachers in the classroom, and focusing on professional development. The authors also claim that these activities have no impact upon increasing student performance or are only marginal and often negatively impact the relationship with teachers and parents.

2.7.7 Trust

Many studies in relation to leadership highlight the importance of trust in creating a healthy environment in schools, as "without trust a school cannot improve and grow into the rich, nurturing micro-society needed by children and adults alike" (Blase & Blase, 2001, p.23). Accordingly, trust is an effective foundation for schools (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993). The importance of trust within a school community becomes particularly important with increased pressure upon schools to achieve high standards and to raise test scores. Day and Sammons (2014) and Day *et al.* (2010) both confirm that trust is fundamental in developing effective distributed leadership, which is strongly linked to positive schooling that is inspirational, and which provides a good environment for teaching and learning. Trust supports the autonomy of teachers in the classroom, and has been shown to raise levels of student behaviour, participation and performance, which is considered to be the main indicator of a school's readiness to sustain reforms, particularly, among principals and teachers (Brewster & Railsback, 2003).

The study of Handford and Leithwood (2013) aimed to identify the practices of leadership that generate trustworthiness from the teachers' perspectives. They conducted post-observation interviews with 24 teachers from six US schools, which were classified as "high trust" and "low trust" schools. Good leadership had a significant impact upon teachers' trust in their principals who they consider competent, consistent, reliable, provide openness and are respectful; these were found to be strong indicators of trust. Moreover, Sebring and Bryk (2000) argue that for struggling schools to improve there needs to be trust between the school and the community it serves. They found that:

> In schools that are improving, where trust and cooperative adult efforts are strong, students report that they feel safe, sense that teachers care about them, and experience greater academic challenge; in contrast, in schools with flat or declining test scores, teachers are more likely to state that they do not trust one another (2000, p. 441).

Previous studies have established a strong relationship between school improvement and trust within school communities, among principals, teachers and students. In general, effective distributed leadership is based on components, such as: a belief that educators are interested in students; that they make extra efforts for their students' sake; and a belief that teachers trust students. Distributed leadership spreads responsibilities and accountabilities; supports individuals and spreads trust in an organisation (Day *et al*., 2010; Day *et al*., 2016). Building and sustaining trustworthiness is essential to the long-term success of a school and it significantly influences the change process. What is more, there is an increasing body of studies that demonstrate that the central success of distributed leadership relates to establishing trust (Day & Sammons, 2016).

2.7.8 Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership is a style that plays a significant role in developing school performances, which mainly focuses on working collaboratively. The increasing body of new studies shows the significance of distributed leadership for school development (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008; Brandy and Huguet, 2017; Louis *et al.*, 2010; Bush & Glover, 2012; Nobile, El Baba & London, 2016; Höög, Johansson, & Olofsson, 2009; Büyükgöze, 2016; Hallinger & Heck, 2011; Sammons *et al.*, 2014; Scheerens, 2013; Dinham, 2005). Distributed leadership involves:

> Administrators, teachers and students working together in a school climate that supports success allow the positive outcomes to be celebrated by all (Brandy and Huguet, 2017, p. 101).

Brandy and Huguet (2017) reviewed literature on the influence of effective leadership on school performance. The main findings showed that effective leadership emerges from leaders who are trusted by staff members, and who create a focused school environment that leads to academic success. Distributed leadership encourages collaboration through appointing teachers who are leaders in order to support and guide colleagues in curriculum and instruction requirements, as well as hiring teachers who are able to enhance student performance. Moreover, to measure the interaction between leaders' personalities and a specific context of the school community, Höög, Johansson & Olofsson, (2009) conducted a study of two secondary schools in a small Swedish town, where five years previously, the head teachers had achieved success as leaders. The researchers revisited the two schools to interview the principals and teachers to discover whether the success had been maintained. The results showed that:

> In both cases the first principal had created a culture of very strong collaboration between the principal and different teacher teams. This was based on trust, dialogue and knowledge, but also a great deal of

social competence. The new principals could not live up to the demands from the teacher teams and was not sensitive enough to understand how to work with the existing structures when changes were needed (Höög, Johansson & Olofsson, 2009, p. 751).

Furthermore, to help teachers to work effectively, Scheerens (2013), in his analysis of an international review of research studies of 109 effective schools, emphasised that "leadership should be supportive and not a downright directive, teachers engaged rather than frustrated, and internal relationships should be based on trust." (p. 9). Likewise, Tarter and Hoy (2004) hypothesised that effective organisational functioning should enable the culture of the school to be distinguished by trust, and individual positions should be amalgamated in pursuit of collective efficacy.

Dinham (2005) describes a case study in which qualitative data were collected from parent groups attached to schools with outstanding educational outcomes. The study used qualitative interviews with principals, head teachers, teachers and students at 38 secondary schools. The key factor in achieving outstanding results related to leadership exercised by principals, although as an additional key factor, was that staff members were encouraged to play leadership roles, including head teachers, heads of departments, deputy principals, and teachers. This finding has been supported by a large-scale study conducted by Louis *et al.* (2010), which aimed to "identify the nature of successful educational leadership and to better understand how such leadership can improve educational practices and student learning" (p. 7). The key findings demonstrate that collective leadership has a stronger influence upon student achievements than individual leadership. Indeed, this is due to the fact that collective leadership practices aim directly to improve instruction and support teachers through their impact on motivation and working conditions. This encourages teachers to take on leadership roles; and thus, student achievement will increase. In addition, the researchers found that high-performing schools were greatly influenced by teacher teams, parents and students.

Similar findings are shown from the study by Büyükgöze (2016), which focuses on effective school principal experiences in Turkey. The study conducted semi-structured interviews with a primary school principal who had over two years' experience. He examined and interpreted the results within the Turkish education system. The main findings show that participative leadership should be encouraged, as it provides staff members' multidimensional satisfaction and encourages student-centred approaches. These findings are supported by Sammons *et al.* (2014) who conducted a mixed-methods study to investigate school improvement and the role of leadership in a longitudinal study in England for three years period in both primary and secondary schools. The data collected from head teachers enabled a deeper understanding of leadership roles, which determined that schools with low performance had rapid progress during the three years, due to leaders' practices. The study revealed that:

> the practice of leadership distribution is common among schools; where sources of leadership coexist alongside more focused, overt 'individually-enacted' sources of leadership; and responsibility and power tend to vary in response to contexts or challenges found in different school settings (Sammons *et al.*, 2014, p. 584).

In addition, Bush and Glover (2012) conducted a study for the English National College that focused on high-performing senior leadership teams. They adopted a case study approach with nine English schools, four secondary, three primary and two special schools. The results emphasise that "high-performing leadership teams are characterised by internal coherence and unity, a clear focus on high standards, two-way communication with internal and external stakeholders and a commitment to distributed leadership" (Bush & Glover, 2012, p. 21). Distributed leadership highlights the importance of creating an atmosphere of collaboration, delegation, trust and empowerment, as discussed below.

2.7.8.1 The Concept of Distributed Leadership

Bush and Glover (2014) noted that the theory of leadership is subject to fashion. By the end of the 20th century, two popular leadership approaches emerged: collegial and participative (Bush & Glover, 2014). In terms of origin, the idea of distributed leadership surfaced in the 1950s in the literature of social psychology (Gronn, 2002; Day & Sammons, 2014), and related to the concept of distributed cognition and activity theory (Day & Sammons, 2014). This model featured shared approaches to leadership. Crawford (2012) adds that the transformation from individual to shared leadership was a result of the failures of high-profile 'super-heads' in England, which led to the mistrust of individuals, or 'heroic' leadership. However,

> There is recognition that school leadership teams, rather than just one person, play a vital role in school development and that a clearer definition of the roles and their distribution can contribute to increased effectiveness and better provision for future leadership; the context must always be kept in mind, as there may be different roles depending on the size, location and level of schools and the socioeconomic background of the students (Pont at el., 2008, p. 73).

Distributed leadership shares certain similar features with leadership, such as being: "shared", "dispersed," "teamed," "devolved" and "democratic" (Pont at el., 2008). Leithwood and Riehl (2003) emphasise that leadership is "a function more than a role". It is not just about formal or positional roles; rather, it is a function that could be practiced by anyone who wields influence at any school level (Goleman, 2002). Leadership can be distributed in many ways. Pont at el. (2008) clarifies that the additive notion of distributed leadership appears to be associated with conventional concepts of leadership in which structures are hierarchical. Pont *et al.* (2008) describe leadership as being composed of "concertive action", which is more than the sum of its parts.

As Harris (2004, p. 13) indicates, "distributed leadership concentrates on engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organisation, rather than seeking this only through a formal position or role". Hence, organisational change is reinforced when engaging teachers in a leadership role that will lead to innovation and facilitating change (Hopkins, 2001). Therefore, distributed leadership "does not imply that school staff are necessarily enacting leadership any differently" to the time "when heroic, individual leadership was the focus of attention" (Lumby, 2009, p. 320); however, it mitigates the burden of overloaded work of head teachers (Hartley, 2010).

Separately, Bennett *et al.* (2003, p. 3) claim that distributed leadership is an emergent property of a group or network of individuals in which group members pool their expertise. Spillane *et al.* (2001) further explain this as perceiving distributed leadership as 'distributed practice', or 'collaboration practice' (Heck & Hallinger, 2009), in which school leadership is practiced by the head teacher, teachers, and group of development team in leading the school development (Spillane & Healey, 2010; Heck & Hallinger, 2009). However, the notion of distributed leadership involves the comprehensive quality of leadership that focuses on not only the distribution of trust among a group of leaders, but also developing leadership abilities of school members (Harris, 2011). This will generate commitment to collective responsibility (Stoll, 2009) and raise school level and understand students' needs.

In spite of the above, the structures of autonomy are one of the significant challenges that hinders the implementation of distributed leadership correctly (Bush & Glover, 2014). The author states that "there are inherent threats to status and the status quo in all that distributed leadership implies" (Harris, 2004, p. 20). This can indicate that distributed leadership makes the authority relationship among leaders and followers unclear (Law, Galton & Wan 2010). Furthermore, the spread of distributed leadership demands coordination and the process of nurturing the space of formal leaders, which is suggested to be a challenge to achieve without a school principal's support (Hopkins & Jackson, 2002). As leadership is widely considered to be an influential process, the

main issue stems from "who can exert influence over teammates and in what domains?" (Harris, 2005, p. 19).

2.7.8.2 Who Distributes leadership?

It has been stated that "despite the rhetoric of distribution, it is clear that the head has the central role in deciding what is distributed and how distribution is accomplished" (Bush & Glover, 2012, p. 34). In particular, Thomas (2009, p. 2) suggests, head teachers exhibit "strong leadership within a team framework". Similarly, Bush and Glover (2012) demonstrate that:

> Heads were instrumental in drawing up agendas, chairing meetings and providing the school's vision and sense of direction; the executive head of school G was said to have 'a subtle hierarchical force' while the leadership style of the head of school R was perceived to be 'a mixture of directive and democratic' (p. 34).

Correspondingly, these successful schools illustrate Gronn's (2010) concept of 'hybrid' leadership, to integrate single and distributed factors.

The term distributed as in distributed leadership is often associated with the notion of distributed cognition as it has been developed in sociocultural theories of learning for example. This section deals primarily with distributed leadership. Delegated leadership relates to positions of authority in a school. Teachers are empowered by holding a position of authority in schools, referred to as 'delegated' authority (Busher, 2006, p. 37). For a fuller discussion see section on power, page 30.

The term distributed reflects a shift away from the notion of learning as an individual activity to recognising the multidimensional aspects of learning. Jean Lave described cognition as complex and knowledge as more than that which is stored in the head (Lave 1997, p. 1). In everyday life, cognition is distributed as it:

'stretches over, not divided among – mind, body, activity and culturally

organized settings' (Lave 1997, p. 1).

Hutchins (1995) uses the term 'distributed cognition' to emphasise the mechanisms of group performance, as well as the role of tools and discourse in joint activity. He focused on the way people with different positions in an organisation such as the US navy bring different pieces of knowledge together to enable a complex task such as navigating an amphibious aircraft carrier down a river requires teamwork. He also helped to develop the apprenticeship model of learning (Lave and Wenger 1991) whereby newcomers learn from more experienced actors and gradually move from peripheral positions in the organisation to more central roles across time as they undertake a wider range of activities and so learn more roles.

In his book *Communities of Practice*, Etienne Wenger (1998) does not use the term distributed cognition or distributed leadership, yet he raises the issue of the difference between procedures in organisations that are prescriptive and ones that are open enough to enable meanings to be negotiated.

Proceduralized prescriptions align practices with the rest of the

organization, but they do so by narrowing the scope of responsibility and

localized activities' (Wenger, 1998, p. 260).

Privileging certain procedures and managing them keeps an organisation functioning smoothly, yet it curtails creativity and maintains institutional knowledge as what is already known. Wenger was interested in organisational learning and growth. Accordingly, Wenger (1998) emphasised how new knowledge can emerge in institutions when different players who do not have a full overview of organisation workings are enabled to negotiate meaning by voicing what they know from their perspective and position in the organisation. In this way, local knowledge and understanding dialogues with more global knowledge, he suggests. He argues that there is a role for leadership in communities of practices.

As instruments of alignment, leadership, authority, and policies all have

the potential to become resources for negotiation, and policies – as much

as they can thwart the process (Wenger, 1998, p.262).

When processes in an organisation encourage the negotiation of meanings, there are possibilities for the institution to productively create new knowledge and meanings. This notion of distribution involves the potential for new knowledge to emerge as a form of institutional learning, a thinking school perhaps.

Barton and Hamilton (2005) take Wenger to task for not having a good enough theory of power in his description of communities of practice. They claim, 'he deflects a focus away from power' and ignores the importance of 'higher level structures' (2005, p. 19). Workers at lower levels of the organisation have some power, yet only due to their positions in the highly structured hierarchy of the organisation. Workers exercise some power while at the same time being incorporated into other practices and especially the practice that are decided and created at higher levels of the organisation about which they have no knowledge and no say. 'Their space for action is limited' (2005, p. 19). They suggest that Wenger's notion of distributed cognition or leadership elaborated as the ability to negotiate meanings in organisations is idealistic, as it does not take account of the social, political and historical contexts through which privilege is fostered and guarded.

This begs the question as to whether or not distributed leadership can ever be egalitarian and whether meanings can be truly negotiated. While it may be the case that to navigate a ship or indeed to teacher students requires a range of personnel with different forms of expertise distributed across an organisation, it does not mean that all people are equally able to negotiate meanings. Power dynamics are threaded through institution practices as capillary forces (Foucault, 2006) and resides to some extent at higher levels of an institution. Their hierarchical position endows leaders with authority, even if this authority can be resisted as was suggest in the section on power.

Distributed leadership has become a very popular concept, its usefulness is described for example, by the OECD. The OECD (2008) suggests that by giving people at different levels of the school experience in leading groups, leadership capacity is built within the organisation. This suggests that the OECD members are using a literal sense of the term distributed to mean across different people and organisational structures rather than the concept of distributed cognition described earlier.

> "Distribution of leadership can strengthen management and succession planning. Distributing leadership across different people and organizational structures can help to meet the challenges facing contemporary schools and improve school effectiveness. This can be done in formal ways through team structures and other bodies or more informally by developing ad hoc groups based on expertise and current needs" (Gunter, Hall, and Bragg, 2013, p. 564)

The OCED also argues for the need to develop leaders in the interest of national growth. They argue that people require incentives to take up leadership positions. This is a topic that will be discussed in the findings chapter of this thesis. They suggest also that middle level managers need training so they can become future leaders. If leadership becomes more spread out across people in institutions, this raises the question of how policies should be developed to reflect this change. Harris and Lambert, (2003) and Lambert (2003) argue that developing teachers to become leaders improves the whole school. They argue for an institutional rather than a personal concept of leadership capacity:

> Leadership capacity is found to be a function of several features: broad based, skillful participation; shared vision that brings coherence; inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice; roles and responsibilities that are collaborative and lead to collective responsibility; reflective practice as the genesis of innovation and self-organizing practice; and high or steadily improving student performance (Lambert, 2003, p. 425).

The OECD supports this position and suggests that school boards also have a role to play in successful schools. However, they need strong guidance about their role (OECD, 2008, p. 3–4).

Yet, even this rather literal notion of a distributed leader has potential problems. As Timperley (2005, p. 417) argues: 'distributed leadership over more people is a risky business and may result in the greater distribution of incompetence'. Harris (2005b, p. 26) argues that distributed leadership 'is not a panacea' yet teachers at all levels of the institution can be encouraged to face new challenges, arguing that if a school is 'serious about sustainable school improvement, surely this is a risk worth taking?' (Harris, 2000, p. 26).

2.8 Distributed leadership and delegated leadership

Distributed leadership is often used to describe a school's management approach, sometimes referred to as situational distributed leadership (Scribner et al. 2007) and might include management teams, groups and possibly individuals that have specific responsibilities. The emphasis here is on relationships between people. Distributed leadership often signals a dynamic interaction between the head teacher and teachers and points to professional capacity building (Brasof, 2017; King and Stevenson, 2017) with an emphasis on sharing knowledge across the system. Scribner et al. (2007) raise the issue of autonomy within a team, which can relate to the social distribution of leadership. A key question relating to distributed leadership is how far does the distribution reach, and does this extend to 'students and parents' (Harris and Spillane, 2008, p. 33).

Delegated leadership refers to a narrower practice than distributed leadership whereby a head teacher or leader delegates a task to a specific individual or group. On a positive note, some scholars argue that delegating single leadership tasks can be seen as the first

step towards distributed leadership (Fonsen 2014; Kyllönen 2011). Harris (2003) takes a hierarchical view of school management suggesting that power always remains at the top with the head teacher. In hierarchical models the power to make decisions is linked to positional roles, such as the roles attached to deputy head teachers in the Saudi Arabian educational context. Therefore, on a negative note, Hargreaves and Fink (2006) for example, suggest that delegating tasks to individuals is offering the person only superficial power and if the task is menial or unpleasant can lead to a lack of commitment or resistance from the individual.

Gronn (2010) suggests that often leadership involves a hybrid mix of both positional and distributed leadership practices. There are many versions of hybrid leadership. In this study, broadly in Saudi Arabia school decision-making structures have involved a management structure that attaches responsibilities and tasks to positional roles. However, in this study, schools were chosen to participate because they were in a process of transition based on Vision 2030 guidance. In this study, some schools might be developing management structures with some elements of positional and distributed leadership so potentially having hybrid management structures.

2.9 Middle leaders

Busher et al. (2007) have argued persuasively that leadership is not confined to the roles of the head teachers and teachers, support staff and administrators often undertake leadership roles. They call for a focus on middle leaders. They define middle leaders as 'people who hold middle-ranking posts in the hierarchy of a school, being neither senior leaders, such as principals or deputy head teachers, nor junior staff' (2007, p. 405). Good examples of middle leaders are subject specialist teachers. They often take control, steer and provide guidance for other teachers and classroom assistants on issues such as curricular pacing and content, pedagogical approaches, assessment tasks, marking and

moderation with respect to specific subjects such as English or Mathematics. They often lead by organising meetings and bringing groups together. While these are formal positions in many school structures, for example, the National Curriculum guidance in England and Wales stipulates the need for subject specialist, there are no formal subject specialist teacher roles in the Saudi Arabian school system. Instead, when the Department of Education announces curriculum changes head teachers usually bring groups together to organise and implement the change. Teachers sometimes lead these groups. Head teachers often choose people based on an assessment of a specific teacher's capacity to be a good leader. Therefore, in the Saudi Arabian school system opportunities often arise for teachers to take on leadership roles. However, their chances of being given such roles depend greatly on the head teacher choosing them or noticing their potential. This means that characteristics of a good head teacher have to include knowing staff well and having the ability to spot leadership potential. So, while many opportunities to take on leadership roles arise, the problem in the Saudi Arabian education system is that a teacher with potential to lead could be consistently overlooked. On the other hand, given that there are no financial rewards for taking on any leadership positions in schools in Saudi Arabia, there are few incentives to undertake the extra work a leadership role entails, although this is changing. When middle leader positions are a feature of the school structure, such as subject specialist teachers in England and Wales, there is both positional authority and financial remuneration.

2.10 Teacher leadership

The concept of the teacher as leader is sometimes linked to the concept of middle leadership. Middle leadership is a development from middle management and was introduced to recognise that teachers, for example, undertake more than management tasks and contribute to strategic developments in organisations (Franken, Penney & Branson, 2015; Gurr & Drysdale, 2013; Ronnerman, Grootenboer & Edwards-Groves, 2017). The importance for this study stems from studies that suggest that if

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transformations in organisations are to be sustained across time there is a need for all players within a school to be committed to improvement and raising educational standards. As Harris and Muijs (2002, p. 1) argue, 'the challenge facing most schools is no longer how to improve' but 'how to sustain improvement.' Sustaining a good learning culture requires everyone throughout the school to be involved in creating a learning environment with a strong focus on the quality of instruction at the level of the classroom. Sustainability also requires building capacity across the school. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) suggest that while empirical evidence is rather limited, it would seem that teacher leaders can influence other teachers to work collectively for improvement, for example, to develop and not simply deliver the curriculum. The term leader rather than manager also points to the issue of agency. Grant (2006) argues that teachers can become involved in whole school development and the wider community issues, which involves qualities such as 'courage, risk taking, perseverance, trust and enthusiasm' (Grant, 2006, p. 529). Yet if teachers are to be enabled to lead, they require school cultures in which they feel trusted and supported by the head teacher and other stakeholders. An atmosphere of collaboration within the school is important for teachers to act as leaders as well as opportunities for professional development (Harris & Muijs, 2002).

Hammersley-Fletcher, Kılıçoğlu & Kılıçoğlu (2020) debated whether or not teacher autonomy exists in schools in England and Turkey. Following Genc, (2010) they understand teacher autonomy as whether or not teachers can develop and act on their own theories of practice and exercise wisdom. They suggest that high levels of regulation imposed by a government and other external bodies are linked to low levels of professional agency (Agasisti et al., 2013; Greany and Waterhouse, 2016). In particular, when teachers are scrutinised and held to targets and other measures of accountability their autonomy is restricted and school improvements do not necessarily ensue (O'Neil, 2013).

In the context of Saudi Arabia, Alsalahi (2014) studied whether or not teachers can act as leaders. He undertook a small-scale qualitative study of English teachers and found that teachers felt marginalised, lacked decision-making powers and reported head teachers to be authoritarian. He also found that teacher training programmes neglected teachers' professional needs and resources to support teachers to become leaders were not available.

Other studies conducted in Higher Education Institutions (Shah, 2014) concluded that top-down management structures and bureaucratic practices in Saudi Arabia disempowered English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher. Shah's key findings were an absence of appreciation and celebration of language teachers' skills, a lack of collaboration among teachers and little interpersonal trust. He suggested that policies and practices in educational institutions were oppressive and mitigated against teacher autonomy. It is the findings from these kinds of studies in Saudi Arabia that have led to calls for distributed leadership to give educators at all levels of the school a sense of ownership and experiences of professional fulfilment by being trusted to be involved in decision-making processes.

2.11 Gender and Leadership

Much of the literature of leadership and management tends to assume that the head teacher is either male or gender neutral. However, the feminist literature of leadership suggests that women as leaders draw on slightly different priorities to men. The current literature review found that most journal articles did not address gender in relation to leadership and a considerable percentage of the section of this chapter reviews studies written by men. The specific papers on women's leadership styles and priorities come towards the middle of the chapter and are particularly relevant to Saudi Arabia, where all head teachers in girls' schools are women.

The matter of gender diversity, however, for several years, the educational leadership has been examined (Cleveland, Stockdale & Murphy, 2000; Rosener, 1990). Research confirmed the notion that males are more competent than females in regard to issues relating to work (Burns & Martin, 2010). It has been noted that "earlier researchers postulated that most workers believed women to be less competent than men in the workplace" (Henderson, 1994, p. 51). This perception is due to the traditional thought of leaders as exceptional persons who fight enemies, set orientations, and make crucial decisions. This perception is deeply rooted in both an individualistic and unsystematic approach globally. Indeed, that view defines leaders as great men and heroes who appear in crises and times of war (Senge, 1994). Hence, with this strong-rooted perception, the identity of the dominant man has been shaped both internally and in public. This subconscious idea increases dominance of the masculine leadership, even with the effort that aims to integrate female leadership in the field (Olsson, 2002). Subsequently, the traditional stereotype of men and women led to the restriction of leadership positions often being only given to men (Appelbaum *et al.*, 2002).

Even though males still usually occupy positions of authority, females slowly started to hold management positions many decades ago (Burns & Martin, 2010). It has been additionally stated that "the relative scarcity of women in top leadership roles is not a new phenomenon and can be demonstrated both in national U.S. and international terms" (Stelter, 2002, p. 1). Furthermore, Henderson (1994, p.58) argued that "despite many gains, women are still grossly underrepresented in professional and managerial jobs". Moreover, the great contribution of social perceptions has led to issues of gender in leadership being highlighted; in the social context, women leadership is considered in a negative light (Stelter, 2002, Deal & Stevenson, 1998). Stelter (2002) highlighted another aspect of this issue. "Traditional perspectives of leadership cantered on masculine-oriented concepts of authoritarian and task-oriented behaviour, and that these same perspectives may contribute to a "glass ceiling"

essentially prohibiting relationship-oriented (i.e. feminine) leadership behaviours from being recognized as viable leadership behaviour" (Stelter, 2002, p. 1).

Gender relates to distinguishing culturally generated qualities between males and females, regardless of their biological variation (Brandser, 1996). Specifically, in organisations, the notion of gender role is constructed derived from masculinity that includes independence, decision-making, analysis, logic, objectivity and aggression, whereas femininity involves feelings, emotions, intuition, sensitivity and expressiveness (Fernandes & Cabral-Cardoso, 2003). In terms of leadership, gender might have a diversity of various rationales "from interpersonal relationships to social role expectations to differences in perception and styles, men and women may indeed lead differently in addition to being 'followed' differently." (Stelter, 2002, p. 1). Accordingly, this difference in gender leadership refers to the relationship between gender roles and leadership patterns, which links masculinity with task-oriented leadership and femininity with relationship-oriented ones (Oshagbemi & Gill, 2003; Rigg & Sparrow, 1994). Book (2000) states that female leadership is more effective, while Engen, Leeden and Willemsen, (2001) claim that the correlation between the effectiveness and style in gender leadership is small or without any connection.

Of all the studies that focus on the differences between female and male effective leadership, the only strong difference is that females generally lead in a democratic way, which encourages participation by others (Northouse, 2007; Stelter, 2002). Moreover, Trinidad and Normore, (2005) found that "women adopt democratic and participative leadership styles in the corporate world and in education" (Trinidad and Normore, 2005, p. 574). In addition, females manage collaborative groups and interpersonal relationships (ibid, 2002), whereas male leaders focus on goal-directed practices (Stelter, 2002). However, Rosener (1990) defined feminine leadership styles as "interactive leadership" that boost participation; self-worth; participate in power and knowledge; correlating power to interpersonal skills; transforming self-interests

for an overall advantage of all; and a belief in feeling good as beneficial to increased performance levels.

2.11.1 Gender in Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, researchers have attempted to compare studies that cover gender roles in schools, although it is rare due to the education system in Saudi Arabia, which is completely single sex and separated in the administrative structure and buildings. Girls' schools are led by female head teachers and women staff members, while boys' schools are led by male leaders and staff. Originally, formal public education for females was established in the early 1960s, where the system is single-sex and girls are taught in separate buildings from boys (Abalkhail, 2017). Hence, the competition to become a leading school is not a big gender issue in Saudi Arabia.

Since the 1960s, conservative attitudes towards female education have gradually decreased, although this position does not relate to the effect of Islam itself, but refers to the customs and tradition of the nation (Al-Rawaf & Simmons, 1991; Waddy, 1980). This traditional culture leads to the domination of patriarchal males (Omair, 2008) in leadership positions. Furthermore, the general assumption is that work is more central to men than to women (Kaufman & Fetters, 1980). Meanwhile, recently, in the context of Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, women are shifting toward various managerial professions as a sequence of government initiatives that are beginning to enhance gender equality in the labour force. Nevertheless, women encounter multiple obstacles in the workplace, including patriarchy (Karam & Afiouni, 2014). Accordingly, women most commonly work in "feminine fields" (Hutchings *et al.*, 2012).

Some studies have covered the different aspects of female professional work in Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, which could help to outline the challenges that women leaders face when attaining higher positions. Elamin and Omair (2010) conducted a study to explore women working in the Arab Muslim context. In that study, 301 Saudi males responded to a questionnaire, which revealed that very

traditional attitudes still exist in Saudi Arabia towards working women. There is a disparity in the results of the research, however, as the men who are educated, single, young and unemployed have less traditional attitudes towards working women compared with the less educated, old and employed men.

In addition, Hodges (2017) conducted a study to investigate the obstacles that restrict Saudi Arabian women's advancement. By using gender and Middle Eastern literature, as well as by interviewing 25 professional women in Saudi Arabia, the researchers aimed to explore the chances of women becoming leaders and the factors impacting upon their leadership practices. The results demonstrate that Saudi women face a variety of challenges in relation to religious, cultural, social and organisational factors. The findings reveal that the influential factors upon perceptions and experiences of leadership for women are self, others, and working conditions (place and work). It has also been noted that "the findings also indicate the need for policies to eradicate inequalities which prevent women from becoming leaders" (Hodges, 2017, p. 34).

Women in Saudi Arabia gain greatly from the availability of education and economic resources that have encouraged them to seek jobs in both the public and private sectors (Abalkhail & Allan, 2016). Moreover, the government has taken many measures to enable women to assume leadership positions in the country. A Royal Decree was issued to allocate 20% of the seats of the Shura Council (Consultation Council) to Women in 2013. In addition, women were elected to municipal councils and several women were appointed to leadership positions in the public and private sectors. Saudi Arabia is also close to reaching its goal of equal pay for women and men (Saeed, 2019).

Overall, the Kingdom's Vision 2030 is dedicated to ensuring the empowerment of women in socio-economic development and supporting them to become effective at all levels of society. The participation of women in the labour market increased from 12% in 2009 to 18% in 2017, and the country aims to raise this percentage to 25% in 2020. Moreover, women hold many leadership positions, such as Deputy Minister, Chairman

of the Council, Under-secretary and the chief executive officer (CEO) of a number of leading banks and companies (Saeed, 2019). The participation of women in various labour fields in Saudi Arabia has marked a considerable change in their traditional roles within society. As a consequence, they are moving regularly into managerial positions and professions (Abalkhail, 2016). During the several five-year development plans from 1970 to 2015, the Saudi government achieved success in implementing equality in education and employment at all levels for girls and women (Ministry of Economy and Planning (MEP), 2015; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2006).

Women in Saudi Arabia are being encouraged to hold leadership positions in various sectors in the country. Burns and Martin (2010) found that even although men still usually occupy positions of authority, women are slowly starting to hold management positions (p. 36). Nevertheless, the difficulties that women leaders face through school duties are revealed in the study conducted by Alhazmi (2010), which aimed to measure female head teachers' job satisfaction in five secondary schools within Saudi Arabia, using a qualitative method. Five head teachers, deputy heads and some teachers were interviewed, and the main findings show that a lack of delegated authority, budget constrained, poor supervision, a high workload, limited opportunities for training and poor school infrastructure were problems that women faced. A school's location was also a further factor. Indeed, these problems grow as a result of a centralised education system. The higher positions are held by men, and a major problem relates to connecting ways to discuss the school barriers and difficulties, which have to be undertaken by telephone, letter or email, rather than in face to face meetings. In particular, Al-Hariri's (1986) aimed to find solutions to the difficulties that women school administrators face when focused on making decisions and communicating. The study used a questionnaire with 70 participants and conducted interviews with 27 Saudi women school administrators. The findings showed open discussions between men and women are required, although this is constrained by Islamic customs.

A study by Taleb (2010) examined the relationship between gender and female leadership styles in academic private colleges in Saudi Arabia by using a single case study and semi-structured interviews with seven women senior managers. The results reveal that the female leaders are characterised as democratic and tend to possess a transformational, rather than an autocratic style. The findings also demonstrate that leaders are interpersonally oriented. Additionally, the study shows that this style is in agreement with the general style of women's leadership found in studies of women leaders mentioned above. In general, the challenges facing women leaders in Saudi Arabia do not relate to their ability or capacity to lead and manage any organisation, but that their ambitious are curtailed by several conditions, including a dominating patriarchal-male culture, a centralisation education system, together with organisational structures such as single sex buildings.

Alyami and Floyd (2019) conducted a study of female leaders' perceptions and experiences of decentralisation and distributed Leadership in the Tatweer System in Saudi Arabia. Tatweer is an education development company which implements the Ministry of Education reforms and one of its aims is to decentralise the school system. The study conducted a qualitative case study of three Tatweer schools, undertaking interviews, focus groups and documentary analysis. The authors interviewed 12 teachers and three head teachers from three secondary girls' schools in Riyadh, and interviewed one official from the King Abdullah Project, as well as conducting focus group interviews with the Tatweer Unit's members (this unit works on two fronts: firstly, to help schools to change culture and practices; secondly, to improve performance by providing schools with tools, strategies and training). Many aspects that appear in the study's finding were also found in the study of the Tatweer system, such as issues of accountability, trust, and staff competence. This led to the term "semi-decentralised" to describe the Tatweer education system. Even although they found a "semi-decentralised" system, the head teacher in the school achieved success in terms of distributing leadership responsibilities and involving the school community in making decisions.

2.12 Studies of Leadership in Saudi Arabia

In relation to the Saudi Arabian context, compared with the findings of other countries in the literature review, there is a lack of studies on leadership in Saudi Arabia, as conducting organisational research is quite difficult (Dorfman *et al.*, 2004; Mullick, 2013). Mullick (2013) points to a serious lack of literature on school leadership effectiveness based on Saudi Arabian studies, but also with regards to teachers' perspectives on leadership practice.

Nonetheless, several studies have been conducted that cover certain aspects of the leadership context in Saudi Arabia. Algarni and Male (2014) aimed to construct models of leadership to critically investigate the role of educational leaders in enhancing learning and development in public schools within Saudi Arabia. The study found that school principals tend to manage issues, such as school maintenance, rather than to focus on development. This is at odds with the aims to reform the education system in order to implement Vision 2030. Studies tend to find that the challenges faced by educational leaders in Saudi Arabia have a negative effect on supporting student learning and development. Issues found to work against leadership are central decision-making and a lack of resources (Alabdulkareem 2014). Alabdulkareem assessed differentiated supervision implemented in many Saudi schools as a way to improve school leadership. The study used qualitative methods with four supervisors' and one of the many themes that the study revealed was a lack of leadership skills. It found that unprepared school leaders were viewed as obstacles for any model of improvement.

In addition, Al-Abbas (2010) investigated successful school leadership characteristics and behaviours that support classroom teachers from Saudi teachers' perspectives. A questionnaire was used to collect data from 82 primary school teachers in the Najran Region of Saudi Arabia. The main findings were that:

It is clear that the lack of appropriate selection criteria for principalship is problematic, as is the absence of any systematic professional learning programme for principals; importantly, it has highlighted issues inherent in the system, such as the transient nature of leadership appointments, the appointment of poorly qualified or unqualified staff, the absence of a pool of potential principals, and the lack of will to develop a middle leadership echelon in schools (Al-Abbas, 2010, p. 107).

A study by Mathis (2012) described the leadership role of Saudi female principals in Saudi Arabia, which interviewed 12 female principals of primary and secondary schools. The main findings showed that they were not provided with sufficient authority to make a decision and thus their roles were as school managers, rather than school leaders. In addition, the study found a shortage in physical environments that enhance overall learning and excellence.

A study by Al-Muqbel (2009) conducted in a high school where administrative staff and the teachers were interviewed, aimed to understand efficiency and its interaction with private and public external environments. The study highlighted that the role of a school leader was to implement a set of steps that identify the specific tasks and ways to perform them. This was a pre-plan, which the Ministry of Education had prepared. Al-Muqbel (2009) noted that this plan was separate from other plans in school. Al-Muqbel criticised the plan as it described a school leader's mission in a timetable in isolation from the work of the rest of the employees. Therefore, it is necessary to understand what Al-Muqbel's study tells us about why this school failed to achieve high student outcomes. The school did not have its own specific vision, mission, or even goals. The head teacher simply adopted the goals and plans presented by the Ministry of Education without involving the administrators, teachers and parents in preparing the plan. Al-Muqbel (2009) highlighted the problem that

some leaders are not sufficiently qualified to prepare plans, and are unable to control the material and staff members. This is due to:

> The complexity of the highly centralised system of education in boys' and girls' schools which discourages creative innovation; in my experience, in the field of education for boys, there are administrators who want to try new ideas and creative techniques but they often find it difficult to do so since they have to get permission to try new initiatives (Al-Fozan 1997, p. 41).

2.13 Raising Educational Performance

The government in Saudi Arabia has allocated a large percentage of its annual budget to educational development (Ministry of Foreign, 2016). In spite of this, the results from Al-Hariri *et al* (2014) study confirm that there are signs of poor performance among school leaders following assigned administrative tasks, which has led to adverse reactions to administrative tasks and the loss of leaders from administrative work. This has resulted in confusion and unexpected deficits in administrative departments. It was noted in that study that this situation occurred as a result of school leaders failing to acquire the experience they require in administrative practices. Accordingly, such failures often occur because, as Zaidi (2015) stated, the Ministry of Education's mechanism of appointing leadership is unproductive. It aims only to fill the shortage of school leaders, and does not ensure they have appropriate preparation. Furthermore, there is a lack of scientific criteria concerning the recruitment, selection and appointment of leaders. As Arif (2008) emphasised, neither the Departments of Education nor the Ministry implement appropriate scientific criteria to select educational leaders.

In 2014, the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia implemented a new process for nominating school head teachers. This process includes new measurement tests

produced through a collaboration between the National Endowment for the Measurement and Evaluation (known as "keas"; in English, "measurement") and the Ministry of Education. This process focuses on candidates for school assistants, school managers, educational supervisors and counsellors. It measures a candidate's knowledge, skills and values. Al-Fuhaid (2014) noted that the aim of these tests was not only to select the best candidate for managing significant responsibilities, but also to identify training needs in improving the inputs and outputs of the education system. Fuhaid emphasised that the tests are characterised by a number of features that build on clear and specific criteria for professional functions and are prepared in accordance with global controls for the construction of tests and quality control. To achieve equality, it is necessary for uniform and standardised procedures to be applied across all regions of Saudi Arabia. In sum, the test is a theoretical measurement of a variety of knowledge forms (Al-Fuhaid, 2014).

All of these steps are critical because, as Arif (2008) emphasised, there is a need for scientific and practical processes in the field of education in order to ensure the selection of eligible and capable educational leaders. In particular, Arif (2008) recommended developing controls and procedural mechanisms to enable leaders to nominate themselves (and not simply be nominated by others). Moreover, Arif recommended training educational leaders in culture and education management; scoring their creative achievements, providing training both prior and subsequent to their skill development, and introducing the concept of career accreditation (i.e. gradients in educational fields) beginning with teachers and ending with the director of education.

In summary, there are signs of poor performance among school leaders, due to the fact that certain school head teachers are failing as a result of not acquiring the experience and training programmes they need in administrative practices. Furthermore, there is a lack of scientific and practical criteria in relation to the recruitment, selection, and appointment of school head teachers. However, in spite of

the fact that the Ministry of Education implemented a new process for nominating school head teachers, the test is a theoretical measurement of a variety of knowledge forms, and there is a need for scientific and practical mechanisms in the field of education, in order to ensure the selection of eligible and capable educational leaders.

2.14 Conclusion

International literature shows strong evidence for the appropriate leadership style that supports low-performance schools and sustains school development, in order to make schools run smoothly during times of transformation and to respond to a variety of contexts and challenges. Features, such as participant/collaborative and shared/collegiate leadership, are elements of distributed leadership. With these features of distributed leadership, the researcher believes that this style could play a significant role in developing leadership performance; and thus, will influence student outcomes positively. Studies suggest that the creation of a collaborative community within the school will influence student outcomes. Moreover, administrators working together can run schools smoothly, which could foster school development. Also, enabling teachers to play leadership roles could help to create trust, which may consequently enhance the implementation of change. In addition, teachers working in collective ways encourages other members of staff to work harder to achieve school's goals. As a result, this will lead to a rise in levels of trust that can create a school environment that supports academic success (Huguet, 2017). This could be achieved by creating democratic communication with staff members; providing moral and material support; constant communication with parents; involvement with the broader community; and strong links to values. This requires that leaders identify, monitor and identify potential problems (Nobile *et al.*, 2016).

Saudi Arabia is experiencing a comprehensive development boom, particularly after the announcement of Vision 2030 by the Crown Prince and the Minister of Defence,

Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The significant aim of this vision is to achieve a globally competitive economy. Vision 2030 focuses on education to bridge the gap between the education output and the labour markets' requirements. This requires building an educated generation of critical thinkers who are capable of taking responsibility and making decisions in the future. This could help to develop a labour market with workers who can innovate and become aware of Saudi Arabia's economic possibilities in the global economic context.

To create a critically knowledgeable workforce for future development of Saudi Arabia's economy requires a shift in the way schools operate. This requires transforming teaching methods that depend on memorising and rote learning which do not develop students' skills and create critical thinkers. To create critical thinkers, requires schools change, and leadership is critical to change.

Therefore, the current study will investigate what form of leadership is required in a secondary school in Saudi Arabia in order to implement this transformation. The research questions are:

● How do women head teachers and managers in the education system perceive leadership?

● Do women head teachers and managers have an understanding of different models of leadership, and in particular distributed leadership?

● What might be some of the possibilities and barriers for developing effective school leaders in girls' schools in Saudi Arabia in line with Saudi Vision 2030?

● How can leadership models be adapted to work within girls' schools that are led by women in Saudi Arabia in line with Saudi Vision 2030?

The following chapter introduces the methodology and methods used to address these questions.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3. Introduction

The empirical study was designed to investigate what form of leadership is required in a secondary school in Saudi Arabia in order to instil this transformation development. Specifically, it is to determine whether or not secondary school head teachers in girls' schools recognise the difference between leadership and management in light of the Vision 2030, which places the requirement for leaders at the centre of educational transformation. This chapter explores and justifies the methodology and methods that underpin the current study, which employs a qualitative approach. It also describes the methods used to generate data to address the research questions:

● How do women head teachers and managers in the education system perceive leadership?

● Do women head teachers and deputy head teachers have an understanding of different models of leadership, and in particular distributed leadership?

● What might be some of the possibilities and barriers for developing effective school leaders in girls' schools in Saudi Arabia in line with Saudi Vision 2030?

● How can leadership models be adapted to work within girls' schools that are led by women in Saudi Arabia?

3.1 Design of the Study

This study involved 20 members of staff in many girls' secondary schools within a city

located in the middle of Saudi Arabia. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with eight head teachers, seven deputy heads, and also undertook a case study in one school. The case study involved the head teacher, who is one of the eight head teachers interviewed in the multi school phase of the research, two deputy heads and three teachers, whilst semi-structured interviews were conducted. The questions asked focused on whether participants could distinguish leadership from management; it also explored the barriers and possibilities that school leaders face when employing distributed leadership styles in girls' high schools within Saudi Arabia.

3.2 Methodology

Empirical studies in the social sciences draw from different traditions that originate back to the Greek philosophers, Aristotle and Plato, during the fourth century BC. These philosophers developed ways to understand, conceptualise and classify knowledge, as well as reality and human experiences. As a discipline, social science researchers study different contexts of people's lives, the nature of knowledge and truth (epistemology), values (axiology) and being (ontology) (Somekh & Lewin, 2005).

Social science research is often classified according to four main paradigms: scientific and positivist; naturalistic and interpretive; critical theory; and feminist educational research (Cohen *et al*., 2007). A scientific paradigm often uses quantitative methods in order to determine a principle, law or pattern by investigating a large population of people that generalises the research findings. Quantitative methods aim to create phenomena through statistical techniques and the utilisation of numbers (Punch, 2014; Gilbert, 2001). Meanwhile, naturalistic and interpretive paradigms seek to understand specific contexts through the preservation of knowledge from individual perceptions. The latter paradigms tend to use qualitative methods, as these approaches are employed to understand the perspective of participants and how they comprehend the world.

Cohen *et al.* (2000) suggest that, in the subjective approach, the interest is not with generating universal laws or rules, but more with "… the way in which the individual modifies and interprets the world he or she finds himself or herself" (p.7). Additionally, educational researchers have started developing socio-material approaches that rethink the material practices of education in various methods in four diverse fields: complexity theory, actor-network theory (ANT), cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT), and spatiality theories (Fenwick *et al.*, 2015). Specifically, the current research is interpretive in nature, as this study will not generate findings across a large population; and the main point is to understand how people define and develop meaning (Josselson, 2011a).

3.3 Interpretive Methodology

This study starts from an interpretive strategy, which focuses on people's interpretation of events, and as such can suggest multiple realities (ontology) (Denscombe, 2003). Interpretive approaches concentrate on action as behaviour-with-meaning; thus, intentional behaviour that has a future orientation (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Accordingly, meaningful actions enable shared experiences and interactions between people (ibid). Cohen *et al.* (2007) explain that "interpretive researchers begin with individuals and aim to understand their interpretations of the reality around them" (p.22). That particular study investigated participants' perceptions of leadership and different meanings of leadership and management stemming from the diverse lived experiences of participants. Moreover, people working in girls' secondary schools in Saudi Arabia were investigated, and whether they can imagine how school structures could be organised differently to enable distributed leadership models to be adopted. The literature review found that distributed leadership models are usually more successful than other models in orchestrating school transformations.

3.4 Qualitative Methods

Qualitative methods try to "understand how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their world, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam, 2009, p.5). In general, qualitative research focuses on one of two research perspectives: interpretive or critical. Interpretive investigators suppose that individuals generate their meaning through interaction with their surrounding world, where there is no single reality regardless of one's conceptions (Lapan *et al*., 2011). Strauss and Corbin (1998) describe qualitative research as forms of research suitable for examining cultural phenomena, organisational performance, social changes, and interactions of individuals who live experiences where no one else could recognise the case.

Two qualitative methods were selected for the current study: interview and case study. This choice was in part pragmatic based on time limitations and geographic distance, as the researcher was unable to spend the required time in Saudi Arabia, and there were also difficulties in gaining access to different schools.

3.4.1 Interview Method

Within interview methods, there are a range of different types, such as: standardised, closed questions, in-depth, ethnographic, elite, life history, semi-structured, narrative and focus groups. May (1997) defined an interview as "yielding rich insights into people's experiences, opinions, aspirations, attitudes and feelings" (p.108). This study sought to understand the way head teachers comprehend and specifically determine their subjective understandings of management and leadership, as these relate to their lived everyday experiences. Meanwhile, the interview methods enable an interviewer to ask participants specific questions regarding their understanding, thinking and feelings regarding certain matters.

Nevertheless, conducting an interview is not a simple choice and requires a skilled interviewer. An interview is a purposeful process that demands the development of a

friendly ambience that leads to conversation, which requires good communication skills (Seidman, 2013). In addition, interviews require structural coherence and clear questions (Punch, 2005). Correspondingly, the interviewer has to develop trust between participants and the researcher (Gwartney, 2007); to listen accurately and select appropriate time to stop, probe or prompt (Ritchie, Lewis & Elam, 2003); and to motivate interviewees to converse confidently and honestly (Denscombe, 2014).

Four major forms of interview are used as research tools: structured interview, unstructured interview, semi-structured interview, and focused interview (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). The structured interview is one in which the content, procedures and pre-established questions are organised in advance. This means that a researcher has some restrictions, such as not being able to implement modifications and the requirements to use a formal style to manage the interview and keep it focused (O'Leary, 2014; Cohen *et al.*, 2007). In contrast, the unstructured interview is a flexible and open situation, which has great freedom (Cohen *et al*., 2007). Consequently, the current study selected a semi-structured, individual face-to-face interview as the most appropriate method, because the researcher did not have sufficient time to elicit a free flowing narrative that might not have addressed the research questions.

3.4.1.1 The Semi-structured Interview Method

Semi-structured interviews function with a relatively flexible structure that enables researchers to start with a specified questioning plan, which can minimally shift to follow the flow of the conversation and is able to lead to the emergence of interesting and unexpected data (Gill *et al*., 2008). The researcher commonly guides the participants by a set of questions that lead into engagement within conversation to create systematic data regarding the investigated problem (Cohen *et al.*, 2017). Moreover, a semi-structured interview is a flexible approach that enables adjustments to the structures, depth and the domain of the questions. Hence, semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to ask a series of questions based on a research topic

that enables participants to return to the main topic, in order to determine what most interests a participant.

Semi-structured interviews explore topics that can be developed by the interviewee, who is able to talk widely on the phenomena that are raised by questions posed by the interviewer, where the answers are open-ended (Denscombe, 2003). Thus, the semi-structured interview was appropriate for the current study, as it enabled the exploration of in-depth, interviewee responses regarding their understanding of various aspects of the distributed leadership practices and to provide them with the opportunity to speak about their day-to-day experiences in the workplace. Specifically, in relation to the current study, the purpose of interviewing deputy head teachers and teachers was essential in determining whether the head teachers would try to share responsibilities with other staff members, as is required for a distributed model of leadership. Questions were also used to explore whether there were barriers to the understanding of what distributed leadership is, and whether head teachers could imagine accomplishing it.

3.4.2 The Case Study

In addition to interviewing head teachers and deputy head teachers, a case study focused on one school, which enabled the researcher to conduct interviews with staff members in different roles and positions in one school. Multi schools' interviews were implemented and a single school case study that involved members of staff, head teacher, Lama, who was one of the head teachers interviewed in the multi school phase of the research. The role of the case study was to gain a greater understanding of leadership practices by devising a whole school approach. The participants were two deputy head teachers and three teachers, and the aim was to draw on their comments to triangulate what Lama, the head teacher, had reported as her leadership practices.

A case study is a "specific instance that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle" (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p.253) which concentrates on only one topic to be investigated. Moreover, "what a case study can do, that normally a survey cannot, is to study things in detail" (Denscombe, 2003, p.30). A case is often designed to interpret a more general principle, which provides a unique understanding of the ideas from people in actual cases (Nisbet & Watt, 1984). A case study often occurs in one place, which enhances access for participants. More importantly, it enables the researcher to develop a better understanding through the process of engaging a variety of participants (O'Leary, 2014).

A case study enables the researcher to collect data from different levels of school members, which helps to make a study more detailed. Triangulation or obtaining agreements between pieces of information collected from multiple sources increases levels of trustworthiness and the validity of findings (Lapan *et al.*, 2011). Case studies help to provide a more in-depth analysis of school staff practices, as researchers in case studies are able to select participants for purposeful sampling, which provides case study research with more strength, as knowledge sources, individuals, or cases are identified as rich information sources (Patton, 1987). Interviewing staff members in different positions within a school enabled triangulation, as classroom teachers and deputy-heads provided information that supported what the head teacher had stated during her interview; thus, it was possible to be more confident that the head teacher was stating something that was truthful of her practice. As Stake (1995) highlights, four features of qualitative case studies, which are as follows: "holistic", "empirical", "interpretive" and "emphatic". This means that the researcher should focus on: the holistic; the interrelationship among the phenomenon and its contexts; empirically, their observations in the field, and interpretively, based on their second sight, which considers the research based on the researcher-subject interaction; and emphatically reflect the indirect experiences from the perspective of open-ended interview questions.

In the current study, the case study allowed me to explore to what extent distributed leadership was enacted by the head teacher, and whether her deputy head and teachers in her school could provide any evidence of their head teacher attempting to share responsibility and to delegate tasks, as is required for this model of leadership.

3.5 The Position of the Researcher

Semi-structured interviews were conducted, and the researcher played a significant role in managing the interviews. There has been debate, however, regarding the value and importance of insider and outsider researcher positions (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015). Specifically, an insider researcher is considered to relate to one of the group members from which the research sample is drawn; in the current study, the researcher had similar qualities, such as gender, identity, nationality, profession and culture to the interviewees. Contrastingly, an outsider researcher does not belong to the group (Gair, 2012). The importance of the researcher's position is to identify relationships with the participants and the knowledge gained from the study (Griffith, 1998). However, in the process of insider research, the close distance and the researcher's role with the participants may create a bias within the study (Creswell, 1998).

A researcher's personal identity may impact upon the information gathered by an insider researcher (Denscombe, 2003). Hence, as one who has made a career in the Ministry of Education (MoE), and held a supervisory role in the education office, the researcher could be classed as an "insider" in the current research. However, during the research, I was not a representative of the Ministry of Education and was not employed by the Ministry. At the time when I undertook the study, I was a student at MMU and when I return to Saudi Arabia after my studies I will work as a teacher. However, my previous position as a supervisor in the Ministry provided many advantages, as it was possible to understand the cultural and historical context in which participants were operating, and so made it easier to design the research questions and understand the responses. The researcher's previous status in the

Ministry of Education facilitated access to the schools and the participants. In addition, understanding the nature of the head teachers' work helped in the data analysis and interpretation. Being an insider facilitated access to the participants for short time period, as it was possible to contact the supervisor in the education office, who was able to provide head teachers with information. This enabled the possibility to ask for volunteers and reassure participants regarding issues of confidentiality.

3.6 Interview Schedule

The semi-structured interview schedule was designed for the head teachers and deputy head teachers; and these schedules were also used in the case study. In the case study, school interview schedules were also designed to be appropriate for a range of teachers according to their specialist subjects. The interview questions were designed to investigate the research questions, and specifically whether participants understood the difference between management and leadership; if they had an understanding of what distributed leadership models are; and if there were any leadership approaches that seemed specifically appropriate to women head teachers in Saudi Arabia.

The questions were drawn from a combination of sources, including the literature review and the researcher's personal experiences as a supervisor and education officer in the education office in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The interview questions covered aspects of the literature review and specifically elements of distributed leadership (Day & Sammons, 2016; Leithwood *et al.*, 2004; Leithwood *et al.*, 2008). The questions aimed to investigate a wide range of elements of distributed leadership (Pont *et al.*, 2008; Harris, 2004; 2011; Gronn, 2000; Spillane & Healey, 2010; Heck & Hallinger, 2006; 2008; 2010; Bush & Glover, 2012), such as: establishing and developing leadership teams (Day *et al.*, 2007; Bush & Glover, 2012) and applying distributed leadership practices (GuQuing *et al.*, 2008; Wallace, 2002; Musselwhite, 2007).

Indeed, it has been stated in many studies that a head teacher plays a vital role in creating trust (Day & Sammons, 2014; Bromily, 1996; Schneider, 2003; Young, 1998). Meanwhile, Day *et al.* (2010; 2014) listed five essential components of trust. Hence, the literature review guided the researcher to develop interview questions that were designed to understand whether head teachers and deputy head teachers possessed any elements of distributed leadership.

3.7 Piloting and Validity of the Interview Protocol

Prior to conducting the main interviews, the researcher conducted a pilot session with two school leaders and one deputy head teacher, because "piloting an interview schedule can provide interviewers with some experience of using it and can infuse them with greater sense of confidence" (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2018, p.265). Specifically, the pilot procedure aimed to examine and refine interview questions, restructure the questions, and to ensure the acceptability of the interview content. Testing the interview questions helped to ensure success in gaining the desired data and enabled questions to be developed prior to the study. These were developed through participants who were similar to the actual test participants, in order to confirm the interview questions had been formulated appropriately and understood/explained as intended (Lapan *et al.*, 2011). Indeed, "a pilot interview is conducted with participants who fulfilled the required set criteria for the population" (Burns & Grove, 2011, p.366). The pilot study was conducted with two head teachers and a deputy head teacher using telephone interviews.

Other interview questions were designed for teachers in the case study. Two classroom teachers conducted a pilot interview of the research questions using telephone interviews. The pilot study was conducted by online call, due to the international telephone charges; the calls were restricted to between thirty-five to forty-five minutes. It was also adhered to that "questions that seem not to be

understood or questions that are often not answered should become apparent" (Bryman, 2008, p.248). Subsequently, following the pilot study of the interview questions, the structure was changed and the researcher added some questions in order to simplify the meaning and to create clarity and understanding for the participants. However, the pilot study of the interview questions of teachers did not expose any major issues. In general, the researcher's questions were clear and the participants understood them. The final interview schedule can be found in (Appendix 1).

3.8 Access to Participants

Access is a key issue and is an early factor that must be decided upon in the process of research. Burgess (1984) confirmed that "at its most basic, access involves gaining permission to do a piece of research in a particular social setting or institution" (p.38). In particular, researchers need to ensure that access is not only permitted, but also practicable (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p.109). Meanwhile, "in many cases, access is guarded by 'gatekeepers', who are the people who control researchers' access to those whom they really want to target; for school staff, this might be, for example, head teachers" (ibid, p.109).

Access for the participants required permission from the Planning and Development Department in the Ministry of Education (MoE). Therefore, the researcher was required to send translated copies of the research questions, a consent form, information sheet and the targeted category of participants by email. The Ministry of Education subsequently approved the questions to interview the head teachers, deputy head teachers and teachers. After approving the researcher documents, the researcher was then required to make an agreement with the Cultural Attaché of the Saudi Arabian Embassy in London, which includes the Planning and Development Department approving the letter, and to provide a support letter to the specific

student's Director of Study. After this approval, the researcher was issued with an air ticket for a flight to Saudi Arabia in order to conduct the study in July 2018.

3.8.1 Selecting Participants: School Leaders

The researcher found the schools by contacting a supervisor in the School Administrator's Department in the Educational Office and asking the supervisor to help to select schools. My access to schools and teachers was highly regulated by the Education Office. Ideally, I would like to have gained access to schools to undertake ethnographic work, observations in classrooms and undertake extensive interviews with teachers. However, it was not possible to get this level of access. The Department of Education allowed me to undertake interviews, and I was provided with lists of schools to potentially work with although I was not permitted to undertake ethnographic work in schools and in classrooms. This created restrictions on the research design which is discussed later. Despite the restrictions on how participants were selected and the small scale of this study it nevertheless provides a useful contribution to the field of education leadership in Saudi Arabia as it involved in-depth interviews that provide rich insights into women head teachers' and deputy head teachers' concerns, challenges and sense of constrains on their capacities to act as leaders.

I selected schools using the following criteria: the head teachers' performance level and location in order to ensure the study would include head teachers with different levels of performance based on annual review outcomes. Head teachers with high, medium and low levels of achievement were selected and various school social economic indicators were considered in order to make sure that head teachers and deputy head teachers had been included from diverse school areas. The Education Office provided contact details for potential participants and head teachers' performance scores. Subsequently, the researcher chose two head teachers who were

excellent, four who had medium and two with low scores. Furthermore, the head teacher of Manar School, Lama, was also part of the case study (see Table 3.1).

The researcher contacted the participants by sending a WhatsApp message to the schools, which resulted in eight replies; two of these provided apologies in regards to their inability to participate. The consent forms were sent to participants with the information sheet and all the participants returned the forms providing consent. However, when it came to the interview, one participant refused to have her interview audio recorded, although she did agree to have her responses written down by hand. Table 3.1 gives brief biographical details of the participating head teachers.

Table 3.1: Participants, School Head Teachers

Participant	School Code	Leadership Quality	Leader Age	Work Experience	School Size	Social Economy
Sara	A	Medium	52	4 Years	650 student	Mid level
Nora	B	Low	36	4 years	500 student	Good level
Wed	C	High	38	1 year school leader, 9 years- deputy head teacher	790 student	Low level
Lama- Case study school	D	High	50	18 years	730 student	Good level
Noha	E	High	52	13 years	600 student	Good level
Roz	F	Medium	38	8 years	700 student	Mid level
Joud	G	Medium	47	17 years	800 student	Low level
Amal	H	High	42	3 years	600 student	Mid level

3.8.2 Selecting the Deputy Head Teachers

Whilst simultaneously selecting school head teachers, the researcher was provided with a list of schools' deputy head teachers based on their roles in school. Ideally, I would have chosen to interview deputy head teachers who worked in the same schools as the head teachers, but unfortunately that was not possible given the lists I was provided to work from by the Department of Education. The list included deputy head teachers who practice a range of different roles in schools, and depending on the schools stated mission, their qualifications, number of students and what roles they had in the school affairs (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Participants, Deputy Head Teachers

Participant	School Code	Age	Work Experience	The Role in School
Fattem	L	36	12 years	School Affairs
Huda	M	42	15 years	Education and School Affairs
Dalal	N	45	5 years	Students' Affairs
Samara	Y	38	7 years	Education and School Affairs
Dana	P	36	6 years	Education, Students and School Affairs
Ruba	Q	41	6 years	Educational Affairs
Rasha	R	38	2 years	Students' Affairs

The researcher contacted 12 potential deputy head teachers through WhatsApp messages, which ascertained seven replies and four apologies regarding their inability to participate, while one did not respond to the message. The consent forms were sent

to participants together with the information sheets. The deputy head teachers came from different schools because the list of potential participants provided the Education Department was a different list to the list of potential head teacher participants. In an ideal situation, I would have drawn the sample of deputy head teachers from the same school as the head teachers. Table 3.2 gives brief biographical details of the participating deputy head teachers. Despite this limitation it was possible to explore emergent themes across the head teacher and deputy head teacher interviews.

3.8.3 Selecting the Case Study School

The case study school was selected based on the head teacher's performance level. The decision to target a school where the head teacher was judged to be exceptional was to explore distributed leadership in Saudi Arabia in the current policy context. The school was selected to explore whether leadership practices as reported by an excellent head class teacher corroborated teacher and deputy head teachers' accounts as a way to explore if distributed aspect of distributed leadership filters into classroom teachers' practices at all. Such a case study school could indicate the possibilities and challenges of implementing distributed leadership given the most conducive school environment available at the time the study was undertaken

The researcher contacted two school head teachers to take part in the study but was ultimately not successful. However, one head teacher agreed to participate in the current study, who provided the researcher with the list of two deputy head teachers and five teachers with various specialists, who were judged to be excellent, and all agreed to participate (see Table 3.3). The list provided by the Ministry for Education did give details of the length of teachers' careers. In an ideal world, I would have selected early career and more experienced teachers. I would like to have included High School students from participating schools in the study, however the Ministry of Education did not grant permission to interview students. Unfortunately, it was not

possible to get permission to undertake ethnographic observations in schools and classrooms.

The researcher sent WhatsApp messages to the deputy head teachers and three teachers, who all replied. Following this, the consent forms were sent to participants with the information sheet; all participants returned the forms providing consent.

Table 3.3: Participants, Case Study

Participant	Experience	The Role in School	Level of School and Social Economy
Lama	18 years	School leader	The assessment level of the school is excellent
Deem	3 years- Deputy head teacher experience 7 years manager in a small school in village	Deputy head teacher for education affairs	The social and economic level of the school is good
Loloa	10 years- Deputy head teacher	Deputy head teacher for student affair	
Abeer	15 year	Arabic Language	
Ranem	16 year	Biology	
Asia	12 year	Maths	

3.9 Undertaking the Research

The researcher arranged a meeting time and place to conduct the interviews according to what the interviewees found most appropriate. The length of the meetings had a duration of fifty-five minutes to one hour and ten minutes for head teachers. The researcher started the phase of collecting data at the beginning of the summer school holidays in Saudi Arabia, which has a length of four months. The interviews occurred

outside schools in female coffee shops and female shopping centres. In Saudi Arabia public places like cafes are normally used as meeting places as people feel comfortable and can have drinks and snacks together. Participants chose to meet me in cafes because these were places where they felt safe and comfortable to undertake interviews. This brought advantages because it enabled interviewees to develop the confidence to talk about the various aspects of school matters while outside the school in a neutral environment. However, the necessity of undertaking interviews in multiple places was a significant challenge, as the researcher had to travel to places identified by participants and at times convenient to them. Sometimes it took considerable time to reach a specific location.

The interviews were conducted on a one- to- one basis, as had been explained on "WhatsApp" messages, which also provided brief explanations of the research concept, although not the interview schedule. Consequently, the researcher started the interviews by reminding the participants briefly of their rights as had been stated on the information sheet, as well as asking each person to re-confirm their consent for audio recording of the interview. Rubin and Rubin (2011) highlight that audio recording and note-taking are ideal techniques for collecting interview information. Therefore, the interviews were recorded on a digital audio recording device and notes were taken both during and after the interview, in order to create a reminder of any substantial contextual elements. The participants were informed that these recorders would be kept confidential and in a safe place, and that only the researcher and the supervisor would listen to them. In addition, the researcher was conscious of the valuable time that participants were providing. In the event of an interview, it would also have to be noted that it may be necessary to stop in the middle of the interview and continue in two days; for instance, when one participant had a phone call that required her to leave the place quickly. Hence, "the researcher had to realise that characteristics, such as flexibility, adaptability, humour, accepting ambiguity, empathy and accepting one's emotions would contribute towards successfully completing the study" (Nyamathi & Shuler, 1990, p.128).

What is more, the researcher sought to create a trusting, friendly and open atmosphere at the moment of meeting the interviewees for the interview, recognising that "purposeful small talk facilitates a warm and friendly environment so as to put the participants at ease" (Krueger, 1994, p.36). Additionally, the researcher engaged with some of the knowledge, experience, perceptions and reactions with the interviewees, which motivated them to continue the dialogue (Tutty *et al.*, 1996)

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are extremely important in research, as they are central to research integrity (O'Leary, 2014). The ethical dimensions within an interview process relate to interpersonal interaction and provide sufficient information regarding why the data is being collected and what it will be used for (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Ethical issues cover three essential areas: informed consent; confidentiality; and the interviews' consequences (Kvale, 1996). To confirm, the current study was conducted regarding to British Educational Research Association's ethical guidelines and the MMU Academic Ethical Framework.

Participants were provided with information sheets and the researcher asked for consent by providing them with a consent form containing the project's title, a permission statement, as well as an explanation of the aims of the project and the time involved. Also, the researcher made it clear that participation was completely voluntary with no obligations. Moreover, participants were told that their participation would be strictly confidential, and no information would be used that can be traced back to a specific individual. It was stressed that the results of the current study may be published anonymously only, and participants were given the right to withdraw from the interview at any time. In addition, the researcher was required to enable participants to understand their involvement by providing an opportunity to discuss the information sheet with the researcher. What is more, the researcher requested permission to audio record the interview and explain what would happen to the audio recording and the transcript. Furthermore, the researcher

informed participants of their right to withdraw at any time. Ethics is all about creating safe places and protecting anonymity. I assured participants that anything they said in interviews would not be relayed back to their head teachers or supervisors. The process of ethics is also about making people feel they are being protected and that is why I have been careful to use pseudonyms for participants and for schools so they can not be identified. I was aware that difficult issues might have been raised in the interviews and was constantly checking to make sure participants felt comfortable and did not feel stressed. I was prepared to stop the interview if participants seemed to be stressed or upset.

3.11 Data Analysis

"Analysis literally means pulling things apart to examine them in their smallest components" (Lapan *et al.*, 2011, p.263). The current study gathered qualitative data and the analysis interpreted this, although interpretive data is "a not a completely accurate representation (as in the numerical, positivist tradition), but more of a reflexive, reactive interaction between the researcher and the decontextualised data that are already interpretations of a social encounter" (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p.369).

As aforementioned, the interviews were audio recorded, and as the interviews were undertaken in Saudi Arabia, in the Arabic language (the mother tongue of both the researcher and the participants), they were transcribed in Arabic. The interview transcripts were read and then the researcher undertook an extensive thematic analysis. The researcher followed the steps suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), with the first step to start the data analysis process of familiarising one's self with the data by transcribing from the recorder to the written text, revisiting and ensuring the data was transferred accurately. Transcripts were written in the Arabic language, as is the mother language for both the participants and researcher. Whenever a quotation was translated from Arabic to English some of the meaning may get lost. So, to render a quotation into English in the best possible way I asked other Arabic and English

speakers to read these quotations when I translated them into English to check that they gave a reasonable representation of participants' meanings.

The trustworthiness of the data in any study depends on the research paradigm in which the study is located (Cohen et al. 2007). Mine was an interpretive paradigm. Accordingly, I had to accept that what people said and told me in interviews was limited to their perception of events. The trustworthiness of the data comes from the way I did the thematic analysis. I looked for common themes across a cohort such as the head teacher interviews. If an issue was raised multiple times this gave me some confidence that what a participant was saying bore some relationship to practice. Of course, I can not know for sure what happen in practice unless I had been able to triangulate interview comments through undertaking ethnographic work or observations, which as stated earlier was not possible. So, while the study is about participants' perceptions of leadership, it is not claiming to be generalisable.

To try to ensure trustworthiness the interpretive approach used a very systematic thematic analysis. It was possible to triangulation themes identified in the head teachers' interviews with themes that emerged in the deputy head teachers' interviews such that when similar themes were identified this provided some trustworthiness that the theme related to practice to some extent. Each transcript was read several times in order to become familiar with data through reading and re-reading the interview, as well as noting down initial ideas and meaning. The first list of emerging codes related to: appointing, gaining experiences, per-service training, developing staff, developing teachers' skills, maintenance, developing school building, autonomy, budget, making decisions, meeting, teamwork, committees and incentives.

Codes were classified into categories and organisations used different highlighting colours and numbers that were generated from theme repetition, explanations, constructs, and causes. Sets of themes and sub-themes were also devised, such as:

professional development; school leadership practices; motivating staff; autonomy; and developing learning environment. There were also sub-themes, such as: professional development of head teachers, meetings, communications and teamwork, budgets and trust. These themes will be discussed in the Findings Chapter.

In the data analysis, the theme of professional development is examined, as well as the sub-themes of professional development of head teachers, building teachers skills and building administrators skills. The theme of school leadership practices, including sub-themes of meetings, teamwork and communication are also stated. The third chapter is the theme of motivating staff and the sub-themes of incentive and trust. The theme of autonomy is the focus of the fourth chapter with sub-themes of budget, maintenance and accountability. The fifth chapter discusses the theme of developing the learning environment. Overall, these five themes emerged from the data obtained from the current study as a systematic analysis in the Findings Chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: HEAD TEACHERS

4. Introduction

This chapter reports the findings from interviews with the eight head teachers in girls' secondary schools in Saudi Arabia; the following two chapters will address the interviews with deputy head teachers and from the case study. A thematic analysis of head teacher interviews (see Methods Chapter Three, p. 100) found four major themes: professional development, school leadership practices, motivating staff and autonomy. Within the major themes there were a number of subthemes, which will be discussed in the following sections.

Some of the interview questions ask head teachers' perceptions of what they think the Ministry of Education expects the role of a head teacher to be. Head teachers gained their positions in a climate when there were insufficient numbers of willing candidates to take on the role of head teacher. Accordingly, the Ministry of Education appointed any teacher who showed any interest in the job, irrespective of how suitable they were. Indeed, the majority of head teachers interviewed for this study had not wished to take the role of head teacher. Only two participants had put themselves forward for the position of head teacher, while the rest were directed to take on this role by the Ministry of Education. One teacher applied for the deputy head teacher position, although the decision was made to make her a head teacher. The other four participants had previously worked as deputy head teachers and one had been a head teacher in another school. Two of them were acting as head teachers under the name of deputy head teacher.

4.1 Professional Development

This theme identified issues around the head teachers' professional development in terms of prior training and continuing professional development and the confidence required for the role of headship. Head teachers in this study faced many challenges at the beginning of their headship career, as they sought in many ways to develop their skills and knowledge and gain experience through practicing their roles and by contacting other head teachers. Additionally, many sub-themes were identified under this theme, which are: head teachers' professional development, developing teachers' skills and building administrators' skills.

4.1.1 Professional Development of Head Teachers

None of the head teachers had any prior training for the role of a head teacher, which caused all of them anxiety and concern. Four participants took a head teacher's role directly from being a classroom teacher without pre-service training, experience in management or knowledge of the range of duties and tasks expected of head teachers. The other four participants worked as deputy head teachers before becoming head teachers. Consequently, all faced difficulties in acting as head teacher, and all spoke of the anxiety, stress and misunderstanding tasks. When the Ministry of Education appoints a head teacher, it is expected that the head teacher should act as a professional head teacher from the first day.

All eight head teachers reported gaining experience from practising head teachers. Many also referred to their personalities and their ability to overcome the challenges they faced at the beginning:

> The nature of my personality helps me to adapt with so many difficulties
> I had faced (Joud, school G).

And:

> In the beginning, I got help from all school members and who supported me in a great environment. They enabled me to lead school (Amal, school H).

As well as:

> I got help from the head teachers of other schools to understand and gain experience of my responsibilities tasks such as how to inventory damaged and missing stuff in school (Sara, School A).

Amal pointed to the role of others in supporting her, while Sara spoke of learning from another head teacher. Noha from school H provided a different perspective on how she overcame the challenges that confronted her. She spoke of the importance of social media:

> Head teachers spoke of the importance of communicating using social media such as Group WhatsApp for gaining information from other head teachers and communicating with staff. Group WhatsApp became a formal method for communicating with staff after it was approved by the Ministry of Education following a circular from the Ministry of Education (Noha, school H).

Separately, Nora, from school A also mentioned the importance of Group WhatsApp:

> I made myself, I am proactive, I access group WhatsApp with other head teachers, I have acquired so much, I have the chance to ask and discuss a variety of issues of school matters.

Many mentioned the Ministry of Education Guidance (*The Organisational Guide for Schools of General Education*) which explains the goals and tasks of the various councils and committees within a school. The Guide enables staff to know what their roles require and the functions attached to their role.

The organisational relationships between the roles of staff in a school organisation, and defines the responsibilities attached to each role (see Chapter One, p. 21). The Guide indicates teachers' responsibilities, the various councils and committees they have to attend, and the tasks allocated to different members of staff. Furthermore, the Guide establishes the basis for staff to be monitored and their performance to be evaluated against the specific responsibilities attached to a role (Organisational Guide for Schools of General Education, 2016, p.7). The Guides are publicly available texts accessible to everyone in the organisation which make transparent the roles and duties attached to each member and committee. Accordingly, regulation both internal to the school and external via local Education Offices can be said to be governed by explicit, publicly available rules rather than personalities. The Guides provide transparency within the education system that enable each member of staff to know her place and role. The downside of such a transparent system in that roles may be too prescriptive and not flexible enough to enable change to take place. For example, if teachers only follow the rulebook, they can act as automatons taking no initiatives and can lack motivation to change. Yet, publicly available texts mitigate against head teachers coercing staff or imposing personal views. Having roles and duties available in publicly available texts gives teachers resources to refer to so they can resist a head teacher who might act as a despot or bully.

Alongside *The Organisational Guide for Schools of General Education,* the Ministry of Education launched *The Procedural Guide for Schools of General Education* (2014). The Procedural Guide aims to provide easy to follow instructions about procedures associated with specialist teaching roles and encourage efficiency (The Procedural Guide for Schools of General Education, 2016, p. 10). The Procedural Guides supports head teachers to understand their work through step by step lists of instructions on how to deal with a wide range of issues. However, in interviews, those head teachers who

mentioned the Guides stressed that they were inadequate and did not help them to do the job. Lama from school D highlighted the drawback of this guide. She stated that:

> The Procedural Guide for Schools of General Education came to clarify the tasks for each person in the school; the disadvantage of this is that if we assigned someone to do extra work, especially in the exam period, some employees refuse to undertake any work not listed in the Guide. This led me to have to create procedures to address the problem, for example, giving written warnings (Lama, School D).

In spite of the *Procedural Guide for Schools of General Education* explaining everything, head teachers explained they need training to interpret certain matters in school and the training was inadequate, as stated by Nora, from school B:

> The training courses of developing head teachers' skills are insufficient and not focused.

Some head teachers had been offered in-service training by the Ministry of Education. Some said the training courses were not long enough, such as Nora, from school B:

> In the beginning, the management was very difficult. I took different courses for two and three days, it was never enough to answer all the questions about my duties and tasks at school.

Nora explained that although the in-service training did not allow her to develop enough leadership skills, more training would have helped. For example, Roz from school F highlighted the method of applying new programmes launched by the Ministry of Education, and the role of training programmes for facilitating the new work and programmes.

The two programmes of 'Noor` and 'Faris` are data bases required by the Ministry for registering school staff and students' data. We can also access school information on them. The process of installing these programmes was sent to school. We followed the process, but the implementation failed. Furthermore, the Faris program was initially difficult, the deputy head teacher and staff got a training programme of the implication steps and the work became a success. (Roz, School F)

Nora, from school B, explained that potential head teachers need months of training and visits to successful schools to learn from head teachers.

The head teacher needs two to three months of training courses to qualify them. Further, head teachers need field visits for at least one week of an outstanding head teacher to understand the whole works' details.

The courses offered by the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia are not long enough, but there were other courses that involved experience abroad under the King Abdullah Programme. Lama, from Manar School, who is the head teacher of the case study school referred to them directly:

These training programs were related to the King Abdullah Project to Develop Public Education. These programs are a long period process, aiming to take courses and gain experience from Harvard University in the USA, and the University of Cambridge in the UK and visited some schools there. (Lama, Manar School)

Many head teachers pointed to the role of the supervisor. Supervisors belong to regional offices and have the role of looking after a certain number of schools and supervising the head teachers and administrators' work, ensuring the school runs under the rule of the Education system and are responsible for annual assessment of

the head teachers' performance (see Chapter One p. 24). Sara, from school A, and others described how they frequently called on the supervisor for help.

> When I face any difficulties in solving problems within school, I directly communicate with the schools' supervisor, the reason to do that is to be aware of the solutions of the problem.

It became clear from the interviews that some head teachers had become very reliant on the supervisor, which prevented them from becoming autonomous and taking initiatives.

> I do not take any steps unless I consult my supervisor to protect me (Sara, school A).

In general, training programmes were available only after head teachers had been appointed and this was recognised as too late by all head teachers. The lack of training caused them stress and increased problems. When training was provided after head teachers were in post, it was insufficient, too short, and did not cover the real-life problems that they encountered on a daily basis. Most training courses are related to specific, new programmes, such as 'Noor' and 'Faris', which is the data bases of the school staff and the students. One head teacher was clear that she required two to three months of training before taking up the post and at least one week shadowing a head teacher in a successful school in order to be prepared for the job. Another head teacher said she would prefer to attend formal training courses instead of trying to acquire knowledge from others.

4.1.2 Developing Teachers' Skills:

All the eight head teachers highlighted the need to provide professional development for teachers in their schools. They recognised that to transform their schools they needed to take their staff with them, and for this they required better trained staff. Many spoke of the way they delegated tasks to staff, and all agreed that classroom

teachers should have autonomy over how they undertake teaching and delivering lessons. They recognised that teachers need to feel confident in the classroom, and one way to facilitate this was to provide continuing professional development (CPD). Many suggested that CPD should address learning strategies; for example, active learning, using technology, managing the classroom and dealing with students' behaviour. Accordingly, they recognised that to develop these skills, teachers required training. Lama, from Manar School, who is the head teacher of the case study school summarised this as follows:

> Teachers need to develop their skills in classroom management and develop abilities in how to deal with students in general, outside and inside the classroom.

Five head teachers spoke of challenges in motivating staff and especially the problems they faced in getting teachers to attend training courses. They indicated that teachers and employees refuse to attend training courses. The reasons were: firstly, and most importantly, there were no financial incentives to encourage teachers to take up places on these courses and no salary incentives offered to teachers who enhance their professional qualifications by undertaking CPD training courses. Furthermore, head teachers reported that teachers who had been in the profession for a long time were reluctant to change their routines and did not recognise the benefits of CPD. It was reported that these teachers believed they had enough experience to be good teachers. Head teachers often referred to this in terms of personalities. They explained that some teachers would not agree to attend CPD courses and found an excuse for refusing. In many cases the reluctance to undertake CPD training was not about educational values as such, it was more about pragmatics. Many women teachers could not attend CPD training courses because, for example, the locations of training centres were far from their homes. Travelling long distances was difficult for women teachers in the study as, until recently, they had to be chaperoned by a man and could not drive themselves to training centres. Furthermore, the times when courses took

place were difficult for women teachers, for example, if it conflicted with childcaring and domestic responsibilities which take place after school hours. Male teachers do not have domestic responsibilities on top of their professional responsibilities and are more free to attend training after classes. Also, given there was no financial support for undertaking training, women had to arrange and pay for childcare and cover travelling expenses from their regular salary. Many head teachers, such as Wed, spoke of the difficulties in getting women teachers to attend CPD training.

> In addition, this negatively affects teachers. Head teachers suffer from an inability to motivate staff to train and this issue costs us time and effort to pursue the teachers to enrol in the sessions. Now, the Ministry of Education links professional development to the teachers' assessment, and this is a positive step. The teachers are not enthusiastic because they know they will receive their salary at the end of the month and the salary will not be affected (Wed, School C).

The Ministry has made a decision to link professional development to the annual teacher appraisal. However, barriers still remained. Amal, from school H, explained the main challenge:

> One of the considerable challenges is work pressure. If the time of a course coincides with heavy workload, such as examination and assessment times pressure to complete the planning forces teachers to apologise and absent themselves from training courses.

Time pressure was mentioned by other head teachers, such as Joud, from school G, who said that a full teaching timetable leaves no room for training:

Teachers need time to develop themselves and work for work itself. Most teachers spend all of their time writing and preparing resources for lessons.

Furthermore, another significant challenge is that the Ministry of Education often rolls out new programmes or activities without training staff or teachers as Wed, from school C, explained:

We have been asked to implement the new systems and programs without training or a clear explanation. I find difficulties in dealing with school teachers and staff. However, sometimes we have training, but it is insufficient for understanding all aspects of the new work.

Teachers are involved with peer group programmes, where they learn from each other, although as Lama, the head teacher from Manar School pointed out, unless the trainer is well qualified this can backfire:

To gain benefits from training courses, specialised courses must be given by specialist trainers.

In sum, head teachers recognise their responsibilities in offering continuing professional development for their teachers to meet the demands of Vision 2030. Most head teachers in the study were trying to achieve this by encouraging teachers to undertake training programmes and sharing knowledge through team working, where new skills could be disseminated. They also sought to delegate tasks to teachers and deputy head teachers to provide others with the opportunity to develop skills and gain experience in tasks that head teachers have to undertake.

However, many head teachers spoke of the considerable challenges they faced in developing teachers. The main difficulty was to motivate teachers to attend training programmes, as they reported that many teachers refused to take up places on training courses for several reasons: no financial incentive; some older staff were

reluctant to change habits and the lack of time to attend courses due to their full teaching timetables. Head teachers were also had concerned with regards to the quality of training programmes and stated that sometimes the trainers were not sufficiently specialised to deliver high quality courses. Correspondingly, many head teachers welcomed the new decision by the Ministry of Education to link professional development with annual assessment that would help head teachers to involve teachers in training programmes. Nonetheless, some warned that if training courses are not of high quality, then they would still not be able to develop the skilled workforce required to fulfil Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia.

Since the study was undertaken, the Ministry of Education has started to provide more support for staff development. However, as comments from these head teachers suggest, there is a need to take into account the extra demands that women teachers have in terms of their dual roles as professional teachers and as mothers with domestic responsibilities.   If the Ministry is to be successful in enticing more women teachers to undertake professional training, issues such as the location and times of training courses as well as the financial burden attached to childcare and travel that impact women's lives need to be recognised and addressed.

4.1.2.1 Pedagogy (Learning Methods)

Teaching methods and in particular pedagogy is central to making knowledge available to students. Six head teachers stated that classroom teachers should choose teaching methods as pedagogic practices that they believe are effective and retain control over these aspects of education. Joud, from school G, said:

> First step to develop teachers' performance is to give the teacher the autonomy to run the lesson and assess in her way and not impose specific ways to teach. In addition, teachers should give students opportunities to be creative and undertake activities they enjoy without dictating to them. Even administrators need more opportunities to be creative.

Hence, while head teachers recognised the many challenges teachers face in developing their performance in the classroom, they mostly agreed that teaching methods or pedagogic practices must remain free from control, indicating the high value they placed on professional autonomy at the level of the classroom. They also recognised that teachers need support in developing more effective ways to manage student behaviour, and to motivate and encourage students to want to learn. They recognised that teachers need more skill when working with low achieving students and those with learning difficulties, and this requires a broader range of teaching strategies at classroom level.

4.1.2.2 Building Teachers' Skills

While head teachers were striving to develop teachers' skills, the Ministry of Education had launched many training programmes aimed at developing teaching methods, such as encouraging collaborative learning and active learning. These were aimed at making students more proactive and less passive in lessons and to encourage them to become part of the learning process.

> The main skills that I would like to develop for teachers are dealing with technology, managing students and learning strategies. There is a new generation of teachers who are rejecting the old method of transmission in education (Sara, School A).

While head teachers and the Ministry of Education were making progress in supporting classroom management techniques and more interactive pedagogical approaches, many head teachers emphasised the considerable effort needed to encourage staff development and in keeping up to date with modern teaching methods, and some pointed to the lack of pre-service training to prepare teachers for these new methods. They mentioned the role of educational supervisors in supporting the head teachers to address challenges to be more confident in their school work.

However, head teachers were looking for more support as this was considered central to gaining greater confidence to undertake their headship roles.

Head teachers are responsible for developing teachers' skills and abilities through continuing professional development (CPD), which is crucial for the demands and requirements of Vision 2030. The Ministry of Education launched many new learning strategies. However, these strategies need considerable effort from head teachers and teachers, in order to keep updating their knowledge with modern learning approaches. In addition, head teachers strive to develop leadership skills in their teachers. Many head teachers found a successful method in dealing with school duties and to manage the school, especially in times when they lacked staff or staff were absent. In addition, they provided opportunities for school staff to develop their skills and experience the role of head teachers. However, many head teachers faced challenges in assigned tasks to teachers. The reasons behind that are due to the difficulty in finding and acquiring capable teachers to undertake head teachers' responsibilities; while the other head teachers mentioned that the full timetable leaves no time to assign teachers more tasks.

4.1.3 Building Administrators' Skills

Head teachers recognised the need to train administrators as well as teachers in their schools. Accelerate change in the education system that aims to prepare students to cope with worldwide developments has resulted in head teachers looking to enhance performance by improving their school in a variety of ways. Seven head teachers mentioned the need to develop the school administrators' skills and the need to train them in technology to support this. They stated that the Ministry of Education often appoints administrators who do not have administration skills or do not have sufficient knowledge of management systems, which provides a major challenge for head teachers.

Many administrators graduated ten years ago, and have no enthusiasm or motivation to become technologically literate. Roz, from school F, explained:

> I would like to develop staff skills to use technology because the new employees do not have sufficient experience in the computer and have no desire to learn. Because teachers graduated from the Institute of Teachers ten years ago and have never worked with technology before being appointed, they do not have sufficient skills. Developing the skills to use technology is a significant skill because many of their tasks are using computers, for example, to enter data, such as students' absences in the programs 'Noor' and 'Faris'.

Like other head teachers, Noha, from school E, supported administrators to develop technological skills, and pointed out that they were motivated because professional performance and assessment were linked to gaining qualifications:

> Administrators are keen to develop their skills because there are five qualifications for professional development in the performance evaluation form. This may be one of the reasons why and some are motivated to develop themselves.

Nora, from school B, also stated that there are not sufficient courses to fulfil demand:

> The Ministry of Education launched many courses for the administrators, but only a few employees can be accepted. They can join only one session for one employee. I wish they would be able to have the chance to be involved in the training courses because they are passion.

Lama, from Manar School, the head teacher of the case study school supported this by stressing the lack of capacity on training courses:

> Sometimes training plans come late to school. When the employees submitted their requests for the training courses, the order is not approved, because the available numbers are limited.

Nora, from school B, also provided an example of an attempt to develop the staff. She explained that:

> I give the administrators a chance to learn by sending them to other schools to gain experience and exchange practices, especially the procedures of absence, attendance and data inputting skills.

Despite head teachers encouraging their administrative staff to register on training courses, the lack of training programmes to prepare them to become technologically skilled professionals is a significant challenge.

4.1.4 Summary

The majority of the head teachers in this study were undertaking the role of head teacher under the name of deputy head teacher. Many said they had not wanted to take on the role of head teachers, as they felt under prepared and under trained; and they had not been provided with sufficient pre-training to understand the head teachers' duties and tasks. As a result of this, most were struggling to undertake their roles and had been right from the beginning. They suggested that this creates an atmosphere in the education community of stress for the head teacher, which makes the role of headship unattractive. As in-service training was insufficient, and courses were too short, and the existing courses failed to answer all head teachers' questions about role and tasks within the school and many felt unprepared and out of their depth. They pointed to the significant challenge of developing teachers' pedagogic skills and the technological skills required by administrators. The limited number of training sessions, especially for administrators, was mentioned, as was the need to provide training courses for teachers at times when they can attend and in places that are not too distant from their homes. Moreover, it was clear from these interviews

that good, timely and high quality training is required for secondary school head teachers before taking up this position. Hence, The Ministry of Education needs to provide more, longer and better quality training programmes for prospective head teachers, as this will help the head teachers to overcome challenges, save their time, and reduce stress. The next section looks in more detail at the day to day running of schools from the head teachers' perspectives.

4.2 School Leadership Practices

This section refers to the daily routines and how head teachers described issues such as organising meetings, teamwork, communication tools and managing change. All eight head teachers confirmed that their role was primarily supervising school performance, designing the school annual operational plan, and distributing the roles to staff in accordance with "*The Organisational Guide for Schools of General Education*", which explains the roles of each individual in the school in detail, while the Procedural Guide describes the process of the school procedure (see Chapter One p.20).

Four out of eight head teachers expressed satisfaction with the ways they had found to undertake these day-to-day activities. Before the Ministry of Education provided the Guide, head teachers had to undertake many tasks which, they are now able to devolve to administrators. The Guide has lightened the workload for head teachers, and this has provided them with greater confidence in their ability to lead the school. Noha, from school E, explained the significance of the Guides as follows:

> *The Procedural Guide* is clear and specific in the regulations and duties of each specialist. To clarify the content of the Guide, we have a meeting with the staff and explain their roles.

In general, the Procedural and Organisational Guides have helped head teachers to manage the school and have enhanced performance levels. They help head teachers to feel less pressure, as the Guides explain tasks in detailed, easy to follow steps. Despite the two Guides (one for head teachers and one outlining the roles required of teachers), there have been some unintended effects. One is that, because the Organisational Guide specifies employees' roles, head teachers reported that it was sometimes difficult to persuade teachers to undertake work not listed in the Guide as discussed earlier in section 4.1.1.

Many head teachers in the study stated that they do not have adequate powers to distribute tasks sufficiently to others, such as their administrators and deputy head teachers.

Lama, the head teacher of the Case Study at Manar School, described how she managed the balance by encouraging all staff to feel a part of the whole school community. She provided staff with the power to take initiatives and to make mistakes without being reprimanding them and by actively supporting them.

> I do not like to take a central role in school. I give the deputy head teacher and the administrative staff the powers that belong to them. In some cases, they return to me to discuss important matters. I give them high confidence to be able to work properly even if I am out of school.

However, four head teachers argued that they act more like managers, despite being named as head teachers with leadership roles. Even although the guides suggest head teachers should be leaders, the many forms of regulations at the central office level means that many end up acting only as managers, as Noha, from school E, explained:

> Head teachers are constrained by regulations and this is because any decision taken by the head teacher must be agreed by the higher authorities. Some matters are out of our control.

Nevertheless, when Roz, from school F, started to work as a head teacher, she realised that in the beginning, she played the role of a manager and gradually came to devolve jobs to her deputy head teachers and others.

> I was initially acting as a manager with high centralisation to control the system in the school, and I did everything by myself until the school system was under control. After that, I worked as a head teacher, gave the power to the deputy head teacher, and distributed roles to everyone.

While they recognised that the main duties were, for example, designing the school annual operational plan with their staff, organising school work and distributing roles according to "*The Organisational Guide for Schools of General Education*", they also mentioned that many school committees and teams are devised to supervise schoolwork.

4.2.1 Meetings, Communication and Teamwork

All eight head teachers agreed that frequent meetings were necessary to ensure each term was working well and making appropriate decisions in relation to the many matters required to keep a school functioning well, for instance, identifying the school's vision, solving problems and raising student outcomes. In addition, the meetings provided the opportunity to distribute work and clarify any new objectives and regulations.

Many said they used social media, such as Group WhatsApp to call meetings, create teams and communicate effectively. All the eight responses agreed that they called a first meeting at the beginning of the year to agree the school plan and distribute the tasks and roles to everyone in the school. Wed, from school C, stated that:

Organising meetings using Group WhatsApp has made the work easier especially when we have a new system or new circulars, further, I can also organise individual meetings if there is any problem.

All eight head teachers agreed that the first step to creating a school vision was to hold a meeting with staff and teachers. Sara, from school A, added:

To identify the school vision, I meet school employees, listen to them and they listen to me. After this we highlight the difficulties and suggest the best solutions and we try to find shared vision.

All eight head teachers said they depend on meetings and WhatsApp groups to manage the school, including clarifying goals and setting regulations. Most meetings consist of a committee of six to nine members of the school (head teacher, deputy head teacher, the student counsellor, the data entry employee and subject specific teachers). The committee's tasks are primarily to discuss the main school issues, solve problems, develop areas of excellence, the vision, and create a school plan.

In addition, all eight head teachers expressed their satisfaction in working with teams. Teamwork was encouraged in The Organisational Guide for Schools of General Education. Many teams involve members from different levels of the school community, for instance, the head teacher, deputy head teachers, teachers, parents and students. These teams are created according to the school's needs, which include: during periods of change; when applying a new system and addressing specific issues. Such claims to work collaboratively and in teams seem to be trustworthy as all the head teachers in this study mentioned these practices and the deputy head teachers and teachers from other schools in the study also mentioned that the school leader in their schools sought to work collaboratively by establishing teams. So, even although this was a small-scale study it seems reasonable to suggest that at least some head teachers were working collaboratively with their staff, although how wide this practice

is throughout Saudi Arabia can not be deduced from this study. Lama, from Manar School, explained:

> We work as a team, which involves members at all school levels, students, teachers and administrators. Teamwork members reforms depend on the nature of school duties.

Noha, from school E, emphasised the importance of teamwork in developing school performance:

> The school's excellence is achieved by teamwork. Reaching a level of excellence comes through a group of members working together to achieve the aim. The work should be based on long-term and short-term goals and identify the pros and cons of various approaches. If the head teacher works on the principle of 'this is my work and this is what I am doing', I think it will not be excellent for very long.

Nora, Wed, Roz and Noha all agreed that teamwork offered many advantages in achieving goals, developing school performance and solving problems. They also recognised the importance of teamwork in times of change. They stated that as they worked in teams, they could define tasks, and coordinate the work to take the appropriate steps in terms of supervising and implementing change. Participants agreed that no head teacher working alone can achieve success. Teamwork enabled them to delegate and provide powers to all staff. They agreed that excellence required collective action.

Some spoke of the need to diversify channels of communication and stressed the role of deputy heads and others in clarifying the school rules, naming objectives and allocating duties. All eight head teachers said that they used meetings, social media groups, such as "WhatsApp", as well as using individual meetings to discuss the challenges that teachers and staff faced.

In relation to methods, Sara, Nora and Amal all spoke of how they informed staff about new activities.

> We inform employees about the new rules, systems or programs through holding a meeting. For example, with the introduction of a new system for all schools, we held a meeting to explain and introduce the new system. We involved teachers, explained aspects and then adopted the new system. As well as using 'WhatsApp', which became a formal method of notification staff after approval by the Ministry of Education based on a circular of the Ministry (Sara, school A).

Most schools face resistance to change from some staff. However, all eight head teachers showed confidence in facilitating change and introducing new programmes. In particular, Nora, from school B, explained how she created committees to facilitate change:

> In the case of change we organise meetings with the team, then we determine the priority, we start coordinating the work by taking appropriate steps and through supervision.

Wed, from school C, stressed that being a role model was a good way to encourage staff to accept changes. She stated:

> I work as an example, especially if there is a refusal or objection of work by the employees, I do the work by myself. That has an influence on employees which leads staff to work quickly and cooperatively.

Roz, from school F, explained the benefits of forward planning:

> We work in advanced planning and exchanging the roles between the administrators if needed.

In sum, all the eight head teachers noted that they designed their schools' annual operational plans with their staff, even though the "*The Procedural Guide for Schools of General Education*" states that it is head teachers who are responsible for organising school work and distributing it to staff. They said that they participated in many school committees to supervise work. The two Ministry of Education Guides explain tasks in detail, which has helped to relieve head teachers' work pressure. Additionally, head teachers said they used Group WhatsApp to organise meetings, clarify school goals, to regulate issues, distribute roles and duties, discuss important issues, and solve problems. All head teachers stated that they preferred to work in teams: to delegate responsibilities to staff members; to involve employees in decisions; to collaborate; to develop their skills and gain knowledge, and to explain the new duties, rules and circulars. Head teachers in the eight schools showed that they were confident and positive in dealing with the staff in times of change. Moreover, head teachers were good at working with the administrators, as part of teams to explain the new duties, rules and circulars. Head teachers spoke of the importance of being a good model, demonstrating flexibility and using incentives to encourage staff, as well as to avoid resistance to change. This collaborative approach helps head teachers to overcome challenges in changing times and as Wed, from school C, explained, they believed that consultation was the best way to lead. The consultation is the best way to encourage employees to take part in teamwork. I take into account their views and motivate and help them.

4.3 Motivating Staff

4.3.1 Incentives

Motivation is one of the qualities that head teachers need to encourage staff and teachers to take initiatives and support school transformation. All the head teachers in the study confirmed that options to motivate staff were limited. Specifically, five head teachers stated that they needed to be able to reward teachers with incentives

to motivate them. Roz, from school F, was critical of the limited choices she had to encourage the staff, and noted that:

> The powers that head teachers have to stimulate teachers are specific.
> If a head teacher cannot create internal procedures to get work done,
> she is questioned.

However, Nora, from school B, was the only head teacher who talked about having a budget that she uses to reward staff:

> I give excellent teachers gifts at the end of each term and mention their special features. I use the budget to create an item called "expenses, gifts and honours" for teachers and students, and sometimes I take it from my own funds. They appreciate the thanks and add my recommendation to their professional files as an achievement.

Incentives can be seen as a significant resource that helps head teachers to motivate staff and create a feeling that their work has been appreciated, especially teachers who have shown initiative and become more involved in school work and duties than others. However, the lack of official incentive was a considerable challenge and prevented head teachers obtaining the most from their staff. Furthermore, financial or materialism incentives encourage staff to develop their skills and improve school performance. It has to be recalled that in Saudi Arabia all teachers, including head teachers, are paid equally, which provides no financial incentive to work beyond the minimal requirements of the job.

4.3.2 Trust

All the head teachers reported that they sought to enhance confidence in their staff and create a trusting environment. They encouraged employees to take initiative, to become more involved in school activities and work towards the school's vision.

The basic element of accomplishing school work is trust. This can be achieved by supporting employees morally and practically by for example, assigning them administrative or developmental work to give them confidence and develop their skills (Sara, School A).

Lama and Noha focused on how head teachers create a trusting environment when staff are in trouble:

Do not personalise anything that is done by mistake and do not personally blame a person. If the person makes a mistake do not blame her (Lama, Manar School).

Lama added that she provided her staff with opportunities to develop their skills and encouraged them to demonstrate their skills.

Head teachers should encourage teachers and instil confidence in them by delegating duties to teachers and providing them with powers to make decisions. It is important to look for the positive points in people and develop them, rather than focusing on their negative aspects of an employee's personality (Lama, Manar School).

In sum, all head teachers were keen to develop a trusted environment in the school by supporting school staff and encouraging them to improve their skills. They achieved this by delegating tasks and enabling them to develop their knowledge and gaining experience in different aspects of the school's business and mission. Additionally, head teachers were generally able to accept mistakes and were ready to guide teachers and administrators, as well as raise their confidence to create healthy environments of trust and tolerance.

4.4 Autonomy

The third major theme identified by participants was the need for more autonomy. The majority of the head teachers in the study showed confidence in developing different aspects of school life and were committed to leading the school forward and improving. However, six out of the eight head teachers stressed that they had insufficient powers to develop creativity and stressed that the Ministry of Education's central regulations were the problem. In particular, four participants believed that they played the role of manager, despite being named leader, for several reasons. Firstly, any decision taken by the head teacher had to be approved by higher authorities, as there is a sequence of steps for approving a decision, starting with the regional, the education officers and ending with the Ministry of Education. This hierarchical structure hinders head teachers' work. Secondly, head teachers were unable to use existing powers unless the Office of Education approved. These restrictions related to the way workload and duties are described in the Guides which forced head teachers to implement guidance, rather than act as leaders. Finally, sometimes, head teachers made decisions in line with their autonomy, the decision was overturned by regional educational supervisors, which led to confusion.

In 2016, the Ministry of Education launched a document outlining 60 powers for head teachers; ten of them were new (Ministry of Education, 2016). These regulations empowered head teachers and gave them more freedom to lead and develop their schools in ways that they considered to be appropriate to achieve their objectives. However, within interviews, head teachers confirmed that these powers cannot be used unless they gain permission from the Educational Office. The reason behind that was unknown. For example, Noha, from school E, said:

> Head teachers have 60 powers, but practically they only apply in times of emergency and in relation to medical reports. The other decisions must be referred to the higher authorities to get permission. …. I do not

know why, it may be the work procedures in the Ministry, I do not know why.

Meanwhile, Lama, from Manar School, emphasised that:

Head teachers need real powers and not only on paper.

In sum, despite the 60 powers the Ministry of Education provides to head teachers to develop their work they suffer from a lack of the autonomy to exercise those powers.

4.4.1 Budget

One area that many participants mentioned was the school budget. Being able to deploy the budget efficiently is crucial to running a school. Yet three participants reported major problems in accessing the budget to; for example, maintain buildings and equip classrooms with smart devices, such as interactive whiteboards ("smartboards") to cope with modern teaching methods. The Ministry of Education allocates the budget depending on the number of students in each school. However, delays or budget shortages impede the process and as Lama, from Manar School, stated, sometimes she was forced to use her own money to pay for things.

The budget has exhausted us, and it is the main reason to be reluctant to accept the nomination for the post of head teacher. Sometimes I pay the school fees from my own account because the budget is late in the disbursement, or it is not enough for the rest of the expenses.

In sum, three head teachers mentioned the budget as an obstacle in their daily work. They highlighted that the budget comes from the Ministry and is often late. Some participants also suggested this was a major reason why some teachers do not want to take on the role of a head teacher.

4.4.2 Maintenance

Seven out of eight head teachers reported that they did not have the power to maintain many of the school facilities, such as toilets and electronic devices. Additionally, concern over maintenance was considered a serious barrier to developing the schools by five of the head teachers, who emphasised that computers need regular maintenance in order to undertake essential school work. Wed, Lama and Roz argued that if maintenance is required, they had to take the costs from the canteen budget and have to make priorities until the budget arrives. Specifically, Lama added that she had to supplement the maintenance budget from her own account, while, Wed, from school C explained that there was no budget for installing smartboards and maintaining them.

> Among the problems that head teachers confront is no maintenance of smart boards due to the high price of £4000 for one. The head teacher is not permitted to install or maintain them because it needs a specialist, and it comes from different companies. No permission or budget to maintain school devices causes pressure on me, especially since the Educational Office is keen that we follow Ministry of Education orders to use and maintain devices (Wed, School C).

Noha, from school E, explained the process for maintaining equipment:

> We have to submit forms to the maintenance department in the Ministry of Education. They did not respond to the school requirements for three months. But if there are urgent needs, I usually make the repairs and take the cost from the school budget account. There are no powers for head teachers to get repairs done or responsibility to do the maintenance.

In sum, maintaining the school facilities and devices effects the quality of education, which in turn effects school performance. The process of maintaining school facilities

is easy, although obtaining the approval and gaining the services from the Ministry of Education takes a long time. This causes problems as many lessons depend on computer devices and facilities such as laboratories.

4.4.3 Accountability

All head teachers indicated that in the event of any error in the school, the head teacher is the one who is directly held responsible and blamed.

> There are powers for the head teacher. However, sometimes if I work with these powers, I may expose myself and may be held accountable, I am restricted (Nora, School B).

Similarly, Noha, from school E, criticised the way the Ministry of Education acts when mistake happen in the school.

> The head teacher is blamed when any mistakes happen in the school. This is wrong and is the reason why deputy head teachers or teachers refuse to take the role of head teachers. Some deputy head teachers do not mind bearing the pressures of the workload, although they still do not want to take the position of head teacher. If a head teacher has done her work by explaining every duty and task required by everyone in school, mistakes should be directly attributed to the person who made the mistake and not the head teacher, because the head teacher has done her job.

All the participants indicated that when they confront a problem in their schools, they usually ask the deputy head teacher for help, and if they cannot find a solution, they directly ask the educational supervisor for advice. Many head teachers indicated the reason for asking the supervisor was to avoid being accountable. Sara, Joud and Nora said they always contacted the Education Supervisor if there was a problem. All three

head teachers stated that going to the Education Supervisor was to protect themselves, as Sara, from school A, explained:

> If the deputy head teachers and I cannot find a solution or the problem is taken further. I go directly to the administrative supervisor at the Education Office to protect myself and the problem is clearly resolved.

Four out of the eight head teachers said that they did not allow any member of staff to make a decision without first consulting them, which in effect does not enable staff to take initiatives. They stated that a teacher must inform the deputy head teacher of any changes they make. The reason was due to the high level of accountability placed on head teachers by the Education Office. Wed, from school C, had experienced what it was like to delegate a task to a member of staff who then made a mistake:

> I have a previous experience of a school member making a wrong decision that caused a serious problem. At the time of the questioning, the investigation committee made me directly accountable in the first instance.

Sara, from school A, however, spoke of the difficulties related to autonomy, and described herself as a "restricted head teacher". She was looking for more freedom to choose the appropriate course of action.

> The educational office may refuse any aspect of the school plan, even if it is proportionate and appropriate for the internal situation. For example, the exam timetable, in the system it allowed me to put one exam every day, but the educational office did not allow me to do so and forced me to change the exam timetable to every other day.

Overall, head teachers were facing significant challenges in trying to act autonomously, which made them feel a lack of confidence when dealing with school problems. They faced high levels of scrutiny from the Education Office and felt overly

accountable for any problems that might occur in the school. They felt that blaming the head teachers for others' mistakes was unjust, especially if they were doing their job well by clarifying school regulations and rules to staff. Some also highlighted that the high level of accountability contributed to making the position of head teachers undesired within the education community.

4.4.4 Development Learning Environment

Six head teachers focused on a lack of autonomy to develop and create a creative environment in their schools. Five participants focused on the need to provide a better learning environment for students through better pedagogic approaches and the need for modern equipment. Moreover, some explained that they did not have sufficient classroom space for the number of students they were required to take in, which caused overcrowding and led to a decrease in the quality of teaching and learning. Lama, Manar School, reported:

> The number of students is very large and is not suitable for the building size. Classrooms have to seat more than the capacity; however, I have no authority to refuse new students, and if I reject any extra students, they bring letters from the Educational Office saying I have to accept them. This is a hazard in cases of emergency. If I had the autonomy, I would cap the number of students. At exam times, I have to create an external area as a temporary exam room to accommodate the number of students.

Wed, from school C, also added that:

> I would like to make a significant change in the way schools are organised.

Lama, from Manar School, spoke of the importance of having well equipped rooms in her school and how she created them.

The educational resource rooms are where I run courses inside the school. The main challenge is that these rooms were not equipped. However, I sought to equip them myself by working with community partners, such as the Chamber of Commerce. They provided tables, chairs, and two computers with printers for the resources' rooms. I thanked them by sending a shield and a thank you letter.

In addition, Lama had many recommendations about how to develop facilities to improve the performance of schools and to create a healthier environment.

School buildings need to develop and keep pace with external developments, especially in girls' schools. All schools have remained at a level similar to that of 20 years ago. There has been no evolution and no change, yet social networking has changed the way students receive information, shop and go to markets. All this is evolving yet schools stand still.

Overall, head teachers stated that they needed more power to raise school achievement levels. Correspondingly, head teachers wanted to reorganise their schools and develop the learning environment. To achieve this, they needed more equipment, such as computer devices and smartboards. With these forms of technology comes the urgent need for high quality maintenance to keep the computers and devices working properly. They also noted that it takes too long to gain approval for routine maintenance tasks, as well as to develop facilities, and get equipment repaired and often they have no guarantee that this work would be undertaken. Furthermore, their schools were overcrowded, and this impaired teaching and learning as well as creating safety risks. Hence, they urged the Ministry of Education to provide head teachers with more authority to cap student intake.

4.4.5 Summary

To sum up, head teachers were facing many obstacles to improve school performance and enabling creative change. Despite the 60 new powers, head teachers said they

were prevented from using them due to overly strict regulations from the regional education offices and the Ministry of Education. Meanwhile, not having the budget on time and not having sufficient money to cover basic needs, such as updating learning resources and maintenance were viewed as major problems. Obtaining the budget late causes disruptions and many stated that they had to pay for maintaining school facilities out of other budgets, as many lessons depend on computers, devices and laboratory facilities. Indeed, they blamed the high levels of accountability for significant challenges during their daily work, which prevented them from making decisions or even delegating tasks to staff. The levels of accountability coming from the regional educational offices were linked in turn to the high levels of reporting back to the central Ministry of Education.

4.5 Conclusion

A fundamental point that arose from the interviews with the head teachers was that the Ministry of Education appoints head teachers without assessing their ability to be a good school leader. The reason for this shortcoming was an insufficient number of women teachers wishing to take up the position of a head teacher. Many deputy head teachers were transferred to headships often against their will. Findings suggest that when these head teachers do not have any pre-service training they come up against considerable challenges in their everyday work. Subsequently, the method that head teachers used to overcome these challenges was to communicate with other head teachers often via WhatsApp. Despite the *Organisational and Procedures Guides for Schools of General Education* explaining all school duties and tasks, head teachers emphasised that they required training courses to develop sufficient knowledge and skills to undertake the role of head teacher. More efforts are required from the Ministry of Education to train, support and encourage head teachers to cope with the

accelerating developments in education. It was quite surprising that there are no financial incentives to take up leadership roles in the education sector in Saudi Arabia.

All participants recognised that the fundamental role of the head teacher was to oversee school performance, and they recognised their roles in improving school outcomes. *The Organisational Guide for Schools of General Education* encourages staff to work as a team and suggests that head teachers should follow the guide. All the head teachers in this study spoke of their willingness to lead through teamwork, and they recognised that consulting with staff members was the way to achieve tasks, develop high quality teaching, and achieve their goals. In addition, teamwork helps schools to overcome the challenges faced due to the fast pace of change. While the limitations of this small scale study mean that how widely collaborative working practices and team work are throughout the education system in Saudi Arabia can not be know, this study provides some encouraging signs that head teachers understand the merits of collaboration.

Head teachers said that they considered holding frequent meetings was essential for explaining new rules, informing staff of new activities, exchanging information, sharing experiences, solving problems, and to create a whole school vision. Head teachers seemed to be aware that meetings were also essential for professional development and discussing teachers' performance. All the head teachers said they used online applications, such as WhatsApp groups as a formal method for communicating with staff circulating new decisions. The wide use of WhatsApp was also mentioned by the deputy head teachers as will become apparent in the next chapter, again providing some signs that meetings were being arranged and that head teachers understood the importance of including staff in some areas of decisions making.

Comments from head teachers in this study suggest that they suffer from not having sufficient autonomy and power to solve basic problems, such as maintaining school buildings, and having up-to-date teaching equipment. Many stated that the major barriers were the budget, which often arrived late, the lack of sufficient teachers and

having too many students. They spoke of overcrowding which meant that teachers had high workloads and could not find the time to attend training courses, and even when this was possible the courses were not of a high enough standard, it would seem. Accordingly, the lack of appropriate facilities, resources and equipment could have had impacst on students' learning and the school's performance.

According to comments from head teachers in this study, it would seem that they needed more power to be able to raise standards and increase performance. Hence, while many of the head teachers in the study wanted to reorganise the school and develop learning environments, they felt they had many challenges. They felt they required greater powers, and specifically to control the student intake and make day to day decisions without having to seek permission from the regional education office. Their comments suggest many wanted to raise teachers' levels of skill, although they lacked the Ministry of Education resources to do so. The large number of students in one classroom and the inability to raise teachers' levels of competence in terms of new pedagogical methods and the lack of information technology skills were said to be hampering their efforts. Many suggetsed that the procedures for dealing with students' absences was a cause for concern and impacted negatively on school performance.

According to this small scale study, it would seems that the leadership skills that head teachers need to achieve levels of excellence requires more flexibility and trust from the Ministry of Education. Many head teachers showed the potential to be excellent leaders, as they said they strongly believed in teamwork, delegating tasks, communicating and consulting with their staff. They spoke of skills in delegating tasks, decision making and creating a trust environment. These skills are essential for creating a healthy and successful school culture. Thus, while these features of distributed leadership were in evidence from the thematic analysis undertaken in this study, it would seem that head teachers lacked the authority to practice distributed leadership more fully.

The analaysis of head teachers' comments suggest they had limited powers to motivate staff. They spoke of only having the power to let employees leave two hours early or come to school two hours later on a specific day as an incentive or reward for taking initiatives, although one head teacher said she used a budget to award staff prizes to excellent teachers. Therefore, while the findings suggest that head teachers require more autonomy and authority, the centralised, hierarchical structure of the education system seems to lead some head teachers to be wary of acting autonomously for fear of being blamed for mistakes, and specifically the mistakes made by their staff. What is more, the unintended effect of strong central regulation seems to have been to make some women head teachers highly dependent upon regional education supervisors.

Varying perceptions of leadership can be seen across participants' comments. Some of them, such as Lama, who is perhaps at one end of the spectrum, seemed to understand leadership and distribution leadership very well, and said she wanted to undertake this model of leadership. At the other end of the spectrum were head teachers who said they felt constrained by the high level of accountability required by the Ministry of Education. It seems that these head teachers did not understand or try to enact leadership as opposed to management. Many said they relied on supervisors in the regional education office, and some suggested they did not want to make autonomous moves, for fear of making mistakes, which they believed they would be blamed for.

Nevertheless, many participants mentioned elements of distributed leadership suggesting that some head teachers were trying to enact it. They seemed to be putting significant effort into developing good learning environments by developing teachers' leadership skills, spreading leadership responsibilities throughout schools, establishing trusting communities, building teamwork and allowing teachers to lead many of these teams if it was required.

These are qualities of distributed leadership that have been highlighted in many studies. As Harris, (2004, p.13) indicated, "distributed leadership concentrates on engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organisation, rather than seeking this only through a formal position or role". Furthermore, Spillane and Healey (2010); and Heck and Hallinger, (2009) stated that school leadership is practiced by the principal, teachers, and members of the school's improvement team in leading the development of the school. Tarter and Hoy (2004) (see Chapter Two p. 55) hypothesised that effective organisational functioning should enable the culture of the school to be distinguished by trust, and individual positions should be amalgamated in pursuit of collective efficacy. These findings came from interviewing head teachers. The next chapter turns to the interviews with seven deputy head teachers in different schools to those of the head teacher participants reported in this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: DEPUTY HEAD TEACHERS

5. Introduction

A deputy head teacher plays a key role in running school affairs and monitoring the performance of employees, such as teachers and students. Specifically, secondary schools in Saudi Arabia have various roles for deputy head teachers depending on the size of the school. For example, a large school should have three deputy head teachers, a medium school should have two and a small one should have one. All the schools in this study should have three deputy head teachers.

Seven school deputy head teachers with different roles were interviewed (see Chapter One, p. 20 for details of the roles of deputy head teachers). One of the deputy head teachers works in educational, school and school affairs simultaneously (1, 2 and 3). Two deputy head teachers work in educational affairs and school affairs (1 and 2). Two work in educational affairs (1) and one works in educational affairs, while one works in school affairs (2).

Deputy head teachers responded to the interview questions depending on their specialisms and highlighted specific issues relating to their roles as described above. Thematic analysis revealed four themes: the professional development of deputy head teachers; deputy head teachers' work and practices; motivation and autonomy. The reason for interviewing deputy head teachers was to triangulate findings with the head teachers' interviews. The aim was to suggest where deputy head teachers supported what head teachers had said, and to determine whether there were any differences. In general, deputy head teachers' comments and themes aligned with and strengthened findings reported in Chapter Four. Rather than disagreeing with head teachers, deputy head teachers provided further details based on their everyday

experiences of working alongside head teachers to lead and manage schools. The themes and sub-themes will be discussed in the following sections.

5.1. Professional Development

This section refers to the professional development for deputy head teachers. As the roles of the deputy head teachers are substantial and include monitoring teachers' performances, looking after school buildings and resources as well as monitoring student's performance and wellbeing they require many skills. Some deputy head teachers also have a role in the professional development of other teachers and staff.

None of the participants in the current study had any pre-service training in preparation for taking on a deputy head teacher position. In this respect their concerns regarding the lack of pre-service training echoe the concerns made by head teachers in relation to training. Each deputy head teacher had been a class teacher, and none had any administrative experience even although the Ministry of Education provides many programmes for developing administrative skills. Samara, from school Y, confirmed that she did not have any pre-service training, although she had received training courses after being appointed as deputy head teacher. She stated:

> I did not get any training programme before starting the job. Nevertheless, after being appointed as a deputy head teacher, I had the chance to attend appropriate programmes for my work. The programmes were varied, for example, Personal Planning, Towards Excellence Leadership, Creative Thinking and Crisis Management. There was also a course to explain *the procedural and organisational guides* in work.

However, many deputy head teachers explained that the training programmes were insufficient and did not address their needs. Rasha, from school R, said:

I got a training session after the appointment. However, work as a deputy head teacher needs many more training courses. Due to the many development steps in not only the school system but also the things that affect students, deputy head teachers need training courses to support them across the areas of their work.

Deputy head teachers also drew attention to a lack of training programmes to develop their administration skills, which head teachers had also mentioned. Ruba, from school Q, said:

After being appointed, I attended a course about the activities and a course on making a decision, but I did not attend any courses that aim to develop skills in administration and management.

Additionally, Huda, from school M, highlighted that the quality of the programs did not match deputy head teachers' needs.

Almost always practice and experience are better than the training programmes that I got.

Many deputy head teachers highlighted the reasons preventing them from attending training programmes. One stated the lack of deputy head teachers in schools. Dana, from school P, said:

I do not get any training programmes, even after I took the position. I just had to practice management and develop myself by practicing the work in school. In the first year, I was unable to take any training programmes because of the lack of deputy head teachers and the head teacher also was new. Thus, the training courses were focusing on developing the head teacher more than the deputy head teachers. After that, I managed to take courses.

Another reason for not receiving sufficient training was due to the travelling distance, as Rasha, from school R, confirmed:

> Some training programs are held in the training centre where the location is very far from the deputy head teacher. What we need is that the necessary programs, especially the courses allocated by the Ministry of Education for the administrators should be located in each of the training centres of the regions of the city.

Deputy head teachers recognise the need for training courses to help them develop skills to perform their duties appropriately. Many stated that they would have liked to have had pre-service and in-service training to prepare them for the roles of a deputy head teacher, in order to better understand their tasks and the nature of their work prior to starting the job. All seven deputy head teachers in this study had come straight from classroom teaching and had no prior experience in a management role.

5.1.1 Distinguished Leadership

Four of the deputy head teachers confirmed that they would be able to lead the school effectively if they had more autonomy and received more training programmes. However, two deputy head teachers indicated that it was difficult to be an excellent leader. The inability to take a head teacher position was due to a lack of experience. They all recognise that training courses were essential to be able to lead the school professionally. Fattem, from school L, said:

> I cannot imagine that I will be excellent in leadership, because I certainly lack experiences in the many aspects of the work. In addition, I do not have any experience of many duties involved in a head teacher's role. I only have experience in the specific field that I am working in and I gain knowledge through work, not by training. I have not had enough training courses.

However, five deputy head teachers argued that they would potentially be able to lead if they received sufficient training programmes and had more experience in leadership roles. Ruba, from school Q, reported that:

> I cannot imagine that I will be an excellent leader because it is difficult, and you need more experience. I need more experience and get more courses to be able to lead and to be competent; I need time to develop myself.

Likewise, Samara, from school Y, said:

> I need more courses so that enables me to be creative in my work. I would like to develop the skills that allow me to deal with the work pressure and reduce the burden of work on head teachers.

Huda, from school M, highlighted the importance of the quality of training programmes for head teachers.

> Head teachers need training programmes to develop leadership skills and to know the difference between management and leadership. However, many program trainers were unqualified to give these programmes and that impacted on the quality of the sessions and head teachers did not get the benefit of it.

Dalal, school N's deputy head teacher, argued that the role of a head teacher had not changed, even after the Ministry of Education changed the name from manager to leader. She stated that:

> Nothing has changed with regards to the role of head teacher. It is just a moral change and a moral effect, but I don't see any change in the type of work.

Meanwhile, Rasha, from school R, suggested that pre-service training needed to be improved:

> Initially, the head teacher must be trained before taking the position for six months to a year. After that, the head teacher must be supported by the education office.

5.1.2 The Features of Head Teachers' from Deputy Head Teachers' Perspectives

This sub-theme addresses deputy head teachers' perspectives of the attributes that make a good head teacher. The majority highlighted that important features were: leading by example; caring about subordinates; respecting and accepting other opinions. For example, Rasha from school R and Dalal, from school N, listed many essential traits of a head teacher from their perspective. Specifically, Dalal, from school N, states that:

> Head teachers need many skills. These skills include the ability to persuade, which is necessary with the frequent change in circulars and decisions. Building relations is very important in the school community, respect and appreciation for anyone in school because it has a very strong influence on people. Flexibility is also another feature of head teacher, especially when used in a good method and not to reflect negatively on the school.

Samara, from school Y, said:

> It is vital for the head teacher to have the flexibility and the ability to support others, accept the views of others and listen to all. To lead in an appropriate way a head teacher should always be aware of school matters and develop themselves. Head teachers should have sufficient experience, knowing all the duties involved and not be led by others;

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they require a capacity for dialogue, discussion and dialogue management, and the ability to motivate and demonstrate capacities.

Huda, from school M, expressed her experience in leadership:

I always lead by example to undertake new tasks. I believe that this is one of the reasons for the success of head teachers.

When the participants were asked about what were the most important leadership skills needed to build strong relationships within the community, Fattem, from school L, noted:

Head teachers should have many attributes; for example: consultation, serious work, commitment and be an example to employees.

Many focused on the quality of justice as a significant quality for a head teacher. For instance, Huda, from school M, stated that:

Justice is the most important attribute of a head teacher to support staff, especially when they face problems. We have some head teachers who are authoritarian. Some head teachers simplify the challenges that they confront; also, some teachers consider that they have the initiative to solve problems and not let a problem grow.

Similarly, Ruba, from school Q, said:

Ability to distribute work fairly between employees and the human relationship in dealing with employees; honesty and personal strength.

One deputy head teacher argued that the intense work impacted negatively and was a reason why many deputy head teachers did not want to take on headship roles. Fattem said:

We have intense pressure at work that has led to a lot of reluctance to undertake head teachers' roles and we experience early retirement by deputy head teachers.

Overall, deputy head teachers highlighted many characteristics that make a good head teacher. They suggested that head teachers should seek to develop themselves and understand all aspects of the job. They listed important features, such as the ability to motivate others, to distribute tasks fairly, lead through love, and build relationships within the school, for example, by respecting and accepting others' opinions, as well as justice, honesty, being persuasive and leading by example. The biggest drawback to becoming a successful leader, and why many of them did not aspire to attain a head teacher position, was due to the intense level of work pressure.

5.1.3 Building Teachers' and Administrative' Skills

One of the significant elements that deputy head teachers spoke about was the need to improve teachers' skills, as well as the need to find suitable courses in terms of time and location. Four out of the seven deputy head teachers focused on the challenges they face in developing school teachers' performances. For instance, Samara, Dalal and Huda pointed to the problem of teachers not being motivated to undertake training. Samara, from school Y, said:

> We are suffering from some teachers who have no loyalty and work only for the salary and not for the work itself. There are also different conditions for teachers who are indifferent to the development and do not care about developing themselves, because they will take a full salary. In addition, the diligent and non-diligent have equal salaries, level and everything. There are no incentives to employees to become excellent.

Fattem, from school L, also focused on the challenge that they faced in developing schools' teachers. She argued:

Teachers have full timetables and many lessons per week. So, it is difficult to find time to discuss and develop teachers' performance. In addition, the training centre is very far away. Moreover, there is no exchange of experiences between teachers in the region who have the same experience, whether in school or out of school.

However, the Ministry of Education has recently linked professional development to job assessments as a way to motivate employees to undertake training courses. Nonetheless, when Huda, from school M, was asked about the role of appraisal in encouraging teachers to take up places on training courses, she stated that:

This system has not yet been implemented. I expect that there will be a change and some teachers will want to develop themselves.

5.1.4 Delegation and Developing Leadership Skills of Staff

This theme relates to how deputy head teachers delegate responsibilities and create a trusted environment among teachers. Many deputy head teachers spoke of enabling teachers to participate in the running of the school, which subsequently develops their knowledge and skills to undertake administrative roles. Six out of the seven deputy head teachers mentioned the need to develop teachers' skills by delegating responsibilities. For example, Dalal, from school N, spoke of developing teachers' leadership skills in line with the Ministry of Education's plan. She stated:

If we have a teacher who is given a major role in a programme she needs the power to develop a plan and work on it. Developing teachers' skills is not a goal for me, but this came from the Ministry of Education who instructed the teachers to do some training courses and this gives the teacher leadership roles in the school. This helps to prepare teachers to become future head teachers.

Huda, from school M, spoke of trying to involve teachers in teamwork to develop their leadership skills:

> We seek to develop the teachers' and staff skills of leadership. For example, if we have a new task, we form a committee and give an opportunity for an excellence teacher or employee to lead. We chose the teacher who has the skills of leadership to prepare them to undertake administrative work.

Samara Dana and Fattem confirmed that they tried to develop teachers' skills, especially those who seem to be able to influence others or have skills of persuasion. They spoke of supporting them to feel comfortable in exercising their responsibilities within the school, for example, preparing the school timetable schedules and some records.

5.1.5 Summary

There were calls to improve the quality of training programmes at pre-service and in-service levels for both deputy head teachers and head teachers (see Chapter Four, page 107). Deputy head teachers drew attention to the lack of systematic training programmes to prepare them to undertake their roles and enable them to understand their duties and tasks, as well as perform their work effectively. The lack of training was highlighted by head teachers and the deputy heads reinforced this. In addition, the deputy heads agreed with head teachers that in-service training programmes were insufficient and did not support teachers to become aware of the different aspects of the administrative work. Deputy head teachers spoke of gaining experience through practicing roles in a school. Indeed, many stated that better qualified trainers are required to raise the quality of training programmes. In terms of head teacher characteristics, deputy head teachers highlighted the importance of building good relationships within the school, for instance, respecting and accepting others'

opinions, as well as justice, honesty and leading by example. These comments echo and amplify what head teachers had reported.

One of the main barriers to deputy head teachers undertaking their role well was in persuading teachers to attend training courses; stating that teachers do not have the desire to change or develop their skills because they all earn that same full-time salary. Moreover, the times when training courses were available did not accommodate teachers' timetables, and were located far from their homes, which made travel difficult. Deputy head teachers spoke of looking for more incentives to motivate teachers to join the training courses and to seek to develop their performance. The deputy head teachers' observations regarding teachers and the problems of inadequate training support reinforce what head teachers had said.

Deputy head teachers were looking to develop teachers and administrative staff skills using various methods, such as delegating tasks and responsibilities, providing support to lead teams and allowing them to have experiences of administrative work. These initiatives were aimed at supporting teachers to develop their leadership skills, and echo many of the issues raised by head teachers when speaking about teachers and deputy head teachers.

5.2 Deputy Head Teachers' Practices

This section explores deputy head teachers' perceptions of their roles in the school, including meetings, teamwork and managing change.

5.2.1 Meeting, Communication and Teamwork

Deputy head teachers hold meetings for several reasons, such as to announce a new rule or activity, as well as to develop school plans. In many cases, they use "WhatsApp"

to inform teachers and employees in regards to any new circulars from the Ministry of Education. Specifically, four out of seven deputy head teachers spoke of the importance of holding meetings. For example, Fattem, from school L, stated:

> We call a meeting at various times. These meetings depend on the needs of the school. We try as much as possible to clarify regulations and circulars through the meeting and this helps to minimise the effort, whether for teachers or students. The first meeting takes place at the beginning of the year to clarify the regulations and to avoid any misunderstanding.

Dalal, from school N, clarified the process of informing the school staff and teachers of a new activity using WhatsApp. She stated:

> If there is a new activity like the announcement of active learning, the first step is to send them the new circulars and explain through WhatsApp that we will hold a meeting to discuss, then encourage them to join a training programme.

Dalal reported holding meetings with individuals in order to: clarify school matters; announce new regulations; explain a new activity and clarify ambiguous rules form the Ministry of Education. In addition, deputy head teachers stated that they often utilised WhatsApp as a formal tool to communicate new activities and rules.

Five out of seven of the deputy head teachers confirmed that they encourage employees to work as a team in order to accomplish tasks, save time and exchange experiences. For instance, Samara, from school Y, stated:

> We all work as a team and not alone. We work with everyone, the administrators, teachers as well as the committees that we established in the school. We must work as a team to accomplish the tasks and goals that we set up at the beginning of the year. In addition, students

participate in committees such as the Student Activity Committee and
the Committee to take the parents' views in the proposals they see fit.

Teamwork was viewed as an essential process in achieving progress in school performance. Many committees were created following the *Organisational Guide* issues by the Ministry of Education and deputy heads reported that many other teams were established in their schools depending on the particular school's circumstances and requirements. Moreover, deputy head teachers reported that they encouraged staff and teachers to work in a team to raise the quality of the work, in order to further knowledge exchange and enable teachers to have confidence. Many spoke of providing teachers with the opportunities to lead a team, which ultimately enabled them to develop professionally. Dalal, from school N, said that a team depends on the mission they aim to accomplish.

> Many tasks can only be done by teams. The team is according to the
> task, for example, if we have the results of the tests, the committee set
> up an input data employee, assistant employee and teacher. Sometimes,
> in preparing a plan, the team leader is a teacher who is the responsible
> person.

Huda, Ruba, Fattem, Dana and Rasha confirmed that their schools worked in teams and distributed tasks among teachers. They also reported that they had a great deal of confidence in their staff to accomplish tasks, especially during examination periods and times of change.

Separately, all seven deputies confirm that they usually worked in teams to create the school vision by holding meetings with different members of staff and teachers in order to gain a range of perspectives. For example, Fattem, from school L, stated:

> To create a shared vision of the school, we work on the principle of
> consultation between head teachers, teachers, administrators and me.

Listening to the ideas and proposals, and through that, we determine the school vision.

Huda, from school M, said:

Each school has certain conditions that are different from other schools and the head teacher makes staff aware of the needs of the school through holding meetings with the school committees. These meetings allow the head teacher to identify the school's needs, problems and aspects that need to be developed. Thus, through the meeting, the head teacher can set a specific goal with the members of the school.

Rasha, from school R, provided another example of how the school vision was created:

The vision we set usually deals with the deficiencies in school. For example, morning delay and absence of students; to solve this problem we hold meetings with teachers and administrative staff to consider solutions, especially if the delay exceeds the allowable and calculate the delayed plan.

Therefore, it can be seen that deputy head teachers' organised meetings that include members at many levels as a good way to create a school vision or solve problems. It was stated that involving members from different levels guarantees that the vision will be realistic and achievable.

Six deputy head teachers spoke of how they explain new systems to staff and students. Dalal described the steps she follows in order to facilitate change:

In the phase of change, we work flexibly to deal with different cases properly. We focus on the priority to be achieved, sometimes we stop many other tasks as we share the new system and ensure everyone understands their role. However, if somebody resists the change, we try

to change the views of those teachers by delegating a person to persuade them.

Samara, from school Y, highlighted many ways of dealing with staff in times of change. She spoke of protecting staff and teachers from the fear of change and how to share roles among employees. She stated:

> In the change phase, we explain the new rules and system, try to minimise the duties of the teachers, answer their queries, and provide the tools they need. In addition, we try to protect them from the anxiety of change through delegating responsibilities to other staff and rotating roles.

It can be seen that during times of change, deputy head teachers reported acting flexibly in order to protect teachers from anxiety and to prevent them from resisting the change. They explained a new system and clarified the process, as well as supporting staff by rotating roles and paying attention to who was refusing to change.

5.2.2 Summary

Teamwork might be considered as an emergent property of leadership. Deputy head teachers supported head teachers in confirming the importance of instigating meetings and committees with staff from across the many levels of the school form administrative staff and students to teachers and deputies. All the deputy head teachers in the study reinforced what was stated by head teachers that meetings were called to respond to needs as they arose. All the deputy head teachers spoke of encouraging their staff and teachers to work in teams in order to raise the quality of the work and encourage knowledge exchange, as well as to enable teachers to gain confidence, which again supports findings from head teachers. Most spoke of organising meetings through Group WhatsApp in order to communicate information of new activities and rules, again reiterating what head teachers had stated. Furthermore, deputy head teachers spoke of how they work when changes are

required and remarked on the requirement to be flexible, to clarify new rules, protect employees, and prevent resistance to change. They mentioned the necessity to provide teachers with the opportunity to take on leadership roles, to encourage them to lead teams to plan the supervision of other teachers and complete tasks efficiently, again reinforcing what head teachers had noted.

5.3 Motivation and Work with Staff

Three out of seven deputy head teachers highlighted the importance of providing incentives to encourage teachers and staff to undertake professional development. For instance, Huda from school M, argued that:

> The absence of incentives is a barrier in developing teachers and staff. Employees have a belief that there is no difference between them and the other employees who do not develop themselves. This lack of incentives to improve influences the whole school performance.

This view was supported by Samara, from school Y, who provided an example of one way to use incentives for whole school development. She stated:

> If I wish to develop any aspect of the school, this requires permission from the higher authority. In addition, we have a lack of incentives. For example, I have excellent teachers and I do not have any financial incentives to reward them or to motivate others. We only have the incentives of leaving school early or allowing them to come in late. If the Ministry of Education gives me the responsibility of leading the school, they must have more confidence and give head teachers more authority to develop teachers and the students, without having to go back to the Ministry to ask permission for everything I would like to do.

Incentives of leaving school early and coming to school late were also mentioned by Dana, from school P, who focused on the power of regional educational officers to accept or reject the use of such incentives. She argued:

> The Ministry can refuse the use of any incentives. However, the known teachers' incentives are to leave school early or come to school late. The problem is that some teachers complain to the educational office about these incentives. Thus, we are accountable to the Ministry, as incentives are an informal aspect of internal procedure and not a formal practice.

Dana said that the educational office did not sanction the use of incentives. She stated:

> Yes, they allow us to use the incentive in the meetings but not on the paper. However, when the reality hits, if there is a complaint or call for accountability, they do not recognise this authority. In addition, this is considered as an internal procedure between head teachers and the school members, but when it comes to the educational office, we are accountable. Thus, we always tell teachers we need the approval of the educational office.

It can be seen that head teachers and deputy head teachers confront real barriers in having procedures to motivate the school team. They do not have a specific formal incentive to encourage teachers and reward excellence.

Many deputy head teachers sought to motivate teachers and staff by providing them with certain powers by being involved in whole school tasks. All seven deputy head teachers spoke of the importance of creating a trust community in which staff and teachers work together to achieve school aims. A particular example was Dana, from school P, who said that she encouraged teachers to participate in school tasks.

> Give the staff and teachers tasks and motivate them, even if someone fails, we support and direct them. The good thing is that the employee is aware of wider aspects of school work.

Fattem, from school L, stated:

> We create trust by delegating a task to excellent teachers to take leadership responsibility.

Huda, from school M, said:

> I give staff a chance to develop their skills and do not blame them if they make a mistake.

Overall, all deputy head teachers stated that they sought to create a trusting environment within the school by delegating responsibilities to teachers and staff, and by treating them with respect and not blaming them if they made mistakes; instead, they spoke of the requirement to support them and provide guidance.

5.3.1 Summary

In sum, it can be seen that the incentive scheme is essentially for both head teachers and deputy head teachers to motivate teachers. In many cases, incentives are considered as a reward for teachers who are working hard and performing well. Thus, deputy head teachers agreed with head teachers regarding the need to have the power to provide incentives for employees. Both groups agreed that the lack of power to use incentives could hinder work in schools. Specifically, most deputy head teachers were looking for more power to motivate teachers and provide justifiable rewards to some. Deputy head teachers have specific roles in continuing professional development and were, therefore, acutely aware of the need for incentives to encourage staff and teachers to develop their skills as part of the wider mission to improve school performance.

The deputy head teachers seek to develop the leadership skills of staff by delegating tasks, enabling them to take on leadership roles and by assigning administrative duties to excellent teachers, in order to improve their skills and raise their confidence. Many spoke of the collaborative manner through which they had developed the school vision by including members from different levels of school. Likewise, many deputy head teachers spoke of enabling staff and teachers to make decisions on many school matters, even although several deputies did not allow teachers to make decisions, due to the high level of accountability. Furthermore, the school deputies sought to create a trusting environment by delegating tasks that would develop skills, and not to blame members when things went wrong. Accordingly, findings from the theme on deputy head teachers' perceptions of their roles can be seen to deepen and extend what the head teachers thought with regards to the importance of teamwork, incentives and managing change, reported in Chapter Four page 98. The next theme describes deputy heads' views on autonomy.

5.4 Autonomy

The deputy head teachers spoke of confronting many challenges in their day-to-day work. Five stated that they thought they had the potential to excel in leadership if they were granted more power and autonomy. This is in line with comments made by head teachers on autonomy. All the deputy head teachers spoke of limitations to the powers extended to head teachers and deputy head teachers. They spoke of the way head teachers and deputy head teachers work together. They confirmed that if head teachers had more autonomy, they would be more effective. In particular, Huda, from school M, argued:

> Always, the main factor that restricts the performance of head teachers
> is autonomy. They have not been given enough powers. Everything that
> leaders need to do have to be approved by the educational office and
> this hampers many things in school. I believe that if head teachers had
> more authority, the school would change to a better level. …If I had an

employee who had low performance or caused a problem in school, I would like to transfer her to another school. Many head teachers have called for the authority to transfer employees, even although it is a 'double-edged sword'. In addition, there are many things that can be achieved if the head teacher has power; for instance, the development of laboratories and English language labs, mobile classes.

Deputy head teachers said that they required more power to motivate school employees to improve their skills and cope with the new development plans from the Ministry of Education. They described striving to gain more authority, and how they needed this to tackle the poor attitude of some students. Rasha, from school R, stated:

We need autonomy to exclude students from school when they are overriding the systems. Further, the teachers who refuse the development and apologise for not attending courses are old, cannot keep up with technology and do not want to develop themselves. We are looking for more powers to deal with this matter.

However, speaking of the need to provide the head teachers with more power to lead the school, Dalal, from school N, highlighted other aspects. Specifically, she criticised the rhetoric of autonomy used by the Ministry of Education which was not backed up in practice. Dalal explained:

The problem is that the Ministry of Education gives head teachers power and yet holds them accountable for using them. If this accountability did not exist, it would be better, and the head teacher would have more freedom in setting the work within her power. The deputy head teacher is part of the management and their work is related to each other. If the powers of the head teacher were activated properly, things would be better. For example, we have an *Organisational Guide* in which an item says that the head teacher has the power to assign additional work to

employees, and in the section of the employees' work, it says that they do not have to be assigned extra work. Thus, in fact, head teachers cannot require extra work from teachers as head teachers are accountable to the Ministry of Education. Thus, I would like to have compatibility between the system and applying the rules. I mean, if the Ministry has given the head teacher the power, it should not regulate them.

In addition, Ruba, from school Q, provided many examples of how she could imagine developments if they had more autonomy. She was looking to distribute duties more effectively and develop programmes for students to improve their skills and experiences. Ruba said:

> If we have the powers, we could distribute roles to staff in a better way, we could develop school performance. For example, each person has a role in the school, from administrators to teachers, yet they could be creative and more productive. In addition, establishing programmes and courses for students that interest them has benefits, such as programmes to develop better achievement tests and courses that can benefit them in the future by preparing them for a university specialism.

In summary, most deputy head teachers spoke of the lack of autonomy extended to head teachers, as well as how this limited their roles as leaders to develop the school and increase performance. Moreover, they stated that they, as deputy head teachers, need to have powers to undertake many of their duties, for example, they need more authority in making decisions that lead to school improvements, as well as to develop school labs, and create courses that would lead to improving students' knowledge. They spoke of how the deputy head teachers had conflicts in relation to different regulations coming from the Ministry of Education and this echoes what head teachers

had said, yet added more details about how conflict arose between the Ministry of Education rhetoric on autonomy, and how this functions in everyday practice. As with head teachers, deputy head teachers were looking for more autonomy in order to enable them to have the capacity to discipline school employees who refuse professional development. They also wanted to be able to transfer a person to another school if they were performing badly. What is more, all the deputy head teachers suggested that if they had more power, they could support school improvements by working more effectively by being more proactive and creative, and this echoed head teachers' views.

5.4.1 Accountability

Five deputy head teachers confirmed that the head teacher is the first person who is responsible for mistakes that occur within the school. However, the other two reported that the individual who makes the mistake is responsible, as well as the head teacher. Samara, from school Y, said:

> The head teacher is responsible for all work, from communicating with
> parents to the smallest thing in the school.

Huda, from school M, also highlighted the impact of placing the whole responsibility on the head teacher.

> Head teachers are responsible for any mistake therefore, many abandon
> the role once given leadership jobs among educators.

Furthermore, Fattem, from school L, claimed that:

> We are tired at work and we have a fear of accountability even over the
> simplest imbalance of daily work, such as teachers refusing to do extra
> tasks.

Hence, the high accountability placed upon head teachers was recognised as a major concern and some stated that it prevents head teachers from doing their job effectively. The level of accountability was said to impact adversely on all school employees and created fear in school management that influenced the decision of head teachers and created challenges in developing different aspects of the school.

Three deputy head teachers said they permitted teachers to make decisions if required. The other four did not agree that teachers could make decisions on management issues due to the high accountability placed on the school administrators. They emphasised that teachers have to consult the head teacher or deputy head teachers before making decisions. Huda, from school M, stated:

> If I delegate the task to the employee, she has to report to me on the outcome and she should come back to consult me in case of a decision.

Similarly, Fattem, of school L, explained:

> If the decision relates to a management matter and the decision is big, we will consider the reason and give her permission. If the decision is related to the whole school, she should consult and not decide alone.

In summary, many deputy head teachers stated that they permitted employees to make decisions if the outcome was positive and would not negatively impact upon students. Others, however, stated that they did not allow staff and teachers to make decisions, and confirmed that employees have to consult management members. Furthermore, if the decision related to a teacher's teaching subject, all the participants agreed that she should have the freedom to decide.

5.4.2 Learning Environment

Deputy head teachers spoke of trying to develop a learning environment in their schools. Rasha, from school R, highlighted the importance of providing students with a healthy learning space. She said that:

If I have a budget, I would like to develop the school environment to be more suitable for teaching by upgrading buildings and maintaining the facilities, labs, language labs and learning resources.

Furthermore, Samara, from School Y, focused on developing more spaces in the school. She suggested that:

If I have enough budget, I would allocate money for developing space for a resource room, an attractive area for reading and develop the quality of the canteen.

Hence, four deputy head teachers focused on the need to develop school buildings as a way to improve learning opportunities and improve student outcomes. Accordingly, they identified many aspects that could be improved, such as school labs and resource rooms, which are significant for both students and teachers. The main challenge they mentioned was the lack of budget allocated to such resources and maintenance.

5.4.3 Summary

Deputy head teachers highlighted the many challenges they face on a daily basis, which has contributed more details to the findings from head teachers reported in Chapter Four page 101. The first is the power that the Ministry of Education exerts over how a school is run. It was argued that they and the head teachers possess insufficient power, which hinders the process of developing the school in many ways, such as: teachers' professional development, improving school facilities, and developing good courses for students. Separately, certain participants pointed to a conflict between their roles and regulations from the Ministry of Education's system, which can sometimes give rise to embarrassing situations when dealing with teachers. For example, deputy head teachers reinforced the point that the Ministry of Education provides head teachers with the authority to assign additional tasks to teachers, however, in the guidance by the Ministry of Education that relates to teachers, the rule is that they should not be assigned any further work. Secondly, both deputy head

teachers and head teachers lack the authority to instil sanctions that motivate staff and teachers to develop professionally by undertaking training, be more proactive, and take initiatives. There are barriers to rewarding teachers or applying sanctions for poor performance. Moreover, they explained that the high accountability at the Ministry of Education was a significant challenge which prevents head teachers from practicing their role effectively. High levels of accountability impact adversely on school staff and teachers and creates fear in the school management team that influences the decision of head teachers. Indeed, deputy head teachers reinforced head teachers' views that high levels of accountability hinder the school from developing in many ways.

5.6 Conclusion

The main challenges confronting the deputy head teachers were in developing school staff and teachers, as well as the power to use incentives. Deputy head teachers spoke of the significant effort and time required to persuade employees to join training programmes. However, they recognised, along with head teachers that the lack of incentive was due to many issues, such as: teachers who did not like change; salaries not being linked to roles or performance and the negative impact of some colleagues. Many school deputy head teachers highlighted the importance of improving school facilities, labs and a resource room if they had insufficient budgets and these comments reinforced the head teachers' comments regarding the problem of budgets being late and inflexible.

In addition, deputy head teachers spoke of the need for high quality training programmes at both pre-service and in-service levels, which again reiterated the head teachers' concerns. It was noted that there are no systematic training programmes in the preparation of both the head teachers and deputy head teachers to take on their

roles and help them understand their duties and perform their work effectively. Furthermore, in-service training programmes were considered insufficient for understanding the different aspects of the administrative work they are required to do. Deputy head teachers said they gained experience through practicing the role in a school, which was also stated by the head teachers. What is more, many deputy head teachers highlighted the importance of the need for qualified trainers who could deliver professional training which is what the head teachers had also observed. Specifically, one suggested that head teachers should have pre-service training for at least a period of six months to a year, before having to take on the role. They also stated that practical training is required and that visiting an outstanding school to gain knowledge and understanding would also be helpful. Deputy head teachers also highlighted many traits that make head teachers effective, such as: building good, trusting relationships within the school; treating everyone with respect; accepting other opinions and the need to be seen to be just, honesty, and to lead by example.

Separately, deputy head teachers highlight many challenges in undertaking their daily duties. The first was the power that the Ministry of Education exerts over roles and head teachers' who in effect have insufficient autonomy, as well as their own lack of autonomy. Additionally, they spoke of many conflicts between the Ministry of Education's guidance to deputy head teachers and teachers, which makes it difficult to motivate staff and teachers to undertake professional development. However, most deputy head teachers were seeking to develop leadership skills by delegating tasks and assigning teachers to the administrative duties, as well as by encouraging excellent teachers to improve their skills and become more confident.

All the participants spoke of the importance of teamwork as a fundamental step in achieving progress in school performance. They spoke of the importance of committees and meetings between school members at all levels of the school as a good way to develop an achievable vision. They took the initiative to develop committees in line with *the Organisational Guide* and to initiate other meetings when

they perceived the requirements. In addition, they made good use of social media, such as WhatsApp groups, which function to impart knowledge and circulate new activities and rules.

In general, the deputy head teachers supported the findings from the head teachers, as reported in Chapter Four page 102, as they stated that there are the same kinds of problems and difficulties for head teachers. For example, sufficient training, lack of incentive, need to pay a higher level salary for deputy head teachers or a difference in the salary if they want to take the role. The deputy head teachers supported those points that were raised by the head teachers in terms of training while the deputy head teachers noted they needed training in order to understand how to accomplish administrative tasks, how to work with staff, and how to build trust, as well as the need to control the budget to develop the school in many aspects, motivate the school team, and improve the learning environment. Similarly, one important new detail was the stark warning from some deputy head teachers that many individuals leave the profession once taking up leadership positions due to the intense workload, lack of adequate training, and insufficient autonomy, which makes the job very stressful. Furthermore, some deputy head teachers in the current study felt that they would not progress to headships, as they had no way to gain the required experience and professional training to accomplish the job correctly.

Distributed leadership involves such things as the head teachers being able to take initiatives, have autonomy, distribute roles to other individuals, build teams, and develop a trusting school atmosphere, which are all reinforced by the deputy head teachers' comments. Deputy head teachers described their roles within this as a broader picture of what distributed leadership requires. The deputy head teachers also supported what head teachers had said when describing the differences between management and leadership. It can also be stated that deputy head teachers were trying to enact certain elements of distributed leadership, such as building teams, creating trust environments, and developing leadership skills within teams. These

attributes of distributed leadership have been highlighted by many studies, such as Hopkins and Jackson (2002) (see Chapter Two, p.41) who stated that organisational change is reinforced when "engaging teachers in a leadership role" that will lead to innovation and facilitating change. Furthermore, Bennett *et al.* (2003, p. 3) claim that distributed leadership is an emergent property of 'a group or network' of individuals in which group members pool their expertise. Moreover, the notion of distributed leadership involves comprehensive qualities of leadership that focus not only on the 'distribution of trust' among a group, but also 'developing leadership abilities' of school members (Harris, 2011). The Deputy head teachers showed awareness of these qualities and were trying to enact them in their schools, along with their head teachers.

CHAPTER SIX: CASE STUDY

6. Introduction

Manar Secondary School was selected as a case study school as it was considered to be one of the best examples of a girls' school with good leadership practices, and thus, demonstrates the potential and barriers for distributed leadership to be enacted in Saudi Arabia in the current educational climate. Manar School is in an area where families are above the middle level in terms of their socio-economic background. The school has a capacity of 400 students, although it had 730 enrolled when the study was undertaken. Indeed, the school was over registered because it has a reputation as a very good school (see the Methodology Chapter, page 81). The role of undertaking the case study was to gain a greater understanding of leadership practices by triangulating accounts between the head teacher, deputy head teachers, and teachers from the same school.

Participants comprised the head teacher, two deputy head teachers and three teachers. The head teacher, called Lama, was also part of the multi-school phase and her views have been reported in Chapter Four, along with the other head teachers in the study. Specifically, she had an excellent score on assessment criteria see Chapter One, p. 25 for details of how assessment scores are awarded. Only those aspects of her interview which are relevant to the process of triangulation will be reported in this chapter. The aim is to determine whether her two deputy head teachers and three classroom teachers corroborate her views regarding leadership practices in Manar School. We have not yet the two deputy head teachers. One, referred to as Deem, was responsible for education affairs. The other, referred to as Loloa, was responsible for students' affairs (see Chapter One, p. 20 for details of the roles of deputy head

teachers). The three classroom teachers were selected to cover a range of diverse subjects and these were mathematics, Arabic and science.

The next section reports some of Lamas' views across four major themes reported in Chapter Four: professional development; head teachers' practices, motivation; and autonomy. Subsequently, the views of the deputy head teachers will be reported and include issues around professional development for deputy head teachers, deputy head teachers' practices, motivation and autonomy. This is followed by teachers' perceptions of professional development, head teachers' practices, motivation and autonomy.

6.1 Head Teacher

6.1.1 Professional Development

Lama's views were similar to other head teachers about professional development. She agreed with others that there were no training programmes to prepare head teachers for the role of headship, such as to understand the range of activities they need to undertake to run a school and develop leadership skills. Lama referred to her personality when explaining how she had managed to adapt to headship and overcome the challenges at the beginning of her headship career. Her positivity and confidence were evident in the interview, as she stated:

> I did not gain pre-service training, but I have a leadership personality and
> that helped me to manage the school at the beginning.

In addition, she spoke of the many challenges she had faced in supporting teachers in their professional development, agreeing with the other head teachers in the study. She particularly stressed the need for quality in relation to training courses and stressed that they should be run by professional trainers. She was strong on the need

to provide teachers with the freedom and professional autonomy to choose their teaching methods. She was also very conscious that overcrowded classrooms and large students prevent teachers from using good pedagogic approaches and created challenges with respect to controlling students' behaviour. She also raised the issue of what happens when a teacher has to teach lessons that are not her specialisation, and spoke of the detrimental effects of this on students' learning. Lama also mentioned the problem of not having appropriate training courses for her administrative staff, and the time lag between the introduction of new systems and the training packages arriving, and the lack of sufficient access to such training courses and material.

6.1.2 Head Teachers' Practices

This section covers the role, duties and tasks of the head teacher, and how she is able to manage and adapt to change. Lama's views were similar to other head teachers, as she spoke of holding meetings with the school staff to distribute tasks, as well as to clarify new rules and activities. She also said she held individual meetings with teachers to support their professional development. In times of change she said she worked with groups to find the best methods to make the transition and to make tasks understood. This enabled staff to work in confidence, especially in periods of change. She stated:

> We worked together to explain, simplify the new rules and the circulars, and then asked the employees to do the work.

While Lama, along with the other heads had to follow *the Ministry of Education Organisational Guides* she also was flexible and allowed the school staff to decide, depending on the situation. She reported:

> Teachers in a classroom are free to manage the lesson. If it is in the interest of the student and the school, I will thank her even if she is outside the system. Due to conditions in the school sometimes I allow

decisions that do not exist in the system, in the sense that the situation sometimes differs from the system and is subject to specific circumstances. However, some decisions are difficult to implement.

6.1.3 Motivation

This section explores Lama's views regarding the skills that head teachers need to lead their schools effectively, in order to motivate staff and delegate responsibilities more productively. When talking about how she deals with her staff, Lama stressed the need to be polite, accept their mistakes, and look for their positive skills and seek to enhance them. She spoke of the importance of creating a trusting environment in the school and delegating responsibilities. Specifically, Lama was looking for more opportunities to develop aspects of school life and provided staff with the chance to make decisions about their work. She said:

> I do not like to take an authoritative role in school. I give the deputy head teachers and the administrative staff the autonomy they need. I always authorise staff, and give them the powers to make a decision each according to her work. I find when I am out of school, the school runs as normal. I delegate to teachers, which is one of my powers, and they report back to me on difficult things.

6.1.4 Autonomy

Like the other head teachers in the study, Lama stated that without more autonomy from the Ministry of Education, she was not able to undertake many headship responsibilities effectively. She specifically mentioned the school budget, and said that:

> Head teachers need real powers and not only on paper.

She was unable to maintain buildings and build up teaching resources as she would have liked. However, Lama took the initiative to pay the cost of maintenance from her personal account. Not having the budget on time meant that she could not supply the school with appropriate services, for example, maintaining toilets and science laboratories. Lama also had similar issues with other head teachers about developing the school environment. In particular, she wished to develop the resource room with learning tools and resources for different specialities such as having varieties of devices, including computers and data storage facilities. This room helped students to learn using several learning tools. She also used the room to hold training courses for both school staff and students. She also envisaged this as a space where she could hold training courses for the staff. Indeed, Lama sought to develop facilities in different ways from other head teachers in this study. She explained:

> The educational resource rooms are where I run courses inside the school. The main challenge is that these rooms were not equipped. However, I sought to equip them myself by working with community partners, such as the Chamber of Commerce. They provide tables, chairs, and two computers with printers for the resource rooms. I thanked them by sending a shield and a thank you letter.

Lama highlighted that head teachers often act like managers, rather than leaders, as the Ministry of Education accepts anyone for the position regardless of their training, skills, and personal qualities.

> 90% of head teachers, unfortunately, are acting as managers or less than a leader. The education office appoints anyone who agrees to take the head teacher's position to fill the vacancies regardless of their qualities or abilities, or whether they are willing or not.

She pointed out that The Ministry of Education may not be convinced that a new head teacher can take full responsibility for running a school, as they have to appoint people

to bridge the gap in capacity. Hence, this creates a vicious circle, where the high levels of regulation and accountability are recreated because there are not enough well qualified head teachers in the system who could be extended more autonomy. The next section turns to the views of the two deputy head teachers in Manar School, in order to determine whether they have similar views to Lama or whether they believe different things about her leadership that were not highlighted by her, or the other head teachers in the study.

6.2 Deputy Head teachers

6.2.1 Introduction

Two deputy head teachers participated in the case study and were different participants to the ones reported in Chapter Five. Deem was responsible for education affairs and Loloa for student affairs (see Chapter ,One p. 20 for details of deputy head teachers' roles and duties). In general, Deem and Loloa agreed with the concerns raised by the deputy head teachers reported in Chapter Five with regards to the importance of creating a school culture of trust, of delegating responsibilities, and the shortage of professional development. Their views are presented to determine the extent to which they corroborated what Lama had mentioned as potentials and barriers for distributed leadership practices in Manar School.

6.2.2 Professional Development for Deputy Head teachers

Deem and Loloa had similar views as the other deputy head teachers reported in Chapter Five with regards to professional development. Neither had received sufficient pre-service training and the ones they had attended were inadequate. They gained knowledge through practice doing their jobs on a daily basis. Loloa highlighted

the cooperative school community as important to the way she overcame difficulties at the beginning. She said:

I did not face any difficulty, as colleagues at work were able to guide me.

However, Loloa revealed the main element that helps candidates to pass the interview test for deputy headship was that the interview questions were available in an informal booklet for candidates. She explained:

There was a test before the appointment and the test questions were at the heart of the work. The main element that helped me to understand the duties was that there was a booklet that explained the questions and answers in the exam; because I was a math teacher, I had no experience in management work.

Deem highlighted *the Organisational Guide* that explains a head teacher's role, as well as the way tasks have to be distributed across school staff. Deem explained:

I am confident in my ability to lead. Especially after distributing and organising the work according to the new system, each deputy head teacher has a role and tasks. The head teacher's work became easier and more comfortable after *the Organisational and Procedural Educational Guides*. Before the guides the work was not conducted in this way. Before the head teacher had to do all the work and the deputy head teacher had a specific responsibility for school records. Now the work is divided, and the head teacher has time to develop other aspects of the school.

Both Deem and Loloa highlighted the leadership skills most important for building strong relationships within the school community. They said the main skills that a head teacher requires, as specifically Loloa reported that Lama had were as follows.

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Our head teacher has the skills of delegation, motivation, and high powers and decision-making. This motivates us to search for the positives in others and try to develop our performance and work hard. We show the head teacher our work and ask for her views. However, the head teacher who does everything by himself is making a mistake as it leads to deficiencies and poor performance.

In sum, Deem stated that she was able to take a leadership role in the school due to head teachers' tasks becoming easier after the introduction of *the Organisational Guide*. The Guide suggests how roles should be distributed and this helps head teachers to focus on developing other aspects of the school. Deputy head teacher, Loloa, said that Lama was able to distribute roles of leadership among staff and teachers, she encouraged teachers to create teams to develop their work, delegate, motivate, encourage staff to make decisions and build good relationships within the school community.

6.2.2.1 Building Staffs' Skills

In Chapter Five it was reported that deputy head teachers in this study spoke of their efforts to motivate teachers and to undertake professional development. Deem and Loloa had similar views to the other deputy head teachers, who faced challenges, especially in supporting teachers and administrators to develop professionally. They reported that those who had graduated a long time ago and those employed recently resisted change and refused to attend professional development courses. The administrators who came without qualifications presented obstacles in dealing with daily tasks. Deem and Loloa said that these challenges were beyond their control, and were made worse by teachers having full teaching schedules. They also confirmed that because places on training courses were limited both administrators and teachers had difficulty in obtaining approval to attend. They stated, however, that they encouraged staff who attended a training course to transfer their knowledge to other members of staff.

6.2.3 Deputy Head teachers' Practices

Teamwork, managing change, meetings, and creating school vision were major themes reported in Chapter Five. Both Deem and Loloa said they tried to build a collaborative community within Manar School by holding meetings to create the school vision, explain new systems and activities, as well as to ensure teachers and students understood and had sufficient knowledge of new school matters. In times of the change they also agreed that head teachers need to create a positive environment by distributing tasks, simplifying duties and explaining the process required by the new system.

6.2.4 Motivation

Deem and Loloa stated that deputy head teachers have limited resources to motivate staff to put more effort into improving the school's performance. Loloa mentioned that the incentives they use do not motivate teachers anymore. Methods, such as "thank you" cards or allowing teachers to leave early or come to school late, were not sufficiently effective. They recognised that teachers and administrators need financial incentives. Indeed, Deem and Loloa expressed similar views to the other deputy head teachers, as they were both sought opportunities to develop talent and stipulated that instilling confidence in staff was the fundamental role of the head teacher. The powers that Lama granted them to manage the school in their specialist roles played a significant part in their abilities to develop teachers professionally and raise performance. Deem emphasised:

> The school where I worked actually epitomises the role of the leader. She gave me the powers to work according to my areas of responsibility and my specialism. I have the freedom to manage my work and distribute work to administrators and the head teacher (Lama) supervises my work. I will consult her if necessary. Yet, the implementation is my responsibility and I have the freedom to distribute

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work. I prefer to take decisions that are in everyone's interest so that it does not in favour the student or the teacher and vice versa.

Deputy head teachers each sought to develop employees' skills by cascading knowledge across the staff. They strived to create a trusted environment by instilling confidence in teachers and by delegating responsibilities. They added that they took steps to develop teachers' leadership skills by providing them with a chance to play the head teachers' role. Advancing staff autonomy to take decisions, as long as they do not impact on students negatively, was something they encouraged. They also endorsed Lama's views regarding the need to develop the school vision collaboratively with teachers from various specialist subjects. As Deem reported:

> It is possible to give the teachers the roles of leadership such as supervision of one floor and over seeing the regularity of classes. Many teachers have the ability to perform their duties, master new areas, to lead and manage. However, there are several teachers who fail in their tasks and do not care about the details of their work. Yet when, teachers have ability the school seeks to develop their skills by giving them supervisory tasks such as the implementation of programs and activities, so they are working to their fullest capacity.

6.2.5 Autonomy

Deem and Loloa said they faced several challenges which created barriers in improving the school's performance. The two deputy head teachers suffered, like the other deputy head teachers, from a lack of authority provided by the Ministry of Education. They were looking to develop school performance in different ways and said that they needed more autonomy to control student numbers, which exceed the school capacity, and which prevented them from implementing the school development plan,

to improve the skills of staff and develop school facilities. Deem and Loloa emphasised that Lama was directly responsible for any mistakes that happened in the school. For example, one teacher refused to mark exam papers. They recognised how ineffective it was for Lama to carry the blame for an individual's insubordination. Loloa stated:

> The responsibility is high, and the situation is discouraging because the head teacher has to carry the responsibility if one of her staff makes a mistake.

Loloa reported that the high accountability placed on head teachers is one of the crucial reasons that discourage deputy head teachers from wanting to take up a head teacher position in the future.

6.2.6 Summary

There was no pre-service training of deputy head teachers to develop skills and prepare them for their new position. In-service training was insufficient and did not match the need to understand the role, make decisions, to build good relationships in the school community, or develop teachers' skills. Both Deem and Loloa noted that they gained experience from practising their roles. They agreed with Lama that the main barrier to developing distributed leadership in Manan School was the high accountability placed on head teachers, such as Lama and the lack of autonomy, which prevents flexibility. They agreed with Lola's views regarding the importance of teamwork, delegating responsibilities, motivating staff to develop themselves, encouraging staff to take decisions and building good relationships in the school community.

Deem and Loloa focused on several challenges, specifically Lama's lack of autonomy, and her inability to make decisions; for example, to limit students' numbers and develop spaces for specialist school activities. While both Deem and Lama wanted to

develop staff, they lacked access to incentives and linked this to an inability to create a more competitive environment in the school.

Dem and Loloa complied with Lama's assertions that she tries to delegate tasks to them and provides them with opportunities to act autonomously when required. This enabled Deem and Loloa to develop their professional skills and feel confident in the school. However, they agree with Lama that limited autonomy from the Ministry of Education was a barrier that prevented them, as well as Lama, from improving various aspects of the school and particularly developing teachers' skills and students' learning opportunities. As with others, they referred to problems caused by appointing administrators with no qualifications, and the lack of incentives to encourage teachers to attend training programs. Moreover, Deem and Loloa agreed with Lama that they were all trying to create a trusted environment in the school by delegating responsibility, developing skills and giving teachers greater responsibilities and missions to accomplish. They supported what Lama had said about enabling teachers to make a decision with certain boundaries. They also supported Lama's comments about a collaborative community in the schools and her aims to raise the quality of the school performance through teamwork and meetings. They agreed that the school depended on teamwork to accomplish school tasks and ensure the quality of the tasks was high and the processes of implementation were simple and clear.

In general, the deputy head teachers agreed with the head teachers' perceptions of the main issues that were revealed in this study. In terms of professional development, both the head teacher and deputy head teachers emphasised that the head teacher needs to gain prior training to understand the management tasks and have knowledge of the new role. However, both the head teacher and deputy head teachers were working in a team and encouraging teachers and staff to become involved in team work in order to accomplish the school aims, develop leadership skills for both staff and teachers, and improve the school community by creating an atmosphere of trust through providing the chance to lead the teamwork, as well as to make decisions and

take greater responsibility. In sum, many practices enacted by Lama, Loloa and Deem are elements of distributed leadership.

6.3 School Teachers

6.3.1 Introduction

Three teachers from the disciplines of teaching Arabic, biology and mathematics participated in the case study. The variety of specialists teachers aimed to include different perspectives regarding school life and explore to what extent they recognised the picture of leadership presented by Lama, their head teacher, as well as the deputy head teachers, Loloa and Deem

6.3.2 Professional Development

Two out of three teachers had views with regards to a head teacher's role. They highlighted the importance of having a head teacher who has a full knowledge of the duties and tasks of headship and who is aware of school rules and regulations. Abeer, who was an Arabic teacher, aspired to be a head teacher and stated:

> I can imagine myself a successful head teacher, and in which case I would need a comprehensive knowledge of a head teacher's duties and work demands. The school is large, and the work is significant and no one person can control the situation in the school. However, I have experience in administrative work if someone asks me to cooperate, I do.

The other teacher, Raneem, who taught Biology, focused on the restrictions placed on head teachers by the Ministry of Education. In imagining herself as a future head teacher, she explained why the Ministry of Education does not provide head teachers with more power in leading a school. She explained:

I will be able to carry the responsibility, yet, the challenge is that the head teacher is not free to act in school and is governed by the regulations and circulars. However, even the Ministry of Education gives them the freedom, many head teachers are not serious with this freedom.

Furthermore, Raneem highlighted a significant aspect that may give a reason why the Ministry of Education does not provide head teachers with the full power to lead a school. She argued:

According to head teachers I talked with, they say that even if the Ministry gave them absolute freedom, there are many head teachers who are not qualified for head teacher roles which is inappropriate for their personality, and they took the position only as a functional name.

Similarly, both Reneem and Abeer asserted the statements made by Lama regarding restrictions placed on head teachers' autonomy, and Reneem echoed the point made earlier that the poor quality of some head teachers is why the Ministry of Education has restricted the powers of all head teachers. Along with Lama and the deputy head teachers in Manar School, they suggested that when a school is being administered correctly, the Ministry should consider making exceptions to their rules and the overly prescriptive guidance.

6.3.2.1 Building Teachers' skills

When considering the head teacher's role in relation to discovering staffs' skills and developing them, Raneem remarked:

Instil a spirit of trust, love, and altruism among school members and with students. Because each person has a bright side and the head teacher should look for these aspects and highlight and encourage them, both in

administrative work and in teaching. There is creativity, but the teachers

need to be encouraged and have these aspects highlighted.

In this quotation we can see that Raneem supports Lama's approach when she said she seeks to find the positive aspects in her staff. In some respects, Raneem takes Lama's approach to an even greater level by suggesting that all staff members have creative potential.

Asia, who taught Mathematics, highlighted the role that head teachers have in motivating staff, and supported Lama's desire to provide training facilities within the school. She said:

Providing courses within the school to reduce the effort, especially if a

member of staff does not have transport. The head teacher tries to push

staff to attend courses. She tries to motivate and encourage teachers to

develop themselves by joining free online courses that are available for

teachers (Asia, Teacher).

Asia's comment supports Lama's views when she said she encouraged professional development in her staff. Lama reported that she wanted to hold training courses in school and Asia suggested that there are already opportunities in the form of free on-line courses that provide alternatives to the requirement of travelling to training centres and for staff who did not have sufficient time to join the official training sessions.

6.3.3 Head Teachers' practices

All three teachers reported working as a group, thus corroborating Lama's assertions that she uses this approach to run the school. The teachers also support her views that teamwork was beneficial and helped staff to share knowledge, gain experiences and

encourage each other to accomplish the tasks. The three teachers stated that they preferred to work in teams to achieve their aims and develop their knowledge. For example, Asia highlighted many benefits of teamwork:

> Teamwork is excellent to organise the work through a union between teachers in specialist subject areas and others. It helps to manage the school day and if the work is individual, the quality will be reduced. Cultivating the spirit of cooperation saves time and effort. In addition, it is useful to work in committees to exchange ideas, organise and get new ideas and to accomplish the work.

Asia and the other teachers agreed with Lama that teamwork was an important feature for the way the school was organised. They recognised and valued this way of working, to share knowledge and experiences, save time and effort, and ensure a high-quality performance and achieve the school's objectives.

6.3.4 Motivation

Lama had suggested that motivating staff to improve their performance was one of her roles. The three teachers supported her views and provided an example of how she motivated them in the workplace. They said that Lama and the management team had a spirit of cooperation, encouraged them and appreciated their accomplishments. Moreover, Abeer commented:

> I do the work and I do not like to have free time. The people I deal with in administration and the way they deal with us does not leave me any room to evade work. They are supportive and encouraging. It makes you look for work by yourself.

Abeer also confirmed that she was encouraged to undertake professional development.

The head teacher supports teachers through guiding the teacher to the training courses that can develop her performance and this is followed-up through classroom observations.

Lama recognised that head teachers play a significant role in developing teachers' skills. She claimed to promote their confidence and support them to improve their performance. The three teachers in this study highlighted many skills Lama had in encouraging professional development and making decisions and creating a trusting environment. Two out of three teachers said they could make decisions if the situation required it without referring to the head teacher and the head teacher appreciated that. For example, Raneem confirmed:

If the decision is beneficial to the school and the student, I will make a decision, our head teacher always encourages this, and she rejoices in the development and creativity in any area and does not ask us to return to her for confirmation. The current head teacher develops leadership skills and allows decision-making.

Asia supported this:

If the decision is about the curriculum and within the classroom, I make decisions without referring to anyone. In special cases, I make decisions if they are related to students. I have worked as a deputy head teacher for school affairs as a volunteer and I was making decisions without returning to the head teacher.

Lama recognised that a successful head teacher seeks to create a safe environment for teachers by understanding staff and teachers' needs. All three teachers confirmed that Lama put effort into creating a trusted environment, for example, Abeer argued that much of the trust in the school had been created by the head teacher, and provided many reasons.

99% of the time there is trust between me and the management team. In relation to school administration and policy there is flexibility and they do not force us to do things that we do not like, and the teacher is able to choose the appropriate approaches for her. The trust that the head teacher created in school is evident in the way the head treats people very kindly and understands our circumstances.

Raneem, a teacher, supported this and added:

The head teacher gives us confidence in ourselves and trust in her by the way she treats staff. I do not remember an occasion when I asked her for something or offered an idea that she let me down. If she thinks it is not good she does not criticise, and if she thinks it is in the interest of the student or school, she is quick to take the intuitive to help and provide support, either herself or to authorise others to help.

Asia, a teacher, also emphasised the role of head teacher in supporting the staff.

The head teacher seeks to instil confidence in school by creating familiarity among the teachers. No one in the school taught us that there is a barrier or she considered herself a head teacher. She allows us to enter the administration room without permission, treats us as sisters and students as daughters, she is very modest. This makes us take the initiative to do anything and if you need her in a matter or to consult, she works with you to solve problems. I consider her as a hero head teacher.

All three teachers agreed that the head teacher strived to create a healthy environment by encouraging staff to develop their performance, make an effort in accomplishing school work, and by appreciating their work. They considered a successful head teacher to be one who supports teachers and encourages them to look for opportunities to improve, for example, through official training courses or by providing training sessions in school. They agreed

that Lama empowered them to make decisions and provided them with freedom to manage lessons in their classes. They verified Lama's claim that she encouraged them to make decisions even outside the roles defined in the *Organisational Guidance* documents, if the situation required. Moreover, they confirmed that Lama sought to develop employees' skills and that she would always create a trusting environment within the school. They added that she appreciated them taking initiatives, making decisions and defended them if they made mistakes. This provided them with the confidence they needed to work, and they said she understood their specific circumstances and encouraged them by supporting their ideas and suggestions.

6.3.5 Autonomy

Two teachers focused on several challenges that limited the head teacher's capacity to develop the school performance, and specifically reinforced Lama's points about the need for more control over the budget, issues of accountability and limits to her ability to develop school buildings. Abeer, a teacher, highlighted the negative impact on school performance as a result of the lack of head teachers' autonomy in school. She raised two issues:

> We hope the head teachers will have the autonomy to refuse something she sees as not in the interest of teachers, students or the school as a whole, for example, a mandate that teachers go to another school, if a teacher does not want to be moved because she is involved with many activities in her school. In addition, the students roll over the school's capacity. The school has 400 students and we registered 700 students. The problem is that the budget covers the 400 students, and this causes a deficit in raw materials for activities or even certificates of thanks. Moreover, the head teacher does not have the authority to reject this excessive number of students and the supervision office imposes this on

the head teacher. This affects the students' behaviour and affects the teachers' psychologically and their performance in the classroom.

Abeer stressed the need for head teachers to have the powers they need to address overcrowding and enforced teacher transfers. She argued that head teachers should have the power to retain the teachers against mandatory transfers and the power to refuse to accept students beyond the schools' capacity. She also pointed to the importance of the head having control over the budget and how this, in the end, affects students and their examination results. She stipulated that shortcomings in the budget prevents teachers from properly supporting students. As Abeer noted, the school's capacity was 400 students, whereas the number on the roll was 700, and the budget only covers 400 students.

Raneem criticised the high accountability placed on head teachers by the Ministry of Education. She pointed out that this prevented Lama from making decisions, as well as from developing school activities, and even upgrading school resources.

> Our head teacher is efficient but lacks freedom. However, if she would like to develop an aspect or apply an idea in the school, she has a fear of accountability and objections from her supervisor. Unfortunately, we do not know when we will get rid of this accountability.

Raneem also proposed methods to reorganise classrooms to be more effective and improve teaching and learning through developing the learning environment in the school:

> To make the classroom more effective, we should divide the classes according to specialisation and equip them with appropriate resources to the benefit of students and so teachers have opportunities to be more creative and save time.

This is just one example of a teacher taking the initiative and suggesting how the school could improve. This comment testifies to the kind of community Lama had created in the school. Raneema had the confidence to make this proposal during the interview and so validates Lama's comments about the way she encourages staff to take initiatives and develop leadership qualities. Raneem and other teachers recognised that Lama's powers were curtailed by authorities above her, although the effects of this lack of power had secondary effects all the way down to the classroom level.

6.3.6 Conclusion

Overall, teachers in the current study showed potential to become leaders in their own right, while some aspired to be head teachers in the future. They also recognised that to do so requires comprehensive knowledge and understanding of head teachers' duties. Further, they looked for sufficient power in managing schools. However, one teacher argued that many head teachers are not qualified and would not be able to exercise the power even if the Ministry of Education extended it to them. Some took the position in name only and relied on central support and a great deal of guidance in acting as head teachers. Hence, the teachers supported comments from other head teachers and deputy head teachers that there is a serious problem in the education system, which stems from appointing head teachers who are not qualified or able to become effective leaders. As mentioned in earlier parts of the chapter, this creates a vicious cycle, as the need for control and regulation in the education system is perpetuated by the less than competent head teachers, which creates barriers for excellent head teachers, such as Lama, to exercise the level of autonomy she requires to improve her school.

Evidence that Lama was indeed an excellent head teacher was supported by the views of her deputy head teachers, Deen and Loloa, as well as three of her teachers,

Raneema, Abeer and Asia. They all agreed that their head teacher strived to create a trusting working environment, where each felt appreciated, empowered to make decisions and to exercise initiative when appropriate and when it was in the interest of students. They agreed that Lama was passionate about professional development and that she linked this to raising their performance and that of students. They seemed to agree that Lama had the kind of personality to be a good leader and some of them also aspired to be head teachers, hinting that they too had leadership qualities.

The teachers' comments suggest that Lama was supporting their professional development by empowering them to exercise leadership in various ways during their day to day practices. For example, she encouraged them to make decisions if appropriate for the school, even if it was not part of the designated teachers' duties. Secondly, she created a community of trust within the school by accepting and developing her teachers' ideas and suggestions, understanding their specific personal circumstances and by encouraging them to take the initiative to develop skills. Thirdly, she motivated them to improve their performance by encouraging them to join training courses, while appreciating their achievements and supporting them to refine their skills by assigning them tasks to accomplish. Finally, she enhanced teamwork in school to cascading knowledge and enabled staff to experience roles beyond classroom teaching, and thus, boosted the quality of work and relationships across the school.

Teachers mentioned several challenges encountered in their daily school work. They reinforced comments made by the two deputy head teachers and by Lama regarding budget restrictions and focused on how this impacted the quality of teaching and learning and on students. They also mentioned the lack of incentives to encourage staff development, as well as to develop school buildings, and provide students with a healthy learning environment.

While some head teachers, who were mentioned in Chapter Four, argued that they allow their staff to make decisions only if they relate to their subjects and inside the

classroom, Lama claimed that she encouraged her staff to make decisions autonomously, and we can see that these claims have been validated by her staff. Even although some head teachers mentioned they had difficulties in managing staff, due to a mismatch between the *Official Guidance* documents for teachers and for head teachers, it is clear from the case study that in good schools with exceptional head teachers, such as Lama, this problem does not emerge. Accordingly, Lama supported teachers by providing them with the power they need to manage their classrooms and to deal with students' problems. These features of the head teachers' roles were considered by some head teachers, as reported in Chapter Four, to be considerable challenges, although Lama seemed to be able to motivate her staff despite facing similar challenges regarding, for example, the lack of appropriate incentives.

Nonetheless, even Lama was stuck with many problems, such as how to develop a better learning environment, a lack of autonomy to lead more effectively, and a lack of control over the school budget. Yet, many of the problems raised by head teachers in the other schools were not at the forefront for her. Lama had encouraged competent, confident and autonomous teachers who worked with her and who appreciated the limitations she was under due to structural issues in the education system. Her staff were motivated to do their jobs well and were not looking for free time. The case study demonstrates the importance of good leadership and points to the potential for distributed leadership for school development in girls' schools in Saudi Arabia.

The deputy head teachers and teachers all confirmed that Lama was a democratic individual who led through teamwork and consultation. She provided teachers with the opportunities to lead teams to make decisions and the confidence they needed to manage their duties; she did not personalise anything committed by mistake. Additionally, she cultivated trust by dealing with staff carefully, and by helping them to learn from their mistakes. These are the emergent qualities of leadership referred to by Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2008); Huguet (2017); Louis *et al*. (2010); Bush

and Glover (2012); Nobile, El Baba and London (2016); Höög, Johansson and Olofsson (2009); Büyükgöze (2016); Hallinger and Heck (2011); Sammons *et al*. (2014); Scheerens (2013); Dinham (2005) (see Chapter Two, p.44). For example, Scheerens (2013) emphasised that "leadership should be supportive and not a downright directive, teachers engaged rather than frustrated, and internal relationships should be based on trust." (p. 9). The notion of distributed leadership involves the comprehensive quality of leadership that focuses on, not only the distribution of trust among a group of leaders, but also on developing leadership abilities of school members (Harris, 2011).

Despite the centralised education system in Saudi Arabia, the head teacher in the case study enacted many elements of distributed leadership. Lama succeeded in providing the school with appropriate learning resources by seeking financial support from benefactors, while she also minimised accountability by empowering her deputy head teachers and teachers to make decisions, and stood by them if they were made accountable by the regional education supervisors. In addition, Lama developed her staffs' skills and the learning environment, spreading the culture of collaboration across the workforce through teams and consultation, as well as dealing with them carefully and demonstrating flexibility in times of change. By spreading trust, she enabled a community of competent, confident and autonomous staff to grow.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION

7. Introduction

This chapter brings together findings from Chapters Four, Five and Six to address the four main research questions: 1) how do women head teachers in the education system perceive leadership; 2) do women head teachers have an understanding of different models of leadership, and in particular distributed leadership; 3) what may be some of the possibilities and barriers to developing effective leaders in girls' schools in Saudi Arabia in line with Saudi Vision 2030; and 4) how can leadership models be adapted to work within girls' schools that are led by women in Saudi Arabia?

As reported in Chapters One and Two, Saudi Arabia is a society historically organised through gender, or more specifically sex-group, segregation. Before the establishment of the education system in Saudi Arabia in 1954, only boys attended schools and girls were educated by parents and were dependent on home learning via private tutors. The first girls' schools opened after the establishment of the Ministry of Education in the 1960s. The Saudi Arabian Vision 2030 provides a roadmap for economic and development work within The Kingdom yet includes no plans to integrate the sexes in public institutions, schools or universities (Saudi Arabia Vision 2030, 2016). As suggested in chapter two, issues of patriarchy and how it infuses schools cannot be ignored especially in a society in which women's liberties are controlled far more than men. Therefore, throughout the summary of findings and in response to the research questions, the divided nature of Saudi Arabian public life remains an important contextual feature. Societal patriarchal power dynamics influence the way women operate in society and limit to a great extent their access to policy making at the highest levels of society. This context infuses who women feel they can become and how much they feel they can say in education policy debates, how they act as leaders as well as the

confidence they feel on a day-to-day basis to act autonomously. While the study did not directly interrogate these societal contextual issues, the contextual background provided in Chapters One and Two are integral to how the study was designed and gives an overview of how the women interviewees were positioned socially. The findings in this study can not be generalised to boys' schools because men in Saudi Arabia are positioned very differently to women. Each research question will be addressed in turn. This is followed by sections on the contributions and implications of the study, the limitations of the study and policy recommendations.

7.1 RQ 1: How do women head teachers in the education system perceive leadership?

All eight head teachers recognised the difference between management and leadership. They all described many features of distributed leadership as elements of their working practice and seemed to practice these to a more or lesser extent, suggesting some variation in the way women teachers perceived leadership in education. Many of these features were also mentioned by deputy head teachers and the three teachers in the study, suggesting that women head teachers recognised and practiced some aspects of leadership. The study was very small scale and so while there are hints that women head teachers in Saudi Arabia may well have understood the 2030 vision and the role of leadership as compared with management, it is not possible to suggest how widespread this is throughout the country.

Some of the features all head teachers mentioned as elements of their leadership practices were teamwork, communicating new rules and processes via the social media tool WhatsApp, and the need to include all staff in working towards the schools' goals and having roles outside classroom teaching. They all spoke of the role of professional development for deputy head teachers, teachers and school administrators. All head teachers in the study were motivated to improve the learning

environment for their pupils. Three head teachers recognised the need to build trusting communities and to enable teachers to take initiative and make decisions autonomously when the occasion arrived, yet others did not take this position.

All eight head teachers perceived leadership as problematic in the girls' schools where they worked in Saudi Arabia. All of them spoke of their own experiences and how they had come to attain the role of head teacher. They all spoke of not being adequately prepared to adopt leadership positions, while a great deal of the problem was a lack of prior experience, inadequate or non-existent training and inadequate continuing professional development (CPD). The barrier they all recognised to practicing leadership was the lack of autonomy for professionals within the education system.

Across all the interviews, four main themes emerged in the way head teachers perceived their roles, which involved issues of gaining the role of head teacher; pre-training; gaining experience and CPD. However, as reported in Chapter Four page 103, five head teachers did not have the desire to undertake the head teacher position. Indeed, many head teachers had taken on the leadership roles under the name of deputy head teacher before progressing to head teacher. Only two participants had voluntarily put themselves forward for the head teacher position, while the rest had been directed to take on this role (p. 106). The next primary concern was that they had not received any training, and all eight participants mentioned this problem (p. 105). Moreover, the absence of in-service training for leadership was perceived to create challenges in their abilities to enact good leadership practices.

They spoke of how training courses do not equip head teachers with the skills and knowledge to develop their understanding of leadership, in part because the courses involve answering standard questions (p. 108). All eight head teachers said they were concerned that the Ministry of Education did not provide CPD to explain a new system before they are expected to implement it. They described having to learn from each other via social media groups, and specifically, WhatsApp (p. 106).

Participants pointed to the lack of preparedness, expertise and understanding of the tasks required of head teachers, as well as the waves of anxiety they experienced when required to act as head teachers and how this created an atmosphere within the profession that makes others reluctant to do the job. Seven head teachers agreed that they needed skills to build good relationships both within and outside the school (p. 112).

On a positive side, three out of eight perceived themselves to be performance-oriented and felt satisfied that they were managing to increase academic performance and work with staff cooperatively. They explained that their scores of 'excellence' on leadership assessments (see Chapter One, p. 26) was due to continually developing leadership skills, such as being flexible in dealing with staff, encouraging teamwork, and showing an interest in teachers as people as well as professionals

Findings from interviews with deputy head teachers supported the concerns, challenges and problems highlighted by the head teachers. Four out of seven emphasised the importance of training in order to work confidently and address school challenges. Interestingly, one deputy head teacher suggested that head teachers should receive training programmes for six months to a year in order to understand the leadership role prior to commencing the position. Another deputy head teacher recommended that head teachers should visit outstanding schools in order to become aware of how successful leadership is enacted (Chapter Five, p. 144).

Many deputy head teachers pointed to head teachers' intense workload and the lack of training programmes, both of which are shown to make leadership positions undesirable among educators (p. 144). One deputy head teacher raised the need for better qualified trainers, and the high demand for training programmes (p. 144). From the case study reported in Chapter Six, one teacher mentioned that despite the head teacher not having undertaken much training, the leader's personality played a significant role in overcoming challenges and meeting the demands of the role

especially at the beginning (Chapter Six p. 185). Their comments related to Lama, the head teacher of Manar School.

These findings support evidence from studies in the literature review. Specifically, many studies of leadership in education emphasised that to guarantee the success of development plans and improve students' learning requires a broad range of skills, experience and personal qualities (Leithwood *et al.*, 2004; p. 8-9). Furthermore, Bush (2011) suggests that head teachers should be able to practice both leadership and management to operate effectively and achieve school goals. Furthermore, Burke (2008) notes that in order to facilitate success in educational reforms and achieve positive changes in the public educational sector, one of the most significant and urgent requirements is to develop leadership skills among educators. Alabdulkareem (2014) undertook a study to assess professional support and supervision for head teachers in Saudi schools. One of the many themes that the study revealed was a lack of leadership skills. It found that school leaders who were not well trained in leadership skills were viewed as obstacles in any model of improvement.

7.2 RQ 2: Do women head teachers have an understanding of different models of leadership, and in particular distributed leadership?

Even although the term 'distributed leadership' is not commonly used among head teachers in Saudi Arabia, all head teachers spoke in the interviews of trying to use practices of leadership that are recognised as distributed, rather than heroic, transformation or transactional. The majority spoke of the importance of working collaboratively, delegating responsibilities, encouraging teachers, enabling staff to make decisions and creating trust within the school. They also stressed the importance of flexibility, respect, acceptance of staff members' opinions, creating a school vision and working collaboratively to achieve the school's aims. These features are all

characteristics of distributed leadership. However, they pointed to multiple barriers to enacting distributed leadership.

Several different perspectives on leadership were found in the current study, as was stated in Chapter Four (p. 118). All head teachers agreed that their role was to supervise and monitor tasks according to *The Organisational Guide for Schools of General Education*. This guidance prescribes which tasks have to be undertaken by which member of staff in a school (see Chapter One Figure 1.5, p. 23). The guide explains the role of each employee in the school and head teacher have to adhere to the guidance when managing the school.

Some leaders reported that they went further than the guidance to delegate extra tasks to some members of staff where they felt this was required, showing that they were exerting some agency beyond the guidance. This finding supports Bush & Glover (2012), who reported that "despite the rhetoric of distribution, it is clear that the head has the central role in deciding what is distributed and how distribution is accomplished" (2012, p. 34). Moreover, Thomas (2009); Bush and Glover (2012); and Gronn (2010) all stated that successful schools have powerful leaders who act within a team framework, which incorporates individual and distributed staff roles. In this study head teachers explained how they used a teamwork approach to develop school agendas, as well as how they organised meetings and they contributed to achieving the school's vision (Chapter Four, p. 120). All head teachers expressed the importance of teamwork in achieving school goals. They believed that working within a centralised education system prevented them from improving their working environments. Mathis (2012) studied the leadership role of women head teachers in Saudi Arabia and found that they were not provided with sufficient authority to make decisions and thus were only able to act as managers rather than school leaders.

All head teachers reported feeling comfortable with change and approached this by working collaboratively to implement new systems, working in teams and distributing roles between school members if required (Chapter Four, p. 121). They also emphasised that creating a community within the school was one of the main elements that distinguishes a leader from a manager, as well as working collaboratively to achieve the goals. It was clear that they were trying to encourage staff to work collaboratively, to consult them to determine the school vision and facilitate how tasks were undertaken in order to fulfil their school's objectives (Chapter Four, p. 122). These findings suggest that many of the head teachers in this small-scale study had the capacity to visualise how they could further improve the school, yet faced barriers in doing so. Leithwood and Duke (1999); Bush and Glover (2003); Kouzes and Posner (2008); Morrison (2013); and Harris (2002), all point to the importance of a head teacher being able to visualise the future as a fundamental element of leadership. They stated that having a vision and communicating this is an important aspect of leadership. A study by Taleb (2010) described the challenges facing women leaders in Saudi Arabia and suggested that many of the challenges did not relate to women's abilities or capacities to lead or manage but that their ambitions were curtailed by several conditions, including a dominating patriarchal-male culture, a centralisation education system, and organisational structures such as single sex buildings.

All eight head teachers reported holding several meetings to discuss school procedures and new activity and organising them using the social media application, 'Group WhatsApp'. All eight head teachers reported holding meetings with staff (Chapter Four p. 122) to clarify new regulations and discuss future activities (p. 123); they reported that this helped staff to understand their duties and roles. Such meetings, they suggested, support staff to work towards goals and the school's future orientated objectives.

These findings align with Hallinger and Huber (2012); Louis and Kruse (1998); Chrisman (2005); Leithwood (2006); Hallinger and Heck (2011), who stated that the schools' capacity for development is linked to leadership practices that focus on work conditions and how to respond to them. Establishing good work conditions enables teachers to become motivated, develop new capacities, and commitments to the school's specific vision. Building collaborative cultures, building relations with parents and the community, as well as linking the school with its broad environment were also important findings (p. 98 & 109). Similarly, research by Gronn (2000) found that distributed leadership is a property that emerges from interacting individuals within a network or a group. Thus, organisational change is reinforced when engaging teachers in leadership roles that lead to innovative and facilitate change (Hopkins, 2001). A study by Taleb (2010) examined the relationship between gender and women's leadership styles in academic private colleges in Saudi Arabia. The results revealed that the women leaders were characterised as democratic and tended to possess a transformational, rather than an autocratic style of leadership.

Findings from the current study support previous studies (for example, Day & Sammons, 2014); Cunningham & Gresso, 1993) that emphasise the importance of trust. In the current study, all eight head teachers reported the need to promote trust and all recognised that it was essential for school development. They reported actively seeking to enhance teachers' confidence through emotional support or delegating responsibilities to them while not focusing on mistakes and guiding them to develop their skills and understanding This finding supports Blase & Blase (2001) who point out that successful distributed leadership requires establishing trust. They stated that "without trust a school cannot improve and grow into the rich, nurturing micro-society needed by children and adults alike" (Blase & Blasé 2001, p. 23). Likewise, this finding supports previous studies by Brewster and Railsback (2003) who found that the increasing trust within a school community motivates staff to do better, teach to

higher standards and raise test scores. Consequently, this leads schools to focus on the various aspects of school improvement over the long-term (Chapter Four, p. 125).

Seven head teachers reported encouraging staff to develop leadership skills. Head teachers said that they delegated tasks to teachers in difficult times, such as when they do not have a full complement of deputy head teachers (p. 118 & 121). This finding revealed that head teachers are able to distribute the school tasks and delegate activities, and this is consistent with findings by Day *et al*. (2010; 2014) who highlight one of the fundamental components of effective distributed leadership is to spread the responsibility and accountability to staff. This extends a sense of responsibility to a broad range of teachers (Day *et al.,* 2010). Hence, supporting teachers to develop skills through delegating tasks to them is considered one of the main indicators of a school's readiness to undertake reforms (Brewster & Railsback, 2003).

In terms of making a decision, all head teachers emphasised that they provide teachers with the right to make a decision in the classrooms if the decision is related to their lessons. Furthermore, four head teachers reported that they provided teachers with the responsibilities to develop leadership skills beyond classroom teaching, which in turn developed their self-confidence. This finding is consistent with Fullan (2001; 2006); Spillane *et al*. (2001; 2004); and Hopkins (2001), whose findings showed that a distributed school leadership rationale is based on the notion of sustainable change, in which leadership generates changes that enable teachers and other staff members to embrace their own leadership, as well as to own the responsibility to implement these changes in the classroom. However, the other four head teachers reported that they did not allow teachers to make decisions beyond the classroom. They stated that a teacher would have to consult them, which appeared to be because head teachers were concerned about the high level of accountability placed upon them (p. 123).

In the literature review, Creemersa and Kyriakides (2006) provide an example of why school leaders need to possess more than one style. They argue that instructional leadership is not equally important for all the teachers at a school as some teachers may need to focus on curriculum and instruction work. Principles are, therefore, "expected to adapt their leadership to the specific needs of the teachers by taking into account the extent to which they are ready to implement a task" (Creemersa and Kyriakides, 2006, p. 355). In the current study, it was found that head teachers were adopting a range of leadership styles and reported acting in different ways, for example, one head teacher provided the school members the autonomy to manage their work in order to develop leadership skills and be able to make a decision and more confidence in the work (Chapter Four p. 119). Another head teacher started her work in a new school by acting as a manager to control the school system and organise the job, yet later she changed to a more distributed leadership role and delegated tasks to the teachers (Chapter Four, p. 119). Meanwhile, another head teacher made a decision that was not beneficial to the students, and the Department for Education's (DoE) supervisor asked her to change the arrangement (Chapter Four, p. 127). These examples demonstrate that head teachers had different styles of leadership. These findings support the evidence presented by Leithwood *et al*. (2004), which indicates that individual leaders in effect behave completely differently based on the people whom they are working with and the circumstances they are facing.

The views of deputy head teachers reported in Chapter Five were similar to the head teachers and several interesting points can be highlighted. Deputy head teachers identified various qualities of an 'excellent' head teacher, such as: the ability to motivate, undertake dialogue, provide fair management, distribute tasks, lead with affection, show respect and accept others' opinions. They also highlighted the qualities of justice, honesty, persuasiveness and leading by example. These findings are consistent with Garza *at el*.(2014) who noted several qualities of successful leaders,

which included flexibility and sustaining their efforts through continuous motivation. Additionally, these principles enable head teachers to construct relationships with staff to create communities, showing they understood that success is impossible to achieve in isolation.

Concerning teamwork, all deputy head teachers confirmed that teams had been created in their schools based on needs at different levels of the school. The team members included ''excellent'' teachers (see Chapter One, p. 26) who could share best practice, ideas and experiences, and two deputy head teachers mentioned this arrangement (Chapter Five, p. 149). Further, three deputy head teachers confirmed that many of the teams were led by teachers in order to develop their leadership skills (Chapter Five, p. 150). This finding supports those of Bennett *et al*. (2003) and Harris (2004) who suggest that "distributed leadership concentrates on engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organisation rather than seeking this only through formal position or role" (Harris, 2004, p. 13). Thus, organisational change is reinforced when engaging teachers in leadership roles that lead to innovation and facilitating change (Hopkins, 2001). Additionally, Higham *et al.*(2007) state that, "day to day school leadership is usually distributed across a range of school staff with leadership teams becoming more diversified with regards to members' background and expertise" (Higham *et al.*2007, p. 20). This finding also supports the ideas of Penlington *et al*., (2008); Fullan (2001; 2006) and Hall and Hord (2001), who stated that distributed leadership has a direct influence on the development of teams of leaders, as well as developing the capacities of a staff team as the central part of a head teacher's role.

Another significant interest is that all the school deputies confirmed that teachers have the freedom to make decisions with respect to teaching their subject (Chapter Five, p. 159). Huguet (2017) found that effective leadership emerges from members who are trusted, which creates a more focused school environment that leads to academic success. It encourages collaboration through by encouraging teachers to

support and guide colleagues in curriculum and instruction requirements, as well as hiring teachers who demonstrate high quality in enhancing student performance.

While head teachers and deputy head teachers raised many similar themes, the deputy head teachers and teachers added many interesting details beyond the head teachers' accounts. One interesting point was that deputies reported various qualities that head teachers require such as: decentralisation; working in teams; delegating the responsibility; motivating staff to develop themselves; encouraging staff to make decisions and build good relationships in the school community (Chapter Six, p. 175). All the teachers emphasised that their head teachers created a trusting atmosphere in the school by empowering staff which made them feel confident, as well as showing an understanding of the different situations and personal circumstances of teachers. They pointed to the importance of head teachers promoting initiatives, supporting their ideas and opinions, and providing a defence if they made mistakes (Chapter Six, p. 184). They concurred with head teachers that teachers were allowed to make decisions outside their authorised roles if the situation required it. They also pointed out that the head teacher showed her appreciation when teachers made the right decisions and that created a confidence community (Chapter Six, p. 183). This finding aligns with Day *et al*. (2010), who emphasised that successful school leaders are not only focused on the outcomes of students' tests, they are also interested in the personal and social aspects of staff and students, as well as engaging everyone in the school community. What is more, effective head teachers develop student performances indirectly through good leadership, which stems as much from their personality, their virtues, values, characteristics and competencies, as well as through their actions in relation to selected strategies and how they adapt their leadership practices to the school context.

The three teachers in the Case Study school spoke positively of the way their head teachers motivated them to develop leadership skills and encouraged them to undertake tasks by taking initiatives. They spoke of, their love of their work, and of

feeling inspired by the head teacher (Chapter Six, p. 184). This finding supports the work by Spillane *et al.*(2001; 2004), who stated that distributed leadership practice is a process of leaders' interactions with staff, and their situations, while recognising that teachers and others can move in and out of leadership roles, regardless of the position. Hence, organisational change is reinforced when the engagement of teachers in leadership roles leads to innovative and facilitates changes (Hopkins, 2001).

7.3 RQ 3: What maybe some of the possibilities and barriers in developing effective school leaders in girls' schools in Saudi Arabia in line with Saudi Vision 2030?

This study was very small-scale, and so findings can only suggest possibilities and barriers reported by a small sample of deputy and headteachers. Even so, the interviews were of a good length, and the data was rich. While all the head teachers seemed to have some understanding of what distributed leadership was, they commented that they faced several challenges in acting as such leaders within the highly centralised education system in Saudi Arabia which has a plethora of prescriptive guidance documents. Many head teachers said they felt they had no choice but to adhere to the processes and procedures outlined in guidance documents and this interfered with their ability to take initiatives, be proactive and lead with autonomy. Most head teachers spoke of the excessive accountability they had to demonstrate in following the guidance. Some felt the need to check all their decisions with the regional education office (Chapter Four, p. 126). The challenges they faced in developing girls' secondary schools effectively were: a lack of autonomy; too much accountability; a lack of incentives to motivate staff; no control over budgets and difficulties in carrying out maintenance on school buildings.

In Vision 2030 initiated in 2015, the Ministry of Education allocated 60 powers to head teachers. Despite this important development, which was aimed at enabling head teachers to act as leaders, findings suggest there remain many obstacles in exercising

such powers. Four of the head teachers argued that they were restricted and were acting as managers under the name of 'leader' (Chapter Four, p. 127). Moreover, all head teachers were looking for more autonomy in order to be able to improve the school's performance, to motivate staff, encourage initiatives and work towards improving school outcomes (Chapter Four, p. 126). Many wanted to develop school facilities, encourage more creative teaching and interactive pedagogies and to solve problems such as overcrowded schools (Chapter Four, p. 131). Four out of eight indicated that their lack of autonomy in controlling student numbers caused problems in classrooms such as teachers not being able to control students' behaviour shape good learning attitudes and raise standards (Chapter Four, p. 132).

Furthermore, four head teachers criticised the way their role as a head teacher was limited (Chapter Four, p. 129) supporting Bush & Glover (2014) who reported that one of the potential barriers to the implementation of distributed leadership in a successful manner was the structure of the existing authority within schools. Harris (2004) also stated that, "there are inherent threats to the status quo in all that distributed leadership implies" (*ibid.*p.20). The threat relates to the way distributed leadership makes the authority relationship among leaders and followers unclear (Law *et al*. 2010). These studies therefore draw attention to the way head teachers have to use leadership skills carefully to retain their authority while inviting others to take control. In this study there were some head teachers seemed to have this skill, and Lama was one of them.

As was reported in Chapter Four (p. 130), all the participants pointed to the high level accountability placed on head teachers. In the event of a serious problem in the school, the head teacher was the only one who was directly responsible, regardless of who had made the error or why. The Ministry of Education blamed the head teacher. This finding is consistent with Fischer and Boynton (2005), who stated that there should be "no micromanagement or intrusive scrutiny from above", as this could "damage group morale" (2005, p. 119).

All eight head teachers confirmed that there were insufficient incentives to encourage staff (Chapter Four, p. 124). Only one head teacher mentioned allocating a budget for rewarding staff. Bush and Glover (2014) reported that head teachers need incentives that are required to stimulate the teachers to have a positive attitude to new initiatives so they can act effectively.

As was outlined in Chapter Four (p. 103), that developing school staff is one of the head teachers' roles. Indeed, all eight head teachers highlighted the need to develop both teachers and administrators' skills, as well as provide them with the autonomy to choose appropriate teaching methods to deliver their lessons (Chapter Four, p. 113 & p. 115). Five head teachers said they faced difficulties in motivating school employees to undertake training programmes because training did not impact on salary and some teachers were negatively influenced by colleagues who refused to change routines and resisted change (Chapter Four, p. 111).

There were inadequate training programmes for administrators so when the Ministry of Education implemented a new programme or activity, staff were not trained to implement it (Chapter Four, p. 112).

Moreover, the lack of power that head teachers felt they had to influence staff and develop their skills and knowledge contrasts with findings from Day and Sammons (2014), who showed that the head teachers' main goal is not only to develop the skills and knowledge that teachers and school members demand to achieve school objectives, but also the dispositions (i.e., ability, resilience, and commitment) to persevere in the application of skills and knowledge. These direct experiences of staff members, as well as those leadership roles and with organisational contexts are able to influence capacities and motivations (Leithwood *et al.*, 2004). Alhazmi's 2010 study aimed to measure women head teachers' job satisfaction. Findings pointed to problems faced by women leaders including: a lack of delegated authority; budget constraints; poor supervision; a high workload; limited opportunities for training and poor school infrastructure. Issues were also raised about schools' geographic location

and especially challenges faced when the school was in a rural area. The study suggested that many challenges listed above stem from an overly centralised education system.

The significant issue was that seven head teachers considered the late arrival of the budget a considerable barrier in developing a learning environment (Chapter Four, p. 127). However, many head teachers said they sought to bridge the gap by paying from their own money or borrowing from the school canteen profit (Chapter Four, p. 128). In addition, six head teachers spoke of their limited autonomy in improving and creating a good learning environment (Chapter Four, p. 131). Five participants highlighted the importance of servicing mobile devices and computers, and the problems caused when they could not. Not having well functioning devices and computers was considered a barrier to students' learning. The problem was exacerbated because the Ministry of Education is the only department responsible for maintenance and repairs and their services were often consider too slow (Chapter Four, p. 129).

These findings show that head teachers showed some awareness that their schools needed to improve performance and this is supported by a study by Grissom and Loeb (2011), who state that school leaders should comprehend the school needs in relation to the educational resources and have the ability to direct school resources (i.e. keep the school running smoothly). However, insufficient leadership autonomy prevented head teachers from doing this. Likewise, studies by Day and Sammons (2014) and Leithwood *et al.*, (2008) confirmed that effective leadership practices that lead to sustainable educational success require fertile working conditions for educators so they can enhance learning environments and create stability in the organisation through a reliable infrastructure within the school. This requires the inclusion of staff in teaching programmes, monitoring school activities, and protecting teachers against embarrassment in their work (Leithwood *et al.*, 2008; Duke, 2004; Hallinger, 2003).

Accounts from deputy head teachers in Chapter Five support head teachers' views that a lack of autonomy was a barrier to school improvement. Five deputy head teachers said they were looking to become excellent leaders and said they required more autonomy from the Ministry of Education (Chapter Five, p. 157). They acknowledged that head teachers were overly restricted. They believed that the school performance would be more flexible, and work would be distributed more effectively if head teachers had more autonomy. A large number of students in each classroom was also considered a serious problem and led to a decrease in the quality of learning (Chapter Five, p. 157 & 158). Head teachers also pointed to a deficient budget as another reason why they were discouraged from applying to be a head teacher (Chapter Four, p. 128).

In Chapter Six (p. 166), the head teacher of Manar School, Lama stated the reason that the Ministry of Education restricted the authority of leaders was due to the lack of head teachers' qualifications. She reported 90% of head teachers have inadequate skills to lead schools. The Ministry restricts the power of the head teacher to compensate for some head teachers' inadequacies. The head teacher in Manar School said that this discourages candidates putting themselves forward for head teacher positions (Chapter Six, p. 166). However, as was reported in Chapter Six (p. 171), part of a head teachers' role was to develop school facilities. Lama had sought to create a new resource room to develop staff and students' technology skill and media access and without official support or funding she had found a business partnership to equip the room. This finding supports Louis & Kruse (1998); Chrisman (2005); and Leithwood (2006), who suggested that a schools' capacities for improvement are linked to leadership practices. In this case Lama had found a way to improve work conditions in her school. By creating a resources room where teachers could undertake online training courses she enabled teachers to develop their skills, and she had also found a way to motivate them and in turn contributed to build a collaborative culture (Chapter Six, p.171).

7.4 RQ 4: How can leadership models be adapted to work within girls' schools that are led by women in Saudi Arabia?

The sex- segregated nature of Saudi Arabian society was highlighted in Chapters One and Two and referred to again in the introductory section 7 above. The education system in Saudi Arabia is completely single sex. The administration structure and buildings are also single sex. Girls' schools are led by female head teachers and have female teachers and administrators and boys' schools are led by male leaders and have male staff. Engen *et al*. (2001) claim, however, that the differences in effectiveness and style between schools run by the male and female head teachers is small or non-existent. This study could not compare female and male leadership performance, yet even so I have tried to understand the qualities of leadership exhibited by the head teachers of eight girls' schools in a city in the middle of Saudi Arabia.

The literature suggests that in public organisations, male leaders exhibit qualities such as independence, aggression and decision-making and characteristics such as being analytical, logical and objective whereas female leaders are said to draw on feelings, emotions, intuition, sensitivity and expressiveness (Fernandes & Cabral-Cardoso, 2003). Accordingly, the relationship between gender roles and leadership links masculinity with task-oriented leadership and femininity with relationship-oriented leadership (Oshagbemi & Gill, 2003; Rigg & Sparrow, 1994). In particular, some argue that female forms of leadership are more effective (Book, 2000) and that women are more motivated to develop themselves, raise educational attainment, succeed and are idealistic (Abdalla, 1996).

These findings from the literature review correspond with the findings from the current study in many ways. Firstly, women head teachers described dealing with others with empathy, suggesting emotional labour and putting effort into providing the best conditions for teachers who they recognise as having family responsibilities.

This emotional labour and care was reflected directly in the ways they described their work as head teachers. Many explained that they dealt with the school as a community and felt a great sense of responsibility towards it. All eight head teachers spoke of caring for their follow staff members not only in how they accomplished school tasks, but also in developing their skills and knowledge. Furthermore, building a relationship within a school community was one of their priorities. For example, when undertaking changes, six head teachers said they achieve this by working in teams to facilitate the new activities while trying to protect staff and students from the concern and anxiety that often accompanies change.

Secondly, all eight head teachers reported having strong feelings of responsibility for providing students with a healthy and suitable learning environment. They put effort into equipping and developing learning spaces and six head teachers reported doing so from their own budget. One remarkable case was mentioned by one head teacher who had contacted the Chamber of Commerce for resources to equip a room in order to be able to hold training courses for both school staff and students to develop their skills and knowledge. This finding supports Hallinger and Heck (2010), who suggests that distributed leadership was associated with change and increasing the academic capacity of schools, which in turn impacts on students' learning. Some head teachers in this study seemed to show potential to lead according to a distributed model which aligns better with the female rather than the male leadership characteristics mentioned above.

Another finding from this study was that all eight head teachers worked to achieve success by encouraging teachers and deputies, by including them in teams to share best practice, and experiences and develop their leadership skills. Two head teachers said they provided teachers with a chance to lead and make decisions for the team. Four head teachers also emphasised that team members should take initiatives depending on the nature of tasks and individual experiences.

Characteristic such as developing teachers' skills, delegating responsibilities to staff where appropriate and enabling them to gain experiences are consistent with the studies that indicated that distributed leadership concentrates on engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organisation, rather than seeking this only through a formal position or role (Harris, 2004, p.13). Bennett *et al*. (2003); Spillane *et al*. (2001); Spillane and Healey (2010); Heck and Hallinger (2009). Additionally, Harris (2004, p.13); Hall and Wallace (1996), and Day *et al*.(2007). In addition, Bennett *et al*. (2003, p. 3) claimed that distributed leadership is an emergent property of a group or network of individuals in which group members pool their expertise. Furthermore, school leadership should be practiced by many members and not only the principal, (Spillane & Healey, 2010); Heck & Hallinger, 2009). Hall and Wallace (1996) emphasise that when recruiting new leaders and team members is imperative and needs to take account of candidates' capacities for group work. Furthermore, Higham *et al*.(2007) stated that, "day to day school leadership is usually distributed across a range of school staff with leadership teams becoming more diversified with regards to members' background and expertise" (2007, p.20).

The current study shows that head teachers sought to create a community within their schools. The eight head teachers reported they were working collaboratively, consulting individuals to determine school objectives, were making decisions collectively and discussed problems together in teams to arrive at the best solutions. Moreover, head teachers in the current study said they "do not like to take a central role in school" (Lama, Chapter Four, p. 102). They sought to encourage sharing responsibilities with staff, to develop leadership skills, to increase the feelings of security and create trusting communities within the school.

These findings suggest that the head teachers were practicing many aspects of distributed leadership such as working in teams, supporting employees to develop their skills and establishing trust. They were also concerned to provide individuals with the confidence they needed to work creatively. These attributes support Rosener

(1990), who defined feminine leadership style as "interactive leadership", including: boosting participation; promoting self-worth; sharing power and knowledge and working for the advantage of all. Many head teachers in this study gave signs that they had good interpersonal skills and believed that if staff felt good they would perform better (Rosener, 1990, p.39). In addition, Northouse (2007) and Stelter (2002) argue that in all the studies that focus on the differences between female and male leadership, the only strong difference is that women tend to lead in a democratic way, which encourages participation by others (Northouse, 2007; Stelter, 2002). Trinidad and Normore (2005) found that "women adopt democratic and participative leadership styles in the corporate world and in education" (Trinidad & Normore, 2005 p.574). Furthermore, females manage collaborative groups and interpersonal relationships (ibid, 2002), whereas male leaders tend to use more goal-directed practices (Stelter, 2002). Alyami and Floyd (2019) conducted a study of women leaders' perceptions and experiences of decentralisation and distributed leadership in the Tatweer System in Saudi Arabia. Findings covered issues such as accountability, trust, and staff competence. This led to the term "semi-decentralised" to describe the Tatweer education system. Within this "semi-decentralised" system, it was found that the head teacher in the school achieved success by undertaking aspects of distributed leadership with staff and through involving the school community in decision-making.

The literature suggests that women tend to want to lead by working with teams and bringing people together. They do not have strong hieratical systems which direct others to follow rules. The women who are not confident in their role as leaders, in this study, were not trying to force staff to follow them, rather they were more worried about conforming to the guidance from the Ministry of Education. Most said they wanted more autonomy so they could take initiatives and felt very restricted by official guidance from the Ministry of Education. It may be that some of the women in the study lacked confidence as leaders because women, as the literature suggests, are more restricted within society in general and find it harder to take on roles of leadership because it demands they have a lot of confidence in their own position. Yet,

some women in this study showed they could resist some of the many regulative elements of the centralisation system. Women such as Lama, like many other head teachers, showed confidence as a leader and could take and hold powerful positions. These women recognised there is power in bringing everybody with you and persuading them to do things collectively. Yet such powers also demand much from a leader and require that staff trust her. Maybe this is what distributed power looks like?

7.5 Contributions and implications of the study

Even although comments from head teachers in girls' schools in this study mentioned many areas where they said they were exercising leadership, it was found that in some areas, such as school maintenance, their comments suggested they tended to manage, rather than lead. Studies of leadership in Saudi Arabia's education system by Algarni and Male, 2014) also found this.

The current study has been able to establish that the nature of the centralised school system in Saudi Arabia continues to be a major barrier to head teachers being able to exercise leadership. This finding is similar to other studies undertaken in Saudi Arabia (Alabdulkareem, 2014; Alyami & Floyd, 2019). Yet, Alabdulkareem's (2014) study was undertaken prior to Vision 2030, and it may be that the systems have only minimally changed since 2014. In addition, Alyami and Floyd (2019) also had the same findings as the current study, as their study showed that women head teachers were able to understand what distributed leadership is and wanted to develop it further in their schools. Nonetheless, as with other studies, the problem was the centralised system, which is highly restrictive and makes it difficult for head teachers to take initiatives or make decisions based on the perceived circumstance or needs in the school.

Even although Vision 2030 states that it aims to decentralise and provide more autonomy to educators, it remains only a "semi- decentralisation" model (Alyami & Floyd, 2019). Hence, even although some of the findings in my study are the same with

these in these two recent studies, my study provides an up to date confirmation of previous findings. Furthermore, the schools in my study were not in the Tatweer system (see Chapter One, p. 17). Tatweer schools are not typical schools as they are equipped with advanced devices and are supervised by the educational consultants. The schools involved in this study were normal public schools and not Tatweer experimental schools.

Also, the schools selected for this study, unlike the school of the Tatweer system, suffered from the lack of teachers, equipment, and had no external educational consultants offering guidance. My study supports findings from many other studies in Saudi Arabia that show that head teachers lack sufficient training to undertake distributed leadership (Alabbas, 2010; Al-mugbel, 2009; Arif, 2008; Alyami & Floyd, 2019; and Zaidi, 2015).

Prior studies in Saudi Arabia have focused on flaws in the way head teachers were selected (e.g. Al-Fuhaid, 2014; Arif, 2008; Zaidi, 2015). This study confirms that in this respect not much has improved. This study reveals further details of how head teachers are selected, by showing that candidates who were appointed to the role of head teacher had referred to an informal booklet that provided examples of the types of questions they would be asked in the official head teacher tests. They had also drawn on answers collected from previous candidates to support them in tests and in the recruitment interview.

Previous studies have not emphasised the importance of trust, team building, delegating roles, and having a vision, as major qualities of leadership, that are raised in the international literature on distributed leadership (e.g. Bennett *et al*., 2003; Bush & Glover, 2012; 2014; Crawford, 2012; Day & Sammons, 2014; Goleman, 2002; Gronn, 2002; Harris, 2004; 2005; 2011; Hartley, 2010; Heck & Hallinger, 2009; Hopkins, 2001; Hopkins & Jackson, 2002; Law *et al*. 2010; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Lumby, 2009; Pont *et. al*., 2002; Spillane *et al*., 2001; Spillane & Healey, 2010 and Stoll, 2009).

The current study suggests that women head teachers are as capable as men of taking up leadership roles (Fernandes & Cabral-Cardoso, 2003), although this study cannot conclude that women head teachers might be better leaders than men, as suggested by many studies (e.g. Engen *et al*., 2001; Northouse, 2007; Stelter, 2002; Taleb, 2010; Trinidad and Normore, 2005), as there is no comparative data in the current study. However, this study found that women were being encouraged to take on leadership roles (see Alhazmi, 2010), and were facing similar barriers to male head teachers (Al-Abbas, 2010; Alhazmi, 2010; Al-Fozan, 1997; and Al-Muqbel, 2009). However, historical legacies in the way Saudi Arabian society is organised including patriarchal power dynamics may have some influence on how women think about their roles as leaders. There is a need for further research in this area.

To develop head teachers' performance, the Ministry of Education has been advised to take steps to improve the working condition of people who take initiatives to become head teachers. One major policy recommendation from this study is that head teachers should be awarded higher salaries than classroom teachers. Head teachers should have the powers to provide deputy head teachers with incentives, including monetary awards, for the extra work they are required to undertake. Further work needs to be done on how to motivate classroom teachers. Furthermore, the list of tasks assigned to teachers in *the Organisational Guide* prescribed by the Ministry of Education needs to be relaxed to enable head teachers to encourage teachers to take initiatives according to local needs.

The location of the training centre, and specifically travelling distance needs to accommodate women teachers' domestic responsibilities. The detailed nature of the current study revealed that some head teachers seem to be attempting to develop deputy head teachers and teachers by providing them with leadership opportunities, such as leadership roles and enabling them to lead training courses offered by the school. Indeed, this kind of local, on the job experience has probably supported staff development better than the training courses provided by the Ministry of Education

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up to the point when the study took place. The study suggests that a combination of work-based practice, along with formal professional courses, is required to create women leaders in the future. This is expected to help with the level of productivity of women in Saudi Arabia, as a greater number of women might be motivated to work more to increase per capita income of the country generally. In addition, it might help to improve the quality of life for these women and improve their overall well-being.

7.6 Study Limitations

As with all studies, the current study has limitations. The main limitation is the small-scale of the study and the limited number of participants. The next section identifies how future researchers could improve on this study. The participants included in this study may not be representative of the entire population of women head teachers in Saudi Arabia, as the sample was small, and therefore, the findings cannot be generalised. Moreover, the study was based in one major city and did not include participants from other regions of the country, and so, for example, may not be indicative of how head teachers practice in rural or other non-urban areas. Therefore, these findings may not reflect the current situation in all girls' secondary schools in Saudi Arabia.

Two qualitative methods were selected for this study, semi-structured interviews and a case study. The choice was in part pragmatic based on time limitations and geographic distance. The data collection phase was challenging as I was unable to spend much time in Saudi Arabia and had to conduct the research at a time when schools were on their annual vacation which is four months long. Consequently, I was required to find participants and conduct interviews outside school buildings, which had advantages and maybe some disadvantages.

Some advantages were that participants could speak freely and were probably not intimidated by authority figures. The disadvantages were, for example, that I could not

see the buildings they referred to when talking of the need to improve learning spaces or the need for more equipment. It would have been advantageous to have been able to undertake some ethnographic observations, for example, to observe head teachers as they undertook their daily work.

The case study was identified through recommendations made by the supervisor in the education office. The school was selected because it had excellent examination results and Lama, head teacher, had excellent educational leadership qualities and had won an award indicating that her school was in the top ten in the country. Some of the teachers also had received prizes for their professional practices. Therefore, this was not a typical school, and instead indicated the potential for leadership in the best possible contexts. The school was selected to demonstrate the potential for distributed leadership that might be actualised in girls' schools in the future.

The task of translating a large amount of data from Arabic into English was also considered. I took responsibility for generating Arabic and English translations. My English translations were reviewed by two PhD students: one was a native Arabic speaker and the other one a native English speaker, yet there may have been some miscarriages of meaning given the wide cultural differences between the UK and Saudi Arabia. The analysis of the results was also more time-consuming than I had expected. However, after completing these phases, I gained great benefits and enjoyment from the process of data analysis.

7.7 Policy Recommendations

Four major policy recommendations emerge from the study and are listed as follows.

1- The Ministry of Education should be aware of the potential of women head teachers as an important national resource for driving Vision 20130 forward. There are many

women head teachers in Saudi Arabia and this study demonstrated that many are aware of what is required to be a school leader, and are already practicing some elements of distributed leadership with a desire to implement and achieve more. There was an agreement among participants that they had all enjoyed a degree of success in their role as leaders, regardless of whether they had purposefully applied for the position, or been pressured to take a headship role. This element of success was evidence that the leader's role is a dynamic one that requires a set of skills which demand personal and professional development opportunities. Participants confirmed this in several ways, mentioning that they had 'gained knowledge' in posts, and had developed ways to communicate and create teams, and specifically with the use of the social media application, Group WhatsApp' with other school head teachers", and by stating that they 'could develop even more in a leadership role'. Many indicated what they were able to do and many expressed wanting to take more initiatives, which is an important aspect of leadership, as opposed to management. Head teachers were also able to contemplate the potential benefits of enacting distributed leadership more fully.

2- The Ministry of Education should place more trust in women head teachers in Saudi Arabia. By granting them more autonomy they would be able to drive Vision 2030 forward faster than at present. The major barrier to women head teachers widening their roles as leaders in schools is the overly burdensome mechanisms of accountability, which need to be loosened. The notion of a leader is a recent one in the Saudi Arabian education system. Up until recently, the head teachers' role has been a management role, which did not require the Ministry of Education guidance to provide any leeway for head teachers to take initiatives, as the system has heavily focused on regulation and accountability within a highly, top-down, hierarchical and centralised system. However, the strong regulation, as well as the level of scrutiny, is now hindering school transformation. Therefore, to improve this, the Ministry of

Education needs to trust and empower head teachers to lead schools with more autonomy.

3- The Ministry needs better procedures for appointing head teachers generally and women head teachers in particular. There is currently a severe lack of head teachers throughout Saudi Arabia. The Ministry needs to recognise that many women take on headships unwillingly due to the chronic shortage of qualified people to undertake the role. The lack of desire to become a head teacher is because there are no real motivations for women to step up to this onerous role, as there is no financial incentive or reward for the increased workload and the level of responsibility is burdensome. Hence, the Ministry of Education should choose women with the desire, aptitude and potential to be good leaders and provide better motivations for women to want to take up the role of school leader. At present the assessment tests that are used to identify head teachers are inadequate.

4- The Ministry of Education needs to address the quality, length and type of initial and continual professional training for all head teachers and teachers and women in particular. A serious lack of preparation for headship is an important issue in the Saudi Arabian education context. To support schools to achieve high-level performance and improve students' results, the Ministry of Education needs to raise the quality of training courses, make them more accessible and give them higher status. A focus on qualifications required of head teachers, such a Master's degree in leadership would better prepare them for the wide range of activities and responsibilities required to lead a school effectively. Improving training courses at all levels in the education system would better equip head teachers to act as leaders rather than managers. High quality training courses for their staff would enable them to enact distributed leadership more effectively to create vibrant, dynamic education communities that would lead to better educational standards required for Vision 2030. This study has demonstrated that such efforts and investments would not be wasted in girls' schools

in Saudi Arabia and would accelerate the changes required to develop a modern education system.

5- This study investigated women leaders and did not include men. As the history of education described in Chapter One suggests, the power dynamics in Saudi Arabia are most likely to be experienced differently by women than by men. Accordingly, the findings can not be generalised to boys' schools due to the very different social positions men occupy which in general affords them greater freedom of movement and more autonomy than women. In general, men are likely to have more room to argue their case against their supervisors, because in general in society, they have more opportunities to enter debates about policy decision than women. Women carry a general feeling that they are 'stuck' with their allocated roles in society and this feeling most likely translates into their professional lives. More research is needed on relationships between women's societal positions and their leadership potential and approaches in education. A future study might be able to compare men and women leaders in high schools in Saudi Arabi.

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Appendix 1: Head Teachers' and Deputy Head Teachers' Interview Schedule

How do women head teachers and managers in the education system perceive leadership?

● Do you recognise differences between management and leadership? (or does it not mean anything for you?)

● Tell me about your present roles as a head teacher/ assistant?

● Can you imagine yourself as a good leader?

● When you face difficulty to solve problems in school, who is the person you will ask to help you?

Do women head teachers and managers have an understanding of different models of leadership, and in particular distributed leadership?

● How do you create a shared vision in the school with all staff/ teachers?

● To what extent do you clarify the role and goals of school for the school staff?

● What skills do you seek to develop in school staff/ teachers? Why?

● Do you seek to develop leadership skills of staff through giving them leadership role in school? If yes, what is the role, if no, why?

What might be some of the possibilities and barriers for developing effective school leaders in girls' schools in Saudi Arabia in line with Saudi Vision 2030?

● Have you got any training programs before or after you were appointed as school leader?

● What challenges do you face in developing staff?

● Do you work as a group to achieve the school aims? Who do you work with?

● How do you facilitate school work, especially: In exam periods? In changing periods

● If you have a scarcity within school (e.g. a lack in class teachers, tools), how do you usually bridge the gap?

How can leadership models be adapted to work within girls' schools that are led by women in Saudi Arabia?

● What are the main leadership skills that you need to have in order to have a strong relationship among the school community?

● To what extent do you agree that your staff is making decisions without asking you? What is your reaction to this? (you have allowed them to do whatever they want?)

● How do you motivate (encourage) your staff/ teacher to work collaboratively to lead school?

● To what extent do you collaborate with boys school leaders?

Appendix 2: Teachers Interview schedule questions

- Tell me about your present roles as a teacher?
- Can you imagine taking more responsibility in leading or managing within school?
- What other work do you prefer to share in school?
- Can you imagine taking a decision without returning to the head teacher? If you cannot, why and what do you need to do?
- To what extent, the school leader creates a trust environment among school staff.
- What would make you initiative to accomplish schoolwork?
- To what extent you seek to accomplish school tasks in teamwork.
- What are the skills that teachers need to build a strong relationship within school?
- Imagine if you were a head teacher:

    A. What type of change would you do to develop school?

    B. What kind of help would you provide for teachers to perform better?

Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheet

This is Hind Alowin; I am a PhD student at Manchester Metropolitan University. I am doing my research in A Study of Perceptions of Leadership and its Role in Educational Transformation in Girls' Secondary Schools in Saudi Arabia.

Research Title: A Study of Perceptions of Leadership and its Role in Educational Transformation in Girls' Secondary Schools in Saudi Arabia

Objectives of the study: The purpose of the proposed project is to investigate what kind of leadership framework might be developed for principals of the secondary girls' school in Saudi Arabia.

Research Questions

· How do women head teachers and managers in the education system perceive leadership?

· Do women head teachers and managers have an understanding of different models of leadership and in particular distributed leadership?

· What might be some of the possibilities and barriers for developing effective school leaders in girls' schools in Saudi Arabia in line with Saudi Vision 2030?

· How can leadership models be adapted to work within girls' schools that are led by women in Saudi Arabia?

Privacy and confidentiality: The participant's personal identity will not be made public in discussion or written work. Where it is necessary to refer to the participant then it will be done anonymously in order to preserve the participant's privacy and confidentiality.

Risks of the study: Any personal data gathered during this investigation will be treated in accord with the 1998 Data Protection Act: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents. There are no perceived risks in being part of this study.

Data to be captured: The study will gather a range of data to address its objectives. Specifically, and with the participant's agreement this will be through interview/ questionnaire.

Use of the data:the student is completing PhD for Manchester Metropolitan University.

Reuse of the data: The data will not be reused in future module reports or research.

Who has access to the data: Direct access to the data is limited to the student,; the university supervisory and examination team. Copies of it will not be passed onto others. The data will be destroyed after the research has been completed.

Storage of the data: Data collected will be held in a secure and safe manner in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The data will not be placed on the Internet at any time.

Your rights: Participants are free to withdraw from the research at any time without explanation and any personal data will be erased. Participants have the right to request that personal data be destroyed at any time.

No one under the age of 13 should take part in this study *

Appendix 4: Research Consent Form

Title of the research: A Study of Perceptions of Leadership and its Role in Educational Transformation in Girls' Secondary Schools in Saudi Arabia

Name of Researcher: Hind Alowin

Carried out from: Manchester Metropolitan University

Objectives of the study: (The purpose of the proposed project is to investigate what kind of leadership framework might be developed for principals of the secondary girls' school in Saudi Arabia).

Name of the participant:

1.   I understand the purpose of the research.

 Agree   disagree

2.   I agree to take part in the above study

 Agree   disagree

3. I understand that the data I provide will be held anonymously and confidentially

 Agree   disagree

4. I understand that there are no perceived risks to being involved in this study.

Agree   disagree

5. I understand that data will be collected using interviews/ questionnaires.

Agree   disagree

6. I understand that data will be stored within the requirements of the data protection act and used only for the purposes of this study

 Agree   disagree

7. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time and without explanation.

Agree   disagree

8. I agree to be digital recorded

    Agree   disagree

Student's phone number:

Student's email address:

Student's signature:

Each participant must sign this consent form.

No one under the age of 13 should take part in this study.

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

* 2 copies of this form must be completed: one should be left with the participant; the other retained by the student for his/her records

Appendix 5: Approved Letter from the Ministry of Education for Conducting Study

المملكة العربية السعودية

وزارة التربية والتعليم

الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم بمنطقة الرياض

إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

Ministry of Education

الرقم : ....

التاريخ : ٤/٨/١٤٢٩هـ

المشفوعات : ....

" إفادة "

الموضوع: الموافقة على تطبيق أدوات الدراسة في مدارس تابعة لإدارة التعليم بمنطقة الرياض

			الاسم
هند بنت عبد الرحمن بن رشيد العوين			الاسم
1438هـ-1439هـ	العام الدراسي	1037329743	السجل المدني
Educational Leadership	التخصص	جامعة Manchester Metropolitan	الجامعة
قائدات –معلمات (المرحلة الثانوية)	العينة	دكتوراه	الدرجة العلمية
دراسة حول تصور القيادة ودورها في التحول التربوي في المدارس الثانوية للبنات في المملكة العربية السعودية			عنوان الدراسة
الموافقة على تطبيق الدراسة في مدارس المرحلة الثانوية التابعة للإدارة العامة للتعليم بمنطقة الرياض بدءً من تاريخ 29-8-1439هـ			نوع الإفادة

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته   وبعد،

بناء على قرار سعادة مدير عام التعليم بمنطقة الرياض رقم 38920793 وتاريخ 1438/6/23هـ بشأن تفويض الصلاحية لإدارة التخطيط والتطوير لتسهيل مهمة الباحثين والباحثات، وحيث تقدمت إلينا الباحثة (الموضحة بياناتها أعلاه) بطلب إجراء دراستها بداية من تاريخ 29-8-1439هـ ،وعليه نفيدكم انه لا مانع من تطبيق الدراسة خلال مدة زمنية محددة بـ (90) يوم خلال العام الدراسي الحالي ، على نطاق مدارس منطقة الرياض مع ملاحظة أن الباحثة تتحمل كامل المسؤولية المتعلقة بمختلف جوانب البحث ، ولا يعني سماح الإدارة العامة للتعليم موافقتها بالضرورة على مشكلة البحث أو على الطرق والأساليب المستخدمة في دراستها ومعالجتها وبناء على طلبها تم منحها الإفادة ،علماً انه يتم الاطلاع على أداة الدراسة (المقابلة).

شاكرين لكم حسن تعاونكم

ص / الملحقة
ص / قسم الدراسات والبحوث
إ/ العمري

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