The Role of School Principals as Leaders of Educational Change in Saudi Arabia

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Preface

My personal interest in school reform and educational leadership stemmed from my experience of working in Saudi Arabia as an educational training centre manager and supervisor. It also stemmed from my master of training and professional development studies at Griffith University in 2008/2009. At that time, I was most inspired by engaging in an assignment examining the impact of educational change and its implications for teaching practice. I was asked to examine one key policy change that had been mandated by reform leaders and how these changes had impacted teachers, which developed my understanding of the imperatives for schooling reform and their impact on educators, including school principals.

In December, 2009, after completing my Master of Training and Development (HDR Specialization) and gaining a Griffith Award for Academic Excellence, an opportunity presented itself to search the impact of rapid educational reform in Saudi Arabia on school principals. My initial examination of the literature, which identified the lack of knowledge about the impact of contemporary school reform initiatives on school principals in traditional Arabic countries, inspired me to undertake this study. Despite the challenges involved and commitments required to undertake further academic research, I chose to take a step forward and approached Professor Richard Bagnall to supervise me throughout my long PhD journey.

My PhD journey was not an easy one. I had to work hard, develop new ways to engage with ideas, and embrace an unfamiliar research environment and methods of learning. However, with my supervisor Professor Bagnall’s support, I pushed through the challenges and everything worked out well. I believe, as a result of undertaking this research, I am now able to add clarity to the concept of contemporary educational initiatives and their impact on school principals as the leading educational change agents in school reform. I also believe that I have a great many valuable experiences to share with my relatives, friends, and colleagues in my home country.

Abdulaziz Alshehri

September 2015
Abstract

In an increasingly globalised world, public education reform in Saudi Arabia has been given high priority as a driver of economic and social development and its sustainability. This reform has impacted on the working lives of school principals, who are continually faced with complex global challenges in the education system, including higher expectations for schools and school leaders, moving towards decentralisation, making schools more autonomous in their decision making and holding them more accountable for results, with expectations of improved overall student performance while serving more diverse student populations.

This study sought to examine the ways in which globalising pressures, particularly the neoliberal economic globalisation pressures, for educational reform are perceived and responded to by school principals in the Saudi educational system, with a view to informing educational policy and practice in responding to those pressures. The impetus for the study stemmed from the lack of knowledge about the impact of contemporary school reform initiatives on the leading change agents – school principals – especially in traditional Arabic countries.

This research study used an interpretive case study that sought to construct and interpret the meaning of school principals’ experiences of managing educational reform initiatives in Saudi Arabia. Those experiences were explored and analysed by obtaining detailed information from 20 participants through semi-structured interviews, in conjunction with official documents relevant to the research topic being investigated.

The study found that the magnitude and importance of the imperatives for educational change were seen as being appropriately reflected in the extent and depth of the Government commitment to educational reform. The generally high level of understanding by the principals of the governments’ reform initiatives should also serve as a strong foundation to successful reform. However, the lack of a coherent policy implementation framework coordinating the implementation of the different reform initiatives and their supporting programs of professional development was found to be impacting negatively on the opportunity to successful implement the policy reforms. Traditional approaches to the provision and the content of the training programs were also seen as generally inadequate in meeting the professional development needs of school principals as leading change agents of major school reform. The lack of a coherent school leadership framework defining the major responsibilities and tasks of effective school principals and guiding school principals’ recruitment, training and
appraisal was also found to be negatively impacting on the opportunity for school principals to perform the roles that would make a difference in school and student performance.

The major implication of the study suggests the importance of developing a clear and coherent policy framework, directing schooling reform and coordinating the implementation of the different reform initiatives and their supporting programs. It also suggests the importance of a coherent school principalship framework, grounded in research evidence on effective principalship practices, providing guidance on the main characteristics, tasks and responsibilities of effective school principals, using it as a basis for the recruitment, training and appraisal of school leaders.
Dedication

In the name of Allah and the best prayers, and most abundant peace, be upon the
Prophet Mohammad.

Praise be to God the Almighty, who has given me the strength and assistance to
complete this study.

I owe all of my success today to my parents, who instilled in me the value and power of
education, and who consistently encouraged their children to pursue their dreams.

The successful undertaking of this thesis would not have been possible without my
wife, Mastourah’s, support and willingness to take care of me and our children and
sacrifice our time together. It is only because of you that I was able to fulfil a dream. I
will always love you.
Acknowledgments

What a wonderful experience this PhD journey has been, even though the path has not always been an easy one. I thank the God for providing me with the time, opportunity and strength to complete this thesis.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the following people who have contributed towards the completion of this thesis.

First and foremost, I wish to acknowledge my supervisor, Professor Richard Bagnall as being a superb supervisor. I am most grateful for his support, guidance, encouragement, patience and understanding.

My thanks also to Associate Professor Ray Brown for his advice during the early stages of the project.

I would also like to acknowledge my brothers and sisters, who encouraged me and inspired me to complete this project.

I also wish to express my gratitude to the Saudi Government and the Ministry of Education for sponsoring my study.

My sincere thanks also go to the Director and members of the Department of Education in Al-Namas for sponsoring and giving me the opportunity to pursue this further study. I would also like to acknowledge the school principals involved in this study for allowing me to research in their schools and for providing the relevant information necessary for the study. Without their support, the study would not have been possible, and I am forever grateful to them. I can only hope that the study will contribute to making their schools better places for them, and most importantly for their students.

I am grateful for the fellowship and support of my colleagues and friends, whose support, individually and as a group, has encouraged and inspired me to complete this project.
Statement of Originality
I certify that this work has not been previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and beliefs, the thesis contains no materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Signed
Abdulaziz Saad Alshehri
Date 29/09/2015
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Chapter One: An Introduction of the Study

Introduction
This introduction opens with a statement of the study topic and the argument for its undertaking. The significance of the study is then discussed, before presenting an overview of the structure of this thesis.

Research Topic and Rationale
This is a report of a study focusing on examining the ways in which globalising pressures for educational reform were perceived and responded to by school principals in the Saudi educational system, with a view to informing educational policy and practice responding to those pressures. That topic was grounded in a review of literature, which indicated the contempararily profound impact of globalisation in determining the direction of educational reform (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002; Giddens, 1990; Held & McGrew, 2007; Held, McGrew, Goldblatt & Perraton, 1999; Robinson, 2004; Sklair, 2005, 2000). Educational reform policies and strategies emerged as being shaped by globalisation and the rapid evolution of information and communication technology. These policies and strategies foregrounded the imperative for educational jurisdictions to make efforts to adapt and improve their schooling systems to ensure that students have the knowledge and skills necessary to handle the emerging challenges and opportunities resulting from globalisation and information and communication technology, and to participate fully in contemporary global society. In this sense, globalisation emerged as a new phenomenon impacting on the Saudi education system, pushing it to adapt to develop students’ ways of thinking about their social, educational, and working life in the globalized context (Giddens, 1990; Held & McGrew, 2007).

Globalisation, particularly in its economic dimension, was seen as shaping educational reform policies through three types of driving concerns: competition, finance, and equity (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002). Competition driven reforms aim primarily to enhance economic productivity by improving the quality of labour and educational institutions. Such reforms include decentralisation, the introduction of achievement standards, the improved management of educational resources, improved teacher recruitment and training, and change in curriculum and pedagogy to improve educational quality and relevance. Finance driven reforms are motivated by the need to improve the economic climate and conditions for growth in a country by reducing public spending and increasing efficiency and quality in service delivery. Such reforms shift public funding from higher to lower levels of education,
and force the privatisation of education and the reduction in per student costs at all levels by, for example, increasing class sizes. Equity driven reforms address issues of educational access for the poor, women, those with special needs, and those living in rural areas. This concern is the motivation, for example, behind the ‘education for all’ and universal primary education movements, which seek to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to acquire a basic education, and that such an education is state-supported (Carnoy, 2000; Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002).

The literature review also indicated that international researchers of school leadership have increasingly found school leaders to be central to the task of building schools that promote: powerful teaching and learning for all students (Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Peterson, 2002); the development and retention of teachers (Bishop & Mulford, 1999; Bottery, 2001; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999); the creation of a learning culture within the school (Fullan, 2004; Hallinger, 2011, 2010); improvements in students’ learning (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006); and leadership of the school reform improvement processes. The literature also indicated that, in line with school reform policies, the expectations for schools and school leaders have expanded and intensified, with the increasing trend towards decentralisation, school autonomy and accountability (Adams & Kirst, 1999). As a result, there emerged the importance of redefining and broadening school leaders’ roles, supporting and developing school leaders, and improving incentives to make the role of headship, in particular, more attractive for existing heads and for those who will be taking up school headship positions in the future, through such measures as strengthening training and development approaches to help leaders.

The review of the literature also showed a lack of knowledge about the impact of contemporary school reform initiatives on the leading change agents – school principals – especially in traditional Arabic countries (Wiseman, Al-Sadaawi, & Alromi, 2008). For example, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) tests scores in mathematics and science for Grades Four and Eight in 2003, 2007, and 2011 and the World Economic Forum: The International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation (2013) showed a lack of progress and educational improvement in Saudi Arabia, which did not meet the standards of other countries at similar income levels (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, 2013). Jalal (2008) argued that the reform efforts were viewed by Saudi educators as less than completely successful in raising achievement and encouraging
economic development. Reports have shown that the Saudi education system results in poor academic performance, especially in core subjects such as mathematics and science in which the average mathematics scores for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) have been below average (Jalal, 2008). Schools have also been seen as failing to adequately prepare students for the labour market, leading to the demand for educational reform in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi educational reforms have thus in recent years been directed to maximizing the effectiveness of school performance. Such reforms include changes to teacher education, school curriculum, and school leadership and management systems (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013a). Meemar (2014) conducted a study exploring Saudi school principals’ perceptions of the new administrative and technical authorities granted as part of the decentralisation, examining their beliefs about the effectiveness of the new authorities in achieving the Ministry of Education goals. The findings suggested that school principals had limited ability, and low to moderate support in implementing the new authorities, and limited opportunities to improve student and school outcomes. Alyami (2014) conducted a qualitative study, investigating the impact of educational policy improvement on practice within Saudi Tatweer schools. The findings suggested a need to engage educators, including school principals and teachers, and support them in the process of managing change before implementing school reform initiatives.

The purpose of the research study here described was, therefore, that of examining the ways in which globalizing pressures for educational reform were perceived and responded to by school principals in the Saudi educational system, with a view to informing educational policy and practice in responding to those pressures.

**The Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study were seen as informing education policy and practice on how to best respond to the pressures of globalisation in driving the reform process, and as contributing to developing research based understanding of the lived experiences of school principals in the process of managing change. Since the need for the study stemmed from the perceived value of studying the experience of key implementers of the policy reform initiatives – school principals in the case of Saudi Arabia – the potential utility of its findings was in informing policy and practice that seeks to maximise the success of Saudi school reforms: identifying lived realities and issues and evaluating practices in policy
implementation and leadership, including school leader professional development and professionalism.

The Structure of the Study

The reminder of this thesis is structured as follows.

Chapter Two (Literature Review)

Chapter Two presents the background review of the literature that informed the study. It was guided by the purpose of the study. It opens with a review of key focal points raised in the literature that were seen as influencing and being influenced by education reform: globalisation, educational change, school principals as managers of change, the professional development of school principals, and professionalism. An outline of the education system and the need for significant school reform in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) are presented in the final section of the chapter.

From the examination of the literature review, the major implications for the study are then identified. Those implications for the study were used to develop a conceptual framework to structure and guide the design and conduct of the study through the methodology. The conceptual framework is presented in the final section of the chapter.

Chapter Three (Research Methodology)

Chapter Three presents an account of the research methodology designed to address the research questions developed through the conceptual framework. It does this, firstly, by describing and justifying the research approach taken in the study. A detailed account of the research procedures is then, similarly, given, including, site and participant selection, data sources, data collection, data analysis, and the pilot study. Matters of research integrity are also examined and, finally, ethical considerations are identified and discussed.

Chapter Four (The Research Participants and the Schools)

Chapter Four presents introduces the 20 participants engaged in the study and each participating school. The chapter concludes with a brief reflection on the participants.

Chapters Five Through Ten (Research Findings)

Chapters Five through Ten document the findings regarding the six research focal points identified in the conceptual framework: the imperative for educational change, policy and
procedural responses to that imperative, school principals as educational change managers, understanding educational change, the development of skills for effective school principalship in the reform process, and the changing nature of educational professionalism. A chapter is devoted to each of those focal points.

The presentation of the findings of each of the six chapters opens by outlining the main findings, followed by an overview description of each of the findings and an articulation of its importance to the interviewees, and then its importance in the documentation reviewed. Each finding is then detailed by sequentially interdicting important aspects of it, each interdiction being followed by narrative extracts from the interview to illustrate and ground the point made, together with any pertinent observations about it in the documents.

Chapter Eleven (Discussion)

Chapter Eleven discusses and reviews those findings in the context of pertinent published research. The discussion is structured by the points identified in the conceptual framework. Each section opens with a re-stating of the informing research questions, followed by an overview of the main findings. Those findings are then related to pertinent material identified in the review.

Chapter Twelve (Conclusion and Recommendations)

Chapter Twelve presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study. It starts by presenting an overview of the study, including a summary of the study purpose, research approach and procedures. The main findings and conclusions drawn from the findings of the study are then explained. From the conclusions, a number of recommendations for educational policy and practice and for further research are presented.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction
This chapter reviews the key issues raised in the literature regarding the research topic, in order of their presentation here: globalisation, educational change, school principals as managers of change, the professional development of school principals, and professionalism. Finally, this chapter provides an outline of the education system and the need for significant school reform in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). A conceptual framework grounded in the identified implication of the literature review for the study was developed. The conceptual framework that identifies the key factors of the research topic on which the research was to focus is presented here as the final section of the chapter.

Globalisation
Globalisation has become a key research field in the social sciences, including in education. It has become a most hotly debated and contested topic (Held et al., 1999; Robertson, 1992). Robinson and Pierre (2003) and Robinson (2012), for example, have argued that the notion of globalisation is problematic, given the multitude of partial, divergent and often contradictory claims surrounding the concept. Although there may be difficulty in elucidating a clear and coherent definition of globalisation, most generally it has been seen as the widening, deepening, and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life (Held & McGrew, 2000; Held et al., 1999). Robertson (1992), who is considered a key foundation scholar of the concept of globalisation, defined it as the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole. Other definitions include that of it as “bringing people closer together and places further apart” (Short, 2001, p.24), and “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (Giddens, 1990, p.64). Rosenau (2003), captured the contradictory nature of globalisation well. Distant proximities, he argued, encompass the tensions between core and periphery, between national and transnational systems, between communitarianism and cosmopolitanism, between cultures and subcultures, between states and markets, between urban and rural, between coherence and incoherence, between integration and disintegration, between universalism and particularism, between pace and space, between the global and the local, to note only the more conspicuous links between
opposites that presently underlie the course of events and the development or decline of institutions.

While there may be disagreement among scholars on the meaning of globalisation, a number of common points can be identified. Held et al. (1999) argued that a satisfactory definition of globalisation must capture four elements: extensity (stretching), intensity, velocity and impact. Robinson (2012) identified a number of points. First, the pace of social change and transformation worldwide seemed to have quickened dramatically in the later decades of the twentieth century, with implications for many dimensions of social life and human culture. Second, this social change was related to an increasing connectivity among people and countries worldwide, an objective dimension, together with an increased awareness worldwide of these interconnections, a subjective dimension. The effects of globalisation – of those economic, social, political, cultural and ideological processes to which the term refers – are ubiquitous, and different dimensions of globalisation (economic, political, cultural, etc.) are interrelated; in other words globalisation is multidimensional. Holm (2003) has argued that, across theories, there is a fundamental agreement that globalisation represents (a) deep-rooted transformations in the texture and experience of everyday life, (b) changes in the relationship between time and space, and (c) modifications in the relationships between the self and others. Boundaries and physical distances are seen to matter less in determining the shapes of societies, organizations, and individuals than they did in the past. Giddens (1990) has pointed out that globalisation embodies dynamic communicative, economic, cultural, and political practices and produces new discourses of identity. He identified six dynamic and interdependent processes of globalisation, which are imbedded in virtually all theories of globalisation:

(1) The dramatic increase in economic interdependence worldwide.
(2) The intensification and deepening of material, political, and cultural exchanges.
(3) The global and rapid diffusion of ideas and knowledge enabled through new information technologies.
(4) The compression of time and space.
(5) The disemboding of events and institutions, which permits new realignments and restructuring of social interaction across time and space.
(6) Increases in global consciousness through processes of reflexivity (Giddens, 1990).

Different theories of globalisation draw on the distinctive contributions and broader theoretical traditions of multiple disciplines and perspectives. Robertson (1995, 1992)
provided an overview of the historical development of globalisation. He argued that interest in globalisation arose from a division between sociology, which dealt with societies comparatively, and international relations and political science, which dealt with societies interactively. However, as this division became destabilized, an interest in globalisation developed as a result of bridging academic fields such as education, communication, and cultural studies.

Held et al. (1999) also provided a useful framework for analysing globalisation. They discussed three main schools of thought in globalisation research: the hyperglobalists, the skeptics, and the transformationalists. Hyperglobalists, they suggested, argue that we live in an increasingly global world in which globalisation is a direct threat to the nation state, which diminishes in power as the global marketplace comes to rule. Their focus is on economic globalisation, which is argued to denationalise economies, creating global markets that transcend state control, resulting in a loss of autonomy and sovereignty for the state.

The second school, the skeptics, argued that globalisation is a myth (Hirst, Thompson, & Bromley, 2015; Paul & Grahame, 1996). They have argued that what the hyperglobalists describe as economic globalisation is just a heightened level of economic interdependence. They argued that the current global situation is not unprecedented, and they questioned what exactly is ‘global’ about globalisation – if it is not a universal phenomenon, then the concept is not valid and lacks specificity. For example, skeptics point to the fact that much of the economic interdependence is limited to OECD countries, and is therefore not really global.

A synthesis between these two competing approaches is represented by transformationalist scholars, who argue that globalisation has structural consequences and is a driving force in society which influences political, social and economic change (Giddens, 1990; Held et al., 1999). Globalisation is seen as not just a shift in the intensity of exchange, but one which leads to a re-articulation of political, cultural and economic power. There is a structural transformation and a global shift in how power and authority is organized. The best example of this is the change in state sovereignty and autonomy. There has been a ‘reconfiguration of political power’ (Held and McGrew, 2007) which is understood as neither globalist nor skeptic, but transformationalist. They argued that globalisation is not a debate about either convergence or divergence, but represents a dialectical process, which can both integrate and fragment, creating both winners and losers. Transformationlists understand
globalisation as a multidimensional process including economic, political, social and cultural dimensions.

A number of scholars have seen globalisation as an ideology serving a particular set of economic and political interests (Bourdieu, 2002). As such, globalisation has been interpreted as a deliberate project of economic liberalisation, which subjects states and individuals to more intense market forces. Martines and Garcia (2000) identified the globalisation of liberalisation as a set of policies that have become widespread through being imposed by powerful financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the International American Development Bank. Reforms such the introduction of market mechanisms and logics (choice, competition, decentralisation), the liberalisation and privatisation of the public service sectors, including education, and the importation of management techniques coming from the corporate sector, resonate in the neoliberal ideational context (Martinez & Garcia, 2000). Neoliberal ideology sees globalisation as a set of political-economic arrangements for the organization of the global economy, driven by a desire to maintain the capitalist system rather than by a set of values (Dale, 2005). The neoliberal global economic arrangements are seen as the intensification of a global market operating across and among a system of national labour markets through international economic competition. Market competition, technological change, and multinational corporations are seen as being drivers of this global economy (Robinson, 2004). The political arrangements of globalisation, which are mostly influenced by global economic competitiveness, eliminate or decrease the power of nation states and constitute a new and distinct form of relationship between nation states and the world economy (Sklair, 2005, 2000). Robinson (2004) and Sklair (2005, 2000) have argued that the globalisation of neoliberalism means that the shaping of the playing field of politics is increasingly determined not within insulated units, relatively autonomous and hierarchically organized structures called states; rather, it derives from a complex congeries of multilevel games played on multilayered institutional playing fields, above and across, as well as within, state boundaries.

The reaction of states to those changing circumstances involves society in becoming more concerned with setting up a framework of institutional organizations through which it seeks to establish what Rosenau and Czempiel (1992) referred to as governance without government. Most prominent among the organizations involved in attempting to install governance without government are the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organization
for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, and the G-20 nations. While these organizations have different missions, approaches and capacities, they respond to the problems posed by changing global economic circumstances. The organizations exercise, directly or indirectly, economic and political power over nation states by prioritizing certain forms of development assistance and through international agreements and conventions (Robinson, 2004; Sklair, 2005, 2000). Meyer (2007) has taken this view by arguing that the analysis of globalisation may be seen as an institutional theory, as the spread and ultimate universalization of sets of modern values, practices and institutions through isomorphic processes that operate on a global scale. It is argued that the growth of supernational institutional networks and planning agencies, such as the World Economic Forum, the Group of 20, and the World Trade Organization, and of universal modern norms of organization, brings about what they refer to as a world society, one which has been accelerated by information and communication technology.

The global cultural economy is one of the important themes among cultural theories of globalisation, referring to what Appadurai (1996) saw as the central problem of today’s global interactions: the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization. Homogenization refers to a global cultural convergence that tends to highlight the rise of world cuisines, world tourism, uniform consumption patterns and cosmopolitanism. Heterogenization refers to continued cultural difference and highlights local cultural autonomy, cultural resistances to homogenization, cultural clashes and polarization, and distinct subjective experiences of globalisation. Appadurai (1996) has argued that the globalizing cultural forces of media and communications have produced complex interactions and disjunctures between different cultures. Appadurai (1996) discussed five ‘scapes’ that influence culture, arguing that they ensure cultural diversity, and not cultural homogeneity or domination. The five ‘scapes’, all of which refer to a type of movement, are ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, finescapes, and ideoscapes. Ethnoscapes are flows of people, such as tourists and immigrants. Technoscapes are technologies that cross boundaries. Finescapes are flows of currency markets. Mediascapes are mass media technology and images. Ideoscapes are images, but specifically the political and ideological aspects of images. These ‘scapes’ influence culture not by a uniform effect, but through their ‘disjunctures’. Thus, mass media plays a larger role in cultural diversity than in cultural standardisation.
One of the main bases of globalisation is that of information technologies, which have enabled the global and rapid diffusion of ideas and knowledge. Continuing rapid technological development has changed the way individuals, communities, institutions and firms interact with each other. Castells (2008), has argued that the process of global structural transformation is associated with the emergence of a new technological paradigm, based on information and communication technologies. He proposed a grounded theory of the network society, which has been closely associated with the notion of globalisation and a new type of social structure, the network society. This society is identified as a social structure based on networks operated by information and communication technologies based in microelectronics and digital computer networks, generating, processing, and distributing information on the basis of the knowledge accumulated in the nodes of the networks. Castells (2008) argued that there are two main features of the new network society. The first is the development of new information technology (IT), in particular, computers and the internet, representing a new technological paradigm and leading to a new age of information. The second feature is capitalist retooling, using the power of this technology in the new system that Castells (2008) referred to as the new economy, which is characterized by three fundamental features. First, this new economy is global in the precise sense that its core strategic activities have the capacity to work as a unit on a planetary scale in real or chosen time. Core activities include financial markets, science and technology, the international trade of goods and services, advanced business services, multinational production firms and their ancillary networks, communication media, and highly skilled speciality labour. Second, the new economy is networked. At the heart of the connectivity of the global economy and of the flexibility of informational production, there is a new form of economic organization, the network enterprise that is a network made up of either firms or segments of firms, and from internal segmentation of firms. Third, it is informational, that is, the capacity of generating knowledge and processing/managing information determine the productivity and competitiveness of all kinds of economic units, be they firms, regions, or countries.

Contemporary educational reform strategies are seen as being shaped by globalisation through two main types of concern and driver: equity and competition (Dale, 2005; Rizvi and Lingard, 2010). Equity driven reforms focus on social justice, inclusion and fighting discrimination on the basis of place, race, gender and disability. Education for All (EFA), for example, was a policy statement signed by 181 countries including Saudi Arabia in 1990 in Jomtien (Ball, 2003; Dale, 2005). The signatory countries undertook to provide universal
primary education for all children by 2010. The focus of the policy was primarily on setting targets in the developing world. The six Dakar goals that were signed up to in 2000 reaffirmed those of the EFA declaration and aimed to: (1) expand early childhood care and education; (2) ensure access to free and compulsory education of good quality by 2015; (3) promote the acquisition of life skills by adolescents and youth; (4) expand adult literacy by 50% by 2015; (5) eliminate gender disparities and achieve gender equality by 2015; and (6) enhance educational quality (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002; Dale, 2005). These goals, based on the premises of social justice and equity have been reiterated in more recent OECD literature on education and equity in lifelong learning (OECD, 2004). They reflect an increased concern by international organisations to look at education beyond its human capital development objectives (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010).

Competition driven reform is captured in neoliberal economic policies that address the debates around efficiency, effectiveness and quality of education, aiming primarily to improve economic productivity by improving the productivity of labour and educational institutions (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002; Dale, 2005). Such policies include those of: decentralisation and accountability; the introduction of competitive markets in education; the introduction of predetermined standards of achievement; private sector managerial techniques; the improvement of educational resource management; improved teacher recruitment and training; and the improvement of the school curriculum and pedagogy. Neoliberal economic reform policies also attempt to reduce public spending and increase the efficiency and quality of service delivery, aiming to improve the economic climate and conditions for growth in a country. Such reforms shift public funding from higher to lower levels of education and force the privatisation of education and the reduction of per student costs at all levels by increasing class sizes.

Globalisation, particularly the neoliberal economic globalisation, is having a profound impact on schooling reform policy. Carnoy and Rhoten (2002) have argued that, with an increasing focus on efficiency, effectiveness and the quality of education, more attention has been paid to the development of a new public management system that uses private sector management approaches in the education sector. Central among these approaches are: decentralisation, privatisation, and the accountability of outcomes.

Much of the educational reform policy-making worldwide attempts to decentralise educational management systems, although there is considerable variation in the ways in which the notion of decentralisation is conceptualised (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002). Rizvi and
Lingard (2010) have defined three different modes of decentralisation: devolution, functional decentralisation, and fiscal decentralisation. The idea of devolution is more in line with democratic equality than are notions of functional and fiscal decentralisation, which are implanted in order to achieve greater social efficiency. The major characteristics of devolution are the enhancement of democratic participation, local control, and community decision-making. Functional decentralisation involves the transfer of specific functions of the central government to the local or regional level. Advocated in the name of social efficiency, functional decentralisation is often linked to technologies of accountability and transparency as a part of the larger notion of public management or good governance. Fiscal decentralisation typifies the transfer of monies and control over funding sources to local institutions (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Carnoy and Rhoten (2002) argued that many of the decentralisation reforms do not have their origins in the desire to increase school productivity, but in the need to reduce central government financial and management responsibility for primary and secondary education. In many national schooling systems around the world, decentralisation reforms have had strong elements of fiscal decentralisation because central governments wanted to see provinces and municipalities bear a greater share of costs. Many municipalities and schools, thus, have opposed decentralisation reforms, because they have realised that they would have to bear much more of the cost of education than in the past (Carnoy et al., 1999).

Along with an emphasis on the notions of quality, efficiency, and productivity, the privatisation of education has been another approach in educational reform policy (Carnoy et al., 1999; Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002). Privatisation generally involves the transfer of public assets to private sector companies. An example of such reforms is the privatisation of educational delivery and school choice. A major argument for privatisation is its positive effect on inter-school competition and school accountability and hence school quality. It is also argued that school choice would motivate teachers and principals to improve school quality (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002). Ball (2003) and Dale (2005) have argued that the extension of private education has not been to improve the school quality but to reduce public spending on education. They have argued that, beyond such cost-effectiveness, the experience of privatising education has been of a significant and negative impact on the human right to education, both in terms of the quality of education and of its accessibility and affordability (Ball, 2003; Dale, 2005). The Right to Education Project (PERI) (2014) reported that, in many parts of the world, inequalities in opportunities for education have been exacerbated by
the growth of unregulated private providers of education, with wealth or economic status becoming the most important criterion of access a quality education.

There is growing evidence that privatisation in and of education has a range of detrimental effects on the enjoyment of the right to education, with specific negative consequences for women and girls (Dale, 2005). The Right to Education Project (PERI) (2014) highlighted the point that privatisation in many cases exacerbates gender discrimination in education, in part because in many countries parents favour the education of boys over girls. As quality education becomes more costly, studies have shown that boys are often given priority over girls. In addition limited access, concern has been raised that privatisation in and of education can lead to greater discrimination and that marginalised groups fail to enjoy the bulk of the positive impacts and also bear the disproportionate burden of the negative impacts (Ball, 2003; Dale, 2005).

Privatisation has also put increased pressure on school principals and teachers salaries, especially in the lowest-income regions, thus creating resistance among the very educational personnel needed to improve the quality of education (Carnoy et al., 1999; Dale, 2005). They have argued that the privatisation of schools has pressured regions and municipalities to reduce teacher salaries in order to reduce costs, creating conflict between the state and the very group (teachers and principals) needed to produce favourable educational change.

Another observed approach to the neoliberal ideology of economic globalisation is the accountability movement in education, paralleling the decentralisation of education (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002; Dale, 2005). Making schools and teachers more accountable for their work and its effects has led to the introduction of education standards, indicators and benchmarks for teaching and learning, aligned assessments, learning outcome assessment, and prescribed curricula. As a result, various forms of consequential accountability have emerged, where school performance and raising the quality of education are closely tied to the process of accreditation, promotion and financing (Carnoy et al., 1999; Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002). However, Dale (2005) has argued that, according to the existing body of educational change theory, the widespread approach of increasing pressure on school principals, teachers and students has not brought the improvement expected, and has created a pressure on schools to act in line with the directions or criteria passed down by top, creating a culture of fear and frustration, and consequently, a focus on the passing of examinations, rather than on student learning.
The introduction of information technology is another feature of neoliberal educational policy. Information technology is progressively being introduced into educational systems, partly to try to expand the quantity of education at a lower cost through distance education and partly to deliver higher quality education (at a higher cost) through computer assisted instruction and the use of the internet (Carnoy et al., 1999; Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002). Although almost all countries are at the very beginning of using such new technology, its future use in education cannot be underestimated, particularly because of its ability to link students in the smallest towns of every country with the rest of the world (Carnoy et al., 1999; Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002).

In summary, the review of the literature on globalisation provides insight into the nature and importance of globalisation, particularly the neoliberal economic globalisation, in determining the importance and direction of educational reform. The major implication that this presents for the study is that it suggests the importance of research into the implementation of educational reform, focusing on the extent to which key participants are aware of the importance and impacts of neoliberal globalisation in driving the reform process.

**Educational Change**

A vast body of research has been written on the topic of change (Lewin, 1947; Havelock & Zlotolow, 1995; Kotter, 1996). Lewin (1947) developed a three-step model of change which is often cited as his key contribution to organizational change. He noted that most people are frozen in terms of their openness to change. His three-step model provided organizations with a method to disrupt organizational equilibrium as a condition required for successful change. Unfreezing is necessary to overcome the strains of individual resistance and group conformity, and can be achieved by the use of three methods. Firstly, increasing the driving forces that direct behaviour away from the existing situation or status quo. Secondly, decreasing the restraining forces that negatively affect the movement from the existing equilibrium. Thirdly, finding a combination of the two methods listed above. Some activities that can assist in the unfreezing step include motivating participants by preparing them for change, building trust and recognizing the need to change, and actively participating in recognizing problems and brainstorming solutions within a group.

Lewin’s second step in the process of changing behaviour is movement. In this step, it is necessary to move the target system to a new level of equilibrium. Three actions that can assist in the movement step include persuading employees to agree that the status quo is not
beneficial to them and encouraging them to view the problem from a fresh perspective, working together on a quest for new, relevant information, and connecting the views of the group to well-respected, powerful leaders who also support the change (Lewin, 1947).

The third step of Lewin’s three-step change model is refreezing. This step needs to take place after the change has been implemented in order for it to be sustained, to ‘stick’ over time. It is highly likely that the change will be short lived and the employees will revert to their old equilibrium (behaviours) if this step is not taken. It is the actual integration of the new values into the community values and traditions. The purpose of refreezing is to stabilize the new equilibrium resulting from the change by balancing both the driving and the restraining forces. One action that can be used to implement Lewin’s third step is to reinforce new patterns and to institutionalize them through formal and informal mechanisms, including policies and procedures (Lewin, 1947).

Lewin’s approach has faced increasing levels of criticism. Firstly, many critics have argued that it is too simplistic and mechanistic for a world where organizational change is a continuous and open-ended process (Dawson, 2003; Kanter, 2003; Pettigrew, 1990). Secondly, it has been argued that Lewin’s work is only relevant to incremental and isolated change projects and is not able to incorporate radical, transformational change (Dawson, 2003; Harris, 1985; Pettigrew, 1990). Thirdly, his work ignored the role of power and politics in organizations and the conflictual nature of much of organizational life (Dawson, 2003; Kanter, 2003; Pettigrew, 1990; Wilson, 1992). Fourthly, Lewin is seen as advocating a top-down, management driven approach to change and ignoring situations requiring bottom-up change (Dawson, 1994; Kanter, 2003; Wilson, 1992).

Havelock & Zlotolow (1995) also developed a planned, problem-solving, five step change model, which he called a problem-solving model. This model rests on the primary assumption that innovation is a part of problem-solving process that goes on inside the client system. This designated client system may be of any size and complexity, for example, a school district, a school building, a classroom teacher or even the student. He argued that problem solving is usually seen as a patterned sequence of activities beginning with a need that is sensed and articulated by the client system. This need must be translated into a problem statement and diagnosis. When he has thus formulated a problem statement, the client-user is able to conduct a meaningful search and retrieval of ideas and information that can be used in formulating or selecting the innovation. Finally, after a potential solution has
been identified, the user needs to concern himself with adapting the innovation, trying it out and evaluating its effectiveness in satisfying his original need. This orientation of planned, problem-solving change, thus, has the following five steps:

(1) Feeling a need and deciding to do something about it.
(2)Attempting to define the problem.
(3) Searching for promising solutions.
(4) Applying one or more promising solutions to the need.
(5) Determining whether the problem is solved satisfactorily and repeating the problem-solving cycle if it is not.

In 1996 John Kotter also proposed a model for leading change and effecting organizational change (Kotter, 1996). He introduced an eight-step process for initiating top-down transformational change. The first three steps are all about creating a climate for change. The next four processes are about engaging and enabling the organisation, and the last process is about implementing and sustaining change. The eight-step processes are:

(1) Establishing a sense of urgency.
(2) Creating a guiding coalition.
(3) Developing a vision and strategy.
(4) Communicating the change vision.
(5) Empowering broad-based action.
(6) Generating short-term wins.
(7) Consolidating gains and producing more change.
(8) Anchoring new approaches in the culture.

According to Fullan (2014a), these two approaches of managing organizational change generate problems of their own. Firstly, he argued that they usually resulted in defining the problem at the executive level or by an outside consultant, rather than by the people who lived with the problem at work or who will have to live with the implied change. Secondly, he argued that the processes are seen as a cycle and are assumed to be repeated until the correct solution is found, which disrupts the organizational system during this process, as no one knows how many times the cycle needs to be repeated. The third problem of this approach is the tacit assumption that change can be directed and orderly.
Beer, Eisenstat, and Spector (1990) proposed a bottom-up strategy of managing change to build a culture within the organization, focusing on employee behaviours, attitudes, capabilities, and commitment. The organization’s ability to learn from its experience was seen as a legitimate yardstick of organizational success. Participation was the hallmark of managing change to get all employees emotionally committed to improving the organization’s performance. To that end, Beer, Eisenstat, and Spector (1990) introduced their six steps to effective change:

(1) Mobilizing commitment to change through the joint diagnosis of business problems with people in the organization.
(2) Developing a shared vision of how to organize and manage for competitiveness.
(3) Fostering concerns for the new vision, competence to enact it, and cohesion to move it along.
(4) Spreading revitalization to all departments without pushing it from the top.
(5) Institutionalizing revitalization through formal policies, systems, and structure.
(6) Monitoring and adjusting strategies in response to problems in the revitalization process.

Bottom-up, step-by-step and top-down strategies have all been criticized. Argyris (2000) calls such models of change ‘unactionable’ advice, as he questioned the efficacy of such models in guiding effective change. At the heart of Argyris’s (2000) argument is that much of the advice offered is espoused theory. Espoused theory is seen as using the principles and precepts that are hold as truths, as guides to behaviour. There are gaps between espoused theory and theory-in-use—what we actually do. How we behave and respond is our theory-in-use. Such gaps exist for all of us, whether we are in formal leadership positions or not. When we give flawed advice we are feeding espoused theory and not contributing a great deal to theory-in-use. Fullan (2014a) also argued that step-by-step recipes for success, whether top-down (Kotter, 1996) or bottom-up (Beer, Eisenstat, & Spector, 1990), will never be adequate for managing change in every context, although they may contribute to an understanding of the process.

Egan (1990) noted that a number of non-rational factors, or ‘messiness’, are inherent in organizations: strategy and operations that are not well integrated; different individual idiosyncrasies, approaches, and problems; friendships and animosities that affect the functioning of subsystems; and political factors, such as power and authority, protection of
turf, and competition for resources. The organizational culture, which affects and is affected by the previously named factors, can greatly enhance or inhibit the system’s effectiveness. Egan (1990) proposed a three stages change model. In stage one, he called for vigilance throughout the organization in monitoring emerging problems and opportunities, challenges, blind spots, seeking points of leverage, and gathering clear and specific action-oriented data. His stage two entails defining what the organization needs and wants but not how it is to be achieved. It involves brainstorming possibilities and evaluating them in terms of realism, adequacy, fit with the organizational culture, and consequences. It includes getting commitment from key stakeholders. In stage three, a wide range of strategies is proposed, and organizational players determine what steps need to be taken and in what order (Egan, 1990). He placed the responsibility for change deep within the organization and considered the key stakeholders and the organizational culture to be the primary consideration.

Fullan (2014a) concluded that this model is too complex to be controlled, and instead needs to be understood and ‘disrupted’ in desired directions. He identified six truths about the change process:

1. Never a checklist, always complexity.
2. Re-culturing is the name of the game.
3. Redefine resistance.
4. Appreciate the implementation dip.
5. It is not enough to have the best ideas.
6. The goal is not to innovate the most.

Fullan (2014a) argued that the change process needs to be understood as being complex, and easy answers must be recognised as problematic. As a result, simple checklists of how to do change will never suffice. He argued that there is no step-by-step shortcut to transformation. Instead, it involves the hard day-to-day work of reculturing. He argued that restructuring is required to move an organization forward, but even more important is the hard work that needs to go into reimagining the culture of the organization, toward building new ways of seeing change, new ways of building relationships and embracing diversity, new ways of creating and sharing knowledge, and new ways of deepening the moral purpose of the organization. Fullan (2014a) indicated the importance of redefining resistance as a potentially positive force, as naysayers sometimes have good points, and they are crucial concerning the politics of implementation. He argued that this does not mean that you listen
to naysayers endlessly, but that you look for ways to address their concerns. Fullan (2014a) also warned about the inevitable early difficulties of trying something new—what he called the ‘implementation dip’, where an initial decline in productivity and organizational self-confidence may temporarily be experienced. He advised people against becoming discouraged and suggested that they understand that the decline will pass, as new expertise is developed. He also argued powerfully against change as being a process of having the most innovations or the most new ideas. Too much change at once will often be too shallow to be truly effective or transformational. It often leads to burn out and dissatisfaction with the entire change process, which can actually set progress back significantly. Real change is deep, meaningful, and slow, not bright, shiny, and fast, so it can take longer and be more even more difficult than initially expected. But if approached with patience and optimism, real change can yield more thorough, long-term results (Fullan, 2014a).

In terms of educational reform, governments across the world have been attempting to change their public education system in ways that support higher levels of achievement, and in many cases, these reforms have reduced inequities in educational outcomes. With many attempts to achieve an effective large scale reform over the last 30 years, the central lesson identified by Levin and Fullan (2008) is that sustained improvement in student outcomes requires a sustained effort to change school and teaching and learning practices in individual classrooms, and that requires focused and sustained effort by all parts of the education system and its partners. However, the remaining challenges are how to achieve effective, whole system reform.

Fullan (2009b) reviewed the history of schooling reform and identified three different approaches of schooling reforms: standards-based district-wide reform initiatives, professional learning communities, and ‘qualification’ frameworks that focus on the development and retention of quality leaders. The standards-based district-wide reform initiatives include four components in the reform strategy: (1) identification of world class standards in different curricula, such as literacy and mathematics; (2) a system of assessments mapped on to the standards; (3) development of curriculum based on the standards and assessments; and (4) a serious investment in ongoing professional development for school leaders and teachers. Fullan (2006a and 2006b) criticized this approach as missing any notion about school or district culture. It does not include the harder questions: under what conditions will continuous improvement happen? And, correspondingly, how do we change school and district cultures? He emphasized the point that standards, assessment, curriculum,
and professional development in change are not wrong, but are seriously incomplete strategies, as they lack a focus on what needs to change in instructional practice, and equally importantly, what it will take to bring about these changes in classrooms across the districts.

A professional learning communities (PLC) approach involves developing communities of learners in which teachers and school leaders work together to improve the learning conditions and student outcomes in given schools. Dufour, Eaker, & Many’s (2006) approach represents the most advanced example of the PLC framework, consisting of six components: (1) a focus on learning; (2) a collaborative culture stressing learning for all; (3) collective inquiry into best practice; (4) an action orientation (learning by doing); (5) a commitment to continuous improvement; and (6) a focus on results. Fullan (2006a and 2006b) argued this approach to change focuses on the school, and to involve the right components. However, he mentioned three issues to be concerned about in the spread of PLCs. The first issue is the danger and likelihood of superficiality, with many people calling what they are doing ‘professional learning communities’ without going deeply into learning, and without realising that they are not going deeply. The second issue is the mistake of treating PLCs as the latest innovation. When it is treated as a program innovation, people may see it as the flavour of the year, which means it can be discarded easily once other innovations come along in the following year. He argued that PLCs should not be presented as an innovation to be implemented. Instead, they should be presented as new collaborative cultures, which focus on building the capacity for continuous improvement and providing a new way of working and learning. They are meant to engender enduring capacities, not pass as just another program innovation. The third issue is that PLCs can be miscast as changing the culture of individual schools, rather than, more deeply, being part and parcel of creating new multiple school district cultures. Fullan (2006b) argued that their purpose is to reform the schooling system. To that end, he argued that all schools and districts need to learn from each other. Fullan (2006b) referred to this approach as lateral capacity building, seeing it as crucial for system reform. They reinforced the notion of the school as part and parcel of wider system change, not as an autonomous unit, which PLCs can unwittingly represent.

Introducing qualifications frameworks that focus on the development and retention of quality leaders is the third popular approach to change. It involves establishing incentives and various standards and qualifications requirements, along with corresponding professional development, to attract people to the teaching profession and to leadership positions and to retain them in these positions. It is thus premised on the idea of attracting the best possible
people to the classroom and to the principalship, in order to change the system for the better. A recent good example of this approach is in the final report of the Teaching Commission (2006), which identified four recommendations: transforming teacher compensation, reinventing teacher preparation, overhauling licensing and certification, and strengthening leadership and support. Fullan (2014a) argued that, although this approach obviously can do well, it has one fatal flaw. It bases system change on enticing more and better individuals. He argued that this strategy might at best contribute to about 30 per cent of the solution, the other 70 per cent depends on the culture or conditions under which people work. He confirmed that any change approach must simultaneously focus on changing individuals and the culture or system within which they work.

Fullan (2014a) proposed a theory of action to design strategies that get results for the whole school system. He identified seven core premises underpinning his theory of action: (1) a focus on motivation; (2) capacity building, with a focus on results; (3) learning in the context; (4) changing the context; (5) a bias for reflective action; (6) tri-level engagement; and (7) persistence and flexibility in staying the course.

A focus on motivation is provided as the first premise necessary to motivating people to put in the effort to get results. Fullan (2006b) argued that any change effort would fail if its strategy did not enhance motivation over time. He argued that moral purpose is a great potential motivator, making a positive difference in the social environment and improving the school system across all schools in the district. Moral purpose can contribute to closing the gap between high and lower performing schools and students by raising the level of achievement of all. He also argued that motivation could be mobilized by several key aspect of his theory, including capacity, resources, and peer and leadership support.

Capacity building, with a focus on results, was presented as being crucial, combining both support and pressure. Capacity building was seen as being any strategy that increases the collective effectiveness of a group to achieve the moral purpose, involving helping to develop individual and collective knowledge and competencies, resources, and motivation. The key part of a focus on results is what Fullan (2014a) presented as the evolution of positive pressure. He argued that an emphasis on accountability by itself produces negative pressure: pressure that does not motivate, that is palpably unfair and unreasonable and does not come accompanied by resources for capacity building.
The third basic premise of this model is that strategies for reform must build in many opportunities for learning in context. Learning in context may occur when all schools and principals are members of intervisitation study teams in a district in which they examine real problems and their solutions as they evolve in their own systems. Learning in context was seen as the learning with the greatest payoff, because it is specific and because it is social, thereby developing shared and collective knowledge and commitments. Learning in context was also related to sustainability, because it improves the system in a way that establishes conditions conducive to continuous development, through creating opportunities to learn from others on-the-job, the daily fostering of current and future leaders, the selective retention of good ideas and best practices, and the explicit monitoring of performance (Fullan, 2014a).

The fourth premise of this model is that strategies for reform must have the capacity to change the larger context, requiring lateral capacity building in which individuals, schools and districts learn from each other. Fullan (2014a and 2014b) argued that changing the context requires creating a culture of sharing and caring. Changing the context means also changing the conditions under which people operate, including knowledge sharing as a value, creating mechanisms to enable it, and reinforcing it when it occurs. Fullan (2003) proposed ways to create the conditions and processes that enhance the likelihood of greater ownership and commitment:

1. Start with moral purpose, key problems, and desirable directions.
2. Create communities of interaction around these ideas.
3. Ensure that high quality information infuses interaction and related deliberations.
4. Look for promising patterns, consolidate gains and build on them.

The fifth premise in the model is a focus on reflective action. Fullan (2006b) argued that reflective action is crucial as it is a process of learning, not only by doing, but also by thinking about what one is doing.

Sixth, Fullan (2014a) argued that tri-level engagement is essential for system reform. Tri-level in this context refers to school and community, district, and state. He argued the need for connectedness and coherence-making. Achieving system coherence was seen as focusing on strengthening and building the mechanisms that insure the optimal coordination of reform goals, efforts and outcomes (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2014). Fullan (2014a) also argued that achieving coherence is difficult in a culture of change, because disequilibrium,
ambiguity and disturbance are common. He made the point that many reform efforts made the mistake of taking on too many uncoordinated new initiatives and policies: that the problem is not the absence of innovations but the presence of many disconnected, episodic, piecemeal projects with superficial implementation, which ultimately create overload, fragmentation, incoherence, and confusion and often create an outcome that is worse than the original conditions.

Lastly, because the above six premises are complex to manage and must be cultivated over time, including through bumpy cycles, a strong resolve is necessary to stay on course. It takes what Fullan (2014a) called resilience: persistence plus flexibility. He argued that rigid persistence begets push back in equal or greater measure. Failure to keep going in the face of inevitable barriers achieves nothing. Being flexible, in fact, is built into the action theory. Because the theory is reflective and inquiry-based, and because it is cultivated in the minds and actions of key players operating with a similar theory of action, it was seen that there was plenty of self-correction and refinement built into it.

Based on these seven premises, Fullan (2014a, 2010) outlined eight elements of successful reform: a small number of ambitious goals, a guiding coalition at the top, high standards and expectations, collective capacity building with a focus on instruction, mobilizing the data as a strategy for improvement, intervention in a non-punitive manner, being vigilant about distracters, and being transparent, relentless, and increasingly challenging.

In their work on how to change 5000 schools in Ontario, Canada, Levin and Fullan (2008) also identified seven key components that have the potential to create lasting improvement across a broad range of student outcomes:

(1) A small number of ambitions, yet achievable goals which are publicly stated.
(2) A positive stance with a focus on motivation.
(3) Multi-level engagement, with strong leadership and a guiding coalition.
(4) Emphasis on capacity building, with a focus on results.
(5) Keeping a focus on key strategies while also managing other interests and issues.
(6) Effective use of resources.
(7) Constant and growing transparency, including public and stakeholder communication and feedback.
For the OECD, Hargreaves (2012) conducted a review of many high performing education systems: a network of 300 secondary schools in England, schools in the province of Alberta in Canada and in the Tower Hamlets school district in the UK. He discerned and distilled a set of powerful elements of educational change that these extraordinarily successful, yet also quite varied systems, held in common as key elements accounting for success: a high quality teaching profession, supportive working conditions, professional trust, and an inspiring country vision. He also identified six pillars of purpose and partnership that support change, three principles of professionalism that drive change and four catalysts of coherence that help sustain change. The six pillars of purpose and partnership are an inspiring and inclusive vision, public engagement, investment in education, responsible corporate involvement in education, involving students in change and in leadership, deep engagement, and critical and challenging teaching and learning. His three principles that drive professionalism are high quality teachers, positive and powerful professional associations, and lively learning communities. He argued that all successful systems need coherence, mechanisms that hold the efforts and the outcomes together, and four catalysts of coherence: sustainable leadership, integrating networks, placing responsibility before accountability, and appreciating differentiation and diversity for every child’s learning needs.

Hopkins, Stringfield, Harris, Stoll, and Mackay (2014) reviewed school effectiveness and school improvement studies over the last 40 years, and identified a set of features of high-performing national and regional educational systems. These features relate to: student-focused interventions, teachers’ recruitment and development, leadership expectations, and system level strategies. These high-performing systems focus on the student achievement at system level and school level, as well as on the teachers’ professional lives. For this purpose the quality of teaching and learning becomes the central theme in the system improvement strategies and a relentless effort is concentrated on enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. In order to encourage students to consistently undertake challenging tasks, the system or school system creates protocols. Student performance is monitored and timely support is provided. The systems address inequities in student performance through good early education and direct classroom support for those students who have fallen behind. Timely intervention and action are crucial for these systems, hence they intervene early at the classroom level to enhance school performance. In terms of teachers’ recruitment, these successful schools or systems have selection policies ensuring that only highly qualified people become teachers and educational leaders. However, only hiring qualified people may
not do the job, requiring also the provision of ongoing professional learning support. Hence these systems put in place ongoing and sustained professional learning opportunities in order to develop relatively common practices by integrating the curriculum, teaching and learning. Teachers are also supported by being provided with timely, ongoing and transparent data to facilitate their abilities to make improvement in their teaching and learning. These effective systems also place very high expectations on the school leadership. At the system level, these systems establish structures that link the various levels of the system, promote disciplined innovation as a consequence of the thoughtful professional application of research and focus on best practice, which is facilitated by networking, self-reflection, refinement, and continuous learning. These educational systems develop and communicate clear goals and standard professional practices.

Another significant study is that reported in the Mckinsey Report, which examined the characteristics of the top performing education systems in the world (Barber & Mourshed, 2007). It reported that, on benchmark measures of literacy, numeracy, and science, the countries that performed consistently well, ranking in the top five or six, typically included Finland, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Canada (Ontario, Alberta, Quebec) and South Korea. The Mckinsey group set out to identify polices and strategies (i.e., instruments amenable to manipulation) that accounted for the differences. They found four important factors: (1) attracting high quality people to the teaching profession (academic plus suitability for teaching); (2) focusing on strategies for developing high quality instructional practices on an ongoing basis on the job; (3) cultivating, selecting, and developing instructionally oriented leaders (especially principals, but also others at the district and state levels); and (4) continuing data-based attention to how well individual students, schools, and sets of schools are doing with early intervention to address any problems.

In summary, the review of the literature on educational change provides insights into the nature and importance of the process on managing change and key factors for the success of school improvement reform. The major implication for this present study is that it suggests the need for research into the process of managing change in the Saudi schooling system and the extent to which that process can facilitate successful change in school practice.

**School Principals as Educational Change Managers**

Leadership has increasingly been seen as a key factor in organizational (Yukl, 2009) as well as school (Hallinger & Heck, 1998) effectiveness. The increased interest in educational
leadership evidenced over recent decades may be due to the trend in the continuous reform of education systems throughout the world (Fullan, 2004; Hallinger, 2011, 2010). These reforms have led to a dramatic growth in the importance of the role assigned to school leaders, both individually and collectively. This growth is evident in system policies adopted globally that have sought to transform leadership structures (e.g., school based management) and roles (e.g., instructional leadership), while at the same time revamping approaches to school leadership preparation and development (Hallinger, 2003; Huber, 2004).

This policy driven interest in school leadership has been accompanied by greater scholarly effort aimed at understanding how leadership contributes to school effectiveness and improvement (Anderson, Kleinhenz, Mulford, & Gurr, 2008; Hallinger, 2011; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Huber & Muijs, 2010; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008). Leithwood and Jantzi (2006), for example, conducted a large-scale empirical study for the National College for School Leadership in England, organized around what they referred to as seven strong claims about successful school leadership. That study, in varying degrees, supported the convictions that:

1. School leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning.
2. Almost all successful leaders draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices:
   a. Building vision and setting directions.
   b. Understanding and developing people.
   c. Redesigning the organization.
   d. Managing the teaching and learning program.
3. The ways in which leaders apply these basic leadership practices – not the practices themselves – demonstrate responsiveness to, rather than dictation by, the contexts in which they work.
4. School leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions.
5. School leadership has a greater influence on schools and students when it is widely distributed.
6. Some patterns of distribution are more effective than others.
7. A small handful of personal traits explain a high proportion of the variation in leadership effectiveness (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).
More than ever, in today’s climate of heightened expectations, the roles and functions of school leaders have been changed in many countries of the world. The efforts made to improve schools have illustrated the point that school leaders need to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs administrators, and expert overseers of legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives (Leithwood, et al., 2008). According to Harris et al. (2013), there is a set of key contemporary challenges at the heart of school leadership. That set includes ensuring consistently good teaching and learning, integrating a sound grasp of basic knowledge and skills within a broad and balanced curriculum, managing behaviour and attendance, strategically managing resources and the environment, building the school as a professional learning community, and developing partnerships beyond the school to encourage parental support for learning and new learning opportunities. Research has shown that principals are required to rethink their priorities, curriculum goals, pedagogies, learning resources, assessment methods, and technologies (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). They also are required to ensure that students and parents are prepared for the new realities and to provide them with the necessary support. In consequence, newly conceptualised models of leadership have evolved (Hargreaves, Halasz, & Pont, 2007; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

Internationally, school leadership research has identified a number of leadership models. Earlier leadership models of school administration saw a school as a stable system, where the existing structures needed to be administered to achieve fixed results. It was argued that a static concept of leadership may work, with the school leader first and foremost ensuring that the school as an organization functioned well and ran smoothly. The term ‘transactional leadership’ has been applied to this concept of steady state leadership: the school leader is the manager of the transactions, which are fundamental for an effective and efficient work flow within the organization. The daily organizational office proceedings and the administration of buildings, financial and personal resources, the time resources of staff, as well as communication processes within and outside of the school are all included in this definition of ‘transactions’ or ‘interactions’. All these activities constitute the daily routines of school leadership and should not be underestimated, since they represent part of the workload required to create the appropriate conditions for the teaching and learning processes to take place (Huber, 2010).
However, once the rapid and extensive processes of change demand viewing and performing change and improvement as a continuing process, different conceptions of leadership are seen to be required (Heck & Hallinger, 2005). Among a number of major leadership models evident in the educational leadership literature, the two predominant models are those of instructional leadership and transformational leadership. Both models have garnered the bulk of research aimed at demonstrating leadership influence on student learning (Heck & Hallinger, 2005).

Instructional leadership models emerged in the early 1980s as a part of the 1970s effective schools movement. Early definitions of instructional leaders tended to be broad and centred on the idea that a principal in an effective school is less an in-house bureaucrat or accountant than a principal teacher (the origin of the title is now long forgotten) and a mobilizer, departing from the tradition in the American public education system of separating management from practice and administration from teaching (Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

Such definitions were criticized as having provided a general overview but giving little consideration to what the principal’s work around instruction included. It was argued that early research on instructional leadership focused on the characteristics of successful leaders, isolating personal traits such as gender and leadership style that correlated with ‘effective’ schools (Elmore, 2000; Heck, Marcoulides, & Lang, 1991). This focus suggested that a principal was successful because of certain personal qualities, rather than because he or she had mastered a body of professional knowledge or had proven himself or herself to be competent (Burch & Spillane, 2003; Elmore, 2000; Hallinger, 2005). It capitalized on the long-standing, romantic belief in the solitary, heroic American leader, one who could ‘save’ the failing school (Elmore, 2000). A few studies suggested more expansive characteristics of instructional leaders, such as a strong results orientation, strength of purpose, and a willingness to involve others in decision making (Rosenholtz, 1985; Sammons, 1995), but the implication remained that a leader either was born with these traits or was not going to be successful.

Later studies moved beyond personal characteristics, focusing on the general behaviour of principals in effective schools. For example, successful principals systematically monitored student progress and were highly visible in their supervisory role (Tyack & Hansot, 1982); they visited classrooms, observed teaching, and then responded to those observations (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Edmonds, 1982); they were experts in
curricular development and teaching and generated a common sense of vision among their staff (Adams & Kirst, 1999; Tyack & Hansot, 1982); and they were assertive, strong disciplinarians and evaluated the achievement of basic objectives (Brookover & Lezotte, 1981; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986). Perhaps most common among lists of behaviours, instructional leadership was to be carried out by the principal alone, and he or she was to be a strong, directive leader, focused on building school culture, academic pressure, and high expectations for student achievement (Bossett et al., 1982; Hallinger, 2005; Heck, Larsen, & Marcolides, 1990; Marks & Printy, 2003; Rosenholtz, 1985).

As interest grew in the new, instructionally focused role of the principal, in the 1980s Philip Hallinger developed one of the most widely used tools for measuring instructional leadership, the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) (Hallinger, 1990; Murphy, Weil, Hallinger, & Mitman, 1982). The PIMRS isolates 50 principal behaviours, assessing 10 functions of instructional leadership on three dimensions: (a) defining the school’s mission (framing and communicating goals), (b) managing the instructional program (supervising instruction, coordinating curriculum, and monitoring student progress), and (c) promoting a positive school learning climate (protecting instructional time, professional development, a visible presence, promoting high expectations, and providing incentives for teachers and students) (Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986). Hallinger (2008) reasserted the usefulness of this construct in his meta-analytic review of the literature, the PIMRS having then been used in more than 199 studies.

In 1996, the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium in USA created the national Standards for School Leaders, influenced in part by Hallinger’s framework. Revised in 2008, these standards highlight some of the behaviours identified as being critical to instructional leadership: (a) developing and facilitating a school vision of learning, (b) advocating and nurturing a school culture conducive to student learning, (c) managing the organization as an effective learning environment, (d) collaborating with families and community members and responding to needs and mobilizing resources, (e) acting with integrity and fairness, and (f) understanding and influencing the larger sociopolitical context.

The broad influence of the instructional leadership role of principals has been acknowledged. However, this is not the only role of the school principal (Cuban, 1988). Principals fill an array of managerial, political, instructional, institutional, human resource, and symbolic leadership roles in their schools as well (Bolman & Deal, 1992). Critics have
asserted that efforts to limit or even focus narrowly on this single role in an effort to improve student performance will be dysfunctional for the principal (Barth, 1986). Moreover, the ability of principals to fulfil the somewhat heroic role suggested by instructional leadership approach advocates may be limited. Hallinger and Murphy’s (1986) study suggested that, although the principal in a small primary school could more easily spend substantial amounts of time in classrooms working on curriculum and instruction and supporting teachers’ learning, this type of direct involvement in teaching and learning is simply unrealistic in a larger school, whether at elementary or secondary level. Barth (1990) also asserted that any intention to provide instructional leadership, especially in secondary schools, is complicated by the fact that in many cases principals have less expertise than the teachers whom they supervise.

Transformational leadership models have also been prominent in the research in responding to the new challenges and rapid and extensive processes of change that demand viewing and performing change and improvement as a continuing process (Hallinger, 2003). Transformational leadership models were initially conceptualized by Bass (1985) and Burns (1978) in non-educational contexts. Burns argued that transformational leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. They do this, as Bennis and Nanus (1985) explained, by developing a vision for the organization, developing commitment and trust among workers, and facilitating organizational learning. Through these and other behaviours, Avolio and Bass (1995) added that transformational leaders convert followers to disciples; they develop followers into leaders. They elevate the concerns of followers on Maslow’s needs hierarchy from needs for safety and security to needs for achievement and self-actualization: increasing their awareness and consciousness of what is really important, and moving them to go beyond their own self-interest for the good of the larger entities to which they belong. The transforming leader provides followers with a cause around which they can rally.

In educational contexts, Leithwood and his colleagues have carried out the most substantial adaptation of Bass’s (1985) transformational leadership model (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; , Leithwood, Tomlinson, & Genge, 1996). Leithwood’s model consists of seven components: individualised support, shared goals, vision, intellectual stimulation, culture building, rewards, high expectations, and modelling. It assumes that the principals alone will not be able to provide the leadership that creates these conditions. It may well be shared,
coming from teachers as well as from the principal (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). It also starts from different motivational assumptions. Behavioural components such as individualised support, intellectual stimulation, and personal vision suggest that the model is grounded in understating the needs of individual staff, rather that coordinating and controlling them towards the organization’s desired ends, as instructional leadership seeks to achieve. In this sense, the model seeks to influence people by building from the bottom-up rather than from the top down.

Several studies of the impact of the principal from a transformational leadership perspective have been carried out. Leithwood (1994) highlighted ‘people effects’ as a cornerstone of the transformational leadership model. Within the model proposed by Leithwood and colleagues, many of the outcomes of interest in terms of restructuring schools are teacher effects (e.g. changes of behaviour, the adoption of new programs, and teaching techniques). Thus, the principal’s efforts become apparent in the school conditions that produce changes in people rather than in promoting specific instructional practices (Bishop & Mulford, 1999; Bottery, 2001; K. Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999).

Leithwood (1994) also found that a principal’s effectiveness is achieved through fostering group goals, modelling desired behaviour for others, and providing intellectual stimulation, and individualised support (e.g., toward personal and staff development). In such schools, principals were found to be better at supporting staff, providing recognition, and knowing the problems of the school, and were more approachable. They followed through, sought new ideas, and spent considerable time developing human resources.

Several studies have reinforced the conclusion that transformational leadership has an impact on teachers’ perceptions of school conditions, their commitment to change, and the organizational learning that takes place (Bogler, 2001; Day, Harris, & Hadfield, 2001; Fullan, 2002). With respect to outcomes, leadership has been found to have an influence on teachers’ perceptions of progress with implementing reform initiatives and teachers’ perceptions of increases in student outcomes.

Several studies have also been carried out to find out the effects of transformational school leadership on student academic achievement and engagement (Leithwood et al., 2004; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Ross, Hogaboam-Gray, & Gray, 2004) In sum, the results from these studies have been mixed. Ross et al. (2004) reported significant positive effects of transformational leadership on achievement in mathematics and language, whereas
Leithwood et al., (2004) and Leithwood and Riehl (2003) found non-significant effects. The Leithwood and Riehl (2003) study, which was designed to assess the effects of transformational leadership on student engagement in schools, reported significant positive effects. These mixed findings align with Elmore’s (2004) conclusion, which reinforces the need for both instructional leadership and transformational leadership. His argument was that the impact of instructional leadership was nearly four times that of transformational leadership, but he concluded that, given transformational leadership’s emphasis on relationships and instructional leadership’s emphasis on educational purpose, one could argue that both theories are needed.

Consistent with Elmore’s argument, Sun and Leithwood (2015) proposed a model of integrated effective leadership practices, which considers the instructional and transformational roles that school principals play. Five domains of practice were included: setting directions, building relationships and developing people, developing the organization to support desired practices, improving the instructional program, and securing accountability. Each of these domains includes a handful of more specific practices (Leithwood & Seashore-Louis, 2011).

Hopkins and Higham (2007) also set out an approach to what they referred to as system leadership, which leads to sustainable educational transformation. Their model is based on the assumption that sustainable educational development requires educational leaders who are willing to shoulder broader leadership roles and who care about and work for the success of other schools, as well as their own. The elements of their model begin with the condition that leadership must be imbued with moral purpose. They argued that the best system leadership shares two types of behaviours and skills. Firstly, they engage in personal development, usually informally though benchmarking themselves against their peers and developing their skills in response to the context they find themselves working in. Secondly, they have a strategic capability, which they can translate: they can translate their vision or moral purpose into operational principles with tangible outcomes. Hopkins and Higham (2007) argued that the moral purpose, personal qualities and strategic capacity of the system leader are focused on three domains of the school: managing the teaching and learning process, developing people and developing the organizations. System leaders engage deeply with the organization of teaching, learning, curriculum and assessment in order to personalize learning for all their students, reduce within-school variation and support curriculum choice. In order to do this, they develop their schools as personal and professional learning communities, with
relationships built across and beyond each school to provide a range of learning experiences and professional development opportunities. They also realize that all this requires a robust and reliable school organization, and they work towards achieving it.

In his recent book, Fullan (2014b) argued that the role of the principal as direct instructional leader is not effective in improving student learning. It positions the principal in too narrow a role (overly focused on classroom instruction), too confusing a role (what exactly does ‘instructional leadership’ mean anyway), and too tedious a role (checklists and more checklists, reaching all of those teachers and being an expert in every subject). Instead, he argued that the current environment requires a new kind of leadership. A kind of leadership that takes into account the human condition – that is, the natural human desire to do things that are intrinsically meaningful to themselves and to work with others. To meet these conditions, it is necessary to change outdated school systems into dynamic learning environments. To create this type of learning environment, the new role of the principal must encompass three components: (1) learning leader, (2) system player, and (3) agent of change. He argued that learning leaders support groups of teachers to work together to improve student learning, which, as a number of research studies show, produces the most powerful effects. He asserted that the principal must act as lead learner and ensure that the groups focus on a few key areas: (1) specific goals for students, (2) data that enable clear diagnosis of individual learning needs, (3) instructional practices that address those learning needs, and (4) teachers learning from each other, monitoring overall progress, and making adjustments accordingly.

The role of school principals as system players was seen as being focused on building external networks and partnerships to access new ideas, which in turn would improve their own school. By seeking out and learning best practices from other schools, the school principal can help her/his own school. The role of the school principal as change agent involves seven competencies which principals need to effectively lead change at their schools: challenging the status quo, building trust through clear communication and expectations, creating a commonly owned plan for success, focusing on team over self, having a sense of urgency for sustainable results, committing to continuous improvement for self, and building external networks and partnerships.

In summary, the review of the literature on school principals as change agents illustrates their importance as leaders of change and the roles that they play in implementing
reform and improving schools’ outcomes. It also shows how expectations of schooling and school principals have changed. The major implication then, for this present study, is of the value of studying the experience of key implementers of the policy reform initiatives: school principals in the case of Saudi Arabia.

**Development of Skills for Effective School Principalship in the Reform Process**

In view of the ever-increasing responsibilities of school leaders for ensuring and enhancing the quality of the schools, professional development (PD) has become one of the central concerns of educational policy-makers. In many countries, including Saudi Arabia, the development of professionals in schools is high on the reform agenda. There is broad international agreement about the need for school leaders to have the capacities required to improve the quality of teaching in their schools, and to enhance the quality of learning in the pupils (Pont, Nusche, & Hopkins, 2008).

Historically, in the 1970s, it would have been accurate to assert that no nation in the world, including Saudi Arabia, had in place a clear system of national requirements, agreed upon frameworks of knowledge, or standards of school leadership development. Indeed, in 1980, the United States was one of the few nations in which school administrators were required to have any type of pre-service preparation or certification (Hallinger, 2003).

In the past 20 years, school leadership development has become a reality across almost all countries involved in improving school leadership, either as preparation for entry to a leadership post or to further develop the skills of active principals (Huber, 2004). Although it seems that there may be international consensus about the important role of school leaders and their development, on closer examination it is apparent that some countries have engaged in the issue more rigorously than others. There is some evidence pointing to the need for the training of practicing school leaders themselves, as well as other key stakeholders. In England, only 17 per cent of principals thought they were ‘very prepared’ for principalship and only about one in eight head teachers were prepared to say that on actually taking up their first headship, they regarded themselves as well equipped to take it on (Anderson et al., 2008). A research study surveying new principals in Europe (Bolam, Dunning, & Karstanje, 2000) found that 65 per cent had received no formal or structured preparation for the job. According to Pont et al. (2008), almost all principals or candidates for principalship had a background as teachers; however, when they took up their position, they may not necessarily
be competent as pedagogical leaders, and they often lacked knowledge in personnel and financial management and the skills for working beyond the school borders – some of the key leadership tasks required for school of the 21st century.

There is widespread consensus among practitioners, researchers, and policy makers that professional training and development (PD) have an impact on participants by improving leaders’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions. This PD can contribute to more competent and effective leadership behaviour and eventually lead to improvements in teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007). For instance, a Swedish longitudinal study of 35 schools measured the effects of school leader education (Blossing, 2005). The findings indicated that, in some schools, the school leaders used teachers or their representatives in leadership processes, as well as more collective work among teachers, as a result of the training in which the school principals were involved. Another change has been the institutionalisation of school based evaluation, with a mixed focus on student achievement and teachers’ work. This change reveals that training is having an impact on improving leaders’ knowledge of promoting changes in the way schools are led and managed (Pont et al., 2008).

The need for leadership training and development is also supported by research on leadership in other sectors, such as private business. There is much similarity between the challenges facing business leaders and those facing education leaders, and in the importance of professional development to respond to those challenges. A recent study undertaken by the Center for Creative Leadership predicted trends in business leadership. The results may well apply to trends in education. Senior business leaders were seen as facing increasing complexity due primarily to a set of factors that call for them to do more with less, and to respond even more quickly to changes in their environment. The development of organisational talent and improving the way organisations plan for leadership succession was seen as being a priority (Willburn, Hackman, & Criswell, 2008).

Evidence from leadership development in the public sector provides some lessons from which school leadership could benefit. According to the Organisation for Economic and Development (OECD) (2001) study, leadership development was seen as being critically important in many countries. A set of common patterns included the development of systematic leadership development strategies, the establishment of new leadership development institutions, linking current management training with leadership development,
devising leadership competence profiles, as in qualifications standards and frameworks, identifying and selecting potential leaders, coaching and mentoring, and promoting sustainable leadership development through the recognition of managers’ responsibilities for the development of other leaders (the Organisation for Economic and Development (OECD), 2001).

Although there is widespread consensus on the importance and impact of professional development for school principals, a range of critics, including principals themselves, have raised a litany of concerns about the quality and effectiveness of the leadership preparation typically provided in university based programs and elsewhere (Copland, 1999; Elmore, 2000; Lumsden, 1992; Peterson, 2002). Research evidence has indicated that many professional development programs for principals in the United States have been criticized as being fragmented, incoherent, not sustained, lacking in rigour, and not aligned with state standards for effective administrative practice (Peterson, 2002).

Traditional pre-service programs have come under attack for failing to adapt the curriculum to what is required to meet the learning needs of increasingly diverse student bodies. The knowledge bases on which programs rest are viewed as being frequently outdated, segmented into discrete subject areas, and inadequate for the challenges of managing schools in a diverse society where expectations for learning are increasingly ambitious. Some critics have contended that traditional coursework in principal preparation programs often fails to link theory with practice and is overly didactic, out of touch with the real-world complexities and demands of school leadership, and not aligned with established theories of leadership (Copland, 1999; Elmore, 2000; Lumsden, 1992; McCarthy, 1999; Murphy & Vriesenga, 2006). Often missing from the curriculum are topics related to principles of effective teaching and learning, the design of instruction and professional development, organizational design of schools to promote teacher and student learning, and the requirements of building communities across diverse school stakeholders.

Some of the common features of traditional preparation programs have also been subject to increased scrutiny. For example, the quality and depth of internships and field experiences, widely recognised as pivotal to candidates’ professional learning and identity formation (Barber, 2007), have been found to be notably uneven across programs. Efforts to provide field based practicum experiences were found not to consistently provide candidates with a sustained, hands-on internship in which they grapple with the real demands of school
leadership under the supervision of a well-qualified mentor (Barber, 2007). Instead, some programs have required little more than a set of ad hoc projects conducted while a candidate was still working full time as a teacher. Often these projects have been written papers, disconnected from the hands-on challenges and daily requirements of the principal’s job.

In-service programs also have been criticized. Although there is a smaller research base available to guide in-service rather than pre-service programs, there is evidence of a growing consensus that ongoing leadership support and development, like leadership preparation, should combine theory and practice, provide scaffolded learning experiences under the guidance of experienced mentors, offer opportunities to actively reflect on leadership experiences, and foster peer networking (Peterson, 2002). Despite an improved understanding of the components of effective professional development, few in-service programs for school leaders provide what Peterson (2002) terms ‘career-staged’ support, providing a cumulative learning pathway from pre-service preparation throughout a principal’s career.

Although induction programs for new principals are becoming more widespread, relatively few school districts were found by Peterson (2002) to offer systematic mentoring for beginning principals to help them learn how to make sense of such a complex job, prioritizing and juggling its many demands and developing skills in managing and leading other adults. Beyond the initial years, principals were seen as needing to develop more sophisticated skills that require differentiated approaches to professional development. Depending on their own backgrounds and prior experiences, as well as the school contexts in which they work, different principals were seen as needing different kinds of support.

Criticisms of existing professional development programs have thus included: (1) a misalignment between program content and candidate needs, (2) a failure to link programs with school or district core values and missions, (3) a failure to leverage job-embedded learning opportunities, and (4) uneven use of powerful learning technologies (Coffin, 1997). Too many districts have been seen as failing to link professional development to instructional reforms, as they continue to waste resources on one shot workshops, rather than designing ongoing support that would help align school activities with best practices to support principals in problem solving (Coffin, 1997).

These criticisms have been found to be common problems in most professional development programs. In order to address the issues and improve the applicability of these programs, what is needed is to locate and identify some effectively implemented professional
development programs, and to analyse them to identify the critical features that can help in professional teacher learning. Some programs that have used strategies such as maximizing learning, learning transfer and student centred pedagogies, faculty support through mentoring, and opportunities to use their learning in practice, have been found to be effective in adult learning. Moreover, intellectually strong content and opportunities for field experiences can challenge and offer comprehensive, coherent and relevant experience for leadership preparation. School improvement also requires a well-defined and well integrated theory of leadership that is coherent and consistent with other program elements (Orr, 2006).

Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) have conducted research to evaluate the effectiveness of university based leadership preparation programs for school leadership. The research suggested a number of specific program features of effective leadership development programs, such as: clear values about leadership and learning around which the program is coherently organized; field-based internships with skilled supervision; opportunities for collaboration and teamwork; and strong partnerships with schools and districts to support quality field experience. In terms of leadership, these university based programs promoted standards based curricula that emphasized instructional leadership, organizational development, and change management. They encouraged active instructional strategies to link theory and practice, such as problem based learning. Like that of the effective system study, in this university based program, rigorous recruitment and selection of both candidates and faculty was given due importance.

In another study of eleven innovatively redesigned principal preparation programs, Leithwood et al. (1996) surveyed teachers in graduate schools and found that the teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ leadership effectiveness were strongly correlated with program features such as innovative instructional strategies, cohort membership, and program content. Orr, Silverberg, and LeTendre (2006) compared the initial learning and career outcomes of graduates from five leadership preparation programs. These programs were different in terms of their features and the way they had been redesigned to meet national and state standards. The researchers found that the five programs differed most in the programs’ level of challenge and coherence, their use of active, student centred instructional practices, and the length and quality of internship opportunities. These same qualities were positively associated with how much graduates learned about instructional leadership practices and the ways to fostered organizational learning. Internship length and quality were also positively associated with career intentions and advancement. These results suggest that programs
which used somewhat different models, but which were well-implemented and had innovative program features, yielded positive and significantly better outcomes than more traditional preparation programs.

Darling-Hammond et al.’s (2007) study identified eight exemplary programs that included many of the same elements considered essential for effective school leadership. These programs had some common elements around the curriculum, opportunities of applying theory into practice, and candidates’ recruitment. The curriculum was comprehensive and coherent, with an alignment to state and professional standards and it emphasized leadership of instruction and school improvement. Again, well-designed and supervised administrative internships that provided opportunities for candidates to engage in leadership responsibilities for substantial periods of time and which were mentored by expert principals were found to be helpful. Furthermore, active, student centred instructional pedagogies in these programs facilitated the integration of theory and practice and stimulated reflection, problem based learning, action research, field based projects, journal writing, and portfolios that featured ongoing feedback along with self, peer, and faculty assessment. Faculty recruitment and selection processes were carefully planned and rigorous, and provided qualified teachers with potential for leadership to become principals. These programs had faculty staff who were knowledgeable in their subject areas, including expert scholars and practitioners with K–12 teaching and school administration experience, well-structured social and professional support, and formal mentoring from expert principals (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) also found that the exemplary in-service programs had a set of learning opportunities informed by a coherent view of teaching and learning and well-grounded theory and practice that was useful in developing the required attitudes and practices. These programs were also found to involve continuous learning aimed at developing and implementing the specific professional practice learning required by instructional leaders. The leadership development strategies were based on the local needs to foster a well-defined model of leadership and to enable leaders to enact the model. Some of the target practices included: developing shared goals and instructional practices; observing and providing feedback to teachers; planning professional development and other learning experiences for staff; using data to plan school improvement; and developing learning communities. The programs also typically offered support in the form of mentoring, participation in principal networks and study groups, collegial school visits, and peer
coaching. A learning continuum was found to be operating systematically from pre-service preparation, through induction and throughout careers, involving mature and retired principals in mentoring others.

While elaborating on the district efforts in school leadership development, Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) found three features of support. Firstly, districts had in place a learning continuum that was operating systematically from pre-service preparation through induction and throughout the career, involving mature and retired principals in mentoring others. Secondly, the leadership learning programs were grounded in practice, including analyses of classroom practice, supervision, and on-the-job observations connected to readings and discussions organized around a model of leadership. Finally, there was evidence of collegial learning networks, such as principals’ networks, study groups, and mentoring or peer coaching, that created communities of practice and sources of ongoing support for problem solving.

A review of the literature of the strategies to develop school leadership conducted by Dempster, Lovett, and Fluckiger, (2011) suggested ten elements of potential effective leadership in professional development. First, that philosophically and theoretically the program should conform to individual and system needs in leadership and professional learning. Second, the program should be goal-oriented, with a dual focus on school improvement as well as improvement in student learning and achievement. Third, the program should have the support of research evidence. Fourth, time should be allocated for organizing the learning sequence to ensure that it is well-paced and engages collegial support, in-school applications and reflective practice. Fifth, the program should be practice-centred, so that knowledge is transferred to schools for practice, enabling leadership capability to be maximised. Sixth, the program should be designed purposefully for specific career stages, with ready transfer of theory and knowledge into practice. Seventh, the program should have the element of peer support within or beyond the school, so that feedback helps in transferring theory and knowledge into improved practice. Eighth, context sensitive programs should be provided to build on and make use of school leaders’ knowledge of their circumstances and context. Ninth, there should be partnership integrated programs, with external support through joint ventures involving associations, universities and the wider professional world. Finally, there should be a commitment to evaluate the effects on leaders, as well as on school practices to which their learning applies.
The *content* of principal professional development programs has been found to be one important dimension of such successful programs. The content of school leader professional development depends in part on how the role of school leader is conceived as a teacher, administrator, and/or transformational manager of learning (Davis et al., 2005; Mulford, 2003). Traditionally, the school principal has been seen as a figurehead or representative of the body sponsoring the school. Consequently, a fundamental role of school principals entails representing, articulating, and implementing government educational policies at the school level. The principal is also expected to serve as a resource allocator, a representative of the school to the community, and a manager of the school’s facilities, students, personnel and programs. More recently, the global literature on school leadership has focused on the principal’s roles as an instructional leader, change leader, transformational leader, curriculum leader, and leader of a learning community. The emphasis, thus, has clearly shifted towards the human dimensions of leading a school (Davis et al., 2005; Mulford, 2003).

Some researchers have suggested that it is no longer the primary aim of school leadership to make the school function within a fixed legal framework. According to Senge and Sterman (1992), schools were being viewed more and more systemically as learning organizations, each with its own specific conditions, rules, and culture.

Correspondingly, educational administration programs may need to provide practical experiences that focus on relationships and learning outcomes: guiding potential leaders in establishing collaborative decision-making, developing a shared vision, aligning the energies of diverse groups of people, supporting the interdependency of individuals in the organization, and providing opportunities for shared learning among staff (Senge & Sterman, 1992).

In their review of the research on school leadership, Davis et al. (2005) argued that the development of successful principals should reflect the current research on school leadership, management, and instructional leadership. It should incorporate knowledge of instruction, organizational development, and change management, as well as leadership skills. The content should be aligned with the program’s vision, purposes, and goals. Knapp et al. (2003), for example, argued that a well-defined and aligned program is one that links goals, learning activities, and candidate assessments around a set of shared values, beliefs, and knowledge about effective administrative practice.
Increasing importance is being placed on the content of the progress of professional development for school leaders with regard to values. Caldwell (2003), for example, identified a set of six values that underpin what he called a new sense of the public good: access, equity, choice, growth, efficiency, and harmony. Begley (2006) argued that acquiring administrative sophistication is a function of understanding the influence of personal values on organizational and social practices. Partly as a result of working with groups of school administrators in Canada, Barbados, Sweden, Australia, and Russia, Begley identified four motivational bases of values (consequences, consensus, preference/self-interest, and ethics/principles) and seven sources of values and value conflicts (self, group, profession, community, culture, and transcendental God, faith, and spirituality).

The delivery mode has been found to be another dimension of school leadership professional development (Huber, 2004). International comparisons suggest that school leader development is increasingly being regarded as a continuous process that may be divided into several phases. The first phase is the orientation phase, in which teachers interested in leadership positions are provided the opportunity to reflect on the role of a school leader in respect of their own abilities and expectations. The second is the preparation phase, which occurs prior to taking over a school leader position or even before applying for it. Induction is the third phase, in which after taking over a leadership position, development opportunities are provided to support the school leader in her/his new position. The fourth is the continuous development phase in which established school leaders are provided various training and development opportunities that are best tailored to their individual needs and those of their schools (Huber, 2004).

According to Hargreaves, Halász, and Pont (2008), most countries have developed a wide range of programs and options that target different stages of school leadership, from initial pre-service training through to induction programs and in-service provisions. However, leadership development is broader than specific programs of activity or intervention and can be done through a combination of formal and informal processes through the stages and contexts of leadership practice. Workplace learning, for example, has an important place as a complement to formal training in the development of a school leader’s competence. According to Lankard (1995), two particular dimensions of learning in the workplace are that it is action learning and situated learning. Action learning engages individuals (usually in teams or work groups) in learning through systematic problem solving around real organizational needs or concerns. Situated learning refers to the conduct of the learning
experience in the context that gives rise to the need for skills and where they will be put to use. Internships experienced in actual classroom or school settings can offer situated learning. A school walk-around can also situate the learning gained through observation, explanation, and dialogue among peer leaders.

It has also been argued that leadership development should be research based, incorporating knowledge of instruction, organizational development and change management, as well as leadership skill (Knapp et al., 2003). This kind of development is designed to draw upon what is known about effective leadership development and should be aligned with the needs and policies of the sponsoring jurisdiction, whether at the national, provincial or state, municipal, or local level. The core leadership development skills highlighted in the literature as being at the heart of successful school reform may be seen as developing knowledge to promote successful teaching and learning, developing collaborative decision making processes and distributed leadership practices, as well as processes or organisational change, and developing management competences in the analysis and use of data and instructional technologies to guide school improvement activities (Knapp et al. 2003; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003).

One effective program that has become increasingly popular in business and education is the process of mentoring and coaching. Mentoring is more generally used to refer to a process whereby a more experienced individual seeks to assist someone less experienced. Coaching is used to refer to forms of assistance relating more specifically to an individual’s job-specific tasks, skills, or capabilities, such as feedback on performance (Hobson & Sharp, 2005).

There is a larger body of research evidence on mentoring than on coaching. Major studies of mentoring have shown it to be effective. It has become a standard element in principal preparation programs in the United States and the United Kingdom (Luck, 2003). A study of mentors and mentees among school leaders in England (Luck, 2003), for example, found that the mentors unanimously endorsed the value of mentoring. Some respondents who were mentees in the course of formal development programs rated mentoring as the most important part of the program (Luck, 2003).

According to Evans and Mohr (1999), principals learn most effectively when they engage in continuous discussion groups in which they form commitments to one another and build a web of ‘lateral accountability’. Peer learning pushes principals to move beyond their
assumptions and to expand or change their original thinking through disciplined analysis and rigorous discourse around challenging texts on difficult or controversial issues. At the same time, according to Evans and Mohr (1999), it is essential to provide a safe setting in which principals can dare to risk, fail, learn, and grow.

In summary, the review of the literature on professional development for school principals illustrates the importance of the development of school leaders’ capacities required to enhance the quality of the schools, and the key elements considered essential for effective school leadership. The major implication for the present study is that of the importance of studying the nature of, and opportunities for, the professional development of school principals in enhancing their capabilities required to support the reform agenda.

The Changing Nature of Educational Professionalism

Educational changes have affected teacher professionalism and how teachers practice it individually and collectively. Kolsaker (2008) indicated that professionalism is a challenging concept to research, since the field is relatively under-researched, and is criticized as vague and lacking in a sound theoretical foundation. Blimpo, Evans, and (2011) argued though, that there is no need for any agreement of a universally accepted concept of professionalism. Gewirtz, Mahony, Hextall, and Cribb (2009) argued for the need to work with plural conceptions of professionalism. They identified a range of views of professionalism: as a form of occupational control; as a socially constructed and dynamic entity; as a mode of social co-ordination; as the application of knowledge to specific cases; as the use of knowledge as social capital; as a normative values system that incorporates consideration of standards, ethics and quality of service; as the basis of the relationship between professionals and their clients or the public; as a source of specific identities; and as a basis and determinant of social and professional status and power (Evetts, 2003; Gewirtz et al., 2009; Noordegraaf, 2007).

Reed and Evans (2008) defended the concept of professionalism as practice that is consistent with common delineations of a specific profession or occupation. They argued that it contributes to and reflects perceptions of a profession’s purpose and status, and the nature, range, service and expertise prevalent within it. According to their study, the concept of professionalism also reflects ethical codes underpinning professional practice, and its three main components are identified as being behaviour, attitude and intellect.
The behavioural component of professionalism relates to how practitioners work. Reed and Evans (2008) identified this component through its sub-components - the processual, procedural, productive, and competency based dimensions of professionalism. These sub-components relate to people’s work practices through their output, productivity, achievements, skills and competences.

The attitudinal component of professionalism relates to practitioners’ attitudes. According to Reed and Evans (2008), the sub-components are the perceptual, evaluative and motivational dimensions of professionalism, which relate to perceptions and beliefs, and include self-perception, values, motivation, job satisfaction and morale.

The intellectual component of professionalism relates to practitioners’ knowledge and understanding. Reed and Evans (2008) identified this concept through the epistemological, rationalistic, comprehensive and analytical dimensions of professionalism. The sub-components relate to knowledge bases, the nature and degree of reasoning people apply to practice, what they know and understand, and the nature and degree of their analytical abilities.

Moreover, Goodson and Choi (2008) argued that in the present time of educational change, teacher professionalism was being driven by more and more government guidelines and central edicts, on issues ranging from assessment to accountability, to defining the curricula. In the process, it would seem that teaching is being technicalized but not professionalized (Goodson & Choi, 2008). In fact, such standardization is doing away with existing patterns of professionalization and replacing them with notions of the teacher as the technical deliverer of guidelines and schemes devised elsewhere. Brennan and Shah (2000) described this as a model of ‘managerial professionalism’ which emphasizes the image of a professional that clearly meets corporate goals, set elsewhere, managing a range of students and documenting their achievements and problems for public accountability purposes. The criteria of the successful professional in this corporate model is of one who works efficiently and effectively in meeting the standardized criteria set for the accomplishment of both students and teachers, as well as contributing to the school’s formal accountability processes. This kind of professionalism (called ‘deprofessionalism’) has subjected teachers to the micro-management of ever-tightening regulations and controls that are the very antithesis of any kind of professionalism (Brennan & Shah, 2000).
To move beyond deprofessionalization, Goodson (2003) developed and defended a new moral professionalism – what he calls ‘a principled professionalism’. He indicated that there was a need for a new professionalism and a body of knowledge driven by a belief in social practice and moral purpose. He outlined seven components.

(1) First, and most importantly, opportunities and expectations with regard to engaging with the moral and social purposes and value of what teachers teach, along with major curriculum and assessment matters in which these purposes are embedded.

(2) Increased opportunity and responsibility for exercising discretionary judgment concerning the issues of teaching, curriculum, and care that affect one’s students.

(3) Commitment to working with colleagues in collaborative cultures of help and support as a way of using shared expertise to solve the ongoing problems of professional practice, rather than engaging in joint work as a motivational device to implement the external mandates of others.

(4) Occupational heteronomy rather than self-proactive autonomy, whereby teachers work authoritatively, yet openly and collaboratively with other partners in the wider community (especially parents and students themselves), who have a significant stake in students’ learning.

(5) A commitment to active care and not just anodyne service for students. Professionalism must in this sense acknowledge and embrace the emotional as well as the cognitive dimensions of teaching, and also recognize the skills and dispositions that are essential to committed and effective caring.

(6) A self-directed search and struggle for continuous learning related to one’s own expertise and standards of practice, rather than compliance with the enervating obligations of endless change demanded by others (often under the guise of continuous learning or improvement).

(7) The creating and recognition of high task complexity, with levels of status and rewards appropriate to such complexity (Goodson, 2003).

Goodson (2003) suggested that principled professionalism would develop from clearly agreed upon moral and ethical principles focusing on the caring concerns that should lie at the heart of professionalism, rather than on the contradictory and material conditions that concern teachers as a professional group. Principled professionalism would, then, return to the initial concerns that underpin the profession of teaching. Teaching is thus seen, above all,
to be a moral and ethical vocation, and a new professionalism needs to reinstate this as the guiding principle.

Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) conceptualized the concept of professionalism. They differentiated between two things: being professional and being a professional. They argued that these ideas are connected, but they are not the same. Being professional is about what one does, how one behaves. It is about being impartial and upholding high standards of conduct and performance. They argued that being professional is about quality and character – not getting too personally involved with children, refraining from gossiping about parents, and learning to challenge colleagues’ actions without criticizing them as people. Being a professional, they argued, has more to do with how other people regard one, and how this affects the regard one has for oneself. This is what people are usually referring to when they ask whether teaching is truly a profession or not. Does it have the same status and levels of reward that other professions do? Is the training as long and as rigorous? Do members of the profession have collective autonomy over their own actions, and freedom from excessive outside scrutiny? Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) indicated that the definitions of what constitutes being a professional point to the following features:

1. Specialized knowledge, expertise, and professional language.
2. Shared standards of practice.
3. Long and rigorous processes of training and qualification.
4. A monopoly over the service that is provided.
5. An ethic of service, even a sense of calling, in relation to clients.
7. Autonomy to make informed discretionary judgments.
8. Working together with other professionals to solve complex cases.
9. Commitment to continuous learning and professional upgrading.

What does this mean for school principals? Are they professionals in the ways that practitioners of law and medicine are? Do school principals get the same respect and support from the public at large, as do other professionals? Are they allowed the same degree of autonomy and discretion? These questions have been investigated in a number of international studies, for example, those of the Organisation for Economic and Development (OECD) (2008, 2013) which aim to improve the quality of current leadership and to make it sustainable over time. Based on the Organisation for Economic and Development’s
A study of school leadership around the world, with the participation of 22 countries, research findings indicated that, in most countries, the leadership workforce was ageing and large numbers of school leaders would retire over the next five to ten years. At a time of high demographic turnover in school leaders, education systems were seen as needing to focus on fostering future leaders and making leadership an attractive profession.

Some evidence indicates that, while the heavy workload of principals is in itself a deterring factor to potential applicants, individuals are also discouraged by the fact that this workload does not seem to be adequately remunerated and supported. Other important factors having a negative impact on motivation for principalship are uncertain recruitment procedures and the scarcity of career development prospects for principals (Pont et al., 2008). Acting on these levers may contribute to the recruitment of competent people into the profession and provide incentives for high performance on the part of current and future leadership. To make school leadership an attractive profession, the Organisation for Economic and Development’s (OECD, 2008) study advanced the following recommendations:

First, professionalising recruitment by taking parallel steps within the system. It was suggested that policy makers should:

1. Consider recruiting managers and leaders with different backgrounds and expertise for certain functions within leadership teams. These should be drawn from outside the education sector.
2. Plan for leadership succession by proactively identifying potential leaders and encouraging them to develop their leadership practices, offering training programs, establishing contact between young teachers and current leaders, and including leadership topics in initial teacher training.
3. Provide more elements to evaluate candidates, such as competency profiles or leadership frameworks and put less weight on seniority.
4. Provide guidelines and training for those on recruitment panels and encourage the use of recruitment tools to assess a wider range of knowledge, skills and competences.

Second, making school leaders’ salaries more attractive was also recommended through five steps:
(1) Compare salaries of school leaders with similar grades in the public and private sectors to keep the profession competitive and attract the best qualified graduates.
(2) Establish separate salary scales for teachers and principals.
(3) Establish salary scales reflecting leadership structures to improve the school level distribution of responsibilities in a leadership team context, and pay principals a sufficient salary premium over other staff to compensate them for the additional workload.
(4) Link salaries to school level factors, allowing substantial salary increases for school leaders in difficult areas.
(5) Make a balanced use of performance related rewards. In systems using performance related pay, develop reliable indicators and clear assessment criteria to ensure that assessment procedures take account of the context in which principals are working.

Third, encouraging involvement of school leaders in professional organizations, as they provide a forum for dialogue, knowledge sharing and the dissemination of best practice, both among professionals and between professionals and policy makers.

Fourth, providing options and support for career development, by implementing the following steps:

(1) Provide renewable fixed term contracts for principals to periodically reassess and acknowledge high performing colleagues and encouraging them to continuously develop their skills and improve their practice.
(2) Plan and provide opportunities for principals to step up towards new opportunities, such as jobs in educational administration, leadership of federations of schools or as a consultant.

In summary, the review of the literature on the changing nature of educational professionalism provides insights into the nature of school principalship professionalism and the extent by which it has been affected by school reform initiatives. The major implication, then, for the present study suggests the importance of research into the nature of school principalship professionalism and the extent to which educational reform initiatives have impacted the attractiveness of school leadership as a vocation.
Schooling in Saudi Arabia

Structure and Organization

General education in Saudi Arabia falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (MOE), established in 1953. The MOE is responsible for kindergartens, general education (elementary, intermediate and secondary), special education, and adult and literacy education (Al Sallom, 1996). Although in recent years there has been limited decentralisation, the system is still highly centralized, with strong government control over standards, financing, curricula, organization, and teacher recruitment and training (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013a). The Ministry also determines the structure of schools in each region and the general rules that apply to the management of schools. The school calendar and holidays are standardized for the whole country. Administrative responsibility for education at regional and provincial levels is undertaken through 45 different elements: 13 General Education Departments and 32 Provincial Education Administrations.

Early Developments

A formal, organized system of education in Saudi Arabia did not exist until 1925. Before that time, on the Arabian Peninsula there was a traditional educational system called Kuttab. That system required students to learn to read and write Arabic and memorize the Qur’an (Tomas, 1968) and some schools included foreign language and simple mathematics (Al Sallom, 1996; Metz, 1993). These schools were initially open only to boys, later to girls at the lower levels (Lipsky, 1959). Characteristically, Kuttab schools were located either in the mosque or in the teacher’s house, and most often the teacher was the mosque’s imam.

In spite of the existence and spread of Kuttab, illiteracy was still widespread in most of the Arabian Peninsula in the early 20th century. The Kuttab system was officially supplemented in 1925 when the first government operated schools were established in Saudi Arabia. The first formal educational authority, the Directorate of Education, was established by King Abdulaziz. At the time, the Ministry of the Interior oversaw the Directorate of Education because there were insufficient qualified and educated people to establish a separate department. Given the size of Saudi Arabia and its lack of financial resources at the time, assistance was sought from Egypt, not only to provide supplemental aid for teaching, but also to help subsidize the curriculum and to organize the Saudi system. Because the Egyptian educational model followed in the footsteps of the English educational model of the
day, the Saudi educational system indirectly modelled itself upon the English system (Al Sallom, 1996; Lipsky, 1959)

As public, government-sponsored schools in Saudi Arabia began to expand and increase in number, with their attendant high demand for teachers, most teachers in Saudi Arabian schools were inadequately qualified. An unqualified teacher might not hold a teaching certificate, but could read and write and may have completed elementary school. In 1928, the Saudi Directorate of Education established the first Saudi Teacher Education Institution to meet the increasing need for teachers. In 1935, King Abdulaziz also sent Saudi students to study in Egypt. By 1951, there were 169 Saudi students studying in Egypt to become teachers. At that time, assistance was requested from three sources in Egypt: (1) the Ministry of Education; (2) the General Directorate of the Al-Azhar institution, which is an Islamic institution in Egypt; and (3) through personal contacts (Wiseman et al., 2008).

There was no national curriculum at the beginning of the era of King Abdulaziz. The first curriculum implemented in Saudi Arabia occurred in 1925, and was created by Mohammed Al-Gussab, a Syrian. The curriculum planning process changed twice, in 1932 and 1935, primarily to focus firstly on religious and Arabic language curricula and secondly, to include health education and moral development (Wiseman et al., 2008).

Developing a Modern Education System

As the Saudi educational system expanded, so did the awareness of illiteracy in Saudi Arabia. For instance, in 1950, UNESCO estimated that more than 90 per cent of the Saudi population was illiterate. This level of illiteracy and other issues pushed the Saudi government to modernise and to make education one of its most important goals. Other issues included the poor development of the country’s human resources and its antiquated economy – both of which, it was believed, required educating youth in labour market specific skills (Wiseman et al., 2008). This led to a new era in Saudi education reform in 1953, when the General Directorate of Education became the Ministry of Education, taking full responsibility for the primary, intermediate, and secondary male educational system, in addition to special education and adult education and literacy.

The General Presidency for Girls’ Education (GPGE), established in 1960, was responsible for defining study programs and curricula for girls, in order to satisfy the ambition of the Saudi people to educate girls in accordance with the teachings of Islam.
(Ministry of Education, 2008). Its establishment was a turning point, marking the rapid development of girls’ education. It controlled kindergartens, general education (elementary, intermediate and secondary), teacher training, colleges of education, adult and literacy education, and vocational education and training for women. Early in 2003, the GPGE was dissolved and all its functions were transferred to the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2008).

The Supreme Committee for Educational Policy, established in 1963, is the highest authority in education in the kingdom. It issued the Educational Policy Document, in the Council of Ministers Resolution No. 799 of 17 December 1969, confirmed full Saudi government sponsorship and governance of education. That document stands as the basic reference on the fundamentals, goals and objectives of education. It is a comprehensive document, which emphasizes the correct Islamic orientation and provides for extensive scientific and technological developments, with the ultimate objective of promoting human dignity and prosperity (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Article 233 of the Educational Policy states that all types of education at all stages are to be free and that the state will not charge tuition fees (Ministry of Education, 2008). Free education with free transportation and textbooks was provided from 1950 (Al Sallom, 1996), in reforms that were driven by a commitment to education as contributing to better living conditions through greater access to better employment opportunities and improved health conditions. The gradually increasing role of Saudi Arabia in the global economy, with its rise as a major producer and exporter, also encouraged more emphasis on education in order to establish conditions needed for sustainable economic growth and human development (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2013a, 2013b). These reforms were followed, from 1970, by the establishment of successive five-year national developmental plans developed by the Ministry of Economy and Planning, premised on education as the core element to achieve the national development goals (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2010b).

Through the plans, the number of students at all levels rose from about 547 thousand in 1970 to over five million in 2013, studying in more than 33,000 schools. The literacy rate for Saudi adults aged 15 years and above rose from 64.3 per cent in 1974 to 87.4 per cent in 2010. The literacy profile of youth in the 15-24 years age group had almost reached 98 per cent for both males and females in 2010. The proportion of first grade students who reached Grade Five was 98.3 per cent in 2010, revealing a marked progress over the preceding
decade. Primary education gross enrolment rose from 82 per cent in 1990 to 106 per cent in 2010, while the net enrolment rate in primary education stood at 97 per cent in 2010. The priority also given to making education available to all Saudi citizens was reflected in the share of GDP devoted to education, which increased from 3.5 per cent in 1970 to 27 per cent in 2013 (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2005, 2010b).

Successive development plans have placed emphasis on a number of the issues that are strategic in the kingdom’s development process. For example, the Fourth Development Plan (1958-1990) was the first educational plan in Saudi Arabia that specifically addressed the role and importance of technology in education. Through it, the Ministry of Education established the Directorate General for Educational Technology. As part of this effort, in 1988, during the periods of the Seventh and Eighth Development Plans, the Kingdom intensified its efforts to develop its technological and knowledge capacities with a view to laying the foundations of an advanced, internationally competitive and knowledge based economy, keeping pace with the accelerating global advancements of knowledge and technology (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2013b). The Eighth and Ninth Development Plans continued to emphasise the education roles of promoting the skills of the work force and developing workforce capabilities through the quantitative and qualitative expansion of education, as well as development of the educational system, to ensure an adequate qualitative and quantitative response to development and community needs and emerging challenges (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2005, 2010a).

**The King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Project for Developing Education**

The King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, also known as the Tatweer Project, was established by the Saudi Government in 2006 in response to the tremendous challenges posed by globalisation. It was declared that “the education system faces new challenges, many of which are the result of advances in information and communication technologies, and increased globalisation and competition among nations, which has created demand for skills that the Saudi Education needs to promote” (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013). It was also proposed that “The education system is poised to adapt to these global transformations. It is required to provide students with 21st century capabilities and attitudes that will help them grow into productive citizens who engage with the rest of the world positively. Their creativity and
talent is the most valuable asset that will help the Kingdom strengthen its competitiveness in the 21st century.

Planning and development in the Tatweer Project was also divided into four pillars: (1) curriculum reform and development, (2) teacher training and development, (3) school environment and technology reform, and (4) extracurricular activity promotion and development (Wiseman, Astiz, & Baker, 2013). It began with the creation of 50 pilot ‘smart schools (25 male and 25 female), known as Tatweer Smart Schools (TSSs), across every region of Saudi Arabia. The TSS initiative was implemented as the signature element of the Tatweer Project to be (1) a real world pilot of the programs and policies identified as a result of a comparative review of international experiences commissioned by the Tatweer Project leadership, and (2) a basis for examining the appropriateness and impact that carefully selected educational development actions could have on teaching and learning in Saudi Arabia’s schools (Wiseman et al., 2013).

In 2009, a new vision and strategy for education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was developed. It put students and student learning at the centre of the education system and redefined the roles of the schools, districts and the Ministry of Education in supporting student development and growth. The new approach for the development of a national strategy was to provide direction and coherence to government investments in education, focusing on improving the quality, relevance and efficiency of the education system (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013). It adopted a systematic approach that moved away from isolated interventions to a more holistic approach, coordinating actions at the technical, institutional, governance and policy levels. It rests on four major macro-strategies:

(1) Creating a model of change by building the capacity of the schools and districts to plan, manage, lead and evaluate their own development.
(2) Building the capacity for change, including the provision of resources, knowledge, skills, and capabilities to enable individuals and organizations to do their jobs effectively.
(3) Sustaining change through effective institutions, governance arrangements and polices.
(4) Managing and communicating change across all levels of the system and all segments of society.
These four macro-strategies have been translated into ten strategic objectives:

1. Empowering districts and schools to manage and lead change.
2. Improving curriculum, instruction, and assessment to enhance student success.
3. Providing equitable learning opportunities and support systems for all students.
4. Providing early childhood education for all.
5. Providing a world class environment conducive to student learning.
7. Engaging families and community partners to support a culture of learning.
8. Developing a system to professionalize teaching practice.
10. Improving governance, leadership, and policy to sustain change (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013).

A number of thrusts may be seen in those reforms. Firstly, there is a focus on raising the capacity of individuals and the efficiency of educational institutions to improve Saudi economic competitiveness and productivity globally. There is an emphasis on providing equitable access to high quality education for all people, including lowest-income groups, women, the rural population, and students with special needs. There is a focus on the increasing educational autonomy in decision making on the part of municipalities, schools, principals of the schools, teachers, and local communities. More flexibility is seen as allowing for a better fit between educational methods, student needs and increasing autonomy of local educational authorities, motivating them to improve school quality. There is a focus on information and commutation technology to be introduced into the Saudi education system to deliver higher quality education through computer assisted instruction, and the use of computers and the internet as part of educational management and change. With the increased availability of information technology, there is also an emphasis on comparing the performance of the Saudi education system, individual schools and student performance with that of other countries by using standardized tests. This international measurement culture has placed increased emphasis on mathematics and science curricula, and on English language and communication skills.

As school principals are seen as playing an important role in the success of school reforms, the Ministry of Education focused on developing administrative polices and regulations to empower them to lead development in their schools, enabling them to solve
problems in their own schools. The Ministry of Education recognised that Saudi school principals often have limited decision making power (Alsufyan, 2002). Aldarweesh’s study (2003) confirmed this perspective through interviews with 50 Saudi high school principals in Riyadh, in which he identified the limited decision making power of principals as being one important barrier affecting the effective implementation of education initiatives. Accordingly, the Ministry of Education established a new set of authorities for school principals: administrative and technical authorities. The new authorities are those new powers granted to schools to assist them to manage school programs, employees and buildings. These 12 administrative authorities allow principals to:

1. Choose an assistant principal from the list of names provided by the Department of Education.
2. Deduct pay from the employees’ salaries when they are absent or late, and then inform the Department of Education to implement the decision.
3. Specify teachers who are to be transferred from one school to another. These teachers should be those whose performance has decreased 85 per cent in function over the last two years.
4. Transfer any employees in administrative jobs to other schools if their performance has decreased from ‘excellent’ in the last two years.
5. Evaluate bus drivers.
6. Apply models that support the proficiency of teaching and solve school problems.
7. Arrange studies to solve school issues.
8. Nominate not more than five employees for professional development in the school year.
9. Sign contracts with specialized parties accredited by governmental sectors related to operating the school cafeteria.
10. Adopt the naming of teachers who deserve a financial reward for teaching classes in which they substitute for an absent teacher, in addition to working their own 24 credit hours.
11. Sign contracts with labourers for cleaning the school.
12. Contract with competent institutions to perform urgent maintenance for the school according to the specified budget.

The nine technical authorities allow principals to:
(1) Make temporary modifications in the duration of classes and recesses to address educational needs.

(2) Increase the duration of study for groups of students to approximately a maximum of one hour per day.

(3) Close the school in emergency cases for one day at the most, and officially inform the Department of Education.

(4) Communicate directly with governmental organizations in emergency cases.

(5) Accept students who are out of the school district.

(6) Determine when a student’s behaviour represents a danger against any school employee, and transfer the student to another school.

(7) Add programs that address some of the school’s problems.

(8) Execute specified school activities outside the school, for durations of no more than three days.

(9) Contact the private sector to sponsor school programs that match school goals.

**Implications for the Study**

The major implications from this literature review, then, for this present study were as follows:

(1) The need for research into the process of educational reform in Saudi Arabia.

(2) The importance of globalisation in determining the imperative for, and direction of, educational reform, and hence the importance of research into the implementation of educational reform focusing on the extent to which key participants are aware of the importance of that imperative.

(3) The value of studying the experience of key implementers of policy reform initiatives: school principals in the case of Saudi Arabia.

(4) The importance of research into the nature of professionalism of school principalship, and the extent to which educational reform initiatives have impacted on the attractiveness of school leadership as a profession.

(5) The importance of studying the nature of, and opportunities for, the professional development for school principals in enhancing their capabilities required to support the implementation of the reform agenda.
The Conceptual Framework Guiding the Study

From the forgoing implications arising from the literature review, a conceptual framework to structure and guide the design and conduct of the study through the methodology was developed. Central to the conceptual framework was the lived experience of school principals as leaders of school reform in the position of change managers. The conceptual framework identified the key focal points and the interrelationships to be considered in translating the research topic and questions into the research project. These focal points are those that influence (and are influenced by) education reform identified in the literature: the imperative for educational change, policy and procedural responses to that imperative, understanding of the educational change process, school principals as educational change managers, the role of supporting staff development, and the changing nature of educational professionalism. (Figure 1) illustrates the seven focal points and the interrelationships on which the study focused. The framework begins with globalisation, the first of the identified focal points, which was identified as having a profound effect on the Saudi schooling system, requiring it to be adjusted to focus on developing student understanding of, and capacity to work in, their social, educational, and working lives within the globalized context.

The pressures of globalisation were seen as creating the imperatives for schooling reform, the second of the identified focal points: identifying the importance of understanding the nature of the imperatives and the ways by which the imperatives are impacting schooling reform in Saudi Arabia.

The third of the identified focal points is that of the policy and procedural responses, identifying the importance of understanding the nature of the policy reform initiatives and the interventions that were being undertaken by the government to respond to the imperatives for educational reform.

Understanding educational change, the fourth of the identified focal points, was identified as a key factor in the implementation of the process of school improvement reform.

In responding to their new roles and responsibilities, school principals were seen as being influenced by the sixth of the identified focal points, that of the use of professional development to develop their capacities to enhance and manage the implementation of the policy reform. The importance of this focal point was to understand the opportunities for
professional development available to school principals to support them in their leadership of reform policy implementation.

The school principals’ self-perception as professionals was also seen as being affected by the schooling reform agenda. The changing nature of professionalism, the seventh of the identified focal points in the conceptual framework, was identified with the aim of understanding how changes in education affected the professionalism of the leading change agents and what factors were impacting on the attractiveness of principalship positions as career options.

Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework that Studied the Research
Research Questions

From that conceptual framework, the research questions to be addressed through the study were identified. They are presented under the headings drawn from the focal points identified in the conceptual framework:

The imperative for educational change

(1) How do school principals, school leadership consultants, and professional development planners see the imperative for educational change?

(2) To what extent do those responses align with the policy and planning and other key documents?

Policy and procedural responses to that imperative

(1) What are the policy and procedural responses on the part of school leadership consultants and professional development planners?

(2) To what extent do those responses align with the policy and planning and other key documents?

Understanding educational change

(1) How do school principals, school leadership consultants, and professional developers understand changes with respect to school principals’ roles and responsibilities?

(2) To what extent does that understanding align with the policy and planning and other key documents?

School principals as educational change managers

(1) What do school principals understand to be their roles and responsibilities in the educational reform process?

(2) To what extent does that understanding align with the policy and planning and other key documents?

Development of capacity for effective school principalship in the reform process

(1) In what professional development activities do school principals engage in support of their reform leadership?

(2) To what extent do those activities align with the policy and planning and other key documents?
The changing nature of educational professionalism

(1) How are the new roles and responsibilities of school principals impacting on their professionalism, and how are they expressed in measures such as their remuneration, workload, status, self-esteem, and their interest in continuing their job as leaders?

(2) To what extent do those impacts and expressions align with the policy and planning and other key documents?
Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Introduction
This chapter presents an account of the research methodology designed to address the research questions developed through the conceptual framework. It does so, firstly, by describing and justifying the research approach taken in the study. The more specific research procedures are then, similarly, explained and justified, where appropriate, in the following order: (1) site and participant selection, (2) data sources, (3) data collection, (4) data analysis, and (5) the pilot study. Matters of research integrity are then examined and, finally, ethical considerations are identified and discussed.

Research Approach

Interpretivism
The study sought to examine the ways in which globalizing pressures for educational reform are perceived and responded to by school principals, as leaders of school reform in the position of change managers in the Saudi educational system. The philosophical orientation that guided the selection of the methodology and the conduct of the research was, correspondingly, constructivist. The central point of constructivism in this context is that social entities can and should be understood through social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of persons in a social context (Neuman, 2005; Noddings, 1995). Such an orientation towards social reality assumes that the beliefs and meanings people create and use fundamentally shape what reality is for them. Noddings (1995) referred to the general constructivist proposition, that knowledge is actively constructed by people, as ‘a cognitive position’, which assumes that the construction of knowledge by an individual involves the operation of processes internal to the individual, although relating to the individual’s experience. Phillips (2000), similarly, argued that, in effect, the construction of knowledge by an individual necessarily implies an assumption that the individual carries out some set of knowledge constructing processes, which he identified as mental processes. He further argued that acceptance of a concept of intersubjectivity in constructivist theory necessarily implies an assumption that the processes of constructing of knowledge are, at least to some extent, common to two or more individuals. Constructivism thus, assumes that the social world is largely what people perceive it to be. Social life exists as people’s experience of it and the meaning that they give to it. In other words, people construct meaningful experience.
by interacting with others in ongoing processes of communication and negotiation, confirming an emphasis on the active involvement of people in reality construction.

Such construction involves individuals (and the researcher) in interpreting their realities and actions (Creswell, 2012; Neuman, 2005), pointing to an interpretive approach to the research (Neuman, 2005; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). Interpretivism is grounded in the assumption that social reality is at least partly constructed by people’s interaction with others in ongoing processes of communication and negotiation in daily social life (Neuman, 2005). Such interactions can create different experiences and multiple interpretations of those experiences (Neuman, 2005; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). Constructivism thus assumes that the social world is largely what people perceive it to be. Social life exists as people’s experience of it and the meaning that they give to it. In other words, people construct meaningful experience by interacting with others in ongoing processes of communication and negotiation, confirming an emphasis on the active involvement of people in reality construction (Neuman, 2005; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005).

Interpretivism can be traced back to the German sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920) and the German philosopher Wilhem Dilthey (1833–1911) (Neuman, 2005). Weber’s approach to sociology, referred to in his native German as Verstehen (meaning understanding), is described as a science that attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order to arrive at causal explanations of lived reality (Neuman, 2005). Weber’s definition seems to embrace both explanation and understanding, but the crucial point is that the task of ‘causal explanation’ is undertaken with reference to the interpretive understanding of social action rather than to external forces that have no meaning for those who are involved in that social action.

Interpretive researchers share a view that the subject matter of the social sciences – people and their institutions – is fundamentally different from that of the natural sciences. The study of the social world therefore requires a different logic of research procedure, one that reflects the distinctiveness of humans as against the natural order (Bryman, 2012; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Interpretive researchers prefer qualitative research that often uses small-scale participant engagement, or observation techniques involving the researcher in direct personal contact with those being studied, analysing transcripts of conversations or behaviours in detail and measuring those details to collect large quantities of information to
acquire an in-depth understanding of how people create meaning in everyday life (Neuman, 2005; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005).

Neuman (2005) argued that an interpretive approach in social science has four fundamental features relating to: (1) the ultimate purpose of the investigation, (2) the perceived nature of reality, (3) the relationship between the researcher and the object of study, and (4) the role of values in research. First, the interpretive investigator’s goal of research is to develop an understanding of social life and to discover how people construct meaning in natural settings. To achieve this goal, the researcher needs to get to know a particular social setting and see it from the participants’ point of view. Researchers, therefore, need to build a good relationship with the people being studied, sharing their feelings and taking into account the reasons for, and social context of, their behaviour and actions (Neuman, 2005; Paul & Marfo, 2001; Smith et al., 2009).

Secondly, given the perceived nature of reality, interpretivism is committed to multiple constructions of reality. Interpretivists maintain that social life exists as people perceive it, as they construct it in interaction with others in the ongoing processes of communication and negotiation in daily social life. This interaction can create different experiences and multiple interpretations of those experiences. Therefore, interpretive researchers seek to discover how people construct meaning in their natural settings and learn the reasons behind people’s actions (Neuman, 2005; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005).

The third feature is that of the relationship between the researcher and the study object. Interpretivists contend that the researcher and the study object are dependent on one another and that qualitative investigators should take advantage of this relationship to better understand phenomena. They argue that their aim in conducting research is to develop knowledge and understanding of the particular phenomenon under study. This requires that they make direct experiential contact with the overall context, such as the complete fabric of the local culture, people, resources, purposes, earlier and future events, and expectations of the particular situation under study. Interpretive researchers, for example, rarely ask survey questions and collect the answers of many people, because each person’s interpretation of the survey questions is assumed to vary according to the interview or questioning context. Instead, they often use bracketing and gather word (text) or image (picture) data from a small number of individuals or sites (Guba, 1990; Neuman, 2005).
The fourth feature that grounds the interpretive approach is its focus on the role of values in research. Interpretivists posit that research is influenced, to a great extent, by the values of the researcher. They question the possibility of research being value free because values are infused throughout cultural realities. Therefore, they emphasize the point that values should be recognised and made explicit. Researchers should reflect on, re-examine, and analyse personal points of view and feelings as a part of the process of studying others. For interpretivists, the investigator needs to at least temporarily empathize with, and share in, the social and political commitments or values of those he or she studies (Neuman, 2005; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005).

**Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)**

In line with that research approach, the study adopted Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as its framing research method. IPA has a history in psychological research and more recently in many social science fields, including education (Smith, 1996). The fundamental theoretical foundations of IPA stem from phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography (Smith et al., 2009, 2009). An essential element of phenomenological philosophy is that it enhances the researcher’s efforts to explore an individual’s perception of their lived experience. IPA is phenomenological in that it endeavours to examine and comprehend an individual’s lived experience of a phenomenon within a particular context (Smith et al., 2009). Giorgi (1985) proposed that phenomenological research intends to “do justice to the lived aspects of human phenomena, and to do so, one first has to know how someone actually experienced what has been lived” (Giorgi, 1985, p. 1). Although this statement reflects a general tenet of phenomenology, Giorgi’s approach tends to accentuate the descriptive and presents a more rigid stance of adhering closely to his translations of Husserl’s phenomenological method, which emphasized a more systematic approach. IPA, on the other hand, is clearly interpretative and gathers from the broader collection of phenomenology rather than operationalizing one specific version of phenomenology (Smith et al., 2009).

Although Giorgi’s descriptive phenomenology is a long-established research methodology, the research objective here was to interpret interactively obtained data by utilizing a detailed interpretative analysis, interwoven with segments from the participants’ accounts of their lived experience (Smith et al., 2009).

Another key theoretical component of IPA is hermeneutics, which is essentially the theory of interpretation (Smith, 2011). As a central element of the IPA research focus, the researcher is representative of the research instrument (Creswell, 2012) and plays an active
role in the exploration, description, interpretation, and evaluation of the manner in which the participant makes sense of his or her particular experience (Smith et al., 2009, p. 40). Smith et al., 2009) referred to this IPA researcher function as its ‘double hermeneutic’. IPA’s interpretation employs the dialectical approach as a double hermeneutic (Smith & Osborn, 2008), whereby the researcher examines how a phenomenon appears and the manner in which the participant make sense of this appearance (Smith et al., 2009). In other words, through interpretative activity, the researcher “attempts to make sense of the participant’s making sense” of his or her own personal experience of the phenomenon (Smith et al., 2009, p. 186).

IPA implements the interpretative role of the researcher’s engagement with the participant’s elicited personal verbal text and recognizes the significance of interpretative collaboration between the researcher and participant (Smith et al., 2009). The IPA researcher attempts not only to gain an understanding of the participant’s perception of his or her lived experience but also considers how he or she understand the world, and how this understanding influences what transpires during the interview. Consequently, the participant’s story becomes the research data of the study. The bringing together of the phenomenological and the hermeneutic processes make up two essential concepts of IPA: without phenomenology, the study would have nothing to interpret, and the phenomenon would not be seen without the hermeneutic component (Smith et al., 2009).

Lastly, IPA’s idiographic component pertains to a focus on the particular (Smith & Osborn, 2008), which emphasizes detail in addition to “understanding how particular experiential phenomena (an event, process, or relationship), have been understood from the perspective of particular people, in a particular context” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 29).

Smith and colleagues asserted that “IPA has the idiographic aim of providing a detailed analysis of divergence and convergence across cases, capturing the texture and richness of each particular individual examined” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 200). In order to realise that aim, IPA first applies an equally detailed analysis of each individual case, followed by a detection of patterns across the participants’ cases (Smith, 2011).

This present study aimed to explicate the experiences of selected school principals and supervisory staff, in relation to the way in which school principals experience the process of managing change in the face of globalized pressures for educational reform. The researcher maintained an ‘open phenomenological attitude’ (Finlay, 2009) while providing a safe
environment for the participants’ experiences to be voiced and heard. Thus, a deeper understanding of this phenomenon emerged through the researcher’s empathic interpretation of the participants’ perceptions of their experience, and the manner in which they made sense of their particular experience (Smith et al., 2009). This approach was ideal, as it made it possible to attend to the particularity of each principal’s and other supervisory staff member’s involvement, in that IPA provides a very rich way of engaging with, and understanding, other people’s worlds. It provides insights into the lives of people whose voices might not otherwise have been heard, or whose experiences might be ignored, or else constructed quite differently by mainstream theoretical models (Smith et al., 2009).

Accordingly, IPA was deemed the appropriate research approach to facilitate the exploration and understanding of the meaning of various experiences of selected school principals and supervisory staff within the context of school reform.

The Case Study Method
For this research, a case study approach was also adopted as a way of focusing the interpretive nature of the research (Yin, 2014). The study was regarded as a case study to the extent that the research project was conducted within just one national educational jurisdiction: that of Saudi Arabia. Acceptance of the concept of institutional globalisation stresses the ideas of a unitary cultural system, cross-national descriptions and evaluations of education and schooling, and convergence of educational institutions within and across nations toward similar goals and operating structures. It is argued that there has been a marked tendency to organize, plan, and make common educational policy around the world (Powell & DiMaggio, 2012). Educational curricula, for instance, show similar scripted and standardized qualities, both at the mass and the elite levels (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002). Such a tendency justifies the selection of Saudi national education as a case that has some common characteristics with other international educational institutions around the world.

Yin (2014) argued that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident. In other words, a researcher would use the case study method because he/she wanted to understand a real life phenomenon in depth and in its cultural context, with important contextual conditions being not only highly pertinent to the phenomenon of study, but also not readily distinguishable from the phenomenon itself.
The case study is also preferred in examining contemporary events when the relevant behaviours cannot be readily manipulated (Yin, 2014). This quality was consistent with the research purpose in the present study, to explore school principals’ experiences of, and responses to, contemporary educational change agendas in Saudi Arabia, through in-depth interviews with some school principals and others who have a responsibility for formulating and managing those agendas.

The case study was adopted also because of the type of research questions that were asked. Yin (2014) indicated that classifying the type of questions being asked is the first and most important condition for differentiating among the various research methods. He articulated that ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions are likely to favour the use of case studies. This is because such questions deal with operational links needing to be traced over time, rather than frequencies or incidents. In the present study, 10 of the 14 questions were of the ‘how’ type.

Merriam (2014) defined a case study as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit, such as an individual, group, institution, or community. She articulated three particular features of interpretive case studies that were particularly relevant to this study: it is particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic in nature. Particularistic here means that case studies focus on a particular phenomenon. The case itself is important for what it reveals about the phenomenon and for what it might represent. The notion of case studies focuses attention on the way specific groups of people confront specific problems, taking a holistic view of the situation. They are problem centred, small scale entrepreneurial endeavours (Merriam, 2014).

The descriptive nature of case study means that the end product of a case study is a rich description of the phenomenon under study. Moreover, the description is interpretive, which means that instead of reporting findings statistically, “case studies use prose and literary methods in order to describe, produce images, and analyze situations. They present documentation of events, quotes, samples and artefacts (Woodside & Wilson, 2003).

The heuristic nature of case studies means that they illuminate the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study. Case studies explain the background and the details of the phenomenon, and furthermore they discuss and evaluate alternatives not chosen, thus increasing its potential applicability (Merriam, 2014).
Research Procedures

Site and Participant Selection
For the selection of the data sources within the case study, purposeful sampling was used, based on the assumption that the study was directed at discovering, understanding, and gaining insight, and therefore called for a sample from which the most could be learned (Merriam, 2014). The point of this approach was to select sources that provided the greatest amount of relevant information. The participants were school principals of boys’ schools located in Alnamas Province, Saudi Arabia. Within Saudi culture, girls study in separate schools and it is inappropriate for a male to be collecting data within girls’ schools. Two educational leadership consultants and three educational leadership planners were also selected to participate in at least one individual interview session each with the researcher. A number of factors were taken to account when the school principals were chosen, with the intention of maximizing the diversity of participant backgrounds and possible viewpoints, so that the study would fairly represent the boys’ school sector. Accordingly, the study sought to have approximately equal representation across each of the following variables (Table 1).

School level
Participants represented various levels of schooling in elementary, middle, and high schools. Six elementary, four middle, and five high school principals participated in the study. Several studies had documented important differences between students in elementary, middle, and high schools in terms of their engagement in the classroom learning activities that facilitate achievement and contribute to students’ social and cognitive development (Hill, 2006). Differences between students in different levels include their educational outcomes, student motivation, functioning, and attitudes toward school (Hill, 2006; Nichols, 2008).

School site
Participants also represented different socio-economic school contexts. In Alnamas Province there are two types of communities, the first is in the city centre and the surrounding areas of the city, while the second is within the ‘Bedouin community’ whose members previously lived in the desert, but who have come to live in small villages around the city. Three school principals from the Bedouin community, representing various levels of schooling in elementary, middle, and high schools, participated in the study. There are some important differences between these two communities. Bedouin family sizes are larger, their income is
lower, and their parental educational backgrounds are lower. Studies have demonstrated that such factors could increase the differences between student achievement (Nichols, 2008).

**School type**

The participants represented both public and Islamic schools, which latter on focus more on teaching the Holy Quran and religious curricula. Three Islamic school principals representing various levels of schooling participated in the study.

**School principals’ experience**

The study sought to include approximately equal representation across the range of the length of experience as school principals, from not less than two years to more than ten years. The average length of school principals’ experience as teachers was approximately nineteen years. The average length of their experience as school principals was approximately nine years. Nine principals had been working as school principals from between two to ten years. Six principals had working experience as school principals from between eleven to 20 years.

**Data Sources**

The 12 questions that were identified by the researcher from the conceptual framework served as a guide to the researcher in identifying the data sources for addressing the questions. These data sources are presented in Table 1. They comprise school principals, school leadership consultants, professional development planners, and documents that were obtained from the schools under investigation, the Department of School Leadership, and the Department of Professional Development (within the Department of Education) in the Alnamas province. These sources are explained in more detail in the following section.

**School principals**

In the Saudi school system, school principals are unquestionably the key managers of change within schools (Jalal, 2008; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Accordingly, school principals were seen as being central to the change management process. In this context, an essential function of school principals was to build the capacity of the school for high performance and continuous improvement through management of the curriculum and teaching program, development of staff, and creation of a climate and conditions for collective learning (Jalal, 2008).
Table 1: Data Sources for Addressing the Questions from the Conceptual Framework

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<td>Interview with professional development planner</td>
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Q1) How do school principals, school leadership consultants, and professional development planners see the imperative for educational change?
Q2) To what extent does that understanding align with the policy and planning and other key documents?
Q3) What are the policy and procedural responses on the part of school leadership consultants and professional development planners?
Q4) To what extent do those responses align with the policy and planning and other key documents?
Q5) How do school principals, school leadership consultants, and professional developers understand changes with respect to school principals’ roles and responsibilities?
Q6) To what extent does that understanding align with the policy and planning and other key documents?
Q7) What do school principals understand to be their roles and responsibilities in the educational reform process?
Q8) To what extent does that understanding align with the policy and planning and other key documents?
Q9) In what professional development activities do school principals engage in support of their reform leadership?
Q10) To what extent do those activities align with the policy and planning and other key documents?
Q11) How are the new roles and responsibilities of school principals impacting on their professionalism, and how are they expressed in measures such as their remuneration, workload, status, self-esteem, and their interest in continuing their job as leaders?
Q12) To what extent do those impacts and expressions align with the policy and planning and other key documents?
While courses and course content were set and specified at the national level, it was the school principal’s job to implement school curriculum and instruction in a manner that effectively and efficiently achieved the policy makers’ intent. Another important responsibility carried out by school leaders was teacher monitoring and evaluation. Regular teacher evaluations involved the school principal and other external supervisors from the Department of Education. Different criteria for evaluation may be used in the assessment of teaching performance, in-service training, and student performance (Ministry of Education, 2013). Classroom observation and documentation prepared by the teacher were also methods used in the evaluations. School leadership played a vital role in promoting participation in professional learning and development by teachers. School principals played an important role in identifying teacher professional development needs in collaboration with the Department of Training and Development.

In Saudi Arabia, school principals had conditional autonomy at the school level to fund professional development. School based professional development activities involving the entire staff or significant groups of teachers were encouraged. Further, school principals had a responsibility to manage and report on the use of financial resources. In Saudi Arabia, financial allocations for each school were centrally drawn up by the Ministry of Education according to specific criteria and were distributed to all schools. School principals then had responsibility for deciding how money was spent within their school. Another role handled by school leaders was their engagement in activities beyond their schools, such as collaborating with other schools or communities around them through forming networks, sharing resources, or working together (Jalal, 2008).

Accordingly, school principals were seen in this study as central to the change management process. Therefore, six of the research questions, here numbered 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11 (Table 1) were directed to the school principals. These questions sought to elucidate school principals’ perspectives on how they saw the imperative for educational change, how the Ministry of Education had responded to that imperative, how they understood changes with respect to their roles and responsibilities, what they understood to be their roles and responsibilities in the educational reform process, what professional development activities they engaged in to support their reform leadership, and how the new roles and responsibilities were impacting on their
professionalism, including their remuneration, workload, status and their interest in continuing their jobs as change leaders.

School leadership consultants

The Department of Education in Alnamas region comprised a number of departments. One was the Department of Leadership, which sought to enhance the performance of all of the school principals who were part of this study. It aims to help school principals build the capacity of their schools for high performance and continuous improvement. The Department of Leadership was administered by a number of experts, consisting of a Director, Deputy Director, and leadership consultants who had a number of functions. They followed up on the effectiveness and efficiency of implementation of plans that were approved by the Ministry of Education. They recruited and retained top school principals and teachers, and educated newcomers and veterans alike to understand their jobs and become comfortable in their work roles. In cooperation with the Department of Professional Development, they were responsible for identifying school professional development needs, planning training programs, and implementing some training workshops. They also had the role of preparing and implementing a plan for different learning activities, including group information meetings, mentoring, coaching, learning from experience, visiting other schools, and so on. They also were responsible for monitoring and evaluating school principals. Because of these roles, it was believed the leadership consultants would be a valuable source of data in this study (Jalal, 2008).

Accordingly, questions 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11 (Table 1) were also taken to the school leadership consultants.

Professional development planners

The Department of Professional Development sought to develop educators’ skills, including those of school principals, in effectively and efficiently leading their schools. A number of professional development planners who were included in the study are responsible for implementing the professional development plans approved by the Ministry of Education. Such programs could be short or long and were provided internally in the training centre or in cooperation with some universities, private sector organisation, and so on. The professional development planners were required to prepare internal and external plans with the school
leadership consultants, based on the school principals’ training needs, in addition to the new strategies approved by Saudi Ministry of Education (Jalal, 2008).

Accordingly, questions 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11 (Table 1) were also taken to professional development planners.

**Official documents**

School documents included school annual reports, the school principal’s plan, school principal’s agenda, teachers and school principal professional development files, and minutes of meetings.

The Department of School Leadership documents included the Strategic and Procedural Plans for school leadership approved by the Ministry of Education and the Department of Leadership in Alnamas region, the Department of Leadership annual reports, advisory documents, and other key documents.

Accordingly, these documents were used to address questions 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12 (Table 1). Those questions sought to obtain evidence concerning the focal points identified in the framework: the imperative for educational change, policy and procedural responses to that imperative, understanding of the educational change process, school principals as educational change managers, the role of supporting staff development, and the changing nature of educational professionalism.

**Data Collection**

This section provides a description of the methods that were used for the collection of data from each of the sources. The participants in the study were 15 school principals, two educational leadership consultants and three educational leadership planners in the Department of Educational Training in Alnamas Province, together with school documents, the Department of
Leadership documents, the Department of Professional Development documents, and other governmental documents.

**Group information session**

The procedures used to collect the primary data from the main participants (school principals) started with receipt of a copy of the approval paper from the Department of Education in Alnamas Province, to conduct the research (Appendix 8). An invitation to attend a group information session about the research project was then distributed by the Department of Education to each of the selected school principals, educational leadership consultants and educational leadership planners selected for inclusion in the study. The invitation to the group session worked well, due to the Department of Education’s customary invitations to officers for briefings on important projects, and to the Saudi tradition of officers coming together for briefings on important projects. The Department of Education traditionally and commonly invites school principals to meetings to communicate information or to summarize guidelines on important projects.

Nevertheless, participation in those information sessions and the individual interviews was entirely voluntary. Four initial group information sessions were conducted by the researcher in the Arabic language. Three were conducted for school principals on the basis of their district (north, central, and south). The number of school principals who attended each session was between 20 and 25. The fourth session was conducted for eight educational leadership consultants and educational leadership planners.

The information presented by the researcher at each group information session included a written and spoken description of the research project, and an explanation of the purpose and nature of the proposed interview session (Appendices 2, 3 & 4). The written and spoken description was translated for this purpose from English to Arabic. A copy of the consent package in Arabic for the research project participants, including a consent form, was provided to each candidate participant at the group session. Session participants were invited to question the researcher about any aspect of the research project and all questions were answered during the group session.
Session participants were advised that their signing of the consent form was entirely voluntary, and that it did not oblige them to participate in an interview session. They were requested to return a signed consent form to the researcher within one week of the group information session if they chose, without obligation, to participate in an individual interview session. Further, they were informed that returning a signed form could be through whatever way best suited each participant, including mail, email or by hand.

When the preliminary approvals to participate from school principals, educational leadership consultants and educational leadership planners were obtained, the researcher informed them that he had chosen a total of 18 participants considering a number of factors, as explained previously, including school level, school location, school types, and participants’ experience. The candidate participants were informed later and the researcher began to make arrangements for each participant to participate in at least one individual interview with the researcher. The rest of participants were retained as reserve participants. However, the researcher did not need to ask any of them to participate because none of the selected participants withdrew from the interviews.

**Individual interviews**

Data were collected from those participants using semi-structured individual interviews. The semi-structured interview allowed the interviewer to address a series of research questions with variability in their sequencing of topics and in the way they were presented and discussed (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2013). The questions were relatively general in their frame of reference. The interviewer used latitude to ask further questions in response to what were seen as significant replies (Bryman, 2012). Such interviewing style may be seen as being a conversation with a specific purpose, focusing on the informant’s perception of self, life and experience, and expressed in his or her own words (Merriam, 2014). It has also been described as focused interviewing (Yin, 2014) involving a series of open-ended questions based on the topic areas the researcher wants to cover. This particular interview style allowed the participants to disclose their views on specific concepts to help align the research context and its influence on interpretation of the data (Merriam, 2014).
Collectively, the 20 interviews were around 24 hours in length: 18 hours with school principals and 6 hours with departmental staff. Three follow-up interviews were conducted with two school principals and one supervisor. Two of the participants who were contacted by the researcher expressed their interest in engaging in another interview to add more information. The third was with a participant contacted by the researcher to discuss questions raised in the data analysis. The three follow-up interviews were each approximately an hour and a half in length. One interview was postponed for a day, because in the first interview, the participant brought his little child and realized the importance of conducting the interview without interruption. He apologized and asked to conduct the interview the next day in his school.

Throughout each interview, the researcher attempted to maintain the role of an interested listener, adopting a conversational style of interaction with the participant while avoiding insertion of his own accounts of his experiences or his evaluations into the conversation. The interviews were similar in character to a conversation, allowing the interviewee to freely respond and express his views on, and understanding of, a particular event. Following Wengraf (2001), the researcher used various forms of response to each participant’s speech, including verbal and non-verbal acknowledgement, gestures, and prompting statements. Gestures were used by the researcher to indicate to the participant that he had heard and understood what was said. Prompting statements were also used by the researcher to elicit elaboration or clarification of statements made by the participant.

The interviews were conducted individually in the Arabic language at a location selected by the participant, providing that it was private and free of outside interruption and noise. The researcher and the participant were the only people present during each interview session. Each individual interview was approximately one hour in length. An appropriate environment, including consideration such as the furniture in the room and best the place to sit, was organized, so that the arrangement was conducive to the conduct of an informal conversation between the researcher and the participant. For example, the researcher faced the participant at an angle, in order to allow some neutral direction of gaze space between the participant’s field of vision and that of the researcher (Wengraf, 2001; Yin, 2014).

Each interview session was opened by the researcher who introduced himself to the participant, and then briefly summarised the information that had previously been provided in the
group information session (Appendices 2, 3 & 4). This information was translated to Arabic and included a written and a spoken description of the research project, an outline of the specific purpose and intended general form of the interview session, and statements regarding the participant’s control over the conduct and recording of the interview session. A copy of the translated consent form was provided to each participant at the beginning of each initial interview session unless he had already signed and returned it (Appendix 6). The researcher reminded the participant that he intended to audio-record all speech uttered during the interview session, and he reiterated the conditions of consent to the interview session, including the participant’s right to have any of the recorded speech deleted from the recording before the recording was removed from his presence. The researcher then asked the participant if he had any questions or concerns about his participation in the research project. The researcher responded to all matters raised by the participant and then proposed to proceed with the interview session. At the end of the first interview, the researcher asked the participant about his participating in a follow-up interview, and offered to make necessary arrangements with him if the need arose.

Before commencing each interview, the researcher placed two audio-recording devices in an unobtrusive position, and asked the participant to nominate a code number by which the researcher could identify the audio-recording of his session, and which the researcher could record in a notebook beside the participant’s name. The researcher gave the participant an assurance that all information recorded would remain confidential to the researcher and would be destroyed on completion of the research project, consistent with the university’s research protocols. The participant was assured that his identity would be kept confidential by the researcher.

*Interviews with school principals*

The interviews were conducted with school principals in Arabic. As the main participants in this project, each school principal was invited to talk first about anything connected with his background experience, including his experience of teaching and leading schools, his educational background, age, and work experience as a teacher and as a school principal. He was also invited to talk about the current school that he was leading, including school level, number of students, number of teachers and school context. He was then invited to talk about how he saw the
imperative for educational change; any examples of how the Ministry of Education had responded to that imperative; his understanding of the process of managing change with respect to his roles and responsibilities; what he understood to be his roles and responsibilities in the educational reform process; any examples of the professional development opportunities in which he had engaged in support of his reform leadership; any ideas on professional development, including the provision of initial pre-service training, induction programs and in-service provision; his understanding of, and views about, the current provision of other professional development; any suggested ways that might help in developing more effective training; and how the new roles and responsibilities were impacting on his professionalism, including his remuneration, workload, status and his interest in continuing in his job as a change leader.

Each interview session was terminated when either the available time for the session was close to expiry, or the participant indicated that he did not want to continue with the session. Before the termination of each interview session, the researcher invited the participant to raise any questions or matters of concern about the interview, and the researcher responded to all matters raised by the participant. The researcher also asked the participant whether he wished to either edit or withdraw the audiotape recording of the session. The researcher also asked him to choose the time that suited him to obtain any documents related to the study, and whether or not he would be willing to engage in a follow-up interview, should one be required.

Interviews with educational leadership consultants

Interviews were conducted with two educational leadership consultants in Arabic. Each educational leadership consultant was invited to talk first about anything connected with his background, including educational background, age, and work experience. He was then invited to talk about how he saw the imperative for educational change; any examples of how the Ministry of Education had responded to that imperative; his understanding of the process of managing change with respect to school principals’ roles and responsibilities; what he understood to be school principals’ roles and responsibilities in the educational reform process; any examples of the professional development opportunities provided in support of school principals as change agents; any pertinent professional development; any ways that might help in providing more effective learning; how the new reforms were impacting on the professionalism
of school principals. The interview session was terminated in the same way as were the interviews with the principals.

**Interviews with professional development planners**

The interviews were conducted in Arabic with three professional development planners. Each participant was invited to talk first about anything connected with his background experiences as noted above for the principals’ interviews. He was then invited to talk about how he saw the imperative for educational change; any examples of how the Ministry of Education had responded to that imperative; his understanding of the process of managing change with respect to school principals’ roles and responsibilities; what he understood to be the school principals’ roles and responsibilities in the educational reform process; any examples of the professional development opportunities provided in support of school principals as change agents; any pertinent professional development; any ways that might help in providing more effective learning; and how the new reforms were impacting on the professionalism of school principals. Each interview session was terminated in the same way as those noted above.

**Documentary information**

Other data sources were the official documents obtained from the 15 schools, the Department of School Leadership, the Department of Professional Development in the Alnamas region, and the Ministry of Education.

The documents accessed are noted above. They were obtained from school principals, and departmental staff, and also from the Ministry of Education and Tatweer websites. They were used to see whether the transcripts from the participants’ interviews reflected what had been written in the documents. Following Bryman (2012), an advantage of documents is that they are non-reactive. This means that because they have not been created specifically for the purposes of social research, the possibility of a reactive effect can be largely discounted as a limitation to the validity of data.

**Interview protocols**

To guide the investigator in carrying out the research, interview protocols were employed in the interview sessions, in order to ensure that the interview was well structured and that careful notes were taken. According to Yin (2014), a protocol contains the instrument and contains the
procedures and general rules to be followed in using the protocol. It is a major way of increasing the reliability of case study research and was intended to guide the researcher in carrying out the data collection. The protocols included a list of issues to be addressed or questions to be asked in the semi-structured interviewing, allowing flexibility in the conduct of the interview.

Bryman (2012) suggested some basic elements in the preparation of the protocols that guide the interview. First, the researcher should create a certain amount of order in the topic areas, so that the researcher’s questions about them flow reasonably well, but be prepared to alter the order of questions during the actual interview. Second, the investigator should try to use a language that is comprehensible and relevant to the people being interviewed. Third, it was suggested that the researcher ask for record information of a general kind (name, age, gender, etc.) and a specific kind (position, number of years employed, number of years involved in a group, etc.) because such information is useful for contextualizing people’s answers.

For this study, three interview protocols (Appendices 2, 3 & 4) were used: one for school principals (App. 2), one for educational leadership consultants (Appendix 3), and one for professional development planners (Appendix 4). Each protocol started with general information about the study and the interview session, including the project title, the interview session data and place, interviewee code and the position of the participant. It included an outline to remind the researcher of points to raise during the interview session, including the purpose of the project, the nature of the interview, signing the consent form, the participants’ right to withdraw or have any of the recorded speech deleted from the recording, giving the participant an assurance that all information recorded would remain confidential to the researcher, and inviting the participant to raise any concerns or questions before commencing the interview.

The protocols also included a reminder for the researcher to turn on and test the two tape recorders before commencing the interview. The questions to which each participant should respond were also included in each protocol. At the end of the protocol was a reminder to thank the participant and to ask him whether he wanted to raise any questions or matters of concern about the interview and whether he would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview, should it be required. The arrangements for visiting the school or participants’ offices to obtain the related documents were also included in the protocols.
Data Analysis
After conducting the first interview with a participant, the researcher began the process of analysing the study data. Given the interpretive approach that was used in this study, the analysis was guided by IPA analytic procedures in the following order: (1) transcription and translation; (2) reducing individual’s interviews and individual documents; and (3) undertaking an aggregated analysis.

Transcription and translation
Following the gathering of the interview data through audio recordings, each interview was transcribed (Smith et al., 2009). The transcription was done in Arabic. However, one interview transcription and some sections from other interview transcripts and documents were translated from Arabic into English, for conformation and discussion with the researcher’s supervisor as part of the process of ensuring research integrity. Illustrative sections or texts that served to illustrate or ground the concept were also translated. The initial translations were done by the researcher, since he was best placed to understand the content and context of the transcription. All translated texts were reviewed by the supervisor in order to validate the initial translation by the researcher.

The information obtained from interviews and documents was also carefully organized. Each transcript and document was labelled by a code number only known the researcher. This code number was recorded in a notebook beside the participant’s name and school or the department name. The codes were stored in secure place separate from the transcripts, to insure that they could not be identified in the event of misadventure. All materials were categorized by participant, school, the Department of Educational Leadership, and the Department of Training and Development. The date of each interview was written in each transcript and in the notebook (month, day, and year). The researcher made two photocopies of all transcripts, documents, and notebooks and retained the original one (Creswell, 2013; Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). When transcribing the audio recordings, two inch margins on each side of the text were created so the researcher could jot down notes in the margins during data analysis. An extra space on the page between the interviewer’s comments or questions and the interviewee’s responses was left, as Smith et al. (2009) had suggested making explanatory comments and notations of significant information within the left hand margin of the transcript. These explanatory comments were
descriptive (e.g., summative of the content of data), linguistic (e.g., inflections, pauses, word choice and language used by participant), and conceptual (e.g., the researcher’s questioning nature pertaining to the data). In the process of transcription, the researcher made marginal notes on what was being said and possible interpretations that occurred to him during the interview, together with any other qualifications arising during the interview.

**Reducing individual interviews and individual documents**

Once the interview data had been organized and transcribed, each interview transcript was further reduced by ascertaining the emergent concepts and clustering them together according to their conceptual similarities. The clusters were then given a descriptive label. Smith et al. (2009) called them subordinate themes, and the researcher called them ‘emergent concepts’. Data analysis was driven by the 12 questions that had been developed from the conceptual framework (see Figure 1). These questions framed the way in which the researcher perused the text (both individual interviews and individual documents) for emergent concepts. The process involved breaking down the elements until there were small enough units to invite rudimentary analysis or ‘chunking it out’ (Creswell, 2013; Gay et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2009). Through this process, the researcher started with a large set of data (transcripts and documents) and reduced it progressively into a smaller number of important concepts relevant to all identified questions, in order to identify the important concepts or themes. It required reading each transcript and document several times to obtain a general sense of the data as a whole before breaking it down into small and discrete parts, such as individual words, phrases, or groups of sentences (Bryman, 2012; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Smith et al., 2009).

After finishing the first transcript, the researcher moved to the next interviews as IPA’s next suggested step, which involved “moving to the next case” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 100). The preceding steps were repeated by the researcher and were applied to each participant’s transcript. IPA analysis is committed to the individual participant and analysis from “within the text itself” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 37). Hence, the researcher attempted to bracket information and ideas obtained from previously analyzed cases to maintain the unique experience of all participants.

Fragmenting the transcripts and documents involved coding. Codes were labels used to describe a segment of text using either the participant’s actual words or the researcher’s own
language (Creswell, 2013). At this stage, after coding all transcripts, the researcher developed general ideas of each emergent concept from each individual interview and document, providing a portrait of each individual and school, which developed the researcher’s understanding of the context in which the study was taking place. The researcher identified text to illustrate each emergent concepts and important features of it and its variability.

**Undertaking aggregated analysis**

In the aggregated analysis, the researcher undertook a meta-analysis, through which he combined concepts to develop an overall picture of the data. The meta-analysis identified emergent concepts for each question across all individual analyses (both interviews and documents). The goal of this step was to identify common emergent concepts or categories and to show how they were related. This involved an iterative process by which the common emergent concepts were constructed and their interrelationships understood. It is consistent with the final step of Smith et al.’s (2009) procedure of data analysis, in which the researcher looks for patterns and connections across cases. It allowed the researcher to group and regroup the emergent themes. New common emergent concepts were generated by combining initial emergent concepts in the individual analysis. The data were then re-explored and re-evaluated in terms of the selected common emergent concepts. The researcher then sought to develop a picture of the interrelationships between and among those common concepts. Interconnecting common concepts helped to provide information that supported and confirmed the relationship between common concepts. It also helped the researcher to connect the common concepts to display a sequence of events or issues (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

After the emergent common concepts had been identified, the researcher labelled and developed a clear description of each common concept that clearly described its important variation across the data sets. The grounding of the construction of the each broad concept was demonstrated by extracting some texts from the transcripts and documents and including them in the report. The results of this process were thus presented as an integrative narrative, and included relevant extracts in the participants’ own words, not only to enable the reader to assess the pertinence of the interpretations, but also to retain the voice of each participant’s personal experience (Shinebourne & Smith, 2009).
The Pilot Study
Prior to the full implementation of the general data gathering procedures, the researcher conducted a pilot study consisting of one trial interview session with one school principal and the partial analysis of that session. The purpose of conducting the trial session was to test the planned implementation of the interview sessions to identify any problems encountered by the researcher or the participant, and to determine whether modification of the planned procedures was required. It also helped to develop the researcher’s skill and confidence in using semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2012), including asking good questions, being a good listener and transcribing and following up on any points of interests.

The trial session was arranged and conducted by the researcher under the terms of the approvals given for the conduct of the study. After the interview was carried out as described for the general data-gathering procedures, the participant was requested by the researcher to provide a spoken evaluation of the session, and to make any recommendations regarding ways of improving the individual interview process. The researcher initiated that evaluation by asking the participant an open question about the interview such as ‘how was the interview for you?’ With the consent of the participant, his responses were audio-recorded. The participant indicated that the interview had been carried out as the participant had anticipated prior to the interview. He also indicated that he was comfortable with the way in which the interview had been carried out and that he had not experienced any form of distress or confusion.

Taking into consideration the fact that the participant did not recommend changes to the processes used in the trial session, the researcher’s assessment was that the interview protocols appeared generally to function as he had intended, that the research questions were being addressed, and that the content of the interviews could be used in the research study. It was concluded that no modifications were needed to enhance the effectiveness of the data gathering processes planned for the individual interview session.

Research Integrity
The notion of research integrity here is that of the ways in which, and the extent to which, the research methodology may be seen as allowing the study to contribute to public knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This section identifies and addresses a number of criteria of research
integrity appropriate to the research methodology. It does so in the context of the concept of ‘reality’ appropriate to the research.

**Reality in Interpretive Research**

The notion of reality in relation to research in the social sciences, including research in education, has been the subject of extensive debate in the literature (Bryman, 2012). Much of the discussion about reality has focused on perceived differences between constructivist interpretations and realist interpretations. In discussing conceptualizations of reality in research in the social sciences Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2011) drew a distinction between ‘normative’ and ‘interpretive’ research paradigms in the social sciences. They posited that ‘the normative paradigm’ in social sciences is based on two major assumptions: that ‘human behaviour is essentially rule bound’ and that human behaviour ‘should be investigated by the methods of natural sciences’. Thus, within such a traditional normative framework, the broad purposes of research have been identified as explanation of phenomena in terms of cause and effect, prediction of phenomena, and/or control over phenomena. In contrast, the central endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience and to generate the meaning of that experience. Thus, reality refers to a human construction rather than to a world that is independent of human interpretation. Such different philosophical orientations in relation to the general issue of interpretation of reality in research have led to the viewpoint that the traditional concepts of validity and reliability cannot logically be applied to the evaluation of the interpretations reported in constructivist interpretive research (Cohen et al, 2011).

**Evaluative Criteria**

This study adopted a constructivist philosophical and methodological orientation. The researcher, as indicated in the research methodology section, identified the study as an interpretive one and adopted a viewpoint that saw reality as a human construction. Consequently, the researcher selected and applied the concept of trustworthiness and its four criteria, proposed by Guba and Lincoln (1994), to assess the integrity of the study. Guba and Lincoln (1994) argued that trustworthiness is made up of four criteria that are regarded as being appropriate for the evaluation of interpretive research in order: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Each criterion they saw as having an equivalent criterion in quantitative research.
Credibility

The term ‘credibility’ refers to the integrity of the interpretations at which a researcher arrives: their acceptability to others. Within Guba’s (1990) concept of credibility, several specific process criteria were proposed including the credibility of the research methodology in terms of its establishment within the research approach adopted in the study, the extent and duration of the engagement between the investigator and the participants within their own cultural milieu, intelligent sampling of the informants in the study, and triangulation of data through the use of several methods of data gathering.

With respect to the credibility of the research methodology in terms of its establishment within the research approach adopted in the study, the research methodology was carefully selected and refined from that which appeared in the literature as being most appropriate for the research approach.

With respect to the extent and duration of the engagement between the investigator and the participants within their own cultural milieu, the researcher spent one year collecting research data in the field. He initially focused on building understanding and trust among the potential and selected participants. From that point, his immersion in data collection from the participants was relatively informal, welcoming, and constructive.

With respect to intelligent sampling of the informants in the study, the participants were carefully selected on the basis of appropriate criteria, as has been explained earlier.

With respect to the triangulation of data through the use of several methods of data gathering, a number of different data sources, and hence perspectives, were used: interviews with school principals, departmental staff, and official documents.

Transferability

The concept of transferability was another criterion adopted for the study. It refers to the extent to which the findings of a particular research study are comparable to the findings of other research studies, on the basis of the similarity between the contexts of the initial and subsequent studies. In order for comparisons to be made between studies on the basis of the similarity between the contexts of the initial and subsequent studies, a detailed account of the contexts of
the initial study and of the phenomena under investigation is required. Geertz (2002) argued for what he called thick description, which provides rich accounts of the details of a culture. Guba and Lincoln (1994) argued that a thick description provides others with what they referred to as a database for making judgements about the possible transferability of findings to other milieu.

The researcher developed thick description, as this was one characteristic of the interpretive case study. He created a case study database that included the interviews with school principals, school leadership consultants and professional development planners. All documents obtained from the schools, the Department of Leadership, and the Department of Professional Development were organized and catalogued. The researcher’s notes were another important component of that database. The notes were a result of the interviews and document analysis, and so on. Organizing and cataloguing this kind of database helped to produce a detailed account of the contexts under investigation, and hence also comparisons between different schools in the study, in addition to comparing the findings with those from other research studies.

**Dependability**

Guba (1990) proposed a concept that he termed ‘dependability’ as a criterion of interpretive research analogous to the traditional quantitative criterion of reliability. His concept of dependability appears to refer primarily to the repeatability of the research study by other investigators, in terms of the explication of the research design and methodology and how the methodology was applied in gathering and analyzing the data. The researcher used an ‘auditing’ approach in this study, ensuring that complete records were kept of all phases of the research process and were accessible to the researcher’s supervisors, including problem formulation, the selection of research participants, the interview transcripts, and data analysis decisions. All issues arising during different stages were discussed with the supervisors. In addition, in consideration of the adopted interpretive approach that assumes that knowledge is constructed through the participants’ lived experiences, the researcher used the published work of social theorists and researchers, as social actors within the discourse of interpretive analysis. This published work was selected by the researcher on the basis of its apparent relevance to the purpose and aim of the study and to the philosophical and methodological approaches of the study, as explicated in the methodology section. A further source of construction in this study was a set of constructions
that were made by the participants. The researcher provided the participants’ quotations and literal descriptions to enhance the study’s dependability.

**Confirmability**

The concept of confirmability in evaluating interpretive research is concerned with ensuring that the researcher has not overtly allowed personal values or theoretical inclinations manifestly to sway the conduct of the research and findings deriving from it. In practice, the application of Guba’s (1990) concept of conformability appears to involve assessment of the extent in which the phenomena under study represent the lived experience of the informants in the research, rather than the preconceptions and biases of the researcher. Guba (1990) advocated explication of the philosophical assumptions underpinning the choice of methodology, of the methodology itself, and of how the methodology was used to arrive at the data and the findings of the study, as means by which the confirmability of the study could be assessed. He suggested the use of ‘audit trails’ to enable a person other than the researcher to assess the extent to which the methodology and decision making involved in the study were consistent with the theoretical underpinnings of the study. This concept of confirmability appeared to be applicable within a constructivist research paradigm. However, the reporting requirements for an audit trail of the processes of observation in such studies seemed to be inconsistent with some of the methodological procedures involved in collecting data from semi-structured interviews.

**Ethical Considerations**

Associated with the research design, ethical considerations play a role in all research studies, and all researchers must be aware of, and attend to, the ethical considerations related to their studies (Lindorff, 2009). Research participants should be protected from harm (Lindorff, 2009). As a researcher, Lindorff (2010) stated that it is important to protect all participants and make sure that they are not exposed to any risk in participating in any research.

The issues of justice, beneficence, respect for persons and conflict of interest are vital to any ethical human researcher. The issue of justice means that the research methods should not burden participants. Rather, participants should be motivated to contribute without constraint. The issue of beneficence views actions as acceptable if they minimise risks of harm and maximise possible benefits. Respect for persons is the third principle, which requests that
participants be treated as autonomous individuals. They should be informed about the nature of the research, and that they are free to terminate participation at any time, that they have the right to withhold any information they do not want to disclose, and that their pseudonyms should be known only to the researcher. Thus, the researcher should not identify them by name on any of the data collected in the research, or in any presentation or publication arising from the research. Finally, in relation to conflict of interest, there was none evident in the design or undertaking of the study. The researcher had no continuing personal or professional involvement with the participants beyond that involved in the study.

Given the research design in this study, ethical considerations and “respect for the dignity and worth of persons and the welfare of research participants” (The Association of Active Educational Researchers, 2009) guided all stages of the research process in order to undertake the research in an appropriately ethical manner. Research ethics approval procedures were completed prior to the data gathering process. Ethical clearance for undertaking research was approved from the host university (Griffith University) before the empirical part of the study was initiated. Particular ethical considerations were needed as the nature of this interpretive case study required an emphasis on a respectful relationship between the researcher and participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Throughout the research, participants were treated with respect and honesty. The study also adopted key ethical principles of respect for the researcher-participants’ relationships and the professional standards relating to data collection, storage and dissemination of findings (Guba, 1990).

Furthermore, ethical codes were established to regulate issues common to all research. Permission was obtained from the Directorate of the Department of Education in Alnmas, to undertake the research. A consent form (Appendix 5) was prepared to obtain permission from each interviewee to participate in the study (school principals, educational leadership consultants, and educational leadership planners in the Department of Educational Training). All consent forms were translated from English to Arabic (Appendix 6), and were completed and signed before starting the interviews. They included information about the purpose of the study, the time the interview would take to complete, the plans for using the results of the interview, and the availability of a summary of the study when the research was completed (Creswell, 2013). Moreover, the respondents were advised that they were free to withdraw their consent at any
time throughout the data preparation and collection phases. Confidentiality was maintained by coding the responses of participants in the interviews to protect their anonymity. It also was maintained in the transcription of audiotapes, at each stage of the data analysis, in all draft documentation and in the publication of the research findings.
Chapter Four: The Research Participants and the Schools

Introduction

This chapter presents brief information about the 20 participants engaged in the study and their schools: five high school principals, five middle school principals, five primary school principals, and five supervisory staff. For anonymity and confidentiality purposes, pseudonyms were used for the participants. The description of each participant is presented in the following order: school principals and departmental representatives. A description of each participant is presented in the alphabetical order of the pseudonyms assigned to them.

School Principals

The background outline of the participants opens with a description of each of the 15 school principals who participated in the study, followed by a description of each of their schools. An overview of the proceedings of the interview and the researcher’s reflections is then presented. A description of each participant is presented here in the alphabetical order of the pseudonyms assigned to the participants.

Abdulrahman

Abdulrahman was a Saudi Arabian citizen who graduated with a bachelor degree in education. He had 22 years of experience in education, 17 of those years had been spent as a school principal. He had also served as a vice principal for three years at a middle school. When he graduated from high school, teaching had not been his first priority. However, he had to apply for a teaching job in order to stay with his parents in his small village.

Abdulrahman’s school was a combined primary and intermediate school, with more than 140 students and 24 teachers. The building consisted of two tidy, clean stories with a large number of classrooms. In the entrance to the school, there were welcoming posters and a well-designed principal’s office. The indoor area had motivational posters for students. The school had an undercover playing field, computer and mathematics laboratories, a learning resource room, and a cafeteria.

Abdulrahman’s interview was 64 minutes in length. He called the researcher a day before inviting him for lunch before the interview was conducted in his home. He was supportive and
interested in any additional information the researcher wanted. He presented his ideas and perspectives positively.

**Abood**
Abood was from Saudi Arabia and his first language was Arabic. He had a bachelor degree in education. He had 15 years of experience in education, 10 of which were as a teacher in intermediate and high schools. He then worked as a vice principal for one year and had been a school principal for four years.

Abood’s intermediate and high school had more than 250 students and 25 teachers. It was situated in a rural area, where students’ parents were less educated and their incomes were low. The school building consisted of two stories. Abood indicated that the building’s facilities were not suitable because they lacked outdoor sporting grounds, computers, and science laboratories.

Abood’s interview was one hour and seven minutes in length. The interview was conducted in the researcher’s house on a weekend. He indicated that he had no time to do the interview during the school hours because he was busy with students and staff. When he arrived in the morning, the researcher served him coffee and tea. He seemed to be open with the interviewer. He indicated that he was happy to share his perspectives with the researcher and offered his help if needed.

**Ahmad**
Ahmad was a Saudi citizen, and his first language was Arabic. He had a bachelor degree in science. He had about 18 years of experience in education, three of which he had served as a supervisor in the Department of Education. He had been recognised by the Ministry of Education for his work. He then worked for five years as a school principal, two of those in an Islamic school.

Ahmad’s primary, intermediate, and high Islamic schools had around 200 students and 27 teachers. Students were taught a similar curriculum to that which public school students study, with more focus on the Quran and Islamic studies. The school building was new, consisting of two stories. It had computer and science laboratories, a football field, and a playground.
Ahmad’s interview was 83 minutes in length and was conducted in his office at around midday. Because of the prayer time, the interview took place in two sessions: the first was 45 minutes long, and the second 38 minutes. He was active, friendly, positive, supportive, and had a desire to make a difference in his school.

Ali
Ali was from Saudi Arabia and his first language was Arabic. At the time of the interview, he had 15 years of experience in education. He had a bachelor degree in education. He had taught Arabic in high school for eight years and had then worked as a supervisor in the Department of Education for two years before being appointed to work as a school principal. He had been working as a school principal for five years.

Ali’s intermediate school was a public boys’ school located in the city centre, with more than 200 students and 23 teachers. They shared a building with a primary school, consisting of three stories. Ali commented that they did not have enough classrooms, they did not have science or computer laboratories, and they lacked a proper staff room and school playground.

Ali’s interview was one hour and 20 minutes long. During the interview, he showed his enthusiasm and understanding towards the school reform initiatives. The presentation of his ideas was clear and fluent because of his qualifications as an Arabic teacher. However, he showed signs of frustration and pressure regarding the students’ performance. He offered his help in providing any additional information that the researcher might want.

Amjad
Amjad was from Saudi Arabia and his first language was Arabic. He had a bachelor degree in education. He had 14 years of experience in education, nine of which were spent as a high school teacher. He had been appointed school principal by his previous principal. He had worked as a vice principal for a year in a high school and had since worked for four years as a school principal.

Amjad’s elementary and intermediate Islamic school had more than 20 teachers and 180 students from a rural area, where parents were less educated and their income was low. At that school, students received monthly financial support from the government. The school building
consisted of three stories. Amjad indicated that the building lacked outdoor sporting grounds as well as computer and science laboratories.

Amjad’s interview was one hour and four minutes in length. It was conducted in two segments. The first one was conducted in the evening at his school, when he brought his child with him. After seven minutes, the participant then asked the researcher to postpone the interview for one day, as he realised the importance of conducting the interview without interruption. The second interview was conducted in the evening at the researcher’s house. Amjad offered his help and hoped he could be of assistance to the researcher in his study.

**Bader**

Bader was a Saudi citizen and his first language was Arabic. He had served for 20 years in the field of education. He had a bachelor degree in education and had worked as a supervisor in the Department of Education for two years. He had also worked as a high school principal for more than 10 years.

Bader’s school had around 300 students and 32 teachers. The school was a relatively new, three-storey building. It appeared to be clean and well-designed. When entering the school, one noticed that the corridors were filled with positive, inspiring, and motivational posters. Overall, the environment of the school seems to be positive and well organised for educational use.

Bader’s interview was 72 minutes in length. It took place in his office in the morning. When the researcher arrived, he met some of the teachers in Bader’s office. The relationship between the principal and the teachers appeared to be good and respectful. Bader was always smiling, optimistic, excited, and caring. During the interview, he showed a willingness to participate and talk. He invited the researcher to come back to the school to attend a school activity.

**Bander**

Bander was from Saudi Arabia and his first language was Arabic. He had a bachelor degree in education. He had served in the educational field for 20 years, 10 of which had been as a principal and a vice principal in elementary and intermediate schools. Initially, he was appointed by the school principal with whom he was working. Even though he had never realised that he had leadership capabilities, he enjoyed his position as leader.
Bander’s school was a high school in the city, with about 300 students and more than 30 teachers. The school building was old, consisting of three stories, small classrooms, and no laboratories or other school facilities.

The interview was 68 minutes in length. It was conducted in Bander’s office in the morning. When the researcher arrived, Bander served him Arabic coffee before the interview took place. Bander’s personality was calm and very kind. He appeared to be ambitious and wanted to make a difference for his school and students. However, he showed signs of concern regarding the lack of support from parents and the Department of Education.

**Basem**

Basem was from Saudi Arabia and his first language was Arabic. He had about 30 years of experience in education, eight of which had been as a high school principal. He had a bachelor degree in education. He said that when he first graduated as a teacher, his parents and family had been proud that he had joined the teaching profession, as teachers in Saudi Arabia were well regarded. However, the value of teaching as a profession had declined over the years.

Basem’s school had more than 300 students and 37 teachers. The school was one of the biggest schools in the city. It consists of three stories with laboratories, a playground, and an indoor sport facility. The school and the administration appeared to be tidy and well presented.

Basem’s interview was 65 minutes in length. When the researcher arrived, he was welcomed with coffee and tea, but had to wait about 15 minutes while Basem attended to some visitors to the school. The interview took place in the meeting room. Within five minutes of the interview, Basem became more open and comfortable, and the atmosphere of the interview was friendly. He recognised the challenges and difficulties the education system was going through. However, he was optimistic and appeared to be ambitions.

**Fahad**

Fahad was a Saudi Arabian citizen with a bachelor degree in education. He had served in education for more than 30 years, 20 of which had been spent as a school principal in different intermediate and primary schools.
Fahad’s small primary school was located in a small village. It was a two-storey building with less than 30 students and 14 teachers. Most of the teachers in the school had had more than 20 years’ experience in teaching. The school building was almost seven years old, with only a small indoor play area. Although the school building appeared large, it lacked a playground and laboratories.

Fahad’s interview was 62 minutes in length and was conducted in the morning in the school meeting room, at the interviewee’s request. He appeared to be calm and took his time expressing his views. He pointed out that the group session motivated him to participate in the study. He was enthusiastic to talk about his long experience, although he showed signs of sadness and frustration. He commented that he had decided to retire at the end of that year.

Hamad

Hamad was from Saudi Arabia and his first language was Arabic. He had more than 20 years experience in education and had a bachelor degree in education. He taught in an intermediate school for more than 10 years and then worked as a vice principal in a large middle school in the city for 2 years. He then served in another large, rural city school where students’ academic achievement needed to be improved. He had since that time been a principal for 5 years at a large high school in the city.

Hamad’s school had more than 300 students and 35 teachers. The three storey school building appeared to be new, clean and tidy. He pointed out that the building’s facilities were suitable for educational needs, with outdoor sporting grounds and computer and science laboratories. However, he commented that the building lacked open spaces and had no elevators.

Hamad’s interview was one hour and 17 minutes in length. Initially, he was somewhat apprehensive and, at times, exhibited nervous laughter. However, rapport was soon established and he seemed to become more comfortable and open with the interviewer. He mentioned that he was happy to share his experiences, and he hoped that the interview would help the researcher in his study.
Hassan
Hassan was from Saudi Arabia and his first language was Arabic. He had a bachelor degree in education and 13 years of experience in education. He worked for a year as a vice principal, and for three years as a school principal.

Hassan’s school was a combined primary and intermediate school with more than 130 students and 21 teachers. The school building appeared to be new, consisting of two stories and large classrooms. The school had a playground and one science laboratory.

The interview was 57 minutes in length and was conducted in Hassan’s office. When the researcher arrived, he was very welcoming and was served Arabic coffee with sweets. Before commencing the interview, two teachers met the researcher and talked for about 10 minutes. At the beginning of the interview, Hassan appeared nervous. The researcher suggested moving to a round table in the corner of the office, which turned out to be a good idea for Hassan. At the end of the interview, Hassan commented that the way the researcher managed the interview helped him to express his experience and feel more comfortable.

Majed
Majed was from Saudi Arabia and his first language was Arabic. He had a bachelor degree in education, and had served in the teaching profession for 14 years: one year as a supervisor in the Ministry of Education and five years as a school principal, which, he said, had always been his dream.

Majed’s school was a primary school with more than 140 students and 23 teachers. The school was a two storey building with large classrooms. When entering the school, it appeared to be tidy and clean. There were motivational posters on the school walls. At the entrance of the building, there was an open area with a water feature and a coffee and tea area for the teachers and visitors. The school had an outdoor playground as well as computer, mathematics, and science laboratories. The school had been nominated for the Department of Education’s Outstanding Schools Award.

The interview was 90 minutes in length and was conducted in Majed’s office. When the researcher arrived, he was welcomed by Majed and the vice principal and was served breakfast in the coffee and tea area. Majed was excited about his participation in the study. His
presentation was excellent. He was ambitious and appeared to enjoy his work as a school leader. At the end of the interview, he took photos with the researcher.

Omar

Omar was from Saudi Arabia and his first language was Arabic. He had served in the educational profession for 17 years. He had a bachelor degree in education. He had worked for two years as a teacher in a small primary school located in a small village. He had been awarded a Teaching Excellence Award because of his extensive use of technology in his lessons. Before he became a school principal, he had worked for one year as a supervisor in the Department of Education.

Omar’s school had fewer than 60 students and 15 teachers. The school building was a rented house in a small village, consisting of three floors with small, old rooms. It lacked a tuckshop, a playground, a teachers’ room, laboratories, and other learning facilities.

Omar’s interview was 63 minutes in length. When the researcher arrived, he was welcomed warmly. The researcher also met some of the teachers during the break time. Breakfast was served before the interview. The interview took place in Omar’s office and was conducted in a friendly environment. Omar was excited to talk and present his ideas and solutions to the challenges he faced. However, he appeared to be under pressure with the lack of support and appreciation for his efforts as a school principal.

Rayed

Rayed was a Saudi citizen, and his first language was Arabic. He had a bachelor degree in science and had been a teacher for 17 years, serving six of those years as a school principal. He had been appointed to his current position as the school principal by the previous principal.

Rayed’s primary school had 87 students and 19 teachers. The school was located in a small village on a mountaintop. The school consisted of one small storey, and lacked enough parking spaces for the teachers and a playground for the students. The building’s design appeared to be old, however it had recently been renovated.

Rayed’s interview was 58 minutes long and was conducted in Rayed’s office in the morning. He was very welcoming and kind, serving coffee, tea, and dates. He appeared to be calm, expressed his views constructively and responded in a direct and to-the-point manner.
Salman
Salman was from Saudi Arabia and his first language was Arabic. He had a bachelor degree in education and had 11 years of experience in education, four of which had been as a principal. He had been nominated as a principal by the previous school principal.

Salman’s school was a primary school with 100 students and 21 teachers. The building was a one storey building located in a small village away from the central city in which the parents’ educational and financial level was low. The building lacked enough classrooms, a playground, computer laboratories, and a learning resource room.

Salman’s interview was one hour and 29 minutes in length. It was conducted on two separate days. The first interview was 71 minutes in length and was conducted in his office. Five days later, he called the researcher and asked for another meeting to add further comments to the interview. It took place in his house. Both interviews were conducted in a friendly way, and Salman appeared to be excited and showed an interest in expressing his views and ideas. He gave the researcher his email address and offered his support when needed.

Departmental Representatives
The description of each of the five departmental representatives who participated in the study opens with a background overview of the participant, followed by an overview description of the proceedings of the interview and the researcher’s reflection of it. A description of each participant was presented here in the alphabetical order of the pseudonyms assigned to the participants.

Ammar
Ammar, a Saudi citizen, had a master’s degree in educational leadership. He had served in the educational field for 25 years, as a school management supervisor for three years and then as an educational supervisor for 10 years.

The interview was 101 minutes long and took place on two different days. The first interview lasted for 76 minutes. Three days later, the participant called the researcher to request another interview to add more information that might be of help to the study. Both interviews were in Ammar’s office. He showed an interest in participating in the study and in supporting the
researcher. It was clear that he was knowledgeable in his field. He presented his ideas well. He gave the researcher his phone number and email for any additional information.

**Anas**

Anas was from Saudi Arabia and his first language was Arabic. He had a bachelor degree in human resource management and more than 20 years of experience in education, 10 of which had been as a supervisor in the educational training section in the Department of Education.

The interview was 71 minutes in length. It was conducted in the morning at Anas’s office. The researcher was invited to breakfast before the interview. It was clear that Anas was well liked and respected by his colleagues. He was enthusiastic and showed his interest in sharing his experience in a positive manner. He offered his help in providing any additional information that might be useful for the study.

**Emad**

Emad was from Saudi Arabia and his first language was Arabic. He had a Master of Education degree and more than 20 years of experience in education. He had served for nine years as a supervisor in the Department of Education, three of which were as a school principal consultant.

The interview was 58 minutes in length and was conducted at midday in Emad’s office. He showed his understanding, support, and his willingness to participate in the study because of its potential to support the work of school principals. He also recognised the importance of academic research, since he was involved in the research process during his master’s study.

**Khalifah**

Khalifah was from Saudi Arabia and his first language was Arabic. He had a bachelor degree in education. He had 13 years of experience in education, seven of which he had spent as a teacher. He had worked as a supervisor in the Department of Education for six years, four of which were in the Educational Training Centre.

The interview was 61 minutes in length and took place in the morning at Khalifah’s office. When the researcher arrived, he was served traditional Arabic coffee and sweets and was asked to wait for half an hour so that Khalifah could finish a meeting. In the meantime, Khalifah gave
the researcher the training centre’s report to read before conducting the interview. Khalifah offered his help in providing any additional information the researcher wanted.

Soltan
Soltan, a Saudi Arabian citizen, had served in the educational field for about 20 years. He had worked as a teacher for 15 years and then as a supervisor in the Department of Education for four years, three of those as a manager of the local Educational Training Centre.

The interview was 70 minutes in length and took place in the meeting room at Soltan’s office in the morning. Soltan indicated the key role that his previous school principals had played in supporting him through his teaching profession and helping him improve his skills and achieve his career goals. He was critical yet positive, focusing on solutions rather than problems. He gave the researcher his phone number and email and offered his help in providing any additional information the researcher wanted.

Summary
To summarize, a total of 20 participants engaged in the study. They were five high school principals, five middle school principals, five primary school principals, and five departmental representatives. Appendix 1 provides a summary of information about the participants engaged in the study.
Chapter Five: The Imperative for Educational Change

Introduction

This chapter documents the findings regarding the imperative for educational change, the first of the focal points identified in the conceptual framework. Two research questions addressed that focus:

(1) How do school principals, school leadership consultants and professional development planners see the imperative for educational change?
(2) To what extent does that understanding align with the policy and planning and other key documents?

The chapter, firstly, presents the findings with respect to the overall importance of the imperatives for change. It then presents the findings with respect to the emergent imperatives for educational change and their individual importance.¹

The notion of the imperatives for change that emerged from the interviews was that of the important ways or directions in which schooling in Saudi Arabia needed to be reformed. All participants recognised the importance of globalisation as the main driver of the articulated imperatives for reform. Participants’ discussion was also about the nature of the needed reform resulting from the pressures of globalisation.

The Importance of Educational Change

This section presents and evidences participants’ assessment of, and comments on, the importance of educational change in Saudi Arabian schooling, together with evidence from the documentation reviewed. The focus is initially on the importance of such change and on the importance of it being ongoing. The articulated reasons for that importance are then addressed.

All participants confirmed the need for educational change and school improvement:

¹ In this and the following chapters reporting results from the study, italicising is used to indicate translated narrative extracts.
Of course, I believe that the education system and schools need to improve and still need to do more and more. (Hamad)

Yes, I believe education needs to be improved. Its system needs to be restructured. (Khalifa, D.P.)

Absolutely, all school principals and teachers who I know, feel the need for school improvement, educational reform. (Bader)

Many changes and efforts are being implemented. They are necessary and appreciated. (Majed)

The need for continuing school development was also confirmed by 13 participants:

I can see some improvements in many areas over the last four to five years. However, there is still a long way to go. (Omar)

School development should always keep going and not stop at all, especially in periods of unpredictable advances. (Anas, D.P.)

The overall reasons for the importance of educational change and its continuation were articulated by 12 participants:

All people, schools, and organizations must always develop to keep up with the changes. (Bander)

If you look at current school performance, there are a number of areas in which the Ministry of Education, Departments of Education, and schools must perform well in order for students to get a quality education. (Ali)

This generation needs to be able to handle the new economic, social, and cultural challenges. (Soltan, D.P.)

Reviewing the Saudi educational and policy documents revealed compatibility with the participants’ responses. The documentation indicated that development is needed because education:

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1 D. P. in this and subsequent chapters means departmental representative
Is the cornerstone of economic and social development and a key determinant of its sustainability. The ultimate objective of development is to achieve human welfare that is developed economically, socially and culturally and which is contingent upon having educated, skilful and productive citizens, who uphold high moral and religious values and are proud of their civilization, while being open to and tolerant of other civilizations and cultures (Ministry of Economy and planning, 2010b: 371).

The importance of changing education was also confirmed. It was declared that:

The need to improving the schooling system is to provide students with twenty-first century capabilities and attitudes that will help them grow into productive citizens who engage with the rest of the world positively. Their creativity and talent is the most valuable asset that will help the Kingdom strengthens its competitiveness in the twenty-first century (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013a: 4).

It was also proposed that the importance of educational reform is to “help prepare students to acquire practical knowledge, skills, and attitudes so that they are be able to positively react to and face modern changes” (Ministry of Education, 2004: 12).

**Imperatives for Reform**

The notion of the imperatives for change that emerged from the interviews was that of the important ways or directions in which schooling in Saudi Arabia needs to be reformed. The analysis revealed seven major imperatives for change: globalisation, preparing students to be involved and competitive at a global level, improving the quality of student achievement, improving student achievement in national and international tests, improving the quality of education institutions, promoting active learning styles, and providing high quality education for all students. The ordering here of the seven imperatives is in approximate decreasing rank order of their combined importance to the interviewees. Each imperative is described in the following sequence: (1) an overview description of the imperative; (2) an articulation of its importance to the interviewees, and as evidenced in the documentation reviewed; and (3) detailed explanation of the imperative by sequentially interdicting important aspects of it, each followed by narrative
excerpts from the interview to illustrate and ground the point made, together with any pertinent observations about it in the documents.

Globalisation
The notion of globalisation was seen by the participants in two distinctive but interrelated ways. On the one hand, it was acknowledged as the overarching driver of the imperatives for reform. On the other hand, it was seen as a direction for reform in itself; as the development of globalised citizens and the schooling structures and culture to facilitate that development. In the latter sense, it was an imperative focusing on the need for education to be adjusted to develop students' ways of thinking about their social, educational, and working life in the globalized context. This way of thinking was being profoundly affected by new information and communication technology that allowed for the real time interchange of knowledge between the most distant points on the globe. This imperative emerged as being the most important for participants, with 18 of 20 identifying it:

This new era of globalisation has brought with its new considerations and challenges, schools need to understand these challenges and respond to them. (Basem)

We are living in a new globalized environment that is completely different from 20 years ago. The new era has created new needs for our students. Those new needs must be addressed by schools. (Fahad)

In the age of globalisation, we has to teach our students how to think rather than what to think. (Ali)

Students now have different ways of thinking about their learning and social lives. As educators, we have to understand this and respond to it through improving our school performance. (Abdulrahman)

New information and communication technology reconceptualises students' learning and social life. The way and time students interact with their parents have changed and become more limited. (Majed)

The analysis revealed the impact of new information and communication technology as an important aspect that accelerates globalisation and reconceptualises students’ social and learning life, with 15 participants identifying it:
Social networks such as Whatsapp, Facebook, and Twitter allow Saudi youth to interact with others around the world. We need to understand what the new roles of schools and teachers are. How should schools teach students? What kind of knowledge do skills did they need? (Bader)

Schools, parents or mosques are not the only sources of information. The internet is also an important source of information. (Ahmad)

Students spend most of their time watching television or using the internet. (Salman)

Students can interact and interchange email with students in another country in seconds. (Soltan, D.P.)

The available documents revealed compatibility with participants’ responses in this respect. The documentation indicated that:

The education system faces new challenges, many of which are the result of increased globalisation and competition among nations, and the advances in information and communication technologies, which have created demand for skills that Saudi education needs to promote. (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013a: 3).

It was also argued that:

The gradually increasing role of Saudi Arabia in the global economy, with its rise of a major producer and exporter, encouraged more emphasis on education in order to establish adequate conditions needed for sustainable economic growth and human development (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2010b: 379).

Preparing students to be involved and competitive at a global level
The notion of preparing students to be involved and competitive at a global level focused on the need to raise the efficiency and improve the productivity of the Saudi workforce, through enabling individuals in raising the national and international economic competitiveness of Saudi Arabia. This imperative emerged as being the second most important for participants, with 14 of 20 identifying it:
It is necessary to prepare students to have the required work knowledge and skills that they will be able to use over a significant part of their working life. (Ali)

Developing schools to prepare students for their working life is essential. Many parents are always looking for good schools that provide high quality education to ensure that their children can find good jobs in their future. (Abdulrahman)

This imperative were identified by 14 participants and indicated three aspects. Each of the 14 respondents identified this imperative, variously noticed one or more of the following three related aspects: the needs of the qualified labour market, the technology as a driver of changing in the nature of the workplace, and the needs to reduce the mismatch between outputs of schooling system and labour market needs.

With respect to the needs of the qualified labour market, eight participants indicated, firstly, that the school system needed to be reformed in a way that responded to new and emerging labour market needs, driven by globalisation, combined with the new information technologies:

As we live in that competitive global era, dealing with crazy current information technology, our students need to be prepared to have the required skills to handle such global challenges and deal with these technological advances. (Ammar, D.P.)

This time could be described as an era of intensive competition. This creates demands for students to have certain types of higher level skills. What does that mean? It means schools are responsible for teaching these certain types of skills. (Emad, D.P.)

Secondly, with respect to this aspect of the imperative, Three participants identified the need to improve students’ interactive and communication skills:

Schools need to prepare and help students to have strong commutation skills. They have became a very important factor of the new labour market needs. (Hamad)

I believe that the quality of our students’ communication skills and negation skills is an important indicator of their success in their future work life. (Emad, D.P.)
Students’ ability to effectively communicate with other in this era of global economic competitiveness needs to be improved. To be honest, those skills are really weak at present. (Anas, D.P.)

Thirdly, the need to develop students’ ability to analyse, solve problems and communicate the information for decision making to effective workers was identified by two participants:

*The introduction of technology and team work in the workplace requires that students be prepared to be problem solvers, creative and innovative.* (Rayed)

*New technologies, computers, and smart phones mean that education needs to be reformed in a way that enables students to deal with and respond to these innovations.* (Omar)

The second important aspect of this imperative was that of technology as a driver of change in the nature of the workplace. Seven participants saw new information based technologies as increasing the demand for more skilled workers to develop new technologies and to use the technologies in the workplace:

*The introduction of technology in workplaces has made it necessary for schools to develop students’ capacities in specific skills such as software skills and computing skills.* (Soltan, D.P.)

*Schools are required to have a goal to teach students how to effectively use software applications such as email, internet, word processing and presentation packages.* (Bander)

*The rapid pace of technological change mean that students need to have a higher level of skills to integrate the technologies into their study and their future work.* (Basem)

The third aspect of the imperative to prepare students to be involved and competitive at a global level was that of reducing the mismatch between outputs of the schooling system and labour market needs. Five participants saw a weak relationship between current schooling outcomes and labour needs as a lack of the student competencies and skills required in the workplace:

*Unfortunately, we have to admit that our education system does not meet the requirements of the labour market. An increasing number of our graduate students struggle to find work while employers are unable to find the workers they need.* (Abood)
It is time to revise our education system, I have read about and listened to employers who say that they cannot properly qualified workers. Yes, again, we need to have a proper education system that can produce graduates for the labour market. This could help to develop our economy, our country and its ability to compete in this global competitive economy. (Ammar, D.P.)

The analysis of documents indicated official concern about the quality of the education system in preparing students for work. Documents indicated that “students in Saudi Arabia would not be competitive in the global market, given their lack of knowledge and capabilities needed for their working life” (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2010a: 396). It was documented that the educational system must promote skills and knowledge and develop the capabilities of Saudi students with the aim of:

- Strengthening the capabilities and raising the productivity of the Saudi national workforce, so that the competitive advantage of the Kingdom, especially in this time of mounting competition, locally and internationally, can be enhanced. (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2005: 397)

To that end, the Saudi Government initiated a Strategic Long-Term Vision for the National Economy up to 2024 which argued “The necessity of improving the quantity and quality of education and training to promote the skills and capabilities of the Saudi work force” (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2010a: 382).

**Improving the quality of students achievement**
The idea of improving the quality of students’ achievement concentrated on the need to promote students’ skills and knowledge to strengthen their capabilities and raise their future productivity in being competitive workers. The focus in this imperative was on the need to promote learners’ conceptual knowledge in specific subjects and on how this knowledge could be utilized in different situations in their working lives. The participants, firstly, identified the importance of this imperative:

*Student achievement is a big problem that needs to be addressed.* (Ali)

*In general, our students’ achievement is low. It needs serious action to improve it.* (Khalifah, D.P.)

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Four important aspects were identified by 13 participants: the need to promote student knowledge and skills in mathematics, to improve student performance in science, to promote the knowledge and skills of students in technology and computing, and to promote student skills in English. Each of the participants identified this imperative, variously noting one or more of the identified foregoing four aspects.

In relation to the need to promote student knowledge and skills in mathematics, five participants identifying it:

*Actually, student performance and knowledge in mathematics is a big challenge for the Ministry of Education.* (Abood)

*I believe that our students and country will not be competitive at a global level unless more attention is given to improving student knowledge in mathematics.* (Ahmad)

The second aspect was that of improving student performance in science, with four participants highlighting it:

*Student knowledge and skills in science need to be improved. Most students are not qualified enough in that important subject.* (Rayed)

*Science curricula must be developed in a way that develops our students’ understandings and skills.* (Emad, D.P.)

*Many students lack basic knowledge and skills in science.* (Bander)

The third aspect was that of promoting the knowledge and skills of students in technology and computing, with three participants identifying it:

*Students need to be well prepared to effectively use computers in their study time and in the future.* (Fahad)

*Schools need to be developed in a way that develops our students’ skills in using new technology, such as the internet, laptops, and smart phones.* (Anas, D.P.)

The fourth aspect was the need to promote student skills in English as a foreign language, with three participants articulating it as:
The importance of learning English language has become very clear. In fact, it has become the first scientific and economic language. And because of that, teaching English needs to be given more attention. (Omar)

Students’ skills in English are really weak. They are missing any opportunities to find good jobs and to have an access to much good information and knowledge that is written in English. (Soltan, D.P.)

Reviewing the available documents revealed compatibility with participants’ responses. The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS) (2013) test scores in mathematics and science for Grades Four and Eight show that the Saudi Arabia is below average. The World Economic Forum: The International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation (2013) report shows that in Saudi Arabia, education did not meet the standards of other countries at similar income levels and continued to occupy low ranks in the health and primary education, being placed 35th among 157 countries.

The documentation indicated that the Ministry of Education established a number of initiatives to strengthen student capabilities and raise their future productivity in mathematics, science, English, and technology. It was argued that “Our ability to compete in an increasingly globalized world depends on our effort to expand the pool of scientists, mathematicians and engineers who will be the source of innovation in our economy” (Alsabti, 2012).

To that end, a new mathematics and science, English language, and ICT curricula were established, and the Ministry of Education established a network of science centres:

To foster innovative thinking and assist transformation to a knowledge society, motivate and inspire broad audience interest, build a national program for informal learning, train teachers and staff for science interpretation, link science centres to industry and research, and support STEM-based education (Alsabti, 2012).

**Improving student achievement in national and international tests**

The imperative of improving student achievement in national and international tests focused on improving student performance by developing a national outcomes based quality system to assess student learning and make teachers, administrators, and parents much more aware of
student performance. It focused on the need to improve student achievement in international assessments, which give an indication of the performance of students, teachers, schools and the education system: assisting in monitoring and stimulating educational improvements in Saudi Arabia. This imperative emerged as being the fourth most important for participants:

*Student achievement needs to be developed so that students can do well in the national and the international tests.* (Salman)

*The overall results of students in both national and international tests are low.* (Omar)

The imperative was identified by 11 participants, who noted one or other of the following aspects: the need to improve student achievement in national tests, and the need to improve student achievement in international tests.

Improving student achievement in national tests was identified by eight participants:

*The average level of the student achievement in the national tests is very low.* (Hamad)

*The results of the national test implemented by the national centre for assessment for secondary schools students show the low level of the students’ learning.* (Amjad)

*Student achievement needs to be developed so that students can do well in the national tests undertaken by national Centre for Assessment in Higher Education.* (Salman)

The second aspect of this imperative was the need to improve student achievement in international tests, with seven participants confirming it:

*Participation in international tests like TIMSS shows us how much our education needs to be improved.* (Khalifah, D.P.)

*If you had seen the results of our students in international tests, you would definitely agree that our education needs to be developed.* (Ahmad)

*Our student test scores in science and maths are low. What does that mean? It just means we have to improve our schools, teachers, and all of our education system.* (Basem)

Reviewing the available documents revealed compatibility with participants’ responses. The documentation indicated the need to improve student performance by:
Developing a national results based quality system to give an indication whether improvement is taking place or not, and whether certain policies are working or not when applied over a period of time. The system also makes teachers, administration, and parents much more aware of student performance and more sensitive to the need to raise their performance (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013a: 13)

The government established the National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education (NCAHE) to develop and implement educational assessment in order to promote the efficiency of educational institutions. The NCAHE implements a number of tests, including the General Aptitude test (GAT), the General Aptitude test in English, and the Educational Attainment Test for Science colleges. (National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education, 2015)

It was also documented that the Saudi Government had established the Public Education Evaluation Commission to oversee and evaluate both government and private schools with the aim of promoting school quality and efficiency that “Aims to build a national framework of qualifications and indicators to measure the performance, projects, and programs of public educational organizations” (Public Education Evaluation Commission, 2015).

The documentation indicated that the Ministry of Education had also focused on comparing student performance with that in other countries. The Kingdom participated in the Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in 2003, 2007, and 2011 (Public Education Evaluation Commission, 2015).

**Improving the quality of education institutions**

The notion of improving the quality of education institutions focused on the need to improve the policies, plans and regulations governing the public education sector to improve learning in schools and to build the capacity of these schools to manage and lead development:

*There is a need to improve the governance of the education system.* (Anas D.P)

*The school system needs to be improved so that it can provide a positive learning environment.* (Ali)
This imperative was identified by ten participants who variously noted one or more of the following three related aspects: the needs to empower schools and staff to design, plan, and lead their own development, the need to provide adequate school infrastructure to improve learning outcomes, and the need to utilize technology to improve the effectiveness of educational administration.

The need to empower schools and staff to design, plan, and lead their own development was identified by seven participants:

*Teachers and students in my school have particular learning and financial needs.
Unfortunately, I can’t do anything about that except to write a letter to the Department of Education to solve these problems.* (Amjad)

*To be honest with you, my staff and I had plans to develop our school and improve students’ knowledge and skills, but we just stopped, because we couldn’t do anything about it. We had not enough autonomy to make it happen. We had to wait for the approval to come from above.* (Bader)

*How could the Ministry of Education ask me to be an effective and responsible principal without giving me more freedom to make a decision?* (Salman)

*The centralization of decision making in education is a very big problem that needs to be addressed.* (Abdulrahman)

The second aspect of this imperative was the need to provide adequate school infrastructure to improve learning outcomes, with five participants identifying it:

*My own and other schools’ conditions and facilities are not good enough to improve our student learning outcomes.* (Amjad)

*There is no way to improve student learning outcomes if you have to teach them in leased school buildings which don’t meet the basic standards of schools.* (Omar)

*This school is very old and it lacks a science lab, lunch room, and sports facilities.* (Bander)

*More attention is needed to provide school buildings.* (Ammar, D.P.)
The third aspect of this imperative was that of utilizing technology to improve the effectiveness of educational administration. The need to build a strong and reliable technology infrastructure in schools, enabling the implementation of e-services, applications and facilities and data exchange and connectivity between schools was affirmed, with four participants identifying that:

*Using the internet in my work is just a waste of my time. The internet signal is very weak. It takes a long time to send an email or log onto a website.* (Abood)

*Every year, we use new applications to be implemented. I used Aleshraf, Maref, applications and finally they were all replaced by Noor applications. The main problem was that the data could not be transferred from the old one to the new one. We needed to enter them and it took long time.* (Salman)

*We lacked the basic requirements to use internet and Noor application such as a phone line, and we lacked internet speed.* (Hassan)

Reviewing the available documents revealed compatibility with the views of the participants. The Saudi government recognised the importance of “Improving the quality of school structures and educational institutions so that it ensures the effective planning, implementation and delivery of education,” (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013a: 5).

It was articulated that school system needed “To be modernized and restructured to be an active, decentralized, well regulated and innovative system,” (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013a: 5). And, “The school system reform adopts a systemic approach to improvement, moving from isolated interventions to a more holistic approach that coordinates actions at the technical, institutional, governance and policy levels”, (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2010a: 377).

Achieving the decentralisation of educational governance was also emphasised. It was documented that “The new decentralisation policy redefines the roles of the Ministry of Education, the district Departments of Education, and schools,” (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013a: 5). Also that utilizing of technology to enable learning was also documented with the aim of:
Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of educational administration through establishing a number of initiatives, including the Noor System for Educational Administration, the Fares system for Human and Financial Recourses Management (ERP), the Map system, which includes all schools in Saudi Arabia, and the Enjaze System for Office and Documents Management. (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013a: 54)

**Promoting active learning styles**

The notion of promoting active learning styles focused on strengthening the delivery of education in schools to positively influence student achievement. This meant that there was needed change, from traditional teaching practices grounded in the recitation of facts and isolated knowledge, to active learning styles, which help to build student understanding of the subject matter and raise their levels of achievement:

*The orderly style of teaching within the classroom must be changed.* (Ali)

*To improve our student outcomes, the traditional learning style of teachers must be changed.* (Soltan, D.P.)

This imperative was identified by nine participants, each of whom noted either or both of the following two related aspects: using active learning styles in classes and preparing teachers to effectively implement the new active learning styles in their classes.

Using active learning styles in classes, including cooperative group work among students and teaching based on student questioning, was identified by nine participants:

*Lectures used to be enough to keep students engaged. However, they are not suitable anymore.* (Majed)

*Students need to be active participants in their learning.* (Ali)

*Using traditional ways of teaching needs to be changed. Lectures can’t help students be actively involved in their learning. They might be able to recall some facts or remember some information, but they are not able to learn how to learn and think.* (Ahmad)

The need for preparing teachers to effectively implement the new active learning styles in their classes was identified by seven participants:
Many teachers need help to implement new instructional styles in their daily teaching practices. Some teachers have told me that they didn’t know how to manage their class or plan their lessons. To be honest, I don’t know either. (Majed)

We have been asked to implement cooperative learning and to stop using the traditional approaches. But we face many difficulties, such as a lack of professional support in teaching methods and a lack of appropriate materials to apply the new approaches to teaching. (Salman)

Many teachers in my school face difficulties in matching the teaching method and the lesson objectives. They first need to be given professional support on teaching methods. (Amjad)

The analysis of the available documents revealed that they supported participants’ responses. The Ministry of Education emphasized the use of new teaching methods based on constructivist learning theory:

Students need to learn by giving them the skills to take initiative for their own learning experiences. In the new classroom, students are actively engaged in the learning process, learning activities are interactive and student-centred, and teachers facilitate a process of learning in which students are encouraged to be responsible and autonomous. (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013b: 23)

**Providing high quality education for all students**

The imperative of providing high quality education for all students focused on insuring that equity in education was delivered to all individuals, including learners from low socio-economic backgrounds, rural areas, and having less educated parents. This imperative was identified by only three participants, all of whom had been working in rural areas, where parents were less educated and were in low income groups:

*All children should have equal opportunities for a good education.* (Amjad)
All students and schools have the right to have good and equal learning opportunities and resources, regardless of their place and background and the place where they are located. (Salman)

With respect to this imperative, each of the three participants variously noticed one or other of the following two aspects: the lack of support from the Department of Education and the lack of parental involvement in their children’s schooling.

The lack of support from the Department of Education was identified by three participants:

Unfortunately, the support from the Department of Education has not been enough at all. (Abood)

I have asked the Department of Education to provide a playground for the students, but I have not seen any support or positive feedback. (Salman)

My school often lacks the resources and support to provide good education. (Amjad)

The lack of parental involvement in their children’s schooling was identified by two participants:

Parents don’t visit the school or ask about their children. (Amjad)

Many students come from families with low education, so they cannot support their children. (Abood)

The analysis of the available documents was inconsistent with the participants’ responses. It showed that the Saudi government has paid special attention to achieving universal education for all and providing equal opportunities for low-income learners to access good education (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2013b).

It was also indicated that:

The availability of education in all parts of the Kingdom to all targeted and needy groups will help to restrict poverty to limited pockets by upgrading low-income families, education levels, developing their capabilities and skills, and enabling them to effectively participate in the development process. (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2010a: 392)
Summary

To summarize, a total of seven imperatives for educational change and related issues were identified in the 20 transcripts of the participant interviews (Table 2). The seven imperatives identified were: globalisation, preparing students to be involved and competitive at a global level, promoting active learning styles, improving student achievement in national and international tests, improving the quality of education institutions, and providing high quality education for all students.

Table 2: Imperatives for Schooling Reform and Related Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imperative</th>
<th>Related issues</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Globalisation</td>
<td>Developing students’ thinking in the global context.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>New ICT and its impact on accelerating globalisation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparing students to be involved and competitive at a global level</td>
<td>The needs of the labour market.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Technology as a driver of change in the nature of the workplace.</td>
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<td>Reducing the mismatch between outputs of the schooling system and labour market needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improving the quality of students achievement</td>
<td>Promoting students’ knowledge and skills in mathematics.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Improving students’ performance in science.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Promoting the knowledge and skills of students in technology and computing.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Promoting students’ skills in English.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improving students achievement in national and international tests</td>
<td>Improving student achievement in national tests.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Improving student achievement in international tests.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improving the quality of education institutions</td>
<td>Empowering schools and staff.</td>
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<td>Providing adequate school infrastructure to improve learning outcomes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Utilizing technology to improve the effectiveness of educational administration.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promoting active learning styles</td>
<td>Using active learning styles.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparing teachers to effectively implement the new active learning styles.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing a high quality education for all students</td>
<td>Lack of support from the Department of Education.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lack of parental involvement in their children’s schooling.</td>
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1 Imperatives are listed in decreasing order of importance to the participants.
Chapter Six: Policy and Procedural Responses to the Imperative for change

Introduction
This chapter documents the findings regarding policy and procedural responses of the imperative for educational change in Saudi schooling, the second of the focal points identified in the conceptual framework. Two research questions addressed that focus:

(1) What are the policy and procedural responses on the part of school leadership consultants and professional development planners?
(2) To what extent do those responses align with the policy and planning and other key documents?

The analysis ultimately yielded a database of 14 interventions, which were classified into six broad interventions: establishing the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Project for developing education (Tatweer), promoting and enabling the transformation of teaching to embrace contemporary pedagogical approaches, establishing the Mathematics and Science Comprehensive Curriculum Development Project, introducing technology into schools, developing assessment and accountability systems, and establishing a framework for decentralised local school finance and governance. Each of these six interventions is described below in the following sequence: (1) an overview of the intervention; (2) an articulation of its importance to the interviewees, and as evidenced in the documentation reviewed; and (3) a detailed description of the intervention interdicting important aspects of it, followed by narrative extracts from the interviews to illustrate and ground the point made, together with any pertinent observations about it in the documents.

Interventions Being Undertaken by the Government

Establishing the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Project for Developing Education (Tatweer)
The King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, also known as the Tatweer Project was established by the Saudi Government in 2006. It was seen as aiming at improving school outcomes through adopting a systematic approach that moved away from isolated interventions to a more holistic approach. The analysis of the interviews revealed that
the Tatweer Project was seen as the most important intervention that represented the government’s recognition to the need to improve the whole school system in the country, with 20 of the interviewers confirming that importance:

*Tatweer was established in reaction to the increasing criticism of schools outcomes from all parents, students, and communities.* (Ammar, D.P.)

*Tatweer will... I mean I hope it will, help the Ministry of Education to improve the school system and hence our students’ outcomes.* (Fahad)

*King Abdullah established that project and gave it a strong authority to find ways in which schools could be improved. The initial fund for this project was $2.4 billion.* (Khalifah, D.P.)

*Everyone knows of the Tatweer project. All people, teachers, parents, and students hope it could help to improve the most important elements of education. I mean the schools and classrooms that students came to everyday.* (Ali)

The available documents support the participants’ responses:

The King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, also known as the Tatweer Project was established by the Saudi Government in 2006 in response to the tremendous challenges posed by globalisation. (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education development Project, 2013a: 17)

It was also declared that the Tatweer Project was established to:

Provide direction and coherence to government investments in education that focus on improving the quality, relevance and efficiency of the education system. It rests on four major macro-strategies, including: (1) creating a model of change by building the capacity of the schools and districts to plan, manage, lead and evaluate their own development; (2) building the capacity for change, including the provision of resources, knowledge, skills, and capabilities to enable individuals and organizations to do their jobs effectively; (3) sustaining change through effective institutions, governance arrangements and polices; and (4) managing and communicating change across all levels of the system and all
segments of society. (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education development Project, 2013a: 7)

Promoting and enabling the transformation of teaching to embrace contemporary pedagogical approaches
Promoting and enabling the transformation of teaching to embrace contemporary pedagogical approaches was seen as a new learning direction that applied a learner centred approach, placing considerable emphasis on student self-learning. Students were expected to take an active role in their own learning activities, and work collaboratively in teams. This intervention was identified by all participants. Each of them identified the four major projects: the General Project for Curricular Development, the Developing Curriculum Textbooks Project, the Teaching Strategies Development Project, and the Professional Development for Educators Project.

The General Project for Curricular Development was identified by all participants:

*The new approach to learning has been adopted. Students are seen as active participants.* (Bander)

*The General Project for Curriculum Development has shifted the way in which students are being seen, and the way teachers teach.* (Ali)

*One important project is curricular development. Now, our goal is not to teach students some knowledge. Instead, we help them to learn how to learn.* (Abdulrahman)

All participants also identified the Developing Curriculum Textbooks Project:

*All textbooks have been changed, from year 1 to 12.* (Rayed)

*Students are now receiving new textbooks and workbooks that are consistent with the new teaching methods.* (Bader)

*All textbooks have been changed, they have been shaped and organized in new and different ways. They include new objectives and materials to develop students’ skills and understandings: skills such as cooperation, problem solving, and decision making.* (Abood)

*Each subject has a workbook that comes with the textbook.* (Hamad)
The Teaching Strategies Development Project was also identified by all participants:

*The Teaching Strategies Development project adopted what is called the ‘Teach me how to learn’ agenda.* (Khalifa, D.P.)

New teaching methods are being used, for example, teachers are encouraged to use group activities and cooperative learning. *That is what the Teaching Strategic Development Project emphasizes.* (Ahmad)

*The Teaching Strategic Development Project was launched by the Ministry of Education and adopted new teaching methods. In all of those teaching methods, the role of the teacher has been seen as that of a facilitator of learning.* (Basem)

Professional development for educators was seen as aiming to provide in-service training programs to equip all teachers and school principals with the required content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge for effective professional practice to improve student outcomes, with 20 participants identifying it:

*The Professional Development Project consists of a number of new learning strategies that each teacher needs to understand. All teachers and I attended some of these training courses, on topics such as active learning, mind map, and problem solving strategies.* (Soltan, D.P.)

*I attended a number of training courses in Contemporary Learning Strategies, established by the Ministry of Education.* (Bader)

*Contemporary Learning Strategies is another well-known program that aims to prepare teachers to implement the new teaching methods, such as cooperative learning in their teaching practices.* (Majed)

The available documents showed the compatibility of the program with participants’ responses:

“*The General Project for Curricular Development was established in 2004 and informed by contemporary theories of learning that change the focus from teaching to learning and emphasized the process of learning rather than memorizing of facts*” (Ministry of Education, 2008).
The Developing Curriculum Textbooks Project was established, with the aim of:

Providing students with the essential skills, knowledge, and understandings, which is consistent with the new paradigm of learning. Supplemental workbooks for all subjects, which included many learning activities to expand students’ understanding of the topic being studied, were also developed. (Ministry of education, 2008: 29)

The Teaching Strategies Development Project aims to improve teaching methods to be more learner centred and to transform students from passive receivers of knowledge to active participants in learning. (Ministry of Education, 2008: 29)

The documents also support participants responses with respect the to the Contemporary Learning Strategies Project:

The purpose of this project is to carry out a number of in-service training programs that aim to provide all teachers and school principals with the required content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge for effective professional practice to improve students outcomes. (AlSabti, 2012)

**The Mathematics and Science Comprehensive Curriculum Development Project**

The Mathematics and Science Comprehensive Curriculum Development projects were seen as interventions aimed at increasing the academic achievement of students in mathematics and science by enhancing their understanding, knowledge, and skills of the subjects being taught. The interventions were identified by all participants and involved three projects, each variously noted by one or more participants. The three projects were: the establishment of new mathematics and science textbooks alongside new workbooks, Contemporary Teaching Strategies for Teaching Mathematics and science, and Professional Development for Mathematics and Science Teachers initiative.

The first of the identified projects was the establishment of new mathematics and sciences textbooks alongside new workbooks, with 20 participants identifying it:

*The Ministry of Education has introduced established new textbooks for math and science.*

(Hamad)
Students are now studying new mathematics and science textbooks. They also use workbooks that have many different practical learning activities to be implemented by students. (Amjad)

All teachers know about the mathematics and science development project. New textbooks are being studied now. Each teacher has also received a textbook, which includes a number of activities to be followed. (Rayed)

Second, the Contemporary Teaching Strategies for Teaching Mathematics and Science project was identified by 15 participants:

Teachers are encouraged to use the New Teaching Strategies for Teaching Mathematics and Science. The Ministry of Education established this initiative so that our students could engage more in learning process and try to solve problems themselves. (Abdulrahman)

The Ministry of Education and King Abdullah Project (Tatweer) started the New Teaching Strategies for Teaching Mathematics and Science to increase students’ achievement. (Ahmad)

New teaching methods are being emphasized in mathematics and science classrooms. Teachers are encouraged to use problem based learning, inquiry based learning, and experiential learning. (Emad, D.P.)

New teaching methods in science and mathematics are becoming necessary. The Ministry of Education in partnership with the King Abdullah Project (Tatweer) has emphasized that issue by establishing the New Teaching Strategies for Teaching Mathematics and Science initiative. (Bander)

Third, the Professional Development for Mathematics and Science Teachers project to support teachers in using effective pedagogical strategies in mathematics and science was identified by 13 participants:

As a part of professional development for the mathematics and science teachers’ initiative, all teachers have been attending a series of training programs to support their teaching. These programs are provided by the Educational Training Centre. (Salman)
The Department of Education announced the Professional Development Initiative to support mathematics and science teachers. All mathematics and science teachers in my school and I attended a number of three day training programs, such as inquiry-based learning and problem based learning. (Hamad)

Mathematics and science teachers are receiving professional development support. They have attended training programs on modern teaching methods that view students as active learners who can search, test, and solve problems themselves with the support of their teachers. (Anas, D.P.)

The available documents supported the participants’ responses. The second strategic goal in the Tatweer Project “Focuses on improving student performance in mathematics and science to provide the students with transferrable 21st century skills, including critical thinking, independent enquiry and problem solving” (Alsabti, 2012). Subsumed under this strategy, it was stated that:

The Ministry of Education has undertaken a set of projects, including new Science and Mathematics Curriculum Project, the Professional Development for Mathematics and Science Teachers, and the Contemporary Teaching Strategies for Teaching mathematics and Science. (Alsabti, 2012).

Introducing technology into the school system
The introduction of technology into the school system was seen as being a vital intervention aimed at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of educational administration. This intervention was identified by 17 participants, each of whom variously identified one or more of the following three projects: the Noor system, the Fares system, and the Computerized Laboratories Project.

The Noor System for Educational Administration was seen as the most important project, with fifteen participants’ identifying it:

The Ministry of Education has also established a new system called the Noor system. (Bander)

The most recent system that was introduced is the Noor system.(Ammar D.P)
The Noor system is a new big system. All administration tasks, including those for students and teachers, are done through this system. (Rayed)

The Fares System for Human and Financial Resources Management was also identified by five participants:

Another new system called the Fares system has been introduced. (Emad D.P)

Now, the staff and financial management tasks are almost done through the Fares system. (Khalifah, D.P)

The Computerized Laboratories Project was also identified by three participants:

The Ministry of Education provides school with computers, data show, display and a wireless network. (Majed)

As part of the Computerized Laboratories Project, we have learning resources rooms, which have computers, a wireless network, and a data projection facility. (Ahmad)

However, two participants indicated that the investment in technology had been largely a matter of acquisition, not a matter of finding how it could be used in enhancing students learning:

The Ministry of Education has spent a lot of money buying computers and new systems. But they have ignored the question of how it can be used to improve student learning. (Soltan)

All the new technology systems are about school management. It has nothing to do with integrating technology in teaching and learning practices. (Emad D.P)

The available documents supported the participants’ responses:

Utilization of technology to enable learning and to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of educational administration is another vital strategy, which subsumes a number of critical actions, including building a 21st century digital infrastructure, developing a national education portal, developing interactive digital content, building the capacity of teachers, developing a virtual learning school, and establishing an IT system to facilitate data driven decision making. (Ministry of Education, 2008: 36)
A number of projects were implemented, including the Noor System for Educational Administration, the Fares system for Human and Financial Resources Management (ERP), and the Computerized Laboratory system. (Alsabti, 2012)

**Developing assessment and accountability systems**

The Developing Assessment and Accountability Systems intervention was seen as focusing on setting performance standards for students and school systems which, in turn, would lead to the establishment of accountability systems. It was identified by 12 participants, each variously identifying one or more of the following related initiatives: the School Evaluation Project, the Continuous Assessment for Primary Students Project, and the Education Excellence Award.

The School Evaluation Project was seen as aiming to implement a continuing and comprehensive evaluation process for school systems. This initiative was identified by nine participants:

*The Department of Education is implementing a school inspection program to make sure that the school environment is appropriate for learning. Five supervisors visited my school and stayed with us for one week.* (Hassan)

*The School Evaluation Project is being conducted now. The Ministry of Education a number of years ago announced it and established a section, called the School Evaluation Section, in all district departments of education. Those sections are in charge of school inspections in their districts.* (Emad, D.P.)

*My school was visited by five supervisors from the School Evaluation section in the department. They wrote a report based on the criteria prepared by the Ministry of Education.* (Basem)

The Continuous Assessment for Primary Students Project was seen as aiming to assess each student’s progress after finishing every part of the subject, with the aim of reporting whether a student has mastered that part or not. It was identified by six participants:

*The Continuous Assessment for Primary Education Project was approved by the Ministry of Education. Students now don’t have a final exam anymore.* (Omar)
The examinations system for primary education students has been changed. Continuous assessment is being applied now. Parents are receiving four reports per year. (Salman)

The traditional examination system for our school students has been cancelled. Instead, the Ministry of Education has approved a new continuous evaluation system. (Ammar, D.P.)

The Education Excellence Award was seen as recognizing the outstanding achievements and practices of education professionals. Five participants identified it, commenting that:

Recently, the Ministry of Education established the Education Excellence Award for outstanding teachers, school principals, and student advisers. (Khalifah, D.P.)

The Education Excellence Award for outstanding educational practices is an important initiative that fosters a culture of excellence and competition between educators. (Bader)

The Ministry of Education announced the Education Excellence Award in 2010. One teacher in my school has started to think about submitting his application. (Hamad)

However, two participants commented that the Education Excellence Award project has had a negative effect on teacher collaboration and their working as team:

I don’t think that it’s a good idea to focus on rewarding individuals. Distinctive teachers and schools don’t want to share their expertise. (Bander D.P)

We feel that we are in a competition. And everyone just wants to win. It negatively affects teachers’ teamwork. (Ahmad)

The participants’ responses were supported by the available documents. With respect to the School Evaluation Project, the documentation indicated that:

It was prepared by the Ministry of Education and implemented by five superintendents as the continuing evaluation team. These superintendents were required to visit a particular school for five consecutive days and write a report according to the school performance standards. (Ministry of Education, 2008)

With respect to the Continuous Assessment for Primary Students Project, It was also stated that:
It picked up the notion of continuous assessment and applied it in all primary schools from Grades One to Six. It was seen as involving the assessment of each student’s progress after finishing every part of the subject, with the aim of reporting whether a student has mastered that part or not. It was based on two factors. First, the teachers were provided with guidelines for each subject, comprising a framework, content, and standards of knowledge and skills expected of the students. Second, the continuous assessment methodology included differential assessment, so that a mix of means were used, reporting on student progress twice each semester, and sending an assessment report to the parents each time. (Ministry of Education, 2008: 33)

With respect to The Education Excellence Award, It was noted that:

Its aim is to celebrate the outstanding contributions made by teachers, school principals, student advisers, and teacher consultants in both government and private schools. It is also seen as promoting the pursuit of excellence and the reputation of the state school system. (Ministry of Education, 2012)

Establishing a framework for decentralised local school governance

The notion of establishing a framework for decentralised local school finance and governance was seen as transferring the decision making authority and giving additional responsibility to the district or school levels. Seven participants commented on this:

*The school autonomy initiative is one important step approved by the Ministry of Education. It gives me the hope that I will be given more flexibility to take decisions without waiting for approval from the Department of Education.* (Basem)

*I have been given more authority to take decisions concerning our use of the school budget in the way that the school’s management staff see appropriate according to the Department of Education’s guidelines.* (Fahad)

*The Ministry of Education has announced the new strategy of decentralisation. It has started to devolve a number of responsibilities to districts and schools. School principals are being given their school’s annual budget. They are given general criteria to use in their allocating money as they see beneficial for student learning.* (Ammar, D.P.)
The available documents showed compatibility with the participants’ responses. According to the New Vision and Strategy for a Promising Future for Education in Saudi Arabia, the first strategic objective, called Enabler, identifies a set of concrete actions to enable schools and districts to become 21st century learning organizations capable of driving their own development (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013a). It was indicated that this strategy:

Focuses upon establishing dedicated improvement units in each district and school focusing on: improving student learning, building the capacity of these units to manage and lead change, and establishing school councils to enable families and community members to participate in school improvement. (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013a: 27)

**Summary**

To summarize, a total of six broad interventions and their related projects were identified in the 20 transcripts of the participant interviews (Table 3). The six broad interventions identified were: establishing the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Project for developing education (Tatweer), promoting and enabling the transformation of teaching to embrace contemporary pedagogical approaches, establishing the Mathematics and Science Comprehensive Curriculum Development Project, introducing technology into schools, developing assessment and accountability systems, and establishing a framework for decentralised local school finance and governance.
### Table 3: Policy and Procedural Responses and Related Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Related Project</th>
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<td>Establishing the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Project for developing education (Tatweer)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promoting and enabling the transformation of teaching to embrace contemporary pedagogical approaches</td>
<td>The General Project for Curriculum Development</td>
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<td>The Developing Curriculum Textbooks Project</td>
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<td>The Teaching Strategies Development Project</td>
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<td>The Professional Development for Educators Project</td>
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<td>Establishing the Mathematics and Science Comprehensive Curriculum Development Project</td>
<td>The New Mathematics and Science Textbooks</td>
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<td>The Contemporary Teaching Strategies for Teaching Mathematics and Science Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introducing technology into school</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Computerized Laboratories Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing assessment and accountability systems</td>
<td>The School Evaluation Project</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Continuous Assessment for Primary Students Project</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Education Excellence Award</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establishing a framework for decentralised local school finance and governance</td>
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1 Interventions are listed in decreasing order of importance to the participants.
Chapter Seven: Understanding Educational Change

Introduction

This chapter documents the findings regarding the understanding of educational change, the third of the focal points identified in the conceptual framework. Two research questions addressed that focus:

(1) How do school principals, school leadership consultants, and the professional developers understand changes with respect to school principals’ roles and responsibilities?

(2) To what extent does that understanding align with the policy and planning and other key documents?

The main body of the chapter represents the findings relating to the seven factors influencing the effectiveness of managing the reform journey: vision and goals, communication, capacity building for improvement, engagement of educators, collective collaboration, pressures of accountability, and coherence and alignment. The ordering here of the seven factors is in approximate decreasing rank of their combined importance to the participants. Each of these seven factors is described below in the following sequence: (1) an overview description of the intervention; (2) an articulation of its importance to the interviewees, and as evidenced in the documentation reviewed; and (3) a detailed description of the intervention interdicting important aspects of it, followed by narrative extracts from the interviews to illustrate and ground the points made, together with any pertinent observations about it in the documents.

Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Managing the Reform Journey

The seven factors identified as influencing the effectiveness of managing the reform journey – vision and goals, communication, capacity building for improvement, the engagement of educators, collective collaboration, pressures of accountability, and coherence and alignment – are anticipated as follows.

Vision and goals

The vision and goals factor focused on developing, setting and identifying the common purpose that was intended to guide the direction of reform in the schooling system to create lasting improvement and improved student outcomes:
It is important to have a clear mission and clear goals to guide me and other school principals. (Bader)

I think the ministry of education needs to clearly answer the question of what it wants from students and schools. (Anas)

This factor was identified by 18 participants. Each of them variously noticed one or other of two issues: understanding the vision and the number of goals.

With respect to understanding the new vision of school reform, 15 participants firstly articulated that they had difficulties in understanding it:

The Ministry of Education has stated a very general ambitious vision and big targets. I honestly cannot understand the meaning of this vision or how it could be achieved. (Ali)

Every student will perform at a world-class level...It is just a fantasy goal that doesn’t make sense. (Salman)

I cannot understand the difference between the previous statement of vision and the new one. (Omar)

I wish I could find someone to explain to me the meaning of the new vision of Saudi students and their 17 general goals. I wish I could know how my school could achieve those goals. (Amjad)

Second, ten participants indicated that the number of goals and targets included in the Ministry of Education’s statement was large:

To me, it seems that the government is trying to improve everything at the same time. That is not achievable. (Khalifah, D.P.)

The new vision of Saudi students and their 17 general goals. I wish I knew how my school could achieve them. (Ahmad)

The new goals include everyone’s area of interest. It is too much to be achieved. (Fahad)

The available documents showed compatibility with participants’ responses:
The Saudi new vision for education focuses on students as whole persons, rather than being restricted to academic achievement. It identifies 17 general goals and attributes that all Saudi students should possess. (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013a: 9)

The vision for the new educational system has put students and student learning at the centre of the education system and has redefined the roles of the schools, districts and the Ministry of Education in supporting student development and growth. (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013a: 9).

The vision for the new educational system:

Sees students as whole persons, other than restricting itself to academic achievement. It focus on factors related to students physical attributes, mental predispositions, citizenship, and their ability to engage with the rest of the world positively, identifying 17 general goals and attributes that all Saudi students should possess. (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013a: 9)

Communication

The communication factor focused on the need to create extensive interaction between the Ministry of Education, the Department of Education and schools to build a common understanding about school reform strategy and the ways in which it should be implemented, with 16 participants identifying it:

*The Ministry of Education needs to tell schools about their vision and goals.* (Basem)

*Communication with educators at school level is a very important step in achieving the school reform vision.* (Emad D.P)

Each of the 16 respondents identifying this factor noted either or both of the following two related issues: communicating the school reform vision and goals and the communication channels with their school.
In relation to communicating the school reform vision and goals, ten participants indicated that there was a lack of communication between schools and the Ministry of Education:

*The Ministry of Education just has sent out a big booklet of school vision, goals, regulations and guidance on everything to be followed by schools.* (Bander)

*I attended a training session. The trainer mentioned the new ten year plan for development. Most school principals had no idea about it. He was shocked that the Ministry of Education had not distributed it to all schools.* (Majed)

In relation to communication channels with schools, emails, meetings and video conferences were identified by nine participants as the most common ways of communication with the Department of Education.

*The Department of Education has always informed us by email.* (Rayed)

*Email is the preferred contact with the Department of Education.* (Ali)

*The Department of Education invited me and all school principals to attend a meeting to explain a new initiative, its goals and how it should be implemented.* (Hamad)

*Last month, I attended a meeting about implementing the new mathematics and science curriculum project.* (Abdulrahman).

*Videoconferencing was also used to communicate with the Ministry of Education.* (Soltan, D.P.)

Reviewing the available documents indicated that communication was identified as the fourth major macro-strategy to guide educational development in Saudi Arabia. It was articulated that:

The fourth macro-strategy relates to change management and communication. The breadth and depth of transformation introduced by the strategy require a systematic focus on change management and communication across all levels of the system and all segments of society. (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013a: 9)
However, the available documents did not articulate the process through which the new vision was communicated.

**Capacity building for improvement**

The capacity building for improvement factor focused on the importance of providing teachers, school principals, advisors, and other staff with the required knowledge and skills to do better. This factor was seen as the vital missing element in school change effort, with 14 participants identifying it:

*Do you know what the problem is? It is that the Ministry of Education established projects without telling us and teachers what to do about them.* (Amjad)

*It is great to produce new textbooks or to suggest new methods of teaching, but the most important thing is to tell teachers how to effectively implement them.* (Basem)

*Even when support is provided, it is usually not enough to have an impact.* (Hamad)

*Although providing professional development for teachers is the most important element to bring about change, it has been weak.* (Abdulrahman)

Two essential requirements of capacity building for improvement were identified: developing individuals' understanding about the new projects and developing their skills in implementing them. Each of them were noticed by one or more of the fourteen participants identified this factor.

First, developing individuals’ understanding about the new projects was seen by 12 participants as an essential requirement for reform effectiveness:

*Teachers need to understand and know more about the new mathematics and science curriculum.* (Omar)

*Many teachers tell me that they need to know more about the new subjects and concepts in the new curriculum and the new teaching strategies.* (Salman)

*I, as a school principal, and as one who used to teach science, need to know a number of new topics.* (Rayed)
A number of new curriculum concepts need to be understood. Teachers cannot teach them without reviewing their knowledge. (Abdulrahman)

Second, developing individual skills in implementing the new projects was identified by ten participants:

*Teachers find it difficult to implement new teaching strategies in their classrooms.* (Fahad)

*Teachers lack the required skills to implement the new continuing evaluation for elementary schools.* (Amjad)

*Principalship has become a complex activity. Better principalship requires stronger skills in teaching styles, better ability to motivate teachers and students, better skills in working with teachers and parents.* (Khalifah, D.P.)

The available documents aligned with the participants’ responses in that they recognised the need to develop the required knowledge and skills for educators.

The second major macro-strategy focuses on building the capacity for change. Capacity and capability building involves the provision of resources, knowledge, skills, and capabilities to enable individuals and organizations to do their jobs effectively. Examples of capacity building initiatives include training teachers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects, developing the leadership capacity of principals, improving sports education, improving access for special needs students, and introducing 21st century skills across the curriculum, including the use of technology. (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013b: 9)

Planning and development in the Tatweer Project were also divided into four pillars: (1) curriculum reform and development, (2) teacher training and development, (3) school environment and technology reform, and (4) extracurricular activity promotion and development (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013b).
Engagement

The engagement factor focused on involving school principals and teachers in the development and implementation of educational reform. The analysis, firstly, revealed that insufficient engagement in the reform development and implementation was seen by 12 participants as limiting the effectiveness of school reforms:

Most initiatives are imposed from the top. No initiative will work unless it is supported by teachers and school principals. They needed to be more involved. (Ali)

In my opinion...but not only my opinion... all school principals’ and teachers’ opinions need to be heard. (Abood)

If the Ministry of Education wants these new reforms to succeed, they have to work with us as partners... work together... share with us. (Omar)

The analysis, secondly, revealed that 12 participants identified the importance of involving school principals and teachers in the reform development and implementation in building both their understanding and trust of the reform initiatives and effectiveness.

Nine participants, firstly, identified the importance of involving school principals and teachers in building their understanding of the purpose and effective implementation of reform:

Teachers’ understanding would improve in the curriculum development project if the Ministry invited them to participate. (Hamad)

I could not commit to do anything that you wanted unless I understood it. I need to understand first by my being involved, asking me what I think, sharing with me. (Bander)

By explaining to me, asking my feedback, and listening to my views, my understanding would develop and goals of the new initiatives might make sense. (Salman)

Five participants, secondly, identified the importance of involving school staff in school reform to build their trust in the utility of the new initiatives:

Many teachers don’t feel safe with these initiatives. They need to trust that the new reform will not affect them. That could happen by giving them a chance to be involved and discussing things with them. (Majed)
Engaging schools in the reforms would help to increase the trust between them and the Department of Education. (Bader)

Involving teachers in the planning of the reforms would increase the trust between teachers and supervisors in the Ministry of Education. (Fahad)

None of the documents examined provided information on involving school principals and teachers in the development and implementation of educational reform. However, the importance of empowering districts and schools to manage and lead change and engaging families and community partners to support a culture of learning was noted (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013b: 19).

**Collective collaboration**

The collective collaboration factor focused on the need to develop a collaborative environment in which teachers, school principals and all other educators helped and supported each other in improving the learning conditions and student outcomes.

*Working as a team is a prerequisite to improving schools.* (Anas, D.P.)

*School performance cannot improve unless all teachers, principals, administrators and parents work together.* (Ammar, D.P.)

*Working with others like in a team is vital to creating effective schools.* (Abdulrahman)

*Efforts to enhance collaboration and team work are necessary for schools to be effective.* (Bader)

This factor was identified by 11 participants. Each of them variously noticed one or more of the following three important kinds of collaborative environments to be fostered: collaboration among teachers and school staff in each individual schools, collaboration across schools, and collaboration between sections in the Department of Education and between themselves and the schools.

First, building collaboration among teachers and school principals was identified by ten participants:

*I believe that our school will never improve as long as teachers are working alone.* (Ali)
Improvement in teaching, improving learning will be achieved by working together in the school as a team. (Hassan)

My school got an award for student academic achievement by building a strong working team. Teachers help each other and take care of each other. They also took care of each other’s families. (Bader)

If teachers are not working together, all new projects will definitely fail. (Salman)

Second, building collaboration across schools was identified by three participants:

Each individual school is working alone. (Abdulrahman)

Exchanging ideas between schools should be supported. (Majed)

Collaborative schools do better than individualistic ones. That is the kind of culture that should be fostered and spread across schools. However, it is not happening. (Anas, D.P.)

Third, building collaboration across sections in the Department of Education, and between sections and schools was identified by three participants:

Every section is working individually. (Ahmad)

The financial section doesn’t work collectively with the extracurricular section. I spoke with someone about the new extracurricular initiative that needed financial support. They just told me they had nothing to do with it. (Amjad)

I think, we here, in the Department of Education need to work together and collaborate before asking teachers in the school to work as a team. (Soltan, D.P.)

The appraisal system, however, was seen as limiting the opportunities of collaboration among school principals and schools, with two participants identifying it:

How could you expect teachers, principals, schools, or sections to work as a team in a system that supported a win-lose culture? (Hamad)

Teachers’ appraisals are prepared in a way that reinforces individuality, and school principals’ performance indicators don’t pay attention to promoting collaborative learning with one other. (Soltan, D.P.)
The available documents revealed the government’s recognition of the need to develop a collaborative culture in which teachers, school principals and all other educators collaborate and support each other:

The Saudi school should model the concept of a collaborative professional learning community and provide an environment for its staff to learn together on an ongoing basis. (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013b: 6)

Districts of the future are learning organizations that nurture and cultivate innovation and creativity, and promote excellence and distinction among staff and students. They will also be responsible for creating lateral networks among schools to enable improved sharing of knowledge and expertise. (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013a: 6).

**Pressures of accountability**

The pressures of accountability factor was seen by the ten participants who identified it as focusing on the pressures of accountability on school principals and teachers to act in line with directions or criteria passed down by the Department of Education and the Ministry of Education:

*I am trying to meet the basic requirements to save my school and teachers.* (Fahad)

*I work under a lot of pressure. I feel that I just have to make sure we don’t do anything wrong.* (Bander)

Each of the participants identifying this factor variously noted one or more of the following three impacts of pressures for accountability on school principals: focusing on passing the exams rather than student learning, creating a culture of fear and frustration, and lack of investment in supporting school principals.

First, focusing on the passing of exams rather than on student learning was identified by eight participants:

*Students are only studying to pass the tests.* (Bander)
Teachers focus their teaching on the limited knowledge that helps students to pass tests. (Abdulrahman)

Students often say: I don’t care about learning, just about tests and how to pass them. (Amjad)

However, the departmental staff indicated the importance of the accountability systems:

We need to push schools to do better. (Emad D.P)

We need a more rigorous school assessment system to supervise school performance to ensure that they are making the necessary effort. (Ammar D.P)

Creating a culture of fear and frustration, the second of the identified impacts, was identified by five participants:

The most important thing is to submit reports showing that the targets have been met. (Omar)

The pressures of accountability cause schools to focus on showing that everything is fine. (Hamad)

Reports might be fabricated to show that everything is fine and to avoid the pressures of accountability. (Salman)

Third, the lack of investment in supporting school principals was identified by four participants:

I don’t feel that they would give me any support if I asked for help or if they came to visit my school. (Abood)

I know that teachers and I have to implement new teaching strategies, but we don’t know how to implement them. (Fahad)

It is not fair to ask school principals to use the Noor system without teaching them how to use it. (Abdulrahman)

The available documents indicated that the importance of developing an outcomes focus in learning assessment, focusing on educational measurement to monitor and stimulate educational improvement: “The Ministry of Education built a national results based quality system and
developed to assess student learning” (National Centre for Assessment n Higher Education, 2015). And:

When applied over a period of time, the assessment system gives an indication whether improvement is taking place or not, and whether certain policies are working or not. The system also makes teachers, administrators, and parents much more aware of student performance and more sensitive to the need to raise their performance (National Centre for Assessment n Higher Education, 2015).

**Coherence and Alignment**

The coherence and alignment factor focused on the need to establish systematic and coordinated policies across the Ministry of Education, and with the Department of Education, cluster consultants, supervisors, principals and teachers over sustained periods of time, with nine participant identifying that:

*Schools do not need more projects or initiatives, we need to understand how these projects work together to improve our schools.* (Khalifah D.P)

*Everyone works alone. It seems to me that the people who established the Noor system had no contact with those who established the Fares system. Every department fights to distribute their projects.* (Salman)

The nine participants who identified this factor variously noted one or more of the following four issues that were seen as negatively impacting school reform effectiveness: the large number of disconnected and uncoordinated initiatives, the lack of connection between the Ministry of Education, the Department of Education and its different units and schools, spending extra money on the acquisition of technologies, rather than on student learning, and the lack of appropriate infrastructure in schools.

First, the large number of disconnected and uncoordinated initiatives was seen by nine participants as a major barrier to effective reform:

*The problem of the new initiatives is that the establishment of too many projects and policies are really hard to manage.* (Hamad)
It is really hard to understand how all these project work together and how to manage them. (Bander)

A large number of projects have been introduced. Understanding the common purpose of these projects, what lies behind them, and how to manage them is a big challenge. (Hassan)

Second, the lack of connection between the Ministry of Education, the Department of Education and its different units and schools was identified by five participants:

Every unit in the Department of Education is works independently. (Fahad)

I still receive some emails as a reminder about old guidelines that should have been followed. I called the supervisor and told him about the new ones. His answer was that he had no idea about it. (Ali)

Coordination between all units in the Department of Education is lacking. Imagine, most units are still asking me to email them reports although they have access to them through Noor system. Their excuse is that they have a different data system. (Salman)

Third, spending extra money in the acquisition of technologies rather than investing in students’ learning was also identified by five participants:

They are too focused on buying technology and spending a huge amount of money on computers and laboratories. Technology is important but it is not the solution. It’s just a tool in the hands of teachers. (Khalifah, D.P.)

Establishing smart schools and providing a laptop for each student will never make schools more effective. Real school reform is more than that. (Soltan, D.P.)

A great deal of effort, which is still limited, has been directed toward providing schools with new computers and internet and establishing a number of new management systems. All those efforts are great. However, teachers and students are not using them effectively. One simple reason is the teachers don’t really know how to integrate technology into classroom teaching activities. (Bader)

The concern was that, when educators chat about school improvement, the first thing that usually comes into their minds is technology, computers, the Noor system. I agree that
these are necessary, but I don't think technologies by themselves will bring about school improvement. (Ali)

Fourth, the lack of appropriate infrastructure in schools was identified by four participants:

*We were still in a rented house, it was not suitable for learning and did not meet the basic requirements and standards of good schools.* (Omar)

*This school was built 30 years ago and doesn’t have the necessary facilities, such as a school hall, science lab, computer labs, and a school library.* (Bander)

*The school sports field has been closed for one year for maintenance. Could you imagine, students then had no opportunity or space to enjoy their play time or to practice some extracurricular activities?* (Salman)

*The school building and its facilities are very old. Science lab materials do not comply with the new curriculum.* (Amjad)

The available documents showed compatibility with the participants’ responses on the importance of this factor:

The Saudi Government recognises the lack of coherence across the Ministry of Education, and with the Departments of Education. Hence, the government established the King Abdullah Bin Abdualziz Project (Tatweer) to provide a systemic and coherent strategy to achieve system coherence, focusing on strengthening and building the mechanisms that ensure the optimal coordination of reform goals, efforts and outcomes (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2010a:147).

**Summary**

To summarize, a total of seven factors influencing the effectiveness of managing the reform journey were identified in the 20 transcripts of the participants’ interviews (Table 4): vision and goals, communication, capacity building for improvement, engagement of educators, collective collaboration, pressures of accountability, and coherence and alignment.
Table 4: Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Managing the Reform Journey and Related Aspects

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<td>Pressures of accountability</td>
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<td>Creating a culture of fear and frustration</td>
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<td>Lack of investment in supporting school principals</td>
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<td>Spending extra money in the acquisition of technologies rather than investment</td>
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<td>in student learning</td>
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<td>The lack of appropriate infrastructure in schools</td>
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1 Factors are listed in decreasing order of importance to the participants.
Chapter Eight: School Principals as Educational Change Managers

Introduction

This chapter documents the findings regarding school principals as educational change managers, the fourth of the focal points identified in the conceptual framework. Two research questions addressed that focus:

1. What do school principals understand to be their roles and responsibilities in the educational reform process?
2. To what extent does that understanding align with the policy and planning and other key documents?

The main body of the chapter identified six core domains of practices in which school principals engaged during their day-to-day practices: establishing school goals and expectations; managing the teaching and learning process; managing the school operational activities; building an effective team among teachers and school staff; supporting teachers and other staff professional development; and collaborating with families, and the community. The ordering here of the six domains is in approximate decreasing rank of their combined importance to the participants. Each of these six domains is described below in the following sequence: (1) an overview description of the intervention; (2) an articulation of its importance to the interviewees, and as evidenced in the documentation reviewed; and (3) a detailed description of the intervention interdicting important aspects of it, and followed by narrative extracts from the interview to illustrate and ground the point made, together with any pertinent observations about it in the documents.

Core Domains of School Principal Responsibilities

The core domains of school principal responsibilities referred to a collection of actual practices in which school principals engaged in their day to day practices. All participants identified that there was a small booklet that included a job description for school principal duties:

*The Ministry of Education established a new School Principal Authorities booklet, it includes a long checklist of regulations and procedures that I need to perform.* (Ahmad)
The Ministry of Education established a small booklet that has a job description for school principal roles and tasks. (Amjad)

The booklet which was updated a couple of months ago, is a sort of job description and includes a number of roles for managing the school. (Ammar, D.P.)

The available documents revealed compatibility in this regard with participants’ responses. In 2000, the Ministry of Education established a booklet that outlined the roles of school principals and vice principals. It identified 23 specific activities (Ministry of Education, 2001).

The school principals’ booklet was updated in 2013 and includes 52 new regulations and functions related to school operational activities that aim to give school principals more autonomy to perform their work (Ministry of Education, 2013).

In 2014, school principals’ responsibilities were updated by the Tatweer Project. The new booklet encompassed 28 functions, which are presented as job descriptions of school principals (Tatweer & Ministry of Education, 2014 : 20-21).

Establishing school goals and expectations

Establishing school goals and expectations, the first of the identified domains of school principals’ responsibilities, focused on setting, articulation and developing a school plan by the school principal and the teachers, with 17 participants identifying it:

I have to develop an annual school plan with the teacher. (Salman)

At the beginning of each year, I am required to develop a school plan. (Hassan)

School principals need to prepare an annual school plan. (Ammar D.P.)

Each of the 17 participants who identified this domain variously noticed either or both of the following two aspects: developing a vision by all school staff, and developing an implementation plan to achieve the vision.

First, developing the school vision by school principals and teachers was identified by 13 participants:
At the beginning of the school year, all teachers and I work together to identify the school vision. (Hassan)

We held a number of meetings to define the school vision and the main goals that we are required to achieve. (Basem)

We have identified an ambitious vision and specific goals with the school teachers. (Bader)

Second, developing an implementation plan to achieve the vision was identified by ten participants:

We then prepared a 20 page implementation plan consisting of around 20 pages. It includes the goals to be achieved, who is responsible, and the financial resources to achieve the goals. (Bander)

The Department of Education requires me to write a long implementation plan that identifies the specific goals and how they are to be achieved, who will achieve them and the financial requirements to achieve them. (Majed)

We have to prepare a specific implementation plan. The vice principal, three expert teachers and I worked on this task. We prepared the final draft and sent it to the Department of Education. (Ahmad)

The available documents revealed compatibility on this domain with participants’ responses: identifying the primary role of school principals as that of establishing with staff, students and other stakeholders, a compelling vision and plan of the school: “Effective principals build, with staff and other stakeholders, a strategic plan for developing school and identifying specific, shared, and short-term goals to be accomplished,” (Ministry of Education, 2014: 57). And that school principals need to: “Ensure that school plans and goals are aligned with the Department of Education at provincial level and the Ministry of Education; and communicate and build consensus among staff for the school’s goals and priorities” (Ministry of Education, 2014: 57).
Managing the teaching and learning process
Managing the teaching and learning process, the second of the identified domains, focused on the personal involvement of school principals with teachers in planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and teachers, with 17 participants identifying it:

*My most important role is to manage and supervise the teaching and learning of the school.* (Bander)

*The quality of teaching and student learning is the most important thing that I have to care about.* (Basem)

*My main role is to work with teachers to improve teaching processes and student learning.* (Salman)

Each of the 17 participants who identified this domain variously noticed one or more of the following three interrelated aspects: oversight and coordinating the instructional program, involvement in classroom observation and subsequent feedback, and monitoring student progress.

First, the oversight and coordinating of the instructional programs was identified by 17 participants:

*I worked with the vice principal and teachers to set up the school timetable for each teacher and made sure it consisted with the curriculum plan.* (Hamad)

*I needed to make sure that all teachers and students needs were provided, such as text books, teaching aids, and technology resources.* (Majed)

*I worked with teachers to incorporate the contemporary approaches to teaching, in which students play an active role in their learning process.* (Hassan)

Second, involvement in classroom observation and subsequent feedback was also identified by 17 participants:

*I have a plan to visit each teacher at least once each term.* (Ahmad)

*The vice principal and I set a plan to visit all teachers in their classrooms.* (Bander)
I make regular classroom observations and give teachers feedback about their performance and advice that might help them improve their teaching. (Basem)

I make classroom observations and then set a time with each teacher to meet and give him feedback about his performance and discuss the ways in which his teaching and student performance could be improved. (Salman)

Monitoring student progress, the third of the identified aspects, was indicated by seven participants:

I also have to watch student progress by reviewing student homework and their test results. (Amjad)

I spend time reviewing students’ test results, homework to observe their progress. (Abood)

I review students’ tests results to watch their progress and use it to improve teaching strategies. (Bader)

However, ten participants indicated that they had limited time to focus on managing the teaching and learning process:

I have no time to focus on improving instructional learning activities, which I believed is the most important task that I should work on. (Bander)

To be honest. I don’t have enough time to visit teachers. (Bader)

The huge number of managerial, and administrative responsibilities impede my focusing on visiting teachers and giving them feedback. (Basem)

The available documents indicated compatibility with participants’ responses:

The school principal should provide instructional support for teachers by supervising and evaluating teachers, visiting and observing teachers in classrooms and providing feedback for teachers, coordinating the curriculum, instruction and assessment activity and ensuring that it aligns with the requirements of the Ministry of Education and its policy. (Tatweer & Ministry of Education, 2014: 20-21).
And that school principals are required to: “Monitor students’ learning and school improvement progress, identifying students most in need of additional support,”

**Managing the school operational activities**

Managing the school operational activities, the third of the identified domains of school principals’ responsibilities, focused on managing the school’s operations and resources. The analysis, firstly, revealed that this responsibility was taking too much of school principals’ time with 16 participants identifying it:

*Most of my time goes into my office, finishing managerial tasks.* (Fahad)

*I spend most of my time responding to less important tasks, such a writing reports.* (Ali)

*I am always busy with writing lots of reports and meetings with people from the Department of Education and the Ministry of Education.* (Rayed)

Each of the 16 participants who identified this domain variously noticed one or more of the following three practices: dealing with the routines of school life, managing human resources and managing financial resources.

First, dealing with the routine work of the school and handling unexpected challenges was identified by ten participants:

*I have to deal with absent teachers and daily school maintenance.* (Amjad)

*There are a number of routine tasks that I have to take care of including answering parents’ inquiries, dealing with a sick child, or absent teachers.* (Basem)

*Some challenges are expected to happen every day. They are the sort of challenges that I handle every day.* (Salman)

Second, the managing of human resources was also identified by seven participants:

*My role is to make sure that all teachers and staff feel happy and motivated to do their job effectively.* (Abdulrahman)

*Dealing with teachers’ absence, and ineffective teachers are other tasks that I have to look after.* (Amjad)
Managing people, including teachers, school staff, and students with different skills and needs, is one big challenge and an activity that I have to deal with every day. (Abood)

Third, the managing of financial resources was identified by six participants:

I have to set a school budget and how it is spent, considering the Department of Education regulations. (Majed)

I have full responsibility for formulating the budget and ensuring that the fiscal resources of the school are managed responsibly. (Hamad)

Maintaining and repairing schools when needed is my responsibility as well. (Abood)

The available documents revealed compatibility with participants’ responses to this domain: “The principal is responsible for the management and day-to-day operations and business of the school” (Ministry of Education, 2001: 14). “School principals promote student learning by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe and healthy school environment” (Tatweer & Ministry of Education, 2014: 20-21).

The documents also articulated a number of organizational management functions and activities that school principal should perform:

Securing his school’s physical facilities from unwanted intrusions and intruders.

Maintaining the physical facilities in a safe conditions. Implementing and monitoring the use of appropriate discipline in classrooms and all other locations within his school. Allocating resources in support of the school needs and goals.

Managing efficient budgetary processes in ways that are closely aligned with the Ministry of Education regulations and the school’s priorities. Ensuring effective oversight and accountability of resources to support priorities. (Tatweer & Ministry of Education, 2014 : 20-21)

Building an effective team among teachers and school staff

Building effective team, the forth of the identified domains, focused on finding ways to strengthen the relationship between teachers and other school staff in their schools to support one another in achieving the school’s goals, with ten participants articulating it:
My role is to build a team and make teachers help each other. (Bader)

My task is to motivate teachers to work together and help each other. I believe that no one could change or improve student performance by working alone. The answer lies in teachers working in teams. (Abdulrahman)

I have to call for us to work work together as a team: what I call “we” instead of “I”. I think if we work together, our students learning will improve. (Majed)

Each of the nine respondents who identified this domain variously noticed one or more of the following three practices carried by school principals: giving teachers real opportunities to share in developing and managing the school plan, having each member of the school feel a responsibility for the school improvement, and sharing all important information with school teachers.

First, giving teachers real opportunities to share in developing and managing the school plan was identified by five participants:

I work with teachers to build school plans, identify the main goals, and the best way to achieve those goals. (Bander)

I ask teachers to think together and work together to set the school vision, identify the challenges we face, and how we can handle these challenges. (Hassan)

Second, having each member of the school feel a responsibility for school improvement was indicated by four participants:

My role is to ensure that every teacher in the school cares about every student in the school. (Salman)

I try to create an environment through which teachers cooperate and feel responsible for all students. I think this point helps to make our school as good as it is now, so that many teachers want to work in it. (Ali)

Third, sharing all important information with school teachers was expressed by three participants:
I encourage teachers to share knowledge, information, and new ideas that could benefit our school and students. (Hamad)

I ask teachers to be open to sharing information, to face challenges and to exchange good ideas. (Bader)

The available documents revealed compatibility in the domain with participants’ responses. The analysis revealed that neither the new development school model. (2014) nor the public school regulations guide (2014) articulated direct roles for school principals in building effective teams among teachers and school staff. Implicitly, the documents indicated that the roles of school principal are to:

Establish the school board and work with them to contribute to students’ success at school, establish teams and group workers in the school in accordance with the Department of Education regulations, and participate and collaborate with supervisory staff for the students’ learning interest (Tatweer & Ministry of Education, 2014 :20-21).

Supporting teacher and other staff professional development
Supporting teacher and other staff professional development, the fourth of the identified domains of school principals’ responsibility, focused on promoting professional learning and development for all school staff, especially school teachers, with nine participants identifying it:

The professional development of teachers is a really important issue that I care about. (Fahad)

One key role that I work on is teachers’ development. (Ahmad)

Improving teachers’ knowledge and skills, especially at this present time of curriculum development, is necessary. (Emad, D.P.)

Each of the nine participants identifying this domain variously noticed one or more of the following three practices: identifying the training needs of teachers and school staff, sending teachers to attend in-service professional development programs for school staff, and promoting learning from each other in the school.
First, identifying the professional development need of teachers and school staff was indicated by seven participants:

*I visit teachers and then identify their professional development needs.* (Abood)

*I usually discuss with each individual teacher the skills and knowledge that he needs to develop.* (Ali)

*My role is to identify teachers’ professional development needs, especially new teachers, and advise them to attend some workshops in the local training centre.* (Majed)

Second, sending teachers to attend in-service professional development programs for teachers was identified by three participants:

*I receive an annual training plan prepared by the local training centre. I sent five teachers to attend one day workshops and two teachers to attend three days workshops.* (Omar)

*Two new teachers attend a four-day induction program in the training centre.* (Hassan)

*I sent one expert teacher to attend a ten-day training program, which aims to prepare him to hold a leadership position next year.* (Rayed)

However, the quality and effectiveness of the provided training programs was seen as being limited, with seven participants identifying it:

*Most of the training programs are not effective.* (Fahad)

*The teachers’ feedback of the training programs is negative. Most training programs they attend are not related to their actual work.* (Abood)

*The benefit of the workshops appears to be limited. Most teachers say that most of them don’t improve their knowledge and skills, and I agree with them.* (Ali)

Third, promoting learning from each other in the school was indicated by two participants:

*I made a professional development plan in the school with the aim of encouraging learning from each other in the school.* (Hamad)

*My school has many teachers. Each teacher has the potential to give towards the group. My role is to find out the best ways to encourage teachers to learn from each other.* The
school runs teacher meetings on a weekly basis in which teachers exchange ideas and learn from each other. (Bader)

The available documents revealed compatibility on this domain with participants’ responses. The documents indicated the two main responsibilities that school principals need to perform: “Promote continuous and sustainable improvement for school staff, and monitor, evaluate, and support staff progress (Tatweer & Ministry of Education, 2014 : 20-21).

These two general roles were reported in the Ministry of Education (2012) documents. It was documented that school principals are required to harness as much of the professional capacities of school staff as possible:

Principals identify and implement professional learning opportunities with school staff and supervisory staff that are aligned with individual learning needs, plans and school priorities, providing staff with regular and effective feedback, facilitating opportunities for staff to learn from each other, encouraging staff to try new practices consistent with their own interests, demonstrating the importance of continuous learning through visible engagement in their professional learning, keeping staff well informed about their work, using new approaches of instruction and school improvement, and encouraging and facilitating staff to continue their studies. (Ministry of Education, 2012: 23-25)

**Collaborating with families and community.**
Collaborating with families and communities, the sixth of the identified domains, focused on the involvement of school principals in activities beyond their schools, with six participants identifying it:

*My other important role is to work together with parents, families and communities.*
(Salman)

*Schools have to do something with families and community. I have to build relationship and participate in community services.* (Hamad)

Each of the six participants identifying this domain noticed either or both of the following practices: collaborating with families and collaborating with community members.
First, collaborating with families was identified by four participants:

*I invite families to participate in school activities and parents meetings. I encourage families to share their children’s learning needs and to let me help if they have concerns about their children’s learning or behaviour.* (Salman)

*My task to build relationships with some families is not an easy one, especially with families who needed extra support to become more involved in their kids’ school lives.* (Amjad)

Second, collaborating with community members was also identified by four participants:

*I create a strong connection with local communities and invite people from the broader community to attend and participate in school activities and functions.* (Majed)

*I inform the local community that the school building and resources may be used for community activities and meetings for free. They use them many times in some community meetings, sports activities and in the evening.* (Hamad)

*A number of programs, meetings, and sports activities for the local community are held in the school.* (Salman)

The available documents indicated that the primary school principalship policy documentation did not give much attention to engaging and working with the community. It was only stated that the school principal role was to “Invite representative parents to participate in the school board and invite all parents to attend the parent-teachers meetings” (Tatweer & Ministry of Education, 2014 : 23).

However, the updated school principals’ roles gave more attention to promoting parental and community engagement as a key aspect of raising the achievement of all students by:

- Developing and maintaining positive partnerships with families and all those associated with the schools’ broader community; recognizing and supporting the needs of students’ families from communities facing complex challenges;
- Establishing and supporting the school parental board and making sure that it is truly representative of the community; identifying and implementing a plan to meet the diverse needs of students and their families; and encouraging parents and
families to engage and attend school events and public activities (Ministry of Education, 2012: 32).

It was also documented that successful school principals should:

Build partnerships with the local community and external stakeholders so that they contribute to the school’s success; encourage the community to use school facilities in order to strengthen community engagement with the school; identify and implement a plan to meet the diverse needs of students and their families; and encourage parents and families to engage and attend school events and public activities. (Ministry of Education, 2012: 33)

Summary

To summarize, a total of six core domains of practice in which participants engaged during their day-to-day practices in their schools were identified in the 20 transcripts of the participants’ interviews (Table 5): establishing school goals and expectations; managing the teaching and learning process; managing the school operational activities; building effective teams among teachers and school staff; supporting teacher and other staff professional development; collaborating with families and community.
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<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Related practices</th>
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<tr>
<td>Establishing school goals and expectations</td>
<td>Developing the school vision with all school staff</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Developing an implementation plan to achieve the vision</td>
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<td>Managing the teaching and learning process</td>
<td>Overseeing and coordinating the instructional program</td>
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<td>Classroom observation and subsequent feedback</td>
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<td>Monitoring student progress</td>
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<td>Managing the school operational activities</td>
<td>Managing financial resources</td>
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<td>Managing human resources</td>
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<td>Managing the routines of school life</td>
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<td>Building an effective team among teachers and school staff</td>
<td>Giving teachers real opportunities to share in developing and managing the school plan</td>
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<td>Having each member of the school feel a responsibility for school improvement</td>
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<td>Sharing all important information with school teachers</td>
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<td>Supporting teacher and other staff professional development</td>
<td>Identifying the training needs for teachers and school staff</td>
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<td>Sending teachers to attend in-service professional development programs for school staff</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Promoting learning from each other in the school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborating with families, community, and other schools</td>
<td>Collaborating with families</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Collaborating with community members</td>
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1 Domains are listed in decreasing order of importance to the participants.
Chapter Nine: Development of Capacity for Effective School Principalship in the Reform Process

Introduction

This chapter documents the findings regarding the development of capacity for effective school principalship in the reform process. Two research questions addressed that focus:

1. In what professional development activities do school principals engage in support of their reform leadership?
2. To what extent do those activities align with the policy and planning and other key documents?

The main body of the chapter presents five common essential features of school principal professional development as leaders in the reform process of their schools: designing professional development for school principals as a continuum; driving professional development by the policy reform agenda; ensuring coordination between providers; job-embedded professional development; and addressing the individual professional development needs of school principals. The ordering here of the five features is in approximate decreasing rank of their importance to the participants. Each of these five features is described below in the following sequence: (1) a description of the intervention; (2) an articulation of its importance to the interviewees, and as evidenced in the documentation reviewed; and (3) a detailed description of the intervention interdicting important aspects of it, followed by narrative extracts from the interview to illustrate and ground the point made, together with any pertinent observations about it in the documents.

Features of Effective Professional Development for School Principals

The five common features of school principal professional development as leaders in the reform process are articulated as follows.

Designing professional development for school principals as a continuum

Designing professional development for school principals as a continuum focused on seeing professional development for school principals as an ongoing learning process throughout
different stages in their careers. This feature was identified by all participants. Each of them variously noticed one or more of following points.

Firstly, all participants indicated their concerns about the value of professional experience. Since they all came from a teaching background, they were concerned that their professional experience might not be equipping them well for the position of principal:

*The background of all school principals including me has nothing to do with school leadership skills and requirements. We were prepared to be teachers.* (Abdulrahman)

*I am qualified in teaching Arabic, but had no idea about setting goals and managing resources.* (Bader)

*I have a bachelor degree in Islamic science. I haven’t studied any course in school management.* (Abdulrahman)

Second, three stages of school principals’ professional development provision during and suited to the different stages of their career were identified: pre-service training, induction, and in-service training.

Pre-service training was seen as pre-service leadership preparation programs for teachers who might become school principals. All participants indicated that they had not received any pre-service training focused on leadership development, as the Ministry of Education did not provide pre-service training programs:

*I didn’t take any training program as a prerequisite to becoming a principal. I didn’t study any courses in school management at university. And the Department of Education didn’t offer that sort of program.* (Salman)

*Before becoming a school principal, an educational management course was the only subject I studied in school leadership when I was doing my bachelor degree.* (Rayed)

*I started my position without any previous preparation.* (Amjad)

Second, induction programs were organised by the local training and development centre and were seen as being focused on developing principals who are newly appointed to the job. 18 participants identified that:
I attended a three day induction program after I was appointed to the principalship job. Yes, it was three days and focused on building my knowledge of the Saudi school legislation. (Majed)

The induction program was the first course I attended after I was appointed as a principal. That was almost 12 years ago and it was five days. The Training and Development centre invited us to attend the program, which was about the school system, school legislation and financial management (Abdulrahman)

During the first month of my appointment as a school principal, the Training and Development centre sent me a letter inviting me to attend the induction program. It was a four-day course (20 hours). It was almost all about school regulation. (Ahmad)

With respect to induction programs, nine of the eighteen participants identified noticed one induction program, recently established and organized by the local Department of Education. All nine respondents acknowledged the value of it in providing them with a variety of support arrangements for taking up the position and initial steps into school leadership:

I was appointed to attend an induction program. We met one day a week for 10 weeks. It was so beneficial. The program was a good initiative, organised by the school management section in the local department of education. (Omar)

I attended a ten day induction program. It was an excellent idea that should be continued and improved. It was really supportive for me and started my position by giving me some good information and confidence. (Hassan)

The induction program, was organized by the School Management Section in the Department of Education, it was a very good idea. I collaborated with my colleagues in preparing and implementing it. Most of the participants liked it. (Omar)

In-service programs, were seen as the main approach used for providing professional development for the school principals, with sixteen participants identifying it:

I attended a number of training programs each year. For example, this year I went to Riyadh for three days to attend a training program. I also attended one internal training program for two days organized by the local training centre. (Bader)
Last year, I was appointed to attend a one semester training course in Riyadh. It was almost 15 weeks. (Ali)

We sent half-yearly training programs plan for school principals in collaboration with the school management section to all school principals and asked them to attend the required programs according to the plan. (Ammar, D.P.)

The documents received indicated that the Ministry of Education did not provide pre-service or preparatory training to take up the position of school principal, relying instead on short induction or in-service courses:

Either induction or in-service programs or a combination of the two to ready leaders for their posts. (Ministry of Education, 2002: 9).

Short-term induction or in-service programs implemented by the local educational training centres last less than two weeks. (Alghamdi & Li, 2011).

The analysis of the documents also showed that the training was largely left to each local training centre to decide what professional development the principal or those aspiring to principalship needed (Ministry of Education, 2002: 52)

Local programs are designed by the educational training and scholarship sections at districts level, considering the specific needs of the teachers within their regions. (Ministry of Education, 2002: 55)

Driving professional development by the policy reform agenda
Driving professional development for school principals by the policy reform agenda, the second of the identified features, focused on establishing a coherent developmental plan and selected specific activities and programs responding to and addressing the school reform goals, with 18 participants identifying it:

Professional development programs need to be connected to school development goals. (Hamad)

It is necessary that all training programs be aligned with the new initiatives and projects. (Abdulrahman)
The training programs should support teachers to achieve the new reforms goals. (Abood)

Each of the participants identified this feature, variously noting either or both the following issues: the lack of the alignment of reform policy with the professional development program plan, and the lack of alignment of the reform goals with the program content.

First, ten participants noted that most programs showed a lack alignment between reform policy and the professional development program plan:

If you read the training program plan, most of the training programs are not related to school improvement goals and the change initiatives. (Ahmad)

Most of the training programs aren’t connected to my new roles. They are just a number of short, unconnected single programs. They cover general management principles, and administrative requirements, with little focus on student learning and school effectiveness. (Salman)

The training program plan is just a combination of a number of prepared and repeated programs with some marginal changes, such as the name of the program. These programs, in some cases, don’t correspond to my responsibilities. It doesn’t help me to handle the new intensive school reforms imposed by the policymakers. (Majed)

Second, eight participants indicated a lack of alignment between the content of training programs with the reforms goals:

The content of the training programs is inadequate to the challenges I face in my day-to-day work at school. (Salman)

Most of the knowledge is just general and outdated. (Fahad)

I remember one program I attended last year. It was a collection of topics covering administrative requirements, and procedures. These topics don’t align with my core responsibilities or the real challenges I face at school. (Hamad)

The available documents revealed two points. Firstly, the documents revealed that the Ministry of Education recognised that the professional development programs did not seem to be coherent with school improvement activities and agenda: “There is still a need for more coherent approaches to professional development programs with reform initiatives (Ministry of Economic
and Planning, 2010b: 97). And: “Professional development is the responsibility of the local Department of Education, which might make it more difficult to align professional development programs with the current reform agenda (Alghamdi & Li, 2011: 5).

In responding to the above concerns, the government established the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Project (Tatweer) to provide a systemic and coherent strategy for teacher development, including that of school principals, which is part of a national policy for school reform (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2011: 379).

And: “The professional development strategy has been seen as key enabler of school reform efforts” (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013a:147). “It [the professional development strategy] is within a coherent reform agenda and comprises a sequence of reform initiatives aimed at improving school practices and enhancing students’ performance.” (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013a:147).

**Ensuring coordination between providers**

The notion of ensuring coordination between providers focused on ensuring consistency and quality of provision between different providers of training programs, with 17 participants identifying it:

*The Ministry of Education needs to find a way to ensure that different providers are working together and support each other.* (Ali)

*The Ministry of Education needs to coordinate and ensure that all courses from by different providers are pursuing based on similar goals and following similar guidelines.* (Khalifah D.P.)

Each of the 17 participants who identified this feature noted one or other of the following two issues: the multiplicity of the providers of school principals’ professional development and the quality and consistency of programs between providers.

In relation to the multiplicity of the providers, 15 participants indicated that the provision, induction and development programs were managed by three institutions: the local training centres for professional development, universities, and the Ministry of Education.
The local training centre was identified by 17 participants as the main provider of professional development for school principals:

*Most of the training programs I have attended were held in the training centre. I attended one program each semester.* (Rayed)

*The local training centres are active. At the beginning of each semester, they usually distribute a plan that has a number of programs to attend.* (Bader)

*Last week, I attended a one-day workshop in the training centre.* (Hassan)

The training programs were seen as covering a range of topics, with 12 participants identifying it:

*I attended a number of programs, such as planning skills.* (Rayed)

*I attended a workshop on the Noor system which was about implementing technology in school management. I also attended an improving management skills workshops.* (Fahad)

*I participated in developing leadership skills and communication skills programs.* (Ahmad)

*I participated in managing change skills program.* (Hamad)

*I attended a student evaluation skills for primary teachers workshop.* (Majed)

With respect to universities’ training programs, 12 participants identified that they attended a one one-semester in-service course for school principals:

*I attended the Educational Management courses offered by King Khalid University in cooperation with the Ministry of Education.* (Salman)

*Four years ago, I was appointed to attend an almost 15-week training program for school principals at Omm Alqura University.* (Hamad)

*I attended a training program offered by the College of Education at King Saud University.* (Abdulrahman)

Seven participants indicated that the university training programs concentrated on different areas of courses:

*It was about managing school operations and training and development courses.* (Hamad)
I studied leadership theories, leading classrooms, and using technology in schools. (Abdulrahman)

Yes, some courses were about developing teachers, using new technology as a learning recourse or using technology in students learning. Managing people. (Abood)

With respect to the professional development programs offered by the Ministry of Education, 12 participants identified them and three participants indicated that they had attended such programs:

The Ministry of Education also offered a one-week training program for school principals in Riyadh and Jeddah. However, I never attended this programs although I wanted to. (Salman)

I attended one training program in Riyadh offered by the Ministry of Education. The other was offered in Jeddah for five days. (Bader)

I was appointed to attend a three-day program offered by the Ministry of Education. (Abdulrahman)

We heard that the Ministry of Education offered a training program for school principals, however, I wasn’t appointed to participate. (Ahmad)

The three participants who attended such programs indicated that the ministry training programs were focused on:

Improving school leadership skills. (Abdulrahman)

Leading schools in the 21st century. (Bader)

The roles of school principals in implementing new curriculum. (Hamad)

The consistency of the quality of provision between providers, the second of the identified issues, was identified by seven participants, who indicated their concerns about the lack of linkages and coordination between providers themselves to develop a comprehensive package of training programs:

We had different providers of professional development. The problem was that everyone worked alone. (Anas, D.P.)
All providers had different training programs and plans. I didn’t think their efforts would achieve the goals unless they worked together. They required some kind of coordination to provide a range of programs that developed us and helped us to achieve the school objectives. (Ammar, D.P.)

It seemed to me that there was no communication or coordination between universities, the Ministry of Education and the local training centres. Everyone worked alone and had a completely different training plan. (Ali)

I could claim that, for example, the new goals and vision of school reforms were not aligned with courses in the programs offered by the university in the courses I attended. They were out of date, focused too much on theory and failed to produce practical solutions for the new challenges we faced then in schools. (Abdulrahman)

The documents were aligned with the participants’ responses:

Educational training programs are often carried out by: (a) local educational training centres, which are dispersed in most of the regions of the KSA and provide short-term programs, (b) teachers’ colleges and universities, which offer diplomas, undergraduate, and postgraduates programs, and (c) the Institute of Public Administration which is located in three regions of the KSA and offers general programs that do not aim specifically to offer programs for school principals, but rather are devoted to training people involving general educational leadership and supervision. (Ministry of Education, 2002: 10)

Since 2014, there have been new professional development programs developed through the Tatweer Project in cooperation with the National institute of Education (NIE) in Singapore:

The aim is to train 480 school principals through a two-week program in Singapore. They will then impart what they have learnt to some 3,000 school principals in Saudi Arabia. (Ministry of Education, 2014: 100)
Job-embedded professional development

Job-embedded professional development, the fourth of the identified features, focused on providing school principals with learning opportunities that are grounded in day-to-day school leadership practices, with 12 participants identifying it:

The program I attended was structured in a way that did not help me to connect the content with what I learnt in the real word. I think that is a problem that need more attention. (Abdulrahman)

The training programs should be based on the real work of teachers in schools. (Ahmad)

Each of the 12 participants, who identified this feature variously noted one or more than of the following three issues: relating professional training programs to the routine work of the principal, relating it to the range of the job-embedded learning opportunities for school principals, and the effectiveness of the learning opportunities.

With respect to relating professional training programs to the routine work of the principal, seven participants indicated that most of the professional development opportunities were not directly related to the routine work of the principals and did not help to improve their daily practices:

Most of the professional development programs I attended occurred outside of schools and did not provide applicable practices for me to use in my school. (Abdulrahman)

All the training programs that I attended were not directly related to the usual work that I do in this rural school. It was like a general theoretical program that had nothing to do with school practice. (Amjad)

My school is unique in its needs and challenges and culture. Most workshops or meetings I attended focused on presenting new general things that were not connected to my school’s needs and did not have a real impact on my practices or on school improvement. (Salman)

However, two participants indicated that the professional development provided for principals was directly related to the needs of individual principals and their schools:

Other school principals and I met and discussed our schools’ strengths and weaknesses and the needed changes and support. (Rayed)
I asked each school principal to think critically, identify his needs, the challenges he faced and discuss how to better manage such challenges and how I could support him. (Ammar, D.P.)

In relation to job-embedded learning opportunities for school principals, seven participants identified three kinds of available opportunities: mentoring, principals’ networks, and visiting other principals:

*I had an advisor, who mentored me, worked with me, and provided me with support when needed.* (Hassan)

*Use of mentors, visiting other schools were used.* (Bader)

*Last year, I had three meetings with my advisor who worked as a mentor for me. I could contact him when I needed to.* (Salman)

*A group of primary school principals was established to work as a team and support each other. We met twice and used a ‘WhatsApp’ application to discuss and learn from each other.* (Majed)

With respect to the effectiveness of the work-based learning opportunities, six participants identified that mentoring, principals’ networks, and visiting other principals were more effective than attending a workshops or university coursework:

*I think I received benefit from it [visiting other principals].* (Hassan)

*I visited another expert principal in his school. That was probably one important thing where I felt I was supported in what I was wanting and needing to do.* (Ali)

*It was useful to have friendly networks with another three school principals who understood my needs and supported me when needed. I usually asked for their advice and support when I needed it.* (Ahmad)

The documents did not provide detailed information about the links between the professional development plans and programs on the other hand, or about the daily activities of school principals and improving their practices. It was only mentioned that: “The design of professional development programs should be grounded in practices structured in accordance
with the different needs of individuals, so that they help them to improve their real practices in
schools” (Ministry of Education, 2002:15).

The documents also stressed the importance of offering strong support for school principals
through eight methods, “These are: (a) lecture, (b) mentoring, (c) visiting other schools or
classrooms, (d) workshops, (e) programmed learning, (f) brainstorming, (g) role playing, and (h)
case studies” (Ministry of Education, 2002: 15).

**Addressing the individual professional development needs of school principals.**
Addressing the individual professional development needs of school principals, the fifth of the
identified features, was identified by ten participants:

*The training programs should be designed according to teachers’ needs.* (Anas, D.P.)

*Supervision staff in the training centre should ask teachers about their learning needs before designing the training plan.* (Abdulrahman, D.P.)

Each of the ten respondents who identified this feature indicated one or more of the
following three broad areas of professional development needs for school principals:
contemporary instructional leadership practices, leadership skills, and information and
communication technology.

First, ten participants identified their need to develop contemporary instructional
leadership practices and skills.

*I need to develop my instructional leadership skills.* (Salman)

*There were many new approaches to teaching. I need to know more about them and how I can help teachers to implement them effectively in classrooms.* (Hamad)

*The new curriculum requires new ways of assessment. I need to know more about them because they are not really clear to me or the teachers.* (Fahad)

Six participants indicated their need to develop their school management and leadership
skills, including leading for change, organizational change, preparing a school vision and
building relationships skills:

*I need to learn more how to manage school operations efficiently.* (Hassan)
You know, we are in the middle of big change. So, I need to know more about how to deal with it and how to manage my school and teachers in this challenging time. (Omar)

One of my new roles is to prepare a school plan. I need to learn more about it. I need to learn how to write my school vision. (Abood)

I need to improve my skills in team building, leading teams and how we can work together to improve student performance. (Amjad)

Five participants also identified their need to develop their skills in information and communication technology skills:

I need to learn more about technology. (Hassan)

I am not good in using computers, I need to learn how to use the new Noor system. (Hamad)

I ask teachers to use technology in their teaching. But, to be honest, I am not good on computers, the internet, and technology. I need to know more about it and how to use it in classrooms. (Abdulrahman)

The review of available documents revealed compatibility with participants’ responses. The analysis of the training program plans revealed a lack of training on instructional and transformational leadership skills. However, it showed that they offered three training programs for school principals on ‘the new science and mathematics curriculum’ a focus on three general programs and “Using the Noor system in the school principal’s office”. (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2011: 4)

Summary

To summarize, a total of five common essential features of school principals’ professional development were identified in the 20 transcripts of the participant interviews (Table 6). The five common essential features of school principals’ professional development identified are: designing professional development for school principals as a continuum; driving professional development by the policy reform agenda; ensuring coordination between providers; job-embedded professional development; and addressing the individual professional development needs of school principals.
### Table 6: Features of School Principals’ Professional Development and Related Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergent Features</th>
<th>Related Aspects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designing P.D. for school principals as a continuum</td>
<td>In-service training</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Induction</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pre-service training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Driving P.D. by the reforms policy and agenda</td>
<td>Alignment of policy reforms with the professional development program plans</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Alignment of policy reforms with P.D. program content</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stress level of the job</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensuring coordination between provision</td>
<td>The multiplicity of P.D. providers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consistency between providers in the quality of provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insuring that P.D. is job-embedded</td>
<td>Relating professional learning to the routine work of the principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The range of job-embedded learning opportunities for school principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The utility of the learning opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing the individual P.D. needs of school principals</td>
<td>Instructional leadership training needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technology training needs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership skills training needs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1 Features are listed in decreasing order of importance to the participants.
Chapter Ten: The Changing Nature of Educational Professionalism

Introduction

This chapter documents the findings regarding the changing nature of educational professionalism, Two questions addressed that focus:

(1) How are the new roles and responsibilities of school principals impacting on their professionalism and how are they expressed in measures such as their remuneration, workload, status, self-esteem, and their interest in continuing their job as leaders?
(2) To what extent do those impacts and expressions align with the policy and planning and other key documents?

The analysis revealed two clusters factors influencing participants’ decisions to become principals and to continue their work as leaders: motivating factors and de-motivating factors. The motivating factors identified three different intrinsic motivations: making a contribution to society, intellectual fulfilment, and enjoying challenges. The de-motivating factors identified four components that were seen as having a negative impact on participants’ passion to continue their job as school principals: working conditions, and the lack of support, the reward system and the challenges of managing change. The ordering here of the factors in each case here is in approximate decreasing rank of their combined importance of the participants. Each factor is described in the following sequence: (1) an overview description of the factor; (2) an articulation of its importance to the interviewees, and as evidenced in the documentation reviewed; and (3) a detailed description of the intervention interdicting important aspects of it, and followed by narrative extracts from the interview to illustrate and ground the point made, together with any pertinent observations about it in the documents.

Factors Influencing the Current School Principals’ Decisions to Become Principals and to Continue their Work as Leaders

The two clusters of factors influencing participants’ decisions to become principals and to continue their work as leaders were: motivating factors and de-motivating factors.
Motivating factors

When participants were asked to talk about their reasons for joining the school leadership profession, 14 strongly emphasised intrinsic motivation as the main reason why they chose to become school principals. Three different intrinsic motivations were variously identified by one or more of the 14 participants: making a contribution to society, intellectual fulfilment, and enjoying challenges.

Fourteen participants, firstly, identified the motivation of making a contribution to society:

*I was thinking of those kids, not only myself, and those who would come after I am gone.* (Omar)

*I want to make a difference, this is the main goal of taking this tough job.* (Bader)

*I feel responsible to make a positive contribution to kids and their families. I feel that they are like my kids. If I help them to learn, their future and the future of the community will be much better.* (Hamad)

*I enjoy leading others, teachers and students.* (Majed)

*I want to make a positive impact on kid’s future.* (Bader)

Four participants identified professional fulfilment as a motivator for their being attracted to school leadership positions:

*I just feel satisfied to work as a leader. I can’t see myself in another position a like teacher or a superintendent, which was my last position. I left it to be a school principal.* (Hassan)

*I can work hard as long as I work in a leadership position.* (Majed)

Enjoying challenges was seen as an attractive factor to school leadership positions, as the respondents were required to engage in challenging activities that had meaningful goals, with two participants identifying it:

*I felt that I had an ability to lead others and had to use it positively.* (Ali)

*It’s a challenging job that has a purposeful goals, and I love challenges.* (Bander)
It’s a difficult job. But, someone needs to stand up and accept to take it. For me, it is a big challenge, and I enjoy it. (Bander)

The analysis of the available documents revealed that the identified motivating factors that influence the decision of individuals to apply for and continue their job were not indicated in the policy documents. The only focus was on the need to make a plan to reduce the difficulties in filling the position of school principal: “Due to the shortages of school principals, the Ministry of Education requires the establishment of policies to attract candidates to apply for school leadership” (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2013a: 33).

De-motivating factors
The de-motivating factors focused on three components that were seen as negatively affecting participants’ passion to continue their job as school principals, with 14 participants identifying them: working conditions, the lack of support, the reward system, and the challenge of managing change:

First, fourteen participants saw working conditions of leadership as a discouraging component in continuing their job:

Working conditions are a very big issue discouraging teachers from taking on or remaining in principalship positions. (Basem)

Insufficient resources, support and authority limit me in carrying out my role effectively. (Abood)

With respect to this component, three interrelated issues emerged as being barriers: role overload, excessive time demands, and stress. Thirteen participants, firstly, identified overloading the role of the principal as negatively impacting their ability to complete their assigned jobs properly:

Being a principal of a high school is not easy work. I have too many responsibilities and I have to deal with all of them. (Bader)

My roles have increased. Every day, I spend most of my days responding to administrative tasks and emergencies. (Ali)

The administrative burden on me is too much. It needs to be reduced. (Salman)
The number of the tasks and responsibilities I have to finish each week means they can’t be done properly. Sometimes, all I can do is to finish my tasks and the reports requested by the Ministry of Education. (Amjad)

Ten participants, secondly, reported that the heavy workload required them to work longer hours and had a negative impact on their individual family life:

My work requires very long work hours. Each week, I need to spend more hours to finish some tasks. (Abdulrahman)

It is impossible to finish the work in my working hours. I usually go back school at night to do more work. (Salman)

I need to spend additional hours to accomplish my duties and administrative tasks. I also attend some meetings with the vice principals after school hours. (Bader)

I have no choice, I need to work late in the evening. (Hamad)

Five participants, thirdly, indicated that they experienced high level of stress, as arising from their high level of responsibilities, concern about student progress, and parents’ expectations. That stress, they considered, adversely affected the likelihood of continuing in their jobs:

I feel exhausted. This job creates a lot of stress. (Bader)

I am under serious stress, I need to cope with different people, students from dysfunctional homes, and parents. I also have to cope with frequent changes from the Department of Education. (Abood)

I’m stressed at work. I have to go to school in the evenings and at weekends, supervising extracurricular activities and attending many meetings. (Salman)

The documents recognized the work overload falling on school principals through a reform agenda: “The work load of the school principals should be reduced by increasing the school administrative staff number so that schools can conduct their job effectively” (Tatweer & Ministry of Education, 2014). However, there were no detailed suggestions of how that might be achieved or any recognition of other possible stressors in the work of school principals.
The lack of support, the second of the identified factors, was seen by 12 participants as negatively affecting their interest in continuing their job:

*There is a lack of support for school principals.* (Fahad)

*The Ministry of Education expects me to do more and more, However, their support has been limited.* (Omar)

With respect to this component, three interrelated issues were identified: the lack of involvement in decision making, the failure to provide providing learning opportunities, and supporting their career development.

Nine participants, firstly, identified their lack of involvement in decision making:

*I don’t have the authority that school principals used to have in the past. Their voice used to be heard. They were involved in decision making.* (Fahad)

*I feel ignored by the Department of Education. It seems that my role is to listen and do what the top officers ask me to do. I hate being an implementer. I want to have power and influence as a leader.* (Salman)

*You know, the worst thing that can happen in your work is the feeling of powerlessness and ignorance. This is what’s happened to me as a school principal. I need to be valued at least by having my opinion asked about the way my school could be developed.* (Omar)

The failure to provide valuable learning opportunities for school principals was, secondly, identified by six participants:

*All teachers in my school have the same opportunity I have to continue their masters or doctorate studies.* (Ahmad)

*The criteria to apply for a scholarship never gave me more credit than that of any teachers in the school.* (Abdulrahman)

Four participants, thirdly, indicated the lack school of career development for school principals as a de-motivating factor:

*There are hardly any other promotion opportunities.* (Ali)
I tried to take another role in the Department of Education but lost it. Do you know why? Because I’m a school principal and they need me. My application was rejected. (Salman)

The available documents revealed compatibility with participants’ responses. The Ministry of Education recognised the lack of school principals’ contribution to shaping school reform and the conditions in which they work in schools. Thus, the Tatweer Project established the new model of schooling through which was intended to:

“Enable and increase schools leaders’ participation in school development initiatives” (Ministry of Education, 2014).

In relation to supporting the career development of school principal, the available documents did not provide specific career development options for school principals or a plan to provide opportunities for principals to step up to new opportunities.

The reward system for selected principals, the third of the identified de-motivating factors, was seen as negatively impacted the attractiveness of school leadership position. Eleven participants indicated that their salaries were inappropriate and showed a lack of appreciation of their work:

My salary is low, given the demands on my job. (Hassan)

The principals’ pay system is a problem. It doesn’t reflect my increased responsibilities or differentiate between teachers and school principals. Most teachers’ salaries in my school are better than mine. (Bander)

In relation to this factor, ten participants, firstly identified that their salary scale did not distinguish them from teachers or vice principals, with seniority being the main criterion to determine their salary:

Can you believe that all school teaching staff including me and the vice principals are following the same pay scale? (Amjad)

We don’t have a different pay salary scale. All educators have a similar salary scale. The main criterion to determine the salary level for school teaching and management staff is that of seniority. So, what’s the point of having more workload and responsibilities as long as it is not appreciated? (Basem)
Three participants, secondly, reported concerns that all school principals did not receive any advantage from working in rural schools in difficult locations:

*I worked in a school that was in a rural area. I found that there was nothing interesting that motivated me to work there. At least, I should be given higher salary than school principals working in the city.* (Salman)

*To be fair, the school location should be considered in the salary system. I am not working in a rural school. Principals working in such schools are suffering more than I and they should receive incentives. But, unfortunately, the system is not sufficiently flexible to entertain this idea.* (Bander)

Two participants, thirdly, identified that the salary scale did not distinguish between principals worked in high schools and elementary schools:

*Working in high schools is more difficult than primary schools, most principals don’t prefer high schools as there are no incentives for high school principals. All schools follow the same pay scale.* (Emad)

*I am working in a big high school with lots of students, work and pressure. The system doesn’t differentiate between my job with school principals in elementary schools with 30 students. I think this issue needs to be considered and solved. I find no point in taking this position in this busy high school.* (Baseem)

The review of the documents confirmed the participating principals’ responses. The documents indicated that the basic elements of the compensation structure treat all teachers the same, regardless of their performance, positions, responsibilities, school level or location. This issue had been recently recognised by school reformers who are reviewing teacher compensation career pathway system with the aim of:

*Attracting a high-potential teaching force, retaining a high-performing teaching force and encourage low performers to improve their performance, leveraging the highest performers for continuous improvement, and compensating a high performing teaching force in financially sustainable way* (Ministry of Education: 2014).
However, this new system has not been approved yet by the government due to the centralized control system by which the approval process may take so long.

The fourth demotivating factor, the challenge of change, identified the difficulty of leadership in time of rapid change. It was noted by two participants:

*Some of the Ministry of Education’s policy had been a very big challenge to carry out.*

(Hamad)

*Because of the new systems and initiatives, my job had been difficult to handle.* (Hassan)

The documentary analysis did not provide detailed information about the challenges of change and its influence on school principals’ motivations and effectiveness to manage their schools in time of rapid change, aside from the quotation noted above in the working conditions factor.

**Summary**

To summarize, two clusters of factors influencing participants’ decisions to become a principal and to continue their work as leaders were identified in the 20 transcripts: motivating and de-motivation factors (Table 7). The motivating factors encompassed making a contribution to society, intellectual fulfilment, and enjoying challenges. The de-motivating factors were working conditions, the lack of support, the reward system, and the challenge of managing change.
Table 7: Factors Influencing School Principals’ Decisions to Become Principals and to Continue their Work as Leaders and Related Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Cluster</th>
<th>Related components</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivating factors</td>
<td>Making a contribution to society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intellectual fulfilment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoying challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De-motivating factors</td>
<td>Working conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working conditions of school principals</td>
<td>The lack of support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reward system</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The challenge of managing change</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1 Factors are listed in decreasing order of importance to the participants.
Chapter Eleven: Discussion

Introduction

This chapter discusses and reviews the findings of the study in the context of pertinent published research. It does so in relation to each of the focal points in the conceptual framework to which the study was directed:

(1) The imperative for educational change.
(2) Policy and procedural responses to that imperative.
(3) Understanding of the educational change process.
(4) School principals as educational change managers.
(5) The role of supporting staff development.
(6) The changing nature of educational professionalism.

The discussion is here structured by those focal points. Each section opens with a re-stating of the informing research questions, followed by an overview of the main findings. Those findings are then related to pertinent material identified in the review. This chapter is then concluded by contribution of this study to educational reform theory, addressing how the study has contributed to deepen our standing about the impact of the globalisation of neoliberalism on educational policy reform and implementation in Arabic countries

The Imperative for Educational Change

The two research questions informed the focuses on the imperative for educational reform were:

(1) How do school principals, school leadership consultants, and professional development planners see the imperative for educational change?
(2) To what extent does that understanding align with the policy and planning and other key documents?

Findings indicated a high level of participant understanding of the need for continuing educational change and school improvement and of seven interrelated imperatives for schooling reforms in Saudi Arabia: globalisation, preparing students to be involved and competitive at a global level, improving the quality of student achievement, improving student achievement in
national and international tests, improving the quality of education institutions, promoting active learning styles, and providing high quality education for all students. The findings suggested that the first imperative, globalisation, was seen as being the overarching driver of the other six the imperatives.

The findings indicated that the research participants’ understanding of the reform agenda aligned with the documentation of that agenda in its identification of the overarching importance of globalisation as the driver of change, and of the seven identified factors. The only focus in the documented reform agenda that did not emerge strongly in the participants’ understanding was that of the imperative for providing high quality education for all students. Although this imperative was indicated in many different places in the policy – and policy implementation documents – the majority of participants, including the departmental staff, did not identify it.

These findings appeared to be broadly consistent with those of other studies. Research literature confirms that globalisation, accelerated by developments in ICT, has led to a convergence of education policies by integrating them with the broader global trends, and pushing them to have similar solutions and reform agendas (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002; Castells, 2008; Giddens, 1990; Held et al., 1999; Robinson, 2004). The majority of participants recognised the general impact of globalisation, and the rapid development of information and communication technology on school reforms, focusing on preparing students to deal with economic and social transformations. They emphasized the importance of making efforts to adapt and improve the schooling system to ensure that students develop the knowledge and skills necessary to both handle the emerging challenges and opportunities and participate fully in contemporary global society. In this sense, globalisation was seen as a new development that was having an impact on Saudi education by pushing it to adjust to develop students' ways of understanding and working within their social, educational, and working lives in the globalized context.

The importance of reform managers understanding fully the imperative for change has been identified in previous studies, for example, in Kotter’s (1996) process steps for initiating change and Lewin’s (1947) change model. Kotter (1996) identified the importance of establishing a sense of urgency by getting people to understand and gain perspective of the imperative for change as the first necessary step of effective change. Lewin (1947) argued that
the first important step of effective change was ‘unfreezing’, in which participants recognize the need for change and find new ways of improving their day-to-day practices.

The identified six imperatives for schooling reform that were being driven by globalisation seem also to be consistent with Carnoy and and Rhoten’s (2002) analysis of how education is being shaped by globalisation, particularly economic globalisation, through three types of drivers: competition, equity, and finance. Drawing on the work of the Organisation for Economic and Development (OECD) (2015), the six imperatives identified by the participants may be classified into those three categories (Figure 2): preparing students for the future, enhancing quality in educational institutions, and achieving equity, facilitating their concurrency with the findings of other published research. Firstly, preparing students for the future involves three imperatives: preparing students to be involved and competitive at a global level, improving students’ achievement in national and international tests, and improving the quality of students’ achievement. Secondly, enhancing quality in educational institutions encompasses two imperatives: improving the quality of education institutions and promoting active learning styles. Finally achieving equity includes the imperative of providing high quality education for all students.

Figure 2: The Emergent Imperatives for Schooling Reform in Saudi Arabia
Using this three-part structure, the overarching imperative to prepare students for the future includes three of the imperatives identified in the study: preparing students to be involved and competitive at a global level, improving the quality of students’ achievement, and improving student achievement in national and international tests. The overarching imperative to enhance quality in educational institutions includes two of the imperatives identified in the study: improving the quality of educational institutions and promoting active learning styles to strengthen the capacity of schooling to positively influence student achievement. The overarching imperative to achieve equity includes providing high quality education for all students. This imperative, though, was only recognised by three school principals, all of whom had been working in rural areas, where parents were less educated and from low-income families.

**Policy and Procedural Responses to the Imperative for Educational Change**

The focus on policy and procedural responses examined what participants saw as the nature of policy initiatives and the interventions that were being undertaken by the government in responding to the seven imperatives for educational change. The two research questions informing this section were:

(1) What are the policy and procedural responses on the part of school leadership consultants and professional development planners?

(2) To what extent do those responses align with the policy and planning and other key documents?

The findings in relation to the question of how the Saudi Government has responded to the imperatives for educational change indicated the participants’ recognition of the government’s interest in improving schooling by increasing spending on public education and adopting a comprehensive reform strategy directed and guided by the Tatweer Project. The findings also pointed to the participants’ understanding of five broad interventions: establishing the Tatweer Project, promoting and enabling the transformation of teaching to embrace contemporary pedagogical approaches, establishing the Mathematics and Science Comprehensive Curriculum Development Project, developing assessment and accountability systems, and establishing a framework for decentralised local school finance and governance. The findings suggested the
limited identification of interventions responding to the imperative for providing high quality education for all student.

The findings from the question of what extent participants’ understanding aligned with the policy and planning and other key documents, showed broad agreement with the ways in which the government interventions and the related projects and responses to the imperatives for educational change have been captured in reform policy and planning and key documents. However, a small number of identified projects in the documented reform agenda in relation to establishing the Mathematics and Science Comprehensive Curriculum Development Project initiative and achieving equity, were not identified by participants.

Six broad interventions and fourteen related projects were identified. The importance of establishing the Tatweer Project for Developing Education, the first of the identified interventions, was seen as enhancing quality in educational institutions and insuring that the education system is steered more effectively. Promoting and enabling the transformation of teaching to embrace contemporary pedagogical approaches, the second of the identified interventions, included four major projects: the General Project for Curricular Development, the Developing Curriculum Textbooks Project, the Teaching Strategies Development Project, and the Professional Development for Educators Project. Collectively, these four projects were seen as aiming to enhance teaching and learning practices by applying a learner centred pedagogy and placing considerable emphasis on student self-directed learning, in which students are expected to take an active role in their own learning activities and to work collaboratively in teams.

The study indicated that more focus had been placed on the mathematics and science curriculum, the third of the identified interventions, in which three related projects were identified: the Mathematics and Science Comprehensive Curriculum Development Project, the Contemporary Learning Strategies for Teaching Mathematics and Science Project, and the Professional Development for Mathematics and Science Project, designed to support primary and high schools teachers. Introducing technology into schools, the fourth of the identified interventions was seen as aiming to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of educational administration. However, the study indicated a lack of use and integration of technology in day-to-day teacher practices in classrooms to improve student learning. Developing assessment and accountability system and establishing a framework for decentralised local finance and
governance, the fifth and sixth of the identified interventions, were seen as being aimed at measuring and assessing the performance of the students, teachers, school principals and educational administration. Major projects identified included both internal school evaluation (continuous assessment for primary students to assess their progress, and school self-evaluation), and external school evaluation (school inspections, the General Aptitude Test (GAT) and the Educational Attainment Test for Science and Social Science colleges).

The findings here appeared to be generally compatible with those of other studies. The general notion of the Tatweer Project is consistent with Harris’s (2010a & 2010b), Elmore’s (2004) and Fullan’s (2009a & 2009b) theories of school reforms, which argued the need for and the effect of system level reform. The studies confirmed that, under the right conditions, significant and rapid progress could be made in enhancing student learning. Promoting and enabling the transformation of teaching to embrace contemporary pedagogical approaches and its related four strategic improvement initiatives has been noted in the literature as being appropriate for creating learning strategies that can strengthen the conditions in which teaching and learning processes occur by addressing key components such as instruction, curriculum, and resources available to support student learning (Hopkins, 2003; Pont, 2014; Stoll, Fink, & Earl, 2003; Watkins, 2010). The focus on the mathematics and science curriculum, the third of the identified interventions, is compatible with the international reforms being undertaken worldwide (Organisation for Economic and Development (OECD), 2013, 2015) which confirmed the importance of the increased demand for certain kinds of skills, especially languages, mathematics, reasoning, and scientific logic. Introducing technology into schooling was also recognised as an important intervention in a number of education systems around the world, although there was a lack of evidence of any positive impact of the current practices and policies of investment in technology on the student learning and classroom practice. Developing assessment and accountability systems, and establishing a framework for decentralised local school finance and governance, have also been identified as important reform interventions being undertaken in many countries, although they have been named differently in different countries such as ‘self-managing schools’ (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992), ‘site-based management’ (Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991), and ‘local management of schools’ (Alsbury, 2008; Land, 2002).
Understanding Educational Change

This section discusses and reviews the findings of the participants’ perspective of the process on managing change in the Saudi schooling system and its effectiveness in facilitating successful change in school practice. Two research questions addressed the focus:

(1) How do school principals, school leadership consultants, and the professional developers understand changes with respect to school principals’ roles and responsibilities?
(2) To what extent does that understanding align with the policy and planning and other key documents?

The findings indicated the high level of the participants’ understandings of the importance of building an implementation system and the mechanisms to bring about the necessary changes in daily school practices and of the seven factors strongly affecting the success of schooling reform strategies: vision and goals, communication, capacity building for improvement, engagement, collective collaboration, pressures of accountability, and coherence and alignment. The findings suggested that a lack of attention had been given to the identified seven factors and the required mechanisms to ensure that they were well implemented.

The participants in general agreed that the seven factors had the potential to create lasting improvement in schools’ performance and student outcomes, and those indicated in the policy and planning documents. However, the findings indicated that the seven factors were only superficially indicated in the policy and planning documents, without giving clear and detailed information of the ways in which they were to be put in place in day-to-day school practices.

The general lack of clarity and vision and the large number and generality of the goals, the first of the identified factors, were seen as negatively impacting on school improvement and as leading to dispersion of effort and frustration. The importance of communication, the second of the identified factors, was seen as being based on the observed lack of an interactive and sustained two-way communication between the Ministry of Education, the Department of Education and schools to build common understanding about school reform strategy and its implementation. The importance of capacity building, the third of the identified factors, indicated that professional development for educators, including teachers and school principals, was seen as inadequate and was not focused on providing them with the required knowledge and skills to
understand and effectively implement the new initiatives. The importance of engagement, the fourth of the identified factors, was seen as being compromised by the observed, generally limited, chances of engaging school principals in the development and implementation of school reform, which was seen as having a negative impact on building their common understanding of, trust and commitment to the reform efforts. The importance of collective collaboration, the fifth of the identified factors, was identified on the basis of the observed cooperation and collaboration between and among educators, schools and the Department of Education. However, the findings of the study indicated that a collaborative culture was seen as having limited impact, as it focused on building relationships and friendships among and between educators and schools, rather than supporting learning from each other. The importance of pressures of accountability, the sixth of the identified factors, was based on the observed divergent views of participants. It was seen by school principals as focusing on assessment and tests and how to pass the examinations, rather than caring about student learning, and accordingly, it created a culture of fear and frustration. However, the departmental staff confirmed the importance of using standards, assessment, reward and punishment to push schools to make the necessary efforts to improve student outcomes. The importance of coherence and alignment, the seventh of the identified factors, was based on the observed lack of coordination policies and processes among the large number of projects and initiatives, and across the Ministry of Education, the Department of Education, cluster consultants, supervisors, principals and teachers, which was viewed as negatively impacting school reform effectiveness and creating overload and confusion for school principals and teachers. The findings of the study also indicated that the lack of coordination and alignment also included ineffective use of money and technology in supporting teaching and student learning, and incompatibility between the new curriculum and school infrastructures.

The findings here appeared to be generally consistent with those of other studies. Research literature confirmed the importance of establishing and embedding an inspiring vision and a small number of goals for improvement as the first step on a successful path of school improvement (Fullan, 2014a; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Levin & Fullan, 2008). In line with participants’ recognition of the importance of communicating in school reform, the findings from other international studies identified communication as an essential element of school reform. This is not only a matter of telling staff what is happening and why, but also a matter of hearing
from people in order to understand how they see their work, the school, and their place in it (Fullan, 2014a; Levin & Fullan, 2008).

Building capacity for school principals and teachers has been noted in the literature as an essential element of effective school improvement (Barber & Mourshed, 2009; Elmore, 2004; Fullan, 2011; Stannard & Huxford, 2007). The international evidence confirmed the necessity of investing individually and collectively in educators’ capacity building and providing them with required knowledge and skills to do better. Collaboration among educators and across schools was also been identified in the literature as being a vital element of successful reform (Fullan 2014a; Hargreaves, Lieberman, Fullan, & Hopkins, 2010; Levin, 2008). Research evidence from the highest ranked educational systems in the world showed that these systems had invested strongly in building social capital, through which government authorities, school districts, and schools could work together and share their knowledge and experience. Involving school principals and teachers in both the development and the implementation of education reform, the third identified dimension, appeared to be compatible with number of international studies, for example, those of Levin and Fullan (2008) and Barber (2007), which suggested the necessity for involving all people at all levels in establishing the reform purpose and the best strategies to achieve it, which can help to build coalition around reform goals and its strategies.

The pressures of accountability on school principals have also been noted in the literature as an element affecting the success of schooling reform. Levin’s (2008) and Fullan’s (2014a, 2011, 2010) studies confirmed the need for accountability in order to reassure the public that the system is in good hands and is progressing well. Accountability also helps implementers know how well they are doing, while providing feedback and help to do even better. However, those authors suggested that accountability must be accompanied by investing in capacity building, so that educators are able to meet the goals and build trust, so that educators feel safe to be open and share their mistakes and weaknesses. Establishing system coherence was also identified in the literature. For example, Fullan’s (2014a) theory of action to design strategies that get results across the whole school system confirmed the importance of achieving system coherence, focusing on strengthening and building the mechanisms that ensure the optimal coordination of reform goals, efforts and outcomes. Hargreaves and Fullan (2014a) argued that many reform efforts failed because of the presence of many uncoordinated, disconnected, episodic, piecemeal
projects with superficial implementations that ultimately created fragmentation, incoherence and confusion.

School Principals as Educational Change Managers
The two research questions informing the focus on the school principals’ roles and responsibilities as educational change managers were:

(1) What do school principals understand to be their roles and responsibilities in the educational reform process?
(2) To what extent does that understanding align with the policy and planning and other key documents?

The findings indicated participants’ generally high level of understanding of the importance of developing a framework that defines and describes the central practices for effective school leadership. The findings also pointed to the participants’ understanding of six domains of roles and responsibilities in their day-to-day practices as leaders of educational change: establishing school goals and expectations; managing the teaching and learning process; managing the school operational activities; building an effective team among teachers and school staff; supporting teacher and other staff professional development; and collaborating with families, the community, and other schools. The findings also indicated that the fact that school principals lack the time and capacity to engage in those activities had a large and educationally significant negative effect on student outcomes.

The findings indicated a moderate level of alignment between the six domains and the planning and other key documents. It indicated that the general roles and responsibilities identified in the study had been captured in the description of school principals’ roles and tasks and the new School Principal Authorities documents. However, the findings indicated a failing of the current school principals’ tasks booklet to achieve school reform goals and improve student outcomes. Establishing school goals and expectations, the first of the identified responsibilities, focused on setting, articulating, and developing an annual school plan by the school principal, teachers and other school staff. It included two sets of practices: developing the vision by all school staff, and developing an implementation plan to achieve the vision.
The second of the identified responsibilities, that of managing the teaching and learning process, included three interrelated practices: overseeing and coordinating the instructional program, classroom observation and providing subsequent feedback, and monitoring student progress. Although there were high levels of participant recognition of the importance of managing teaching and learning practices, the study identified a lack of time and capacity for principals to engage in managing the teaching and learning process.

Managing the school operational activities, the third of the identified responsibilities, encompassed three activities: managing financial and human resources, the routines of school life and unexpected internal and external challenges that the school faces. School principals’ working hours were seen as being full of operational, routine activities and unexpected distractions that had less impact on student outcomes. School principals were reported as being asked to fulfil some school operational activities that required expertise that some of them did not have.

Building an effective team, the fourth of the identified responsibilities, included three practices: giving teachers real opportunities to share in developing and managing the school plan, having each member of the school feel responsible for the school as a whole, and sharing all important information with school teachers and all other support staff as widely as possible. The study indicated that fewer than half of the participants identified this responsibility through, for example, putting teachers in groups and building relationships among teachers and school staff.

Supporting teacher and other staff professional development, the fifth of the identified responsibilities, also included three sets of practices: identifying the training needs for teachers and school staff, providing in-service professional development programs for school staff, and promoting learning from each other in the school. The majority of participants reported focusing only on providing opportunities for identifying training needs and providing external training programs for teacher development, although such programs were seen as having limited effect. Conversely, the role of school principals in promoting teachers’ learning from each other in their work was seen as having a large and educationally significant effect on student outcomes.

Collaboration with families, community, and other schools, the sixth of the identified responsibilities, was seen as contributing to improving problem solving through intensified
processes of interaction, communication and collective learning. The findings of the study showed only limited engagement of school principals in collaborating with families, community, and other schools, as the principals were too busy to accomplish such tasks in their schools.

The findings here appeared to be generally compatible with those of other studies. Establishing school goals and expectations, the first of the identified responsibilities, and its related practices appeared to be consistent with most theories of school leadership, for example, instructional and transformational leadership theories. Hallinger, Wang, and Chen (2013) and Sun, and Leithwood (2015) identified setting goals, framing goals, or creating a shared vision as a key function in leadership. Evidence about the central role of establishing school goals was also found by Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd’s (2009) and Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe’s (2008) reviews of 31 studies linking leadership to student learning, which found that setting and communicating goals for teachers and students was one of the most obvious tasks of leadership reported by all studies, which had moderate and educationally significant effects on student learning.

Managing the teaching and learning process, the second of the identified responsibilities, appeared to be consistent with research on instructional leadership. Hallinger (2005), Hallinger and Heck (1999) and Heck, Larsen, and Marcoulides (1990) identified focusing on managing classroom practices as the core of effective leadership. They found that principals from higher performing schools spent more time on managing or coordinating the curriculum with their teaching staff than did leaders in similar lower performing schools.

Managing the school operational activities and its related three practices, the third of the identified responsibilities of school principals, had also been noted in the literature, for example, by Handford and Leithwood (2013), who argued that school structures, policies, routines and standard operating procedures are all part of school principals’ tasks. The findings of Robinson (2007) suggested that the strategic resourcing role of school principals had a small indirect impact on student outcomes. However, the findings of the study appeared to be aligned with those from other studies, for example, that by Levin (2008), who found that school principals spent more time in operational, routine and urgent tasks and put aside the roles that are necessary to improve student learning outcomes and school culture.
Building an effective team, the fourth of the identified responsibilities, and its related three activities have also been identified in transformational leadership studies, for example by Fullan (2014b), Leithwood and Jantzi (2005), Leithwood and Seashore-Louis (2011), and Levin (2008), who argued that building a strong team in which people share a commitment to common goals, support one another in achieving those goals, and work together is a key common role among effective school principals.

Supporting teacher and other staff professional development, the fifth of the identified responsibilities, and its related three practices have also been identified in the literature, for example by Fullan (2014b), Hopkins and Higham (2007); and Sun and Leithwood (2015), who argued that the promotion of, and participation in, teacher learning and development practices by school principals is a vital role that is strongly associated with improved student outcomes. However, the findings of the study indicated that the effectiveness of this practise is limited by their focusing on identifying teachers’ needs and providing external professional development for individual teachers. Elmore (2000) and Cole (2005) made a similar observation and argued that the problem is the absence of learning to do the right thing in the schools where teachers work, and argued that the main role of school principals is to build a new culture in which teachers work together and learn from each other to improve student learning.

Collaboration with families, community, and other schools, the sixth of the identified roles of school principals, is compatible with those of other studies. Hopkins et al. (2008), and Leithwood and Seashore-Louis (2011) emphasised the role of school principals in developing their schools as personal and professional learning communities, with relationships built across and beyond each school to provide a range of learning experiences and professional development opportunities. Sun and Leithwood (2015) identified three important practices that positively impact on collaboration: building trusting relationships with and among staff, students and parents; building productive relationships with families and communities; and connecting the school to its wider environment. However, the findings of the study indicated that most principals preferred to focus on school programs, rather than working outside, as their available time was very limited.
Development of Capacity for Effective School Principalship in the Reform Process

The focus on the role of supporting staff development examined what participants saw as the nature and the options of their professional development in supporting reform agenda. Two research questions addressed that focus:

(1) In what professional development activities do school principals engage in support of their reform leadership?
(2) To what extent do those activities align with the policy and planning and other key documents?

The findings indicated five key features of effective school principal professional development: designing professional development for school principals as a continuum, driving professional development by the policy reform agenda, ensuring coordination between providers, job-embedded professional development, and addressing the individual professional development needs of school principals. The findings also indicated that the provision of induction and in-service development programs, which was managed by three different providers, was seen as fragmented, incoherent, ungrounded in real practice, and not aligned with school reform goals and agenda.

General agreement was evident between the professional development being sought by school principals and that indicated in the policy and planning documents: that the professional development should be planned and continuous, included a concern at the absence of pre-service training programs; the value of the induction program in providing participants with a variety of support arrangements for taking up the position and initial steps into school leadership; and the widespread support for in-service training programs across participants’ responses.

The importance of driving professional development by the policy reform agenda, the second of the identified features, indicated that many professional development program plans and content were seen as fragmented, incoherent, and not aligned with school change goals and agenda.
Ensuring coordination between providers, the third of the identified features, focused on the provision of preparatory, induction and development programs being managed by three institutions: universities, the Ministry of Education, and the training centres for professional development at district level. Each of these providers was seen as lacking a coherent framework for coordinating the planning and the implementation of the training programs to ensure the achievement of the school improvement goals and to improve student learning.

The importance of job-embedded learning opportunities for school principals, the fourth of the identified features of effective professional development was seen as being based on the observed lack of such opportunities limiting the effectiveness of leadership professional development. The findings of the study indicated that most of the existing training programs were seen as being not directly related to the routine work and as not helping them to improve their daily practices. However, the findings of the study indicated the value of some professional development opportunities that provided more opportunities to actively reflect on leadership experience, fostering peer networking and field based learning.

Addressing the individual needs of school principals, the fifth of the identified features of effective professional development, indicated that most of the training programs were viewed as outdated, and inadequate to the challenges of managing schools in meeting the learning needs of school principals. It also identified three broad areas of professional development which need to be addressed: instructional leadership skills, leadership skills, and technology.

The findings here appeared to be generally compatible with those of other studies. Designing professional development for school principals as a continuum, the first of the identified features of effective school principal professional development, was consistent with other international research evidence, for example, that from Peterson and Barnett (2005), who argued that school leaders’ professional development activities should be ongoing through different stages, including, pre-service training, induction, and in-service training (Peterson and Barnett, 2005). Consistent with the findings of the study that showed the lack of pre-service training programs for school principals, the findings of Peterson and Barnett’s (2005) study in the US indicated that few professional development programs provided a cumulative learning pathway from pre-service preparation throughout a principal’s career.
Providing professional development that is driven by the policy reform agenda, the second of the identified features of effective professional development, has been noted in the literature as an important feature that many traditional professional development programs have lacked (Peterson and Barnett, 2005). Case studies of principals’ professional development programs in the US indicated that all training programs categorized as exemplary shared the characteristic of providing a comprehensive and coherent curriculum aligned with state and professional standards (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

The importance of ensuring the coordination of professional development between providers, the third of the identified features of effective professional development, aligned with the findings of other studies, for example, those reported by Davis, et al. (2005) and the Organisation for Economic and Development (OECD) (2008), which indicated that, although individual providers may offer different advantages in meeting the critical development needs of school principals, many lacked the coordination framework to develop a comprehensive package of training programs that could ensure the achievement of the school improvement goals and improve student learning.

Leveraging job-embedded learning opportunities for school principals, the fourth of the identified features of effective professional development, has also been identified in other international studies. Many research studies have suggested that providing experience in a real context is a key feature of effective professional training (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Davis et al., 2005). The findings of Darling-Hammond et al.’s (2007) study of exemplary training programs suggested that they were all grounded in practices sharing the following elements: analysis of classroom practices, supervision and professional development using on-the-job observation, and collegial learning networks, study groups and mentoring or peer coaching offering communities of practice and ongoing sources of support.

The importance of addressing the individual needs of school principals, the fifth of the identified features of effective professional development for school principals, aligned with other research findings, for example, those of Kelly, Chalk, Bonomo, Parachini, Jackson, and Cecchine (2004) and Knapp et al. (2003), which criticised training programs for their lack of alignment between program content and candidate needs and suggested that program content should incorporate learning to allow school leaders to better promote successful teaching and learning,
including knowledge of instruction, organizational development, change management, leadership skills, and the use of instructional technologies.

**The Changing Nature of Educational Professionalism**

The focus on the changing nature of educational professionalism examined what participants saw as the factors influencing the attractiveness of school principalship as a profession. Two research questions addressed that focus:

1. How are the new roles and responsibilities of school principals impacting on their professionalism, and how are they expressed in measures such as their remuneration, workload, status, self-esteem, and their interest in continuing their job as leaders?
2. To what extent do those impacts and expressions align with the policy and planning and other key documents?

The findings indicated two main clusters of factors influencing participants’ decision to become principals and to continue their work as leaders: motivating factors and de-motivating factors. The findings emphasised that school principals were primarily motivated by three intrinsic motivational factors: making a contribution to society, intellectual fulfilment, and enjoying challenges. The findings also showed four extrinsic de-motivating factors that were viewed as a barriers to applying for or continuing in a principalship position: working conditions, the lack of support, the reward system and the pressures of the reform agenda.

There was general agreement between those de-motivating factors and the concerns indicated in the policy and planning documents, which emphasised the need to improve the working conditions of school principals, their career development planning and their reward system. The working conditions of school principals, such as high role overload, long working hours, and high stress levels of the job, were identified as barriers to continuing in a principalship position.

The lack of continued improvement, the second of the identified de-motivating factors, encompassed three de-motivational components: the lack of involving school principals in decision making, limited learning opportunities, and weak support for their career development. Those components were seen as making school principalship less attractive as a career. The reward system was also seen as a strong discourager for school principals to continue their work.
as school leaders. School principals reported that the salary scale did not distinguished between teachers and principals, school level and location. The pressures arising from the constant system reform was also seen as a discouraging factor in their continuing the role.

The findings of the study appear to be generally compatible with those of other studies. The intrinsic motivating factors - making a contribution to society, intellectual fulfilment, and enjoying challenges - have been found in other research studies in, for example, Canada, the United States, Ireland, and Australia, to be strong attractors to school leadership positions (Beaudin, 2002; Begley, 1995). The four de-motivating factors identified in the study have also been noticed in other research studies.

The working conditions, the first of the identified de-motivating factors, such as role overload, and the long working hours required by principalship are aligned with the Beaudin (2002), Lacey (2003) and James and Whiting (1998) findings that the long working hours required by principalship and role overload were important factors discouraging potential candidates, created high levels of stress and negative impacts on the individual’s family.

The lack of support, the second of the identified de-motivating factors, and its three related issues – the lack of involving school principals in policy formation and decision making, providing learning opportunities for them, and supporting their career development – are compatible with the findings of international research studies. The work of Gronn and Rawlings-Sanaei (2003), Fullan (2014b), Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) and the Organisation for Economic and Development (OECD) (2008) all found that any lack of leaders’ direct involvement in recruiting and dismissing teachers, designing, planning and implementing school reform, opportunity for capacity building or lack of career prospects for promotion were important factors that had a negative impact on school principals’ willingness to join and continue in school leadership positions.

The findings in relation to the reward system, the third of the identified de-motivating factors, also align with the findings of Whitaker (2003), Lacey, (2003), and Ferrandino and Tirozzi, (2000) that insufficient income recognition was a key factor discouraging potential applicants to apply for school principalship positions. Salary scale and incentive structures that do not differentiate between teachers and principals, school level and location have also been
reported in some OECD countries to be an important reason why so few teachers have been seeking principals positions (Organisation for Economic and Development (OECD), 2008). The fourth de-motivating factor identified in the study – that of the pressure of constant change – has been identified (Beer et al., 1990; Egan, 1990; Fullan 2014a). Fullan (2014a) for example, warned about the inevitable difficulties of continuous changes, where an initial decline in productivity and organizational self-confidence may be experienced and people becoming discouraged and frustrated.

**Contribution of the Study to Educational Reform Theory**

What, then, might be seen as the outstanding contribution of this study to educational reform theory? I suggest that it would be the study’s deepening of our standing about the impact of the globalisation of neoliberalism on educational policy reform and implementation in Arabic countries, especially in the following ways.

First, the study identified school principals as the pivotal change agents of school reform improvement processes. School principals were identified as being central to the task of building schools that enhance student learning, develop and retain effective teachers, and create a learning culture within the school.

Second, the study found that school principals, as the pivotal change agents, exhibited a high degree of understanding of the imperative for educational reform as being driven by overarching globalisation of neoliberalism. The school principals saw that driver as constituting the need to: (1) prepare students to be involved and competitive at a global level; (2) improve the quality of student achievement; (3) improve student achievement in national and international tests; (4) improve the quality of education institutions; (5) promote active learning styles, and (6) provide high quality education for all students.

Third, the study identified the importance of changing daily school practices through building a system of strategies to implement policy reform responding to those needs. Participating school principals identified seven factors strongly affecting the success of schooling reform strategies in producing lasting improvement in schools performance and student outcomes: (1) establishing and embedding an inspiring vision and a manageably small number of improvement goals; (2) creating and sustaining effective communication between and among the
key players in the reform process – the Ministry of Education, the Department of Education, the cluster consultants, supervisors, principals, and teachers – to build a common understanding about school reform strategies and the ways in which they are to be implemented; (3) building effective collaboration between and among those key players; (4) establishing systematic and coordinated strategies across those key players (5) investing in educators’ capacity building, both individually and collectively; (6) involving school principals and teachers in the development and implementation of educational reform strategies; and (7) establishing an accountability system that motivates educators to engage constructively with the reform strategies;

Fourth, the study identified the transformation of the traditional role of school principals and senior managers into the role of leaders of radical change. As the expectations for schools and school leaders have changed and intensified, participating school principals pointed to six crucial domains of roles and responsibilities in their day-to-day practices as leaders of educational change: (1) establishing appropriate school goals and expectations; (2) leading and managing the reform of teaching and learning processes; (3) managing the school operational activities; (4) building teachers and school staff into an effective team oriented to achieving change; (5) supporting needed teacher and other staff professional development; and (6) collaborating with families, the community, and other schools in the reform processes.

Fifth, the study identified the importance of the professional development in enhancing the capacity of school principal to support the implementation of the reform agenda. Participating school principals pointed to the importance of transforming the traditional approaches to and the curriculum of professional development training programs into those that meet the professional contemporary needs of school principals as leading change agents of major school reform. They identified five features of effective professional development for school principals: (1) designing professional development as a continuum that progresses through different stages, including pre-service training, induction, and in-service training; (2) driving professional development by the policy reform agenda; (3) ensuring the co-ordination of professional development between providers to achieve the school improvement student learning goals; (4) providing developmental experience in real contexts, using on-the-job observation, collegial learning networks, study groups, mentoring or peer coaching, ongoing sources of support, and developing strong
communities of practice; and (5) addressing the individual professional needs of school principals as the lead change agents.

And sixth, the study identified the crucial importance of addressing the effects of the neoliberal deprofessionalisation of school principals and its undermining of their willingness and capacity to take on and successfully follow through the change leadership. Significant negative effects were identified as arising from diminished working conditions, lack of system support and involvement, and inappropriate salary scales and incentive structures. The diminished working conditions – including excessively long working hours and role overload, creating high levels of stress and negative impacts on the individual’s family – were viewed as an important factor in discouraging potential candidates or principahip appointments. The lack of involvement of school principals in policy formation and decision making, limited and inappropriate providing professional development opportunities, lack of support for their career development, and lack of career prospects for promotion, were important factors identified as negatively impacting on school principals’ willingness to take up and continue in school leadership positions. The salary scale and incentive structures that failed to differentiate between teachers and principals, school levels, or school locations also emerged as important factors discouraging most principals to take up and successfully follow through on the change leadership.

These contributions to educational reform theory, of course, are grounded in the experience of school principals in Saudi Arabia. While they are of significance in that context, they may also be taken as suggesting possibilities in other Arabic countries, and possibly more broadly in other educational jurisdictions, where policies of rapid education development in response to globalising neoliberalism are being attempted or contemplated.
Chapter Twelve: Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter opens with an overview of the study including a summary of the study purpose, research approach and the procedures undertaken in the study. A presentation of the main findings and conclusions follows. From those research findings are drawn a number of recommendations for policy practice and further research.

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the ways in which globalising pressures for educational reform were perceived and responded to by school principals in the Saudi educational system, with a view to informing educational policy and practice in responding to those pressures. That purpose was developed from a review of the literature, which showed a lack of knowledge about the impact of contemporary school reform initiatives on the leading change agents – school principals – especially in traditional Arabic countries. An examination of the available limited evidence on the impact of reform agenda in Saudi Arabia also showed a lack of progress and improvement in education, and identified its failure to meet the standards of other countries at similar income levels.

The review of literature also identified key focal points that influence, and are influenced by, the implementation of educational reforms: the imperative for educational change, policy and procedural responses to that imperative, understanding of the educational change process, school principals as educational change managers, the role of supporting staff development, and the changing nature of educational professionalism. The major implications from the literature review for this study were:

(1) The need for research into the process of educational reform in Saudi Arabia.
(2) The importance of globalisation in determining the imperative for, and direction of, educational reform, and hence the importance of research into the implementation of educational reform, focusing on the extent to which key participants are aware of the importance of that imperative.
(3) The value of studying the experience of key implementers of policy reform initiatives: school principals in the case of Saudi Arabia.
(4) The importance of research into the nature of professionalism of school principalship and the extent to which educational reform initiatives have impacted on the attractiveness of school leadership as a profession.

(5) The importance of studying the nature of, and opportunities for, the professional development of school principals in enhancing their capabilities required to support the implementation of the reform agenda.

From those focal points and implications, a conceptual framework to structure and guide the design and conduct of the study through the methodology was developed. Central to the conceptual framework was the lived experience of school principals as change managers and leaders of school reform. Twelve research questions were developed from the framework under the six focal points identified in the conceptual framework. Those research questions were used to structure the analysis of the data and the presentation of the findings.

The study was conceptualised from within a constructivist philosophical orientation that guided the selection of the methodology and the conduct of the research. A case study approach was also adopted as a way of focusing the interpretive nature of the research. The study was regarded as a case study, to the extent that the research project was conducted within just one national educational jurisdiction, that of Saudi Arabia. More specific research procedures were used to construct and interpret the meaning of school principals’ experiences of educational reform initiatives in Saudi Arabia. These experiences are explored and analysed by obtaining detailed information from 20 participants through semi-structured interviews, in conjunction with official documents relevant to the research topic being investigated. Participants in the study were 15 school principals representing different school levels locations and types. Two school leadership supervisors and three professional development supervisors were also included. Documents were obtained from each participant and from the Department of Leadership, and the Department of Professional Development. The data analysis was guided by IPA analytic procedures.

The Conclusions Arising from the Research Findings

The conclusions drawn from the findings of the study are structured here by the focal points in the conceptual framework: the imperative for educational change, policy and procedural responses to that imperative, understanding the educational change process, school principals as
educational change managers, the role of supporting staff development, and the changing nature of educational professionalism.

**The imperative for educational change**

(1) The generally high degree of understanding of the imperatives by the participants and the strong alignment that understanding with the points made in the policy and policy implementation documents suggests the effectiveness of leadership education and learning on the part of the principals in this respect.

(2) However, the very limited recognition by participants of the equity imperative in the agenda suggests the importance of a strong professional development plan to ensure change leaders’ consciousness of, and commitment to, this reform aim.

(3) With that singular qualification, the high degree of participant understanding of the need for continuing change and school improvement suggests a good foundation for the leadership of school reform that serves to direct, manage and shape schooling reform.

**Policy and procedural responses by the Saudi Government in response to the imperative for educational change**

(1) The magnitude and importance of the imperatives for educational change were seen as being appropriately reflected in the extent and depth of the government’s commitment to educational reform.

(2) The generally high level of understanding by the principals of the governments’ reform initiatives should also serve as a strong foundation to successful reform.

(3) However, the participants’ failure to understand and implement the integration of technology in classrooms to improve student learning suggests the importance of professional development to improve performance in this regard.

**Understanding educational change**

(1) The lack of a coherent policy implementation framework coordinating the implementation of the different reform initiatives and their supporting programs of professional development impacted negatively on the opportunity to successful implement the policy reforms.
Although the accountability framework associated with the reform implementation was seen as necessary by the departmental officers, it was experienced by the principals as disturbing the overall focus of the reform and as limiting their potential to lead innovative change in response to reform.

**School principals’ roles and responsibilities as educational change managers**

(1) The competing school management demand of school principals meant that they devoted very little time to those leadership tasks, compromising their effectiveness as change managers.

(2) The key domains of effective school leadership for change emerged as: establishing school goals and expectations; managing the teaching and learning process; managing the school operational activities; building an effective team among teachers and school staff; supporting teacher and other staff professional development; and collaborating with families, community, and other schools.

**Professional development activities for school principals**

(1) Traditional approaches to the provision and the content of the training programs were seen as generally inadequate in meeting the professional needs of school principals, as leading change agents of major school reform.

(2) Key features of high quality professional development for school principals as leaders of school reform were identified as: designing professional development as a continuum; driving professional development by the policy reforms agenda; close coordination of professional development provision across all providers; job-embedded professional development; and addressing the individual professional development needs of school principals.

**The changing nature of educational professionalism**

(1) The two main clusters of factors influencing school principals’ decisions to apply for and continue their work as leaders were those of motivating and de-motivating factors, the motivating factors being making a contribution to society, intellectual fulfilment, and
enjoying challenges, and the de-motivating factors being working conditions, the lack of support, the reward system, and the pressures of constant reform.

(2) The extrinsic de-motivating factors were seen as negatively impacting the intrinsic motivational factors.

**Recommendations for Practice and Further Research**

The study pointed to a number of the recommendations for policy reform practices. Firstly, the study pointed to the importance of establishing an implementation strategy, aiming to provide equal good quality education for all students, raise educators’ consciousness of and commitment to the strategy and respond to different student needs and those of specific populations, such as those from low socio-economic backgrounds. Secondly, the study suggested the importance of developing a clear and coherent policy framework to direct school reform and to coordinate the implementation of different reform initiatives and their supporting programs. Thirdly, the importance of developing a coherent school principalship framework was suggested. This framework should be grounded in research evidence on effective principalship practices to provide guidance on the main characteristic, tasks and responsibilities of effective school principals, using it as a basis for recruitment, training and appraisal of school leaders. Finally, the study pointed to the importance of establishing coherent polices that sustain the intrinsic motivational factors and focus on addressing those factors that impact negatively on school principals as educational leaders.

The study also illuminated a need to develop further research in a number of areas. Firstly, the study pointed to the need for research on strategies to enhance the attractiveness of school principalship in times of rapid educational change. While the study indicated that the new reform initiatives have negatively impacted on educators’ decisions to apply for school principalship, the ways by which educators are discouraged by the reform initiatives are still not clear. Further investigation to examine the impact of a number of strategies, such as recruitment procedures, career development plans, professional development options, and attractive reward systems relating to the attractiveness of school principalship is called for.

Secondly, a need for research on the influence of schooling reform policies and associated strategies on improving school performance and achieving better measurable results for students
was suggested. For example, the lack of knowledge, especially in traditional Arabic countries, about the accountability and assessment system indicates the need for research on the extent to which the pressures of the accountability and assessment system and the professional development initiatives have influenced key implementers of the policy reform initiatives.

Thirdly, a need for more research on reform policy and strategies to enhance and improve classroom practices to better facilitate student learning was suggested. This need stems from the lack of knowledge on the extent to which the schooling reform policy and initiatives have been connected to key changes in the classroom, where teachers and students spend most of their school day and interact with each other.

Finally, the importance of more research on current school principalship preparation and development strategies and options in responding to reform initiatives was suggested. Considering the limited time scope of this study, its general findings illuminate a need to develop further research on the nature and the options of the professional development for school principalship in supporting reform agendas, considering different types of provision, including pre-service, induction, and in-service training; training for different providers; and different kinds of available development activities, including mentoring, principals’ networks, and school visits, and workshops.
**References**


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Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary of Information about the Participants Engaged in the Study

The following table provides a summary of information about the participants engaged in the study. This includes their aliases, nationality, qualifications, work positions, work experiences, length of the interview, and comments related to the conduct of the interview. Abbreviations are used to refer to the participant’s qualification and current position.

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<td>MA</td>
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<td>School Principal Consultant</td>
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Appendix 2: Interview Protocol for School Principals

Project: The Role of School Principals as Leaders of Educational Change in Saudi Arabia

General information

Time: Date:
Place: Interviewee:

Position of interviewee:

Reminder

• Research purpose.
• The nature of interview.
• Signing consent form.
• Participant’s right to withdraw from the interview and delete any of the recorded speech.
• Assuring the information recorded will remain confidential.
• Turning on and testing the two tape recorders.

Interview guide

Each school principal will be invited to talk about:

• Anything connected with his background experiences including those of teaching and leading schools, his educational background, age, and work experience as a teacher and school principal;

• how he sees the imperative for educational change;

• Any examples of how the Ministry of Education had responded to that imperative;

• His understanding of the process of managing change with respect to his roles and responsibilities;

• What he understand to be his roles and responsibilities in the educational reform process; any examples of the professional development opportunities in which he had engaged in support of his reform leadership;

• Any ideas on professional development, including the provision of initial pre-service training, induction programs and in-service provision;

• His understanding of and views about the current provision of other professional development; any suggested ways that might help in developing more effective training;
• How the new roles and responsibilities were impacting on his professionalism, including his remuneration, workload, status and his interest in continue in his job as a change leader.

Before finishing
• Any concerns or questions about the interview.
• Follow-up interview.
• Appreciation.
• Visiting the participant to obtain the related documents.
Appendix 3: Interview Protocol for Educational Leadership Consultants

Project: The Role of School Principals as Leaders of Educational Change in Saudi Arabia

General information

Time: Date:
Place: Interviewee:

Position of interviewee:

Reminder

• Research purpose.
• The nature of interview.
• Signing consent form.
• Participant’s right to withdraw from the interview and delete any of the recorded speech.
• Assuring the information recorded will remain confidential.
• Turning on and testing the two tape recorders.

Interview guide

Each leadership consultant will be invited to talk about:

• Anything connected with his background experiences including those of teaching and leading schools, his educational background, age, and work experience as a teacher and school principal.

• How he see the imperative for educational change;

• Any examples of how the Ministry of Education had responded to that imperative;

• His understanding of the process of managing change with respect to school principals’ roles and responsibilities;

• What he understood to be school principals’ roles and responsibilities in the educational reform process;

• Any examples of the professional development opportunities provided in support of school principals as change agents;

• Any pertinent professional development; any ways that might help in providing more effective learning;

• How the new reforms were impacting on the professionalism of school principals.
Before finishing

- Any concerns or questions about the interview.
- Follow-up interview.
- Appreciation.
- Visiting the participant to obtain the related documents.
Appendix 4: Interview Protocol for Professional Development Planners

Project: The Role of School Principals as Leaders of Educational Change in Saudi Arabia

General information

Time: Date:
Place: Interviewee:

Position of interviewee:

Reminder

• Research purpose.
• The nature of interview.
• Signing consent form.
• Participant’s right to withdraw from the interview and delete any of the recorded speech.
• Assuring the information recorded will remain confidential.
• Turning on and testing the two tape recorders.

Interview guide

Each professional development planner will be invited to talk about:

How he saw the imperative for educational change; any examples of how the Ministry of Education had responded to that imperative; his understanding of the process of managing change with respect to school principals’ roles and responsibilities; what he understood to be the school principals’ roles and responsibilities in the educational reform process; any examples of the professional development opportunities provided in support of school principals as change agents; any pertinent professional development; any ways that might help in providing more effective learning; and how the new reform were impacting on the professionalism of school principals.

• Anything connected with his background experiences including those of teaching and leading schools, his educational background, age, and work experience as a teacher and school principal.
• How he see the imperative for educational change;
• Any examples of how the Ministry of Education had responded to that imperative;
• His understanding of the process of managing change with respect to school principals’ roles and responsibilities;
• What he understand to be the school principals’ roles and responsibilities in the educational reform process;
• Any examples of the professional development opportunities provided in support of school principals as change agents;
• Any pertinent professional development;
• Any ways that might help in providing more effective learning;
• How the new reform were impacting on the professionalism of school principals.

Before finishing
• Any concerns or questions about the interview.
• Follow-up interview.
• Appreciation.
• Visiting the participant to obtain the related documents.
Appendix 5: Consent Form

The Role of School Principals as Leaders of Educational Change in Saudi Arabia

Researcher name         Abdulaziz Alshehri

School of Education and Professional Studies
Griffith University

Principal Supervisor     Professor Richard G. Bagnall

Associate Supervisor     Dr Raymond Brown

Contact Phone          +966431279282
Contact Email       Abdulaziz.alashehri@griffith.edu.au

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet and in particular have noted that:

• I understand that this study is part of a Doctorate at Griffith University in Australia. The purpose of the study here proposed is to examine the ways in which globalizing pressures for educational reform are perceived and responded to by school principals in the Saudi educational system, with a view to informing educational policy and practice in responding to those pressures.

• I understand that I will be asked to complete an interview, which should take approximately one hour to complete, and possibly to engage in a short follow-up interview.

• I understand that only aggregate data will be used in the interviewer’s research project and that all information provided by me will be anonymous and treated as strictly confidential. All records will be maintained and will be accessible only to the research team.

• I understand the risks involved.

• I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary.

I understand that, if I have any additional questions, I can contact the research team.

• I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty.

• I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 37355585 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au) if I
have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project. And, I agree to participate in the project.

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Appendix 6: Translated Consent Form

عنوان الدراسة: دور مديري المدارس كقادة للتغيير التربوي في المملكة العربية السعودية

اسم الباحث: عبدالعزيز الشهري
كلية: التربية والدراسات المهنية بجامعة قريفيث
الجامعة: جريفيث
المشرف الدراسي الرئيسي: Professor Richard G. Bagnall
المشرف المساعد: Dr Raymond Brown
رقم الاتصال الهاتف للباحث: +966431279282
البريد الإلكتروني للباحث: Abdulaziz.alashehri@griffith.edu.au

من خلال التوقيع أدناه، أؤكد أنني قد قرأت وفهمت ورقة المعلومات ولاحظت على وجه الخصوص ما يلي:

- أنا أفهم أن هذه الدراسة هي جزء من شهادة الدكتوراه في جامعة Griffith (قريفيث) في أستراليا.
- أنا أفهم أن الهدف من الدراسة هنا هو دراسة تصورات واستجابة مديري المدارس لضغوطات العولمة للإصلاح التعليمي وكيفية الاستجابة لها في نظام التعليم السعودي.
- أنا أفهم أن المطلوب مني إجراء مقابلة التي سوف تستغرق ما يقرب من ساعة واحدة، وربما إذا استدعي الأمر المشاركة في مقابلة أخرى قصيرة.
- أنا أفهم أن البيانات ستستخدم فقط في المشروع البحثي لمن يجري المقابلة معه، وأن جميع المعلومات التي قدمتها ستعامل على أنها سرية للغاية، كما سيتم الحفاظ على جميع السجلات وسوف تكون في متناول فريق البحث فقط.
- أدركت المخاطر المرتبطة على المقابلة.
- أنا أفهم أن مشاركتي في هذا البحث تطوعي.
- أنا أفهم أنه إذا كان لدي أي أسئلة إضافية، يمكنني الاتصال فريق البحث.
- أنا أفهم أن لي الحرية في الانسحاب في أي وقت، دون تعليق أو عقوبة.
- أنا أفهم أنه يمكن الاتصال بمدير، أخلاق البحوث بجامعة جريفيث على 37355585 (أو ethics@griffith.edu.au) research- للمشروع.
- موافق على المشاركة في المشروع.

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Appendix 7: Letter of Permission

Date: 25/05/12

To Whom May Concern

Subject: Permission to Conduct Research in the Department of Education in Alnamas, Saudi Arabia

I am Abdulaziz Alshehri. I am doing my PhD at Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia. I am writing this letter to seek your permission to conduct research in the Department of Education in Alnamas, Saudi Arabia. I will be examining the ways in which globalizing pressures for educational reform are perceived and responded to by school principals in the Saudi educational system, with a view to informing educational policy and practice in responding to those pressures.

The impetus for the study stems from the lack of knowledge about the impact of contemporary school reform initiatives on the leading change agents – school principals – especially in traditional Arabic countries. When this research has been completed, I will provide the Department of Education library a copy of my thesis, which will be accessible to all participants.

I will conduct interviews with 15 school principals (boys’ schools), two leadership consultants, and three professional development planners. I will be seeking to obtain some official documents relevant to the research topic being investigated. I will be commencing my research project in September 2012. This research project is estimated to be completed by December 2012. During this period, I plan to conduct at least one interview with each participant. I also plan to visit all participants in their offices (schools, the Department of Educational Leadership, and the Department of Professional Development).

Please be assured that the school authorities will be informed of the exact date of my visits prior to my visiting the schools. I also assure you that the participants’ anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained at all costs. All questions, tapes, and transcripts will be kept in a secure place and only I will have access to them. No identifying information about the participants will be used in any papers that may result from this research.
I should be grateful if you would provide me with written authority to conduct my research accordance with the required official and ethical clearance by Griffith University.

If your office has any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project, I may be contacted on +61431279282 (or a.alshehri@griffith.edu.au). You also can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on +6137355585 (or researchethics@griffith.edu.au).

**Candidature name**: Abdulaziz Alshehri
Appendix 8: Authorization from the Department of Education in Alnamas Province