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A Case Study of the Tatweer School System in Saudi Arabia: the perceptions of leaders and teachers

A thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor Philosophy

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Declaration

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

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my father, who was a source of happiness and inspiration in my life.

I also dedicate this work to the memory of my brother, who was burned in a horrific accident in 2009. The plan was for him to accompany me during my Ph.D. study to the UK. However, fate decided to end my brother's life before I start my study.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to my mother, who has continued to support me from afar, and to my husband, children, brothers and sisters.

Abstract

School reform is a major concern in many countries that seek to improve their educational systems and enhance their performances. In consequence, many global schemes, theories, studies, attempts, and programmes have been introduced to promote education in recent years. Saudi Arabia is one of these countries that implemented educational change by introducing many initiatives. The Tatweer Programme is one of these initiatives and is considered as a major recent reform. The main purpose of this study is to investigate this reform in depth by examining the perceptions and experiences of the Tatweer leaders and teachers to find out which extent they have been enabled to be innovative, and to examine the types of leadership and decision-making that have been undertaken by such schools.

This study adopted a qualitative case study that employed interviews, focus groups and documentary analysis. The design of the study has been divided into two phases; the first phase was the feasibility study and the second phase was the main study. The research sample of the feasibility study was head teachers, educational experts and Tatweer Unit's members. The sample of the main study was three Tatweer schools, Tatweer Unit members and one official of Tatweer Project in Riyadh.

The findings of this study identified the level of autonomy in managing the school; the Tatweer schools' system is semi-autonomous when it comes to the internal management, but it lacks autonomy when it comes to staff appointment, student assessment, and curriculum development. In addition, the managerial work has been distributed through teams and members; the Excellence Team plays a critical role in school effectiveness leading an efficient change. Moreover, Professional Learning Communities have been used to enhance the work within Tatweer schools.

Finally the findings show that there have been major shifts in the Tatweer schools' system; the shifting from centralisation to semi-decentralisation; from the culture of the individual to the culture of community; from the traditional school to one focused on self-evaluation and planning; from management to leadership; and from an isolated school being open to society. These shifts have impacted positively on the attitudes of students, parents and staff.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1   Research Problem

The purpose of this study is to investigate in depth the perceptions and experiences of leaders and teachers who participated in the Tatweer reform. The late King Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz, the previous King of Saudi Arabia, initiated the Tatweer Project to reform education and enhance its standards. This reform is a long-term scheme to be achieved since 2007 until 2017. Globalisation has had a major impact on Saudi decisions regarding reforming the policy and the practices of schools, and the Tatweer Project was introduced as a result of the imperatives of globalisation. Indeed, most developing countries have been affected by the growth of globalization, and the majority of developed nations have invested in educational reform (R. Robertson, Brown, Pierre, & Sanchez-Puerta, 2009). Saudi Arabia is one of the developing countries that has sought to improve its economy by reforming the educational system and has attempted to adopt best practice and models internationally in order to improve its education system and then to promote its economic growth. The twenty first century is characterised as being the era of the knowledge economy, therefore, people ought to be able to innovate, invent and have sufficient use of technology as well as being engaged with life-long learning. This would encourage sustainable growth, competition, and productivity.

Therefore, change and innovation in education is the priority in many countries; however, in developed countries new ideas and innovation have been introduced as a result of deliberate planning outcomes, while in developing countries they have been introduced by political pressure (Adams & Chen, 1981). Saudi Arabia as a developing country has responded to the political pressure from the outside and inside of the country to reform its education.

After the events of September 11, 2001, it was required that educational policies be altered in Saudi Arabia, as it was declared to be a fertile ground for Islamic radicalism (Prokop, 2003). "Many authors in the West and East have claimed that the Saudi Educational system has been

under scrutiny by different organizations and political spheres in the world after 9/11" (Elyas & Al-Sadi, 2013, p. 54). In a study of female Saudi participants Mathis (2010) argues that since this event, there has been significant pressure from inside and outside the country for the Saudi Government to evaluate the education system. In addition, there have been a number of Saudi jihadists who joined Al-Qaida and Islamic State in Iraq and Sham (ISIS) and are engaged in violence there since the war in Iraq 2003 and in Syria 2011 (Bunzel, 2015; O'Bagy, 2012).

Many authors argue that the style of teaching at schools takes the traditional shape of rote learning. They ignore using new learning approaches such as discussion between students and teachers, collaboration and creative thinking, and rely on the centralised control system (Alnahdi, 2014; Prokop, 2003; Rugh, 2002; Wiseman, Sadaawi, & Alromi, 2008). Moreover, the major challenge in Saudi Arabia was the level of students' achievement, which was low compared with other countries, according to (TIMSS) in Maths and Science (*King Abdulla Bin Abdul-Aziz Project for Public Educational Development, 2011*; Wiseman et al., 2008).

Mathis (2010) also argues that to achieve educational reform, it is necessary to understand the female principals' role at government schools and investigate the principals' perspectives of their role to inform improvement and changes in their schools. This would raise awareness of girls' needs in Saudi education, something that has historically been ignored by male leaders; Saudi education has been controlled by male leaders. Therefore, this study aims to shed light on the perceptions of female leaders and practitioners about the Tatweer reform in Saudi Arabia. It also highlighted some issues that have been encountered by the female leaders and practitioners whilst leading and practicing the change. This is to provide a framework for the educational reform in the Saudi context; therefore, contributing to the existing educational literature.

The Tatweer Project has introduced many schemes and projects to reform education. One of these schemes is the Tatweer schools' project. These schools were ordinary schools chosen to implement and lead educational change and reform in Saudi Arabia. The Tatweer School model was designed to

increase the efficiency of education through reforming systems, processes and roles inside the school. The aim is to shift from a traditional school environment to a more modern one by moving from a centralised to a decentralised system (*King Abdulla Bin Abdul-Aziz Project for Public Educational Development, 2011*). However, there is very little published material on Tatweer project. A major contribution of this thesis therefore is the documentary analysis of materials not widely available in the public domain.

1.2   Research questions

The main research question is:

> ➢ *What are the perceptions and experiences of the administrators and practitioners in relation to the Tatweer Schools system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*

Sub-questions has been derived from this question which are:

1. *What are Tatweer Schools?*
2. *How is the system being implemented and financed?*
3. *What level of autonomy do Tatweer Schools have with regard to organisational management, staff appointment, student assessment, and curriculum development in Saudi Arabia?*
4. *How do Tatweer schools leaders and teachers work with and in Tatweer schools?*
5. *What is the nature of culture shifts taking place within Tatweer Schools?*
6. *What are the opportunities and challenges within the Tatweer Schools' system from the perspectives of teachers, head teachers and Tatweer Unit members?*

1.3   The importance of the study

This study aims to investigate the Saudi educational reform by examining the experiences and practices of Tatweer leaders and teachers, who have been engaged in the educational reform represented in the Tatweer Schools system. Examining current educational policy reform in Saudi Arabia in general and the Tatweer Schools system in particular is the major contribution to the knowledge of this study; to the best of my knowledge there is a lack of research in this area. Although much has been written about educational change and reform in a western context, the educational reform movement in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a relatively recent phenomenon with little systematic documentation as yet.

This study is important in terms of timing, as the Tatweer school system programme is a new policy innovation. In addition to the critical condition and time that Arab countries in general and Saudi Arabia in specific have encountered as a result of what became known as the 'Arab Spring'. Moreover, this study contributes to the knowledge based on school reform in Saudi Arabia in several ways including the development of a better understanding and analysis of leading educational change in the Saudi context; the decision making model and its practices, and distributed leadership practices in this context.

Additionally, examining the experiences and perceptions of females about leading educational change in Saudi Arabia is the major contribution to the study to provide the silenced voice a chance to be heard in a society where males are dominant in many aspects of life. It also will illuminate experiences of the female practitioners in such schools.

This study will provide new data about this initiative by using the qualitative case study approach; this methodological approach supports gaining thick description about this phenomenon, as it is the most suitable approach to the nature of the research inquiry.

This study raises queries about the issues and concerns that the implementers of the Tatweer reform encounter during the implementation stage of the educational reform. Therefore, this study will enable the Saudi educational officials' knowledge about how implementers of this initiative perceive both the practice and the policy of Tatweer Project. It is also hoped that the research will provide policy-makers with insights into actual practice and the real-life context within such schools to support effective aspects and improve areas of weakness. Moreover, the study hopes to enable implications for policy studies to be discussed, by focusing attention upon the limitations of existing practice and policies, which often takes a limiting view of the impact of educational policy development upon the practices of Tatweer Schools' members.

1.4   Rationale

The rationale of the study started from the feeling of the researcher that there is a real need to investigate the system of education in Saudi Arabia in depth in order to enhance its standards. This feeling was as a result of the personal background of the researcher as a head teacher of primary school between 2003 and 2007. The experience of leading the school led the researcher to the view that Saudi head teachers do not have enough autonomy to develop the school and to do what is best for students, teachers and parents. There was also another concern that the researcher was thinking about, which was the professional development of teachers as her teachers under-performed in their duties and they did not have internal or external motivation to be serious about and loyalty in their work and to be more committed. There was also a weak supervision system in the researcher's school; the supervision office members were concerned more with the schools' appearance and other details more than the students' achievement. After leaving the headship to study for a Masters Degree, the researcher decided to examine leading educational change and school reform.

One day and by chance the researcher had seen the Tatweer Project building while she was on the way to her house on 2009. She visited them and gave them files of some of her papers on school reform and leading educational change. She also applied to work with them, but there were no available vacancies. However, when she started to think about writing a

proposal for the Ph.D. degree, she was thinking about a topic to investigate her concerns. She contacted Dr Adnan Alwarthan, who works under the Ministry of Education in the comprehensive quality section, to ask him about some information that could help her in the proposal; and he advised her on investigating Tatweer Schools. At that time the researcher had not ever heard about these schools and she did not know that they had been introduced by the Tatweer Project that she had already visited. She then began searching to find out what the system is, how it was organised, and finally decided to examine the Tatweer schools' system in depth by using the case study as an approach that would help to yield an in-depth understanding of this programme.

1.5   Theoretical and conceptual framework

This research is built upon the key concepts and theories of distributed leadership, and decentralised decision making. It is believed that leadership is an important element to be developed and examined in the educational reform process. It is also believed that leadership is a crucial factor in achieving school effectiveness and improvement (Marzano, Waters, & Mcnulty, 2005). Indeed, "School improvement has been studied extensively for more than two decades, but change in schools has been problematic" (Lunenburg, 2013, p. 1). Education is facing major challenges affecting all aspects of educational work, and these faces provide motivation for the educational system to initiate continuous change thereby placing educational work close to its requirements, community and global developments. In the midst of these challenges, educational leaders may be faced with many obstacles, as they are not working in isolation from contemporary life; rather, they work in the midst of these events, with a mission of nurturing generations that are armed with knowledge and can contribute to creating nations that are able to co-exist and keep pace with human development (Abuabed, 2005). Therefore,

> Governments universally mediate the market for education because the
> sector suffers from a set of market failures that government intervention can
> rectify. As a result, the users of education services—parents and children—
> are also principals trying to ensure that their country's ministry of education

establishes a system that produces the high-quality education they demand.

(Bruns, Filmer, & Patrinos, 2011, p. 12)

It is argued that school autonomy in decision-making will lead to improved quality in schools and fund management, due to the fact that schools have been prepared to raise quality. This will, in turn, help improve students' achievement and reduce the dropout rate. However, there is increasing concern that applying decentralisation also creates disadvantages. It is believed that autonomy would impact on teachers' work during their days with their students, while critics have also argued that it not only affects teachers' tasks, but also those of school members, where they would have more work that is considered to be a burden. In many countries a debate is taking place about centralisation and decentralisation. Nevertheless, many governments aim to strike a balance between these two concepts within their educational systems (Blunkett, 2000; EC, 2007; Guarino & Tanner, 2012). The policy of the Tatweer Schools' system, aims to have a decentralised system in some managerial aspects as well as empowering head teachers and teachers. Therefore, investigating decision-making in this thesis is central to this research. The Tatweer Project aims to transform schools into using bottom-up approach in its decision-making by converting them into self-evaluation and planning schools. It is suggested that self-evaluation is a significant approach that leads to achieve school improvement; the evidence indicates that schools in many countries that adopt this approach show high levels of students' achievement (Chapman & Sammons, 2013).

The conceptual framework that underpins the study will be presented later in this study.

1.6   Research Approach

A qualitative case study design is used to examine the Tatweer Schools System, where three Tatweer Schools in Riyadh, one Tatweer Unit member and one official representing the focus. The selection of the methodology of this study has its positive impact on gaining rich, new, and valuable description about the topic. As "qualitative case study methodology provides tools for researchers to study complex phenomena within their contexts" (Baxter & Jack,

2008, p. 544), and would provide the research with thick data of the case that is under investigating (Merriam, 1988).

The research design has been divided into two phases; the first phase was conducted to investigate whether the study is feasible or not, and the second phase built upon the findings of the first phase by framing its questions and then the methodology. After conducting the feasibility study to examine whether the idea of the study is viable and the subjects are accessible or not, the findings of the feasibility study led the researcher to narrowing the topic down to focusing on the perceptions and experiences of leaders and teachers of the Tatweer Schools' system in Saudi Arabia, a fuller account is given in chapter five.

1.7   Organisation of the Study

Chapters two and three contextualize the study as before starting the literature review of this study, it is worth writing a contextual chapter that could give a general picture of the context of the study, in which this case is conducted. It also provides essential background to the research context by discussing the impact of globalization on the educational system in Saudi Arabia represented by the introduction of the Tatweer Schools system; this is to place the local within the global. It argues that the impact of globalization on Saudi educational context has had a concrete effect, where the Saudi Arabia government realized that education is an important driver for the prosperity and welfare of the country, and also that women play an important role in education. Reforms in favour for women in specific and education in general, are discussed in chapter three.

Chapter four examines the key theories and literature linked to the research questions. Most of the material reviewed focuses on leadership represented in distributed leadership; leading educational change and decision-making. The framework, which underpins this chapter, was launched from the research questions.

Chapter five discusses research studies from the Arabic context as well as the western context. It aims to review empirical studies under the three concepts, which have been conceptualized in theoretical framework chapter, namely: leadership represented in distributed leadership; leading educational change; and decision-making (centralised and decentralised decisions).

The research methodology is described and discussed in Chapter 6.

The analysis of the case study will be based on the research questions to provide a full picture of Tatweer Schools system using themes that have emerged from the data. The data is presented in the following four Chapters:

Chapter 7 examines the research question of what are Tatweer Schools? This question includes sub-questions, namely: Who introduced the Tatweer Schools? What did they want to achieve? Why were Tatweer schools introduced?

Chapter 8 addresses the following questions: How is the system being implemented and financed? What levels of autonomy do Tatweer Schools have with regard to organisational management, staff appointments, student assessment, and curriculum development in their schools?

Chapter 9 is guided by the question: How do Tatweer schools leaders and teachers work with and in schools?

Chapter 10 focuses on the opportunities and challenges within the Tatweer Schools' system from the perspectives of teachers, head teachers and Tatweer Unit members.

Finally the conclusion chapter presents the general findings that answer the research questions. It summarizes the key findings, in relation to the research questions. It also discusses the implications for theory, practice, methodology, policy making, as well as the implications on my professional development. It also defines the limitations associated with time, translation issues, reviewing documentation issues, and generalization issues related to generalizability of case study research. It then outlines the original contribution to knowledge and the recommendations of the study.

Chapter Two: Globalization and Educational Change: implications for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

2.1   Introduction

The study discusses recent educational innovation and development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia within the broader context of educational reform globally. The aim of the chapter is to provide essential background to the research context by describing the impact of globalization on the educational system in Saudi Arabia. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section discusses the concept of globalization. The argument is that there are two opposing views about globalization. The first perceives globalization linked with neoliberal economic theory as a positive development. Neoliberal economic theory places emphasis on the primacy of the market as the key regulatory mechanism. As such, free-market ideology has also been applied to the social arena including healthcare and education. "Advocates of global neo-liberalism argue that the prevailing system of development will result in economic growth, employment, affordable quality goods and service, and a reduction in world poverty" (Dyer, Humphries, Fitzgibbons, & Hurd, 2014, p. 82). The second argument is more critical about globalization and argues from a cultural and social perspective that:

> Neoliberalism tends to treat economics in isolation from other dimensions of social relations. In particular, the doctrine supposes that economic policies toward globalization could be a culturally and politically neutral matter of technical expertise (Scholte, 2005, p. 7).

These two arguments will be discussed more critically later in this chapter with special reference to the impact of globalization on non-western societies such as Saudi Arabia.

Globalization has had a significant impact on education worldwide and as a result governments sought to reform their educational systems. The drive for school reform is one of the consequences of globalization that will be discussed in this chapter.

2.2   What is globalization?

Although it is not a new phenomenon, the term "globalisation" has been used increasingly since the 1980s. However, its origin can be traced to long before the modern era (Mrak, 2000). There are a variety of definitions of the concept of globalization. Adams (2011) argues that:

> Globalization has been the catchword of the late 20th and early 21st century. It refers to the growing integration of the world, linking together into one global whole what had, heretofore, been independent activity centers all over the world. Globalization is an ongoing process. Although the world is becoming smaller as trade barriers are reduced and as communications and transportation improve… the world becomes more integrated; it is said to become more "globalized". The term *globalization* has important economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions (Adams, 2011, pp.3-4)

This view suggests that globalization is an on-going process that integrates activities worldwide into one global world through communications and transportation and shrinking distances. Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, and Perraton (1999) identify three dimensions of global interconnectedness. They state that:

> Globalization refers to the *widening*, *deepening* and *speeding up* of *global interconnectedness*... Globalization can be taken to refer to those *spatio-temporal processes* of change which underpin a transformation in the

organization of human affairs by linking together and expanding human activity across regions and continents. Without reference to such expansive *spatial connections*, there can be no clear or coherent formulation of this term (Held et al., 1999, pp. 14-15).

Held et al. (1999) definition emphasises the relationship between human activities and processes with regard to the spatial, which are concerned with time and space as well as the global scale of expanding and deepening of such connections. Giddens (1990) provides further explanation in his argument that:

> Globalization can thus be defined as 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. This is a dialectical process because such local happenings may move in an obverse direction from the very distanciated relations that shape them. (Giddens, 1990, p. 64)

Giddens (1990) underlines the *distant local relations* of the world and *social ties intensification,* which is similar to the previous emphasis by Held et al. (1999) although he identifies greater complexity. Adams (2011) view is focused on reducing trade barriers to link the world globally. In other words, globalization can be viewed as a compressed world, which makes the world an interconnected place.

> The term "globalization" could encompass the transmission of ideas; the intermingling of cultures; the preservation or loss of national identity; exchanges of technology, capital, workers, and products across borders; and the role of international nongovernmental organizations (R. Robertson et al., 2009, p. 64).

This definition includes economic, cultural and political perspectives related to the concept of globalization. There is a clear consensus with the previous definitions in terms of overcoming geographical boundaries to exchange activities, products and ideas. Although these definitions have different concerns and foci they share the same core of globalization's dimensions. The following section underlines the processes that interact to shape the globalisation.

2.2.1 The processes of globalization

The international organization that deals with the rules of trade between countries is The World Trade Organization (WTO). The purpose of this organization is to regulate international trade and business and to support producers of services and goods, importers, and exporters (WTO, 2014a). One of the most important treaties of the WTO that affect education is the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), which facilitates trade liberalization in the service industries globally, and includes trade in education (Knight, 2002). Robertson (2006) argues that:

> There is a real tension between education as a human right and education as an area of trade. When member states allow education to be included and traded in global agreements like GATS, member states' ability to ensure that education is a right for all, rather than a commodity to be purchased by the well off is considerably diminished. In sum, it could be concluded that the GATS as it stands is a high price to pay to regulate the global education industry (Robertson, 2006, p. 14).

Perspectives about education being a commodity would raise different concerns to be highlighted. Advocates believe "trade in education to be a means for developing economies to engage with the global economy" (S. Robertson, 2006, p. 2). Opponents believe that subjecting education to global marketing targets would turn education into a commodity that imposes accountancy criteria for valuing education and its human products (Saad-Filho &

Johnston, 2005). They emphasise also that "this model of development favours Anglo-Saxon interests but that it has the potential to undermine education as a human right." (S. Robertson, 2006, p. 2).

Critics of globalization argue that the introduction of uniformity across educational systems, regarding the different stages of education (primary, secondary, college, university), and their respective courses of study are a result of:

> ➢ Western institutions influencing other developing countries' governments regarding educational policies
> ➢ Power groups and other prototypes of schooling when designing educational practice and systems
> ➢ The existence of worldwide educational research facilities giving guidance on accurate and efficient educational policies (Spring, 2009, p. 13).

In this sense globalization appears to have influenced education negatively and positively in activities, policies and practices.

Another important international organization is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which is:

> A specialized agency of the UN system that promotes collaboration among its member countries in the fields of education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, and communications and information… (Blanchfield & Browne, 2013, p. 1).

UNESCO moves beyond education as a commodity to be more comprehensive and moral. The role of UNESCO is varied; it:

> Sponsors international exchanges and meetings in science, education, and other fields; promotes the free flow of ideas, including media freedom; encourages the conservation of books, monuments, and works of art; and assists member states in developing educational, scientific, and cultural programs (Blanchfield & Browne, 2013, p. 2).

UNESCO works with private sectors and foundations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) at the local, state, and global level. "UNESCO has been successful in various reforms during its establishment, however, further changes are needed according to many policymakers and experts" (Blanchfield & Browne, 2013, p. 3).

UNESCO together with UNICEF (The United Nations Children's Fund) and the World Bank were instrumental in organizing the first Education For All Conference in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. The focus of the conference was to address issues related to access to education. Following the Education For All Framework agreed at the Dakar, Senegal conference in 1995 and the emergence of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, there is a global educational vision to be achieved by 2015. The proposed vision is "Equitable, Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All". Certainly, many indicators show that there has been remarkable progress between 2000 and 2010 such as the increased number of students enrolled in primary schools internationally (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2013). Moreover, the Education For All (EFA) agenda has helped to drive significant educational progress since its launch in 2000. However, there are unaddressed areas, and some which have made slow progress. As a result, the EFA 2015 agenda will not be achieved (UNESCO, 2013, p. 3). Evidence of this slow progress is that:

New data [in 2011] show that the world is still unlikely to fulfil one of the most modest commitments: to get every child in school by 2015. More than 57 million children continue to be denied the right to primary education, and many of them will probably never enter a classroom (UIS, 2013c, p. 1).

One third of the students have not achieved the basics in the primary schools, whether they have enrolled in education or not. Another example is achieving gender equity, where the data shows that the poorest girls in sub-Saharan Africa would not complete the universal primary stage by 2086 if the current trends continue (UNESCO, 2014). Additionally,

In the Arab States and sub-Saharan Africa, around two-thirds of girls who are out-of-school are expected never to attend based on current trends and without scaled-up and accelerated action. Insufficient attention to the marginalized is a key reason for limited progress. Also, the expansion of primary education has resulted in a growing demand for secondary education (UNESCO, 2014, pp.3-4).

It is also anticipated that in 68 countries universal literacy would not be achieved by the poorest girls by 2072, so the gap between poor and rich girls would be significant, and gender equity would continue to be an issue. There are only eight countries out of 53 that aim to monitor inequality in learning (UNESCO, 2014).

According to UNESCO (2014) there are additional inequalities related to aid provision affecting educational possibilities in developing countries:

Australia, the IMF and the World Bank increased their overall aid to basic education between 2010 and 2011 but reduced their spending in low-income countries. World Bank aid to basic education increased by 13%

overall, but fell by 23% in low income countries. The United Republic of Tanzania saw World Bank disbursements fall from US$88 million in 2002 to less than US$0.3 million in 2011(UNESCO, 2014, p. 12).

There clearly is a great difference here in funding allocation especially since Australia is a developed country. What is significant is that the World Bank/IMF plays a significant role in setting global policies, promoting collaboration between member states and then providing support and finance for education worldwide.

The next section will discuss the opposing views of globalization from an economic and sociocultural perspective; this includes, the impact of globalization on cultural, social, educational and economic aspects of countries.

2.3   Views of globalization

2.3.1   Economic view of globalization

Neo-liberalism

As stated above, neoliberal theory places emphasis on the free-market economy and considers education a significant business and investment (R. Robertson et al., 2009).

Kotz (2002) argues that:

> Neoliberalism is both a body of economic theory and a policy stance. Neoliberal theory claims that a largely unregulated capitalist system (a free market economy) not only embodies the ideal of free individual choice but also achieves optimum economic performance with respect to efficiency, economic growth, technical progress, and distributional justice (Kotz, 2002, p. 1).

According to neoliberal theory the legal regulatory framework has to support and facilitate private ownership with limited public control and accountability (Kotz, 2002; Scholte, 2005) with a balance of liberalization, privatization and deregulation, hoping that globalization would benefit civilization in peace, human security, social justice democracy and liberty. There are many complexities within societies that impact on their ability to compete in the global economy. Scholte (2005) provides some indications of these complexities in his argument that:

> Privatization, liberalization and deregulation remain the order of the day, but these core neoliberal policies are now undertaken in tandem with more measures that address corruption, transparency, financial codes and standards, unsustainable debt burdens, the timing and sequencing of capital control removal, social safety nets, poverty reduction, corporate citizenship and so on. (Scholte, 2005, p. 14)

Indeed it has been argued that neoliberalism represents an advocate of exploitation of the majority in favour of the economic elite; where it serves to concentrate global profit in the hand of rich countries, in particular the United States (Saad-Filho & Johnston, 2005).

However, it could be argued that neoliberalism would have been more useful if it had created market access for poor people by increasing access to education, land and micro-finance in addition to enhancing regulation (Saad-Filho & Johnston, 2005). Moreover, whilst neoliberalism presents a promise of welfare and benefit for societies, opponents argue that this theory in general seems to threaten the identity, language and beliefs of countries, and also would benefit the interests of the West in particular more than developing countries. This view is supported by critics in the Saudi context where scholars such as Alghathami (2013) argue that neoliberalism seeks to impose a holistic perception of culture in favour of the strong and dominant. He believes that this domination has negative consequences on

economic and social factors.

On the other hand, it is argued that where "education adds to human capital" (Saad-Filho & Johnston, 2005, p. 180) it plays a significant role in economic growth. "Neoliberalism reframes schools as a commodity. Parents and students are consumers in the market wherein there is choice of school options… it aims to provide a wide variety of product choices to an underserved market, relying on competition as a vehicle for school improvement" (Shiller, 2011, p. 162). Nevertheless, Shiller (2011) maintains that "In spite of the onslaught of neoliberal reforms, poor communities still do not have access to high quality schools that will provide their children with the kind of preparation they need for college. Neoliberalism has created the illusion of choice, without actual choice" (Shiller, 2011, p. 170). Shiller (2011) suggests that we turn away from neoliberal policies so that public education may be reclaimed as a public good rather than a commodity in the market.

New Public Management

Another prominent global paradigm associated with neoliberalism is New Public Management (NPM), also referred to as New Managerialism (Morley & Rassool, 1999). This paradigm emerged in the United Kingdom between the late 1970s and 1980s. Whilst the argument is that it enhances democratization and citizen participation, it also supports budget cuts, user charges, competition in the public sector, the separation of politics and administration, and accountability for performance (Gruening, 2001). The relationship between NPM and neoliberalism is human service (Connell, Fawcett, & Meagher, 2009) and was associated with the neoliberal governments during the 1980s and continues to this day. Vabø (2009) argues that NPM is the neoliberal way of governance. This relates to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) advocacy for the reform of public services in line with neoliberal economic theories to create the new model called NPM (Vabø, 2009). NPM provides two important elements to education reform globally, namely, accountability and competition that encourage school improvement and effectiveness.

The imposition of these economic and management models on developing countries raises several questions. The problem lies in the fact that developing countries are still in the Northcote–Trevelyan[1] stage according to Polidano (1999). This contrasts, for example, with development in the UK, which passed this stage over 100 years to arrive at a centralized civil and public service. Many developing countries do not yet have basic political, economic and social infrastructure in place to be able to benefit from the NMP model. Indeed many developing countries do not have sufficient schools or adequate infrastructure to accommodate the educational needs of its population (Polidano, 1999).

There is another contradiction in the global application of neoliberalism as the basis of economic growth. For example, to what extent does it apply to a country such as Saudi Arabia, which relies predominantly on its oil reserves income to support economic development? It could be argued that Saudi Arabia could benefit from improving accountability and competition within its education sector especially within the broader context of the global knowledge economy.

The Knowledge Economy

The economics of knowledge is a key element arising from the consequences of globalization. It is important to differentiate between the concepts of the 'knowledge economy' and 'knowledge-based' economy, where the first is "the older of the two concepts, with its origins in the 1950s. It focused mainly on the composition of the labour force. The term 'knowledge-based economy' has added the structural aspects of technological trajectories and regimes from a systems perspective" (Cooke & Leydesdorff, 2006, p. 5). So, the latter is more comprehensive, whilst the other term is concerned with the economic process of knowledge itself. However, Arundel, Cruysen, and Kanerva (2008) argue that:

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[1] The Northcote-Trevelyan Report was a document prepared by and C.E. Trevelyan. Commissioned in 1853 and published in February 1854. The report is generally regarded as the founding document of the British Civil Service, enshrining the service with the "core values of integrity, propriety, objectivity and appointment on merit, able to transfer its loyalty and expertise from one elected government to the next. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northcote-Trevelyan_Report

The only notable difference between the 'knowledge economy' and the 'knowledge-based economy' is that the former focuses on knowledge-intensive sectors, while the latter extends the concept to all sectors of economic activity. We view the knowledge economy as much broader than a focus on knowledge-intensive sectors and so we use the definition of the knowledge-based economy that considers changes taking place across all sectors. However, since the term 'knowledge-based economy' is rather long, we sometimes use the simpler term of a 'knowledge economy', redefined here to include all economic sectors (Arundel et al., 2008, p. 2)

This section covers both concepts as they are interrelated.

The term "*knowledge-based economy*" results from a fuller recognition of the role of knowledge and technology in economic growth. Knowledge, as embodied in human beings (as *"human capital"*) and in technology, has always been central to economic development. But only over the last few years has its relative importance been recognized. OECD economies are more strongly dependent on the production, distribution and use of knowledge than ever before (OECD, 1996, p. 9).

It has been argued by Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), (2005) that:

Economic success is increasingly based on upon the effective utilisation of intangible assets such as knowledge, skills and innovative potential as the key resource for competitive advantage. The term "knowledge economy" is used to describe this emerging economic structure (Brinkley, 2006, p. 4).

Knowledge thus has become a commodity to be traded, and plays a key role within the labour market; it has investment value. Investing in knowledge-based capital (KBC) underpins

innovation-based growth and raised living standards in the long-term. Consequently, investment in KBC has increased rapidly in many countries more than investing in physical capital. It has promoted productivity growth and innovation especially by spending on research and development (R&D) (OECD, 2013). Hence, the knowledge-based economy is characterized by quality, innovation, high skilled qualifications, and global competition. Brinkley (2006) points out that knowledge has historically been the driver of the economy leading to technical change and innovation. According to the OECD (2009d):

> Looking at the R&D and innovation components in greater detail, the EU has urged its member states to increase planned investments in education and R&D … and consider ways to increase private sector R&D investments, for example, by providing fiscal incentives, grants and/or subsidies (OECD, 2009c, p. 28).

India and China have placed emphasis on producing highly skilled graduates. Europe and other countries in the developed West could not stop these countries from being rapid producers of high skills people; this transformation altered the rules of the game. It has contributed to the decline of what economists refer to as "barriers to entry". This rapid growth in the drive for high skills is due to the fact that within the free-market companies and agents can collaborate and compete on a worldwide basis (Andreas Schleicher, 2006).

> Evidence shows – consistently, and over time – that countries and continents that invest heavily in education and skills benefit economically and socially from that choice. For every euro invested in attaining high-skilled qualifications, taxpayers get even more money back through economic growth. Moreover, this investment provides tangible benefits to all of society – and not just to the individuals who benefit from the greater educational opportunities (Andreas Schleicher, 2006, p. 2).

Therefore, governments have to invest in education and allocate a budget to achieve universal education goals. UNESCO (2014) emphasises that:

> Countries should allocate at least 20% of their budget to education. Yet the global average in 2011 was only 15%, a proportion that has hardly changed since 1999. Of the 138 countries with data, only 25 spent more than 20% in 2011, while at least 6 low and middle income countries decreased their education expenditure as a share of total government expenditure by 5 percentage points or more between 1999 and 2011 (UNESCO, 2014, p. 9).

In Saudi Arabia, 25% was allocated for the education sector of the total public budget of the year 2014; 210 Billion SR (approximately 33 Billion British Pounds) (Abuareef, 2014). An additional budget of 9 Billion SR (approximately 1,458,9 Billion British Pounds) was allocated by King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz (IBP, 2011) at the beginning of 2007 to establish the Tatweer Schools' system. In May 2014, Prince Khalid Bin Faisal (the previous minister of education) received 80 Billion SAR (approximately 12,968, Billion British Pounds) from King Abdullah to be spent on the Tatweer Schools, in addition to the previous budget in which the Tatweer Project had received a proportion of the education budget for 2014 (TBC, 2014). This highlights the emphasis placed on investment in education by the Saudi government. However, Andreas Schleicher (2006) suggest that "money is not a guarantee for strong results" (Andreas Schleicher, 2006, p. 2). This will be discussed in further detail later.

It has been argued that "investment in innovation is now considered even more risky and some of the longer term investments in new technologies are particularly affected" (OECD, 2009c, p. 11). Sometimes it does not result in a balance between investing in technology and returns and outcomes, as innovation and technology are considered to be costly. The issue of costly innovation was evident in Saudi Arabia's Tatweer Schools Project during the first phase of implementation; this will be discussed later in this study.

Impact of globalization on economy

Increasing investment, trade, and migration worldwide affect employees directly in developed and developing nations (R. Robertson et al., 2009). It has been argued that:

> Despite the decline in the manufacturing wage, all workers see an increase in their expected discounted lifetime utility as a consequence of liberalization. While it is true that the manufacturing wage declines, wages in other sectors rise. All workers have a positive probability that they will move to one of those higher paying jobs (Spence & Leipziger, 2010, p. 23).

Spence and Leipziger (2010) argue that the impact of globalization on the economy has reduced poverty in many developing nations; they also state that:

> Globalization as an economic phenomenon has been the dominant force for economic integration and the main driver of growth worldwide for many decades, although the speed of globalization—taken to include trade, finance, flows of information and technology, and offshoring—is unprecedented in modern economic history (Spence & Leipziger, 2010, p. 4).

It seems that global trade, migration and liberalization have an impact on reducing poverty and increasing growth worldwide.

On the other hand, "Inequality…also changes opportunities, incentives, and institutions that form, develop, and transmit characteristics and skills valued in the labor market" (Corak, 2013, p. 21) would increase the poverty of some disadvantaged groups. Moreover,

It could be argued…that inequality of opportunity acts for many as a barrier to fulfilling their potential. Those disadvantaged do not forego education because of a lack of incentives in terms of higher pay for the more educated, but because of a range of barriers to their doing so … A stress on reducing inequality of opportunity leads to policies designed to change the distribution of abilities to compete and to make education more egalitarian; but these policies accept that competition will generate inequalities of income, wealth and outcomes (Saad-Filho & Johnston, 2005, p. 180)

Competition is an important element in neoliberal theory; as argued earlier, it has a negative impact on the equality of opportunities. In the context of Saudi Arabia, women are more likely to have fewer work opportunities and also less income compared to Saudi males. Alnajem (2012) found that poor women in Saudi Arabia suffer from a low level of education. Lack of employment opportunities, she argues, is due to social and cultural factors that interact with each other to influence women's experience making them victims of poverty. The impact of gender inequality on opportunity in Saudi Arabia will be discussed later. Issan (2013) attributes this limiting in work opportunities to the rule of Wahhabi doctrine that women should not be in direct contact with men. This restriction has led to fewer women being able to work; most are involved in professions such as teaching and nursing. However, the wave of globalization has had an impact on this view. Waterman (2001) argues that there is a global movement of women, which seems to be aware of the neoliberal discourse to free itself from the economic and political determinants. This improvement of the economic and social status of women would make a balance in the economic equation, as well as affect the status of women in Saudi Arabia.

However, Aksornkool (1995) argues for the importance of making a supportive political decision to empower women's status. It is insufficient on a large scale to empower women only in education, as this political decision would create a regulation that impacts on society's attitude towards women and accelerates their empowerment.

The following figures illustrate the discrepancy between the literacy rates of male and female adults in Saudi Arabia for the period 1992 to 2015. Although improvement has been observed in both rates, there remains a difference in recent trends in favour of males. However, the gap between both genders in the youth generation is not significant, although males are still favoured. Undoubtedly, these literacy gaps will create gender inequality in work opportunities and income levels.
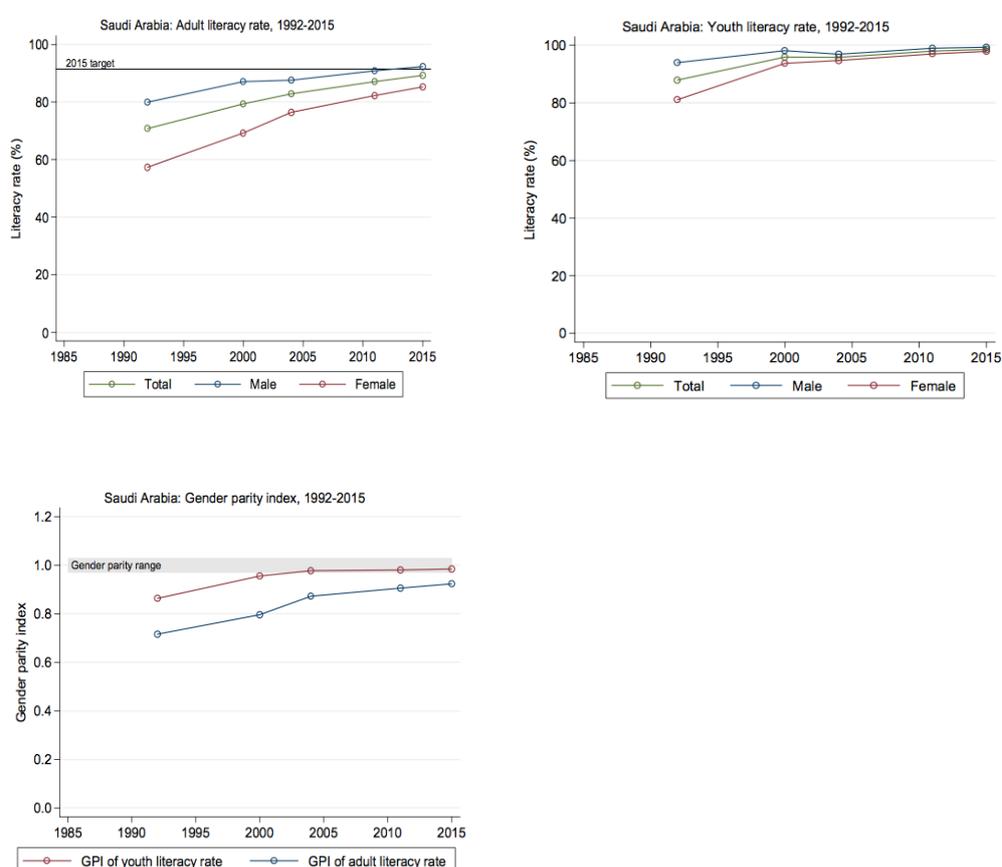
Figure 2- 1: Adult and youth literacy rates of Saudi Arabia[2]

The best explanation of having issue in Saudi girls' literacy is explained by Hamdan (2005), who states that "there is no law in the country, as yet, that prohibits male guardians (for

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2 *Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, May 2013*

example, father or brother) from taking girls out of school, no law making education mandatory to high school…There is also no law to determine the age at which girls can marry" (Hamdan, 2005, p. 59). Clearly this issue needs to be addressed to achieve equality in education for all. UNESCO (2015a) indicate that:

> Progress was uneven in the regions where women were lagging furthest behind. There was fast progress in the Arab States during the 2000s, as the female adult literacy rate increased from 56% in 2000 to 69% in 2010, while the gender parity index increased from 73 literate women for every 100 literate men to 81. However, this progress is expected to slow down by 2015 (UNESCO, 2015c, p. 13).

It could be argued that one important reason behind this slow down was as a result of the consequences of the war the so-called Arab Spring, which affected many Arab countries.

The two arguments presented here are contradictory; the first is more positive and has perceived that the impact of globalization on the economy has reduced poverty, as globalization is the main driver of growth in the worldwide. The second argument appears to be negative and perceives globalization represented in neoliberalism as a catalyst for competition between individuals, which would increase the issue of inequality of opportunity.

The next section will discuss the social and cultural views on globalization.

2.3.2   Cultural and social views of globalization

Globalization affects culture in a way that, when people of different classes and cultures come together to share their ideas, they begin to get to know each other. Thus, globalisation

is a social process in which people with different backgrounds interact. This combination of cultures in all spheres of life exposes people to different attitudes and new ways of thinking. Business networks enable nations to know more about each other; however, local cultures are most affected by television, newspapers and other media channels. Conversely, people who migrate to, and settle in, other countries are more open to cultural change. As more and more people are gaining access to the Internet, communication between people has increased with the shortening of time and distance (Spring, 2009). Nevertheless, the threat of losing national and ideological identity because of globalization is a concern in a religious and conservative country such as Saudi Arabia. Alghathami (2013) argues that Muslims are more likely to support Saudi Arabia to keep its privacy and conservation as a country that provides religious direction for Muslims worldwide. However, it could be argued that exclusiveness would not fit the universal mission of the Qur'an and its values. Nurullah (2008) also maintains that:

> Globalisation poses a challenge to Islamic culture and identity because globalisation promotes the transmission of information through the media and this has resulted in the dominance and hegemony of Western culture over the rest of the world. This poses a challenge to Islamic ways of life, values, and principles. However, as globalisation is inevitable, Muslims should take the benefits and opportunities provided by globalisation in spreading and demonstrating the unique traits of Islamic cultural identity around the world through various means (Nurullah, 2008, p. 45).

With the advancement in the communication networks of governments and local people, changes have been implemented in human resource development, which have resulted in the introduction of new ideas of educational policies and improvements in industrial production outputs (Spring, 2009). "Over the years, for many people these changes have been beneficial, increasing knowledge, advancing technology, raising income" (Adams, 2011, p. 6). Educational practices, policies and organisations are also influenced largely by the global changes taking place (Burbules & Torres, 2000).

Impact on education

The impact of globalisation on educational systems and practices is deep rooted and conflicting. Much-needed reforms can be observed in the collaboration of the UNESCO and UN agencies. This includes: equal education for all; universal educational practices and policies; education as a basic human right; education for the wellbeing of the economy; education for the awareness of a better environment; education about how to participate in governmental systems; and continuous development of new technology and infrastructure (Burbules & Torres, 2000). However, "The striking evidence laid out … demonstrates not only education's capacity to accelerate progress towards other development goals, but also how best to tap that potential, most of all by making sure that access to good quality education is available to all, regardless of their circumstances" (UNESCO, 2014, p. 18). In line with this over the last three decades, local school systems have focused on developing education as the key to economic improvement and the creation of competitive advantage over other economies. Many countries within the UN are working together to provide equal primary and secondary education worldwide. The rise of this global education is shaping the structure from ordinary citizens to global citizens. As a result of globalisation, many developing countries have experienced improvement in their local school systems through facilities provided by global educational institutions (Spring, 2009).

It is argued that, "neoliberal efforts in education aim at reorganizing schooling so the needs of the local and global economy are met by producing human capital" (Elyas & Al-Sadi, 2013, p. 61). Introducing the policy of neoliberalism has led to create one single educational policy, practices and their respective curricula and equal acceptance of this system worldwide (Spring, 2009). However, opponents suggest that diversity in nations would not benefit from neoliberalism policy in education. Carnoy (1999) argues that:

> Education will play an even more important role in economic and social
> development in the future than it played in the past. Despite urging from
> some quarters that decentralizing or marketizing education that is, making
> education more accountable to parent-consumers is the most effective

strategy available to nations and regions in a globalized economy, the evidence suggests something quite different. National governments may decide to decentralise education to respond to ethnic, regional, or social movements demanding 'political' reform. But improving student learning or expanding educational opportunity requires coherent and systematic effort by the public spending. Those nations and regions that can achieve such coherence are most likely to harvest the fruits of the information age (Carnoy, 1999, p. 86).

Globally, countries are struggling with problems that have not been faced by earlier generations. National schooling systems are undergoing continuous change as a consequence of the effects of globalisation.

Governments in developing nations have faced pressure to increase spending on education. This pressure was as a result of the need to have more educated workers. The argument is that a more educated labour force attracts global capital, which in turn impacts positively on the economy. However, as a result of neoliberal economic policy influences governments have been forced to encourage other sources to fund education and limit public spending (Carnoy, 1999). Misra and Bajpai (2010) explain the notion of the movement to limiting public spending. They state that:

In several countries, they were expressed in the adoption of neo-liberal economic policies; they led to attempts to cut public expenditure, and to maximize the economic benefits of educational spending by increasing its efficiency and directing its goals to economic rather than social or cultural ends (Misra & Bajpai, 2010, p. 1).

Another global impact on education is that two international testing programmes are used to measure performance and enable global politicians to discuss the existing gaps in the

universal educational system: The International Mathematics and Science Survey (TIMSS) and The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). These organizations share an opinion regarding how education is provided. They hypothesize an education for the improvement of the economy, which fulfils the expectation of skilled labour demands within a single global economy (Stronach, 2010). The findings of PISA, for example;

> Allow policy makers around the world to gauge the knowledge and skills of students in their own countries in comparison with those in other countries, set policy targets against measurable goals achieved by other education systems, and learn from policies and practices applied elsewhere. While PISA cannot identify cause-and-effect relationships between policies/practices and student outcomes, it can show education, policy makers and the interested public how education systems are similar and different- and what that means for students (OECD, 2014, p. 24).

However, "It is argued that the influence of PISA may jeopardize the democratization of education policy insofar as it allows elites to pursue their own agendas with little public input" (Murphy, 2010, p. 28). The effects of globalizing education are the most moral values that are related to the cultural and social factors seem to be ignored.

Impact on Saudi educational policy

As a result of globalization, it is important to raise questions regarding some essential issues in the context of Saudi Arabia: what is an ideal international citizen, and how can international citizenry be encouraged? This question is vital as the Saudi government recently realised. A study by Alabdulkareem and Alnassar (2005) found that the citizenship curriculum in Saudi Arabia focuses on national knowledge and lack a focus on skills and global trends, while in the UK curricula the focus is on global trends in skills, knowledge and principles, as well as on presenting the curriculum in an interesting way.

Another important question is concerned with the following: Western ideas usually suggest adopting a rational course, in addition to religious and value pluralism; how would this relate to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's focus on one religion? There have been suggestions regarding the influence of Saudi schools on fostering religious extremism, and fundamentalism has been linked with terrorism (Coulson, 2004).

According to an article in *The Times (February 24 2014)* newspaper the number of Saudi jihadists, who joined the war in Syria and Iraq, is close to 3000. Theses jihadists are strongly connected to al-Qaeda, the terrorist network.

Raley and Preyer (2010) have raised the previous questions in their book *"Philosophy of Education in the Era of Globalization"*. These questions include challenges and issues that also need to be raised and discussed seriously in the context of Saudi Arabia; many indicators highlight a serious flaw in the actual system, as will be discussed later. Additionally, the argument that educational change theory is Anglo-centric and, therefore, not explored in non-western contexts, also needs to be examined in relation to the Saudi context.

On the other hand, where viewing the neoliberal education as an economic catalyst to reform education, it is believed that "educational institutions in Saudi Arabia are expected to cater for the new market and to create a more competitive market for the students to flourish in their creativity" (Elyas & Al-Sadi, 2013, p. 57). However, Rugh (2002) and Prokop (2003) argue that the style of teaching at schools takes the shape of rote learning; it ignores using new learning approaches such as discussion between students and teachers, collaboration and creative thinking as well as the centralised control system.

The themes emerging in this chapter so far highlight issues related to innovation and school reform exemplified in the Tatweer Schools system in the Saudi context. The Tatweer Programme has been introduced in Saudi Arabia as a response to the global situation. However, there is no information available on how it is working in practice or being

experienced "on the ground" by the leaders and teachers. This study attempts to fill this gap.

The next section discusses school reform as one of the main outcomes of globalization, and provides two examples of the most popular reforms that have taken place in both Western and Arabic contexts.

2.4   School Reform

Educational change theory has been concerned with school effectiveness since 1960s. This was when the Plowden Report (1967) in Britain and also the Coleman Report (1966) in the USA examined the academic success patterns and failure across primary schools. Following this many efforts were made to investigate school effectiveness as a key concept to educational change (Morley & Rassool, 1999).

> Over the last twenty-five years or so, the school improvement research base has gained prominence and recognition on the international stage. In both a theoretical and empirical sense it has matured through a wide range of successful projects, interventions and innovations across a range of countries, about how to help schools become increasingly effective learning environments for all their students. Since the early 1980s we have learned much about how to improve individual schools but successful efforts at systemic improvement have remained elusive (Hopkins, Harris, Stoll, & Mackay, 2011, p. 1) .

Improving the quality and access to education is a priority in many countries to achieve school effectiveness. It is believed that most research concerned with school effectiveness uses students' results as the indicator of quality (Pennycuick, 1993).

As stated earlier, the value of international learning assessments such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Education Management Information Systems (EMISs), and Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) have been appreciated, where many countries have participated in nationally and internationally benchmarked assessments. The data from these international assessment programs are useful to leverage change for better learning outcomes and improved service delivery (Bruns et al., 2011). However, "the debate about standards has gone global, with both government and opposition parties seeking to strengthen their arguments with international examples" (Bangs, MacBeath, & Galton, 2011, p. 128). Moreover, there is a real concern in the literature with the standards, as education is more complex than the result of the examination. In addition, it has emphasised the concern of value for money in education (Morley & Rassool, 1999), where investing in education is the main factor that affects the economic growth. Mainly, "government(s) struggled to develop new education policies that would, they hoped, be both less costly and more effective" (Levin, 2001, p. 11). Haddad, Carnoy, Rinaldi, and Regel (1990) state that:

> Educational investment has been one of the most important factors contributing to economic growth; that expenditures on education contribute positively to labor productivity; that the economic payoff to spending on education from both a private and public standpoint is high, in absolute terms and compared to other investments (Haddad et al., 1990 p. 3).

The demand for investment in education is strongly indicated by stakeholders worldwide. However, there is little evidence that the capability of the existing educational system's policies will produce higher performance (Harris et al., 2003). Since the 1980s, enhancement in the quality of education have been pursued through policies and reforms on at least three common grounds: standardisation of education, greater focus on literacy and numeracy, in order to improve student achievement; and ensuring rigorous accountability of schools (McLaughlin & Rouse, 2000; Sahlberg, 2007).

At this point, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by school reform; "The terms 'school reform' and 'school improvement' are usually taken to be synonyms… the word 'reform' also commonly implies change on a grand scale that occurs over months, perhaps years… further, by definition, school reform is a deliberate, planned intervention to improve some aspects of the operation of schools" (Angus, 1998, pp. 1-2). School improvement is concerned with the school's capability to lead the change and also with students' achievement (Reynolds, Hopkins, Potter, & Chapman, 2001). The relationship between these concepts is that when governments want to improve education they want to restructure the education system, where school restructuring is regarded as a key component in educational reform and also dominated efforts of school improvement (Harris, 2002). "The word "reform" often has a positive normative character, implying something desirable" (Levin, 2001, p. 19).

It is also important to differentiate between these terms and the school effectiveness where this term was seen as:

> a great deal more than maximising academic achievement. Learning and the
> love of learning; personal development and self-esteem; life skills, problem
> solving and learning how to learn; the development of independent thinkers
> and well-rounded confident individuals; all rank as highly or more highly as
> the outcomes of effective schooling a success in a narrow range of
> academic disciplines (McGaw, Piper, Banks, & Evans, 1992, p. 174).

School effectiveness is part of school improvement and school reform where it is the key practical value of the two concepts. "School improvement has been studied extensively for more than two decades, but change in schools has been problematic" (Lunenburg, 2013). Fullan (2007) argues, "Reform is not just putting in place the latest policy. It means changing the cultures of the classrooms, the schools, the districts, the universities, and so on. There is much more to educational reform than most people realize" (Fullan, 2007, p. 7). Therefore, it is a complicated notion that is framed by various elements to be identified. There is also a need to be explicit about the precise meaning of the term 'school reform'; in this research,

"school reform" will refer to the positive and planned changes that aim to enhance school performance and students' achievement.

The example of school reform addressed in this research relates to the Tatweer Project undertaken in Saudi Arabia. The Tatweer Project represents comprehensive reform that aims to transform the education system in this country. The reasons for reforming education in Saudi Arabia vary; there are both external and internal demands. After the event of September 11, 2001, it was required that the policies regarding education must be altered in Saudi Arabia. Their curriculum must not contain any subject that emphasises extremism (Prokop, 2003). Thorough evaluation of the curriculum has been demanded by officials within and outside the nation in order to refrain from introducing such concepts into the classroom. King Abdullah facilitated the implementation of the Tatweer Project, which requires improvement within the educational system and managing the issues present in the curricula of the schools are under his reign (Mathis, 2010). Further, external challenges are represented in globalization, global competition, maintenance of the culture and the information revolution. In contrast, internal challenges are represented in a broad geographic area; divergent population; population growth; reliance on oil as a main economic source; educational environment; educational culture; and the teaching profession. Moreover, the education system tends to be centralised where the fiscal and administrative authority can be found within the Ministry of Education. By doing this, schools and educational administrations in each region are not equipped to develop or confront any urgent challenges. Another important challenge was the level of student achievement, which was poor compared with their counterparts in other countries, according to (TIMSS) in Maths and Science. There is also a lack of scientific criteria from which to judge schools' performance, quality and outcomes (*King Abdulla Bin Abdul-Aziz Project for Public Educational Development, 2011*). All these challenges are considered plausible reasons to rethink the actual system and attempt to reform and upgrade its standards. These reasons will be discussed in more detail in the data analysis chapters.

Generally, to reform the education in large-scale, governments tend to deal with common factors such as curriculum, accountability, governance, market forces, and status of teachers

(Hopkins & Levin, 2000). Bruns et al. (2011) argue that new reforms have to be subjected to rigorous evaluation to investigate their impacts on cost-effectiveness, which help to strengthen accountability to examine whether these reforms have achieved the desires goal and who benefit and at what public cost. They state that:

> Governments universally mediate the market for education because the sector suffers from a set of market failures that government intervention can rectify. As a result, the users of education services—parents and children—are also principals trying to ensure that their country's Ministry of Education establishes a system that produces the high-quality education they demand. This sequential set of principal-agent problems demands a more complex system of incentives and accountability (Bruns et al., 2011, p. 11).

However, there are many challenges that face educational reform internationally; the major and more important is embracing globalization (Hopkins et al., 2011). These educational movements in the era of globalisation, however, would affect education sectors in nations worldwide. As a developing country, Saudi Arabia is attempting to adopt the best practices and models nationally and internationally, in order to reform its education system, by introducing Tatweer schools' system.

2.4.1 Example of educational reform

In this section, the researcher discusses an example of Finland's reform, which is regarded as a successful education reform according to numerous studies (Angus, 1998; Bangs et al., 2011; Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2009; Pyhalto, Pietarinen, & Soini, 2012; Andreas Schleicher, 2006). Another example given in this section is the experience of educational reform in Qatar.

Finland reform

The strong point of Finland's policy reforms has been the fact that the policy makers did not only rely on maximizing returns from the prevailing paradigms of educational policy and structure, but systematically went overboard to develop one with the objective of completely transcending and changing the basic beliefs and patterns defining the direction and output of educational policy and practice (Schleicher, 2006). However, in any educational reform "a considerable body of research in education and other policy fields lays out the difficulties of moving from policy to practice" (Levin, 2001, p. 20), but the example of Finland's reform has shown success in transferring its policy into real practices. One of the main reforms instituted by Finnish policy reformers was to establish a linkage between high expectations and strong support systems at different school levels to entice instructors and schools to get engaged in higher responsibility for the learning outcomes of each student (Schleicher, 2006), as a successful school can be identified when its students develop more than the expectancy of its intake. Relative to other schools that have the same intake, this school most likely adds greater values to the students' results (Sammons & Bakkum, 2011).

Generally in Finland, schools enjoy great autonomy and are well-trained in designing their own teaching programs, creating their school time tables, establishing operating schedules, setting their learning standards and selecting student assessment criteria. Most schools work towards high standards that they have set for themselves instead of working towards the ones imposed on them externally. In Finland, it cannot be expected for someone to be a school teacher unless he/she has a fairly high level of general knowledge alongside social skills, people skills and a sense of morality and purpose (Sahlberg, 2013). Finland has experimented with greater autonomy rendered to teachers and schools with different timetables for each school in due compliance with the national curriculum teaching arrangements made within schools' resources. This seems unachievable in an inflexible education system.

Additionally, Finland's education system focuses on learning rather than preparing students to pass the examinations; schools originating from trust have established the formal system (Berry & Sahlberg, 2006; Sahlberg, 2007). Parents have a trust in teachers for providing the

best possible professional advice for their children, and the trust based culture generally grows and thrives in an environment which is corruption free and has good governance (Sahlberg, 2007). Indeed, "Social trust is a vital part of any country's education system as it is for its society as a whole. It is also worth asking whether social trust is heretic or inclusive" (Bangs et al., 2011, p. 132). Bangs et al. (2011) maintains that:

> There is substantial agreement that cultural factors explain much of the difference in attitudes to children, to their achievement and to the essential purposes of education. For example, Nordic countries believe that exerting pressure on children at too early an age is likely to be dysfunctional, while in Britain the importance to compete and deliver results has a long, and sometimes dishonourable, history (Bangs et al., 2011, p. 129).

Furthermore, shared vision and an acceptable value system drive sustainable leadership which is the key feature of Finland's education policy (Sahlberg, 2007). Fullan (2009) reveals that Finland has shown to the world in 1997–2002 that a country with a mid-sized population base such as 5 million people can transform itself into a visionary society with a commitment. Sahlberg (2007) explains that the approach adopted by the Finnish to improve learning of the student body involves a long-term vision, and a strong values-based system. According to Andreas Schleicher:

> Finland is not alone in having a strong values-based educational system, which all major parties share. The Nordic countries in Europe … have very strong systems… they have clearly defined values… they have coherence in what they do and what they say and they have this link between their intentions and what is done and what is achieved (Bangs et al., 2011, p. 132).

Schleicher (2006) indicates that schools worldwide have rapidly accepted the best practices of the educational system, by influencing teachers to engage in a greater range of teaching and instructional strategies. This customizes learning experiences for each individual student to enable students to tailor timetables to their specific needs. This also expanded the cultural resilience and adaptability to understand the individual and more specific knowledge and skills background of each student and his or her skills set. Likewise, it enabled understanding of the student's individual aptitude levels and their aspirations and goals and the need thereof to assess individual bespoke needs to be addressed through diverse and highly tailored teaching strategies.

To illustrate this, a network of schools that fosters, encourages and entices innovation and creativity spread across the country and has been a major contributory factor in making Finnish schools and its educational system a great success with strong productivity at school level. Finland has strongly supported its policies with robust systems that enabled spreading of a network of schools. This support is to expand and produce a sharing of experience of innovations in collaboration with the school and educational authorities (Schleicher, 2006). Finland also allows their professionally trained set of teachers to apply ideas that suit their own judgments. These ideas come largely from the teachers' own skills and knowledge and the professional expertise that they have and the experience that they develop from their day-to-day work. The idea generation is also sourced through teachers' roots in the community and their own perceptions about the developmental work that they are part of and are making it happen (Pyhalto et al., 2012). The existence of this network goes a long way in explaining the success achieved by Finland in creating a school system that is able to produce a predictable and consistently strong school performance within a variation of 5% in student performance that prevails and appears in school comparisons as stated in the latest PISA (Schleicher, 2006).

As learning communities, schools portray complex multi-layered perspectives of practice. Opportunities exist for agency, aversion, opposition and resistance with invariable possibilities of stress to emerge during interactions between different stakeholders in this context. Therefore, the professional role of teachers' agency is very much embedded within

deeply involving and yet professional three-way discussions with the teachers, students and parents, and with the members of the community of school (Pyhalto et al., 2012, p. 100).

Finally, findings by OECD (2004) reveals that Finnish students report to have been undergoing lower degrees of stress and anxiety as compared to their counterparts in other countries (Sahlberg, 2007).

Qatar reform

An example of a recent educational reform in the Middle East was in Qatar, "the Qatari leadership selected a system-wide structural reform plan that encouraged qualified persons with innovative ideas … to apply to run new government-funded schools, called Independent schools, under contracts with the government. The reform plan was based on four principles: autonomy, accountability, variety, and choice" (Zellman et al., 2009, p. xv). The academic years of 2004 to 2006 have been evaluated for the reform made during these years (Barnowe-Meyer, 2013; Guarino & Tanner, 2012).

> Independent schools were to be allowed more autonomy to direct teacher recruitment, hiring, and retention than were Ministry schools, where principals and teachers were assigned to their positions by the Ministry of Education … Independent school teachers were more likely than their Ministry counterparts to report having engaged in professional development activities consistent with the reform's expectations: instructional methods, approaches to assessment, use of technology, strategies for teaching students with different abilities, curriculum planning, and the new Qatar curriculum standards (Zellman et al., 2009, p. xix).

These reforms were the most vulnerable to resistance during these years and many changes were introduced. At that time, the strength of independent schools of the K 12 students in Qatar amounted to some 18% during that year. The growth of independent schools was due to

the ministry schools converting to independent schools completing in April 2010. Average per pupil funding of independent schools in the first year of operation in 2004-5 was estimated to be 18913 QR (3453.5138 GBP) and remained at that level during 2005-6 and the total expenses for independent schools exceed the funding allowed to them (Guarino & Tanner, 2012).

As noted, one of the main elements of Qatar's schools was to maintain a system of keeping the independent schools accountable for fiscal accountability for the students learning. Since accountability cannot be effective and attractive enough along with being accompanied by autonomy to run the schools for any private investor educators, the investors or the operators were initially offered unchecked autonomy and freedom in matters such as staff selection, pedagogy and allocation of resources; and the parents were also offered a degree of school choice (Guarino & Tanner, 2012). According to Zellman et al. (2009) school reform that represented the model of independent school showed success in the early period of implementing the reform; the most remarkable improvement was accounting for student achievement compared with their counterparts in Ministry schools. However, "accountability-oriented reforms in education … take place in a broader context of public sector policies and management. They are influenced by, and interact with, this context in several ways. Context of broad public sector reform; Context of public sector dysfunction; Context of political power; Context of influence on public sector accountability" (Bruns et al., 2011, pp. 21-22). Therefore, this type of reform would be influenced by the context and attitude of the government mode. Moreover, compared to the culture of teacher trust in Finland, some parents, principals and teachers in Qatari independent schools have raised a concern about the ability of teachers to perform the function of curriculum development (Zellman et al., 2009).

The lessons learnt from Qatar's experience in school restructuring efforts offer both encouragement and caution. These lessons are useful for other nations especially in the Gulf region and for those planning to embark upon major restructuring drives which can be useful for many countries (Guarino & Tanner, 2012).

This chapter discussed key issues related to school effectiveness and educational reform. It concluded by describing school reform and giving two examples of the most successful reform in Finland at the international level, and in Qatar as an Arabic example, since Qatar has very similar educational features and also culture to Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 3 presents the background and information on the educational system of Saudi Arabia.

Chapter Three: The Saudi Arabian Context

3.1   Introduction

Following the discussion on globalisation, this chapter will describe the background of Saudi Arabia in terms of geographical, historical, economic, demographical and its educational policy. This is to provide an overview of the setting in which the educational reform was initiated and introduced. The history of women's education will also be discussed in this chapter to highlight the shifts in the stages of improving girls' education. The reason for this lies in the fact that the schools in the study were girls' schools.

3.2   The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

3.2.1 Location, borders and areas
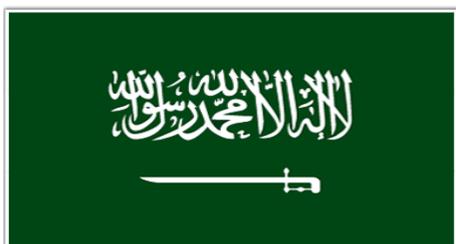
Figure 3- 1: The Saudi Arabia Flag[3]

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[3] Saudi Map: The Arabic form phrase in the flag means "There is no god but Allah; Muhammad is His Messenger." and the sword is another symbol of this country.

Figure 3- 2: Saudi Arabia map location within the Greater Middle East[4]

Figure 3- 3: Saudi Arabia boarders[5]

As can be seen in Figures 3-2 and 3-3 The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is located in the Middle East; Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait to the north, Red Sea to the west, Yemen to the south, Oman to the southeast, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Emirates and the Arabian Gulf border it to the east. It has a total land size of 2,149,690 km². The capital is Riyadh, which is located in the centre. The country is divided into 13 provinces, each area contains a number of districts; a total of 134 districts cover the whole country (SGS, 2012).

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[4] Source: WorldAtlas available online on http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/me.htm
[5] Source: ibid

3.2.2 History

The history of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia started nearly three centuries ago from the mid-18th century during three phases (MEI, 2009). The first stage started when Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdul Wahab called for reform (Bubshait, 2008). Mohammed bin Abdul Wahab, was the founder of the Wahhabi ideology of Saudi Arabia. This ideology is associated with the unification of the country during the first phase. Moussalli (2009) reports that:

> Wahhabism started as a theological reform movement, having the goal of calling (*da'wa*) people to restore the 'real' meaning of *tawhid* (oneness of God or monotheism) and to disregard and deconstruct 'traditional' disciplines and practices that evolved in Islamic history such as theology and jurisprudence and the traditions of visiting tomes and shrines of venerated individuals. Such disciplines and practices are classified as *shirk* (polytheism), *kufr* (unbelief in God), *ridda* (apostasy), and *bida'* (innovations)… Wahhabism prohibits many practices in which other Muslims engage, such as … following any *madhahib* (schools) of Islamic jurisprudence, which in fact constitutes Sunni orthodoxy (Moussalli, 2009, p. 4).

The second phase began from 1820 until 1891, established by Imam Faisal bin Turki and ended with the seizure of the Al-Rashid government and the expulsion of the Al-Saud family from the area. This stage had the same idea as the Mohammed bin Abdul Wahab movement (Darwish, 1980). The third phase, which is the current one was established in 1932, when the founder of the Kingdom, King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud, gained control over Riyadh following several military campaigns (MEI, 2009).

3.2.3 Demography

In 2014 the total Saudi population amounted to 30,770375 (CDSI, 2014); the average male population is 50.9% and the female population is 49.1% (SGS (2012). The area of Mecca (the holy capital of Muslims) is the most populous region of the Kingdom, with a population of about 25.5% of the total of the Kingdom's population, followed by the Riyadh region (the setting of the study), about 25%, and the eastern region about 15.1%. The northern border region is the least populated region and is inhabited by about 1.2% of the total population of the Kingdom (SGS, 2012).

3.2.4 The regime

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been "ruled by the Al Saud family since its founding in 1932, wields significant global political and economic influence as the birthplace of the Islamic faith and by virtue of its large oil reserves" (Blanchard, 2014). The most important and relevant to education principle of the basic law and regulations of the regime, issued in 1992 include:

> Article 9: The family is the nucleus of Saudi Society. Members of the family shall be raised in the Islamic Creed, which demands allegiance and obedience to God, to His Prophet and to the rulers, respect for and obedience to the laws, and love for and pride in the homeland and its glorious history.

> Article 12: Consolidation of national unity is a duty. The State shall forbid all activities that may lead to division, disorder and partition.

> Article 13: The aim of education is to implant the Islamic Creed in the hearts of all youths, to help them acquire knowledge and skills, to qualify them to become useful members of their society, to love their homeland and take pride in its history. Ownership, capital and labour are basic components of the economic and social entity of the Kingdom. They are

personal rights which perform a social function in accordance with the Islamic Sharia.

Article 20: No taxes or fees shall be imposed, except in need and on a just basis. Imposition, amendment, cancellation or exemption shall take place according to the provisions of the Law.

Article 22: Economic and social development shall be carried out according to a fair, wise plan (Henderson, 2009, pp. 29-32).

It is apparent that Saudi laws are highly influenced by Islamic values in its policies and practices. They focus on the obedience of God and the Law. The country is considered as wealthy as the economy relies on its oil reserves, which provide prosperity and growth to the country.

3.2.5 The Economy

The Saudi government has been a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) since 11 December 2005 (Hertog, 2008), which resulted in the emergence of an important aspect in the path of economic reform, which relates to how to deal efficiently with flexibility and the economic implications of globalization. The role of the WTO in this respect is "to ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible" (WTO, 2014d). The most important economic challenges caused by the phenomenon of globalization can be seen in intensified competition between national products and their foreign counterparts, which may create an unequal competitive environment. This requires the need to take effective economic measures and policies to improve the competitiveness of national products. Removing the tariff barriers and securing trade liberalization and openness to the global economy might not be significant challenges for the national economy of Saudi government, where the real challenges are concentrated in the diversification of the economic base (Mahboob, 2006). The first Trade Policy Review by the WTO of Saudi Arabia took place on December 2011 and states that:

Saudi Arabia's development strategy has resulted in a positive economic performance during 2005-10…. Saudi Arabia is taking steps to boost its participation in the multilateral trading system, commensurate with its growing importance worldwide, including through the establishment of its WTO mission in June 2010 (WTO, 2011, pp. vii-viii).

"The oil-driven booms and busts of the 1970s and 1980s have, over the past two decades, given way to comparatively steady growth in the Saudi economy" (Fayad, Raissi, Rasmussen, & Westelius, 2012, p. 4). It improved in 1997 and then dropped in 1998 due to the decline of oil prices, and improved again in 2000 and then reduced in 2001 and 2002 due to the events of September 11 and then came back to growth in 2003 (Mahboob, 2006). This would suggest that the conditions and crises of globalization could affect the booms and growth on the Saudi economy.

According to the ACC (2013) report government spending was 285.2 billion SR (50.1952 billion GBP) in the year 2004, which increased at an accelerated pace, reaching 853 billion Riyals in 2012 with a compound growth rate of 14.7% and optimism about the continuity of this spending to be 862 billion SR in 2013 and 885 billion SR in 2014. This is due to the needs of the public in requiring infrastructure and ambitious aspirations to provide general civil services distributed around the Kingdom. According to the figures released by the Ministry of Economy and Planning, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew at 4.2% since 2004 until 2013. The growth of the private sector reflects the increase of fixed capital and investment by10.7%, which is a healthy index, where the private sector or non-oil sector had growth at a rate of 5.7% between 2004 and 2010 (ACC, 2013). "Activity in the non-oil sector has been particularly robust and has in recent years been accounting for a growing share of real GDP" (Fayad et al., 2012, p. 4).

There is an agreement between authorities and staff that the priority of labour market policies

in Saudi Arabia is to increase the engagement of Saudi citizens in the private sector and also to support initiatives of Saudi competitiveness in this sector (IMF, 2013, p. 12). The report of BTI (2012) emphasises that:

> The Saudi private sector has matured considerably in recent decades, and has more sophisticated managerial structures than most of its peers in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. It has been dealt a heavy blow by the international financial crisis, but the government still counts on it for long-term job creation and diversification (BTI, 2012, p. 4).

This growth in the private sector would provide work opportunities and create private projects that would help to decrease the rate of Saudi unemployment and also would decrease the reliance on oil as a main source of the country.

3.2.6 Diversity

The citizens of Saudi Arabia are predominantly Muslims; the majority belong to the Hanbali Islamic School, where the Wahhabi ideology is the interpretative approach of Shariah law. Originally, King Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud adopted a positive approach towards religious minorities through giving freedoms to religious followers to ensure political loyalty to the state. This was done despite strong opposition by the Wahhabi religious leaders allied with him at the time (Alshyeb, 2013). Nevertheless, this situation did not last; Wahhabism a branch of Sunni Islam following the Hanbali School tradition, which adopts a strict interpretation of Sharia Law, is the official religion in the state. It controls all religious, judicial, educational institutions and does not officially acknowledge the other Islamic sects in Saudi Arabia. This has resulted in the emergence of social tensions and a sense of marginalization and exclusion by the followers of the rest of the Islamic sects (Alshyeb, 2013). There are minorities in two regions: in the east there are Twelver Shi'ite Muslims, and in the south there are Ismaili Muslims, which are other branches of Islam (BTI, 2012). In addition there are also other minorities including Eastern Orthodox Christians, Sikhs and

Buddhists living in the country.

Therefore, the most important reform in education regarding this issue is to respect and include other minorities in the curricula and also by setting regulations to consider minorities and acknowledging their existence. However, this is not regarded in the current Saudi educational reform.

The following section articulates the Saudi policy regarding education.

3.3   Educational Policy in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is a nation where the Islamic Code of life is being practiced in all aspects from personal habits to the education system. This Code influences national policy-making as well as all regulations and laws. Children are required to attend 6 years of primary, 3 years of intermediate and 3 years of secondary schooling in order to complete their education. Education at all these levels is free of charge for all students ("Document of the educational policy of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia," 1970). It has been taught in all levels the following subjects: Math, Science, Islamic Studies, Arabic Language, Social Studies, Arts, Home Economics and Civics. There is no Music, Drama, Dancing, or lessons that teach about different type of religions and ideologies. Therefore, these types of curricula need to be considered as they build the spiritual, social, cultural, and moral side of learners. The reason of preventing these topics is because of the Wahhabism ideology that forbids these things to be practiced or learnt. Evidently, Moussalli (2009) points out that "Wahhabism prohibits many practices in which other Muslims engage, such as listening to certain types of music, drawings of human beings or other living things that contain a soul, praying while visiting tombs (including Prophet Mohammed's tomb)" (Moussalli, 2009, p. 4). Therefore, it is difficult for policy-makers to exceed this boundary, as the ideology is dominant on policies and practices.

In addition, the curriculum focus on preparing students for exams by concentrating on

reciting and memorizing the content of a textbook, and ignores the application of knowledge, innovation and research. These ways have impacted on students negatively and make the exams a 'nightmare' for the students (Hakeem, 2012).

On the other side, the General Presidency for Girls' Education was the body that monitors and leads girls' schools in Saudi Arabia and the Ministry of Education was responsible for boys' education from 1960 until 2002. This body was combined with the Ministry of Education as a result of a claim by the government and public after a sad and serious incident in the city of Mecca in March 2002. The story of this incident started with a fire in a primary school for girls in Mecca, and the religious police intervened in this situation by preventing firemen from accessing the school to rescue girls and teachers, the reason they gave being that the teachers inside the school may not be wearing their scarfs. This inhuman action resulted in the death of 15 girls. The public's dissatisfaction about the General Presidency for Girls' Education following the incident encouraged the integration of this body with the Ministry of Education (Hamdan, 2005; Prokop, 2003). The behavior of these religious police is as a result of their belief, as they think that women should cover their faces and that it is forbidden to them to take off the Hijab.

Another serious event that has affected Saudi education is the events of September 11, 2001, where it was required that the policies regarding education should be altered in Saudi Arabia (Prokop, 2003). "Many authors in the West and East have claimed that the Saudi Educational system has been under scrutiny by different organizations and political spheres in the world after 9/11" (Elyas & Al-Sadi, 2013). Mathis (2010) argues that since this event, there has been significant pressure from inside and outside the country for the Saudi Government to evaluate the education system. According to Prokop (2003) their curriculum must not consist of any subject that stresses extremism. The author also reported that there is heavy religious extremism in the curriculum based on Wahhabi ideology against unbelievers, Jewish, Christian, Sufi and Shi'a, and that this ideology also affected education in Pakistan and Afghanistan (Prokop, 2003).

Thorough evaluation of the curriculum has been demanded by officials within and outside the country in order to prevent the introduction or presence of extremist ideas in the classroom. As part of the drive to address these issues, the King Abdullah Project introduced new educational reform programmes. This includes the implementation of the Tatweer Project, which requires improvement within the education system and managing the issues present in the school curriculum (Mathis, 2010). This project will be discussed later in the data analysis and discussion chapters.

The Higher Education Ministry and the Ministry of Education have been combined to be one Ministry called the Ministry of Education in 2015. It has appointed Dr Azzam Al Dakhil to be the minister of this ministry (MoE, 2015). The previous Minister Prince Khalid Bin Faisal has been appointed to govern Mecca (the holy city). These changes occurred with the new government after the death of King Abdullah bin Abdualziz on 23 January 2015.

3.4   History of women's education in Saudi Arabia

Before 1960, women in Saudi Arabia were only provided with informal education. The girls were required to be educated at home to prevent them from being exposed to society. Some parents sent their daughters only to the school of Kutab (religious schools) where they would learn how to recite the Quran. Others sent their daughters to learn about the religion as well as other subject matters so that they may be able to use this knowledge as an effective wife, mother or daughter. These women were not allowed to complete their higher education. The rest of the individuals allowed their daughters to not only receive primary and intermediate education but they also allowed them to attend college (Al Rawaf & Simmons, 1991).

Religious opposition existed against all these aspects as the culture of the society found it unacceptable for women to attend schools or colleges (Al Rawaf & Simmons, 1991; Roy, 1992). Al Rawaf and Simmons (1991) attribute this situation to the culture of Saudi society during this period, which considered studying as unacceptable for women, and not to the religion. Since that time, several schools were established; there was a rapid growth in the

number of schools and classrooms, fifteen primary schools for girls in 1960/61, and reached 3370 primary schools, 958 intermediate schools and 415 secondary schools by 1988. This was due to the fact that young educated Saudi men tended to marry foreign educated women because there was a lack of educated Saudi women, which resulted in King Saud establishing formal schools for women in 1959 (Al Rawaf & Simmons, 1991).

At that time, the people, politicians and specifically the *ulama* (clerics) resisted any change in the education system. Almalki (2004) attributes this resistance and the attack on education to fear of allowing the education sector to compete with the Wahhabi ideology. This situation existed since the first phase of the Saudi state. "The modern Saudi state emerged in the midst of this difficult situation and its leaders required great wisdom to convince their own people of the importance of education" (Bubshait, 2008, p. 19). There was a significant shift in the *ulama's* attitudes and their religious followers towards education. This shift represented the movement of preventing accessing education in general, and then women's education, in particular, to approve and acknowledge the need to educate women, and then to be leaders in education (*ulama* and their followers) (Alsadhan, 2012).

It would appear that the idea of the *ulama's* change in stance was to not threaten their position in controlling Saudi society. However, Prince Khalid Bin Faisal (previous Minister of Education) had a plan to not allow them again to hold any significant position in education. This was emphasised in his speech in the media on 26th May 2014. He emphasised that:

> One of the main reasons for the spread of extreme thought is to give them
> (extreme leaders) the opportunity in the areas of education and other areas,
> and the field was all for them, and there is no field to the thought of the Saudi,
> who has a Moderation Approach. We abandon our children and they
> kidnapped them. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia exists between two severe
> currents; the power of extremism ideology and the atheistic current. These
> have flanked the Arab and Islamic region as a whole. There are those who
> disbelief the society and those who try to abandon Islam; no doubt these affect

us in the Kingdom. This conflict found a vacuum in the Kingdom, because we are all in the arena; we left the arena to them. In schools too, the arena has been left to them.... Islam does not reject urbanization, modernization, systems development, development in the curriculum, development in everyday life, nor any development in construction, urban planning and the reconstruction of all kinds of life. We must build our civilization and our trendy gains on our principles and Islamic rules... to build the future of this country and build the personal youth of this country based on Islamic principles and values, taking advantage of all the achievements of the modern era; this is what we are seeking now in the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2014).

إن من أهم أسباب انتشار الفكر المتشدد هو اعطاؤهم الفرصة في مجالات التعليم وغيره ، وكان الميدان كله لهم ، وليس هناك ميدان للفكر السعودي المعتدل .. تخلينا عن أبنائنا فاختطفوهم منا .. المنطقة كلها تعيش بين تيارين شديدين: التيار التكفيري والتيار الالحادي ، هذه التيارات تحف المنطقة العربية والاسلامية كلها، هناك من يكفر وهناك من يحاول التخلي عن الاسلام ، ولا شك أنها أثرت علينا داخل المملكة ... هذا الصراع أوجد فراغا في المملكة ، لأننا كلنا تركنا الساحة لهم ، والمدارس كذلك ، فكانت الأنشطة كلها لهم ، لا يوجد نشاط معتدل يمثل الفكر السعودي ، الذي يتصف ويتميز بالاعتدال ، الفكر السعودي الذي قامت عليه هذه البلاد وهو التمسك بالقيم والمباديء الاسلامية ونبني عليها حضارتنا باستخدام كل وسائل التحضر والرقي والمعرفة الحديثة ... الاسلام لا يرفض استخدام التحضر والتجديد والتطوير في الأنظمة والمناهج والحياة اليومية والبناء وتخطيط المدن وكل أنواع الحياة ، لا بد أن نبني حضارتنا ومكتسباتنا العصرية على مبادئنا وقواعدنا الاسلامية التي قامت عليها هذه الدولة ، وهذا ما يمثل منهج الاعتدال السعودي ، وهذا ما نسعى اليه في وزارة التربية والتعليم

This speech reflects the real need of reforming the policy of education in Saudi Arabia. It suggests the intention to change the philosophical framework of education in Saudi Arabia.

Providing education for women is essential to societal development, and could contribute to improved family health and reduce children and female mortality rates. For example, UNESCO (2014) argue that in low income countries:

If all women completed primary education in these countries, the under-5 mortality rate would fall by 15%. If all women completed secondary education, it would fall by 49%, equal to around 2.8 million lives a year… If all women completed primary education, there would be 66% fewer maternal deaths, saving 189,000 lives per year. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, if all women completed primary education, there would be 70% fewer maternal deaths, saving 113,400 women's lives (UNESCO, 2014, pp. 14-15).

Therefore, there is a link between women's education and general health whether is it mental health or physical health. This, in turn, will contribute to raising social awareness. AlMunajjed (n.d) asserts that, as a result of developing education, Saudi women have experienced an improvement in many aspects of their social life; fertility and mortality rates have reduced, the number of females in the workplace has increased and improvements have been made in terms of health and nutrition.

Interestingly, there have been further developments in attempts to raise the status of women in Saudi Arabia. According to Blanchard (2014):

King Abdullah recognized women's right to vote and stand as candidates in the 2015 municipal council elections and expanded the size of the national Shura Council to include 30 women in the 2013 session. These moves, while controversial in the kingdom, have been seen by some outsiders as signs that managed, limited political and social reforms are possible (Blanchard, 2014, p. 3).

"This development provides educational opportunities to women and plays an important role in realizing equity between the two sexes in job opportunities"

(MOHE, 2010, p. 10). It also shows a significant shift in the policy and attitudes regarding women in the context of Saudi Arabia.

Another encouraging reform in Saudi Arabia is the appointment of Mrs. Noura Al-fayez in 2009, as the first Saudi woman to direct the education of girls as a Vice-Minister of Education, a position traditionally held by males (IHS, 2009; MOHE, 2010). This shift hopefully would lead to changes in girls' education, for example, allowing girls to do sport in schools as it is banned in their schools. Mathis (2010) argues that to achieve educational reform, it is necessary to understand the female principals' role at government schools and investigate the principals' perspectives of their role to inform improvement and changes in their schools. This would raise awareness of girls' needs in education, something that has historically been ignored by male leaders.

Driven by global imperatives, therefore, Saudi Arabia has introduced many reforms into its educational policy The most recent and important reform is the Tatweer Project, which was introduced by King Abdullah, and is aimed at improving the system by treating the issues related to teaching and curriculum in public schools as a priority (Mathis, 2010). This reform will be discussed in Chapter 7 of the data analysis and discussion.

This study is the first to investigate the perceptions and experiences of administrators and practitioners of the Tatweer Schools' system in Saudi Arabia, to seek in which aspects they are innovative and effective, and to examine the leadership which has been undertaken by such schools.

3.5   Conclusion

This chapter discussed the Saudi context. It was concluded that globalization has had a major impact on the Saudi educational context; the Saudi Arabia government realised that education

is an important driver for the prosperity and welfare of the country, and also that women play an important role in education. Hence, many reforms have been achieved in favour of women where appointing a woman as the Vice Minister of Education is considered a significant shift in the culture of Saudi society. The other important reform as a response of globalization demands is the Tatweer Project that was designed to semi-decentralise schools, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8. The most important shift recently by the previous Prime Minister is to move from allowing religious leaders to hold a critical position in the Ministry of Education to appoint sufficient leaders.

The next chapter presents the conceptual and theoretical framework for the thesis.

Chapter Four: Theoretical Concepts

4.1 Introduction

Saudi Arabia has a centralised educational system. The Tatweer Project is aimed at transforming the educational system from a centralised system to a decentralised one, and from working individually to working collaboratively and sharing responsibilities. The challenge is to delegate more powers and distribute the leadership to the schools' level, by transforming Tatweer schools into self-evaluation and planning schools (*King Abdulla Bin Abdul-Aziz Project for Public Educational Development, 2011*). The aim of this thesis is to investigate the perceptions and experiences of administrators and practitioners of the educational changes that have been adopted in the Tatweer Schools system. It is hoped that the perspectives of the participants will lead to an understanding of how they experience change within Tatweer schools.

This chapter discusses the theories that underpin this study, namely, decentralisation and distributed leadership. In order to explore these concepts further a number of sub themes are also introduced: for decentralisation, leading and managing change; and for distributed leadership, leadership development, teamwork, and professional learning communities.

4.2 Decentralisation

According to Gamage (2006), decentralisation is described as the broadening of decisions taken in any organisation. There are two main aspects of decentralisation: the decision-making levels, and decision-making domains. The level of decision-making can be determined by asking a question about the level of autonomy granted to schools. The domains of decision-making are divided into four categories: personnel management; policies of students; curricula and instruction; and financial resources. Decentralisation has become a

popular policy option in the policy frameworks of international agencies such as UNESCO and the World Bank (Blunkett, 2000; EC, 2007). This approach contrasts with centralisation, which relates to power being retained at the top levels of the organisation, which is then imposed on the rest of the organisation. A top-down approach is used in a centralised system, and a bottom-up approach is used in a decentralised organization. In decentralisation, humans are regarded as active subjects, rather than objects, which results in wisdom, flexibility and initiative amongst members of the organisation. Conversely, centralisation constrains creativity and initiative lessening efficiency and the growth rate (Gamage, 2006). At the same time, organisations might be decentralised with regard to some functions and tasks, and relatively centralised in others. Therefore, we cannot imagine the existence of absolute centralisation, whereby the administrative head of the organisation restricts all powers. In practice this would mean, that there would be no assistant managers and, consequently, no organisational structure (Alothman, 2003).

There are various advantages associated with the process of decentralisation in education. It would not only benefit the education system but society as a whole. Decentralisation in education means creating devolved systems and delegating significant powers from the central government to the local authorities or even to the stakeholders in schools as well as giving the schools a degree of autonomy in their management and governance (EC, 2007; Gamage, 2006; Naidoo, 2005). Recent developments in educational management have heightened the need for decentralisation. It is argued that implementing decentralisation in schools would yield many benefits to schools and societies alike. It is believed that school autonomy in decision-making will lead to improved quality in schools and fund management, due to the fact that schools have been prepared to raise quality. This will, in turn, help improve students' achievement and reduce the dropout rate (Blunkett, 2000; EC, 2007). The report of PISA 2011 stated that "at the country level, the greater the number of schools that have the responsibility to define and elaborate their curricula and assessments, the better the performance of the entire school system" (OECD, 2011, p. 2). There may be self-governing schools with better flexibility in decision making than the centralised approach (Gamage, 2006). Coggburn (2005) argues that decentralisation in managing human resources would allow managers to make decisions regarding hiring staff faster with less red tape, and would be more responsive and effective.

A detailed description of a typical decentralised system is presented in Figure 4.1:
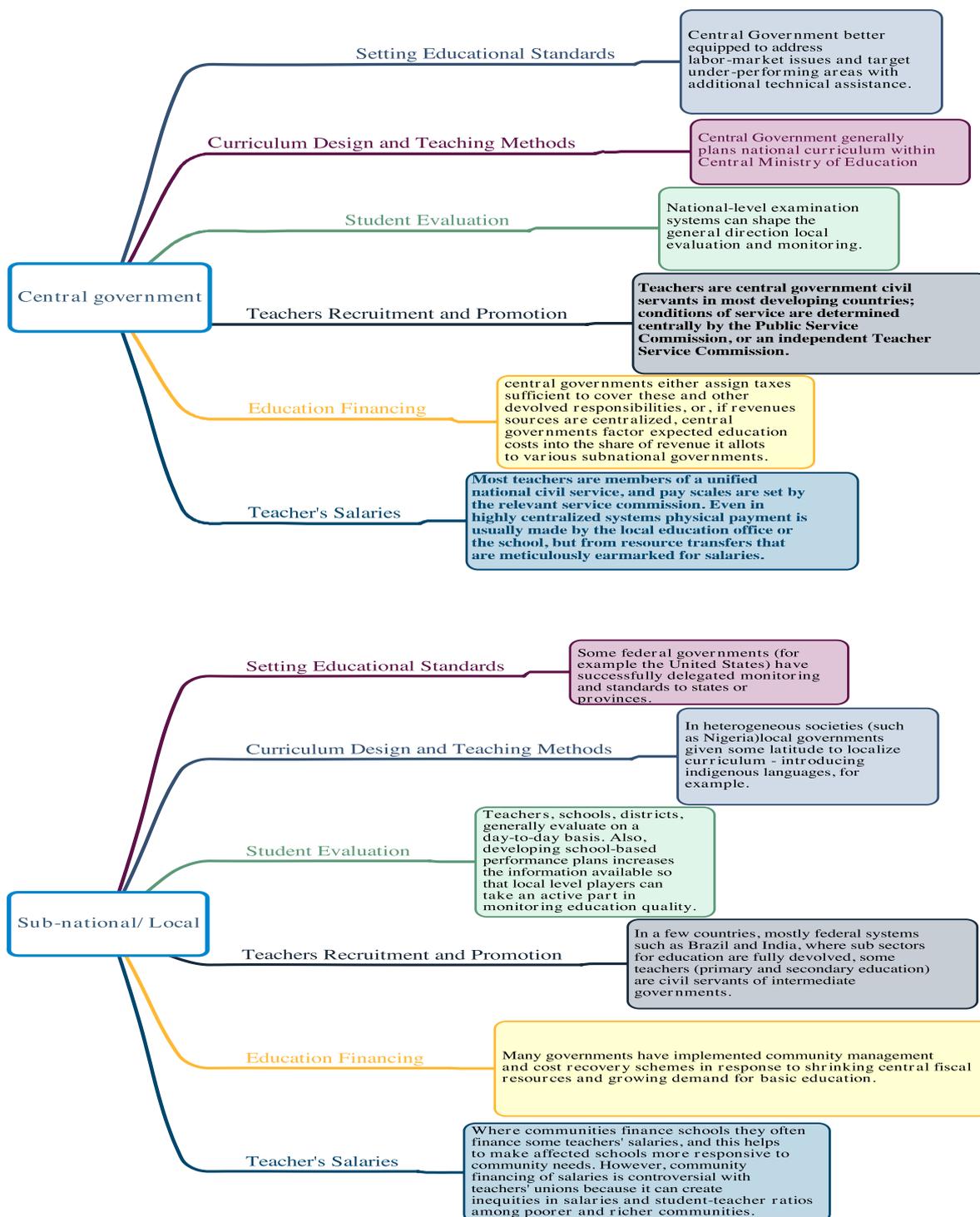
Figure 4- 1: Decentralisation model in education (WBI, n.d)

Figure 4.1 shows the functions of the central and sub-national authority in a decentralised system. This illustrates who decide for education and in what functions; these suggested functions are: Setting educational standards, curriculum design and teaching methods, students evaluation, teachers recruitment and promotion, education financing, and teachers' salaries (WBI, n.d). At schools level, a fundamental role for the local education board is to motivate and allow schools to be involved in the process of decision-making. Schools should be able to check and assess their important procedures and results. This would help with exact identification of the major areas for enhancement and growth. It will also enable them to recognise their successes and strengths (Woods & Cribb, 2001, p. 111). To achieve this, schools need to be empowered and authorised to decide the best for schools' population. For example, in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and several Australian and USA states, school boards employ and terminate academic and administrative staff, take decisions on budgetary matters and, under loose guidelines provided by the State, make decisions relating to the school curricula. Furthermore, schools have gained extensive powers to manage their internal local matters within a nationally binding framework (Naidoo, 2005). Interestingly, in France decisions linked to the general structure of education such as employing schools' staff and teachers, designing the curricula, setting the exam and assessment, training and school building and maintaining it, all take place at national level (Cole & John, 2001). However, improvements towards school empowerment reform and decentralisation initiatives have been preferred in this country (Derouet, 2009). Smith and Greyling (2006) suggest that empowering schools leads to professional prosperity and growth, in addition to its positive impact on school autonomy (Smith & Greyling, 2006).

As stated earlier, in the Saudi context, schools are renowned for having extremely centralised systems, with top-down decision making. There is a dearth of school autonomy and a great deal of bureaucracy, which restricts schools' function (Alzaidi, 2008b, p. 165). Responding to this, the Tatweer Project aims to transform schools into using bottom-up approaches in its decision-making by converting them into self-evaluation and planning schools. It is argued that self-evaluation is a robust approach that leads to achieve school improvement; the evidence indicates that schools in many countries that adopt this approach show a high level of students' achievement (Chapman & Sammons, 2013). Thus, it is argued that empowering school leaders as well as teachers giving them the authority to control the school would

enhance school effectiveness. Smith and Greyling (2006) suggest that school leaders ought to have complete control of their work and must have the ability to solve problems creatively. They must also be compensated commensurate to their level of skill, proficiency and innovation. More difficult tasks should be allocated to help them sustain and thrive through acquiring knowledge and skills; teachers must be engaged in goal-setting, and judging the curricula, content and instructional methods with full powers to control their work. This is echoed by Shindorf, Graham and Messner's (2004), argument that school leaders need to decide to empower teachers in relation to decision-making. Moreover, they must choose between relatively controlled, autocratic, top-down decision making and democratic methods of participative decision-making (Smith & Greyling, 2006, p. 598). Hence, participating in decision-making is one dimension of empowering teachers at schools, which helps to achieve consensus decision-making to solve problems within the school. Naidoo (2005) believes that reaching decisions by consensus relates to democracy. Democratic methods espouse open discussion and exchanges of ideas and perspectives in order to generate policy consensus. Furthermore, both these approaches share some commonalities as democracy mandates rule of law. Voting is a way of contributing to decision-making if agreements are not possible or are too costly to achieve. However, achieving a fine balance between fully controlled and decentralised decision-making has to be reached with an optimum balance between state-level control and common participation (Naidoo, 2005).

It has been argued that teaching does not happen in a vacuum and requires more autonomous interplay of roles instead of top-down authority, and professionally responsible attitudes instead of a bureaucratic responsibility must be instilled and reflected in professional practice beyond implementation of some pre-prescribed solutions (Sahlberg, 2013). It is also argued that the most successful leaders in education engage colleagues and partners in the decision-making process in order to benefit from the expertise, wisdom and talents of teachers, stakeholders and the student body. Furthermore, participative decision-making essentially encourages ownership of and commitment to the decision that has been taken (Duignan, 2007). A unified sense of direction shared by a diverse group of people yields greater opportunities to reach better decisions (Surowiecki, 2004). Alsaud (2009) notes that employee engagement in decision-making would motivate them, and such engagement may be activated with the purpose of making them feel important in contributing to the

governance of the organisation. Taking important decisions not only requires school participation, but also that of others who are related to these decisions. This is because these decisions require more thinking and the ability to persuade other people. As the school leader is interested in joint cooperation, exchanging opinions and discussing all suggestions and recommendations, they will succeed in taking decisions relevant to these important elements and persuading staff to implement these decisions (Ahmed, 1987).

Thus it would appear that decentralised decision-making in schools requires empowerment, democratic methods of participative decision-making, consensus decisions, voting on decisions, exchange of ideas and perspectives, collective decision-making and high morale thereby leading to a greater level of commitment and self-learning. This study, therefore, aims to explore the type of decision-making that is practiced by Tatweer members.

Before discussing the second main theory underpinning the study, namely, distributed leadership, the next section discusses key issues related to leading and managing educational change, as the Tatweer project aims to change the structure of Saudi educational system to be more decentralised.

4.2.1   Leading and managing educational change

The concept of change management

Change management is defined by Abuabed (2005) as to manage planned and organized efforts to achieve the desired objectives of the change through using proper material, human and technical resources available to the educational institution". Another definition by PMI (2013) that change management is "a comprehensive, cyclic, and structured approach for transitioning individuals, groups, and organizations from a current state to a future state with intended business benefits. It helps organizations to integrate and align people, process, structures, culture, and strategy" (PMI, 2013, p. 7). Change management can be defined in the context of this research as the organised activities that affect the performance of the

school to direct its scheme, to improve the status of school to be more effective than before, and to achieve its objectives through the optimal use of the available knowledge, skills and human resources.

Leading change

Leading change requires educational leaders to have knowledge, significant thoughts and strategies for a positive change (Abuabed, 2005). Additionally, leading change is relevant to spreading new thought, designing a new vision and working constantly to achieve this aim. In this study this is reflected in the roles occupied by the Tatweer Unit, Tatweer co-ordinators in schools and head teachers.

Leadership plays a vital role in leading change by defining a way for the organization and finding a motive for change (Alotaibi, 2005). It is believed that the leader should find a significant vision for the future of the organisation and to establish a strategic plan for the change, including the organisation's objectives. Manduca (2012) argues that; "One of the greatest challenges to carrying out change is recognizing there is a predictable and manageable process to follow to ensure success" (Manduca, 2012, p. 29). Therefore, leading change should not be random with unclear expectations.

The role of the school principal as a leader in leading change

The Principal is the development agent of the school who leads and supervises teachers. The Principal also has to have the ability to make developmental decisions that would initiate change in the school. Assadah (1998) notes the importance of the leading role played by the principal of the school, as they are the most influential individuals in the school's administrative structure.

Various skills and knowledge are required in order to play a significant role in developing education. Likewise required are: personal leadership abilities; taking into account the experience as a positive and powerful factor to leaders; developing a strategic plan and vision; adopting significant values, such as respect, self-censorship and trust; and, finally, learning from best practice worldwide in relation to the given context. Hannagan (2005) maintains that the role of the leader "is to organize, supervise and control people so that there is a productive outcome to work" (Hannagan, 2005, p. 5).

In complex educational institutions, such as schools, the managerial roles dealing with academic and administrative functions usually involve dealing with human elements and require premium quality people and skills to deal with the human component; especially during the implementation of a change strategy. Atawy (2004) states that there are fundamental considerations when change occurs in educational institutions:

- Educational leaders have to be convinced by the change, so they can persuade their subordinates to get on board.
- The change should be gradual and perfectly designed, when teachers successfully perform their role in the change, their confidence will increase.
- Using pressure methods on individuals to accept the change should be avoided.
- Individuals should be given the opportunity to practice the new skills that are required by the change, through undertaking appropriate training programmes.
- The change plan should include a vital system of feeding in order to benefit from past experiences and make necessary adjustments.

Furthermore, Hopkins et al. (2011) emphasise five phases to be considered when leading educational change by leaders to improve schools; these phases are: understanding the organizational culture of the school; action research and individual initiatives; emphasizing leadership and managing change; building capacity for learning at the local level; towards systemic improvement (Hopkins et al., 2011, p. 2). Considering the educational context

where the change is to be another important and vital consideration.

Resistance to change

Although change becomes one of the characteristics of many organisations, there are many people who resist it for different reasons. These include (Alamry & Alfawzan, 1997):

Objective reasons: Individuals resist change for objective and intellectual reasons as they count the financial expenses of the change and the time it needs.

Political reasons: People in power may want to maintain their position and interest in the organisation.

Social reasons: Human nature tends to constitute human relations and the desire to integrate with the group; imposing such change will threaten the group.

Economic reasons: Many employees are afraid of the change effect on their posts in the organisation, which may result in losing their jobs.

Emotional reasons: Workers fear of the unknown and find comfort in the familiar.

Cultural reasons: Every organisation has its own culture, which means that any traditions, values and behaviours have emerged and been developed by the time to be postulates to the organisation's members. Therefore, accessing new technologies and factors in the organisation will be considered a change to the organisation postulates and values.

Alqaruity (1988) suggests other reasons for resisting change:

- *Security absence*: The results of the change are not known, so personal security is threatened.
- *Expecting the loss*: Many individuals may think that the reason for change is providing expenses, which means finding solutions and work methods that affect their interests.
- *Misunderstanding the purpose of change*: This is the result of the lack

of change information and communication, so workers may assume that this change will affect their own interests.

Evans (1996) attributes the resistance to change of educators in school reforms to the fear of being burdened or conflicted by the reform process. In addition,

> People may resist loss of status, loss of pay, or loss of comfort, but these are not the same as resisting change. The belief that people do resist change causes all kinds of unproductive actions within organizations. It is time that we dispense with the phrase *resistance to change* and find more useful and appropriate models for describing what the phrase has come to mean employees are not wholeheartedly embracing a change that management wants to implement. Employees may resist the unknown, being dictated to, or management ideas that do not seem feasible from the employees' standpoint (Dent & Goldberg, 1999, p. 26).

Dent and Goldberg (1999) disagree on the concept of change resistance; they argue that it is not useful to describe the behaviour adopted by people in the organisation as a result of implementing change; they explain that employees do not resist the concept of change per se, but they might disagree about the consequences. Earl, Hargreaves, and Ryan (1996) summarise the reason of having difficulty when implementing change namely that the change is not clearly demonstrated and inadequately resourced; it is too broad and ambitious, or it is too specific or too fast for people to cope with, or too slow.   There is no long-term commitment from the actors. Key people, who might be affected by the change or can contribute to it, are not committed and loyal. Leaders are either too indecisive, or too controlling so they do not help to achieve it.

Effective leaders depend on their ability to analyse and resolve reactions, and be aware of how and when they can implement the change programme. Therefore, consideration must be

given to the importance of all employee roles as an effective factor in the change process, alongside knowledge of the scope of the acceptance and rejection of this change (Kanaan, 1999). PMI (2013) suggest that:

> It is important to involve employees effectively in organizational decision-making and change initiatives. During times of change, communication and stakeholder engagement are more important than usual and can substantially affect the cost and outcome of change efforts. Trust is identified as particularly important in obtaining support for and participation in change efforts (PMI, 2013).

Those members who are not in favour of value/worth of logical consideration with respect to democratic decision-making mainly believe that the democratic ideals are not compatible with traditions or lifestyle (Raley & Preyer, 2010). Moreover,

> Principals and teachers who trust each other can better work together in the service of solving the challenging problems of schooling. These leaders create a bond that helps inspire teachers to move to higher levels of effort and achievement. These leaders also create the conditions that foster trust between teachers, including structures and norms for behaviour, and they assist them in resolving the inevitable conflicts that arise (Tschannen-Moran, 2004, p. 12).

To summarise, change resistance can be attributed to different reasons: fear of losing position; friends; jobs; unknown; interfering with personal interest; and preferring to maintain the culture. All these barriers can be avoided when defining the aims and reasons for change resistance in advance. Engaging all stakeholders in the reform decisions and examining their needs and abilities can achieve this. In this study, the participants reveal the difficulties and dilemmas when leading the change to reform the education to be more democratic. These issues will be discussed in the data analysis chapters.

The next section discusses distributed leadership as a new leadership style that has been acknowledged and practiced in the Tatweer school system as an important element in moving from a hierarchical to a more democratic school structure.

4.3   Distributed Leadership

Leadership is an important element to be developed and examined in the educational reform process.

Theories and models abound about leadership and the theory of distributed leadership is one of the most popular in current school leadership and management practice. This theory advocates cascading powers to lower levels. The role of the leader in this model is to provide a value-driven vision for his/her employees (Duignan, 2007). The leader providing inspiration for the future can transform the new vision into practice. This requires that their hopes, desires and expectations to be connected with the school community and to help in establishing a foundation of an organisational culture that supports the hopes and expectations of all key stakeholders. As such:

> Distributed leadership is represented as dynamic, relational, inclusive, collaborative and contextually situated. It requires a system-wide perspective that not only transcends organizational levels and roles but also organizational boundaries. Thus, for example, in the field of education, where distributed leadership is being actively promoted, one might consider the contribution of parents, students and the local community as well as teachers and governors as the impact of good or bad school leadership extends far beyond the classroom (Marturano & Gosling, 2007, p. 43).

In this democratic approach, the power should flow from the Department of Education to managers of educational systems, teachers and, eventually, to learners. Furthermore, the

significance of the power distribution to the lowest levels in the school should be identifiable, as it should be reflected in the policies and practice of education (Smith & Greyling, 2006). The challenge facing the district-level schools, however, is to navigate the hierarchical, authoritative and formal leadership patterns to transform their schools into productive communities of learning (Sheppard, Brown, & Dibbon, 2009).

As Bush and Glover (2013) argue, it is impossible for principals to manage all aspects of their schools. Moreover, differentiating leadership is crucial not only to ensure that all leadership activities are being performed, but also because the pool of talent and experience of all the School Members Team members is employed to the optimum level. Those who take a fundamental role in making the decision to distribute jobs and the management teams are used usually as a machine to implement the leadership roles within the school (Bush & Glover, 2013).

Developing leadership is essential to prepare leaders to be capable to face challenges presented by distributed leadership.

4.3.1 Leadership development

Leadership and organisational growth are interdependent and the ability of an organisation to prosper is dependent on how far it facilitates collaborative learning and who takes the initiative on leadership to responsibility to learn from within the organisational resources (Sheppard et al., 2009). Nevertheless,

> Much leadership development feedback naturally affects how people think about *themselves*, not just their interactions with others. Similarly, it can lead to re-evaluations of many aspects of one's life, not just one's role as a leader…Effective leadership is commonly viewed as central to organizational success, and more importance is placed on leadership

development than ever before. Developing "more and better" individual leaders is no longer the sole focus of leadership development, although it remains a critical aspect. Increasingly, leadership is defined not as what the leader does but rather as a process that engenders and is the result of relationships that focus on the interactions of both leaders and collaborators instead of focusing on only the competencies of the leaders (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004, p. 27).

"Effective leadership development is therefore not an isolated process but one that is integrated with the organization's learning strategy and human resource policy. There should be regular follow-up and feedback from different sources" (Hailey, 2006, p. 27). At school-reform level, it is argued that recruiting the right people to lead schools, and supporting and preparing them comprehensively, is crucial to improving and developing the leadership spirit; moreover, it would reduce the turnover of principals. Additionally, it would encourage school reform and stability, which helps to enhance students' abilities to some extent (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, T, & Cohen, 2007). "Leadership development initiatives today typically offer performance support and real world application of skills through such methods as training programs, coaching and mentoring, action learning, and developmental assignments" (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004, p. 27). Effective school leaders foster collaborative learning, support their teachers to be leaders by providing feedback and regular follow-up, and then provide training after defining their professional needs.

The next section discusses teamwork as an essential part of distributed leadership. The Tatweer Schools' system regards teamwork as a crucial element to successful educational leadership. It aims to delegate more tasks from the hand of the head teacher to the team, which is represented by the Excellence Team and the senior teacher team (*King Abdulla Bin Abdul-Aziz Project for Public Educational Development, 2011*).

4.3.2 Teamwork

In the field of social sciences, it is widely agreed that it is difficult to pinpoint a single definition of many concepts; teamwork is one of these definitions. Guest (2008) reveals that there is a link between teamwork and cooperation, whereby; "teamwork involves functional cooperation: working together toward a practical purpose" (Guest, 2008, p. 340). It also implies a group of people working collaboratively to achieve certain goals.

> Team-based approach to leadership is supported by the concept of 'distributed leadership', in which there is a shared sense of purpose and ownership of issues at all levels of the organization. This concept suggests that leadership is a collective task based on shared decision-making and delegated authority. Leadership is therefore a social process in which everyone is engaged (Hailey, 2006, p. 7).

A group that consists of five to seven members is considered optimal. This group can increase its members to become a formal group and vice versa (Jaalock, 1999). Additionally, "work organisations using teamwork can refer to a wide range of possibilities, such as quality circles, cross-functional teams, self-managing teams or virtual teams. Many employers provide teamwork with varying degrees of autonomy" (Kyzlinková, Dokulilová, & Kroupa, 2007, p. 2). Kyzlinkova et al. (2007) argue further:

> a team must have the right team climate to be innovative and beneficial in its work. Participation in accountability among individual team members and multi-skilling are important preconditions of team effectiveness. In multi-skilled teams, the borders between different job categories are broken down, thereby encouraging employees to broaden their skills and knowledge. There is also a considerable slimming down of the structure and a reduction of functions, which may make it hard for managers to accept some loss of power. Reorganizing management functions in a way that

creates room for autonomous teams is also an important precondition of increasing productivity (Kyzlinková et al., 2007, p. 5).

A robust team spirit can only be attained if the cohesion is strong. A small group size is deemed much more efficient, as there should be a common interest; the leadership style should be appropriate, the location, achievement capacity, culture, career and work load etc. must all be appropriate (Jaalock, 1999). "Team members as individual agents clearly have internalized personal objectives. However, when agents become team members, they in some part assume the objectives of the team. At the least, this requires an integration of agent objectives with those of the aggregate" (Silver, 2014, p. 2). Moreover, the group becomes attractive if effectiveness and efficiency are present; the effectiveness of a team is believed to hold many advantages, such as job satisfaction, improved teaching and learning, strong leadership, relationship building and providing assistance to new school staff (Sparks, 2013).

Presenting the group members with incentives can also enhance the productivity and performance levels of the group. This is a common belief of accountants and administrators. However, some of the behavioural scholars also state that this is not an efficient approach (Jaalock, 1999). Evidence from large studies on developing countries suggest that incentives to promote teachers' performance can work in contexts that are characterised by relatively weak teacher professionalism; weak systems for performance monitoring and also accountability; and relatively large bonus size (Bruns et al., 2011, p. 198). When individuals possess self-esteem, social status, distinctiveness, excitement, and fun in their professional career, they become automatically motivated to be productive. In addition, when the individual is involved in the decision-making process, they feel important and responsible, which can also be an incentive to promote maximum productivity levels (Jaalock, 1999).

At times, many groups are subjected to conflicts amongst individuals, who work in teams. There are two types of conflicts that may either be positive or negative (Jaalock, 1999). When a positive conflict takes place, it could promote development, authority, responsibility and innovation within the individuals. The ambitious individuals can manage the issues

effectively and efficiently. Negative conflict, however, can be highly destructive since it has the ability to disrupt strong networks. Personal issues amongst these individuals could lead to failure in achieving the objectives, misunderstandings, a non-trusting environment, pressure and several other sensitive issues (Alsaud, 2013). In this regard, the increasing requirements of individuals and teams have to be satisfied if they are to remain effective and reliable (Woods & Cribb, 2001).

The next section discusses Professional Learning Communities as a means of developing cohesive teamwork.

4.3.3   Professional learning communities

Morrissey (2000) argues that:

> The term professional learning community defines itself. A school that operates as such engages the entire group of *professionals* in coming together for *learning* within a supportive, self-created *community*. Teacher and administrator learning is more complex, deeper, and more fruitful in a social setting, where the participants can interact, test their ideas, challenge their inferences and interpretations, and process new information with each other. When one learns alone, the individual learner (plus a book, article, or video) is the sole source of new information and ideas. When new ideas are processed in interaction with others, multiple sources of knowledge and expertise expand and test the new concepts as part of the learning experience. The professional learning community provides a setting that is richer and more stimulating (Morrissey, 2000, pp. 3-4).

In this definition, it engages the teachers and administrators to be a learner in the social settings. In this network, participants move to professional practices rather than simple

sharing of experiences, by acknowledging best practices and holding shared values. However, to fulfil the purpose of such an approach Richardson (2005) emphasises the need to validate the work of this team. He observes that:

> School-based learning teams, described as groups of teachers who work together in an ongoing way, need to have the support of a principal to validate their work. High functioning school-based learning teams meet for at least an hour a week during the school day to examine student work and assessment results. Often, a facilitator will push the group to probe for explanations and identify priorities for improving instructional activities and set objectives for action (Feger & Arruda, 2008, p. 7).

Gleeson and Husbands (2004) consider professional learning communities as an advanced educational reform to improve the school. They attribute this to the value of working collaboratively, which, in turn, would involve external policy and standards critically. Bolam et al. (2005) believe that "when teachers and other school staff work together collaboratively with a clear focus on learning, the school's overall capacity to raise standards is enhanced. Moreover, effective professional learning communities seem more likely to generate and support sustainable improvements" (Bolam et al., 2005, p. 1). These communities have a core goal to focus and work with; therefore, the notion of professional learning communities (PLCs) is to promote the school and its system in order to sustain the improvement in students' learning (Bolam et al., 2005). Communities shape identity and, thus, furnish a network of substantial support, obey rules and conventions that reflect on and express a common value system of the community in question. They also protect the local rights and freedoms, while serving the goal of serving the interests of all members (Naidoo, 2005).

Frood and Haar (2013) declare that "developing effective practices for change by administrators and teachers means we must focus on teacher and leader learning,

organizational learning, relational learning, interdependent groups and systems, decision-making processes, and individual and group accountability" (Frood & Haar, 2013, p. 7). Hence, leaders and teachers would work collaboratively on the ground that supports to achieve comprehensive improvement. Moreover, leaders can encourage teachers and staff to create a shared vision, as Huffman and Hipp (2003) state:

> The central task of the leader is to involve others in creating a shared vision for the organization. Personal visions must be developed and shared so that a collective vision can be modelled and embraced by all members. This collaborative vision building is the initial challenge for learning communities (Huffman & Hipp, 2003, p. 8).

The process of building a shared vision, and also values, is the central element of PLCs. This process would guide school staff and their decisions to certain norms and behaviour that support teaching and learning, where the values can be embedded in the day-to-day practices among school staff. This action develops norms of commitment as well as self-criticality and self-awareness (Morrissey, 2000) where "commitment is the result that comes from continuously sharing understanding and creating meaning, engaging in new learning with practice and application, reflecting on practices with feedback, and collaboration with others to improve over time" (Frood & Haar, 2013, p. 13). The processes of commitment, reflection, feedback, and collaboration, encourage and maintain the improvement of learning and teaching.

This concept has been embedded in the Tatweer Schools system and emphasised in the programme's philosophy, leaders encourage creating such communities at the school and the educational administration level. As such, the Tatweer School is viewed as representing a learning school that motivates self-learning through the process of distributed leadership in the school.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed two key concepts: decentralisation and distributed leadership. The differences between top-down and bottom-up approach were discussed at the beginning of the chapter. The section that followed, discussed leading educational change and change resistance providing a framework to underpin leading change theories. It also examined how leaders should develop their role and profession to lead change including the adoption of distributed leadership, teamwork and key aspects of professional learning communities.

The next chapter reviews studies based on the conceptual framework from the perspective of Western and Arabic studies.

Chapter Five: Literature Review

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on reviewing empirical studies, which are concerned with the three concepts that have been conceptualised in the previous chapter, namely, leadership, leading educational change, and decision-making. The empirical studies have been reviewed based on two contexts: Arabic context and western context.

5.2 Leadership

5.2.1 Arabic context

Few studies have been published about educational leadership in an Arabic context. In Egypt for example, a study examined teachers' perspectives of how senior teachers view and define leadership and its relationship with decision-making. A total of 20 Egyptian teachers of English language defined teacher leadership in terms of styles of leadership; characteristics of leaders, and what teacher leaders practice inside and outside the classroom. This study also discussed educational reform and the shift from centralisation to decentralisation in Egypt, where some attempts have been evident (Emira, 2010).

Examining the relationship between effective communication of principals of secondary schools and school climate is another study that was conducted in Abu Dhabi District in the UAE, by Halawah (2005). 208 male and female teachers, and 555 male and female students participated using two instruments; evaluating the school climate, and measuring the effectiveness of communication between principals and teachers. The findings showed that the climate of the school is positively allied with the effectiveness of the principal's communication, and the communication in male schools was more effective than the communication in female schools (Halawah, 2005).

Mathis (2010) conducted a qualitative study that was concerned with the educational leadership of females in Saudi Arabia. This study was a descriptive research study of Saudi female principals in the eastern region. The purpose of this study was to explain the role of the female leadership and their perspectives on this role in Eastern Province. It was concluded that that the principals of schools (12 principals of primary, intermediate and secondary school) do not have enough autonomy to act or to make decisions; they described their role as being a manager rather than a leader.

A quantitative study by Khasawneh, Omari, and Abu-Tineh (2012) aimed to define the relationship between transformational leadership principals on the commitment of vocational teachers in Jordan. The educational system in Jordan has experienced "major reforms initiatives as a critical step to realizing its vision of becoming a regional information technology nucleus and to fully enter into the global economy" (Khasawneh et al., 2012, p. 497). The results showed that "a strong, positive and significant relationship exists between transformational leadership (overall) and the organizational commitment dimension" (Khasawneh et al., 2012, p. 494). It is suggested that this relationship would lead to better understanding of school effectiveness by maintaining organisational commitment among teachers.

In another study, Mattar (2012) conducted a survey to investigate the extent to which the style of instructional leadership had been practiced by the principals of intermediate schools in Lebanon. This research was conducted in ten schools; five schools that have low performance and five schools that perform highly; the study shows the differences between these two groups of schools in the level of leadership styles that has been adopted by the principals. This study used mixed methods of data collection, namely, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. The researcher argues that "In Lebanon… training is not a prerequisite for appointing a principal…the Ministry of Education and higher education must recognize the need for specific preparation for aspiration and practicing school leaders in order to reach the positive effects identified in the school effectiveness research" (Mattar,

2012, p. 527).

While much has been written about educational leadership, relatively little empirical research has been conducted in the Arab countries and particularly in Saudi Arabia.

5.2.2   Western studies

A study by Barr and Saltmarsh (2014) focused on the role of the school principal in fostering parent engagement with their children's schooling. This qualitative study was conducted in New South Wales, Australia, to examine what parents, themselves, perceived as important for engagement with their children's schooling. The study found that parents highlighted the fundamental role that principals play in shaping parents' relationships with schools. Where principals' attitude toward parents is the significant factor in determining whether they feel allowed to be involved in and contribute to activities of the school, or whether they feel too afraid to access the school.

Another study by Oterkiil and Ertesvag (2014) among Norwegian teachers aims to "present a measure for leadership that may be used as part of a more comprehensive instrument to measure a school's capacity to implement school-based interventions" (Oterkiil & Ertesvag, 2014, p. 5)'. This study hypothesizes that a principal's ability to expertly balance a combination of two styles of transactional and transformational leadership may result in greater capacity and a more successful school. They argue that "the principal, in conjunction with the use of collaborative efforts and shared decision-making by stakeholders towards common visions and goals, may produce a more effective school" (Oterkiil & Ertesvag, 2014, p. 6). The findings show that the transformational and transactional leadership scales both correlated considerably positively with affiliation, innovation climate, principal positions in schools, and collaborative activity at teacher's level and the school's level, and negatively with staff freedom.   Programmes of local, state and national reform have stressed the importance of shared decision-making, which involves parents, students and teachers (Rubin & Silva, 2003). This action is consistent with what the Tatweer Schools' system attempts to

do in its initiative.

Moreover, there is a quantitative study by Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallam, and Brown (2014), which compared the instructional and transformational leadership styles in education, and also is examined the impact of both practices on student achievement. The sample of this study was 37 elementary schools in the Intermountain West of the United States. A total of 590 teachers responded to an online questionnaire. The findings showed that " instructional leadership explained more of the variance in student achievement than did transformational leadership. Principals' leadership style tended to have a meaningful impact on student achievement beyond the impact of school context and principal demographics" (Shatzer et al., 2014, p. 445).

A study by Yamamoto, Gardiner, and Tenuto (2014) focused also on the effect of emotion on leadership. It examined "how secondary school administrators derived meaning from critical incidents (CIs) of significant emotional events retrospectively, and how understanding impacted leadership" (Yamamoto et al., 2014, p. 165). This study was a qualitative case study of nine secondary school administrators in the USA. Four themes emerged from the data: "My view of myself, my world; fragmentation of self in response to the critical incident; reintegration and reinvention of self; and relationship with self and others affirmed" (Yamamoto et al., 2014, pp. 172-173). The study found that CIs has implications among principals to create meanings of fragmenting events, and this is by choosing certain words to define them, and working through a process of story with others and with self. The findings indicated a theory that emotion is intimately allied with leadership. The study suggests that the self- reflection type support leaders to avoid misunderstanding, to improve communication as well as understanding themselves.

Dhillon (2013) investigated the characteristics of leading effective, sustainable and successful partnerships in England. This study relies on grounded approach and case study of a sub-regional partnership of education and training organizations. The results show "the extent to which trust, networks, norms and values support effective, sustained and successful

partnerships. These characteristics are differentiated and may fluctuate during the life course of a partnership but remain fundamental features of a partnership working, and significantly contribute to the strength and effectiveness of partnerships" (Dhillon, 2013, p. 736).

Mackay (2012) also examined senior leaders' understanding of learning leadership in the sector of learning and skills as well as the influence on shaping the practices of leaders. He "suggests that leadership practice is shaped by not simply the practices seen and learnt at work, nor through replicating behaviours from those who we admire or detest, but within a complex dynamic of personal, contextual and socially defined influences" (Mackay, 2012, p. 392). This study emerged from the conversations between the author and two of his colleagues based on action research and action learning methodology.

In the area of team importance, a study conducted by Goodall (2013) found that there is a need to build and support a team ethos as well as the need for flexibility, clarity and the value of team members. This study was a qualitative case study of nine schools in England based on interviews. It examined the factors, which impact on the high performing leadership teams' recruitment and sustainability (Goodall, 2013).

A case study of three schools in the Swedish context was concerned with distributed leadership to establish developing and learning school organisations. This study argues that a lead teacher has to focus on development rather than management, challenging rather than confirming, with an emphasis on learning over solution. It also suggests that "the most vital aspects for establishing a development and learning school is to foster a professional attitude that allow teachers to share their concerns and prevent individualism"(Liljenberg, 2015, p. 166).

The previous studies have confirmed different theories and principles that enhance and promote leaders in the educational context.

5.3 Leading educational change

5.3.1 Arabian context

The Arab World has many aspects in common in their systems, especially their culture, language, and general strategies (Masri, 2009). This world has a strong reputation as wealthy and oil-rich (El-Baz, 2007). However, the educational policy reform has been criticised to be at risk; as being left behind (El-Baz, 2007), and a special emphasis was placed on the need for the growing of globalisation, privatisation, labour market of educational services (Masri, 2009). Another claim emphasises that after the event of 11th September 2000, education needed to be reformed in the Arab World, where extremist people generate hate against West culture (Labidi, 2010).

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has established many reforms and several studies have examined the educational reform in this country (Al-Taneiji & McLeod, 2008; Bilkhair, 2007; El Nemr, 2007; Hourani, Stringer, & Baker, 2012; A. Miles, 2010; Thorne, 2011). Recently, large-scale reform has been announced (Thorne, 2011) and about AED 48 billion (USD 13 billion) has been allocated for the next 10 years (El Nemr, 2007). The education system has been transformed to be more decentralised in the decision-making and responsibilities in its schools' system (Al-Amiri, 2012; Al-Taneiji & McLeod, 2008). Additionally, the concept of professional learning communities that tend to be characterised by a supportive structure and supportive and shared leadership have been embedded in this system (Al-Taneiji, 2009). Another important concept in leading change that has been emphasised is the concept of Communities of Practice (CoPs) which is becoming more widely known in the UAE (Stephenson & McNally, 2007). The focus is on the need to increase the idea of parental engagement in schools (Hourani et al., 2012), and also using the role of 'critical friends' by teachers to support their peers in leading classroom change (Stephenson & McNally, 2007). Indeed, the idea of critical friendship is attributed to Desmond Nutall but most cited as definition from Costa and Kallick (1993) (Storey, 2013). Moreover, political reform concerned with women's education became emphasised in UAE between 1938 and 2007. It has given rights for women to access education and equal opportunities to work in all professions since 1971 (Bilkhair, 2007). Furthermore, it has been proposed to expand the oil-

dependent economy. According to the empirical data, there are also attempts to support research and development by investing about $1.3-billion by 2018 (Miles, 2010). In contrast, the Saudi reform tended to encourage private sector participation and create knowledge communities to reduce the reliance on oil as a main source of revenue in the country.

In the context of Egypt, studies show that there has been comprehensive educational reform, influenced by national and global ideas (Abuareef, 2014; M. Ginsburg, Megahed, Elmeski, & Tanaka, 2010; M. B. Ginsburg & Megahed, 2008; Hammad, 2013; Hashimoto, 2008). Educational policy reforms in Egypt tend to practice school-based management to transform the system to be more decentralised (Ginsburg et al., 2010; Hammad, 2013) toward more devolution and delegation of authority and responsibility since 2001 (Ginsburg et al., 2010). School-based management "is used to increase school autonomy and accountability, which can help solve some of the most fundamental problems in schools. Accordingly, while increased resources and other support to the education sector are necessary to give the poor greater access to quality education, it is by no means sufficient" (Bruns et al., 2011, p. 90). Bush (2013) argues that:

> Autonomy and accountability are opposing aspects of school system change; twin dimensions of the reform agenda. School leaders and governing bodies are free to decide how to implement reform but not whether to do so. Defying government prescriptions, or Ofsted requirements, is a high risk strategy (Bush, 2013, p. 679).

A study by Issan and Gomaa (2010) examined the educational reforms taking place in Post-Basic Education in Oman and also aims to underline the successes and limitations of the school system. The new reform was introduced after 1998. It proposed to reform the structure and procedures of the Ministry of Education; the structure of the educational system within the school, the curricula, as well as developing training for teachers and fostering the private sector to invest in education. However, results from empirical studies by UNESCO/UNICEF (1997) showed that students in Oman were lower in achievement than their counterparts

worldwide. In addition, the World Bank has highlighted deficiencies in the educational system with students being taught by inadequately trained teachers, in inadequate facilities, and with limited instructional resources (Albalushi & Griffiths, 2013). However, Bruns et al. (2011) describe the school reform in developing countries that aim to develop the system of reward. They state that:

> A growing number of school systems across the developing world are adopting two specific reforms aimed at strengthening the rewards and sanctions for teacher performance: the use of contract teachers and bonus pay linked to teacher performance. These programs have different designs, costs, and primary objectives, but both address a deep issue of weak incentives for performance in education systems across the developing world (Bruns et al., 2011, p. 199).

A further study by Alnahdi (2014) was concerned with educational change in the context of Saudi Arabia by using the principles of Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) in their book "The Fourth Way". In this paper, the author suggests that Saudi education still in the second way of centralisation and standardisation in its education. The author has criticised the educational system for lacking an accountability system. He also stated that "the Ministry of Education had attempted many previous projects in this area, but, unfortunately, most of them had the goal of changing the content of the textbook only" (Alnahdi, 2014, p. 5). However, this paper has a number of limitations the first and major one being that the author relied on old references to discuss the accountability system of Saudi Arabia. A major reform to the accountability system has recently occurred, which will be discussed in chapter 9. Another serious limitation of this recent paper is that it does not mention the Tatweer Project as a significant project leading the change and reform in Saudi Arabia. These weaknesses show that there is an inconsistency with this study; therefore, it does not describe properly the reality of the education system.

In terms of resistance to change, a study conducted by Alamry and Alfawzan (1997) tackled

reasons for employees' resistance to the change in Saudi governmental institutions, revealing nine reasons behind the resistance. The main causes were poor communication and coordination between management and workers, and the absence of encouragement from senior leaders.

A recent quantitative study by Meemar (2014) entitled *"Tatweer School Principals' Perceptions of new Authorities Granted in the Initial Steps of Decentralization",* aimed to investigate the perceptions of principals about new powers granted by the Minsitry of Education. These authorities have been granted to all Saudi schools since 2011. This thesis targeted the authorities, not the Tatweer reform itself, by conducting an online survey of 173 Tatweer schools' prinicipals. However, the thesis described little about the Tatweer schools' system in phase two, beginning in 2011. The serious weakness of this study is that it does not acknowledge the first phase of the Tatweer Project which started on 2007. Although it refers to the the date of the establishment of the project, it did not reference the Tatweer schools pre 2011. The possible explanation of this limitation is that the methodology of this study does not help to acquire in depth understanding of the Tatweer reform as the study relied on a quantitative approach. This particular initiative needs to be investigated using some qualititative methods that will yield rich data about the new programme. A clearer picture could be given by investigating key persons who can best describe this project, seeing as there have been very few works written about the Tatweer reform. However, this study concluded that the "principals need more authorities and support to achieve the goals of the MOE, and impact the overall performance of students. The role of teachers has changed, as they have a more specific role of supporting the overall development of students" (Meemar, 2014 p. 92).

At the end of reviewing some Arabic studies in the area of leading educational change, it seems that most reforms in previous Arab states have transformed their educational systems to become more decentralised.

Although much has been written about educational change and reform in the Arab World, the

educational reform movement in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a relatively recent phenomenon with little systematic documentation so far. Hence this study aims to fill the gap in this knowledge by investigating the educational reform in the Saudi Arabian context by examining Tatweer Schools' system.

5.3.2 Western Studies

A study conducted in Germany aimed to examine the acceptance and/or resistance of teachers against the policies of standards-based accountability. The study shows that "the majority of the teacher force ignores, misinterprets or misuses the feedback information from standards-based performance tests aiming at a data-driven development of classroom teaching" (Terhart, 2013, p. 486). The research concluded that it is not easy to estimate the success and the failure of the educational innovations, as it can be attributed to the interpretation matter and post hoc reconstruction.

A case study of eight schools by Gunter et al. (2007) aims to examine the implications for how change is practiced and understood. It defines the change in management experience observed as part of an assessment of the Transforming School Workforce Pathfinder Project, which is commissioned for the English schools by the UK Government. The impact of this project can be seen in reducing the working hours of teachers, where this has led to making staff members more effective in the school by changes in role boundaries between members of the school and the teachers. The empirical data also shows that the participants perceive the project as a positive paradigm (Gunter et al., 2007). This issue will be examined in the data analysis and discussion chapters.

In a study of 130 organisations, with a sample of 400 respondents to investigate why people change their organisations, the core issue reported by Kotter and Cohen (2002) is that one of the key findings was that during change processes, human behaviour was one of the key issues facing change. They also reported that change of human behaviour was related more towards changing feelings and thoughts through rationalisation of truth than by giving

evidence through analysis. Thoughts and feelings are important but the change is driven through emotions (Kotter & Cohen, 2002, p. 2). They suggest a process of eight steps to facilitate change and these are: increase urgency; create a team; create the right vision; effective communication for buy-in; having the power and giving power; steering-in through quick-wins; do not let up; make change stick (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). Campbell and Williams (1982) argue that analysis is not an easy issue; however, one must not expect to get every one's buy-in to an analysis or conclusion, no matter how careful the analysis and planning support the conclusions. One has to devise a selling strategy as to how to sell your plan and conclusion to people located at different levels in the hierarchy of an organisation seeing their status as a stakeholder (Campbell & Williams, 1982, p. 13).

Another study by Higham and Earley (2013) investigated historical and analytical leaders' perspective on school autonomy. They also analysed a survey of roughly 2000 schools leaders in England to investigate the leaders' views on autonomy, accountability, managing change and external support. The findings showed that:

> ➤ School leaders commonly anticipated greater power over aspects of school management but not over the aims and purposes of schooling. Considerable variation was also found in school leaders' perspectives on their freedom and capacity to act.

> ➤ The majority of school leaders were positive about school-to-school collaboration. Over 80 per cent of each survey group agreed that working in partnership with other schools was critical to improving outcomes for students.

> ➤ On capacity, among smaller and many primary schools there was considerable concern that additional managerial powers and duties would both disrupt a leadership focus on learning and come hand-in-hand with a lack of support.

> ➤ School leaders commonly considered the aims and purposes of schooling to remain tightly held by central government. Contemporary change was seen to include refinements to the ERA policy framework,

but in a way that sustained government control including through the definition of standards, inspections and intervention.

> On freedom to act, government was seen to retain tight control over schools, but also to be differentiating control by inspection judgments and national test results (Higham & Earley, 2013, pp. 709-715).

A study by Woods and Simkins (2014) investigated the developing structure and governance of the school system in England. The Education Reform Act (ER) 1988 in England was a turning point in English educational policy. The Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition government established the most recent reform. This coalition was formed in March 2010. The new policy encourages and requires in some cases schools to be independent of local authorities and to be funded by centralised government directly. This study reflects some of the implications of these aspirations and the ways in which they have been translated into policy. They conclude the study by underlining three implications developing from the discussion: school group as unit of analysis; renewing public value; and conscious and critical agency. It reflects on "how these developments can be theorised, suggesting that diversity of governance, legitimacy and agency provide a suitable framework for analysing English experience" (Woods & Simkins, 2014, p. 324).

Another case study by Smith and Abbott (2014) focused on issues relating to collaboration, competition, independence and the re-structuring of school governance in secondary schools in two cities in the English Midlands. This study investigated an Academies programme, funded both by private sponsors and a local authority, giving the Academy a freedom in delivering the curriculum, staff salaries and the conditions of the school. It was a qualitative case study of two Local Authorities (LAs), which conducted semi-structured interviews with head teachers of secondary schools, school governing body chairs, teachers' trade union (TU) representatives, LA officers and local politicians. This study found that:

> There was limited collaboration and dispersal of power between LA partners.
> The reverse of this was true in LA2 where an historical weak LA had steered key players towards collaborative behaviour.

➢ Although this was conditional, teacher professionals, TUs, local councillors and administrators were for the time being broadly united by their rejection of changes to the structures of local education (Smith & Abbott, 2014, pp. 351-352).

A further study conducted in northern England by Howland (2015) investigated the factors that have empowered schools' collaboration, and focuses on the evolution of the schools' initial proposal that responds to the requirements of change of central government. "The experience of these school leaders indicate that in reality the freedom to innovate is limited… furthermore, there is a sense that sands are shifting and that there is a lack of consistency in the act of decision-making" (Howland, 2015, p. 29).

The studies discussed here show that the UK educational system moved to be more controlling among schools and limiting the autonomy. This thesis will find out which direction the Tatweer reform is going to decide.

5.4 Decision-making

5.4.1 Arabian context

As stated earlier, administrative systems in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia experiences centralisation in making decisions. Many administrative experts and researchers mentioned that this problem exists in the Kingdom (Al-Dhuwaihi, 2011; Alzaidi, 2008a, 2008b; Mathis, 2010; Prokop, 2003; Rugh, 2002). At a seminar held in the General Administration Institution, it was mentioned that centralisation is an inherent system in the administrative organisation of the Kingdom, so general systems are characterised by centralisation. It also mentions that it is important to give a special interest for the power of decision making in order to create a system that prevents centralisation, which can lead to the 'bottlenecks' in the governmental systems, meaning that all decisions, even those simple and routine, must be put forward to the seniors of the organization to be approved (Ahmed, 1987).

In Egypt, a large qualitative study was conducted by Hammad and Norris (2009) aimed to identify barriers to shared decision-making in Egyptian schools. 85 participants were interviewed across nine secondary schools. The study found that there are significant barriers that restrict teachers from being involved in school decision-making. The participants perceived a highly centralised system that influences decision-making involvement (Hammad & Norris, 2009).

A further study by Metcalfe (2011) was concerned with gender issues in three Arab Gulf countries, Saudi Arabia; Bahrain; and UAE. This study attempts to address a number of issues, where one of these issues attempted to address the following question: *how can national and institutional Human Resource Development HRD frameworks support women's empowerment and education development*? Findings of this study suggest that Arab women should be maintained to improve feminist agency, and also to build their own forms of Islamic feminism, which can be relevant to their own empowerment plans (Metcalfe, 2011).

Although an enormous body of literature has been written on decision-making elsewhere, very few studies have been conducted to examine the educational decision making in the Arabian context, in general, and Saudi Arabia in particular. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap in this area to examine the type of decision-making practices in the Tatweer Schools system.

5.4.2   Western Studies

A large meta-study by Brent Edwards Jr. and DeMatthews (2014) was conducted about the educational decentralisation of governance in both United States and developing nations in the period of post-WWII until the present. The study reviewed a total of 127 decentralisation-related studies from seven leading, peer-reviewed journals in comparative and international education, as well as reviewing the *Journal of Educational Administration*, and *Harvard*

Education Review, and the *Journal of Education Policy*. This study addressed the shift in the economic and political aspects. The findings show that in developing nations the presentation of community- level decentralisation has not been as prevalent as universal rhetoric during the period of the 1990s and 2000s. Another important finding is that in both the United States and developing nations there has been a comparatively recent shift towards other forms of accountability-based reforms and away from decentralisation (Brent Edwards Jr. & DeMatthews, 2014).

A recent study conducted by the OECD (2005) indicates that if teachers are provided with the opportunity to decide which subjects should be taught in school, the curriculum would be much more efficient. This shows clearly that the participation of teachers in the decision-making process can present positive changes to performance. "Despite considerable problems, school-based decision-making holds some promise for improving schools and building community" (Naidoo, 2005, p. 43). The possible explanation of this result is that teachers feel a sense of commitment and ownership of the decision as a result of participating in school's decisions as discussed in the previous chapter.

In the Dutch context, teachers in primary schools collaborate more effectively and frequently than secondary school teachers according to the Honingh and Hooge (2014) study. "'Perceived school-leader support', 'satisfaction concerning participation in decision making' and 'teacher orientation towards student performance' have direct effects on teacher collaboration" (Honingh & Hooge, 2014, p. 87). This study was part of a larger study that examined teachers' collaboration and their characteristics that affect their collaboration. It conducted a secondary analysis in 271 primary schools and 343 Secondary schools. In order to take responsibilities; improving the quality of the school; and addressing societal and political agendas, Dutch school boards were supported.

The matters relating to school governance and the decentralisation or downward authorisation of policy making are characteristically based on action policies since they assume that making a local school autonomous will affect education at a broader scale (Naidoo, 2005).

However, the indication that increased school independence results in enhanced student results is not convincing. Although some studies indicate strong positive impacts, the numerous evidences from the research lately conducted in many countries indicate that it has a lot less effect on student accomplishment. Here are the summary results: Foundation schools – no improvement; New Zealand – no overall improvement; Charter schools – varied evidences; some improved, some weaker, and some having no change at all. No overall improvement can be seen in the major national studies; Academies – mixed evidence; Free schools – mixed evidence (Cobbold, 2012, p. 2). It seems that the existing evidence is not in support of giving the school full autonomy, it does not show any differences in students' results. However, it can be argued that schools need to become fully autonomous in some matters for example in leading, teaching and learning strategies and need some controls from the local authority for instance; with taking into account the economic, social and cultural context of any educational system. It has been argued that:

> Most countries whose students perform well on international student achievement tests give their local authorities and schools substantial autonomy over adapting and implementing education content or allocating and managing resources. Moreover, greater school autonomy is not necessarily associated with wider disparities in school performance if governments provide a framework in which poorer-performing schools receive the necessary support to help them improve (Bruns et al., 2011, p. 131).

Although much has been written about decentralised decision-making worldwide, this type of decision making in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a relatively recent phenomenon with little systematic documentation as yet. Hence this study aims to bridge the gap in this knowledge by investigating the type of decision-making in the Saudi Arabia context by examining the Tatweer Schools' system in general and specifically the type of decisions that have been practiced.

These studies have similarities with the current study in some aspects including the themes of: leading the change, educational leadership and decision-making. Some of these studies have the same approach in the methodology, which is a qualitative case study. Some of these studies also involved head teachers and school leaders as participants and respondents. However, none of these studies conducted a case study in Saudi Arabia to investigate school reform in the context of Tatweer schools.

5.5   Conclusion

This chapter reviewed empirical studies on leading and managing change including issues related to educational leadership and shared decision-making. This framework emerged from the research questions and helped to identify the gap in the knowledge. It aimed also to review the most relevant studies in the western countries and Arab countries.

The next chapter describes the procedures and methods used in this investigation.

Chapter six: Methodology Chapter

6.1   Introduction

This study represents a case study of the Tatweer Schools' system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The main purpose of this chapter is to discuss in detail the methodological considerations that underpin the study. The research design is divided into two phases. The first phase is the feasibility study, whereby interviews and focus groups were conducted. The second phase is the main study, which adopted three qualitative methods: semi-structured interview, focus group, and documentary analysis. These methods are discussed in terms of their advantages, disadvantages and justification of using them.

The validity, reliability and generalisation of the research are discussed. The ethical considerations, which were taken into account and which could influence the study are also discussed in this chapter. The last section in this chapter is concerned with the data analysis procedures.

6.2   Research questions

Generally, research questions frame empirical research and are identified after determining the topic and area of the project. There are two ways to identify research questions. The first, known as inductive, starts with specific questions to general questions; the second is deductive which moves from the general to the specific (Punch, 2005).

The main research question is:

> ➢ *What are the perceptions and experiences of the administrators and practitioners in relation to the Tatweer Schools system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*

Sub-questions has been derived from this question which are:

1. *What are Tatweer Schools?*

2. *How is the system being implemented and financed?*

3. *What level of autonomy do Tatweer Schools have with regard to organisational management, staff appointment, student assessment, and curriculum development in Saudi Arabia?*

4. *How do Tatweer schools leaders and teachers work with and in Tatweer schools?*

5. *What is the nature of culture shifts taking place within Tatweer Schools?*

6. *What are the opportunities and challenges within the Tatweer Schools' system from the perspectives of teachers, head teachers and Tatweer Unit members?*

6.3   Philosophical assumptions

6.3.1   Ontological considerations

Ontological assumptions are allied with the questions of what constitutes social reality (Blaikie, 2000). "What kinds of assumptions does the methodology make about the world? … What is there to know and what is the nature of the thing we are trying to know? Are also questions about ontology" (Lawthom & Tindall, 2011, p. 11). To connect these questions with the current study, it is believed that the research inquiry endeavours in depth understanding the actual practice within a particular educational system; discovering the experiences of the leaders and teachers through a life-changing phenomenon.

Constructionism is considered as one of the most common paradigms in social science. David and Sutton (2011) summarise the theoretical traditions and dimensions of constructionism, which are:

• Ontology: which means that the world around people is built upon the collective meanings and shared reasonable behaviour (Hermeneutics, phenomenology)

- Focus: on meaning and interaction.
- Epistemology: interpretivism (verstehen - understanding).
- Methodology: adopts qualitative approaches.
- Methods: interviews and unstructured (naturalistic) observation.
- Purpose: understanding.
- Variations: symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, ethnomethodology (David & Sutton, 2011, p. 76).

Based on these orientations, Robson (2011) argues that:

Researchers with this theoretical orientation find grave difficulties in the notion of an objective reality which can be known. They consider that whatever the underlying nature of reality (there are differing views amongst them about this) there is no direct access to it. In principle there are as many realities as there are participants- as well as that of the researcher. They consider that the task of the researcher is to understand the multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge. Hence they tend to use research methods such as interviews and observations which allow them to acquire multiple perspectives. The research participants are viewed as helping to construct the 'reality' with the researchers (Robson, 2011, p. 24).

Accordingly, in this research, the constructionism approach is adopted, which can be recognised in understanding the experiences and the perceptions of administrators and practitioners of the Tatweer Schools' system in Saudi context.

6.3.2 Epistemological considerations

Bryman (2012) maintains that the social sciences have to deal with the question of what is or what should be, while Silverman (2011) states that these days, social sciences tend to be concerned with what is and why, not what should be. He argues that for many decades, scientists did not make a distinction between these two considerations, and to help understand only what is and also why, people have to consent on criteria of what outcomes are superior than others, then if they decide which are better, they could determine what should be.

> More importantly, a clear and transparent knowledge of the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin research is necessary in order: (1) to understand the interrelationship of the key components of research (including methodology and methods); (2) to avoid confusion when discussing theoretical debates and approaches to social phenomena; and (3) to be able to recognise others', and defend our own, positions (Grix, 2002, p. 176)

This statement reveals the justification of studying the philosophical concepts of ontology and epistemology in social research, and how these assumptions are important for the research to understand its inquiry and helps other also to understand the researcher's position. Knowledge about Tatweer schools' system can be obtained effectively in this research through the experiences and perceptions of Tatweer leaders and teachers.

Interpretivism

There are different paradigms that help to describe the phenomena that occur in human life. The most common paradigms are normative and interpretive paradigms that are embraced by the view of positivist and anti-positivist (Cohen et al., 2007). Normative studies tend to be positivist, which are interested in human behaviour as being rule-governed that can be investigated by using natural science methods. In contrast, the interpretive paradigm seems to be anti-positivist and is concerned with understanding the individual's experience. Other

characteristics between these paradigms are: behaviour and action as different concerns in such paradigms, normative studies are focused on behaviour as a response to internal or external environment stimuli, whereas interpretative studies tend to be concentrated on action that is regarded as intentional behaviour by understanding the actors' intentions from their experiences (Cohen et al., 2007). This paradigm supports and promotes the value and the importance of qualitative data in order to gain knowledge (Kaplan & Maxwell, 1994).

Bryman (2012) defines interpretivism as:

> A term that usually denotes an alternative to the positivism orthodoxy that has held sway for decades. It is predictable upon the view that a strategy is required that respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action. Its intellectual heritage includes: Weber's notion of Verstehen: the hermeneutic-phenomenological tradition: and symbolic interactionism (Bryman, 2012, p. 30).

Within this paradigm, meaning is constructed by the interaction and engagement of people (Robson, 2011). Meaning here refers to a whole fabric of concrete senses that depict a life around people (David & Sutton, 2011). Lawthom and Tindall (2011) argue that the interpretive paradigm is linked with theories in social sciences that view the social world from an individual's perspective rather than an objective view. "The aim is to gain an understanding of the participants' lived experiences in their own terms, to focus on the uniqueness of experience from the point of view of those who live it" (Lawthom & Tindall, 2011, p. 8).

Weber (1947, cited in Bryman, 2012, P.29) "described sociology as a science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order to arrive at a casual explanation of its course and effects". Basically, interpretivism is about understanding people's point of view

and life-changing phenomena, not about testing hypotheses (Howitt, 2010). Phenomenology is the fundamental intellectual tradition that is concerned with the issue of how people make sense of the world and with the scholar's distinctive preconceptions in their understanding of the world (Bryman, 2012, p. 30). Such an approach tends to be anti-positivism because the nature of this approach places emphasise on description, subjectivity, agency and interpretation (Denscombe, 2010, p. 93). The purpose of the epistemological stance of interpretive phenomenology is to give participants the chance to present their voice and the role of the researcher is to discover themes, patterns and analyse findings (Lawthom & Tindall, 2011).

This research is concerned with understanding the meaning of an experience and how people in Tatweer Schools grasp the world of this system from making all parts work together (Merriam, 1988) and will, therefore, be qualitative in its orientation. Merriam (1988) argues that qualitative research has characteristics which assume that the world is a subjective notion which needs interpretating rather than measuring, and that beliefs come from perceptions rather than facts. Thus, the social world differs from natural science in intellectual traditions by using different logical procedures in research (Bryman, 2012, p. 28). In terms of the latter, the assumption is that the world around us has to be described by some implicit logical patterns, order or system, which could be revealed by using scientific methods that are controlled by strict measures and evidence. Accordingly, this type of research tends to be inductive, holistic and concerned with process instead of outcomes (Merriam, 1988).

Qualitative research is usually exploratory and allied with inductive approaches, whereas quantitative research is associated with deductive methods. An inductive approach focuses on an ongoing process from the data to build accounts of it. Mostly, researchers in this case choose explanation instead of hypothesis testing because they are not sure about what might be the suitable measurement to use (David & Sutton, 2011, p. 84). Basically, "Inductive reasoning, or induction, moves from the particular to the general, from a set of specific observations to the discovery of a pattern that represents some degree of order among all the given events" (Babbie, 2001, p. 34). On other hand, "Deductive reasoning or deduction moves from the general to the specific. It moves from (1) a pattern that might be logically or

theoretically expected to (2) observation that tests whether the expected pattern actually occurs" (Babbie, 2001, p. 35).

Research Paradigm rationale

The reason of choosing the interpretive paradigm is because of the nature of the study and its questions, where it relies on the researcher's epistemological and ontological stance. This allows the researcher to understand the viewpoint of the actors in Tatweer schools of the system as a new phenomenon. Adopting this paradigm helps to make sense of the issue in-depth and to take into account significant factors such as the uniqueness, culture and complexity. Tatweer schools are considered an innovation and a unique notion applied in the Saudi context that has particular characteristics. Bryman (2012) argues that "the researcher infers the implications of his or her findings for the theory that prompted the whole exercise" (Bryman, 2012, p. 24).

6.4 Research design

6.4.1 Phase 1: Feasibility study

The purpose of conducting this study is to investigate the feasibility of doing such study and to view if the researcher could access data, subjects and time scaling. The main themes for questions covered during the interviews and focus groups are as follows:

Tatweer Units (which established by King Abdullah Project and works under educational administration in the Ministry of Education):

➢ Their role and practices.
➢ Their policies.
➢ The difficulties encountered in conducting such programme at school.
➢ Identify how autonomy is thought to influence school effectiveness.

> ➢ Identify the degree of innovation taking place in Tatweer schools.

Educational expert:

> ➢ The role of the educational expert in Tatweer Schools.
> ➢ The relationship between the educational expert and the King Abdullah Project, educational administration and other schools.
> ➢ The difficulties encountered in conducting such programme at school.
> ➢ Identify how autonomy is thought to influence school effectiveness.
> ➢ Identify the degree of innovation, which has taking place in Tatweer Schools.

Head teachers:

> ➢ The role of the head teachers and their practices.
> ➢ Identify how autonomy is thought to influence school effectiveness.
> ➢ Identify the degree of innovation taking place in Tatweer Schools.
> ➢ The difficulties encountered in conducting such a programme at school.

Interviews

In this preliminary study, eight participants were interviewed: five head teachers, one deputy (ex-head teacher), one educational expert and one Tatweer Unit member. The interviews were conducted in Arabic and were recorded after obtaining permissions from interviewees with some note-taking. Two participants, however, refused recording for personal reasons, therefore the researcher relied on taking notes. Then the interviews were transcribed in Arabic script. This process is considered as time-consuming as each transcription took from 4-8 hours. Following transcription, I coded the themes manually, then summarised them for

each interview to draw preliminary findings (see appendix 7, this paper has been published based on this feasibility study).

Name	Position	Date	Years in education	Years in the school	Time of interviewing	Qualification	City
Reem	Head teacher	7-5-2012	12 years	2 years	45 minutes	Bachelor's degree in English	Riyadh
Nora	Deputy of head teacher	7-5-2012	29 years	4 years	One hour	Bachelor's degree in Geography	Riyadh
Farah	Head teacher	8-5-2012	16 years	3 years	3 hours	Bachelor's degree in Microbiology	Riyadh
Lubna	Head teacher	13-5-2012	17 years	4 years	3 hours	Bachelor's degree in Maths	Alqasseem
Hind	Educational expert	14-5-2012	25 years	1.5 year	50 minutes	Bachelor's degree in English	Riyadh
Hana	Head teacher	15-5-2012	29 years	6 years	One hour and 15 minutes	Bachelor's degree in Media	Riyadh
Rana	Head teacher	21-5-2012	31 years	9 years	One hour	Bachelor's degree in English	Jeddah
Suha	Tatweer Unit member	23-5-2012	25 years	One year	39 minutes	Bachelor's degree in Geography	Jeddah

Table 6- 1 Overview of participations' information and the interviews

Focus group

My plan was to interview three focus groups in three cities; however, upon arrival at the venue of Tatweer Unit in Jeddah I found that the whole group were busy. Unfortunately, only one member of the group was willing to do an interview. However, I have interviewed two groups in two cities, which are located in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, and Alqasseem.

Item	Date	The number of members	City	Time of interviewing group
1	12-5-2012	6 members	Alqasseem	120 minutes
2	19-5-2012	4 members	Riyadh	80 minutes

Table 6- 2 Overview of focus group's information

Issues that arose during the research project (feasibility study)

- Two educational experts cancelled their appointments because one of them had an urgent circumstance and the other had a Master's exam.
- Two tape recorders did not work as a result of technology error.
- Two participants did not agree to have their voices recorded so I had to take written notes.
- I had planned to do a focus group with the Tatweer Unit in Jeddah, but when I got there I found that only one member who was willing to be interviewed as mentioned before.

6.4.2 Phase 2: main study

After conducting the feasibility study to examine whether my idea is viable and the subjects accessible, my findings of the feasibility study led me to narrow my topic down to focusing on the perceptions and experiences of administrators and practitioners of the Tatweer Schools'

system in Saudi Arabia. A qualitative case study design is used to examine the Tatweer Programme, where three Tatweer Schools in Riyadh, one Tatweer Unit and one official are representing this programme. One of these schools has experience of two phases of Tatweer Project and others have experience of the second phase (these phases will be discussed in chapter 7). In 2011, there were 15 Tatweer schools in Riyadh city in three stages: primary, intermediate and secondary girl schools. The first phase (2007) had one Tatweer Smart School for girls in Riyadh, which was started in 2007, the second phase (2011) has 15 Tatweer Schools which had started in September 2011 including the Tatweer Smart School in the first phase. This number will be increased annually until 2017 to cover the entire public school system in Saudi Arabia[6]. For this study, I have decided to choose the Tatweer Smart School in the first phase and two schools in the second phase. The rationale for choosing these schools will be discussed in this chapter.

Case study

David and Sutton (2011) have explained that

> Case studies are in-depth studies of specific 'units'. Units may be individuals, organisations, events, programmes or communities. Case studies are distinguished from experiments in that they are not conducted in controlled conditions and are not specifically designed for comparison. Case studies are distinguished from surveys in that they are primarily designed to investigate specific cases in depth. Case studies may draw upon a range of methods, such as interviews and questionnaires, focus groups, observation (participant and non-participant), document and artefact collection and analysis (David & Sutton, 2011, p. 166).

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[6] Note: during the course of this research, the expansion of the Tatweer schools has been continuous.

As it can be seen from this definition the main purpose of this case study is to focus on the details of a specific unit, in line with this current study focuses on details of a particular type of programme as a unit of study, and will use a range of qualitative data collection approaches including semi-structured interviews, focus groups and documentary analysis. David and Sutton (2011) argue that:

> Case study research methods do not have the generalizability of a survey, its attention to the particular situation does allow for a deeper attention to how events came to turnout as they did. Whilst many case study researchers adopt an interpretive approach to description rather than causal explanation, realists argue that attention to the particular process by which events unfold is as important to casual explanation as statistical correlations (David & Sutton, 2011, pp. 172-173).

One of the main criticisms of case-study research is that it lacks rigour. Another major concern of conducting a case study is the question of how to provide a basis for scientific generalisation. The simple answer to such a question is that the case study's findings can be generalised in terms of theoretical aspects not of population's aspect (Yin, 2009). Silverman (2011) also asserts that "to call something a 'case' implies that it is a case of 'something'; so we can only understand the distinctiveness of a case by making theoretical assumptions about what is typical for a certain population" (Silverman, 2011, p. 139) and we will discuss this issue later on in this chapter. David and Sutton (2011) suggest that a case has to imply its own regulative structure internally to be studied. Charles Ragin (1992 cited in David & Sutton, 2011) illuminates two considerations when studying cases, the first considering the reason for choosing a case, whether it has been chosen due to the fact that it is a unique social case or because its representation of many similar cases. The other consideration is between the idea of the researcher's sense of the situation that forces the researcher to choose from the level of organisation, and the analysis unit of the case as it occurs naturally. Therefore,

> The emphasis on the internal dynamics of each case rather than on the correlation of variables across large numbers of cases, alongside the

orientation towards naturally occurring events relative to controlled conditions, does provide a significant degree of continuity. Moreover, diversity within case study approaches forces the researcher to be reflexive about the methods they choose rather than being able to fall back on a prescribed set of tools and technique (David & Sutton, 2011, p. 177).

This study has adopted qualitative case design, where it has investigated one Tatweer Smart School in phase one, and two Tatweer Schools in phase two (self-evaluation school) as well as the officials in Tatweer Unit and Project, to examine the experience and perceptions of administrators and practitioners of the Tatweer Schools' system in Saudi Arabia. Thus, this study has used an interpretative as a paradigm and a case study as an approach; this type of study is interpretative qualitative case study, which contains "rich, thick description ...a case study researcher gathers as much information about the problem as possible with the intent of interpreting or theorising about the phenomenon" (Merriam, 1988, pp. 27-28).

Rationale for the case study

According to Yin (2009) the case study approach will be used when the question is "how" or "why", when there are set of current events and when the researcher has no control or at least little control. One fundamental purpose of a case study is to investigate real life phenomena in depth. Therefore, the researcher has preferred to use a case study as an approach to yield in-depth understanding of the Tatweer Schools' system in real life by focusing on three Tatweer Schools and officials in the Tatweer Unit and project. Owens (2004) suggests that:

> If we want to make a difference in the organization we call school, it is first necessary to carefully make our basic assumptions manifest and consider how logical the connections are between those assumptions, our publicly espoused values and beliefs, and the organizational behavior in which we engage in professional practice. As you

undoubtedly know, this is a difficult, though necessary, thing to do. One reason that it is difficult is epistemological; What do we know about organizational behaviour in education and how do we know it? (Owens, 2004, pp. 4-5).

Thus, in the case of the Tatweer School system, this study attempted to answer the questions: what do we know about the system in a Saudi educational context and how do we know it? The 'case' in this study therefore is represented by the Tatweer School System.

Justification for choosing the Tatweer Schools

Since the King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Project for Public Education Development began in 2007, 25 girls' secondary schools and 25 boys' secondary schools across 25 provinces in Saudi Arabia have been established. The philosophy that guides education development in Saudi Arabia in the project's vision is to focus on school development; regarding the school as a unit of educational system, where there can be an effort of reform and improvement in the education system.

Tatweer schools are considered such an innovation that could develop the whole system of education in Saudi Arabia. This study is the first to investigate the perceptions and experiences of teachers and leaders of the Tatweer Schools' system in Saudi Arabia, to seek in which aspects they are innovative and effective, and to examine the leadership which has been undertaken by such schools. In order to choose sample schools, it is important to know whether you can access potential data sources or not, and in this regard the researcher has to be aware of the importance of choosing the case that is likely to answer the questions (Yin, 2009).

In this study the researcher chose three Tatweer secondary schools for girls out of five schools that would allow the researcher to carry out the research. At the time of conducting this research there were five Tatweer secondary schools, five Tatweer intermediate schools

and five primary schools in Riyadh. The one that has experienced two phases of the Tatweer system (the smart school) had already welcomed the researcher in her feasibility study. The other four represent only phase two of these. Two schools were chosen depending on their provision of access and how effective they were in applying the Tatweer Programme. Although the researcher had been granted permission by two head teachers of two Tatweer schools in her feasibility study, she chose for her case study two schools that are implementing the Tatweer Programme in an effective way and took into account the years of being a head teacher in such schools, because these considerations were not taken into account in the feasibility study. This decision was achieved by asking officials of the Tatweer project for their advice on selecting schools that were implementing the Tatweer project.

Why secondary schools and not other phases? When the project set up the Tatweer School system, it was oriented towards secondary schools and, therefore, it is worth studying schools that have involvement in both phases. Why girls schools and not boys schools? It is common that schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are single-sex, therefore, as a female researcher it is impossible to access' boys schools and the nature of the current study requires the researcher to examine real life inside school, which would involve using face to face interviews and focus groups.

6.4.3 Participants

In this study I interviewed teachers and head teachers in three schools in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, and interviewed one official of the King Abdullah Project as well as conducting focus group of Tatweer Unit's members (nine members from different disciplines) and three Excellence Team members in the three Schools. This was after gaining permission from the Ministry of Education to access the schools. At school level, there is one head teacher at each of the three Tatweer schools, so it is not necessary to consider how to choose head teachers to interview. The intended schools were chosen based on specific criteria as mentioned earlier. On the other hand, choosing teacher participants requires rational selection. I decided to choose senior teachers from each school (head of English, head of Arabic …etc.) because in Tatweer Schools there is an intensive focus on training, as well as these new

positions being associated with the Tatweer Project. Due to their positions they were likely to provide me, as a researcher, with rich data about the Tatweer system.

Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2002) State that "the sample must be appropriate, consisting of participants who best represent or have knowledge of the research topic. This ensures efficient and effective saturation of categories, with optimal quality data and minimum dross" (Morse et al., 2002, p. 12). Hence, the sample is a purposive sampling for all participants. Patton (2002) presents the strength of qualitative sampling, stating that:

> The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations (Patton, 2002, p.230).

However, with a small sample size, caution must be applied, as the findings might not be transferable to all Tatweer populations. This limitation will be discussed in detail later on in this chapter.

Communication with participants

In the feasibility study, the communication with participants has been done initially by telephone, email and phone texts. In the actual study, the communication was done by telephone, email, WhatsApp and text messages. This was to arrange meetings, schedules and also when crosschecking the data with the participants to check the validity of the data.

Demographic information about the study participants

The participants who participated in the in-depth interviews were the head teachers, senior teachers and the officials of the Tatweer Project. Excellence Teams in Tatweer schools and Tatweer Unit members participated in the focus group discussions.

The following diagram (Figure 6-1) provides a visual picture of the participants, schools, and groups.
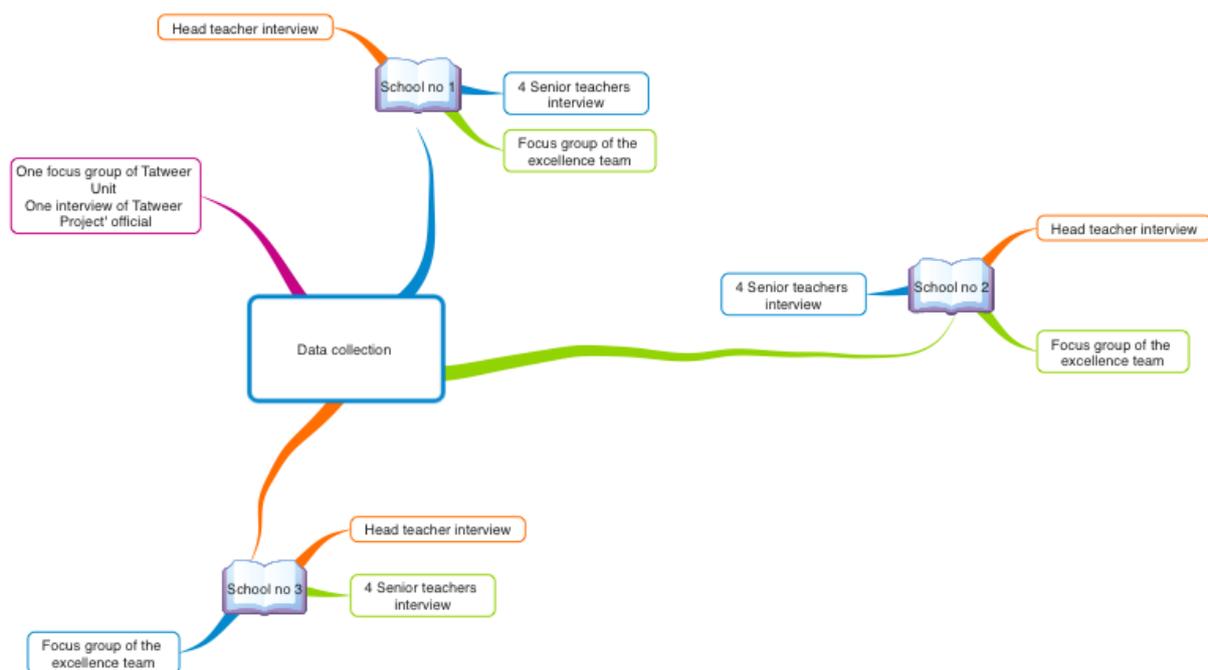
Figure 6- 1: Data collection sample

A total of 16 participants participated in the in-depth interviews and 4 focus group discussions were held as shown in table 6-3.

Participants	Interview	Focus Group
Venue	Tatweer Schools Tatweer Project office	Tatweer Schools Tatweer Unit
Type of Participants	Head teachers Senior teachers Official	Excellence Team in Tatweer Schools Tatweer Unit members
Number of Participants and focus groups	3 head teachers 12 Senior Teachers 1 official (Total = 16 participants)	3 focus groups in 3 School 1 focus group in Tatweer Unit (Total = 4 focus groups)

Table 6- 3 Information of participants in the interviews and focus groups

Interview information

School A: Five participants (head teacher and four senior teachers) participated in the in-depth interviews. The interview with the head teacher lasted for one hour and 30 minutes. The other interviews with the senior teachers lasted for only 30 to 40 minutes because most of them were busy preparing the exams for students and teaching according to the school's plan. The information regarding the interviews in school A is shown by the table 6-4 below.

Name	Position	Date	Years in education	Years in the school	Time of interviewing	Qualification
Nofa	Senior teacher	13-5-13	21 years	10 years	30 minutes	BS religion
Hanan	Head Teacher	13-5-13	13 years	3 years	One Hour and 30 minutes	BS English
Nadin	Senior teacher	18-5-13	17 years	15 years	40 minutes	BS biology
Lati	Senior teacher	18-5-13	22 years	14 years	30 minutes	BS Arabic Language
Amar	Senior teacher	26-5-13	29 years	13 years	40 minutes	BS English Language

Table 6- 4 Overview of the participant information in the interview at School A

Table 6-4 above it is shows that most of the senior teachers who participated in the study had more than 10 years experience in the school and more than 17 years of teaching experience while the head teacher had 3 years experience in the school and 13 years experience in teaching and heading in education. All of them have a bachelor's degree in different subjects.

School B: This had the same number of interviews as school A, where one head teacher and 4 senior teachers were interviewed. The average length of the interview with the senior teachers was 40 minutes, and one hour with the head teacher as shown by table 6-5.

Name	Position	Date	Years in education	Years in the school	Time of interviewing	Qualification
Hanwof	Head Teacher	12-5-13	18 years	4 years	One hour	BSc Biology
Nasem	Senior teacher of Geography	27-5-13	20 years	16 years	45 minutes	BSc Geographic
Marwa	Senior teacher of Arabic	9-6-13	19 years	16 years	20 minutes	BSc Arabic Language

| Najwa | Senior teacher of religious studies | 9-6-13 | 20 years | 15 years | 40 minutes | BSc religious studies |
| Habibah | Senior teacher of Science Math and English | 11-6-13 | 18 years | 10 years | 40 minutes | BSc physics |

Table 6- 5 Overview of the participant information in the interview at School B

Table 6-5 above shows that most of the senior teachers who participated in the study had more than 10 years experience in the school and more than 18 years of teaching experience while the head teacher had 4 years experience in the school and 18 years experience in teaching and heading. All of them have a Bachelor's Degree in different subjects.

School C: This had the same number of the interviews, where one head teacher and 4 senior teachers were interviewed. The average length of the interview with the senior teachers was 30 minutes, and one hour and 30 minutes with the head teacher as shown by table 6-6 below.

Name	Position	Date	Years in education	Years in the school	Time of interviewing	Qualification
Malak	Head Teacher	08-06-13	27 years	27 years	One hour 30 minutes	BSc History
Asmahan	Senior teacher of physic	10-06-13	13 years	4 years	30 minutes	BSc Physic
Razan	Senior teacher of History	10-06-13	14 years	4 years	45 minutes	BSc History
Salma	Senior teacher of English	10-06-13	12 years	9 years	25 minutes	BSc English
Intisar	Senior teacher of Islamic studies	10-06-13	22 years	10 years	25 minutes	BSc Islamic studies

Table 6- 6 Overview of the participant information in the interview at School C

Table 6-6 shows that most of the senior teachers who participated in the study had less than 10 years experience in the school and more than 12 years of teaching experience while the head teacher had 27 years experience in the school and being a head teacher. All of them have a Bachelor's Degree in different subjects.

Focus group information

School A: the time length of the focus group setting was one hour and 30 minutes with five participants. Most of the participants who participated in the focus group discussions had more than 6 years experience in the school and more than 14 years in education as shown by the table 6-7 below.

Name	Position	Date	Years in education	Years in the school	Qualification
Albandari	Tutor	26-5-13	14 years	6 years	Bachelor in social science
Fatemah	Psychological specialist	26-5-13	14 years	8 years	Bachelor in psychology
Nuha	Secretary of Learning Resources	26-5-13	27 years	8 years	Bachelor in Arabic Language
Fawz	Activities pioneer	26-5-13	18 years	15 years	BSc in
Amar	English senior teacher	26-5-13	29 years	13 years	BSc in English

Table 6- 7 Overview of participant information in the focus group of the Excellence Team at School A

School B: The time length of the focus group setting was one hour and 10 minutes with four participants. All the participants who participated in the focus group discussion in school B had more than 10 years in the school and 18 years experience in the education as shown in Table 6-8.

Name	Position	Date	Years in education	Years in the school	Qualification
Nesren	Activities pioneer	27-5-13	18 years	14 years	BS Chemistry
Habibah	Senior teacher	27-5-13	18 years	10 years	BS physics
Najwa	Senior teacher	27-5-13	20 years	15 years	BS religious studies
Worod	Secretary of Learning Resources	27-5-13	20 years	15 years	BS physics

Table 6- 8 Overview of participant information in the focus group of the Excellence Team at School B

School C: The time length of the focus group setting was one hour and 15 minutes with five participants. All the participants who participated in the focus group discussion in school C had more than 4 years and 13 years experience in the school and in education respectively as shown by table 6-9 (The head teacher joined this setting in the mid of the discussion).

Name	Position	Date	Years in education	Years in the school	Qualification
Safah	Activities pioneer	08-06-13	15 years	5 years	BS Islamic studies
Asmahan	Senior teacher of Physic	08-06-13	13 years	4 years	BS physics
Tamader	Media coordinator	08-06-13	15 years	12 years	P.hD in Arabic
Maryam	Senior teacher of Arabic	08-06-13	21 years	20 years	BS Arabic
Najla	Deputy of student's matter	08-06-13	22 years	22 years	BS social science

Table 6- 9 Overview of participant information in the focus group of the Excellence Team at School C

Tatweer Unit members also participated in the study to give more insight about the implementation of the Tatweer Project in Tatweer schools. 9 members took part in the focus

group setting that took place in the Tatweer Unit office as shown by the table 6-10. The length of the focus group setting was one hour and 30 minutes.

Name	Position	Date	Qualification
Hayat	Planning supervisor and the head of unit	03-06-13	M.A. Multi-Language in Education
Rozah	Tutor	03-06-13	Bachelor in Social science
Sawsan	Technology supervisor	03-06-13	M.A. Education Technology
Saydah	Headship supervisor	03-06-13	Bachelor in Geography
Manal	Comprehensive assessment supervisor	03-06-13	Bachelor in Physics
Nahid	Academic subject supervisor	03-06-13	Bachelor in Computing
Nauf	Activity supervisor	03-06-13	M.A. in Business Management
Reem	Training supervisor	03-06-13	Bachelor in Psychology
Rahaf	Training supervisor	03-06-13	Bachelor in Physics

Table 6- 10 Overview of Tatweer Unit members who participated in focus group discussion

Background of Tatweer schools

Background of the School A

This school was started in 2007 under the contract of the Tatweer Project as a smart school. This school has roughly 400 students; this size is considered as the medium size in Riyadh. The school has been able to implement many projects to improve the capability and effectiveness of the school and to achieve the goals and objectives of the Tatweer Project. The school values include Islamic identity, citizenship and responsibility, commitment and transparency in performance, innovation and quality, the right to education for all, and participation and accountability.

The head teacher in this school highlighted the fact that the students in this school come from high socio-economic status and stated that:

> *Students come from high socio-economic status as their parents are working as a staff in the University of (…) where this school is located in the university housing of (…). This school has achieved the 9th grade in the performance on Saudi Arabia level in the league table, the 4th grade upon private and public schools on Riyadh level. The public level in Riyadh, it has the first grade of the school performance* (HT1, 13/5/13, interview).

School's operational plan: the school has three foci for the next two years starting from 2013/2014 academic year. These items contain three issues: leadership and school management, education and learning and students' attendance. The first issue concerned with improving the internal-capacity of management process and achieving staff satisfaction. The second issue aims to achieve professional development for teachers, enhance the level of students' attainment. The final matter wishes to improve students' attendance.

Background of School B

This school was started in phase two of the Tatweer Programme. Therefore, the school under the Tatweer Project has self-evaluation and planning. The school started its contract with the Tatweer Project in 2011 and had implemented four projects. These projects are self-management; Development Gate Project for education; gifted project; and finally the course system. The school is located in the north of Riyadh city. Students come from middle socio-economic status. The size of school is medium where the number of students is more than 400 students. The school is guided by the values such as honesty, cooperation, altruism, mastering the work, self- monitoring and volunteer work.

The head teacher highlighted that the school is innovative in nature since most of the students are creative and the school has won and participated in various competitions. She went further and stated that:

> *The school has won the prize of Microsoft in the competition of schools' administration, I have been chosen as one of five head teachers from the Middle East and 55 head teachers on the worldwide. This competition has dedicated 60 seats, five seats for Middle East and the rest for headteachers from worldwide. Students have also participation in the Olympiad of research, innovation and creativity* (HT2, 12/3/13, interview).

School's operational plan: the school has planned three main targets, which they will implement during the period of one year starting from 2013. These are professional development, family and community and lastly but not least enhancing the level of health awareness among students.

To achieve the above plans the head teacher went further and stated that "*We have loyal people who work for my God, which means they pay from their own pocket in order to get a smile or a pray*" (HT2, 12/3/13, interview).

This statement shows us that the staff haves been motivated by Islamic values that encourage them to be volunteers in their work and invest money in well-being.

Background of School C

This school was started in phase two of the Tatweer Programme. Therefore, the school under the Tatweer Project has self-evaluation and planning. The school started its contract with the Tatweer Project in 2011, rejecting the self-managing project by the head teacher. This school is located in an area of low socio-economic population.

The head teacher stated that:

> *It started its contract with Tatweer Project on 2011 in this school.... Students come from low socio-economic it located in the southern region in Riyadh city. This school has a large population where it has about 800 students and more than 70 staff (teachers and administrators)... Especially it is common that this south area is poor and does not have development... it has a huge growth population* (HT3, 08-06-13, interview).

The head teacher also won the third class on the Riyadh city as one of the best head teachers.

School's operational plan: the school has three targets for the next two years starting from 2013/2014 academic year. These items contain four issues: school environment, professional development for teachers, safety and security, and teaching and learning for students. The first issue is concerned with ensuring the hygiene of the school. The second issue aims to achieve professional development for teachers and staff and to provide them with skills. The third one hopes to implement the tools of safety and security and disseminate the awareness about their importance in the school. The final matter wishes to improve and enhance the level of students' achievement.

However, the vision of each school must be aligned to the vision of the Tatweer Project, which states that:

Outstanding education that contributes to shape the balanced personality at students in developed community of knowledge in accordance with the high quality.

The following table shows the vision and mission of each school.

School	Vision	Mission
A	To build educated balanced person in the advanced cognitive environment with high quality	To create learning, innovative, catalyst environment to meet valuable, cognitive, professional, psychological, physical and pedagogical needs at students as well as personal, skilled and innovative capacity; to grow talents and capacities at students; to prepare and qualify teachers to undertake pedagogical and educational tasks.
B	To foster a generation who is proud of her religion, language and Islamic identity, and looking up to pace with progress, who has the sense of responsibility about himself and the	Encouraging the motivation of learning, and enhancing talents and recruit them. Stimulating students' role in the homework and educate students about the rights towards: the religion, the family, the school and the

	society.	society. Enhancing self-esteem and self-monitoring.
C	To be a modern school, we seek to achieve an outstanding education in a framework of values and ethics and community participation in order to achieve quality excellence in various aspects of education to create an educated generation and conscious leaders to be able to face era challenges.	To have teamwork and to create educated, cultivated and conscious generation to be an Islamic believer that could challenge the issues of the day.

Table 6- 11 Vision and mission of schools that implemented Tatweer Project

The vision of school A focuses on student development and school environment, while school B focus on maintaining religion, language and Islamic identity among the learners. School C seems to have detailed vision that concerned with building values, ethics among learners and partnership with society, and it proposes to achieve a high level of school performance. School A, B and C appear to derive their visions from the Tatweer Unit's vision that focuses on high quality of education, students' personality and the environment.

Although each school had a different vision and goals it is important to highlight that the school management should ensure that they implement the Tatweer Project in the school by ensuring that they use the strategies, which will help the school to achieve its objectives.

The following photograph shows a typical school building of any Tatweer or non-Tatweer schools for girls in Saudi Arabia.

Figure 6- 2: A typical girls' schools in Saudi Arabia

6.5   Data Collection Approaches

Data collection is a significant phase of the empirical research. The type of data in this research is qualitative data as it is the suitable type to answer the research questions, and it is appropriate to the nature of the study and its paradigm. In this thesis the data was collected in May 2013.

6.5.1   Qualitative data

Qualitative data refers to meaning in a linguistic form that can be found in a collection of material (David & Sutton, 2011). "Qualitative data takes the form of words (spoken or written) and visual images (observed or creatively produced)… qualitative data, however, can be produced by other means. For example, the use of open-ended questions as part of a survey questionnaire… [And] can be produced by a variety of research methods"

(Denscombe, 2010, p. 273). The researcher has to build a text to show experience by turning experience into words (Punch, 2005). In the text or what they call description, the data does not show us good or bad aspects, suitable or unsuitable or any interpretations or judgements, it simply helps the reader to understand settings (Patton, 2002).

Miles and Huberman (1994) state that:

> With qualitative data one can preserve chronological flow, see precisely which events led to which consequences, and derive fruitful explanation. Then, too, good qualitative data are more likely to lead to serendipitous findings and to integrations; they help researchers to get beyond initial conceptions and to generate or revise conceptual framework (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 15).

This study is concerned with qualitative data, which can be obtained from a semi-structured interview, focus group and documentary analysis. The reason for choosing this kind of data is because it can help the researcher to understand the social world from the perspective of participants through the interpretation (Bryman, 2012).

Interviews

There are different types of interview methods; the researcher has to be aware of their features to choose the suitable type of his or her interview. MacDonald and Headlam (2008) reveal three styles of the interview, which are structured, semi-structured and unstructured interview. Structured interviews are built upon a set of certain questions; semi-structured interviews are concerned with main themes to cover during the interview rather than specific questions; and finally in the unstructured interview, which does not build upon specific questions or themes, the researcher asks questions based on issues that emerge during the interview. In this study, therefore, the researcher undertook semi-structured interviews, as it

would be more suitable to the nature of the study and to meet its goals. Audio recording was used alongside taking notes; as this helps to validate the data. This was after asking the participants' permission to record their view; it was encouraging that all participants approved recording their interviews' voices, except one participant.

Semi-structured interview

A semi-structured interview is formed by a number of predetermined questions and the interviewer can ask questions without following the same order. This type of method is used to produce qualitative data (Runswick-Cole, 2011). In this study, the researcher adopted this type of interview with 16 participants: three head teachers, 12 senior teachers and one official. Conducting such a method was very useful to yield the data that helps to answer the inquiry of the research. The settings of these interviews were in their workplace: the three schools, and Tatweer Project building. The questions' themes of the interviews were stemmed from the research questions.

Justification of using semi-structured interview

In this thesis, the researcher conducted semi- structured interviews for the following reasons: firstly, it is more flexible in terms of the topic order of the questions, which allow to the respondent to develop her idea (Denscombe, 2010). Secondly, questions of the interview are formulated in general to develop other significant questions based on replies of the interviewee (Bryman, 2012) and "to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on topic"(Merriam, 1988, p. 74).

The researcher interviewed head teachers and senior teachers and one official of the Tatweer Project in order to gain flexible qualitative data.

Advantages of semi-structured interviews

The fundamental advantage of this type of interview is that it can provide the researcher with the viewpoint of participants about the world (Bryman, 2012). According to Denscombe (2010) the advantages of interviewing can be acquiring rich information, less equipment and high response rate. "Observing behaviour is clearly a useful research technique but asking people directly about what is going on is an obvious short cut when seeking answers to research questions" (Robson, 2011, p. 280).

Disadvantages of semi-structured interviews

It is time-consuming, and face-to-face interviews are considered a costly method in terms of travelling to meet informants (Denscombe, 2010). Biases are possible with interviewing (Robson, 2011). It is also worth noting that sometimes people say something different than what is actually happening (Denscombe, 2010). Additionally, at every stage of the interview, there are ethical concerns that might arise and must be considered (Runswick-Cole, 2011).

Focus group interview

The focus group method is widely used in social sciences as a tool that can provide rich data. Robson (2011) argues that a focus group is a kind of interview that takes place in a group setting, it can be structured, semi-structured and unstructured. "Focus groups involve communication between a group of people, rather than the one-to-one communication normally associated with interviews" (Denscombe, 2010, p. 43). In this study, four focus groups have been conducted: three focus groups in the schools and one in the Tatweer Unit office in Riyadh. The participants from the schools are the Excellence Teams, and the Tatweer Unit members in the Tatweer Unit office. The themes of the questions for the Excellence Team were the following:

> ➢ What is the Excellence Team
> ➢ Excellence Team roles and practices

➢ The relationship of this team with teachers and head teachers

➢ The issues that they face in their work

The questions asked of the Tatweer Unit members focused on the following:

➢ Tatweer School's system

➢ Tatweer Schools' autonomy and innovation

➢ Their role and practices

➢ The difficulties of conducting Tatweer Project.

The focus groups in this study were conducted in natural settings, where there is a virtual focus group by using social media, which is another type of focus group. In addition to recording all the focus groups by using digital audio voice and this is of course after obtaining the participants' approval.

Justification for focus group

In this present study, the researcher decided to use a focus group to question one group of Tatweer Unit. There is one Unit in Riyadh with nine members from different disciplines. The researcher also conducted focus groups with the 'Excellence Team' in each Tatweer School. This totals four focus groups: one in the Tatweer Unit and three in Tatweer schools. This kind of interview helps the researcher to explore and explain aspects of the Tatweer Project and its Schools. "The method is particularly useful for exploring people's knowledge and experiences and can be used to examine not only what people think but how they think and why they think that way" (Kitzinger, 1995, p. 299).

Investigating people who work as a team by using such methods is beneficial, and the researcher found useful data and answers with this type of group. The reason is that the participants understand the work of the team as one body with different minds, and so if an incomplete answer comes from one participant, another participant would complete it, giving

a good example of the previous answer. They also reflected and expressed the use of setting to help them to focus and think about their achievement. One participant stated that *"thank you for you, because you gave us a chance to talk about our work… we thought we did not achieve our aims, but talking with you led us to discover our potentials" (Saydah, TU, 03/06/13, focus group).*

Advantages of the focus group

Focus groups help to save money and time as a result of interviewing a number of people in one setting (Bryman, 2012). Interviewees are also more likely to benefit from the experience of being in such conversations (Robson, 2011). The researcher can build up his view based on reactions between interviewees to each other's views (Bryman, 2012).

> Focus group interviews allow group dynamics and help the researcher capture shared lived experiences, accessing elements that other methods may not be able to reach. This method permits researchers to uncover aspects of understanding that often remain hidden in the more conventional in-depth interviewing method… Focus groups put control of the interaction into the hands of the participants rather than the researcher. The interaction between participants themselves substitutes for their exchange with the researcher, and this gives more prominence to the points of view of the respondents… interaction is a unique feature of the focus group interview. Indeed, this characteristic distinguishes the method from the individual in-depth interview. It is based on the idea that group processes assist people to explore and clarify their points of view (Liamputtong, 2011, pp. 4-5).

The focus groups in this study provide rich and valuable data and help the researcher to understand the Tatweer Schools' system in general and some new concepts of the system specifically.

Disadvantages of the focus group

To reassert control the group needs more experience (Robson, 2011). It is also impractical to have an equal time for each person in the setting to share her or his opinion (Payne & Payne, 2004). Some personnel experiences or issues are not worth conducting by this method, or sometimes the participants would not express his or her real view in front of the group (Liamputtong, 2011). In addition, analysing qualitative data from this type of method is considered difficult to analyse as a result of containing rich data and integrating themes in people's speech and patterns in their interaction (Bryman, 2012).

The validity of interview

It is difficult to know whether people tell the truth or not. The best way to deal with this issue is to use triangulation with other sources, so that perspectives and understandings from different points of view could be compared. In this current study the documents will be the best approach to ensure validity. It is also possible to check consistency by comparing the data within interviews (Denscombe, 2010).

Documentary analysis

According to Yin (2009) documentary analysis seems to be more relevant to any topic of case studies, which advocates the researcher's view whilst collecting relevant data for the topic from the schools' documents. Documents are useful in providing information about the context, are accessible easily and ready to use (Merriam, 1988).

Documentary analysis has been used to present the information, figures, and background of the three schools as well as the Tatweer Project. It has been also used to describe Tatweer Unit's reports during three years that contain valuable information about Tatweer schools and the Tatweer Unit. In these reports they analysed the school challenges, figures, Tatweer Unit matters and plans, meetings, training, professional development, their achievements, aspirations, school structure, self-evaluation and planning of the school.

Justification of using documentary analysis

From the researcher's experience as a head teacher, it is commonly known that there are many useful recorded documents in Saudi schools that contain valuable information about plans, meetings, activities, pedagogical files and portfolios, which can help to triangulate the data and provide some rich data about school. In addition, the researcher has gained valuable documents from the King Abdullah Project that includes general information about this Project and Tatweer Schools.

Advantages of Documents

Denscombe (2010) mentions the advantages of using documents as a method to acquire some data as cost-effectiveness, permanent and is a credible method. In addition, it is stable, exact and can be reviewed many times (Yin, 2009).

Disadvantages of Documents

Merriam (1988) asserts that "documents are not produced for research purposes, the information they offer may … less of a concern… the use of documents is too much like historical research… A third major problem with documentary materials is determining their authenticity and accuracy" (Merriam, 1988, pp. 105-106).

However, Scott (1990) claims that researchers have to evaluate documents based on certain criteria, which will be discussed in the next section.

Validity and reliability of documentary data

Platt (1981) and Scott (1990) (cited in (Denscombe 2010)) maintain that in order to examine the validity of documents it is necessary to evaluate them by regarding four criteria, which are meaning, credibility, authenticity and representativeness. Scott (1990) reveals that meaning is concerned with the significance of the content; credibility refers to the accuracy of the content; authenticity refers to the originality and genuineness of the sources; representativeness refers to the availability of representing the total document to the relevant

document. Robson (2011) emphasises that there are also considerable issues about reliability and prejudice of using documents, which have been produced.

The following table clarifies which method and subject that is appropriate to acquire answers to the research questions.

Questions	Type of method	Type of subject
What are Tatweer Schools?	Interview, Focus group, documentary analysis	Headteachers, Tatweer Unit's members, Tatweer Project's official, documents
How is the system being implemented and financed?	Interview, Focus group, documentary analysis	Headteachers, Tatweer Unit's members, Tatweer Project's official, documents
What level of autonomy do Tatweer Schools have with regard to organisational management, staff appointment, student assessment, and curriculum development in Saudi Arabia?	Interview, Focus group, documentary analysis	Headteachers, Tatweer Unit's members, Tatweer Project's official, documents
What is the nature of culture shifts taking place within Tatweer Schools?	Interview, Focus group, documentary analysis	Headteachers, Teachers, Tatweer Unit's members, Tatweer Project's

		official, documents
How do Tatweer schools leaders and teachers work with and in Tatweer schools?	Interview, Focus group, documentary analysis	Headteachers, Teachers, Tatweer Unit's members, documents
What are the head teachers and teachers' views of working in Tatweer Schools?	Interview, focus group	Headteachers, teachers, and Tatweer Unit's members

Table 6- 12 Analyzing questions based on methods and subjects

6.5.2 Reliability, validity and generalizability

"Reliability is a central concept in measurement. It basically means consistency" (Punch, 2005, p. 95), which is concerned with the question of to what extent the findings may possibly be repeated. Quantitative research in particular has an issue with reliability (Bryman, 2012) while in qualitative inquiry it plays a minor role as well as generalizability (Creswell, 2003). On the other hand, validity refers to the integrity of the data (Bryman, 2012) which is concerned with credibility and accuracy of findings (Creswell, 2003). "Its meaning can be shown in this question: how do we know that this measuring instrument measures what we think it measures?" (Punch, 2005, p. 97). However, in qualitative inquiry validity is not the issue considered as a strength of this inquiry, though researchers use it to determine the accuracy of findings from the researcher's, reader's or participant's viewpoint (Creswell and Miller 2000 in Creswell, 2003, p. 195-196). Creswell (2003) suggests strategies that can be used to check the validity of findings and researchers can choose one or more from them. These are:

- Use triangulation of diverse sources.
- It is recommended that researcher could clarify his or her bias that justifies the researcher's narrative honestly.

- To increase the accuracy, it is recommended to use the process of peer debriefing.

- In order to review and check the whole project, it is recommended to ask external editor to do reviewing.

- Spending long periods of time in the field would be helpful.

- Using thick and rich description in order to transfer findings would help to clarify the picture of discussion.

- Discussing various and conflicting perspectives is a useful technique to enhance the credibility.

One way to increase the credibility and legitimacy of qualitative inquiry among those who place priority on traditional scientific research criteria is to emphasise those criteria that have priority within the tradition. Science has traditionally emphasised objectivity, so qualitative inquiry within this tradition emphasises procedures for minimising investigator bias. Those working with this tradition will emphasise rigorous and systematic data collection procedures, for example, cross-checking and cross-validating sources during fieldwork (Patton, 2002, p.544-545).

Generalisability is perceived as an important aim of evaluating quantitative research. And this is one criticism that has been aimed at case studies. In this study the objective is not to generalise the findings, as generalisation is not necessarily the objective of all research. The key aim is to understand the phenomenon in depth and to capture multiple perspectives from leaders and teachers, to deeply understand the Tatweer School system. Although findings from case studies are difficult to generalise, there are authors who believe that it can be done. For example Punch (2005) suggests that there are two ways to produce generalisable findings, which rely on the way that data is analysed. Developing propositions is the first way and conceptualising is the second way, where the researcher focuses on conceptualising and not describing in their analysis (Punch, 2005).

Yin (2009) argues that:

> Individual case studies are to be selected as a laboratory investigator selects the topic of new experiments. Under these circumstances, the mode of generalization is *analytic* generalization, in which a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study. If two or more cases are shown to support the same theory, replication may be claimed. The empirical results may be considered yet more potent if two or more cases support the same theory but do not support an equally plausible, *rival* theory (Yin, 2009, p.38-39).

A number of authors have discussed alternative criteria for assessing qualitative research such as Lincoln and Guba (1989) and Bryman (2012), the following paragraph synthesises the key ideas from the authors.

Trustworthiness and authenticity are other concepts in qualitative research that are considered as alternative criteria to validity and reliability for evaluating the qualitative inquiry. Trustworthiness has four criteria that are equivalent with criteria in quantitative study. These criteria are dependability (equivalents with reliability or stability), credibility (equivalents with internal validity or truth of the findings), transferability (equivalents with external validity or applicability) and confirmability (equivalents with objectivity or neutrality). Authenticity, however, is emphasised on the political impact of the study, which spout from the basic assumptions of constructivism directly. It has five criteria which are; educative authenticity, concerned with the degree of understanding of individuals' respondents about the constructions of others in different ways than themselves; ontological authenticity which refers to the degree of awareness and understanding of the actors of the world through their experience; tactical authenticity, which presents the extent of the empowerment to act as actors; fairness which can be done by presenting conflict value, beliefs and claims as well as

open true negotiations of recommendations; catalytic authenticity which refers to the degree to which the processes of evaluation stimulate the action (Bryman, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1989).

However, Morse et al. (2002) argue that:

> Reliability and validity remain appropriate concepts for attaining rigor in qualitative research… qualitative researchers should reclaim responsibility for reliability and validity by implementing verification strategies integral and self-correcting during the conduct of inquiry itself… verification refers to the mechanisms used during the process of research to incrementally contribute to ensuring reliability and validity and, thus, the rigor of a study… If the principles of qualitative inquiry are followed, the analysis is self-correcting…Verification strategies help the researcher identify when to continue, stop or modify the research process in order to achieve reliability and validity and ensure rigor (Morse et al., 2002, pp. 1-10).

To ensure rigor in this study the researcher has decided to follow the principles of qualitative research such as triangulation, audit trail, peer debriefing, cross-validating sources and member check data that help to implement verification strategies and self-correction. All these processes would confirm reliability and validity (as this research would use these terms as criteria to evaluate the study).

6.6   Ethical issues

At an early stage of preparing a research project, it is essential to think about ethical issues that might arise from conducting any study (Robson 2011). What is vital is to avoid harming

participants, to not be deceitful, to give them informed consent and to avoid privacy invasion (Bryman 2012). For ethical considerations, the first step to be taken was to review the application following the procedures of the University of Reading Ethics Committee to give a favourable ethical opinion for conducting this research. Moreover, approval was granted from the Ministry of Education to access Tatweer schools before conducting the study (see appendix 1 and 2). In addition, I ensured that all information and participants were kept strictly confidential and I made it clear that participation is voluntary and that the participants can withdraw at any time (see appendix 3 and 4).

6.7   Data analysis procedures

Analysing qualitative data is considered a repetitive, difficult and demanding task. "There are four basic techniques of qualitative data analysis: (1) coding, (2) analytical memos, (3) displays, and (4) contextual and narrative analysis" (Kaplan & Maxwell, 1994, p. 41). The ability of the researcher to code is an important part of analysis, where it requires the researcher to be intuitive active, and creative (Basit, 2003).

> Since data analysis and theory construction are closely interlinked in qualitative research, the researcher generates many theoretical concepts in this ongoing process which are often recorded across numerous notebooks, manuscript pages and index cards. Keeping track of the emerging ideas, arguments and theoretical concepts can be a mammoth organisational task (Kelle, 1997, p. 3).

This study relies on qualitative data, which concerned with building an understanding of the Tatweer Schools' system from participants' data that show their perspectives and experiences of the life changing phenomena. This system has been investigated by using the approach of case study to gain in-depth and rich data and also to draw a holistic picture of Tatweer Programme. At the same time, ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of the participants is considered in this study where they remain anonymous.

It can be difficult to present a rich description in a case study while at the same time not identifying the setting. It can be easy for participants in the study to identify each other in a qualitative description, even if outsiders cannot. Qualitative researchers should negotiate with participants early in the study the approach that will be taken to protect privacy and maintain confidentiality (Check & Schutt, 2012).

Analysing qualitative data is a hard and time-consuming process, especially since this study has been conducted in Arabic. The data analysis part of this study has been processed through several stages. These stages can be classified into several steps beginning with recording the interviews and focus group settings. Then the records were transcribed into Arabic transcripts (on paper), each transcript took from 4-8 hours. The Arabic paper transcripts were transferred to an electronic one, then classified into different electronic files and read through. The following stage was to reduce and summarise the data by choosing the most relevant, repeated, important and interesting data. The next step was to translate this data into English, which was also time consuming. This was the most difficult stage where I tried to not affect the meaning of the data. Then I sent the two copies to the participants, on 30 September 2013, an Arabic version and an English one. I asked them to double-check both versions to be sure that the translation did not change the meaning. The majority of them agreed with it, some of them sent feedback and a few of them did not reply. The next stage was to send the Arabic-English participants' comments to the Arabic-English bilingual person to revise the translation and correct it. I ensured that the privacy of the participants was protected and kept strictly confidential.

After this I divided the data into four sections: three sections for the three schools separately, which I named School A, B, C. The fourth section was for the Tatweer Unit members and the official of the Tatweer Project. The three school sections contain 12 questions with answers from the head teachers and teachers. Then each section contains the subsections showing the Excellence Team data that came from the focus groups settings. The fourth section contained

views and experiences of Tatweer Unit members and the official. The following step in the process was to code these answers and then generate a list of codings (see Appendix 6).

After this process I synthesised the data to answer the research questions, to provide a meaningful and holistic picture of the Tatweer schools' system as a case study. The data was triangulated by the documents to check the validity of the answers, and then a conclusion was drawn. In this way, the data analysis was done manually rather than using a software program such as Nvivo. The reason for choosing this manual approach rather than any software program was practical. My laptop was an Apple Mac and at that time of analysing the data, a Mac version of this type of software had still not been released. I learnt how to use this program by attending two sessions and practicing on it at the University of Reading.

However, there are fears of using computerisation in qualitative analysis and its impact on research. There are four main concerns, discussed below:

> The concern that computers can distance researchers from their data; The dominance of code and retrieve methods to the exclusion of other analytic activities; The fear that use of a computer will mechanize analysis, making it more akin to quantitative or 'positivist' approaches; and the misperception that computers support only grounded theory methodology, or worse, create their own approach to analysis (Bazeley, 2007, p. 8).

In general, qualitative analysis also has been criticised as it includes concerns that: there is a fear of the representativeness of the data; the interpretation would be affected by researcher bias; there is a concern about the explanation that may be oversimplifying; or it may affect the meaning by decontextualizing it (Denscombe, 2010).

6.8   Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher discussed methodological considerations from a philosophical point of view, in addition to describing the design and methods. As far as this study is concerned with the perceptions and the experiences of Tatweer schools' members about the project, the researcher has employed three instruments to gain rich data as well as to ensure internal validity by triangulating and comparing data that is collected.

The research design is divided into two phases; the first phase was conducted to test whether the study was feasible or not, and the second phase built upon findings of the first phase by framing its questions and then the methodology. In addition, the procedures of the qualitative data analysis have been discussed in depth in this chapter.

In the following chapters, the data will be analysed and discussed to answer the research questions.

Chapter 7 examines the research question of what are Tatweer Schools? This question includes sub-questions, namely: Who introduced the Tatweer Schools? What did they want to achieve? Why were Tatweer schools introduced?

Chapter 8 addresses the following questions: How is the system being implemented and financed? What levels of autonomy do Tatweer Schools have with regard to organisational management, staff appointments, student assessment, and curriculum development in their schools?

Chapter 9 is guided by the questions: How do Tatweer schools leaders and teachers work with and in schools? What is the nature of culture shifts taking place within Tatweer Schools?

Chapter 10 focuses on the opportunities and challenges within the Tatweer Schools' system from the perspectives of teachers, head teachers and Tatweer Unit members.

Chapter Seven: Data analysis and discussion (1)

7.1 What are Tatweer Schools?

This chapter will address the following sub-questions:

- Who introduced the Tatweer Schools?
- What did they want to achieve?
- Why were Tatweer schools introduced?

This chapter relies on documentary analysis as well as data from the interviews and focus groups. The chapter focuses on how the changes were envisaged by the policy makers, thus highlighting the official perspective. The following chapters will look at how these changes were implemented and experienced in practice.

7.1.1 The Tatweer School Project

Improving the quality of, and access to, education is a priority in many countries to achieve school effectiveness (Pennycuick, 1993). In Saudi Arabia, the King Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz Project for improving public education initiated the Tatweer Project as a development project to upgrade the standards of the country's educational system. "The project is a new measure launched to introduce changes to the education system" (MOHE, 2010, p. 3). The project seeks to: enhance the professional development of teachers; improve the educational environment; integrate technology and digital models into the curriculum; develop comprehensive curricula to meet students' cognitive, occupational, emotional, intellectual and welfare needs; strengthen students' self–capabilities, learning skills creativity; develop their general talents and interests; and deepen their concepts of social and national coherence through extracurricular activities of various types (MOHE, 2010).

There are also wider political and economic goals that the Tatweer Project was initiated to achieve, namely: to ensure the Islamic identity of students and maintain the national culture; to enable individuals to own the keys to comprehensive development and to help them to become capable of competing in international labour markets; to build productive learning communities based on a distinctive educational model. These goals are in line with the basic law and regulations of the regime issued in 1992: 'Article 13: The aim of education is to implant the Islamic Creed in the hearts of all youths, to help them acquire knowledge and skills, to qualify them to become useful members of their society, to love their homeland and take pride in its history' (Henderson, 2009).

Since 2013 The Tatweer Project has operated under a new name: The Tatweer Education Holding Company (THC). It has the following mandate:

As a strategic investment company the purposes of THC include provision of core and support educational services, development, establishment, acquisition, operation and maintenance of educational projects, and execution of related works and activities. According to Ghaith (2012), THC has been given the mandate to implement the Tatweer Project so as to ensure that the public education system has well-planned programmes and projects in order to enable students to compete in the labour market upon graduation. It has been given the right to invest in and profit from a broad spectrum of core as well as educational support services in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and abroad.

To achieve the goals and aims of the project THC adopted a strategic plan, which is supported by the following four principles:

- To pursue its mandate through the establishment of specialised subsidiaries that will operate in specific segments of THC's strategic business domain – the education sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- To enable the Ministry of Education in its drive to transform the K-12 education system and accelerate continuous quality improvement of it in the future
- To play a leading role in the development of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's public education sector thus contributing to the improvement of the national knowledge economy and its competitiveness in the global marketplace.
- To identify business opportunities in the K-12 education sector and developing selected initiatives into sustainable and profitable businesses that have a positive impact on the education sector (Ghaith, 2012).

The Tatweer Project adopted an American project management approach to implement its educational activities (Ministry Official, 13/06/13, interview). This project management approach is exclusive to the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education. It is an execution arm in the education industry and will be implemented by the THC. In the interview the Tatweer Project Official stated that:

It is the exclusive outlet to all the projects of the Ministry of Education. They call us the execution arm or think tank. We are the catalyst and the moderator... Tatweer schools are under our umbrella (13/06/13, interview).

المنفذ الحصري لجميع مشاريع الوزارة. يسموننا العقل المفكر .. مدارس تطوير تقع تحت مظلة (المشروع) هو المحفز والمغير.

Adopting an American project management approach supports the argument that the introduction of uniformity across educational systems an example of: 'Western institutions influencing other developing countries' governments regarding educational policies' (Spring, 2009).

The Tatweer initiative also aims to:

> Improve educational outcomes in Saudi Arabia by improving the inputs. Teachers are one such input. Tatweer seeks to reduce the enrolment of individuals who lack the educational competencies required in the teaching profession. Under Tatweer, NCAHE [7] is responsible for a Teacher Professional Standards and Assessment Tools Project. This project has four major components. The first component – improving standards – will be developed every five years with the aim of modifying standards according to trends in educational research and practice. The remaining three components – developing tools, data management, and reporting – will be conducted annually. Together, these four components represent significant educational reform in Saudi Arabia. By developing teacher professional standards and assessment tools, NCAHE will establish benchmarks for teaching quality, identify training needs for beginning teachers, evaluate outcomes of teacher preparation programs, support education reform that aims to enhance teaching and learning, and establish national indicators in relation to teacher professional development (ACER, 2012, p. 2).

As such, the aim is to enhance teachers' qualifications and quality as an input in order to lead the change in Saudi education.

7.1.2   The reason for introducing the Tatweer Project

As stated in Chapter 2 there are many challenges that face educational reform internationally of which embracing globalisation is a major one (Hopkins et al., 2011). The impact of globalisation on educational systems and practices is deep rooted and conflicting. Educational

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[7] "The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is assisting the Saudi Arabian National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education (NCAHE) with the development of a framework for beginning teacher standards." (ACER, 2012, p. 2)

practices, policies and organisations are also influenced largely by the global changes taking place (Burbules & Torres, 2000). One of these, namely, the threat of losing national and ideological identity because of globalization is a major concern in a religious and conservative country such as Saudi Arabia. Alghathami (2013) argues that Muslims are more likely to support Saudi Arabia to keep its privacy and conservation as a country that provides religious direction to Muslims worldwide. However, it could be argued that this exclusiveness would not fit the universal mission of the Qur'an and its values. Nurullah (2008) acknowledges both these points in the argument that:

> Globalisation poses a challenge to Islamic culture and identity because globalisation promotes the transmission of information through the media and this has resulted in the dominance and hegemony of Western culture over the rest of the world. This poses a challenge to Islamic ways of life, values, and principles. However, as globalisation is inevitable, Muslims should take the benefits and opportunities provided by globalisation in spreading and demonstrating the unique traits of Islamic cultural identity around the world through various means (Nurullah, 2008, p. 45).

With the advancement in communication networks and the growth of the knowledge economy, changes have been implemented in human resource development, which have resulted in the introduction of new educational policies and improvements in industrial production outputs (Spring, 2009). At the moment Saudi Arabia is in the process of adopting best practices and models internationally in order to reform the system of education to enable the country to compete more effectively in the world economy.

There are also other imperatives for bringing about change in education in Saudi Arabia. The number of Saudi jihadists, who joined the war in Syria and Iraq, is relatively high. These jihadists are strongly connected to al-Qaeda, the terrorist network, raising questions about the alleged role of education in fostering intolerance in Saudi Arabia. These issues are also related to globalisation, which is discussed in greater detail below.

Held et al. (1999) view globalisation as a concept that encourages "widening, deepening and speeding up of global interconnectedness" (Held et al., 1999, pp. 14-15), therefore, people would contact with each other easily. Likewise, Giddens (1990) defines it as "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), where social, political and economic aspects of life necessitate human's sharing and collaboration. Therefore, raising children at schools to be tolerant, open to others, respectful of different ideologies and ideas is important in the era of the globalisation. At the same time it is not against Islamic values and principles; in the holy Quran God says: "[2.62] Those who believe, Jews, Nazarenes and Sabaeans whoever believe in Allah and the Last Day and do good deeds shall be rewarded by their Lord; they have nothing to fear nor are they saddened". Another verse states: "[16.97] For whosoever does a righteous deed, be they believing men or women, we shall recompense them with their wage according to the best of their deeds". These verses from the Quran underscore the principles, values, and goals of freedom of belief and social justice. They do not support intolerance amongst different groups of people.

In response to the challenges brought about after the events of 9/11 including the growth in jihadism, King Abdullah[8] introduced the implementation of the Tatweer Project, which requires improvement within the educational system and managing the issues present in the curricula of the schools are under his reign (Mathis, 2010). Furthermore, the minister of education Prince Khalid Bin Faisal introduced a plan to not allow the extremists again to hold any significant position in education.

TIMSS results were another reason to introduce Tatweer Project, where these results show that the Saudi students' level in mathematics and science is lower than their counterparts worldwide. This trend puts pressure on the Saudi government to rethink their policies and practices as discussed in chapter 2. Certainly, when conducting the preliminary study one

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[8] King Abdullah has passed away on 23 January 2015; however, the Tatweer Project still continues its schemes.

participant in the study reported that she engaged in the TIMSS examination by following up implementing this examination, but she was frustrated by the poor results of the students. It is within this context, however, that the Tatweer Project called '*The Development of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Initiative*' was established to improve students' learning and help them to acquire scientific and thinking skills. This development is to be achieved through enhancing professional development for teachers; establishing traditional and virtual science labs; increasing the opportunities to apply knowledge and scientific skills; and allocating additional time to teach and learn Math. This initiative has a partnership with pioneer institutions and universities in teaching Mathematics and Science globally.

The other important reason for introducing the Tatweer Project is the traditional way of teaching and learning. A global context influenced by neoliberal policies, and the impact of technology on work practices, have provided an economic catalyst to reform education. It is argued that "educational institutions in Saudi Arabia are expected to cater for the new market and to create a more competitive market for the students to flourish in their creativity" (Elyas & Al-Sadi, 2013, p. 57). However, Rugh (2002) and Prokop (2003) argue that the style of teaching in schools takes the shape of rote learning; it ignores using learning approaches such as discussion between students and teachers, collaboration and creative thinking. Responding to this issue, a programme to develop the curricula has been established within the context of Tatweer Project. This programme seeks to build national standards for curricula and to develop processes and practices for teaching and learning as well as improving the process of assessment. This programme aims to achieve the following purposes: To develop the scientific characters at learners and enhancing thinking skills such as critical thinking; To make high expectations for all students; To provide education to be appropriated with students' potentials and their orientations; To shift from concentration on cognitive content to educational processes and to include applications for what was learned by learners and translate it into life skills; To strengthen digital content for curricula and enrich material. These improvements focus on the methods of delivering the curricula and the strategy of new style of teaching and learning. It could be argued, however, that the curricula need further development within the context of the Tatweer Project, since Saudi schools do not teach Music, Drama, PE, or Dancing lessons. They would also need to teach different types of ideologies and religions in a respectful objective and impartial manner. These types of

curricula and approaches to teaching would need to be considered as these subjects build the spiritual, social, cultural and moral aspects of learners. These subjects and topics are banned by the ideology of Wahhabism as discussed in Chapter 2 and 3. According to Moussalli (2009) "Wahhabism prohibits many practices in which other Muslims engage, such as listening to certain types of music, drawings of human beings or other living things that contain a soul, praying while visiting tombs (including the Prophet Mohammed's tomb)" (Moussalli, 2009, p. 4). As discussed before the philosophy of the policies and practices in Saudi Arabia stem from the Islamic values and principles and the Wahhabi ideology is the interpretative approach of Shariah law (Alshyeb, 2013). Clearly then if the Tatweer Project is to be successful in addressing the issues raised above, it would be necessary for the dominant ideology of Wahabism to be revised and to be more flexible and open to all different types of Islam in particular and other religions in general.

The final reason for introducing this project is that the education system is highly centralised, where the fiscal and administrative authority is located within the Ministry of Education (*King Abdulla Bin Abdul-Aziz Project for Public Educational Development, 2011*). As a result schools and educational administrations in each region are not equipped to develop or confront any urgent challenges. A key question that needs to be asked is whether the educational services should cater exclusively for the national interest, or whether they should be working also in the interests of the local public and individuals as well. One of the major claims in support of decentralization is making sure of local control over public services of local interests (Radó, 2010). This issue will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

The next section discusses the philosophy of the Tatweer Project within the context of globalisation.

Tatweer Project's Philosophy

Having a clear vision is a vital attribute for any organization to have in order to achieve its goals and objectives. Alotaibi (2005) suggests that leading change is relevant to spreading new thought, designing a new vision and working constantly to achieve this aim. In managing change efforts, the need for a state of dissatisfaction with the current situation, a desire for a future and resorting to a clear strategy to achieve this vision needs to arise. This seems to have occurred in the aftermath of the events of 9/11. From the documentary analysis data, it is apparent that the Tatweer Project adopted a philosophical stance, which incorporates Islamic values, culture and vision to help inculcate high expectations of learners, teachers and leaders. This can be observed in the Tatweer Project targets and purposes, where the emphasis is on keeping the identity of Islam and the national culture. Much emphasis has also been placed on developing schools, which are regarded as the building blocks of the educational system. The Tatweer Project's philosophy views education as a lifelong learning process practiced by learners during their entire lives. While at the same time, building the architecture of society. The Tatweer Project is guided by the following three principles:

> *Education is available for all students*: This principle means that the educational system provides access to every learner.
> *Education is considered to be a permanent process*: This principle highlights the aim to consolidate continuous (lifelong learning) education for learners to ensure their capability to live, and adapt to emerging changes.
> *Education is a responsibility for all:* This includes the government as well as communities, parents, learners, teachers and educational leaders.

This philosophy derives from international education policies especially the UNESCO emphasis on countries meeting the Millennium Development Goals 2020 (MDGs) as well as the proposed vision "Equitable, Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All" (UNESCO

& UNICEF, 2013) to be achieved by 2015. As a result, many developing countries, including Saudi Arabia, started to focus on improvement in their local school systems (Spring, 2009).

 Additionally, the Education For All (EFA) agenda has helped to drive significant educational progress since its launch in 2000 (UNESCO, 2013, p. 3). Many indicators show that there has been a remarkable progress between 2000 and 2010 such as the increased number worldwide of students enrolment in primary schools internationally (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2013). Access to education in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) also developed significantly, including a rise in girls' educational enrolment in most MENA countries (Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003). Saudi Arabia is one of the countries that has witnessed improvement in the enrolment rate in the education in general and girls' education in particular (see Figure 7-1). AlMunajjed (n.d) argues that, as a result of developing education, Saudi women have experienced an improvement in many aspects of their social life. Nevertheless, according to the Global Monitoring Report (2015), gender disparity remains in education in Arab states with 43% of girls expected never to enrol, 19% enrolled but dropped out, and 38% were expected to enrol late.

However, there are unaddressed areas in Saudi Arabia and worldwide, and some which have made slow progress. Evidence of this slow progress is that "New data [in 2011] show that the world is still unlikely to fulfil one of the most modest commitments: to get every child in school by 2015. More than 57 million children continue to be denied the right to primary education" (UIS, 2013c, p. 1). Moreover, one third of the students have not achieved the basics in the primary schools (UNESCO, 2014). It is argued that the government is responsible for reforming education and should engage the stakeholders and also the practitioners to reach the optimal state (Ahmed, 1987; Naidoo, 2005; E. Smith & Greyling, 2006; Weiss, 1999). As is argued earlier, decision-making also is extremely centralised in Saudi Arabia (Al-Dhuwaihi, 2011; Alzaidi, 2008a, 2008b; Mathis, 2010; Prokop, 2003; Rugh, 2002) and the most important and major decisions have taken place in the Ministry of Education. Thus, decisions associated with educational policies and reform take place at the national level, where the government has control over the outcomes and the expenditure.

In the context of Saudi Arabia, the following figures illustrate the progress of the literacy rates of male and female adults and youth in Saudi Arabia for the period 1992 to 2015. Although improvement has been observed in both rates, there is still a difference in trends in recent years in favour of males, so there is still a percentage of gender inequality in literacy in Saudi Arabia.
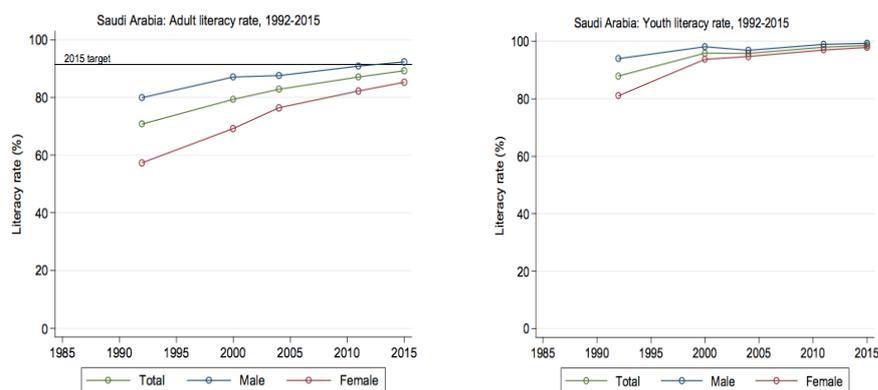
Figure 7- 1: Saudi Arabia: Adult and youth literacy rate, 1992-2015[9]

Another example of gender inequity, is that the poorest girls in sub-Saharan Africa would not complete the universal primary stage by 2086 if the current trends continue (UNESCO, 2014). Additionally "in the Arab States and sub-Saharan Africa, around two-thirds of girls who are out-of-school are expected never to attend based on current trends and without scaled-up and accelerated action" (UNESCO, 2013, pp. 3-4).

Comparing the UNESCO data of gender equity with the gap of literacy rates of Saudi males and females, it shows that the gap is not significant, especially for Saudi youth literacy. According to the Global Monitoring Report (2015) "wealthier countries experienced the fastest declines in illiteracy, such as … Saudi Arabia" (UNESCO, 2015c, p. 137).

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[9] *Source: Adopted from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, May 2013*

It can be also predicted from these figures that greater improvement is needed to have gender equity especially for adults. The best explanation for this disparate in adult rate especially in secondary schools is that there are some factors that affect girls' status in education, but the most important here is that there is no law to protect young girls from getting married at an early age. Hamdan (2005) argues "there is no law in the country, as yet, that prohibits male guardians (for example, father or brother) from taking girls out of school, no law making education mandatory to high school…There is also no law to determine the age at which girls can marry" (Hamdan, 2005, p. 59). Clearly, this issue needs to be addressed to achieve equality in education for all. It is believed that "Inequality of opportunity acts for many as a barrier to fulfilling their potential… A stress on reducing inequality of opportunity leads to policies designed to change the distribution of abilities to compete and to make education more egalitarian" (Saad-Filho & Johnston, 2005, p. 180).

Although there have been improvements for girls in primary schools in Saudi Arabia, there is still great disparity in secondary schools and the higher education system. In the market context of Saudi Arabia, women are more likely to have fewer work opportunities and also less income compared to Saudi males. Women in Saudi Arabia do not have access to all professions compared with other women worldwide. Alnajem (2012) found that poor women in Saudi Arabia suffer from a low level of education. Lack of employment opportunities, she argues, is due to social and cultural factors that interact with each other to influence women's experience making them victims of poverty. Issan (2013) attributes this limiting of work opportunities to the rule of Wahhabi doctrine; whereby women should not be in direct contact with men. This restriction has led to few professions offering positions to women, except in teaching in schools and nursing in hospitals. This highlights the fact that major educational reform is needed to upgrade the standards and policies to enhance the status of Saudi women's education. Aksornkool (1995) underscores the importance of making a supportive political decision to empower women's status.

It is within this context that the Tatweer Project called '*The National Strategy for the Development of Education Project*' was established based on the principles identified above. One of these principles is associated with opportunities to ensure equal learning and education for all students regardless of gender or social background or levels of abilities. As a result, the aim is to improve girls' education to achieve gender equity.

> Progress was uneven in the regions where women were lagging furthest behind. There was fast progress in the Arab States during the 2000s, as the female adult literacy rate increased from 56% in 2000 to 69% in 2010, while the gender parity index increased from 73 literate women for every 100 literate men to 81. However, this progress is expected to slow by 2015 (UNESCO, 2015c, p. 13).

Offering new disciplines in higher education for girls and empowering them in the labour force would support this improvement. However, it could be argued from the above that it is insufficient on a large scale to empower women only in education, a political decision is needed to change society's attitude towards women and to empower them within all aspects of social life.

The following section discusses the guidance of the Tatweer Schools' system in relation to the aim to orient these schools towards meeting the needs of the global knowledge economy.

7.1.3   The Guidance of Tatweer Schools' system

The principles of Tatweer schools' system, which is known in this system as guidance, are determined by three important elements: Economic, Technology and Human, where:

Economics is considered basic for people's development: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia occupies an eminent position among the world's countries due to the power of its oil-based economic system. However, the present era has been characterized by the knowledge economy as an engine for economic growth. This requires investment in human capital to build a knowledge-based economy. Therefore, the focus in Tatweer schools' system is to promote key skills of students such as scientific skills, competition, entrepreneurship, innovation, and business skills in order to produce a new generation who are able to drive the economic growth in the country.

Technology is a significant and basic element in producing cognition and its applications in this era: Technology plays an essential and prominent role in transferring knowledge in the modern world. Tatweer schools' system training of students, teachers, and staff in IT and communication skills will be discussed further in Chapter 9.

Humans as constructive elements in society: educational development concentrates on building human learning; all development efforts must be directed to investment in improving human minds. This can be achieved by enhancing networking, coherence and learning communities.

According to the OECD (1996) "Knowledge, as embodied in human beings (as *"human capital"*) and in technology, has always been central to economic development. But it is only over the last few years that its relative importance has been recognized. OECD economies are more strongly dependent on the production, distribution and use of knowledge than ever before" (OECD, 1996, p. 9). It is argued that where "education adds to human capital" (Saad-Filho & Johnston, 2005, p. 180) it plays a significant role in economic growth.

The next three chapters will examine the application of these three principles in the Tatweer Project.

7.1.4   Tatweer School and its Components

The Tatweer School can be described as a subjective learning environment, participatory, active and strongly associated with the society. To achieve this and produce learners who have the capability to compete with others internationally, the schools employ educational experience, modern technology and new pedagogical approaches such as cooperative and active learning to facilitate learning.

New forms of organisation have also been introduced including Professional Learning Communities (PLC), senior teachers, the Excellence Team, and self-evaluation and planning schools. The intention is to change its role from that of a traditional school to a 'smart' learning school. This new school has to attract educational leaders and qualified teachers who will work to facilitate learning processes. "Tatweer school is the engine of the educational system… it has to build its internal capacity" (The official, 13/06/13, interview).

مدارس تطوير هي المحرك والمغير للنظام التعليمي... مدارس تطوير فلسفتنا فيها طالما انها المغير يجب أن تبني كفاءتها الداخلية.

The above description was supported by the responses from the head teachers and Tatweer Unit members. Some thought that the school is concerned with transforming the school system through building the internal capacity of the teachers and learners; the school creates a global competitive environment and culture among learners; and that the school will change its equipment, curricula and any material that will be used. The significance of the Tatweer school was explained by one of the head teachers during interview:

> Tatweer Schools represent a paradigm shift at schools' level that depends on building internal capacity, where it develops the process of learning and teaching. This is to achieve all desired goals through students' results (HT1, 13/5/13, interview).

مدارس تطوير ... تمثل نقلة نوعية في مستوى آداء المدرسة يعتمد على بناء الكفاءة الداخلية بحيث انها تتطور كل العملية التعليمية والتربوية وتحقق الأهداف المرسومة في تطوير التعليم من خلال نتائج الطالبات

The head teacher of School C perceived that the Tatweer School created a global competitive environment and culture among learners and stated that: "Tatweer school by its name means that this school is involved in modern technology, a development school, and involved in international education" (HT3, 08-06-13, interview).

مدرسة تطوير بمسماها معناها أنها فعلا مدرسة دخلت التكنولوجيا الحديثة مدرسة مطورة معناها دخلت في مجال التعليم العالمي **.**

The head teacher of School B also thought that the Tatweer School would completely change the school equipment and items, curricula, and anything related to education. She stated that:

> Although the change will take place it will be gradual not at once… we do not say at a slow pace but advance steadily; it may be far-off but continuous and it covers the whole process of education. Tatweer is concerned with the professional development of teachers and administrative staff by training them… training for senior teachers and training for subjects' teachers (HT2, 12/3/13, interview).

تطوير يعني بالتطوير المرحلي، التطوير المستمر ولكن... ما نقول بطيء ولكن يتقدم بخطوات ثابتة بخطوات متتالية قد تكون متباعدة ولكن قد تكون مستمرة ولكن تشمل العملية التعليمية بالكامل ، تطوير تم اعتناؤه في البداية من بتطوير الهيئة التعليمية و الادارية يعني تأهيل الكادر التعليمي و الاداري تأهيل مهني، تأهيل عن طريق الدورات التدريبية التي ألحق فيها المعلمات كمعلمات دورات متخصصة في المواد الدراسية ودورات للمعلمات الأوائل

The Tatweer Unit members supported the views of the head teachers:

> At the beginning we could call this school an autonomous school, a learning school, school-based decision-making, a development school that can build its capacities from inside, work gradually in development until it becomes a self-evaluating

school… that can make its own decisions and conduct the project without taking help from the Tatweer Unit or the office of education (Hayat, TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

بدايتها نقدر نطلق عليها مدرسة مستقلة، مدرسة متعلمة، مدرسة متخذة قرار.. مدرسة متطورة تستطيع بناء كفاءتها من الداخل تتدرج في عملية التطوير إلى أن تكون مدرسة تقوم بذاتها.. تستطيع اتخاذ قراراتها وبناء وتنفيذ مشاريعها دون اللجوء لا لوحدة تطوير ولا لمكتب التربية والتعليم بقدر المستطاع ..

The significance of autonomy in these schools will be discussed in the next chapter to examine the level of decision making that Tatweer schools practice.

The Tatweer Project has a long-term scheme of 10 years to ensure comprehensive reform in education. In Tatweer Schools, students are considered to be central to the educational process and as important targets for the achievement of development. Therefore, all activities, processes and school programs are focused on supporting students' learning to enable them to continue with higher education and have appropriate qualifications to engage in the labour market. Furthermore, the Tatweer School is keen on providing an educational environment that encourages learners to be self-learning and to be able to search for knowledge and produce it on their own.

Tatweer Schools have several key elements that help them to ensure that the educational system is successful and meets international educational standards. This includes making comprehensive support available for schools; to apply an incentive system for the school community; apply a flexible accountability system for the school and its community; build databases and comprehensive archives; and to support decision making. The following are some of the key elements in the Tatweer School system[10]:

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[10] This data comes from the document of the policy of Tatweer Project

1) School Leadership

It is believed that leadership is a crucial factor in achieving school effectiveness (Marzano et al., 2005). Providing leadership is a main expectation of most administrators. This belief is highlighted both in educational literature and professional agendas (Gorton, 2009). School Leadership is essential for the development, running and successful management of the school system. Effective leadership will help the schools to be successful and produce learners who are able to change society and compete internationally. It is argued that recruiting the right people to lead schools, and supporting and preparing them comprehensively, is crucial to improving and developing the leadership spirit; moreover, it would reduce the turnover of principals. Additionally, it would encourage school reform and stability, which helps to enhance students' abilities to some extent (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

Educational leadership in Tatweer Schools is characterised by the following:

- Investment in performance: leadership in the school should ensure that all employees benefit from all the opportunities and there is job satisfaction to improve the performance.
- Belongingness: leadership should be able to create an educational environment that is attractive and inclusive in nature to allow all the employees to have a sense of belongingness and togetherness to achieve their objectives and goals.
- Internal motivation: leadership should help the employees to feel the importance of work and desire to achieve the school's goals.
- Accountability: the leadership should be accountable and responsible when it comes to the decision-making process and performance of the students in their schools (*King Abdulla Bin Abdul-Aziz Project for Public Educational Development, 2011*).

Notman and Henry (2011) list six personal characteristics of successful leaders: past life experiences; interested in education; pride and self-belief in school and community; work ethic; level of resilience; depicting the human face of leadership. They also list a number of leadership strategies of successful principals, including: vision and purpose; focus on student achievement; school improvement activities; consultation with teachers and community; hiring of quality staff; competent senior leadership team; personnel support systems; integration of different cultures; producing other leaders; and feeling the pulse (Notman & Henry, 2011). These are useful to be viewed in the Tatweer schools initiative, which regards leadership as a core element in education. Additionally, the professional development of leaders if they are head teachers or senior teachers to refine and improve their skills to lead and manage the school effectively have been stressed in the Tatweer school system. The Tatweer Project has introduced training to create reliable leaders. This is discussed in Chapter 9.

2) Educational Expert

Since Tatweer Schools adopted the concept of the learning school, and aim to build a knowledge community that will lead to achieve development in the knowledge economy era, it is essential for the schools to build these capabilities and establish educational expertise that will help it to achieve its goals. Educational experts are essential to provide professional support for the development of school staff: to transfer experiences; participate with the head teacher and the first teacher in building professional development plans for teachers; provide teachers with studies' findings and knowledge in the educational field and to contribute to making plans and activities as well as providing them with feedback of their performance (*King Abdulla Bin Abdul-Aziz Project for Public Educational Development, 2011*). Hailey (2006) argues that, "Effective leadership development is ... not an isolated process but one that is integrated with the organization's learning strategy and human resource policy. There should be regular follow-up and feedback from different sources" (Hailey, 2006, p. 27). As such, effective school leaders foster collaborative learning, support their teachers by providing feedback and regular follow-up, and then provide training after defining their professional needs. In the Tatweer School Project Phase 2 this will be undertaken by an

external team. This team has experience and skills as proposed by the Tatweer Project. They are referred to as the Tatweer Unit and will be responsible for provision of expertise in the educational field. This team will be discussed later in this chapter.

3) The first teacher

First teachers play a major role in ensuring that the Tatweer schools achieve the concept of the knowledge community by ensuring that they participate in building this community through clear means and procedures. This is because they play a leadership role in the classroom. Indeed first teachers' core responsibility is as a role model for Tatweer students. The first teacher promotes professional development among teachers. S/he ensures that teachers develop professionally by holding meetings; discussing and managing classroom visits between teachers; offering feedback to improve and develop teaching strategies and classroom management; and evaluating practices (*King Abdulla Bin Abdul-Aziz Project for Public Educational Development, 2011*). First teachers therefore are leaders.

It is believed that promoting a professional attitude that allows teachers to share their concerns and avoid individualism is the most important factor for creating a learning school (Liljenberg, 2015). The concept of the first teacher would encourage such learning and collaboration between teachers. It is also argued that teachers have to become agents of change, and also that teachers have the capacity to lead development work (HertsCam, 2014). Therefore, empowering the position of teachers by enhancing the first teacher's responsibilities and status would contribute to school development and improvement.

According to the Tatweer official interviewed the first teacher has been re-designated as the senior teacher in order to improve their status and increase motivation.

4) The outdoor activity pioneer

According to the official documentation, Tatweer Schools provide appropriate and effective environments that will help all the learners to participate actively in all their learning. The environment facilitates learning and gaining scientific and social skills. Outdoor activities are considered as the best way to give the learner opportunity to build a balanced character through practicing activities, without feeling that these activities are compulsory. To achieve this, the appointment of the activity pioneer is necessary to meet the goals of activities. The purposes that the Tatweer Project seeks to achieve through outdoor activities programmes include the following: to build students' character in a balanced manner suited to the Arabian and Islamic community; to create incentives focused on positive competition among learners at all levels; capability development to develop the responsibility of learners; to raise health consciousness levels; Instil a sense of belonging for students and how to love the country (*King Abdulla Bin Abdul-Aziz Project for Public Educational Development, 2011*). Bascia and Hargreaves (2000) stress that "Reform strategies … require a substantial resource environment; a belief that teachers have important contribution to make curriculum development because of their special knowledge of students and their grasp of the immediate realities of practice; and a ready acknowledgment that teachers' work today extends far beyond the classroom" (Bascia & Hargreaves, 2000, pp. 8-9). The outdoor activity pioneer attempts to help the students to translate what they learn into practice. The Tatweer Project has changed the plan of outdoor activities to be embedded within the subjects rather than being a separate subject. This occurred at the beginning of Phase Two (2011) implementation of the Tatweer Project. One participant in the preliminary study was upset about this, as she thought that being a separate subject would be better than embedding the activities within the curriculum.

5) Integrating technology into education

As stated earlier, technology is the cornerstone of the knowledge economy. It is important for the school to equip learners with new knowledge and skills needed to excel in the use of information technology. The Tatweer Project embraces technology by creating an

environment in schools to ensure that there is effective and efficient utilisation of modern technology that strengthens the learning of students and prepares them to tackle future challenges in society and the world beyond. The Tatweer Project also seeks to use technology and to integrate it into teaching and learning in order to achieve the following: To improve learning for raising students' attainment; To make essential requirements technology available in school environment; To make learning resources available and facilitate access to different resources (*King Abdulla Bin Abdul-Aziz Project for Public Educational Development, 2011*). Technology integration as a component in Tatweer Schools is possible since the school environment is geared toward the proper functioning of technology in educational and learning processes and in the school administration system. Various types of technologies such as smart boards, computer devices for offices, laptops, and high speed internet help learners to be educated through communication with others locally and globally have been introduced in schools. Alamry and Alfawzan (1997) argue that accessing new technologies and factors in the organisation will be considered a change to the organisation's values. Accordingly, Tatweer schools have changed their culture and climate by integrating technology into learning and teaching. It has helped the school to move from being a traditional school to a smart school, from traditional teaching to modern teaching by using technology and new strategies, and from paperwork to electronic work. This culture shift will be discussed in Chapter 9.

6) *Educational processes and effective learning*

The Tatweer School is considered to be a development unit where the classroom is the centre of the development process. Therefore, planning and application of education processes are important to enhance the learning process. The main characteristics of the education process and effective learning in Tatweer Schools are based on the following principles:

- An effective classroom sets performance standards for students and helps them to meet their expectations and goals. Active learners in the

classroom are able to learn different skills that will help them to think and solve issues that affect them without difficulties or challenges.

- Teachers are expected to design effective teaching strategies that can be used appropriately in the smart school to help students do research, discover, discuss, think and innovate as well as produce and publish knowledge. The teachers use smart classroom technologies for facilitating learning processes, skills development and different knowledge acquisition (*King Abdulla Bin Abdul-Aziz Project for Public Educational Development, 2011*).

All systems in the Tatweer School and its activities focus on improving teaching methods, strategies, and learning styles for the purpose of improving the students' levels of achievement.

Improving the way of teaching and learning is also another shift in the culture of Tatweer schools.. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 9.

7) Self-evaluation system

Hopkins et al. (2011) point out that "In both a theoretical and empirical sense it has matured through a wide range of successful projects, interventions and innovations across a range of countries, about how to help schools become increasingly effective learning environments for all their students" (Hopkins et al., 2011, p. 1). Self-evaluation is one approach that helps schools to improve their learning and teaching. The self-evaluation system has been designed to evaluate the general performance of the school according to clear standards so as to monitor progress in the school. This will help determine the strengths and weaknesses of the school and enable development efforts to be implemented according to students' needs. The self-evaluation system provides the school with pragmatic statistics and objective data collected through tools, which help in school management and its administration. It also helps

teachers, boards and the external community to achieve the purpose of enhancing students' attainment. The self-evaluation system for general performance in Tatweer School concentrates on the following:

- To follow school performance in the light of purposes and detailed priorities in its plans.
- To measure school performance according to its potential.
- To set strategies for inspection of all school activities.
- Improvement of school programs and processes according to the results of the self-evaluation.
- Preparation for external evaluation of the school (*King Abdulla Bin Abdul-Aziz Project for Public Educational Development, 2011*).

It is argued that self-evaluation is a robust approach that leads school improvement; the evidence indicates that schools in many countries that adopt this approach show high levels of students' achievement (Chapman & Sammons, 2013). This approach has been encouraged in Phase Two of the Tatweer schools project. It is a significant culture shift in these schools, where they used to wait for external examiners to evaluate school performance.

8) Professional Learning Community

As discussed in Chapter 4 the concept Professional Learning Communities was an innovative educational reform to improve students' learning (Ricketts, 2008). The Tatweer School model aims to build a professional learning community, which is referred to as the "Learning School". The knowledge community concept is based on the fact that there is a need for continuous professional development among employees. As a result, roles of staff and educational practices have been modified to meet the aim of creating learning communities. The head teacher of the school plays the role of an educational leader and supervisor, supporting the building of the school's learning community and ensuring that it consistently meets standards of quality. The Tatweer School also aims to create large databases, which concentrate on actions taken and empirical research (*King Abdulla Bin Abdul-Aziz Project for*

Public Educational Development, 2011). The official of the Tatweer Project stated that "the philosophy of Tatweer schools relies on the philosophy of the learning organization" (The official, 13/06/13, interview).

<div dir="rtl">فلسفة مدارس تطوير تعتمد على فلسفة المنظمة المتعلمة</div>

The analysis of the policy documentation of the Tatweer Project in terms of defining the term Professional Learning Communities and its purposes, suggests that the notion of the professional learning community was not clear in these documents. This has led to a lack of understanding of this concept among participants even the members who work in the Tatweer Unit. One of them asked me about the history of this concept, as she seemed to not have a suitable understanding of it. This misunderstanding will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 9.

9) Excellence Team

Within the context of the Tatweer Project, the Excellence Team can be defined as a team, which works to improve the school's performance by determining priorities, setting the targets of the school and ensure that the vision and mission of the school are met. The Excellence Team discussed various issues related to school matters such as the self-evaluation and planning agenda. This team was established in Tatweer Schools in phase two of the Tatweer Project. The nature of this team and its roles will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

7.1.5   Goals of Tatweer Schools

Tatweer Schools aim to achieve the following targets:

- To improve and develop teaching strategies and approaches.
- To achieve appropriate integration of technology in education.

- To integrate evaluation processes with learning processes.
- To increase the graduation rate of secondary students and to reduce the educational loss through attractive and comprehensive educational system.
- To raise participation rate of parents in internal and external classroom activities.
- To increase participation level of the surrounding community (*King Abdulla Bin Abdul-Aziz Project for Public Educational Development, 2011*).

Shared vision, goals, and decisions are important elements for the achievement and implementation of the Tatweer schools. These values would start with the school setting the vision, goals and plans. This mechanism is explained in the following comment:

There is a small addition for the development we noticed, I think the unified vision and objectives that were also emerging from the Excellence Team work and the self-planning… it means a standardization of vision, values and objectives, the goal of the school has become collective… it starts from micro level in the senior teacher's team then the Excellence Team, then the level of administrative department until it gets the initiative, so in this initiative our goal is collective, our attitudes are also collective in terms of defining targets (Nahid, TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

فيه اضافة بسيطة بالنسبة للي ويش لمسناه من تطوير أحس توحيد الرؤى والأهداف هذي نشأت برضو من فريق التميز ووضع الخطة من المدرسة .. هدفهم وهمومهم مشتركة وهمهم واحد .. يعني توحيد للرؤية والقيم والأهداف .. وتنبع على مستوى ضيق على مستوى فريق معلمات التخصص عندهم نفس التوجه أهداف مشتركة، رؤية مشتركة لما يخص تخصصهم، بعدين على مستوى نطاق أوسع اللي هو فريق التميز على نطاق أوسع مكتب التربية والتعليم إلى أن توصلين للمبادرة فتلقين انه حتى في المبادرة هدفنا مشترك على مستوى ادارات وجهات خارجية توجهاتنا مشتركة فيما يخص تحديد الأهداف...

Tatweer Unit members restated the goals and aims of Tatweer schools; they thought that the Tatweer school could be an autonomous and learning school, school-based decision-making,

and a development school that can build its capacities from inside. They work gradually with these schools until they become autonomous schools.

Head teachers, senior teachers, teachers and other participants together develop the mission, vision and goals of their schools. Additionally, working as a team of school staff by evaluating and devising the plan and mission together has led to the involvement of different members of the school community in the schools' development. This practice encourages and motivates people to own the changes being implemented. This process of building a shared vision, as well as values, would induct the school staff into certain norms and behaviours that support teaching and learning; the values, therefore, can be embedded in the day-to-day practice among school staff. This action develops norms of commitment, self-criticality and self-awareness (Morrissey, 2000).

7.1.6   Tatweer schools in Phase One (2007)

Since the King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Project for Public Education Development (Tatweer Project) began in 2007, 25 girls' secondary schools and 25 boys' secondary schools have been chosen among government schools based on criteria, to implement the Tatweer Project across 25 provinces in Saudi Arabia. The schools introduced in Phase One were characterised as smart schools, which meant that they had to be provided and supported by highly advanced technology in their infrastructure, and teaching and learning approaches. These schools still exist but have been included in the Second Phase of the Tatweer Project (2011) with some modification in its policy and organisation to fit the second phase scheme. The organisation of this school is presented in Diagram 7-2.

Tatweer School system programme one 2007

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                    │       The leader of school       │
                    └─────────────────────────────────┘
                                     │
    ┌──────────────────────────┐     │
    │ Evaluation and quality unit │───┤
    └──────────────────────────┘     │
                                     │  ┌──────────────────────┐
                                     ├──│  School governors unit │
                                     │  └──────────────────────┘
    ┌──────────────────┐             │
    │  Secretaries unit │────────────┤
    └──────────────────┘             │
    ┌───────────────┬────────────────┴─────────────────┬──────────────────┐
┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐              ┌──────────────┐
│ Activity leader│  │  Deputy (2)  │              │  Deputy (1)   │
└──────────────┘  └──────────────┘              └──────────────┘
                          │                              │
          ┌──────────────┐│              ┌─────────────────────┐│
          │ Students' tutor│──┤           │ Unit of...............*  │──┤
          └──────────────┘  │           └─────────────────────┘  │
          ┌──────────────┐  │           ┌─────────────────────┐  │
          │ Unit of.........│──┘           │ Unit of..............│──┘
          └──────────────┘              └─────────────────────┘
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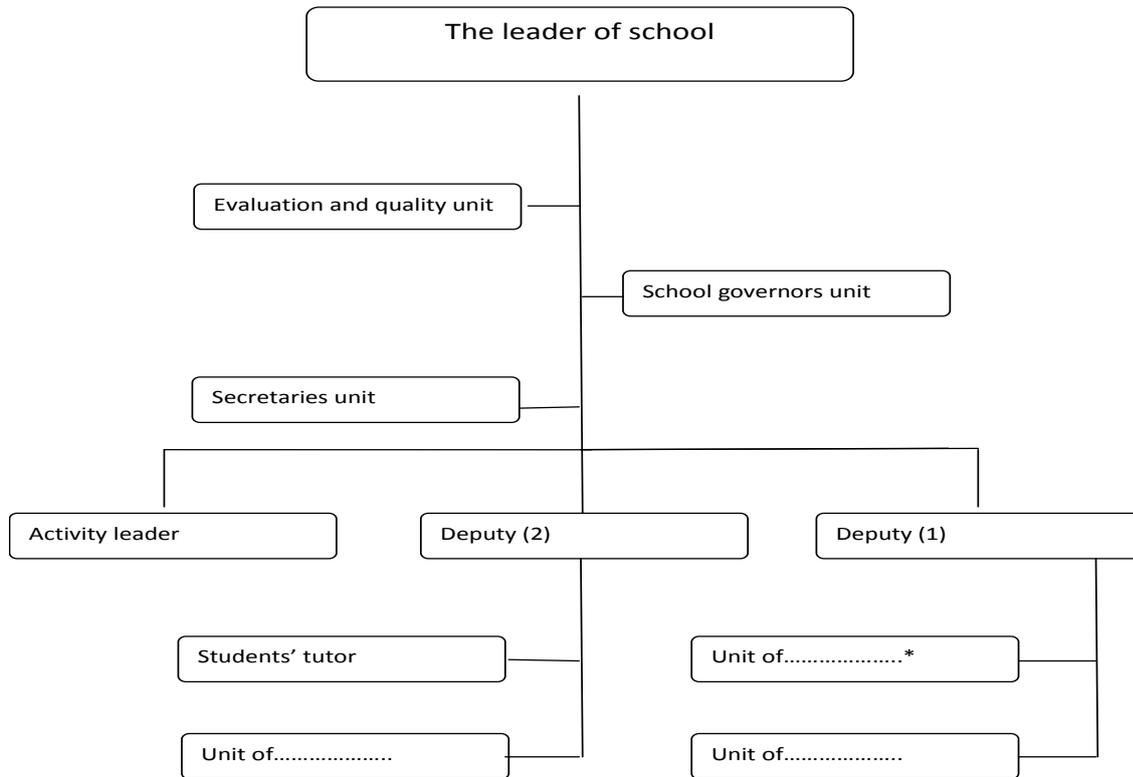
* The leader has freedom to choose any certain unit to meet the school needs

Figure 7- 2: The organisation of Tatweer schools in Phase One

From Figure 7-2 it is clear that the leadership of the school is at the top, supported by different units and sections under its authority. All members of these units come from the schools. It would appear that this model represents a hierarchy which would not fit distributed leadership and participating in creating a collective vision, mission and targets, which is the intention of the Tatweer School Project. Leadership and organisational growth are interdependent and the ability of an organisation to prosper is dependent on how far it facilitates collaborative learning and who takes the initiative on leadership to responsibility to learn from within the organisational resources (Sheppard et al., 2009). Accordingly, this

organisation has been changed in the second phase of the Tatweer Project to be more participatory and delegated. The advantages of using the distributed leadership model will be discussed in the Chapter 9.

7.1.7 Tatweer Schools in Phase Two (2011)

In 2011, the Tatweer Project scheme moved from being smart schools to being self-evaluation and planning schools (called the School Development Model). The reason for this modification came about because smart schools need much more money to provide them with technology and maintaining it became a very costly undertaking. Tatweer Schools are expected to become integrated into all Saudi Schools by 2017 to cover more than 35000 schools (Tatweer official, 13/06/13, interview). This model, known as the school development model (but in this study it is referred to as the self-evaluation school); has three phases:

Design phase (2011-2012): building the model and describes its components in a theoretical framework.

Application phase (2012-2014): to undertake this model in 210 schools for boys and girls in seven districts in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Generalisation phase (2014-2017): this stage will continue for three years in order to introduce the model in all the public schools in Saudi Arabia.

Tatweer experts designed this model after in-depth investigation of the reality of Saudi schools and educational system. Such a model is not considered as a final outcome. Rather it represents a road map to guide strategies, programs and projects. In this model, the idea of educational expert has been modified to be a unit of members (Tatweer Unit members), who

come from different disciplines and have different expertise. Consequently, each district has one unit, which in this research will be called the Tatweer Unit, instead of one educational expert, who was one supervisor of each school. According to this model, networks were built among practitioners and administrators to provide an environment in which to exchange expertise, ideas and practices between all different educational levels.

The most important component created in the Tatweer school organization in phase two is the Excellence Team. The organisation of this school is presented in Diagram 7-3.

Tastweer School system programme two 2011
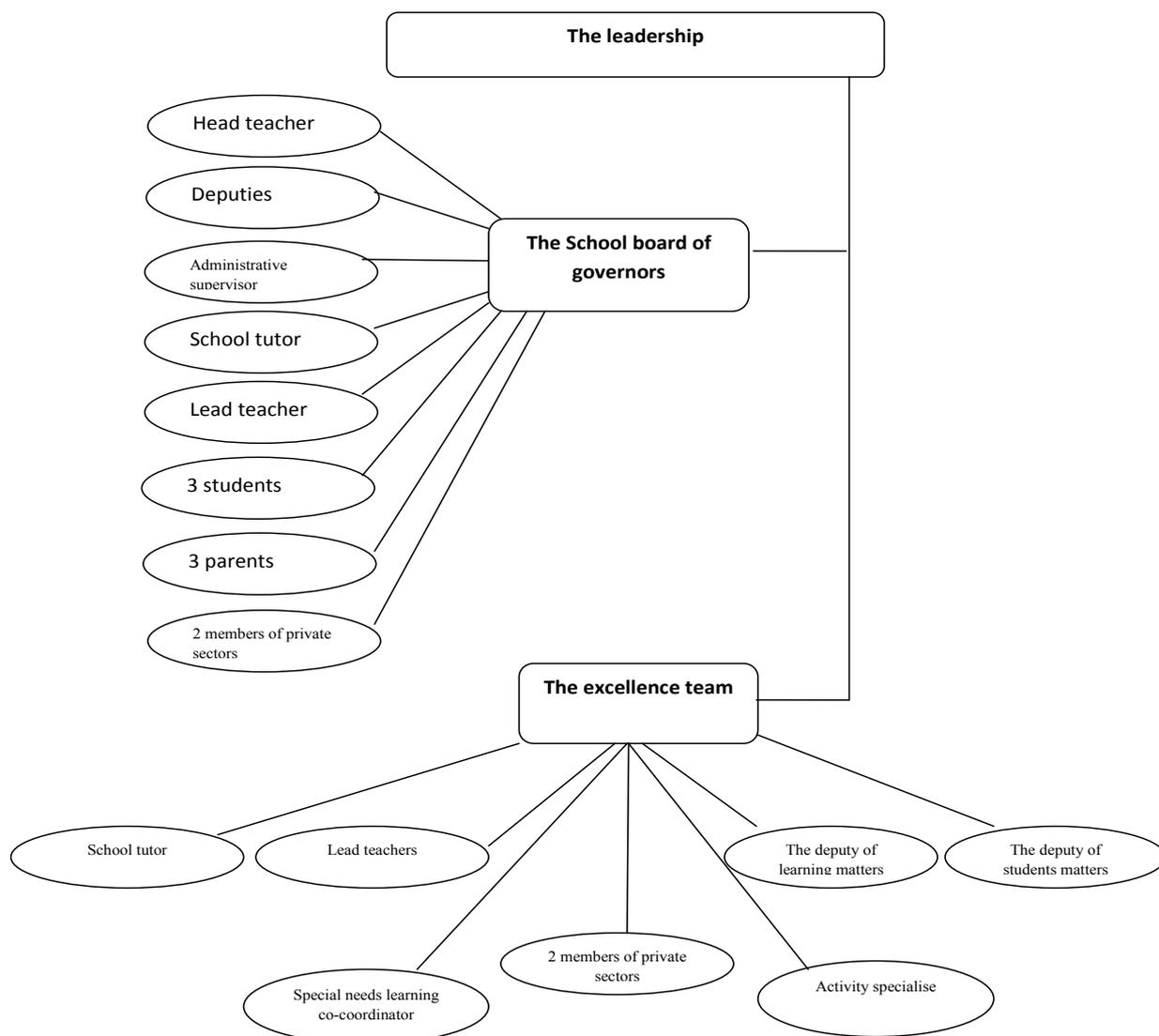
Figure 7- 3: The organisation of Tatweer schools in Phase Two

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It is clear from Figure 7- 3 that this organisation is relying on two important teams to lead and manage the school. These teams are the school board of governors and the Excellence Team. This organisation is different to the previous organisation of the Tatweer schools in Phase One, in two important aspects: the leadership has been distributed into two teams rather than located solely in the hands of the head teacher; the other important aspect is that the members of the board governors are coming from the school and from outside the school. This organisation would help to reduce the centralised system in the traditional schools in Saudi

Arabia. In centralised systems there are constraints to creativity and initiative lessening efficiency and the growth rate (Al-Taneiji & McLeod, 2008; Gamage, 2006; Morrison, 1994).

Implementing decentralisation in schools would yield many benefits to schools and societies alike. It is believed that school autonomy in decision-making will lead to improved quality in schools and fund management, due to the fact that schools have been prepared to raise the quality. This will, in turn, help improve students' achievement and reduce the dropout rate. However, there is increasing concern that applying decentralisation creates disadvantages. It is believed that autonomy would impact on teachers' work during their days with their students, while critics have also argued that it not only affects teachers' tasks, but also those of school members, who would have more work that is considered a burden. In many countries a debate is taking place about centralisation and decentralisation. Nevertheless, many governments aim to strike a balance between these two concepts within their educational systems (Blunkett, 2000; EC, 2007; Guarino & Tanner, 2012). The level of autonomy and types of decision-making will be discussed in the next chapter.

7.2 Tatweer Unit in the Department of Education[11]

"'Leaders' are expected to provide strategic direction and inspiration, initiate change, encourage new learning, and develop a distinct organisational culture" (Hailey, 2006, pp. 3-4). The Tatweer Unit in the Department of Education plays a key role as a leader in supporting the culture of cooperation, and promoting the concept of learning communities in the Department of Education and schools. The members of the Tatweer Unit participate in building internal capacity of schools; provide assistance to ensure the quality of schools' evaluation and plans; provide professional advice to head teachers, teachers and participate in educational groups; build partnership contracts with schools; support them in the implementation of their plans; and make publish the annual performance report for the department of education in the region. This unit was established in 2011 by the Tatweer Project and the Ministry of Education in Phase Two. They moved from having one external

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[11] This information has been acquired from the Tatweer Project presentation PPT, which has been sent to the researcher to support this study on 2013. The reason of relying on theses document as a main resource is because of lacking any other resources such as journals or books.

educational expert for Tatweer schools in the first phase to have one team to monitor, support, train, and encourage these schools.

As is the case with Tatweer Schools, professional learning communities determine the work philosophy inside the Tatweer Unit. This is characterised by the mutual vision of the team's members, cooperation and consultation about matters concerning the unit and the schools where each member expresses her/his opinion according to the previous experience. The philosophy is also based on education networks to transform the experience of all the members by thus building their competence. The most important objectives of the Unit are:

- Developing the performance and competence of the schools' leaderships.
- Developing the competences of the Excellence Team in the Tatweer schools.
- Developing the competences of the head teachers in the Tatweer schools.
- Providing continuous support for the schools and helping them skip the difficulties that face them in applying the programme.
- Supporting the educational professional communities inside the unit's community.
- Spreading the culture of professional learning communities at Tatweer schools.

This unit works on two fronts in the school: first, helping schools to change the culture and practices; second, improving the performance by providing schools with tools, strategies and training.

The following are also the administrative function of the unit:

- The schools were divided among the unit's members for easy follow-up of the school's resources and for easier direct communication and feedback on the inquiries raised in the schools.
- A team consisting of three supervisors who are mandated to design the training program and training of all the targeted categories to ensure that self-evaluation of schools is done properly.
- A team consisting of three supervisors who are mandated to design the training program and training of all the targeted categories on the operational planning.
- A team consisting of three supervisors are mandated to design the training program and training of all the targeted categories on the educational professional communities.
- Members who are responsible for the public relations of the unit.
- The media coordinator has to work with schools to train them on using media in education.

Clearly then the nature of the work in this unit has been well organised. However, in practice, the team members argue that they all work to train the schools. The issue is that the whole team has to go and train schools; the members of this unit were not happy to be responsible for this matter. Tatweer Unit members in the focus group discussion highlighted this issue. They stated that:

Another challenge is the work burden, because of doing training, we have our own administrative work but all of us have to train schools, first of all, our capabilities vary, so not all of us have been trained, so we need one team to do coaching where they have time, abilities and willingness… we work from the beginning of this year until the end, which is additional effort and make results unsatisfying (Nauf, TU, 03/06/13, focus group)

من التحديات أيضا العبء كبير علينا من ناحية التدريب احنا عندنا اعمال ادارية ومع ذلك كلنا كأعضاء ما فيه مجموعة تدرب ومجموعة لا .. كلنا ندرب ندرب على كل شي أخذناه فأولا قدراتنا متفاوتة ، مو كلنا مدربات ، يعني نحتاج انه يكون فيه مجموعة تفرغ للتدريب ويكون عندها القدرة والاستعداد والوقت بحيث ما يكون

عندها ولا أي عمل، مشتغلين من بداية العام الى نهايته واحنا ندرب فهذا فيه جهد اضافي والجهد المبالغ فيه يخلي العطاء مو مميز..

They suggest that training has to be done by some, not all, members of the team. The suggestion was to have a distributed leadership with members of the team having different responsibilities. As Dackert (2004) comments, a team must have the right team climate to be innovative in its work. This confirms the study conducted by Goodall (2013) which found that there is a need to build and support a team ethos as well as the need for flexibility, clarity and valuing of team members.

To summarise, the Tatweer Project has continued the same philosophy of Saudi schools in terms of maintaining Islamic values, identity and culture in its policies and practices but its organization has changed. This project was implemented in two phases: the first phase is considered to be a pilot scheme to implement and lead the change, the second phase is considered to address the weaknesses of the first phase. The second phase is associated with new concepts such as the Excellence Team, self-evaluation, and the Tatweer Unit. It would appear that the philosophical framework of the Tatweer educational system in Saudi Arabia has at least, to some extent, been influenced by globalisation and neoliberal policies.

The next chapter discusses the implementation and financing of the Tatweer system, as well as examining the types of decision-making that has been practiced within these schools.

Chapter Eight: Data Analysis and Discussion (2)

8.1 Introduction

This chapter is based on data from the interviews and focus group discussions by head teachers, senior teachers, Excellence Teams, the official, and Tatweer Unit members. It also draws on data collected from the official documentation. The chapter begins by looking at the implementation and financing of Tatweer Project system, and then identifying the nature of decision-making and how this decision is experienced in Tatweer schools.

The key questions that frame the data analysis in this chapter are:

➢ *How is the system of Tatweer being implemented, and financed?*
➢ *What level of autonomy do Tatweer Schools have with regard to organisational management, staff appointment, student assessment, and curriculum development in Saudi Arabia?*

8.2   How is the system of Tatweer being implemented, and financed?

8.2.1   Implementation

Maher (2000) indicates that there are three options for those who implement change within the organisation:

- Either the upper power has the control
- It may involve organising levels in this change
- Or it may authorise lower levels within the power.

The Tatweer Unit is an external body under the Ministry of Education, which supports and helps the schools to undertake innovations. Members of this Unit have experience of leading and managing schools for a long time as they worked in the education sector. Leadership plays a vital role in managing change by defining a way for the institution and finding a motive for change (Alotaibi, 2005); the Tatweer Unit plays a significant role in this regard. As stated in Chapter 7 this unit is a new entity that started in 2011 alongside Phase Two of the Tatweer Project; it became operational among the self-evaluation schools. As is discussed in Chapter 7 the pilot scheme of Phase One was altered to include devolved powers and delegated responsibilities in its delivery (see Figure 7-2 and Figure 7-3). The process of implementing the Tatweer School system is described thus by one of the participants:

> In the beginning, the Tatweer programme was proposed and they asked seven districts to choose the members of Tatweer Units; the members were chosen and started training. The first training was about self-evaluation, we also undertook training courses about induction of the Tatweer programme (Hayat, TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

> في البداية طرح برنامج تطوير المدارس وطلب من عدد من المناطق عددها ٧ مناطق أن يختارون أعضاء وحدات تطوير، اختيروا الأعضاء وبدأوا في تدريبهم كان التدريب الأول على التقويم الذاتي ، خضعنا لدورات للتعريف ببرنامج تطوير

These courses prepared Tatweer Unit members to carry out their role in coaching schools. The monitoring of the schools was transferred to the Tatweer Units in districts instead of the central Tatweer Project. If the Tatweer Project continued to hold the responsibility for monitoring, supervision, training and even providing schools with resources (as was the case in Phase One), it would make the type of management more centralised in the Tatweer Project. This would restrict their strategic role of leading the change and would impede their ability to initiate programmes and schemes to upgrade the educational system.

The following comment summarises the story of establishing the Tatweer Unit and also the way the unit works with the schools:

We are an emerging unit in our second year... 2 years ago, we were not members, each one worked in different administration… we received instructions to work on introducing the programme to schools and then change the organizational structure inside the school. The school was trained in self-evaluation then school planning, the schools then were required to build a school plan based on their needs. Then in that year we had to follow up the implementation of these plans whether these plans worked on developing the school, improving its performance. Then, we analysed the plans and then sent the conclusion to the school that asked for support… and we also investigated similar plans that have common issues… in order to adopt an initiative for such common issue (Hayat, TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

.. احنا وحدة ناشئة في سنتنا الثانية . قبل سنتين ما كنا أعضاء ، كل وحدة لها ادارة خاصة .. جاءتنا التوجيهات العام ان احنا نعمل على تعريف المدارس بالبرنامج ثم تغيير الهيكل التنظيمي داخل المدرسة، ثم تدريب المدرسة على التقويم الذاتي ثم على التخطيط المدرسي ثم متابعة المدرسة في بناء خطة مدرسية مبنية وفق الاحتياجات ثم في العام هذا متابعة المدارس في تنفيذ هذه الخطط بحيث تعمل هذه الخطط على تطوير المدرسة، على تحسين آداء المدرسة ، ثم نحلل الخطط ونرسل الخلاصة لكل من طلبت المدرسة دعمها ... أيضا احنا نشوف اذا المدارس تشابهت في اختيار قضية.. لا بد من وحدة تطوير المدارس الآن أن تتبنى مبادرة تتعلق بهذا الموضوع..

The Tatweer Unit team emphasised its role in transferring theories of reform into practice. They stated that:

We started the unit with guidance but those were only theories and our job was to move such abstract theories to practice. We started some induction meetings for officers and school head teachers. Then we were required to nominate 15 boys' schools and 15 girls' schools… there was a clear guidance with the regulations and standards for school nomination (Hayat, TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

فانطلقنا من الوحدة بمجموعة من الأدلة وكانت هذه الأشياء نظرية، كانت مهمتنا أن ننقل هذه الاشياء النظرية البحتة إلى واقع تطبيق.. فبدأنا بعقد لقاءات تعريفية للمكاتب ومديرات المدارس، بعدين كان مطلوب منا ترشيح ١٥ مدرسة بنين و١٥ مدرسة بنات وكان فيه دليل واضح فيه ضوابط ومعايير ترشيح المدارس

Each city in the seven districts had to nominate 30 schools of boys and girls as a starting point of this phase. It is important also to clarify that there is a Tatweer Unit for boys and a Tatweer Unit for girls working separately as Saudi education is single-sex. Therefore, there are male leaders who lead boys' schools and female leaders who lead girls' schools.

The Tatweer Project provides guidance to the schools regarding organisation, preparation and training of the school staff. School leaders have to follow this guidance in formulating the school plan including teaching programmes and projects. These have to be submitted to the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education through the Tatweer Unit has to examine this plan, and agree it before returning it to the school. After the adoption of the plan, the head teacher meets with the school's Excellence Team to implement the plan by distributing the work amongst middle management and teaching staff. One head teacher stated that "Our function is based on the plan, we distribute the work to several groups, each deputy is in charge of one team and each team contains a number of teachers and students and sometimes parents…" (HT3, 08-06-13, interview).

عملنا هو على حسب الخطة توزيع العمل على عدة مجموعات، كل مساعدة وضعتها على فريق عمل وكل فريق عمل مكون من مجموعة من المعلمات والطالبات فيوزع العمل عليهم وأحيانا أولياء الامور

Figure 8-1 describes the planning journey, from the school up to the Ministry. This process is contrary to the plan of non-Tatweer schools where it comes directly from the Ministry down to the school. The latter represents a top-down approach in a centralised system whereas a bottom-up approach is used in the Tatweer school system, which has adopted a decentralised organization. In decentralisation, humans are regarded as subjects, rather than objects, to empower them to actively engage in development. This results in their ability to develop

wisdom, flexibility and initiative in their work (Gamage, 2006). The intention of this reform is to have self-evaluation and planning in every single school in the country by 2017.
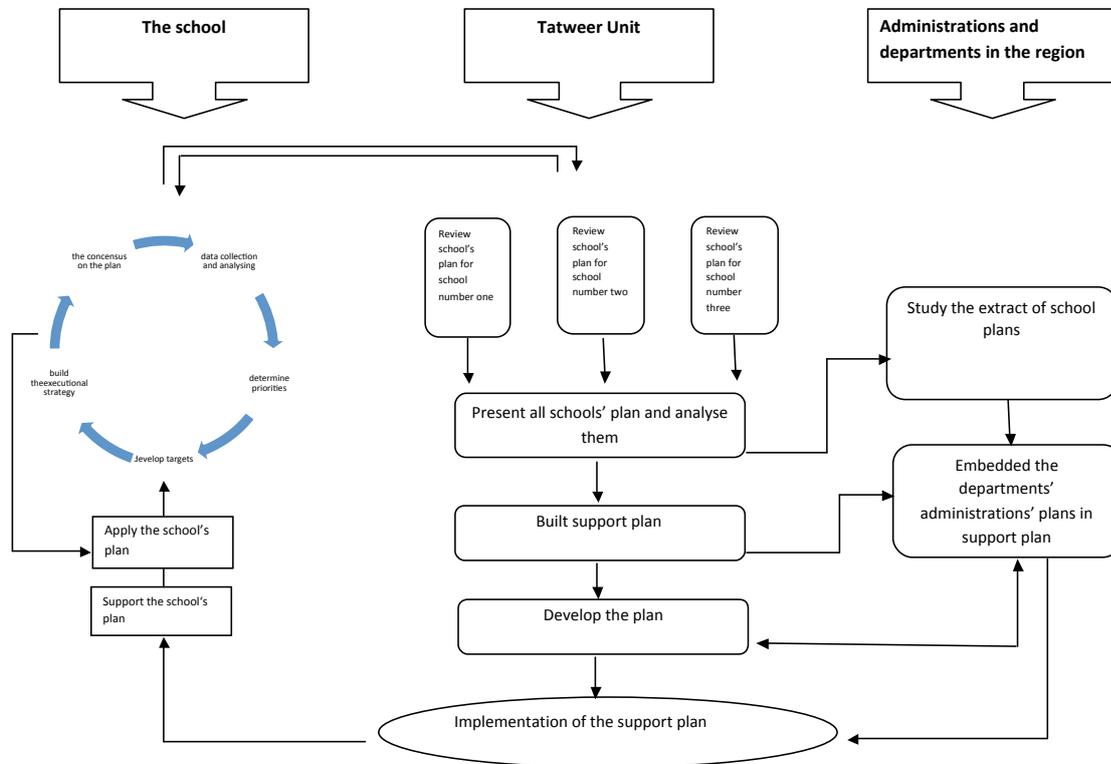
Figure 8- 1: Self-evaluation and planning school (Phase Two): The cycle of the school plan[12]

According to the three head teachers taking part in the study the change in practice would start from the school itself, by implementing the scheme that comes from the Tatweer Project. The head teacher of School A stated that the main goal of their school is to build the school's internal capacity. In contrast the head teacher of school B believes that the emphasis should be on continuing professional development as she thought that the "Tatweer program has from the beginning been about developing the educational and administrational structure, by training the administrative staff and teachers " (HT2, 12/3/13, interview).

تطوير تم اعتناؤه في البداية من بتطوير الهيئة التعليمية و الادارية يعني تأهيل الكادر التعليمي و الاداري تأهيل مهني

The head teacher of school C emphasised the same idea of ensuring the professional development of staff; she understood that the Tatweer School has to be a development school to lead the change. Assadah (1998) notes the importance of the leading role played by the principal of the school, as they are the most influential individuals in the school's administrative structure. Head teachers in Tatweer schools have been developed through training to change the structure of management in the schools, and changing their role from being manager to be a leader as will be discussed in the next chapter.

In order to support the implementation of The Tatweer Project, a network between schools and different units has been created across the country, to share experiences, ideas and practices between practitioners as well as administrators. Another important element to implement the Tatweer Project is the Excellence Team; Tatweer Unit members emphasised that the Excellence Team is the heart of the school. The main role of the Excellence Team is to lead change and maintain sustainable development through developing the teaching capacity within the schools through professional training. One of the Tatweer Unit members reported that:

> The purpose for these schools is to be think tanks. For the expansion phase, we first nominated schools and then launched phased steps by training, as all Excellence Team members were trained with exchanging visits and exchanged expertise among the members and unit managers to benefit from each other's expertise. In addition, we have Whatsapp groups, e-mail groups in exchanging expertise… as we started to activate all electronic communication channels and Internet networks (Hayat, TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

> والهدف منها أن تكون هذه المدارس بيوت خبرة لمرحلة التوسع، تم ترشيح المدارس ثم انطلقنا بخطوات مرحلية في التدريب دربت جميع عضوات فريق التميز.. فيه تبادل زيارات وخبرات متبادلة بين العضوات بين مديرات الوحدات، نستفيد من تجارب بعض، أيضا عندنا قروبات واتساب وقروبات بريد الكتروني تبادل الخبرات وفيه بريد منتديات تطوير التعليمية ... بدأنا في تفعيل جميع قنوات التواصل الالكترونية وشبكات الانترنت..

The first stage of this scheme (2011) considered these schools a source of expertise for other schools that were not yet involved in the Tatweer Project. In future these ordinary schools will be included in the Project after acquiring the main skills and knowledge. One member stated that:

> We have been working on two stages at the same time with schools; in the first stage we worked to follow up the plan and initiative and promote it. In the second stage, we repeat the same strategies and operations that we already applied in the first year (Rahaf, TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

احنا نشتغل على خطين خط مع مدارس المرحلة الأولى في متابعة الخطة والمبادرة وتعزيزها، وخط في المرحلة الثانية أعدنا نفس الاستراتيجيات والعمليات اللي طبقناها اللي طبقناها السنة الأولى.

The first stage included 15 girls' schools (primary, intermediate and secondary). The second stage means that they started to coach the other schools to be self-evaluation and planning schools. This process will continue until all the schools in Riyadh become Tatweer Schools by 2017, and the same scheme will be done in all districts in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the national reform will include all schools in this country.

The next section discusses the way that Tatweer schools are financed.

8.2.2 Financing

The demand for investment in education is strongly indicated by stakeholders worldwide (Harris et al., 2003). In Saudi Arabia, 25% of the total public budget of the year 2014; 210 Billion SAR (approximately 33 Billion British Pounds) (Abuareef, 2014) has been allocated to the education sector. An additional budget of 9 Billion SR (approximately 1,458,9 Billion British Pounds) was allocated by King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz in 2010 (IBP, 2011) to invest in the Tatweer Schools' system and to provide schools' provision.

Figure 8-2 shows the amount of Saudi government spending by sector. As can be seen from this diagram the education and human resource sector was allocated the largest portion of the Saudi budget. Moreover, according to Figure 8-2 spending in education has been increased each successive year.
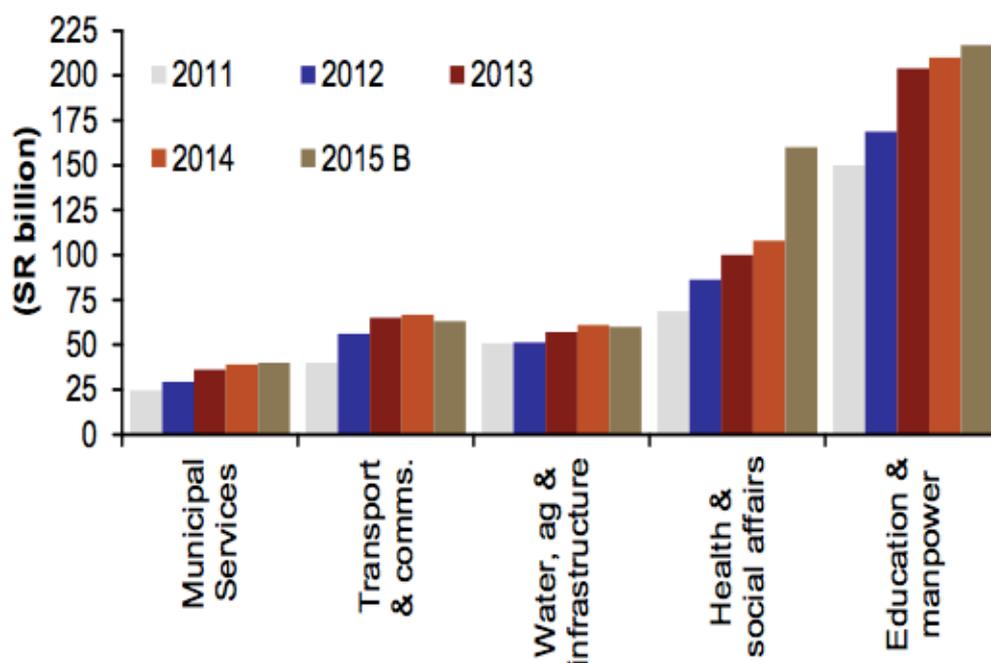
Figure 8- 2: Saudi spending by sector[13]

The participants reported that the Tatweer School funding (allocating material resources, provision and technology) is public spending that comes from the Ministry of Education. This is the same for other ordinary schools' funds. This caused frustration as the participants thought that the Tatweer School system needed more funding and support than other schools.

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[13] *Source: Adopted from Jadwa Investment of Saudi Arabia's fiscal budget (JI, 2014)*

One participant stated that "The Tatweer Project does not finance schools or even supply them because this is subject to the Ministry… the only thing that they support us is in providing us with what we need from the provision... the budget is spent according to the students number and teachers number" (HT2, 12/5/13, interview).

تطوير ليس له دخل في تمويل المدارس ماليا، أو حتى تجهيزها لأن هذه سياسة تبع الوزارة ، الشي الوحيد الذي يدعمونا فيه فقط هو اعطائنا ما نحتاجه من تجهيزات ولكن لا لهم دخل في عملية التجهيز ولا التمويل، الميزانية التشغيلية والتجهيزات من الوزارة، تطوير ليس لها علاقة، والميزانية تصرف بحسب عدد الطلاب والمعلمين ..

The Tatweer Project during the first phase (2007) had supported the schools with a certain amount of money to start its initiative as well as providing schools with advanced technology and funding for training and coaching. In the second phase (2011) of this project financial support has been directly from the Ministry of Education. The change in the financial role from allocating funds to the Tatweer Project to be redirected to Ministry in the Phase Two is because the Ministry would like to support the Tatweer Project as a think tank rather than a central and executive finance body.

Despite the funding allocation by the government all the participants still cited lack of funding and financial support; one of the participants of the Tatweer Unit members stated that "to be realistic and honest our Tatweer schools suffer from lacking financial and inspirational support from the Ministry. We will consider it tomorrow in our meeting with the head of the department of education" (Hayat, TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

عشان نكون واقعيين وشفافين ينقص المدارس الدعم المادي والمعنوي من المسئولين على مستوى الوزارة وعلى مستوى مشروع تطوير وهذي من الأمور اللي بكرة عندنا اجتماع مع مدير التعليم ..

Tatweer Schools, therefore, are not different to other schools in terms of financing, since they receive the same funding and budget from the Ministry of Education and they have to spend the budget based on specific guidance. This regulation restricts their spending, as they remain accountable to the Ministry. However, the participants reported that the Ministry of

Education had promised to allocate SR 50000 (USD 13,209.98) to the Tatweer schools in order to operate their programs for the academic year of 2014. It could be argued that this is a small amount of money considering the improvements to be made. The logic behind this allocation is not known to the researcher where the participants seem did not mind and welcomed this fund.

It is argued that governments in developing countries have faced pressure to increase spending on education. This pressure was as a result of the need to have more educated workers. The argument is that a more educated labour force attracts global capital, which in turn impacts positively on the economy. However, as a result of neoliberal economic policy influences governments have been encouraged also to find private sources to fund education and limit public spending (Carnoy, 1999). As can be seen in the discussion so far, this is not the case in Saudi school reform; the schools' funding remains controlled by the Ministry of Education directly. Participation, if any, from the private, business, and religious sectors to contribute financially to schools is not popular according to the research participants.

However, providing schools with sufficient funding and encouraging the private sector and other stakeholders to supply, and support schools, fiscally would be in line with developments elsewhere in the world where countries are diversifying educational provision. In addition, schools need more discretion to spend their budget based on the school necessities rather than following central guidance, as schools are different in terms of their needs.

The following section answers the second question in this chapter related to levels of autonomy within Tatweer schools' system.

8.3   What levels of autonomy do Tatweer Schools have with regard to organisational management, staff appointment, student assessment, and curriculum development in Saudi Arabia?

8.3.1   Decision making towards decentralisation

This section examines the level of decision making in order to establish whether the Tatweer system is centralised or decentralised. As discussed in Chapter 4 decentralisation is a concept that is influenced by the level of decision-making in the system. The level of decision-making can be determined by asking a question about the level of autonomy granted to schools. Decentralisation has become a popular option in the policy frameworks of international agencies such as UNESCO and the World Bank (Blunkett, 2000; EC, 2007). However, Alzaidi (2008b) argues that Saudi Arabian schools are well-known for having extremely centralised systems, with top-down decision making. He emphasised also that there is a lack of school autonomy and a great deal of bureaucracy.

It has been observed that decentralisation is associated increasingly with greater autonomy in schools; whereby empowerment is defined as the delegation of power and responsibility moving downwards through the educational stakeholders to make decisions about how the educational objectives must be achieved (Smith & Greyling, 2006). According to Gamage (2006) differentiation can be observed between authority and power, in that authority is associated with the legal right given to the leader, and the power that enables them to do their work and achieve targeted goals. Thus for the head teacher, for example, having the legal right is essential to manage her schools internally without going back to the Ministry of Education, where she can use her power as a head teacher to manage and to do the school work. From this view it could be argued that Tatweer schools have been empowered by delegating more responsibilities to manage their affairs internally. Although the aim of the project is to delegate some authority and responsibilities to schools to give them more autonomy to manage themselves, the participants in the study indicate that the level of decision-making in general is semi-decentralised.

All participants initially thought that they had become more decentralised. Where/when asked about the freedom linked to the curricula and recruiting staff as well as assessing students, they found themselves restricted by guidance and regulations from the top authority. The appointment of staff comes from the Civil Service Ministry. The Ministry of Education is mandated to develop curricula and syllabus, which the schools must adopt. Their freedom can be found in managing and organizing the school internally. However, one participant of the Tatweer Unit members reported that centralised/decentralised ways of working in some schools would also depend upon the nature of the head teachers some of whom choose to keep the majority of the work in their own hands.

According to Radó (2010) the fact that no one prefers to work in a centralised system is one of the most significant claims in support of decentralisation. Even if a number of participants are in favour of sustaining strong central authority for different reasons, centralisation leads to the restriction of all participants in education from both the worry and joy of experiencing challenges and resolving issues autonomously. The notion that central governments have more wisdom is the fundamental logic behind centralised governance systems. In comparison with centralised systems, the mechanisms used in decentralised systems are more effective and have greater potential (Radó, 2010). There is also a suggestion that educational managers ought to possess complete control of their work and must have the ability to solve problems creatively. They must also be compensated commensurate to their level of skill, proficiency and innovation. More difficult tasks should be allocated to help them thrive through knowledge and skills, as teachers must be engaged in goal-setting, and deciding the curriculum content and instructional methods with full powers to control their work (Smith & Greyling, 2006). Some of these suggestions may be found in the Tatweer schools' system. This is evident in the following sections, which discuss teachers' engagement in decision making and moving to democracy of decision-making, and also discusses levels of autonomy with regard to organisational management, staff appointment, student assessment, and curriculum development in Tatweer Schools.

The next section describes the process of decision-making inside Tatweer schools.

Decision-making processes

Some teachers (three out of 12 senior teachers in the interview, one teacher in the focus group and one head teacher) in this study were not clear on the decision-making processes and the steps or processes used to solve problems in the schools. Hickson and Khemka (2013) also indicate that the literature does not demonstrate the differences between the definitions of decision-making and problem solving, as their meanings overlap. This is not only an issue in theory, but also can be found in practice as in this study the researcher found the same confusion when asking the participants about the processes of decision-making steps.

One senior teacher was able to distinguish between the decision-making process before the implementation of the Tatweer Project and after the implementation of the project. She perceived that in the past the head teacher imposed her decisions and the staff had to implement them. She stated that:

> The Head teacher (in the past) gave us the decision and we just applied it, but now honestly everyone provides her view and by consultation they form a unified view about the issue… The head teacher also shared the school's vision with parents to ask if they agree with it or not (Asmahan, 10-06-13, interview).

> المديرة تعطينا القرار وحنا ننفذ الآن لا والله صراحة فريق كل واحد يدلي برأيه وبالمشورة نطلع برأي موحد نطبقه حيال المشكلة.. أرسلت ابلا موضي لأولياء الأمور انه فيه رؤية المدرسة كذا وكذا اذا كنتم موافقين ولا لا .

Therefore, in the Tatweer school system teachers, staff, and also parents are now involved in making decisions, which is encouraging as this was not the case before the introduction of the Tatweer Project.

All senior teachers stated that head teachers engage them and students when it comes to decision-making in schools' affairs. The following senior teacher gave an example of

involving them in decision making to solve the issue of students who did not follow the school's rule in wearing the Saudi veil.

> The head teacher met with us and asked our views and we shared together, for example, the problem of the veil for students… we met and discussed the regulations (Lati, 18/5/13, interview).

مثلا المديرة تجمعنا وتسألنا ويش رايكم مثلا فنشارك مع بعض .. مثلا الحجاب يعني مشكلة الحجاب عند البنات اجتمعنا وناقشنا ضوابط معينة

The Excellence Team containing members of the school is another important board to make decisions. One teacher who is a member of the Excellence Team stated that "The Excellence Team members meet together, the administration gives them the chance to discuss, adopt views and construct what they want" (Habibah, 11-6-13, interview).

فريق التميز يجتمعون مع بعضهم الادارة معطتهم الفرصة انهم يناقشون يأخذون آرائهم يبنون ما يريدون.

Alsaud (2009) notes that employee engagement in decision-making would motivate them, and such engagement may be activated with the purpose of making them feel important in contributing to the governance of the organisation. Taking important decisions not only requires school participation, but also that of others who are related to these decisions. This is because these decisions require more thinking and the ability to persuade other people. In Tatweer schools, all the participants stated that consultation is the most common type of decision-making process in the Tatweer Schools.

Head teachers also stated that the collective approach is often the best approach to use when implementing the Tatweer Project:

> With Tatweer there is no decision taking separately, which means that decisions have been made by agreement and consensus, like the plan, when we suggest projects these

are dealt by agreement… some projects I do not feel are strong (to be chosen)… but you cannot frustrate the group, they want it by consensus (HT1, 13/5/13, interview).

القرار مع تطوير ما عاد فيه انفراد بالقرار يعني القرارات تتخذينها بالموافقة بالاجماع.. زي الخطة لما كنا نقترح المشاريع وكذا يعني نتفق بالاتفاق .. بعض المشاريع ما حسيت انها قوية .. بس انت ما تقدرين تحبطين المجموعة هم متفاعلين ويطلبونها بالاجماع..

All head teachers in Tatweer schools consult their fellow teachers and the Excellence Team when making the decisions that will affect the schools. One participant stated that: "First we meet as an Excellence Team then discuss the issue… and through consultation the decision is made; no one can head the decision, and the head teacher cannot enforce her opinion" (Asmahan, 10-06-13, interview).

بالمشاورة بالاجماع أول شي يجتمع فريق التميز بعدين نناقش المشكلة هذي .. يتم مناقشتها وبالمشاورة يتم اتخاذ القرار، ما فيه وحدة تتزعم برأيها ولا المديرة تفرض رأيها علينا ..

This was supported by another participant who recognised the type of leadership that the head teacher had adopted. She stated that:

Our head teacher applies one of the leadership principles which is 'I am fine, you are fine' I request from you something and consult with you. When I am making decisions as a leader without consultation, the job will be done and there will be an outcome… but there will not be innovation (Fawz, The Excellence Team 1, 26-5-13, Focus Group).

المديرة تعمل بمبدأ من مبادئ القائد يعني أنا بخير وأنت بخير.. أطلب منكم طلبات وآخذ منكم المشورة .. لمن أكون أنا بخير والآخرون ليسوا بخير معناته عملي راح ينفذ وفيه انتاجية في العمل ولكن لا يوجد هناك أي ابداع في العمل... ولكن لما أكون بخير والآخرون بخير معناته اتباعي آخذ منهم المشورة وأعطيهم

The head teacher of this school seemingly adopts a transactional leadership approach. Transactional leadership explains "more of a "give and take" working relationship – rapport

between leader and follower is established through exchange, such as a rewards system for meeting particular objectives" (Lai, 2011, p. 2).

Consultations are usually made when making decisions to ensure success in the implementation phase. Participants from the focus groups stated that:

> Nesren: our decisions start with the plan, for example this year we decided to do without some useless projects, this is a considered decision, these decisions continue with the implementation and analysing the plan and the performance of the school …
>
> Worod: our decisions must be made by all of us…
>
> Najwa: we try to convince each other…
>
> Nesren: for example one of the issues, which is the professional development of teachers… we set a general target which is to promote their professional development by intensive training, so it became a project that has a name, targets, plan and phases to be implemented (The Excellence Team2, 27-5-13, Focus Group).
>
> القرارات تبدأ مع الخطة يعني مثلا قررنا هذي السنة اننا نستغني عن برنامج لقينا انه غير فعال هذا قرار يعتبر ...وتستمر مع تطبيق الخطة ومع تحليل آداء المدرسة ...لازم اجماع .. ما قد جانا صراحة تصويت دائما أفكارنا متقاربة يعني فيه نقاشات .. نحاول نقنع بعض .. عندنا مثلا من القضايا المعلمات المستجدات .. الكفاءة المهنية للمعلمات المستجدات .. فوضعوا هدف عام اللي هو تدريبهم رفع مستواهم رفع مستوى الكفاءة المهنية لهم عن طريق تكثيف الدورات صار مشروع له مسمى له أهداف له خطة بعد كذا المراحل حقت تنفيذ المشروع ..

Another factor supporting the need for collective decision-making is the need to be self-evaluation and planning schools. Each step of doing self-evaluation and planning involves decision-making. These decisions have to be made by consultation and teamwork.

Another teacher supporting the idea of consultation by team working, called the consultation Shura, which is an Arabic word and is the principle of the consultation as well as it has a value in Quranic instructions, and she stated that:

> Our head teacher is based on the principle of Shura… the management is a team that works on setting plans and objectives… no decision has been imposed forcibly (Marwa, 9-6-13, interview).

صنع القرار يبدأ في الادارة .. قائم مبدأنا على الشورى .. الادارة في فريق في وضع الخطط والأهداف ... ما فيه قرار يفرض عسفا..

The head teacher of school B expressed the view that together with the Excellence Team they make the decisions, because they thought that they are Muslims, so they are influenced by the Quran's values. The head teacher stated that:

> We are Muslims and our matter is consultation… God says: Those who hearken to their Lord, and establish regular prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation; who spend out of what we bestow on them for Sustenance; chapter 42, verse 38." (HT2, 12/5/13, interview).

طبعا حنا مسلمين وأمرهم شورى بينهم الله سبحانه وتعالى يقول وأمرهم شورى بينهم. وما خاب من استشار. قال تعالى: "والذين استجابوا لربهم وأقاموا الصلاة وأمرهم شورى بينهم ومما رزقناهم ينفقون" سورة الشورى آية ٣٨

However, one teacher thought that they do not engage in every single decision, as she believed that there were decisions linked to managerial matters that do not relate to teachers. There also are decisions for the head teacher only; these decisions are associated with the staff's performance. The head teacher in this regard can consult her deputy who had observed teachers' lessons.

To sum up this point, the most common type of decision-making in Tatweer Schools is through consultation. Head teachers stated that the collective approach is the best approach to use when implementing the Tatweer Project. This is because when the work has moved to be held by the team, who work collaboratively, there is no way to have isolated decisions. As well as having a shared vision and aim, the decision has to be collective. Oterkiil and Ertesvag (2014) argue: "The principal, in conjunction with the use of collaborative efforts and shared decision-making by stakeholders towards common visions and goals, may produce a more effective school" (Oterkiil & Ertesvag, 2014, p. 6). Seemingly then decision-making inside Tatweer schools takes place democratically.

The next section discusses the level of autonomy within Tatweer schools in regard to the organisational management.

8.3.2 Organisational management

As stated earlier, the Tatweer School system is organised into several units that are mandated with key roles and responsibilities. These units help the school system achieve its goals and objectives of producing learners who are able to change the world and compete with others internationally. To understand the organisation of the Tatweer school system, which includes the head teachers, schools' staff, and Tatweer Unit members, the research engaged them in interviews and focus group discussions.

According to all participants, there are two important concepts that play a vital role in the organisation and decision-making in the Tatweer schools system: the Excellence Team and the senior teacher.

Firstly, the Excellence Team is the core of the school and its main role is to lead change and maintain sustainable development. This team has to do the self-evaluation of school performance and the subsequent planning. Excellence Team efficiency can also be measured

through the student's performance, teacher's performance, and evaluation of the project to see if the goals and objectives have been met. This team will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Secondly, the senior teacher, who is in charge of professional learning of the teachers, has to ensure that they are in a position to receive professional development and enhance students' achievement. The senior teacher is usually responsible for teachers who teach the same discipline. The number of the senior teachers in each school varies depending on how many teachers they have in the school. The head teacher is free to formulate senior teacher positions based on the school's needs. For instance, the head teacher of school C chose the teacher of the History to be a senior teacher for social sciences, while other Tatweer schools in this study did not have a senior teacher in this discipline. Therefore, it is up to the head teacher and the school's individual requirements.

Management of the organisation is the responsibility of the head teacher who has the freedom of taking care of the school. The head teacher from School A believed that they were given the freedom to manage school matters internally, without needing the permission or direction from the Ministry of Education, as was the case in the past when they had to ask permission in many simple matters. She stated that:

> Frankly, there is significant freedom…I respect the rules but do not like it to be a collar to suffocate me, especially when I feel convinced that my actions are right within the overall system. I will give an example; I have a certified instructor, who specializes in self-development, she tried to give (the learners) experiences outside the school. I do not mind if she is absent one day from the school (which is against the rules) to offer experience anywhere; because it is self-development for her and a partnership with society (HT1, 13/5/13, interview).

> والله فيه حرية لا يستهان فيها بصراحة... أنا الأنظمة احترمها بس ما أحب انها تكون طوق يخنقني خاصة لما أكون مقتنعة واجراءاتي محكمة ومضبوطة ووفق النظام العام.. أضرب لك مثال أنا عندي رائدة النشاط مدرب

معتمد في تطوير الذات فتحاول تقدم خبرات.. انا ما عندي مشكلة انها تغيب لي يوم وتروح تقدم خبرة لأي مكان تفيده، منها نمو ذاتي لها ومنها شراكة مجتمعية بيننا وبين هذا المكان..

The head teacher from School B had the same views and believed that there was freedom to organize and manage the school internally. She stated that with regard to the level of autonomy in organisational management:

> We have a significant freedom in doing what we think is suitable for any program and activities… Otherwise (previously) you have to go to the ministry to gain permission (HT2, 12/5/13, interview).

كبيرة ولله الحمد يعني لنا مطلق الحرية في تنفيذ ما نراه من برامج في تنفيذ ما نراه مناسب من أنشطة فعاليات تنفيذ أي شي يخص المدرسة ... ولكن فيما عدا ذلك ترجعين للتربية والتعليم لأخذ الإذن

The head teacher of School C had the same view about the freedom given to the head teachers. She argued that it had created a culture of trust between them and other members of the Tatweer Schools. She further qualified the nature of the freedom, which is confined to the framework of the Saudi educational policy. She stated that:

> I give myself freedom where I would not be against the system... I have flexibility, where if there is benefit to the student or the teacher I would be flexible… I have abstract freedom, which is not from the Tatweer Project, neither from the ministry; I gain it myself. The Ministry and Tatweer want such a leadership to be where it does not disturb the process of education (HT3, 08-06-13, interview).

شوفي أنا أعطيت نفسي حرية بحيث ما أخرج عن النظام .. يعني عندي نوع من المرونة بحيث اني ارى اني اذا فيه مصلحة للطالب والمعلم ممكن أكون مرنة .. عندي حرية مطلقة لا من تطوير ولا من الوزارة مني أنا فالوزارة والتطوير يريدون قيادة كذا بحيث انه ما يخل بالعملية التعليمية

The focus group discussions had the same views about the freedom of the head teachers in their various schools when it came to the management of the internal matters in the school. They regarded freedom as being confined within the policies of the Tatweer Project and the Ministry of Education. They also have the freedom for self-evaluation and planning for the schools since it would help them to discover their weaknesses and strengths, which they can work on to improve. Regarding freedom of administrative organisation one teacher stated that:

They gave us authority and freedom but without exceeding the ministry boundaries and regulations... and maybe the self-evaluation gave us freedom (Fawz, The Excellence Team 1, 26-5-13, Focus Group).

أعطونا حرية وصلاحية بس ما أتعدى أنظمة وحدود الوزارة .. يمكن التقويم الذاتي أعطى للمدرسة حرية

They stated that there was a great difference between their freedom now and what they had before the inception of the Tatweer Project. Head teachers have more authority to manage the schools and delegate the duties and tasks. One member of the Excellence Team stated:

I came from a non-Tatweer School and I found that there is a difference, for example, the deputy informed me about all the procedures in detail as well as being accountable to the head teacher and external supervisors (non-Tatweer school), which was suffocating… but now there is trust, I have to bring my file that shows what we did as a group… I now have the freedom of the way of supporting students and enhancing their levels academically. I have the freedom in the implementation and choosing members of the implementation team (Albandari, The Excellence Team 1, 26-5-13, Focus Group).

.. أنا جاية من مدرسة عادية لقيت هنا فيه فرق انا مثلا مطالبة من المساعدة ويش سويتي في هذا يعني معي في الاجراءات التفصيلية .. ومحاسبة المديرة تحاسبني الموجهة تحاسبني شي يخنق جدا ... لكن الآن لا أنت يالجازي عندك الضعيفات جبت لها السجل كامل باجتماع الطالبات بالأشياد اللي سوينا كقروب فيه ثقة ، احساس بالمسئولية ... أنا حرة أنا عندي الطالبات الضعيفات في المدرسة أنت حرة في طريقة رفع المستوى التحصيلي في طريقة التنفيذ في مدة التنفيذ في كيفيته في الأعضاء الداخلين معك

This statement confirms the view that teaching does not happen in a vacuum and requires more autonomous interplay of roles instead of top-down authority (Sahlberg, 2013).

Another participant stated that they have the opportunity and freedom to organise and go on trips to enable students to put skills that they learn in the classroom into practice. This approach is different to the traditional approach where learning takes place within the confinement of the classroom even if there is the need for empirical skills to be implemented. She stated that "They go to social centres; they invite orphans here in the school and organise a party for them. There is a community participation" (Nofa, 13/5/13, interview).

<div dir="rtl">يروحون للمراكز الاجتماعية يدعون هنا الأيتام يسوون لهم حفلات صار فيه مشاركة مجتمعية.</div>

As a result of having internal freedom, one of the head teachers explained that she established a gym, which are banned in government girls' schools. Students and teachers were happy to have it in the school as they used it in the free time. Religious leaders intervene in schools' curricula to prevent such things that do not fit their beliefs. IT is another subject that they do not want girls to learn.

Despite this freedom inside the school there still are restrictions regarding the school building and food supply. For example, one head teacher stated that "the only thing that I do not have freedom of is the building, I cannot destroy the walls except by permission" (HT3, 08-06-13, interview).

<div dir="rtl">الشي الوحيد اللي ما عندي حرية فيه هو المبنى المدرسي مستحيل اني أهد جدار الا بموافقة..</div>

She could not, for example, expand and fix a toilet to be fitted for one disabled student. The Ministry of Education refused to let them go to do what is suitable for the school. This example indicates the ignorance about special needs students in the system. Issues related to building were echoed both by the head teacher of School C and the focus group of two

Excellence Teams. The participants in these teams reported that any decision linked to the school buildings and the supply of food is restricted and that they could not make decisions without going back to the Ministry of Education. The Excellence Team echoed this issue; the following were the responses from the members who stated that:

Maryam and Asmahan: inside the school nothing limits our decisions …

Tamader: only the external effects are the things obstruct us…

Maryam: for example they bring a screen with 110 Volt power supply but the external maintenance body refused to change it into 220 Volt…

HT: that is the thing that I can't do anything about; the maintenance and the building (The Excellence Team 3, 08-06-13, focus group).

داخل المدرسة ما فيه شي يقيدنا ويحد من قراراتنا .. منتهى : خارجيا زي ما قلت لك... المؤثرات الخارجية هي الي تمنعنا... مثال بجيب تقنية حديثة : بجيب شاشة أجي ألقى نقطة الكهرباء الفيش ١١٠ أبي أحوله ٢٢٠ الصيانة يمنع مرفوض .. هند الصيانة تمنعنا أنت تبغاني أجيب وسيلة تعليمية وترفض انك تحول الكهرباء (من الوزارة يعني) ايه ... هذا اللي ما أقدر أسوي فيه شي الصيانة والمبنى..

The same view came from Excellence Team 2 who asserted that they could not establish a nursery or build anything else they needed. They stated that:

We cannot bring even an electrician unfortunately… there is freedom in some decisions… but to build or establish a new nursery no way (Nesren, The Excellence Team 2, 27-5-13, Focus Group).

كهربائي ما نقدر نجيب للأسف ... هو فيه حرية في بعض القرارات .. لكن مثلا أنشيء حضانة أو أبني..

The reason behind this barrier is because the schools' building belongs to the Ministry of Education not to the school itself. Therefore, the building work and its maintenance is the

responsibility of the Ministry; the bureaucratic procedures in such a centralised system makes simple reforms challenging and moves slowly.

The discussion thus far suggests that all the Tatweer schools in this study have full autonomy to manage only their internal day-to-day practices. Blunkett (2000) and EC (2007) maintain that if schools are to reduce dropout rates and provide quality education to the students this can be managed efficiently only by providing them with autonomy to make their own decisions in terms of policies, as well as fund management (Blunkett, 2000; EC, 2007). However, fund management is not included in the freedom of the Tatweer schools' system.

The next section discusses the level of decision-making in staff appointment.

8.3.3   Staff appointment

Staff appointment is the duty of the Civil Service Ministry and is not the Ministry of Education or the head teacher's duty (The official, 13/06/13, interview). Head teachers cannot hire or fire the school staff but perhaps could make recommendations regarding the firing or hiring of any staff or schools employees and involve all head teachers, Tatweer Unit members and the official. According to the head teacher from School A:

> I want them to ask my opinion when they select someone. Basically, because one of the head teacher's authorities is to be in the team of interviewing staff, but this authority is not activated it is suspended unfortunately (HT1, 13/5/13, interview).
>
> أبغى يؤخذ رأيي لما ترشحون وحدة أو تنقلونها. لأنه أساسا من صلاحيات المدير انه يقابل حتى في اللجنة اللي تقابل هذا أنا بستخدم هذي الصلاحية (بس غير مفعلة) غير مفعلة هذي الصلاحيات للأسف مع وقف التنفيذ للأسف..

The head teacher from school B stated that the level of autonomy in staff appointments is restricted in Tatweer Schools. The appointments of the teachers and other school staff come from the Civil Service Ministry, who supports the Ministry of Education in the recruitment processes. The head teacher agreed that she could not hire or fire any staff in her school. The only thing that she could do is to acknowledge the need for a certain appointment She explained that:

> We cannot be involved in this matter and we never will, but when someone comes and ask me to do the job of administrator, and we really need an administrator…then I can write a letter that I need an administrator… She can take the letter as a supporter to submit it to the administration and human resources (HT2, 12/5/13, interview).

> لا ما نتدخل فيه أبدا لكن ممكن تجيني وحدة تقول أنا محتاجة اشتغل ادارية، وانا محتاجة ادارية ممكن انا أرفع لها خطاب اني بحاجة هي ممكن تاخذه كداعم لها للادارة انه مديرة المدرسة هذي بحاجة ماسة الى ادارية، حارس ...وأكتب لها خطاب لادارة شؤون الموظفين ..

Head teachers do have authority to make recommendations about the transfer of teachers in their schools to other schools. The head teacher of the school C explained that:

> They gave me authority on transferring teachers but after assessing her I found that she was extra to the school's capacity and secondly she does not fit to the school (HT3, 08-06-13, interview).

> نقل الموظفات أعطونا صلاحية نقل بس بعد تقييمها ويثبت أول شي انها زائدة عن النصاب ثانيا انها ترى المديرة انها لا تصلح للمدرسة

The Tatweer Unit members supported the views of the head teachers and stated that:

We could call this school an autonomous school, learning school, school-based decision-making, a development school that can build its capacities from inside… we do not mean autonomous in hiring no, it is never the intent of the Ministry… because this is the intention of the country not the Ministry… hiring is the responsibility of the Civil Service Ministry (Hayat, TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

بدايتها نقدر نطلق عليها مدرسة مستقلة، مدرسة متعلمة، مدرسة متخذة قرار.. مدرسة متطورة تستطيع بناء كفاءتها من الداخل تتدرج في عملية التطوير إلى أن تكون مدرسة تقوم بذاتها... احنا ما نقصد استقلالية في التوظيف ..لكن اقصد اتخاذ القرارات لتسهم في بناء الخطة وتنفيذها وبناء الكفاءات حسب ما هو موجود .. أبدا هذا ما هو توجه الوزارة هذا توجه دولة .. التوظيف عندنا مهمة الخدمة المدنية فهذا توجه دولة لا تقدر وزارة التربية والتعليم ولا برنامج تطوير انهم يغيرونه..

Public schools in Saudi Arabia and the Tatweer Schools follow the same policy. Only private schools in Saudi Arabia have full autonomy when it comes to the hiring and firing of their staff and employees (The official, 13/06/13, interview).

Staff are appointed by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the Civil Service Ministry who are mandated with the recruitment procedures. Therefore, this policy is top-down approach that controls the process of employment. However, Alrushdan (2005) maintains that the connection of teachers with a national centralised authority would result in a lack of teachers in certain locations; because of the slow and strict bureaucratic procedures that lead to long journey to reach the centre of the decision. This case applies in Saudi Arabia because of the large country with a huge number of schools that need teachers and staff, schools have to wait to the recruitment results by the Civil Service Ministry alongside with the Ministry of Education. In contrast Coggburn (2005) argues that decentralisation in managing human resources would allow managers to make decisions regarding hiring more quick with less red tape and would be more responsive and effective. Though, as stated in Chapter 4 inequality, favouritism, corruption, tribalism, and nepotism possibly are enhanced in decentralised systems regarding recruitment, where it supports hiring unqualified staff (Bossert, Beauvais, & Bowser, 2000). While the recruiting system is centralised in Saudi

Arabia, however, nepotism and corruption are still common in this country as will be discussed in the Chapter 10.

8.3.4   Student assessment

The policy of student assessment is the same in the Tatweer schools' systems and Saudi schools in general. The schools have a guide that they have to follow when it comes to the assessment of students. The head teacher of the school A stated that:

> We have clear and explicit guidance to follow, I cannot change it. Anything related to students and their academic achievement we are committed to do it… but we can raise our comments (about the curricula) (HT1, 13/5/13, interview).
>
> عندنا دليل ونمشي عليه واضح وصريح ما أقدر أغير في النظام .. كل ما يخص الطالبات وتحصيلهم الدراسي ملتزمين فيه ... بس نرفع مرئيات دائما

In the mid-term assessment, there is freedom to assess students by using different types of methods. Teachers can assess the students' achievement at the middle of the term by designing the tests or exams, on which the students will be assessed. According to the head teacher of School B:

> She (the teacher) can either devise an oral test or practical test, or if she wants to make a competition and take the grade through it, she is free… nobody can enforce her, it is important to save the rights of students at the end of the day… if she wants to ask students to do a paper, or if students submit research or report she is free to do this… this is up to the teacher... if there is a subject that does not need exam... it would need a research or certain project… but I talk about the mid-term exam not the final exam (HT2, 12/5/13, interview).

اما تسوي اختبارات شفوية أو اختبارات شفوية او اختبارات عملية تبغى تسوي مسابقات وتأخذ من خلالها هي حرة ما أحد يجبرها المهم في النهاية تحفظ حق الطالبات ... كيف حصلت على درجات الطالبة هي حرة... تبغى تسوي ورقة عمل الطالبة تقدم بحث الطالبة تقدم تقرير معين ... هذا شي يرجع للمعلمة (آه لأنه ما كان فيه كذا سابقا) لا فيه مواد تقول ما يحتاج اختبار يكفي انها سوت بحث أو مشروع معين اختبار عملي وأنا أتكلم عن الاختبارات الفترية ولا أتكلم عم الاختبارات النهائية لأن المعلمة مجبرة على التقييم والاختبارات النهائية ولعلها تكون فاتحة للاختبارات النهائية .. الاختبار الفتري ممكن تختبر وممكن لا.

Thus, at the end of the term students have to attend a formal examination to measure their achievement, which teachers design based on set standards, whilst there is freedom in assessing students during the mid-term examination. This policy prevails in all Saudi public and private schools.

The Tatweer Unit members explained the system of students' assessments in primary, intermediate, and secondary schools thus:

Nauf: in the primary school the form of the assessment is continuous assessment without doing examination but in the secondary school there are different exams…

Saydah: the intermediate school is between the exam and the continuous assessment…

Manal: it is not like the university that the lecturer can choose his tools, no here it is exams every term" (TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

الابتدائي تقييم في المتوسط والثانوي الاختبارات موزعة .. المتوسط مشترك ما بين التقويم والاختبارات.. ما زالت اذا خلص تنقد وترفع الأسئلة.. مها: مهب مثل الجامعة يختار الأدوات اللي يبى .. لا هنا اختبارات فصلية

As such, the level of teacher autonomy to assess students is restricted; schools have to set examinations by following instructions, whilst there is freedom in the mid -term to choose the tool of measuring the student achievement.

PISA 2011 argues that "at the country level, the greater the number of schools that have the responsibility to define and elaborate their curricula and assessments, the better the performance of the entire school system" (OECD, 2011, p. 2). This suggests the importance of granting the school more autonomy to design their assessment and curricula; this does not apply to Tatweer schools.

The next section discusses the limitations to designing the curriculum in Tatweer Schools.

8.3.5 Curriculum development

In the context of Saudi Arabia designing the curricula is the role of the central government by the Ministry of Education according to all the participants. The logic behind this is that teachers are not regarded as sufficiently qualified yet to enable them to have such responsibility.

Tatweer Schools therefore have no autonomy when it comes to the design, plan, and scheduling of the curriculum. Schools receive the guidance, curricula and the syllabus from the Ministry of Education that they must adopt and use in their schools. After adopting the curriculum and syllabus, teachers have the opportunity or freedom to adapt the new strategies and methods to teach the students. In this regard, Tatweer schools are not different to other Saudi schools as they have adopted the same curriculum and syllabus. Although Tatweer schools are not currently involved in designing the curriculum, the Tatweer Project has established another project to rebuild and redesign the curriculum for all Saudi schools, Tatweer, and non-Tatweer, by educational and specialised experts.

The head teacher of school A stated that they have no freedom when it comes to the designing the curricula or scheduling timetable or even choosing topics, teachers have to cover during the term.

One head teacher went further and stated that "we just raise our suggestions; we do not intervene in the policy of curricula because there is a committee of curricula development and assessment in the Ministry of Education... it is not allow to the teacher to make change...the actual curriculum has to be given as it is. But she can add, she can enrich the curriculum but not eliminate" (HT2, 12/5/13, interview).

لا احنا نرفع مقترحات لا نتدخل في سياسة المنهج لأنه فيه لجنة متخصصة في وزارة التربية لتطوير وتقويم المناهج الدراسية ... لا مهب مسموح لها يعني المنهج المعطى لها لازم تعطيه كمقرر دراسي لكن ممكن تضيف تثري المنهج بأي شي هذا شي يرجع لها ما لاحد دخل لكن لا تحذف ولا تلغي...

Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education does benefit from teachers' feedback about the content of curricula in order to design and reschedule them. This is achieved by sending their comments to the supervision office.

Another head teacher went further and stated that science teachers can use their skills and knowledge to simplify the curricula. Thus, it would be easy for students to understand and perform well in their exams.

Science teachers take the textbook to revise it and filter it, but this is without changing the textbook, this process is only for simplification (HT3, 08-06-13, interview).

يأخذون رأينا فيها نعم . معلمات العلوم يعملون طريقة أفضل يأخذون الكتاب وينقح تأخذه وتنقحه على شكل ملزمة بس انه ما يخل بالكتاب بس تبسطه للطالبة بس تبسطه هي عملية تبسيط فقط لا غير

This means that the teacher could use a suitable method to deliver the course; according to one teacher: "The teacher can be innovative by shaping the curriculum in a creative way rather than using the traditional manner" (Amar, 26/5/13, interview).

<div dir="rtl">

والمعلمة برضوا الابداع عندها تقولب المنهج بطريقة ابداعية تخرجه عن الطريقة التقليدية

</div>

Tatweer Unit members had different opinions when it came to the development and design of curricula. They thought that empowerment of the teachers is important when it came to the implementation of a long-term policy to have autonomy in designing curricula in the future.

Hayat: In terms of curricula teachers cannot exchange the curriculum with another curriculum but they have the ability to add and enrich it …

Nauf: the school can't change the curricula… we did not reach this level until now, that was mentioned in the Tatweer model policies. It depends mainly on developing the teacher first to design the curricula, then there would be freedom to devise the curriculum… the teacher now is able to criticize the curriculum in an objective way and then send it to the stakeholders (TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

<div dir="rtl">

كتطبيق للمنهج قد يكون لكن ما تغير المناهج يعني تستبدل المقرر الدراسي بمقرر آخر لكن لها الحرية في انها تضيف لهذه المناهج.. تثري هذا المقرر.. المقررات ليس للمدرسة الحرية في تعديلها.. لمن تطور المعلم يكون من الحرية بحيث انه يستطيع الانتقاء من المنهج .. بحيث انه يحقق اهدافه ..هذا ما ذكر في الأنموذج لكن ما وصلنا هذا المستوى حتى الآن وهذا يعتمد بالدرجة الأولى على تطوير المعلم ليستطيع اتخاذ مثل هذه القرارات... يقدر المعلم ينقد المنهج نقد تام لكن بموضوعية ورفعه للجهات المعنية

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The reason according to Tatweer Unit members is that teachers are not ready. However, they prepare teachers for this autonomy in designing the curricula by different means, such as intensive training and robust criteria to employ teachers and retain sufficient staff.

It has been stated in a study conducted by OECD (2005) that the performance of schools

would be more efficient if teachers carry out a discussion regarding which course would be suitable to learn. The study deduces that students' reading performance is positively impacted when teachers are allowed to participate during decision-making and the school is independent. This shows clearly that the participation of teachers within the decision-making activities can present positive changes to performance. "Despite considerable problems, school-based decision-making holds some promise for improving schools and building community" (Naidoo, 2005, p. 43). This could not be achieved in Tatweer Schools as they cannot design or determine the syllabus and curriculum in the school as it comes from the central authority.

This contrasts with developments elsewhere in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and several Australian and USA states, school boards employ and terminate academic and administrative staff, take decisions on budgetary matters and, under loose guidelines provided by the State, make decisions relating to the school curriculum. Furthermore, schools have gained extensive powers to manage their internal local matters within a nationally binding framework (Naidoo, 2005).

As is the case with Saudi Arabia, in France, decisions linked to the general structure of the education such as employing schools' staff and teachers, designing the curricula, setting the exam and assessment, training and school building and maintaining it, take place at the national level (Cole & John, 2001).

8.3.6   Decision-making and trust

The value of trust is important in the decision-making processes; when people trust an expert leader it supposes that he/she would lead them the right way. In addition, when leaders trust the followers, it creates a healthy and positive atmosphere.

Principals and teachers who trust each other can better work together in the service of solving the challenging problems of schooling. These leaders create a bond that helps inspire teachers to move to higher levels of effort and achievement. These leaders also create the conditions that foster trust between teachers, including structures and norms for behaviour, and they assist them in resolving the inevitable conflicts that arise (Tschannen-Moran, 2004, p. 12).

In the following statements the head teacher presents the importance of trustworthiness in schools; she explained how the school's teachers had trusted her when she told them about having a partnership with the Tatweer Project. She told her staff:

As long as I have a certain goal and wishing to achieve it, we are going to achieve it God willing… you are not going to obstruct me to achieve it… because you are my support, and I am not going to do anything that does not satisfy you ... (HT3, 08-06-13, interview).

طالما لي هدف معين وأتمنى اني أحققه وأنفذه باذن الله نحققه بحيث ما تقفون أمامي لتحقيقه لأنه أنتم سندي وأنا ان شاءالله ما أعمل الا اللي يرضيكم .. فقالوا لي وقعي عقد الشراكة .. فيهم ثقة فيني كثير .. هدفهم ارضائي وثقة فيني ، مكسب عندي أنا دائما أقول ارضائي وثقة فيني تكفي هذي..

The head teacher then reported that they became convinced after talking to them about this matter and agreed to sign the contract with Tatweer Project, which shows that the staff trusted the head teacher; she thought that they believed in her.

When it came to the consequences of the decision, the head teacher stated that they faced some difficulties and challenges. She stated that:

We faced difficulties … things can't come in one shot… then I called my teachers and deputies and I asked them to be patient, after patience comes the relief... we

faced the most difficult year last year, to satisfy people from inside and outside the school. I told them that the senior teacher would have reduction in her teaching load, the Excellence Team would have an incentive, technology would be provided… so they were happy about it… but unfortunately it was not achieved… only professional development…there are only 10 Smart boards and we have 21 classrooms (HT3, 08-06-13, interview).

فقالوا يا بلا موضي حنا نواجه صعوبات والشي ما يجي دفعة واحدة ، وأنادي معلماتي ومساعداتي قلت لهم أصبروا ما بعد الصبر الا الفرج . واجهنا عام من أصعب الأعوام اللي مرت علي في ارضاء الداخل والخارج .. العام الماضي .. قلت لهم المعلم الأول بيخفض نصابه، فريق التميز بيصير لهم ميزة ، التقنيات الحديثة ستوفر .. فهم فرحانين بالشي هذا فللأسف الشديد، ما تحقق شي فقط تطوير مهني .. سبورات تفاعلية جابوا لي فقط عشر رموها في الميدان من غير صيانة وانا عندي ٢١ فصل

The previous comment shows the importance of having good communication with staff to spread trust; in this case the head teacher through her wisdom, found a good solution by complaining about the lack of provision stating that if this was not provided she would withdraw from the project:

Less than two weeks and my office helped me... they provided me with more teachers, monitors and administrators... thank God we have good teachers and administrators (HT3, 08-06-13, interview).

فكتبت خطاب للمكتب فقلت اذا استمرت الحال فأنا أعتذر للأسباب الآتية ووضعت الأسباب .. نحمده ونشكره ما كملت اقل من اسبوعين الا ومكتبي متعاون معي .. وفر لي معلمات وفر لي مراقبات وفر لي اداريات .... لكن الحمدلله عندنا معلمات واداريات رائعات

The head teacher stated that:

When they evaluated me I got the third class… with the large number (of students) and the (low) socioeconomic conditions in the area, I consider this an achievement (HT3, 08-06-13, interview).

.. لما قيموني السنة هذي أنا مركزي الثالث بينهم .. يعني مع العدد الكبير والتركيبة السكانية فأنا أعتبر نفسي انجاز ..

It seems that the leaders' effectiveness depends on their ability to analyse and resolve difficult situations, and be aware of how and when they can implement the change program. Therefore, consideration must be given to the importance of all employee roles as an effective factor in the change process, alongside knowledge of the scope of the acceptance and rejection of this change (Kanaan, 1999). This highlights the fact that choosing the most effective head teachers to lead the change is vital in the implementation of the Tatweer school system.

In conclusion, the implementation of the Tatweer Project comes from the top, and travels down through the schools. The Tatweer Project established policies and theories and then supported the schools to translate them into practice though the establishment of the Tatweer Unit. Tatweer schools received the same resources, salaries, and central funds as non-Tatweer schools, which according to all the participants, was unfair. Moreover, the Tatweer Schools' system seems to have democratic-decision making limited to matters within the schools. This system is more centralised when it comes to staff appointment, student assessment, and curriculum development in Saudi Arabian schools. This is because the Tatweer Schools' systems cannot fire and hire staff since this is the responsibility of the Civil Service Ministry in the Saudi government. The Ministry of Education also restricts the curriculum development process as well as students assessment.

It is claimed by Bezzina and Cutajar (2013) that there is a need for a new culture of collaboration and sharing of good methods so that there could be a balance between centralised and decentralised practices. These have been known as important elements that have to be dealt with in a strategic way and maintained with the passage of time. In the Tatweer schools' system, it would appear that there is also a need to have greater responsibility for schools to appointment staff as well as more flexibility in assessing students and designing the curriculum.

222

The next chapter sheds light on the new way of working and the cultural shifts taking place within Tatweer schools.

Chapter Nine: Data Analysis and Discussion (3)

9.1   Introduction

This chapter aims to address the following questions:

> ➢ *How do school leaders and teachers work with and in Tatweer schools?*
> ➢ *What is the nature of the cultural shifts occurring within Tatweer schools?*

This chapter first discusses the nature of the work undertaken within Tatweer schools including the strategies that support innovation. The chapter then defines the cultural shift that has taken place in the ethos of the school as a result of these changes. The data in this chapter has been drawn from the interviews, focus groups and documentary analysis.

9.2 How do school leaders and teachers work with and in Tatweer Schools?

9.2.1 Distributed leadership in Tatweer schools

The data of the study show that the nature of work has been transformed in the Tatweer school system moving increasingly towards delegation and sharing. This movement has been influenced by the innovation within the school organisation such as creating different teams with responsibility for the school's affairs. As Bush and Glover (2013) argue, it is impossible for leaders to manage all aspects of their schools. Moreover, differentiating leadership is crucial not only to ensure all leadership activities are being performed, but also that the pool of talent and experience of all the school management team members is employed at the optimum level. One senior teacher in the study supports this view:

The senior teacher cannot work alone; she must work with her teachers, meeting with them, distributing the work and roles to them. They all cooperate (Intisar, 10-06-13, interview).

ما تستطيع المعلمة الاولى العمل بمفردها لا بد يكون معها معلماتها تجتمع معهم تعطيهم المشروع ايش دورك يا فلانة وايش دورك يا فلانة كلهم يتعاونون.

Regarding the importance of distributed leadership, Marturano and Gosling (2007) acknowledge that:

Distributed leadership is represented as dynamic, relational, inclusive, collaborative and contextually situated. It requires a system-wide perspective that not only transcends organizational levels and roles, but also organisational boundaries. Thus, for example, in the field of education, where distributed leadership is being actively promoted, one might consider the contribution of parents, students and the local community as well as teachers and governors in school leadership (Marturano & Gosling, 2007, p. 43).

In Tatweer schools, the Excellence Team, governing body, senior teachers as well as the self-evaluation and planning approach adopted encourage the idea of distributed leadership according to all the participants. This has been made possible by the new structure of the Tatweer schools in which the head teacher involves the teachers by delegating responsibilities and powers to the Excellence Team, senior teachers and governing body. The latter includes the participation of students, parents and other stakeholders; the Tatweer reform has encouraged the school's society to be involved in the school's matter and decisions.

Bruns et al. (2011) argue, however, that new reforms must be subjected to rigorous evaluation of their impact on cost-effectiveness to help strengthen accountability as well as assess whether the reforms have achieved the desired goal, who benefits and to what public cost. In this regard since 2013 the Saudi external body, the Public Education Evaluation

Commission, inspects the work of schools to ensure that they meet the required targets. As such there are external and internal units, sections and committees to hold to account the performance of Tatweer Schools. Moreover, a national league table ranks Saudi schools according to student achievement, using data gathered by the National Center for Assessment in Higher Education potentially increasing the competition and accountability in Saudi Arabia. In this respect, therefore, central to the Tatweer Project is the notion of accountability; whereby in schools, it requires that leadership should be accountable and responsible in relation to the decision-making process and student performance. This means that head teachers coordinate all activities in the Tatweer School; therefore, it is their duty to delegate and ensure that the various teams work actively and effectively to help the school achieve its goals and objectives. The head teacher is considered an educational leader and supervisor, while the senior teacher supports building a learning community and has to ensure its consistency. On the other hand, the self-evaluation approach embedded in the Tatweer School philosophy is aimed at helping the school become self-accountable of its performance. In addition, the introduction of the idea of comparing the data of students in one term with that of the previous term supports the accountability mechanism within the school. However, there is no link between student performance and rewards and sanctions of teachers or head teachers in the Tatweer system as an outcome of the accountability system. Evans (2001) argued that the teacher's pay system must be performance-related in order to generate motivational impact. Some of the participants in the research also argued for a rewards system to be introduced as they that felt their distinctive performance was not acknowledged. Jaalock (1999) suggests that the needs of an individual can be met efficiently through financial compensation. A common belief of accountants and administrators is that offering incentives to group members can enhance the productivity and performance levels of the group. Though, evidence gathered from large studies of developing countries suggests that such incentives can work in contexts characterised by relatively weak teacher professionalism; weak systems for performance monitoring and accountability; and relatively large bonuses (Bruns et al., 2011).

Despite this, a common issue linked to accountability is the fact that accountability still remains with the senior leaders. This suggests that they do not want to lose their power as they are ultimately responsible for any failings (Kyzlinková et al., 2007). As discussed in

Chapters 7 and 8, Tatweer school leadership is expected to ensure that the vision of the school is achieved, and the initiative aims are met. Thus, it is important to ensure that all decision making by staff and teachers has to be relevant and lead to the right direction. However, the autonomous decision-making in the Tatweer School system relates to only the internal school's organisation, and their freedom in making a partnership with the society. It does not affect the critical decision-making that is related to devising the curriculum and assessment, or even employment, and the financial system that can have a major impact on teaching and learning.

The section that follows discusses the implementation of teamwork at Tatweer schools as a method of distributing leadership.

9.2.2   Teamwork and its implementation in Tatweer Schools

Guest (2008) identifies a link between teamwork and cooperation whereby teamwork refers to a group of people working collaboratively to achieve certain goals. Teamwork is a concept emerging in Tatweer schools to ensure objectives are met by encouraging participants to work collaboratively. In situations where teamwork is a mechanism for distributed leadership, Hailey (2006) states that:

> Team-based approach to leadership is supported by the concept of 'distributed leadership', in which there is a shared sense of purpose and ownership of issues at all levels of the organization. This concept suggests that leadership is a collective task based on shared decision-making and delegated authority. Leadership is therefore a social process in which everyone is engaged (Hailey, 2006, p. 7).

In this study, the senior teachers commented that teamwork is active in Tatweer schools and that the head teacher is responsible for coordinating team activities in collaboration with the senior teachers and Excellence Team. One senior teacher stated that:

> Teamwork exists in our school… the Excellence Team is one part of it. The head teacher distributes the work… and we work together. Our aim is the school; we do not have individual aims… The Excellence Team and senior teachers all encourage teamwork (Lati, 18/5/13, interview).

> موجود عندنا ومتحقق بقوة (كيف) يعني فريق التميز هذا جزء منه أستاذة ... موزعة الأعمال .. وكلنا نشتغل هدفنا المدرسة مافيه أهداف فردية .. فريق التميز والمعلمات الاوائل كل هذي تعتبر من ضمن العمل كفريق.

Furthermore, working as a team benefits teachers in terms of exchanging expertise and ideas. One participant stated that:

> Working as a group is always great, especially when we devise our plans. Or when we go to training and come back and there was something I did not understand, I ask my colleague and she can tell me. For example, if I did not attend, my colleague would tell me what I missed (Nadin, 18/5/13, interview).

> دائما العمل الجماعي جدا رائع خاصة لما نرفع خطتنا، لما نروح دورات ونرجع اذا فيه شي ماني فاهمته زميلتي تعلمني، مثلا ما حضرت زميلتي تقول لي ..

Teamwork, therefore, encourages cooperation and collaboration between teachers, helping them work together to improve school performance. One participant stated that teamwork encourages sharing responsibilities:

> To be a group… to exchange ideas… if work is needed, we have to gather at the same time and circulate ideas…. It is not just one person who undertakes the work… we all perform the task required…. Each of us brings ideas until we construct a workable plan (Habibah, 11-6-13, interview).

يعني أن نكون كمجموعة مع بعضنا نتبادل الأفكار طلب منا عمل يجب أن نجتمع في وقت محدد ونتبادل الأفكار .. لا تكون واحدة هي اللي تقوم بالعمل .. كلنا يد واحدة لننتج العمل الذي طلب منا على أكمل وجه .. كل وحدة تجيب فكرة الى أن نبني شي جميل.

Another comment supports the previous statements:

> It is important to have a team… to exchange experiences. It is also nice to work as a group, our hands are one, our aims are one and God's hand is with the group (Salma, 10-06-13, interview).

صراحة ضروري جدا يكون لك فريق عمل .. منها تبادل خبرات وحلو اننا كقروب نشتغل سواء ، يدنا وحدة هدفنا واحد ويعني يد الله مع الجماعة.

The last part of the above quotation is a religious statement meaning that God supports people who work together.

Working in a team also impacts positively on work discourse. One teacher explains this notion by stating:

> I do not have to say I have done this, because we have all done it together... For example, we sat together to discuss active learning: what is it; what are its advantages; when can we use it; and what are the dimensions? All these were learnt with the team (Nasem, 27-5-13, interview).

العمل كفريق معناته اجتماع ما أقول أنا سويت لا ، الكل احنا سوينا مع بعض .. مثلا التعليم النشط. جلسنا كمجموعة سوينا حلقة نقاش وفهمتنا ايش هو التعلم النشط، ايش فائدته متى نستخدمه ايش محاوره كل هذا استفدناه ككل مع الفريق في تخصصي

Effective teamwork is believed to bring many advantages, such as job satisfaction, improved teaching and learning, strong leadership, relationship building and providing assistance to new school staff (Sparks, 2013). Additionally, teamwork helps junior staff adapt to the new

environment and assist the school in achieving its goals and objectives. One teacher states:

> Everyone helps the other; from the head teacher to the junior staff in the school (Marwa, 9-6-13, interview).

<div dir="rtl">

كلا يساعد الآخر بداية من المديرة إلى أصغر موظف في المدرسة.

</div>

To be innovative and beneficial, teamwork leads to positive consequences, such as uniqueness and success. This was the view of one teacher who stated that:

> The school as a whole is considered as a team, and its leader is the head teacher. If we do not work as a team, we would not achieve the uniqueness… we won the Microsoft competition, which is considered a qualification… the school won as an example of good administration… this is because we work as a team; there is a spirit of cooperation and love between us (Najwa, 9-6-13, interview).

<div dir="rtl">

المدرسة ككل هي تعتبر كفريق مع بعض وقائدتها المديرة لو ما صرنا كفريق ما حققت المدرسة التميز.. نجحت في المايكروسوفت وفازت هذا يعتبر تأهيل بالنسبة لنا .. فازت مدرستنا برضوا كادارة وهذا يعتبر تميز بالنسبة لها كوننا نعمل كفريق لو ما عملنا كفريق ما حققنا النجاح فيه روح التعاون فيه روح المحبة فيما بينهم.

</div>

These statements concur with the Halawah (2005) study that examined the relationship between effective communication of principals of secondary school and school climate in Abu Dhabi District in the UAE. The findings showed that the climate of the school is allied positively with the effectiveness of the principal's communication.

The following section discusses the Excellence Team as a new concept in Tatweer schools and the major role it plays by using teamwork.

Excellence Team

This team has a significant role to be undertaken within this system. It is considered to be a fundamental element in the school where it is expected from this team to define the priorities and targets of the school. Recognising the targets and priorities should lead to comprehensive development of the school's performance. In addition, it has a significant function to contribute to building the internal capacity of the school by investigating the school climate and discovering opportunities to be enhanced and threats to be addressed (*King Abdulla Bin Abdul-Aziz Project for Public Educational Development, 2011*).

The key roles of the Excellence Team were identified in the focus group discussions, which involved members of the Excellence Teams. All focus group participants reported that they were the centre and the axis of the school. One member of Excellence Team 3 emphasised the vital role of this team and stated that:

> This team helps improve performance; the aim is to create a healthy environment that stimulates innovation and creation (Maryam, The Excellence Team 3, 08-06-13, focus group).
>
> يقوم بتطوير الآداء .. الهدف نولد بيئة صحية.. بيئة محفزة للابداع والابتكار..

The following focus group members described the nature of its work and responsibilities:

> Habibah: the idea of this team is very good because the work would be distributed precisely… and the responsibility would be less than before in terms of head teacher responsibility; she will be a director…
>
> Nesren: it is not more than a process of organization and coordination, and then reducing roles…

Habibah: the tasks have been authorised to senior teachers to follow teachers (The Excellence Team 2, 27-5-13, Focus Group).

جميلة الفكرة اذا قام الواحد بالعمل المكلف على أجمل وجه .. بالعكس تتوزع الأعمال بكل دقة ... وتخف المسئولية على المديرة وتكون المديرة كموجه ..(فريق التميز يساعد على اللامركزية) الجميع: ايوه .. لأن الأعمال مكلف بها المعلمات الأوائل فيقل العمل فتأخذ من المعلمة الأولى .. عملية تنظيم وتنسيق أكثر ، فتقليص للأدوار . فتكون المعلمة الأولى هي المسئولة ، تجتمع بمعلماتها تحضر لهم توجههم ...

Additionally, the responsibilities of this team include leading the process of change, and supervisory leaders who observe teachers' performance and support them to develop their skills and expertise. Moreover, this team is responsible for the self-evaluation and planning of the schools' performance. This is in order to cultivate the performance of the school by leading an effective change.

The above roles and responsibilities were also highlighted by the focus group discussions with the Excellence Team:

Amar: now the responsibility became including all the members of the Excellence Team. The members of this team are now in charge of a plan for the school…

Nuha: The operational plan has become one task of the Excellence Team, along with self-evaluation. Currently, we are working on next year's plan. We first meet as a team, then work separately each working on one project to set its targets. After that, we come together to collect all these projects in our plan (The Excellence Team 1, 26-5-13, Focus Group).

بس هلحين المسئولية صارت تشمل المدرسة ككل ومعلمة فريق التميز صارت تضع خطة تشمل المدرسة ككل ... الخطة التشغيلية من مهام فريق التميز وضع الخطة التشغيلية للمدرسة للعام الكامل.. والتقويم الذاتي...الخطة التشغيلية والتقويم الذاتي فيها عناصر ومحاور كثيرة... الآن نسوي خطتنا حقة السنة الجاية .. نجتمع لها .. نتفرق كل وحدة تسوي خطتها، أهدافها تسمي مشاريعها بعدين نلمها كلها في خطة وحدة

Seemingly then the major work of this team is school self-evaluation and planning.

The members of the Excellence Team gave an example of the nature of the type of work they do:

> Fawz: For example, my plan is about the activities; Nuha has a plan for learning resources; senior teachers have their plan about subjects...
>
> Nuha: the Excellence Team has to know about anything that occurs in the school; it is the engine (of the school) (The Excellence Team 1, 26-5-13, Focus Group).

خطتي حقة النشاط، آمال تحط خطتها حقة المصادر المعلمات الأوائل يحطون خطتهم كمعلمات...ما فيه شي يدور في المدرسة الا فريق التميز يكون عارف فيه .. هو المحرك..

During the focus group discussion, one member of the Excellence Team stated:

> We have a plan, so we have to achieve at least 90% of our programmes… to solve some problems, which they call issues, each issue has detailed targets. After these, we have projects then we have to implement the phases of the project (Nesren, The Excellence Team 2, 27-5-13, Focus Group).

عندنا خطة .. ماتنتهي السنة هذي الا احنا منجزين على الأقل ٩٠٪ من البرامج ...عشان نحل بعض المشاكل يسمونها قضايا كل قضية توضع لها أهداف كل هدف يوضع له أهداف تفصيلية بعد الأهداف التفصيلية فيه عندنا مشاريع بعد المشاريع تبدأخطة تنفيذ مراحل...

Thus, it would appear that the Excellence Team is concerned with the planning and implementation of the Tatweer Project rather than student experience, as this is the responsibility of the tutors. The responses from the focus group discussion were as follows:

Nesren: we do not intervene in student issues because there is a tutor for them…

Worod: through the plan, we can solve the students' issues (The Excellence Team2, 27-5-13, Focus Group).

ما لنا دعوى في مشكلات الطالبات لأن فيه اخصائية للطالبات مرشدات طلابيات .. هذا شي موجود في كل المدارس في تطوير وغير تطوير.. فاحنا ما نجتمع كفريق تميز من أجل الطالبات لا.. احنا الشغل العام من فوق... الخطة أكثر ... فلما تضعين الخطة تضعينها لمين: للطالبات في المدرسة ... من خلال الخطة بنحل مشاكل الطالبات ...

In addition, the Excellence Team meets to plan the strategies to be implemented in the school and discuss the goals, vision and mission of the project. This team also measures performance using certain criteria; for example, accounting for the number of teachers who attend training annually, comparing students' achievement, attendance rates, and assessing the teachers' performance. Therefore, the core of this teamwork is to develop students by working collaboratively on the programme's plans and projects. Guest (2008) argues that "teamwork involves functional cooperation: working together toward a practical purpose" (Guest, 2008, p. 340). This is in line with the views of the OECD (2009a) on the changing role of leadership in schools:

> The roles and responsibilities of school leadership are rapidly expanding beyond what it is reasonable to expect one individual to achieve. School leadership teams and school boards can play a vital role in school development. A clear definition of school leadership roles and how they are best distributed can contribute to increased effectiveness and better provision for future leaders (OECD, 2009a, p. 17).

The effectiveness of using collaborative efforts and common decision-making in the leadership towards shared visions and goals is also supported by Oterkiil and Ertesvag (2014), and Goodall (2013). The Tatweer schools' system, therefore, emphasises teamwork as a crucial element to successful educational leadership. It has also been delegating more tasks

from the head teacher to the team, which is represented by the Excellence Team and the senior teacher team.

The next section discusses the achievement of the Excellence Team to investigate if the aims have been met.

The achievement of the Excellence Team

This team thought that they had succeeded in implementing the plan's targets, so they were happy with what they earned. The team's efficiency can be determined by the outcomes of their various roles and responsibilities. For instance, if the planning and implementation of the Tatweer Project is done carefully and properly, the school will be able to produce robust students. These students are supposed to be professional in their attitudes, able to compete internationally and, ultimately, change society. Teachers will also be in a position to apply active learning strategies in schools and behave in a professional manner when handling students. Moreover, Excellence Team efficiency can be measured by student performance, teacher performance, and the evaluation of the project. This was supported in the focus group:

> Our achievement would be through the operational plan outcomes: achievement of students, professional development for teachers. This means analysing the plan and its outcomes…we can measure the capacity of professional development by the number of teachers… For example, this year: 10 teachers applied an active learning strategy; next year, this will rise to 30-40 teachers. Therefore, I am on the right track (Nesren, The Excellence Team2, 27-5-13, Focus Group).

> من خلال مخرجات الخطة التعليمية، نتائج التحصيل الأكاديمي للطالبات، تطور الكفاءة المهنية للمعلمات يعني تحليل الخطة ومخرجاتها.. (كيف تقيسون الكفاءة) ... من خلال عدد المعلمات اللي .. مثلا السنة هذي مثلا ١٠ معلمات طبقوا استراتيجية التعلم التعاوني .. السنة الجاية كم صاروا ٣٠ الى ٤٠ معناته انا قاعدة أمشي صح وبتفوق

Through the school measurement, participants stated that:

Nesren: we can measure students using academic analysis…

Worod: for example, we investigate students who have progressed by comparing term 1 with term 2… We also compare attendance rates between terms, which has previously been random…

Habibah and Nesren: this year, the achievement of students is higher and next year it will increase (The Excellence Team2, 27-5-13, Focus Group).

مقياس تحليل المواد... مثلا دراسة اللي تحسنوا النسب نقارن بين الترم الأول والثاني .. يعني بدأنا الترم الثاني العام فنصير نقارن الترم هذا مع الماضي . نفس الشي الحضور والغياب النسب الموجودة عندنا والنسب اللي الآن جديدة .. هي مقارنة لأن أول كانت عشوائية ... السنة هذي مرتفع وراح يرتفع زيادة...

Besides the previous achievements, the students had shown improvement in some subjects following the project's implementation, according to all Excellence Team participants. They consider the achievements of students to be as a result of their success. Three participants stated that:

Najla: the level of students improved in some subjects within the project…

HT: the level of students has improved slightly in Maths and Arabic...

Asmahan: physics and history (The Excellence Team 3, 08-06-13, focus group).

ارتفاع المستوى التحصيلي من بعض المشاريع، ارتفاع الآداء المهني للمعلمات .. تحقيق المشاريع لأهدافها...(هل ارتفع مستوى الطالبات في القدرات؟) أفضل .. المديرة: في العربي والرياضيات ارتفع شوي . بس الفيزياء تحقق ، التاريخ..

This is because Tatweer schools have adopted some subjects to be emphasised by building plans to enhance students' attainment.

Teacher performance has also improved thereby indicating the efficiency of the Excellence Team. One participant noted that:

> The performance level of teachers and students has increased (Najla, The Excellence Team 3, 08-06-13, focus group).

> التطوير المهني للمعلمات والتحصيل الأكاديمي للطالبات (ارتفع)... لجميع منسوبات المدرسة سواء كانت الموظفات الطالبات

However, the increasing requirements of individuals and teams have to be satisfied if they are to remain effective and reliable.

From this review, teamwork can be observed as embracing the following themes: cooperation, shared decision-making, delegated authority circles, cross-functional team, participation in accountability, and cohesion. The following section discusses the training received by Tatweer staff.

9.2.3 Tatweer Schools' staff development training

Coaching and training are essential elements for development in order to gain skills used in the workplace. Hence, the school community requires a coaching and training programme that is appropriate for the Tatweer developmental philosophy and its vision. Consequently, the Tatweer Project seeks to meet the following purposes:

- Coaching teachers through important programmes and courses that will improve educational efficiency and develop their capabilities in the light of competencies, concepts and skills.

- To develop educational processes by integrating technology to eliminate computer illiteracy.
- To offer coaching and training programmes to staff in schools through multiple media; for example, online distance training and training by using the internet.
- Coaching for administration in terms of training staff in school planning and operations (King Abdulla Bin Abdul-Aziz Project for Public Educational Development, 2011).

Training was undertaken in two phases. In phase one (2007), teachers were trained on the learning-based projects and Intel programme. In phase two (2011), teachers were trained on personal style; new teacher training; supervision deliberation of innovative thinking skills; emotional intelligence; exchange of experiences; and senior teacher roles. The Tatweer Unit members conducted the training of management during the second phase, while the Tatweer Project ran the first phase of training. Most of the training was associated with leadership and management skills, pedagogy and how to deal with and nurture students.

Senior teachers are responsible for providing training and support to school staff by ensuring that they are able to enhance the school's operational plan. Teachers received training on different skills to enhance their professional development. In addition, self-evaluation was conducted to improve their performance in various roles and responsibilities in the school. Senior teachers also received training that enabled them to be resourceful in nature and help the school achieve its goals. Their training package was intensive since they play a major and vital role within the school in developing teachers and making decisions.

Therefore, senior teachers as well as head teachers were provided wit leadership and management training, while teachers were provided with the pedagogical training as part of the Tatweer Project. One head teacher stated:

As head teachers, we have had training in leadership, management, teamwork, and decision-making. In terms of teachers, they are provided with training on professional development and classroom questions. We are also a training centre, every week from Sunday to Tuesday or from Monday to Wednesday, training sessions are provided (HT1, 13/5/13, interview).

احنا بالنسبة لنا أشياء في القيادة في الادارة في فرق العمل، اتخاذ القرار الجودة الأسئلة الصفية مكتبنا ركزوا على الاسئلة الصفية دربوا كل المعلمات واحنا مركز تدريب كنا كل اسبوع يجيني من الأحد الى الثلاثاء او من الاثنين الى الاربعاء دورة على مستوى المدارس...

This means that Tatweer schools allocate certain times and dates to train others from different schools. Another head teacher stated that:

We have attended various training in assessing and building the plan… senior teachers received training in senior teacher's skills to be successful... They learnt also various strategies like innovative learning and active learning… these training by participating with educational administration office not only by Tatweer. Here, they knew that we are a Tatweer school, and we have the right to raise the training needs for our staff (HT2, 12/5/13, interview).

اخذنا دورات متفرقة في تقويم الخطة، بناء الخطة، المعلم الأول أخذ دورات مهارات المعلم الأول والأدوات التي يحتاجها ليكون معلم ناجح أخذوا كذلك في استخدام استراتيجيات مختلفة كالتعلم الابداعي والتعلم النشط ... هذه الدورات بالمشاركة مع مركز التربية والتعليم ليس فقط تطوير بناء انهم عارفين انه احنا مدارس تطوير وأنا يحق لي رفع الاحتياجات التدريبية سواء كان معلمات أو اداريات

The educational administration office continues to offer training with the cooperation of Tatweer Unit members. A head teacher interviewee responded:

We received training in the concept of quality... teams and distributed leadership… They gave us a lot of training for teachers and head teachers… for the Excellence Team, senior teacher, and the media coordinator … (HT3, 08-06-13, interview).

عملوا لنا دورات خاصة بالجودة... عن الفرق وتوزيع العمل.. عن القيادة ..أعطونا دورات كثيرة للمعلمات والمديرات .. دورات فريق التميز ، المعلم الأول ، دورات المنسقة الاعلامية ودورت للمديرات ...

There is active learning training, which is associated with anything that improves and develops education… (Hbibah, 11-6-13, interview)

فيه تعلم نشط فيه كل ما يتعلق بتحسين وتطوير التعليم...

One senior teacher felt that there is a shortage in the training strategies:

But I hope we could apply the training... two years ago, we attended training and the supervisors asked us to apply what we had learned. Now, the responsibility is on the head teacher to follow up (Hbibah, 11-6-13, interview).

بس بودي انها تطبق الدورات نأخذ الدورات ولا نطبقها .. قبل سنتين عملت لنا الدورات وحضرت لنا المشرفات في النقطة اللي أخذنا فيها دورات .. الآن يقع العبء على المعلم الأول والمديرة.

In this regard the monitoring system was changed for the second phase in 2011 whereby the external supervisor has responsibility for ensuring teachers apply their training to practice. Currently, the onus for this is on the school.

These findings further support Alqaruity (1988, p. 159), who defines development as "a holistic effort that aims at changing and developing staff by affecting their values, skills and patterns of behaviour by using technology, as well as the processes and organisational structures as a way to develop human and social resources".

The next section highlights the strategy to be used to enhance the profession of the staff and the achievement of students, as well as underlining the cultural shift in Tatweer schools.

9.3   What is the nature of culture shift occurring within Tatweer schools?

9.3.1 Professional Learning Community and School Culture

The Tatweer Project has impacted significantly on school culture; it implements new concepts and projects that lead to change in the interaction between members and students as well as the environment. As discussed in the previous chapter the culture of decision-making has moved from being held by the head teacher to being more democratic in terms of shared decision-making. Moreover, the Tatweer School model aims to build a Professional Learning Community (PLC), which is referred to as a "Learning School". The learning community concept is based on the need for continuous professional development among teachers. PLCs have become part of the culture in Tatweer Schools. The purpose of this concept in Tatweer schools is to support the process of learning and teaching. To achieve this, the senior teacher is in charge of the professional learning of the teachers and ensures they are in a position to enhance their professional development. Furthermore, peer coaching and visiting teachers are other aspects of PLC in Tatweer Schools. The school community in this regard seeks to achieve the basic purpose of instilling the principles of the knowledge economy among learners in the community.

> The Tatweer Model is based on new concepts. We started with new concepts within schools: self-evaluation and planning, the senior teacher, and the professional learning community are new important concepts in the schools (Reem, TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

> نموذج تطوير المدارس قائم على مفاهيم جديدة احنا بدأنا بالأشياء الأساسية داخل المدرسة: التقويم الذاتي التخطيط، المعلم المشرف. المجتمع المهني التعلمي ايضا من الأمور الضرورية والمفاهيم الجديدة على المدارس

Additionally, the culture of the Tatweer School system uses media effectively; in particular, social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, Blogspot, and other forums. An Android application enables Tatweer guides to provide links to Tweets and blogs, which are used to exchange ideas, knowledge and experiences, as well as publish their achievements and news. In

addition to communication, the aim is to spread best practice, products, news, training material, events, markets, and to encourage the concept of PLC.

> Tatweer requires using Twitter… In the past, education was isolated, but now there is a connection between the teacher and the students. Students can find anything they need on our website: difficult lessons, work sheets...etc. are uploaded to the school website (Habibah, 11-6-13, interview)

> لأنه أستوجب تطوير أن يكون هناك تواصل اجتماعي عن طريق تويتر .. أول كان مغلق التعليم الآن لا صار فيه تواصل بين الطالبة والمعلمة أي شي تحتاجه في موقعنا ننزل فيه الأشياء، أي درس صعب ورقة عمل انزله في موقع المدرسة .

Likewise, the Tatweer Project creates actual and virtual networks between schools and different units across the country where practitioners and administrators can share their experiences, ideas and practices. By comparison, as discussed in Chapter 2 the Finnish system has a network of schools that fosters, encourages and entices innovation and creativity across the country. This has been a major contributory factor to the success of the Finnish educational system a great success, with strong productivity at school level. Finland boosts its policies with strong supporting systems that enable the network of schools to expand and share the experience of collaborative innovations with the school and educational authorities (Andreas Schleicher, 2006). Therefore, networking can be an important approach to enhance school performance by sharing and learning from different educational parties. The following is an analysis and discussion about the awareness of the PLC concept among practitioners.

9.3.2   The concept of PLC awareness and practices

Only one head teacher out of three and one teacher out of 12 were aware of the concept of PLC and what it entails in Tatweer schools during the implementation of the project.

The PLC concept was an innovative educational reform. The core of this reform was to improve students' learning (Ricketts, 2008). However, Shields and Knapp (1997) reveal that educational reform in school does not guarantee improving students' learning. On the other side, they emphasise five common characteristics associated with the concept PLCs. These are:

> a) a set of attainable reform goals with long time lines for accomplishing them; b) an explicit focus on particular aspects of the curriculum and instructional practices while aligning professional development with these changes; c) putting in place a school-level process for considering changes in practice while refraining from making school governance the main preoccupation of the reform effort; d) encouraging collaborative engagement of staff members; and e) using professional resources to further this end (Huffman & Hipp, 2003, p. 4).

These characteristics can be found in the Tatweer Model as since the implementation of the project teachers have improved in terms of professionalism. One respondent stated:

> Frankly, as teachers, we have improved the technical programmes. We attended training… and started to exchange experiences and apply every new thing… (Salma, 10-06-13, interview).

> احنا بصراحة كمعلمات صار عندنا تحسن في برامج التقنية أخذنا دورات، تثقفنا.. صرنا نتبادل خبرات مع بعض ونطبق كل جديد.

All participants consider PLC to be a cooperative team where members work collaboratively to enhance and improve students' achievement (This was after explaining the PLC meaning for them in the interview and focus group settings). They regarded the role of senior teachers as one element of PLC. One head teacher stated that:

Of course, this concept is embedded in the work of senior teachers… Senior teachers are associated with professional learning communities. Because they meet as a group… in my opinion, it depends on strong ties between the groups (HT1, 13/5/13, interview).

طبعا هذا يجسده المعلمات الاوائل ... المعلمات الأوائل هم اللي يدور فيما بينهم المجتمعات المهنية التعليمية لأنهم كمجموعة يلتقون تلقينهم في مادتهم تخصصهم يحاولوا جهدهم .. يعتمد على العلاقات انا اشوف لما تكون قوية بين التخصص تكون أكثر من غيرهم.

This particular head teacher regarded the relationship between teachers as essential to cultivate a PLC. This is echoed by Jaalock (1999), who highlights that a robust team spirit can be attained only if there is strong cohesion. In addition, factors such as the size of the team, the leadership style and sharing the same interest must be considered.

One head teacher who was not aware of the concept stated that:

We do it unconsciously; experience tells us to meet other teachers to exchange experience... We apply this, but not using this concept (HT3, 08-06-13, interview).

هذي نسويها بدون كلام، حنا وعي لا ، من الخبرة اننا أقول اجتمع بالمعلمات لتبادل الخبرة ما ذا نحتاج .. هذي مطبقينها بس مو بالمفهوم اللي احنا فاهمينه منك

But the teacher who was aware of the concept of PLC stated that:

I heard about it after searching online for quality. I read about the professional learning community, which is still in its infancy for us… As the school community, we try to learn and train. This is what I understood and it is what we have in our school (Najwa, 9-6-13, interview).

سمعت به لأني قعدت أبحث في الجودة فمر علي ان هذا مجتمع مهني تعلمي .. هو بالنسبة لنا كمجتمع لازال في طور البداية .. كمجتمع مدرسي نحاول نتعلم نحاول نتدرب سوا هذا اللي انا فهمته ، هل هو موجود عندنا في المدرسة .. احنا قاعدين نسويه عندنا تدريب ذاتي.

Another senior teacher was positive in clarifying the purpose of the PLC by providing an example:

In my understanding, a professional learning community is essential to learn the profession, to master it and bring it out in the required way… As in our investigation about the students' performance… to know the reason for the weakness (Nasem, 27-5-13, interview).

كفهمي أنا مجتمع مهني تعلمي لا بد أن أتعلم المهنة على أساس أتقنها وأظهرها بالشئ المطلوب مني زي مثلا دراستنا لمستوى الطالب .. نعرف أسباب الضعف، الطرق ، علاج الضعف نستخدم الطرق البسيطة ..

Another good example was provided by a senior teacher, who stated that:

The project that I am going to do for teachers is called 'learning community'. The first thing is that it has to have professional ethics… the second thing is to develop yourself and your profession... Develop them by learning from others' experiences, by training and attending typical lessons (Razan, 10-06-13, interview).

المشروع اللي بسويه للمعلمات مجتمع متعلم، أول شي تتوفر فيه أخلاقيات المهنة.. الشي الثاني انك تكونين مطورة لذاتك .. مطورة مهنتك .. أطورها بأخذ خبرات من غيري، بالدورات ، بحضور حصص نموذجية.

From these responses, it is apparent that Tatweer schools implement PLC effectively, without necessarily being aware of the concept. This is because they learn the tools to practice PLC without focusing on theories that clarify the meaning and the philosophy. The Tatweer Unit members acknowledged this by stating:

Professional learning community is a new important concept in schools. They implement it on the ground but are not yet aware of it (Reem, TU, 03/06/13, focus group). المجتمع المهني التعلمي ايضا من الأمور الضرورية والمفاهيم الجديدة على المدارس هي طبقت على أرض الواقع نظريا لكن الى هلحين ما استوعبت

In summary, Tatweer schools appear to have introduced a new way of leading and managing the school; it affects all learning and teaching processes as well as impacting on the school's structure and content. However, communicating a vision needs to be regarded in this system as the majority of teachers and heads are not aware of PLC. The possible reason of lacking this communication perhaps that PLC is a new concept to this system, as well as to the Tatweer Unit members and officials. One example is that one member of the Tatweer Unit asked me to provide her some sources from the western literature as they have not fully absorbed it. Moreover, when I asked one teacher about this concept and she was not aware of it I saw the poster behind her about PLC's meaning and tools, and then I pointed to this poster to show her and also to the head teacher, and then the head teacher realised that she had placed the same poster in the room of the staff but they seemed not to be reading it or did not pay attention to it. This reflects how important communicating a vision is here, and the interpretation effect of school leaders on national policy, for example, what is espoused by the policy makers is often interpreted differently on the ground by the teachers/heads. This is one of the key problems when implementing educational change uniformly throughout a complex system.

The culture shift in Tatweer schools is discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

9.3.3 The nature of cultural shifts taking place within Tatweer Schools

"Change" is understood widely to refer to a shift from the current point of balance to the target point of balance; thereby moving from one state to another in time (Assayed, 2004). Alamry and Alfawzan (1997) also define change, in relation to organisations, as: "a set of activities designed and intended by the organization to move from a situation that is not

desirable to a better situation". The culture in Tatweer schools has changed completely compared with non-Tatweer schools. Tatweer Schools have embedded new concepts including PLC, senior teachers, Excellence Team, and self-evaluation and planning. In addition, these schools encourage partnership with the community and society as a whole, in contrast to the non-Tatweer Schools. All these concepts promote the idea of moving the emphasis away from the individual to teamworking at the level of students, teachers and leaders. This represents a major shift in Saudi educational policy; from being isolated schools to being open schools and having a partnership with society. The role of the head teacher moves from inspector to that of a leader. The next sub-sections discuss these changes in more detail and provide supporting evidence.

1) Moving from the culture of the individual to the culture of community

The project policy and the participants support moving towards the culture of community. One focus group participant stated:

> I think the most important shift is moving from individual work to team and community work (Nahid, TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

> أنا أعتقد انه أهم تحول ثقافي هو التحول من ثقافة الفرد الى ثقافة المجتمع .. التحول من العمل الفردي الى العمل الجماعي والمجتمعي ..

Moreover, there is evidence that the culture in Tatweer schools encourages teachers to be open, professional and responsible for the learning process among the students. To achieve this, teachers must be able to change their attitude. This concept of openness was explained by one teacher who believed that the shift was important: she stated that it helps teachers to share their knowledge and experience and, therefore, enhances togetherness among school members and improve performance.

One interviewee went further to state that:

> In the past the teacher was isolated but now there is consultation, and an exchange of experiences; they call it peer coaching. The teacher has to attend to others and they have to attend to her to observe her innovation, and learn from her experience… It becomes open; she can take and give information and experiences from others. It has become a major shift in our school (Nofa, 13/5/13, interview).

كانت المعلمة قبل مغلقة صار فيه تشاور تبادل الخبرات بين المعلمات حنا في تطوير يسموننا تدرب الأقران لازم المعلمة تحضر أو يحضرن لزميلتهم فيشوفون ابداعها يكتبون من خبراتها فيه تبادل خبرات ... ايوه أصبحت منفتحة تأخذ وتعطي تبادل الخبرات تبادل المعلومات، صار نقلة كبيرة في مدرستنا.

In the interviews and focus group discussions all participants agreed that this is achieved by enhancing different tools and strategies to meet this aim; for instance, using collaborative and cooperative learning in learning, and using PLC and teamwork to improve teaching and learning. Silver (2014) supports moving to work collaboratively as a team and argues that; "Team members as individual agents clearly have internalised personal objectives. However, when agents become team members, they in some part assume the objectives of the team. At the least, this requires an integration of agent objectives with those of the aggregate" (Silver, 2014, p. 2). It is common nowadays for relationships between people and the wider community to be affected by smart phones, iPods, laptops, etc. towards isolating people; the Tatweer schools' shift towards openness through use of virtual and personal social networks has served to balance this equation somewhat. Thus, the disadvantages of these modern devices could be offset by the advantages of the openness culture in schools by encouraging individuals to be more open and connected to each other naturally. This, at least, would help students and teachers rebuild their social, emotional, and personal skills that might be otherwise ignored.

2) Pedagogical shift towards using technology and modern strategies

According to all the participants in this study, how teachers practice their profession has shifted dramatically in Tatweer schools. Currently, teachers tend to use new strategies and approaches in teaching and learning. They all adopt an active learning approach using collaboration and cooperation within the classroom. In addition, students can learn outside the classroom through trips to different places such as universities, museums, social care, etc. Students also are encouraged to apply the skills and knowledge they have been taught, and use the resources available to ensure they can meet the skill requirements of the labour market. They have moved, therefore, from delivering information to orienting students to find out information and knowledge. Thus, the students become active participants rather than a subject in the process of learning. As in the past and also in the non Tatweer schools the style of teaching and the curriculum focus on preparing students for exams by concentrating on reciting and memorizing the content of a textbook, and ignores the application of knowledge, innovation and research (Hakeem, 2012).

This was maintained by one of the head teachers:

> I noted the shift, especially after applying the projects… This year, I encouraged new teachers to teach using the new learning resources... and there is no place for traditional teaching… (HT3, 08-06-13, interview).

> ايوه الحمدلله والشكر لاحظته خصوصا بعد ما طبقنا المشاريع .. السنة هذي أجبرت المعلمات الجدد .. مافيه شرح الا بمصادر التعلم ..و لا فيه الشرح البدائي

Another teacher expressed her experience of change, and how it has affected students' achievement:

> I feel I have changed. I changed my rote learning approach; I started to use active learning approaches. I touched upon students' love of this kind of learning. I have

even seen an improvement in their marks…students are better than us in terms of using technology. So they do not like traditional methods (Najwa, 9-6-13, interview).

أحس فيني تغير . غيرت من أسلوبي التلقيني بديت أستخدم أساليب تعلم نشط، لمست حب الطالبات لهذا التعلم وتقبلهم له، حتى من ناحية الدرجات فيه تحسن ... الطالبات هم تقنيا أفضل منا فتجدينها ما تحب الطريقة التقليدية فأنا قاعدة أحاول اني أواكبهم مع العصر ، فأنا أحاول أني أصل الطريق اللي هم يمشون فيه..

This shift is because Tatweer schools encourage teachers to use technology in order to improve their performance and efficiency when offering technical skills to the learners. Although it is a challenge, some have done very well. One teacher stated that

It is enough, of course, to observe teachers' technical development. I am one who was not able to use the computer, then I made technical progress. Tatweer provides the technical skills required to meet the development. There is pressure on the teacher… somehow we reached the level where we are satisfied. Previously, students weren't allowed to bring their iPad, but now they can, along with their computer (Amar, 26/5/13, interview).

طبعا يكفي ان المعلمات تطوروا من الناحية التقنية أنا وحدة من الناس ما كنت أعرف شي في الكمبيوتر فتطورت تقنيا.. كبوا علينا تطوير المهارات اللي لازم أواكب فيها التطوير .. فصار فيه ضغط على المعلم ولكن نوعا ما وصلنا الى حد معين أنا راضية فيه ... الطالبة كان ممنوع انها تدخل الآياد الآن مسموح لها تجيب الآياد وتجيب كمبيوترها..

The use of technology, such as social media, in learning and teaching was also supported by the focus group, which stated that:

Manal: all our schools have Twitter…

Roza: each school has blogs that are linked to the learning resources sheets. The teachers have windows in these blogs, which link them to other schools… So, there is an exchange of experiences and looking at other achievements… Our role is to support these schools by disseminating activities and achievements through our

channels… We have our own blog linked to the Tatweer schools' blogs. Our next step is to let senior teachers have sheets and blogs inside the school blog to activate the PLC (TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

هلحين جميع مدارسنا عندها تويتر ... كل مدرسة لها مدونة أساسية ترتبط فيها صفحات لمصادر التعلم، للمعلمات هناك نوافذ في المدونة تربط المدرسة بأختها المدرسة الأخرى .. ففيه تبادل الخبرات يطلعون على انجازات المدارس الأخرى .. واحنا طبعا ندعم المدارس بالنشر للأنشطة والمنجزات عن طريق قنواتنا... عندنا مدونة بالوحدة أيضا عاملين لها عملية ربط بجميع المدونات ، خطوتنا القادمة انه كل معلمة مشرفة تكون لها صفحات ومدونات داخل مدونة المدارس نحاول تفعيل المجتمعات المهنية التعلمية من خلال أدوات المدونة والانترنت..

However, one head teacher reported initial difficulties using social media with students and parents. She reported that one of the students created an account on the website Ask.fm, and had written a title of "students' confessions" using the name of the school. Consequently, students wrote unacceptable comments under this topic about themselves and the teachers, upsetting parents and the school community alike. The head teacher resolved the issue in an unusual way. The bell was rung at an unusual time and everyone in the school was required to attend a mandatory assembly. All staff, teachers and students listened to the head teacher while she outlined the problem and its impact on the school's reputation, as well as students and parents. Then, the head teacher gave students a deadline of two days to close this account otherwise the school would identify the student who opened this account and used the law to administer an appropriate punishment. The head teacher reminded students of the Information Technology Crime Law in Saudi Arabia, which carries a one-year prison term and a fine of SR 500000 (approximately £86828.90). After two days the account was closed. The student was found and expressed remorse, saying she only did it for fun. The school resolved the issue confidentially with the student and her mother.

3) Shift in students', parents' and teachers' attitudes

Implementation of the Tatweer school programme has led to a change in the students' behaviour, from being self-centered to students who are willing and able to open up and share

their skills with others as per participants. All the participants agreed that a positive shift in attitude had taken place. One interviewee supporting this view stated that:

> There is a significant cooperation between students, there is no selfishness; they feel that the achievement is for all, so I shall help my colleague (Nofa, 13/5/13, interview).

> جدا تعاون بينهم ما عاد فيه انقطعت الأنانية (لماذا) كلا يبي يبدع وحسوا خلاص ان الانجاز بيظهر للجميع فأنا أساعد زميلتي ليش ما أساعدها أبذل معها أعطيها اللي أقدر عليه...

For parents, the programme has enabled them to participate in school-evaluation and planning by voicing their opinions to the school, which has an impact on their attitudes positively. In addition, the attitude of parents has shifted to allow their daughters to go on school trips. One participant supported this by stating:

> When Tatweer came, it spread the culture of trips for girls. In the past, girls were prohibited from going outside. Now, students can go outside the school; even parents are beginning to allow daughters to go on trips, to visit social centers and invite orphans to share in social events… Students have been to America and Germany, and tomorrow they will go to Asser [Saudi city]. Teachers also went with them to Germany; there really has been a major shift (Nofa, 13/5/13, interview).

> لما جاء تطوير نشر ثقافة ان البنات يخرجون رحلات أول ما كان عندنا البنات يطلعون فتغير حتى الأهالي صاروا يوافقون يسمحون لبناتهم يطلعون رحلات... يروحون للمراكز الاجتماعية يدعون هنا الأيتام يسوون لهم حفلات صار فيه مشاركة مجتمعية... راحوا البنات لأمريكا راحوا لألمانيا وبكرة رايحين لعسير المعلمات هم اللي رايحين مع الطالبات لألمانيا فيه تحول كبير رحلات علمية كبيرة هنا كثير كثير.

A possible explanation for this shift is that parents now are engaged in school matters; therefore, they understand the purpose of school's activities and schooling. Subsequently, they begin to trust the school and encourage its activities. The head teacher of school C expressed the same views about engaging parents in school's matters and explained communication with them:

Even parents… we tell them that we are going to communicate with them by SMS or email. Some parents told us that they do not have an email, then they got it (HT3, 08-06-13, interview).

حتى الأهالي والطالبات نقول نتعامل معكم بالرسائل اس ام اس أو نتواصل معكم بالايميل فيه بعضهم كلمونا ما عندنا ايميلات صار عندهم ايميل

The previous head teacher revealed a positive attitude and responses from parents in communication with the school. This is supported by a study of Barr and Saltmarsh (2014), which investigated the role of the school principal in fostering parent engagement with their children's schooling. Principals' attitudes toward parents is the significant factor in determining whether they feel that they are allowed to be involved in and contribute to school activities, or whether they feel too afraid to access the school.

There is also a shift in the teachers' attitude where they become more active and seeking improvement by developing and motivating themselves. One participant stated:

There is a culture shift… Teachers are continuously exploring, investigating and developing (Marwa, 9-6-13, interview).

أكيد هناك تحول ثقافي .. المعلمات في بحث مستمر وفي دراسة مستمرة وفي تطوير مستمر...

Another teacher continued:

We teachers have to search in sources to do our projects…. As long as I like the development and being in the Tatweer school, I have to evolve …" (Najwa, 9-6-13, interview).

احنا كمعلمات مجرد عملنا في الخطة اجبرني أبحث لما ما أمسك مشروع معين ما أقدر ما أكون ملمة فيه قادرة اني

أنفذه الا لما أرجع لمراجع...بما اني أحب التطوير وفي مدرسة التطوير معناته لازم أطور نفسي ..

Additionally, one interviewee expressed the view that teachers were curious when it came to the implementation of the project:

> The Tatweer Project increased my reading; every time I see the word Tatweer, I become eager to learn more. We read about Qatar schools and Gulf States to know what Tatweer is. I thought it was only equipment for the school, but frankly it increases the competitive spirit. It pushed me to research and investigate the matter further (Asmahan, 10-06-13, interview).

زادني اطلاع بزيادة كل ما جاء كلمة تطوير قمنا نقرأ نبغى نعرف ويشو التطوير بالضبط .. لدرجة اننا ندخل على مدارس قطر ندخل على مدارس دول الخليج أبغى أعرف ايش التطوير بالضبط .. كنت حاطة في بالي انه مجرد اجهزة تجي المدرسة والسلام .. لا صراحة زاد روح التنافس .. دفعني لأن أبحث وأتقصى عن المشكلة

In this regard, one senior teacher explained that she tried to understand the meaning of Tatweer (which means development) as she wants to bring about innovation in her school. This was also the case when I asked another senior teacher about the aim of Tatweer schools; she asked me as well to explain the meaning of Tatweer. This demonstrates that teachers are curious to find out about this reform. Clearly, students, parents, teachers and head teachers in Tatweer schools have been impacted positively by this project.

4) Shift from being a manager to being a leader

Participants in the focus group reported that Tatweer culture encourages head teachers to be leaders rather than managers:

The role of the head teacher transferred from being manager to be a leader (Sawsan, TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

<div dir="rtl">تحول دور المديرة إلى قائد</div>

This comment was echoed by three interviewees, and two focus groups in this study. This result contrasts with the finding of Mathis (2010), who conducted a qualitative study of the educational leadership of female principals in the eastern region of Saudi Arabia. Mathis concluded that the principals of the schools do not have sufficient autonomy to act or to make decisions; they described their role as a manager rather than being a leader.

In contrast, the findings of the present study show a positive outcome of the Tatweer schools' system to encourage shifting in the role to be more influential and effective. Effective leadership, therefore, requires the ability to implement intellectual strategies of the organisation's future work. The role of the leader has been emphasised by Hannagan (2005), he stated that this role "is to organize, supervise and control people so that there is a productive outcome to work" (Hannagan, 2005, p. 5). Thus, the movement in Tatweer schools enhances these functions to be practiced by head teachers according to the findings of this study.

5) Shift to create partnerships with society

All the participants in this study articulated a shift towards more openness to society. This means that Tatweer schools can create partnerships with different businesses and entrepreneurships to enhance their performance and activities. One of the head teachers reported success in making partnerships to enhance the school experiences and culture:

It is social awareness… the relationship between our schools and the external society has become very important…. In the past, we met only the parents of weak students…

but now we value all parents... They can provide a lecture, support; or if they have a certain institution to support, we hosted an orphan children committee. Students go to nursing homes and they provide programmes or share technological expertise. They also go to other schools and provide training for them (HT1, 13/5/13, interview).

هو وعي مجتمعي اكثر شي احنا صار علاقة المجتمع الخارجي بالمدرسة مرة مهم عندنا ..منول مجالس اولياء الامور نجتمع بالامهات وامهات الضعيفات.. الآن لا صرنا نتفحص أولياء الامور مين يقدر يقدم لنا محاضرة، دعم عنده مؤسسة معينة... العمل التطوعي ترى مرة صار قوي ..استضافات يجيبون جمعية الأطفال الأيتام ويسوون لهم برامج .. يروحون دار المسنين ويقدمون لهم برامج أو خبرات تقنية يروحون البنات ويدربون مدارس أخرى يعني يروحون..

The members of the Tatweer Unit in the focus group also highlighted this tangible shift that has had a positive impact on the schools. Tatweer schools can cultivate partnerships with different sectors, such as universities, social agencies, business, and health sectors to share resources, experiences and welfare. In addition, these schools work with other schools to share knowledge, experiences, ideas and resources, both human and material. In their study, Higham and Earley (2013) found that the majority of school leaders had positive attitudes towards school-to-school collaboration. Over 80 per cent of each survey group agreed that working in partnership with other schools was critical to improving student outcomes. Overall, Feger and Arruda (2008) illustrate the eventual shift from interpersonal to the inter-community discussion. In this network, participants move to professional practices, rather than simple sharing of experiences, by acknowledging the best practices and holding shared values. Exchange visits between the Tatweer schools and other sectors enable the schools to develop and enhance professional practices and achieve the Tatweer targets.

6) *Adopting self-evaluation and planning*

The Tatweer Project aims to transform schools into using a bottom-up approach in its decision-making by converting them into self-evaluation and planning schools. It is argued that self-evaluation is a robust approach that leads to school improvement; the evidence indicates that schools in many countries that adopt this approach report high levels of student

achievement (Chapman & Sammons, 2013). One of the Tatweer Unit members considered this a cultural shift, stating:

Self-evaluation is a new culture for them… In the past, evaluation was performed by external members (Manal, TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

كانت سجلات الادارة محصورة فقط في المديرة والمساعدات والاطلاع عليها يكون من مقيم خارجي مشرفة ادارية أو من المكتب نفسه ، بعد ما دخلت ثقافة التقويم الذاتي أصبحت مفتوحة و مشروعة لفريق التقويم الذاتي

The previous approach was top-down evaluation and planning, as the Ministry of Education was responsible for building a plan and monitoring and assessing staff. However, the situation in Tatweer schools has changed to that of self-evaluation and planning, which helps schools discover and work through their needs, weaknesses and strengths.   This was explained in greater detail in chapters 7 and 8.

7) Shift to becoming global competitors

The will to compete and become unique is essential for the global success of schools. Competition has become part of the culture in Tatweer schools, where everyone now seeks to be a national and international competitor. It is argued that "Neoliberalism reframes schools as a commodity … it aims to provide a wide variety of product choices to an underserved market, relying on competition as vehicle for school improvement" (Shiller, 2011, p. 162). Thus, it would appear that Tatweer Schools are influenced to a significant extent by neoliberal theory. This was supported by all the participants; one head teacher stating:

Everyone seeks distinctiveness. When we have people who have been rewarded on a regional and worldwide scale, an atmosphere of competition is created. Everyone starts thinking, why won't I be rewarded next year? Why don't I receive the reward from internal and external bodies? (HT2, 12/5/13, interview).

أصبح الجميع يبحث عن التميز .. ولما يكون في المدرسة ناس يتتم تكريمها على مستوى العالم والمنطقة يخلق جو من التنافس السريف الكل يبدأ يبحث لماذا لا أكون أنا العام القادم من المكرمين لماذا لم يكن أنا أحصل على هذا التكريم سواء من الداخل أو من الخارج.

The opportunity to participate in international and national competitions yields benefit for teachers and students alike, as their potential and innovation would be appreciated.

8) Shift in the ethos of the school

Some participants (all participants in school A, three interviewees in school B, one interviewee in school C, and the official) perceived the shift in the school's ethos as key to its improvement. For instance, there is a shift in the role of students where they can train others in, or outside, the school. In addition, students can make products and sell them to the public, in order to prepare them for the labour market in the future. It is argued that "educational institutions in Saudi Arabia are expected to cater for the new market and to create a more competitive market for the students to flourish in their creativity" (Elyas & Al-Sadi, 2013, p. 57). One head teacher acknowledged this in the research and stated that:

> The students have started to do training …girls do training with the resources teacher in other schools… There is also the labour market for students… such as the little investor project… (HT1, 13/5/13, interview).

في تدريب البنات البنات صاروا يدربون.. الرحلات .. صاروا البنات يطلعون يدربون مع معلمة المصادر في مدارس أخرى.. وفيه أيضا سوق العمل للطالبات ... مشروع المستثمرة الصغيرة ...

Moreover, the Tatweer schools attempt to prepare students by providing them with relevant skills and the opportunity to practice their innovations within the wider community.

Another senior teacher thought that the way that the head teacher deals with parents is affecting the ethos of the school. She stated that:

The head teacher has a good approach to parents and students; she is a caring mother, who tries to satisfy students as much as she can … (Nadin, 18/5/13, interview).

المديرة تعاملها راقي جدا مع اولياء الامور ومع الطالبات الام الحنون تحاول ترضي الطالبة قدر الامكان.

Abdeen (2003) argues that a caring family environment in the workplace plays a significant role in the successful adaptation to change. The previous head teacher adopted this approach in her school and demonstrated its impact on the school's ethos. Besides this, the participants from school A explained that the fathers' visit is regarded as an important event and represents a significant shift in their school. The head teacher of this school gave an example to illustrate the cultural change:

We hosted fathers two weeks ago, out of school hours, to let them discuss and see evidence of their daughters' achievement… It is the first time this has happened in our school's history... it was even reported in the media … Students wrote to their parents, and the parents replied… One of the parents wrote: 'Thanks, Thanks and Thanks because you gave me a chance to see part of my daughter's life', whereas I did not know about it for years… it was a very nice and emotional experience (HT1, 13/5/13, interview).

أولياء الأمور استضفناهم من اسبوعين يجون يشوفون انجازات المدرسة طبعا في الاوقات اللي ما كنا متواجدين في المدرسة .. أول مرة في سابقة الأولى من نوعها في تاريخ … .. كان له صدى حتى في الجريدة حطوه .. البنات كتبوا كلمات لاباءهم وردوا الآباء عليهم .. يعني واحد من الآباء كتب لنا في السجل الذهبي يقول اشكركم اشكركم انكم اتحتوا لي اني اشوف جانب من حياة بنتي لي سنين ما دري عنه..يعني كان مرة معبر وجميل..

This school invited male parents to the school in the evening. Previously, this would have been prohibited, even out of school hours. However, because the head teacher is authorised to

manage her school internally without requiring the permission of the Ministry of Education, she can implement such radical changes, provided there are no legal consequences. This movement has positive implications for the school population and parents alike. The following photographs have been provided by one of the Tatweer school members to show a parents' evening event, in addition to an image taken from a newspaper reporting the story.

Figure 9- 1: Male parents evening photos visiting their daughters' school

Figure 9- 2: Image from the newspaper covering the story of the male parents' evening at Tatweer school A

In summary, the culture of Tatweer Schools encourages the development of a partnership between the school and the community. Moreover, the culture has led to a change in the learning process; a major shift has been observed from using a traditional method of teaching and learning to using a technical and modern approach; shift toward being computer literate; a shift in the student's role and behaviour; encouraging sharing and collaboration among teachers; integration of technology; shift in the teacher's attitude and parent's attitude, and shift from being a manager to being a leader. Moreover, the culture of Tatweer schools has focused on self-training, where it is believed that each individual can be trained to have the right skills.

This provides evidence that the culture in Tatweer schools has changed completely, compared with the non-Tatweer schools. This is consistent with the situation of independent schools in Qatar where teachers report engaging in professional development activities consistent with their reform's expectations: instructional methods, use of technology, and strategies for teaching students of different abilities (Zellman et al., 2009, p. xix). However, the researcher has noted that from the data it is appear that the concept of value added has been overlooked where it is essential to be used and practiced in the education. It is important to consider this concept to examine school effectiveness as it has been ignored in the Saudi educational system.

The next chapter sheds light on the opportunities that this reform offers versus the difficulties that Tatweer members encountered as a result of the Tatweer initiative.

Chapter Ten: Data analysis and discussion (4)

10.1   Introduction

This chapter analyses the data of how practitioners and administrators perceive the change in their practices within the school. The analysis focuses on the opportunities and challenges as a result of being part of Tatweer Project. The chapter aims to address the final research question, which is:

What are the opportunities and challenges within the Tatweer Schools' system from the perspectives of teachers, head teachers, and Tatweer Unit members?

10.2   Overall Perceptions of all the participants

Overall practitioners and administrators had high and optimistic expectations of the Tatweer programme being successful, and that it will improve the performance of the students as well as enabling them to compete globally. The views of the participants tended to be positive, although some negative attitudes have also been highlighted where 11 out of 12 teachers were happy, and one teacher was frustrated with this project. In addition, the three head teachers shared the common view that the Tatweer Project has had a positive effect on leading and learning in Tatweer schools. Moreover, in the focus group settings the three Excellence Teams highlighted the advantages of this reform as well as the difficulties, but overall considered it a useful reform. In terms of the Tatweer Unit, they thought that this project has had a positive impact in terms of transforming schools from the traditional culture to more open and participatory culture.

The following comments highlight some common views from all the participants about Tatweer Programme:

***Positive comments*:** It will succeed… The work is better…It is nice… Have a great impact… To be better… There is a nice side of (it)… We think outside the box… There is freedom… it is very nice…it is a step forward not backward... we have more autonomy… we have gained experience… this year is better… Tatweer becomes more helpful… they support me… very better… the best to the best… I like it despite its difficulties… it is enjoyable… add something nice… I am impressed…It is great… an ideal school… more confidence … I like it… a great advantage… very great

***Neutral comments*:** The development starts from the internal… The supervision comes from inside… A paradigm shift… It will be gradual… It must be an open- minded education… we do not have new work… the process of development is continuous… I have great hope… different than other schools

***Negative comments*:** Too tired… A lot of pressure… I feel frustrated... It does not encourage… it was difficult.

The following section presents the senior teachers' perspectives on this system.

10.3   Senior Teachers' perspectives

The data is based on interviews with 12 senior teachers and three focus groups, which contain administrative members and senior teachers. The following two sections discuss their perceptions of the opportunities and challenges presented by the Tatweer schools.

10.3.1 Opportunities

The majority of the teachers in the interview (11 out of 12) and the three focus group settings were happy to be part of the implementation team of the Tatweer Project in the Tatweer schools. Most of them had positive perceptions about their involvement with and working in Tatweer schools, and they liked the Tatweer programme as it helps them to enhance professional development.

The practitioners stated that their expectations were to promote students' learning, they also expected that this project would increase and promote professional development and integrate technology into classroom learning. In addition, they expected to be using more modern strategies of learning and teaching as well as creating an attractive educational environment, and improving the school's performance. The Tatweer Project has a long-term scheme of 10 years to have comprehensive reform in education in addition to establishing high expectations for students' performances. This reflects one of the main reforms instituted by Finnish policy reformers was to create a linkage between high expectations and strong support systems. This reform was to encourage instructors and schools to get engaged in a higher responsibility for learning and the outcomes of each student (A Schleicher, 2006). A successful school can be identified when its students develop more than the expectancy of its intake. Relative to other schools that have the same intake, this school most likely adds greater value to the students' results (Sammons & Bakkum, 2011). In contrast the Tatweer Schools, have concentrated on the school infrastructure, the curriculum and the community as well as improving students' achievement. However, the Tatweer system does not consider the value-added as a tool to assess school performance.

The implementation of the Tatweer Project in Tatweer Schools was difficult in the beginning but most teachers say that the program is very useful since it gives the learners more confidence and encourages them to be innovative. This was supported by one teacher who commented that:

The Tatweer Project is very good… in the beginning it was difficult and there was no agreement but after which, we felt that there is a great advantage, it elevated the thought, profession and our students… it gives more confidence and encourages us to learn many things… I was very shy but now I can show and do workshop talking in front of an audience I have self-confidence… I was could not talk in front of people… teachers have changed... there were teachers, whose people said about them that 'they do not do anything' but now they became innovative in their work… (Nofa, 13/5/13, interview).

رائع جدا أول ما بدأ شفتي الشي أول ما يبدأ يكون صعب بعدين ما يكون فيه قبول بس بعدين لا ، حسينا فعلا فيه فائدة عظيمة من تطوير ارتقى بالفكر ارتقى بالمهنة ارتقى بطالباتنا (يعني حبيتيه) مرة مرة عطاني ثقة كبيرة في نفسي خلانا نتعلم أشياء كثيرة (ويش غير فيك) ثقة في نفسي يعني جدا خجولة صرت أطلع وألقي وأسوي ورش عمل وانطلقت صرت أحكي ، أنا ما أحكي قدام الناس فغيرني كثير .. معلمات تغيروا منول كان فيه معلمات يقولون هذي ما تسوي شي هلحين صارت تبدع في عملها ..

This senior teacher thought that the Tatweer Project gave them an opportunity to highlight their potential and improve their weakness. Tatweer Schools are different from other schools in terms of hardworking and work stress, but Tatweer members were aware that this pressure would support them to be professional in their work, as stated by another teacher:

Honestly, I like it despite its difficulties… we are different from other schools. We work and search... I cannot imagine that I would go to any other school… but I like to go to another school to share my experience… when I go to other schools they asked me 'teacher which planet do you come from' (Nadin, 18/5/13, interview).

والله شوفي اكيد حبيته بالرغم من المصاعب غير المدارس الثانية اللي مريحة راسها يعني طول الوقت حنا نشتغل ونبحث.. ما اتخيل اني اروح مدرسة غير مدرستنا .. لكن احب اروح انتداب عشان انقل خبرتي.. فلما اروح مدارس جربتها يقولون استاذة انت من اي كوكب جاية...

In addition, one teacher stated the reason why she likes working at Tatweer School, despite some difficulties:

It is nice but there is a lot of pressure, unbelievable, and too tiring. We still like the work at Tatweer Schools because I say I want to improve myself (Amar, 26/5/13, interview).

حلو فيه ضغط شديد مش طبيعي متعب جدا .. احنا متمسكين لأن مثلا أقول أنا أبغى أطور نفسي ..

Another teacher has an optimistic expectation about Tatweer Schools, and also the composition of the Tatweer Unit members, who are young educators and can, therefore, help in the implementation of the Tatweer Programme and leading the change. She stated that:

I hope that it will succeed… if it continues even with dilemmas and difficulties… to have young blood to do the work is better than those who have old ideas. It must be open minded, educated and intellectual people (Najwa, 9-6-13, interview).

عندي أمل انه انه ان شاالله راح ينجح ، راح ينجح باذن الله. . اذا استمر حتى مع الصعوبات مع المعوقات ... مع الاصرار والرغبة راح يستمر باذن الله وكلما تجددت الدماء كلما كان أفضل .. لما تكون الدماء شابة وتجي للعمل أفضل مما يكونون (أصحاب) أفكار قديمة يمسكون رئاسة الأعمال في التطوير لازم يكون عقل متفتح مطلع مثقف متعلم

This comment supports the need to have open-minded people who are willing to change and lead the change. This finding is consistent with the main aim of the previous Prime Minister, as he emphasised that extremists and traditional leaders would not be allowed again to lead the schools (see section 7.1.2).

Another teacher stated that the programme has enabled the teachers to feel comfortable and enjoy learning because the way of learning and teaching have been shifted. It also makes teachers have a positive attitude towards learners and become unique when carrying out their duties. One teacher supported this and stated that:

I perceive that it will be an ideal school for the student, which means everything that make her comfortable including pedagogy, and entertainment are available… to be a second house to her including lovely and unique teachers who have an effective role in educating her… It is very nice and I found myself with it, it met my aims… distinctive, innovation… beautiful ideas whether for students or teachers… provision is available… students feel the enjoyment of teaching (Habibah, The Excellence Team 2, 27-5-13, Focus Group).

أتصور أنها ستكون المدرسة المثالية للطالب الذي يريد أن لا يخرج منها. يعني فيها كل ما يريحه من طرق تدريس من أشياء ترفيهية.. تصبح بيته الثاني بما فيها من معلمات رائعات متميزات لهم دور فعال في تربيته في سلوكه... رائع وجميل وأجد نفسي فيه حقق أهدافي ..تميز ابداع .. أفكار حلوة سواء للمعلمة أو المتعلمين حبيته مرة حبيته. توفرت الأجهزة ... ومتابعة الطلاب .. الطلاب يتقبلون المادة ويحسون بمتعة التدريس .. اذا استعملتي طرق التدريس الجديدة اللي تتناسب مع تطوير .. الطالب مرة مستمتع يحب الحصة.

Teachers also had their opinions when it came to the opportunities for students in the Tatweer Schools and stated that

The project introduces students academically, culturally and socially, and prepares them for higher education. Providing them with all knowledge and sciences that they need in their lives (Nofa, 13/5/13, interview).

تهيئة الطالبات علميا ثقافيا اجتماعيا تهيئتهم للدراسة الجامعية تزويدهم بكل المعارف والعلوم اللي يحتاجونها في حياتهم واحنا كمعلمات دين نريد أن نرسخ الثوابت الدينية ، تنمية المهارات لدى الطالبة.

Therefore, the majority of teachers expressed their gratitude on how they have benefited from being part of the Tatweer School community. They explained also that their involvement in training and use of technology had enabled them to understand the various activities and programs in the Tatweer School and use technology to improve their teaching strategies. One teacher stated that:

…. it serves me well… as a geography teacher I do not have to carry maps... I have to carry flash memory or CD... it increased my knowledge and my research... I started to search for things related to my subject... training added a lot… it makes changes in the way I teach and the way I treat my students. I observed myself in terms of treating students, to be honest I was tough but now I have become a bit soft and going down to their level (Nasem, 27-5-13, interview).

بالنسبة لي خدمني جدا جدا ومريح بالنسبة لي كجغرافيا خادمني تماما وجود الخرائط ، اني ما أشيل اللوحات اللي قبل لقيت التقنية مجرد أشيل معي فلاش سي دي ، هذا حلو جدا خدم المعلمة وزاد في معرفتي وبحثي فيها، بدأت أبحث في أشياء تتعلق بمادتي لأنه سهل أسهل من غيره، الدورات أضافت لي كثير غيرت من طريقتي في التعليم بطريقتي في التعامل مع الطالبات أنا لاحظتها على نفسي في تعاملي مع طالباتي أكون صريحة معك أنا شديدة أول بزيادة فالآن بدأت ألين شوي أنزل لمستوى الطالبة

Thus, this senior teacher has been impacted positively by the Tatweer training and preparation as she changed her treatment of the students. Intensive training has also made teachers have the opportunity to improve their teaching strategy as stated by one teacher:

The most I benefited from Tatweer is the training, intensive trainings for all teachers… as specialists, they gave us more opportunity… (Salma, 10-06-13, interview).

أكثر حاجة استفدت منها الدورات انهلت علينا السنة هذي يعني دورات بكثافة معلمات بجميع التخصصات سواء معلمات أوائل أو معلمات... كمعلمات تخصص انهل عطونا فرصة أكثر...

On the other hand, one teacher thought that training alone was not enough since she had attended two training session in one year. She had different views about the training and reported that:

Frankly, it is rare. This year we came up with just two training sessions: innovative thinking skills, the second is the exchange of experiences (Razan, 10-06-13, interview).

الصراحة نادرة يعني السنة هذي ما طلعنا الا بدورتين بس ، ما فيه للأسف نادرة تخيلي سنة كاملة دورتين فقط .. المداولة الاشرافية لمهارة التفكير الابداعي والشي الثاني تبادل الخبرات ...

This was also supported by a senior teacher who stated that:

I feel that they did not help me in the training. I have not yet absorbed its tasks and duties. I got only a general idea. They provided me with the basic skills of a senior teacher… and there was a second training but it did not build on the previous basics which is: supervision based on innovative thinking skills… they did not give me innovative thinking skills which means there is no order in the training provided (Salma, 10-06-13, interview).

في المعلم الأول أحس انهم ما أشبعوني بالدورات، الى الآن ما ني مستوعبه مهامه والواجبات. يعني عندي فقط فكرة عامة بسيطة فقط عطوني في مهارات الأساسيات المعلم الأول ايش لك وايش عليك. ودرورة ثانية بس انها ما كانت مشبعة ما كانت مبنية على أساس : دورة المداولة الاشرافية على أساس مهارات التفكير الابداعي .. هم أصلا ما أعطوني مهارات التفكير الابداعي هم عطوني شي بناء على شي أنا ما أخذته، يعني ما فيه ترتيب في الدورات هذا اللي أنا أعاني منه.

This senior teacher (Salma) had made positive comments about training earlier. When I told her that there were contradictions in her answers she clarified that training for improving senior teachers in leading the change are not enough but training to enhance teachers in their subjects was sufficient and intensive. However, this senior teacher does not appear to be happy about the Tatweer Project especially with the current position and curriculum that, as she explained, will change next year, but she stated that:

Honestly, if it is like this form that we have now, I feel frustrated... we need more support, we need more advancement. For example, I do not have the interactive board (smart board). I teach grade three with the old curriculum... next year this curriculum will change... first and second grade have an excellent curriculum…and next year, God willing, the curriculum will change and would have a great impact (Salma, 10/06/13, interview).

<div dir="rtl">

والله اذا كان بالشكل هذا اللي احنا فيه صراحة ما يشجع . أنا بالنسبة لي محبطة والله نبغى دعم أكثر نبغى نهوض أكثر من كذا. مثلا عندك مو مزودة بالسبورات التفاعلية . أدرس ثالث منهجي قديم .. السنة الجاية راح يتغير .. أولى وثاني مناهجهم جدا رائعة ، ان شاالله على السنة الجاية يكون على المناهج المطورة ويكون وقعه أكبر على التطوير.

</div>

It seems that this senior teacher was unlucky in that they still use the old curriculum while other classes have already started using the new curriculum. In addition, some classes have smart boards while others do not have according to the head teacher of this school. Hence, it could be argued that not all teachers, including this teacher as well as students, benefit from the resources in these schools as there still is a lack of resources as will be discussed in the following section.

10.3.2 Challenges

The following comments discuss various challenges that teachers experienced when leading the change.

Workload

The major challenge all teachers emphasised is the workload that prevents them from undertaking their work effectively. In implementing the Tatweer Project, they have received double responsibilities. In addition to becoming participants in building the school plan and

its evaluation, they have engaged in the school decisions as members of the Excellence Team as well as becoming tutors for students, which are considered to be a further burden.

They reported that there are too many lessons as well as various responsibilities that they hold. One senior teacher stated that:

…the number of students and amount of teaching… lead me to work at home more than at school " (Razan, 10-06-13, interview).

كمعلمة أولى عدد البنات والأنصبة . (هذا يؤثر على آداء المعلمة) يؤثر يخليني اشتغل في بيتي أكثر من اني أشتغل في المدرسة

The participants also emphasised that they work as a member of the Excellence Team as well as being a senior teacher with the amount of teaching sometimes reaching 20 lessons per week. One participant confirmed this:

The difficulty that faces me as a teacher of the subject is the time shortage; I cannot perform some projects during the school days, so I force myself to work at the weekend at the school (Amar, The Excellence Team 1, 26-5-13, Focus Group).

فيه صعوبات تواجهني كمعلمة مادة ... الوقت الضيق لبعض المشاريع ما نقدر ننجزها في الدوام الدراسي فنضطر نجي الخميس

Another participant stated that:

In the past, we taught 20 lessons but it was perhaps easier than 15 lessons now… now 15 lessons need more effort…it is like 20 or more…it needs more intellectual work. Students come to me knowing everything and you should know more than them (Lati, 18/5/13, interview).

The senior teacher described the type of new generation who are educated because of the impact of modern media and technology. Therefore, teachers need to be prepared in every lesson to face students' questions and inquiries. One important book that addresses such issue by Gilbert (2014) titled '*Why Do I Need a Teacher When I've Got Google?: The Essential Guide to the Big Issues for Every Teacher'*. This book is oriented to teachers in order to challenge and encourage them for designing a new learning experience for the 21st century. The teachers in Tatweer schools, however, use different ways to encourage and empower critical thinking and self-learning as discussed in the previous chapter.

Another teacher explained having lots of work in their daily life at the school, she stated that:

> The teacher becomes a tutor... I am in charge of 17 students I adopt them from the first grade to the third grade in the secondary school I'm responsible for keeping their marks high... we work in the school until 1:00 because there is a tutorial lesson to follow students, record their grades and because we returned to the manual record (Nadin, 18/5/13, interview).

صارت المعلمة مرشدة أكاديمية للطالبة ... انا ماسكة ١٧ طالبة اتبناهم من اولى ثانوي الى ثالث خلاص مسئوليتي ارفع درجاتهم .. مثلا سوت الطالبة سلوك خاطيء ما تحاكي الطالبة تجي تكلم مرشدتها الطلابية... الطالبة اي شي عندها استفسار ولا ابداء رأي او مشكلة حول معلمة تجي تبلغ المرشدة الأكاديمية .. هو نظام مقررات لازم مرشدة اكاديمية وهذ اللي متعبنا صراحة.. يعني مثلا نجلس يوم للساعة وحدة يصير فيه حصة اللي هي حصة الارشاد متابعة الطالبات رصد درجاتهم لاننا رجعنا للطريقة اليدوية ما فيه حل ...

This senior teacher reported that they stay at school an additional 30 minutes, as the school started 6:45 in the morning and finishing at 12:30 in the afternoon. In addition, the finding

about using manual records were unexpected, because Tatweer schools have emphasised integrating technology in schooling and managing, therefore, it is supposed that they rely on electronic work rather than manual. But in recording students' marks they are required to write them down on paper and then at the end of the term they transfer them in an electronic program called '*Noor*', which is considered double effort. The reason behind this procedure, according to this participant, is because this program '*Noor*' is available only at certain times during the year.

The senior teachers, overall, emphasised the major workload. They work as leaders in their specialised subject team as well as being a member of the Excellence Team, who plays a major role in leading the change in the school. This required skills from the senior teachers to hold all the responsibilities. They attended many training sessions, conferences, meetings and networks to acquire knowledge and skills. However, the official of the Tatweer Project, who took part in the interview of this study, had an opposite view: she thought that there was no pressure on Tatweer schools' members. She believed that the steps of change work systematically. Therefore, the pressure in schools is because of the head teachers' enthusiasm to implement the change and thus they do extra unrequested work. This official stated that the senior teachers have been helped by being given fewer lessons to teach in the school. It could be argued that a serious weakness with this comment, however, is that senior teachers have different responsibilities and roles to be accountable as well as the number of lessons to be conducted as teachers. Their comments that they suffer from the workload of implementing the Tatweer Project appear to suggest that this area deserves attention.

Reducing the work hours is important for work satisfaction and has been supported by Gunter et al. (2007) who examined the implications for how change is practiced and understood. They found that reducing the working hours of teachers has led to making staff members more effective in the school by changes in role boundaries between members of the school and the teachers. The empirical data of that study also shows that the participants perceived the project as positive (Gunter et al., 2007) whereas amongst Tatweer Project's actors there is a complaint of the burden of work that affect them and their staying at schools.

Financial Issues

For effective implementation of the programme, the schools must have enough funds to support the projects. Inadequate funds are a challenge to implement the project. However, the budget of the Tatweer Project is massive since it was started, as discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 8; 25% of the country's budget was allocated to the Ministry of Education (Abuareef, 2014). Despite this the most common and important issue in the Tatweer context is the lack of funding according to all the participants. One participant complained heavily from funding shortage, she stated:

> There are financial difficulties… we are really suffering but because we like the development, we pay from our pocket… we want to succeed… we would like to achieve our goals (Nuha, The Excellence Team 1, 26-5-13, Focus Group).

> فيه صعوبات مادية .. معاناة شديدة لدرجة اننا من حب التطوير ندفع من جيوبنا على أساس نبي ننجح نبغى ننجح الأهداف اللي عندنا

Another member of the Excellence Team also stated:

> Habibah: Financial support is a barrier …for the teachers, for the school and the project …

> Maha: The Tatweer Project has to develop the whole environment not just to provide virtual boards and we have to maintain them …

> Worod: The building has to be prepared for the development (The Excellence Team2, 27-5-13, Focus Group).

الدعم المالي .. دعم مالي محفز للمعلم والمدرسة .. للمشروع نفسه .. مشروع تطوير لما يطور البيئة المدرسية يطورها كلها مهب بس يضع سبورة تفاعلية واحنا اللي نشرف عليها ونصلحها .. . مافيه صيانة .. المبنى لازم يعد أولا للتطوير..

This extract highlights the real shortage linked to different resources in the educational context. This potentially could slow down the process of leading the change and initiative, where any initiative needs support and funding to achieve its goals (Zellman et al., 2009).

Moreover, the members of the Excellence Team claim that there is no distinction, reward, or incentive for them, although they have additional responsibilities and tasks. As one of them stated

> There is a lack of providing us with financial support, to motivate the teacher and the school (Habibah, The Excellence Team 2, 27-5-13, Focus Group).
>
> (قلة) الدعم المالي .. دعم مالي محفز للمعلم والمدرسة

These comments support each other including the lack of human and material resources as well as building preparation according to the participants. Earl et al. (1996) summarise the reasons for having difficulty when implementing the change; one of the most important reasons is that the change is inadequately resourced. Hence, having a lack of resources would create a barrier to the successful implementation of the reform.

Financial Sponsors

Media ignorance is a challenge to the implementation of the Tatweer Project according to one setting of the focus group. The participants in the focus group stated that:

> Albandari: there is no care from the media about school achievements…
>
> Nuha: we need a system, which provides financial support, and media support, we need a system to provide a sponsor for us, we as a school nobody adopt us. We asked

bank enterprises to be a sponsor to us but unfortunately they refused, because we are a school…how do they look at schools?

Amar: they look at education as a place, which is closed at the school gate and they are responsible for themselves… nobody asks what is behind this gate; there might be projects or activities (The Excellence Team 1, 26-5-13, Focus Group).

فيه من ضمن الأهداف ما فيه رعاية اعلامية لمنجزات المدرسة.... يعني احنا نبغى نظام يكون فيه دعم مادي، نظام فيه للاعلام، نظام فيه للرعاة: يعني احنا كمدارس ما أحد يرعانا نطلب الرعاة من بنوك ما ترعى من شركات ما ترعى كله ايش لأنك ايش لأنك مدرسة ... لأن نظرتهم للتعليم ايش ؟ مغلق بباب المدرسة هنا باب عليهم هم مسئولين عن نفسهم داخل هذا... ماوراء الباب هذا ما احد يحاول يشوف وراء الباب ايش فيه من أنشطة ايش فيه من مشاريع

Another participant in the same setting emphasised that:

They never write in the media that there is a teacher who bought an air conditioner for the school or bought a board although these things happen ... there are teachers who pay from their pocket to make their students happy (Nuha, The Excellence Team 1, 26-5-13, Focus Group).

عمرهم ما كتبوا عن معلم جاب مكيف وركبه بالفصل، ما عمرهم تكلموا عنه، معلم جاب سبورة ما عمرهم تكلموا عنه مع انها تحصل.. فيه معلمين يدفعون من جيوبهم مقابل ان الطلبة يسعدونهم

Presenting group members with incentives can enhance the productivity and performance levels of the group (Jaalock, 1999). For this reason, supporting the school's innovations and activities could be treated as an incentive to the school work, which makes teachers and students happy and proud of what they do as well as feeling that they get respect from the community. One of the participants reported that as a result of this ignorance loyalty towards doing the work is reduced. In fact, this is a serious issue that must be taken into the consideration when reforming the educational system, where teachers' performance should be appreciated and the system of incentives ought to be improved to gain job satisfaction.

Part of the issue has been solved, as one participant from the same group reported that:

> This year we have a coordinator of media (Fawz, The Excellence Team 1, 26-5-13,
> بس هالسنة صار فيه منسقة اعلامية. (Focus Group).

This means that the educational and social media would highlight their performance and would appreciate it. The report of the Tatweer Unit has also recognised this issue, and they have tried to solve it by training the coordinator who works as a teacher in the school.

Low status of teachers

The status of teachers is also low due to the low salary they receive as well as the regulations that do not protect them. One member of the Excellence Team stated that:

> Unfortunately, society looks at teacher's inferior status… it has become worse nowadays. In the past it was better and the reason is not because of the media, it is because of the regulations and laws that support students against teachers as well as the low salary that the government pays (Nuha, The Excellence Team 1, 26-5-13, Focus Group).

لكن نظرة المجتمع للمعلم للأسف مرة متدنية .. (تحسين النظرة تغيرت الآن) آمال م: كل مالها تصيرأسوأ النظرة بالعكس أول فيه احترام مو بس يرجع للاعلام ، اللوائح والقوانين أصبحت في صف الطالب ضد المعلم .. أضيفي إلى ذلك الرواتب المتدنية

This finding is supported by UNESCO (2014) which stated that:

> In some countries, teaching is seen as a second-class job for those who do
> not do well enough academically to enter more prestigious careers, such as

medicine or engineering. The level of qualification required to enter teaching is a signal of the field's professional status. To elevate the status of teaching and attract talented applicants, for example, Egypt has introduced more stringent entry requirements, requiring candidates to have a strong performance in secondary school as well as a favourable interview assessment. Once selected, candidates also have to pass an entrance examination to establish whether they match the profile of a good teacher (UNESCO, 2014, p. 25).

The members of Excellence Team 1 supported this argument; they thought that engineers and medicine doctors have better status than teachers in Saudi Arabia. They hoped that regulations and new policies would enhance their positions to give the teacher more trust and better status. This contrasts with the high status of Finnish teachers where parents have trust in teachers for the best possible professional advice for their children. The reason for this trust is that it cannot be expected for someone to be a school teacher unless he / she has a fairly high level of general knowledge alongside social skills, people skills and a sense of morality and purpose (Sahlberg, 2013) whereas this is not the case in Saudi education.

Resistance to change

Implementation of the new project faced challenges such as resistance to change at the beginning of introducing the Tatweer Project. Evans (1996) attributes resistance to change amongst teachers during school reforms to the fear of being over-burdened by the reform process; this fear has already occurred in the Tatweer initiative.

All the participants emphasised a major difficulty when leading the change. The teachers resisted the change for many reasons; some of them have a traditional mindset so they prefer to keep everything as it is; some of them find it difficult to learn modern technology and new

ways of teaching; and some of them are more likely have lack of trust in the projected results of the change. One of the senior teachers stated another reason of change resistance:

> In the beginning, it was hard for others to accept me as a senior teacher…why did they select me in particular… What do I have and they don't… now I feel it is better because we have new comer teachers who accepted me as a senior teacher as they came after me, whereas those who used to be on the same rank with me didn't accept me well (Najwa, 9-6-13, interview).

في البداية جاني صعوبة تقبلي كوني معلمة أولى .. تقبل ليش انا اختاروني بالذات .. ايش اختلافك تميزك عنا ..الآن كأنه أحسن لأنه فيه معلمات جدد كلما كان فيه معلمة جديدة علي أنا تتقبل ، كنا مع بعض وبعدين اختاروني فصار فيه شي من عدم التقبل...

From this comment, it seems that teachers resisted the change of choosing one senior teacher among them to be a leader, which gave her a distinctive position. Najwa felt that working with new teachers would be better as they are more likely to accept her because of her old experience compared to them. Campbell and Williams (1982) argue that in complex educational institutions, such as schools, the managerial roles dealing with academic and administrative functions usually involve dealing with human elements and require premium quality people and skills to deal with the human component, especially during the implementation of a change strategy. These elements ought to be considered when implementing the Tatweer Project in the first and second phases. One of the key findings by Kotter and Cohen (2002) was that during change processes, human behaviour was one of the key issues facing change. They also reported that change of human behaviour was related more towards changing feelings and thoughts through rationalisation of truth than by providing evidence through analysis. Thoughts and feelings are important but the change is driven through emotions (Kotter & Cohen, 2002, p. 2).

As has been mentioned earlier in this study, teachers have to become agents of change, and also it is supposed that teachers have the capacity to lead development work (HertsCam, 2014). This is what the theory suggests and attempts, but the practice shows the gap where the teachers sometimes represent the resisters when leading the change. Nonetheless, the practice also shows that over time teachers would change and will lead the change.

Frequent change

Some participants (5 out of 12 interviewees and 2 focus group settings out of 3) reported that there is frequent change that disturbs them when leading the change. One teacher supporting this claim argued that:

When we worked on the old application last year, and we sent reports to them they said: 'we apologies we have a new application that you have to adopt' which was issued in just one day (Asmahan, The Excellence Team 3, 08-06-13, focus group).

لما اشتغلنا على استمارات العام لما خلصنا وجينا نرفع التقارير .. قالوا لا نعتذر ، هذي اللي تعتمد هذي الجديدة اللي نزلت قبل يوم وليلة

Another teacher gives an example of this:

To be honest, frequent change during one term is a difficulty. For example, they had requested something to be done; before I finished and perfected the first things, they sent a new method and changed it… I will give you a simple thing like teacher preparation; they gave us a certain way to do it on paper and we used it for a short time, but after a while, they cancelled this paper way, saying we do not want any paper work… go back to the forum and register your preparation and your power points and everything. So it is in a rush, it is difficult especially for us who are newly using technology…. We do not stay with one strategy (Nasem, 27-5-13, interview).

The best explanation for this finding is that it might be expected that Tatweer as a new project tends to adopt the most suitable policies and practices for the schools. Consequently, they may be trying the best practice for the school context and change the unsuitable one. As a result, frequent changes should be expected to reach the optimal reform to fit the current educational context. At the same time, however, Zellman et al. (2009) emphasise that "Frequent policy changes can produce a climate of uncertainty and may reduce motivation and efforts to innovate, particularly if risk- taking is required. The reform would benefit from greater stability in this regard" (Zellman et al., 2009, p. 139). They also suggest that it is required to have a formal evaluation on the performance in the long- and short-term to ensure continuity before the policy is authorised.

Immediate implementation of change

The implementation of the Tatweer Project was done immediately thus posing a challenge to the participants to adapt to the new system. Three participants supported this view, and one of the focus group discussions of the Excellence Team stated

> When we started with the Tatweer Project, they did not give us enough time, they asked us to implement quickly. Teachers were under pressure, everything changed in the plan, preparation, teaching, using the board all in just two months (Fatemah, The Excellence Team 1, 26-5-13, Focus Group).

لما بدأ تطوير ما عطونا وقت ياالله بسرعة نفذي المعلمات انضغطوا كل شي انقلب في الخطة .. التدريس التحضير استخدام السبورة كلها تجمع علينا خلال شهرين ..

The participants have also echoed this issue as a tension they experienced during the change. In addition, participants reported that leading the change is a difficult approach. It is not easy to change the culture and the system in the school in the short term. Change is a continuous and dynamic process; it needs enough time to achieve its targets. Atawy (2004) stresses that change should be gradual and perfectly designed. When teachers successfully perform their role in the change, their confidence would increase. Moreover, individuals should be given the opportunity to practice the new skills, which are required by the change, through undertaking appropriate training programmes.

Nepotism

Interestingly, one participant reported that social network and nepotism is a good thing and she considers it moral for social cohesion especially in recruitment; it shows that relatives support each other. It is noted that nepotism is a common practice in the Arab world not only in Saudi Arabia. Undeniably, it has fundamental negative impacts on the growth of any organization; because of appointment of people who lack knowledge and skills (Arasli, Bavik, & Ekiz, 2006). It could also be considered as a corruption that challenges the process of reform, especially when it comes to staff recruitment. Coggburn (2005) argues that decentralization in managing human resources would allow managers to make the decision regarding hiring faster with less red tape and would be more responsive and effective. However, inequality, favouritism, corruption, tribalism, and nepotism possibly enhanced in decentralised system regarding recruitment, where it supports hiring unqualified staff (Bossert et al., 2000). Although managing education in Saudi Arabia is extremely centralised, nepotism, tribalism, and social networks are rooted in these systems.

In summary, the data suggest that strategies have to exist to face these challenges. Mostly, to reform education on a large-scale, governments should deal with common factors, and these factors are: finance, curriculum, accountability, governance, and status of the teacher (Hopkins & Levin, 2000).

10.4 Head teachers' perspectives

This study interviewed three head teachers at three Tatweer schools. The data analysed in this section concentrates on the perspectives of these interviewees regarding the opportunities and challenges presented by working in the Tatweer school.

10.4.1 Opportunities

Head teachers had different opinions and views about the new management style in Tatweer Schools; two had positive attitudes towards the management while one thought that there was no change in the new management and criticised the new management style in the schools. This project, however, has offered significant opportunities to head teachers in order to extend and improve their practices within the school. The most striking opportunity in Tatweer Schools is that the head teacher can exceed the social and cultural boundaries. For example, the head teacher of school A reported that she established a gym for students in the school; it well-known in the Saudi context that religious leaders prevented sport to be practiced in the girls' schools. Another important case in this regard is that the same head teacher crossed the boundaries of banning males from accessing the girls' schools by allowing fathers to visit the school and view their daughters' performance as discussed in the previous chapter. These changes were as a result of having freedom in the internal management. Leading positive and healthy change to cross the banned social boundaries perhaps could enhance wellbeing. As discussed in Chapter 2, extremist thought had affected negatively on schools' wellbeing; the religious police intervened following a primary school fire in Mecca in 2002 by preventing firemen from accessing the school to rescue girls and teachers. They attributed this action to the fact that the teachers inside the school might not be wearing their scarfs as required by the rules. This inhuman action resulted in the deaths of 15

girls. Therefore, giving the head teacher more autonomy to manage the school would help instigate change within the society to be more mature and educated.

Additionally, the opportunity of feeling free from being accountable for detailed tasks and focusing only on the outcome has been emphasised by one head teacher. The head teacher went further and stated that

> There is a nice side of Tatweer that they do not practice accountability and the monitoring 100%, that means checking documents and asking did you do this and that… they let you work with the team… the Tatweer Unit only requests us to send the final results to them in Excel sheet. Their concerns are the report and the result not all the details (HT1, 13/5/13, interview).

> هم في تطوير جانب حلو انه ما يمارسون عملية الرقابة والمحاسبية ١٠٠٪ اللي هو فتح السجلات و سويتوا كذا ، لا يتركون لك أنت ضمن الفريق .. هم يقولون ارفعي بالاكسل النتيجة النهائية انتم قرروا تشوفون وين تحتاجون ... ما يهتمون بالتفاصيل يهتمون بالنتائج والتقارير...

This head teacher appears to be happy about the way that supervisors monitor and account for the school where they focus on the outcomes rather than the process to measure school performance. This is in line with Kusek and Rist (2004) who argue that "results-based monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a powerful public management tool that can be used to help policymakers and decision makers track progress and demonstrate the impact of a given project, program, or policy" (Kusek & Rist, 2004, p. 1).

Moreover, another head teacher of school C perceived that the Tatweer School created a developmental global competitive environment and culture among learners and stated that:

Tatweer school by its name means that this school is involved in modern technology, development school, and involved in international education (HT3, 08-06-13, interview).

مدرسة تطوير بمسماها معناها أنها فعلا مدرسة دخلت التكنولوجيا الحديثة مدرسة مطورة معناها دخلت في مجال التعليم العالمي .

The head teacher of school B had the same view; she thought that the Tatweer School would completely change the school equipment and items, curricula, and anything related to education. In addition, it concentrated on professional development. She went further and stated that:

Although the change will take place it will be gradual… not at once…we do not say slow but advance steadily; it may be far-off but continuous and it covers the whole process of education. Tatweer is concerned with the professional development of teachers and administrative staff by training them… training for teachers and training for senior teachers (HT2, 12/3/13, interview).

تطوير يعنى بالتطوير المرحلي، التطوير المستمر ولكن... ما نقول بطيء ولكن يتقدم بخطوات ثابتة بخطوات متتالية قد تكون متباعدة ولكن قد تكون مستمرة ولكن تشمل العملية التعليمية بالكامل ، تطوير تم اعتناؤه في البداية من بتطوير الهيئة التعليمية و الادارية يعني تأهيل الكادر التعليمي و الاداري تأهيل مهني، تأهيل عن طريق الدورات التدريبية التي ألحق فيها المعلمات كمعلمات دورات متخصصة في المواد الدراسية ودورات للمعلمات الأوائل

The same head teacher went further and stated that:

…in the past we were thinking within the box, but now we think outside the box. Because our work has become not for education office's inspectors to follow our paper records, there is freedom… there is enough time to think of matters outside the school and then we have gained the Microsoft Award as a result of this, Thank God (HT2, 12/3/13, interview).

أصبحنا انطلقنا من خارج الصندوق كنا في السابق نفكر داخل الصندوق لكن الآن نفكر خارج الصندوق لأنه أصبح التركيز ليس من أجل مكتب التربية والتعليم وليس من أجل حضور المشرفات لمتابعة فقط سجلات ورقية أصبح فيه تخفيف من هذه المتابعة أصبح فيه حرية فيه الوقت الكافي لتفكيري بأمور خارج المدرسة وبالتالي من ثمارها والله الحمد والمنه حصولنا على جائزة مايكروسوفت.

This means the head teacher would have much more time to think about how to lead the school effectively and strategically rather than being a manager. One advantage of this freedom and being trustful is that this school had made a partnership with a famous company to make this school work by using technology and different types of software tools in teaching and learning. This supports the shift from being manager to be a leader that has been discussed in the previous chapter. This contrasts with the finding of Meemar (2014), who found that the Saudi school principal worked as a manger rather than a school leader.

The head teacher of school A reflected on the practices about the new management and stated that:

> Honestly, it is very nice… they invited other schools, which are in the third phase… they asked me the same question (which is what is your perception about Tatweer?) and I said it is a step forward not backward... it makes you reflect on yourself, your practices, your performance, your students' result and even your students' absence… (HT1, 13/5/13, interview).

> والله جميل، احنا سووا عندنا لقاء وا ستدعوا المدارس في المرحلة الثالثة تعريفي.. فسألوني هالسؤال فقلت بالعكس اقول لكم تراه خطوة لقدام مهب لوراء خطوة يخليكم على الأقل تراجعون انفسكم ممارساتكم آدائكم نتائج طالباتكم حتى غياب الطالبات احنا دايم نرفع الغياب لكن ما نقعد نقارن الفصل الأول كنا كذا والفصل الدراسي هذا أصبحنا كذا مثلا ..اول ثانوي اقل غياب من ثاني ثانوي. فهذي اشياء تحفز واشياء مفيدة تخدم

It seems that the new procedures and policies within Tatweer schools have had an impact on the practices and made the practitioners more thoughtful and well organised.

The new management plan has enabled head teachers to have experience in managing the Tatweer school. One head teacher reported that:

I consider myself have gained great experience after finishing the new plan… and I have become a source of knowledge for other head teachers they call me to ask about the plan… (HT3, 08-06-13, interview).

اكتسبنا خبرة كبيرة جدا جدا جدا ، يعني اعتبرت نفسي بالذات بعد الخطة الجديدة اللي خلصناها قبل يومين هذي اكتسبت خبرة ٩٠٪ فصرت الحمدلله مصدر للخبرة كثير مديرات يتصلون علي يسألون عن الخطة..

Another head teacher believed that the management of the school has not changed at all even after the implementation of the Tatweer Project in the schools. She believed that the only change that has taken place is a change in the role of supervisors and head teachers who coordinate the activities in the school. She went further and stated that:

We do not have new work, the work as it is, I have been a head teacher for nine years and my work has not changed with Tatweer…the required work is the same, but the process of development is continuous…This is the fourth project we have engaged in, and each project has polished your character and enhanced your confidence and ability to understand the process of education…how to evolve to the best…how to determine students' need for each single student, how we can make our students reach the universal (achievement) (HT2, 12/5/13, interview).

ما عندنا عمل جديد العمل هو كما هو أنا مديرة من تسع سنوات يعني عملي لم يختلف مع تطوير عن بقية المدارس .. العمل المطلوب منا واحد لكن عملية التطوير عندنا عملية مستمرة ... طبعا هذا رابع اشتراك لنا في مشاريع وكل مشروع يصقل شخصيتك ويزيدك ثقة وقدرة على أن تكونين فاهمة العملية التعليمية .. كيف انك تطورين نحو الأفضل ماهي الاحتياجات الخاصة بكل طالب كيف ممكن نجعل طلابنا يصلون الى العالمية ...

10.4.2 Challenges

The following are some of the challenges within the Tatweer School's system from the head teachers' perspectives.

Paperwork

Although Tatweer schools use technology, paperwork is still a challenge, as highlighted by all the head teachers. One of them stated that:

> There is much to be achieved, especially documents that are frustrating. As we are still in the paperwork stage, it takes a lot of work…Until now even with Tatweer we still have paperwork...Fill in fill in fill oh my god (HT1, 13/5/13, interview).

> فيه أعمال لازم ننجزها وخاصة الورقية منها مرة مزعجة وخاصة احنا ما زلنا الشكل الورقي ياخذ منا وقت كبير ..الى الان والله وحتى مع تطوير الاعمال الورقية تاخذ منا تقارير عبي عبي عبي طيب ياربي ويش لون ..

This view was echoed by another head teacher, who stated that:

> I call the clerk and a lot of times she cannot move because of the heavy work…unfortunately, it is documentation … we have received from the ministry of education, from the supervision office and Tatweer…sometimes we receive four copies repeated … they repeat the circular, what a waste of work? Why do we not rely on electronic work…(HT3, 08-06-13, interview).

> سكرتيرة المديرة .. كل شوي مناديتها واقفة على راسي ما تحرك من كثر الشغل .. ورقي للأسف الشديد ورقي .. شوفي يجينا من وزارة التربية ، يجينا من المكتب يجينا من التطوير .. أحيانا يجينا أربعة مكررة .. يكرر التعميم ايش الهدر هذا .. ليه .. لماذا لا نكتفي بالالكتروني...

This head teacher was concerned that being busy with this technical issue takes them away from leading and being innovative. She emphasised that the supervision office, which is under the ministry, is the one that relies more on paperwork. However, she points also to the duplication of the work, as the same circulars come from three directions. This issue was also recognised in the Tatweer Unit Report, 2012. It stated that: 'one of the difficulties that Tatweer schools face is more administrative and written work pressures on the head teacher and the Excellence Team'. This Unit has to report every term about the actual practice, figures, training, achievements, and difficulties of Tatweer schools.

Research by Bailey et al. (2004) has found that "effective use of ICT can address workload issues if it is well planned and supported... However, it is also clear that in some cases, ICT is not currently being deployed or used effectively to address workload or increase efficiency" (Bailey et al., 2004 p. 8). The next section discusses the workload related stress.

Workload

An increase in workload was identified by all the head teachers, Tatweer Unit members in the focus group setting, and in their periodic reports. One head teacher was concerned about being responsible for many things:

> Another difficulty we have is that the head teacher works on everything; maintenance tasks, following works and sometimes it is required from her to attend to the school anytime in case of an emergency…there is a confusion between being a head teacher and working in everything and perhaps I might perform all jobs. Any suspension of work or when someone is absent you as a head teacher is in charge to cover it... The burden has increased as well as the work...if the deputy had not existed you would have had to do her job; the work is duplicated tasks, it has increased and must be done in a dateline (HT2, 12/5/13, interview).

الصعوبات الأخرى انه عندنا أصبح مديرة المدرسة تعمل جميع الأعمال متابعة أعمال الصيانة متابعة أعمال قد يطلب منه الحضور للمدرسة في حالة طوارئء لا سمح الله .. صار فيه خلط بين مدير المدرسة وانه يكون موظف شامل لكل الوظائف وممكن ما شاء الله أؤدي جميع الوظائف أي شي يتوقف في العمل أو يغيب أنت يا مدير المدرسة مسئول أن تغطي بالموجود عندك أو يؤدي العمل بالذي تراه حتى لو يكون أنت ... زادت الأعباء وزادت الأعمال اذا المساعدة غير موجودة أنت تقومين بعملها تزيد عليك أعمال ومهام وأعباء لازم تنفذين لازم تقدمين في الوقت المحدد..

This sometimes puts the head teacher under pressure and prevents her from dealing with change. The Tatweer Unit members support this; one participant stated that:

There is another challenge that the head teacher faces: stress from different directions from Tatweer Unit because our programme… and the school's office request from her other tasks… so this will take her time and her work becomes managerial rather than leadership (Rahaf, TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

فيه تحدي آخر انه مديرة المدرسة قاعدة تواجه ضغوط من كل الجهات يعني احنا لنا أعمالنا ولنا مهامنا كبرنامج تطوير المدارس وهي عندها مكتبها اللي يخاطبها ويطلب منها أشياء ادارية وهذا يزعزع المديرة ويأخذ من وقتها فيصبح عملية ادارية بدل ما هي قيادية..

Assadah (1998) notes the importance of the leading role played by the principal of the school, as they are the most influential individuals in the school's administrative structure. Therefore, the principal should be released from being under pressure to be an innovative leader and to play his/her vital role in leading the change. This role can be achieved when delegating the technical matters to other members of the school and freeing the head teacher to serve a more strategic function.

Lack of career

Lack of having teachers or administrators are a challenge in the implementation of the Tatweer Project in public schools, as it affects the school's operation. This is because of the regulations and policies that limited and challenged the head teachers when distributing the work. The three head teachers highlighted this issue; one of them stated that:

> Because of the shortage of staffing you are forced to distribute tasks fairly. This is the real confusion because with the new system the teacher could refuse… And this is the difficulty in distributing tasks and also having vacations, which are the great challenge because the system provides them with vacations… in the past they asked our opinion about vacation but now they cancel it (HT1, 13/5/13, interview).

النقص لما يكون فيه نقص تكون المهام تضطرين تقسمينها على اثنين تراعين العدالة مثلا .. هنا الارباك حقيقي لان المعلمة مع النظام الجديد ممكن ترفض.. هذه الصعوبات في اسناد الأعمال النقص دائما والاجازات(انت ما تقدرين توقفين الاجازة) لا ترا اكبر تحدي لنا لان النظام يعطيهم اجازة.. حتى اول كان فيه رأي مديرة المدرسة الآن الغوه

This was supported by one head teacher who stated that:

> In terms of education in general, the regulations restrict you; the clerk remains a clerk, the monitor remains a monitor… you do not have the authority to enforce any… everything is by agreement with the person (HT2, 12/5/13, interview).

بالنسبة للتعليم بشكل عام فتحدك أحيانا اللوائح الكاتب يظل كاتب مدخل البيانات يظل مدخل بيانات المراقب يظل مراقب اذا جاك شخص لا يتفهم قدراته ويحاول أن يمارس مهمة قد أعطي في قرار تعيينه أ عقد التعيين هنا تكون الاشكالية لأن أنت ما عندك الصلاحيات انك تجبر أحد .. كله بالاتفاق مع الشخص ...

Since the Ministry of Education established the new guidance for school organization and management applied by the academic year of 2013/2014, it has affected distributed

leadership within the school. This guidance shows the exact number of staff and their positions compared to the number of students. One of the head teachers stated that:

> The organisational guide has a major shortcoming and it would cause an issue. So they have to support us with teachers and administrators (HT3, 08-06-13, interview).

<div dir="rtl">

الدليل التنظيمي الجديد لا فيه نقص حاد جدا سيخل بالتطوير علينا .. معناته لازم يدعموننا بالمعلمات والاداريات

</div>

The head teacher thought that if she would apply this guidance for the following year, it would mean that the Ministry of Education would have to provide them with additional staff. The reason is that the actual number could not be distributed to the new position based on the guidance as the positions exceed the actual number of staff. This is the issue that the Ministry has created and it would also restrict school autonomy to organise the work based on their potential needs. Thus, the head teacher would not have freedom in distributing the work, if she had to follow certain regulations in this regard.

In this regard, Smith and Greyling, (2006) stressed that the significance of the power distribution to the lowest levels in the school should be identifiable, as it should be reflected in the policies and practice of education. This is what has been done by the Tatweer Project; it has a new organisational guide, identified by the top authority not the school. This causes a problem and restricts the internal autonomy as stated by the three head teachers. This finding concurs with the findings of the study conducted in England by Higham and Earley (2013), which found that school leaders commonly anticipated greater power over aspects of school management but not over the aims and purposes of schooling. Considerable variation was also found in school leaders' perspectives on their freedom and capacity to act… On freedom to act, government was seen to retain tight control over schools (Higham & Earley, 2013, pp. 709-715).

Financial Issues

The most common and important issue in the Tatweer context is the financial issue according to all the participants. The head teacher stated,

> We made a budget hoping that we would receive external support but until now we have not received a Riyal (HT3, 08-06-13, interview).

> هذه البرامج اللي وضعناها وضعنا لها ميزانية استعننا بناس خارج المدرسة... وضعنا ميزانية على أساس يجينا دعم خارجي لكن الى الآن ما جانا ولا ريال..

The Tatweer schools hope that they will be supported financially in the future, as promises have been announced in this regard as discussed in Chapter 8.

The next section discusses the Tatweer Unit members' perception about Tatweer Project.

10.5 Tatweer Unit Members' perspectives

Nine members of Tatweer Unit participated in one focus group to provide the research with insights about the Tatweer Schools' system. The following two sections discuss their perceptions of the opportunities and challenges within the Tatweer School System.

10.5.1 Opportunities

Tatweer Unit members thought that the Tatweer School will transform learners from being traditional in service delivery to professional learners who can change the community.

Furthermore, they believe that the development of the students to become professional in nature starts in school. Tatweer Unit members stated that:

> Development starts from the internal not from the external… previously the supervision was from outside the school now it becomes from inside the school… they consider the head teacher, assistants and senior teachers are internal supervision (Reem, TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

التطوير ينبع من الداخل وليس فقط من الخارج وأيضا الاشراف كان زمان من خارج المدرسة الآن فيه من خارج ومن داخل المدرسة ، يعني اعتبرت المديرة والمساعدة والمعلم المشرف هؤلي اشراف داخلي

Another member highlighted the importance of the self-evaluation approach as an opportunity that helps the school to improve its performance. She stated that:

> The school administrative files become available for the self-evaluation team not only for the head teacher and the deputy (as in the past) (Saydah, TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

حتى سجلات الادارة الأول كانت سجلات الادارة محصورة فقط في المديرة والمساعدات والاطلاع عليها يكون من مقيم خارجي مشرفة ادارية أو من المكتب نفسه ، بعد ما دخلت ثقافة التقويم الذاتي أصبحت مفتوحة و مشروعة لفريق التقويم الذاتي ...

They believed that all the processes of changing and transforming the school have to start from the school itself. Two participants supported the previous claims and added further comments that:

> Saydah: the shift that we seek to achieve is positive but the average cannot be excepted, it varies inside each educational institution…

Manal: It needs more time… it is not easy, because it is about changing thought… the idea of having a senior teacher had taken us and them a long time to have one teacher among them to be responsible for the team (TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

التغيير اللي نسعى له تغيير محمود لكن نسبته لا تتوقعين بالكم اللي نقول لك احنا عليه، لكن نسبة تحققه داخل المنظمة المنشأة التعليمية متفاوتة ... تحتاج زمن ... مو سهل الزمن لأنه تغيير فكر متشرب.. مسألة وجود معلم أول هذي أخذت منا ومنهم شي ما تتخيلينه .. انه يكون فيه معلم من بينهم هو المسئول عن هذا الفريق

Indeed, Wallace and Pocklington (2013) have emphasised that "Reorganisation of schooling in an era of educational reform offers a paradigm case of complex educational change" (Wallace & Pocklington, 2013, p. 8). In the same vein Fullan (2007) thought that educational reform is simple technically but complex to be applied in the social setting. Therefore, sufficient planning, time and effort are needed to achieve a desired reform.

Although the participants had a positive attitude and perceptions about the Tatweer Project and its schools, they reported some challenges that prevented them from achieving comprehensive reform. The following section discusses these issues.

10.5.2 Challenges

The issue that the Tatweer Unit members faced and identified is organisational and is concerned with distributing the work in the Tatweer Unit. The issue is that the whole team members have to train schools; the members of this unit were not happy to have this responsibility by themselves. They suggest that training has to be held by some members but not all the members but through a distributed leadership. They emphasised that although the project tends to give schools more autonomy, the Tatweer Unit itself does not have autonomy as well as authority to empower and facilitate the work in schools. For example, they cannot issue any decision related to hiring or firing teachers at schools as the educational system is highly centralised.

Another issue is the centralisation within some Tatweer Schools; as some head teachers were keen to hold the control of activities in their hand. Centralisation is a key issue because those leaders feel responsible for any failings resulting from wrong decisions, they prefer to keep the power in their hands. This was illustrated in the previous chapter when discussing accountability as a major concern in distributing leadership. It was mentioned that since centralisation is an inherent system in the administrative organization of the Kingdom general systems are characterized by centralisation. It is also argued that it is important to give special consideration to the power of decision making in order to create a system that prevents centralization which leads to what is called 'bottlenecks' in the governmental systems, where all decisions, even the simple and routine decisions, move to the seniors of the organisation to approve them (Ahmed, 1987).

In summary, this chapter has discussed the opportunities that offered to the schools' members, and the challenges that faced teachers and leaders in Tatweer schools as well as Tatweer Unit members. As some issues have never been expected in this system such as relying on paperwork in such modern schools. Moreover, there were some contradictions in the comments of the official thought and the conception of Tatweer schools' members regarding the workload.

The next chapter presents the conclusion of the study.

Chapter Eleven: Conclusion

11.1   Introduction

The study set out to investigate the perceptions and experiences of the administrators and practitioners in relation to the school reform represented by Tatweer Schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The study had also sought to identify the level of autonomy and innovation in these schools. The literature on the Saudi school reform is relatively rare; therefore, the study attempts to fill this gap in knowledge.

The main question of this study is:

What are the perceptions and experiences of the administrators and practitioners in relation to the Tatweer Schools system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

The Tatweer Programme has been introduced in Saudi Arabia as a response to global imperatives. However, there is no information available on how this system is working in practice or being experienced "on the ground" by the leaders and teachers. Therefore, this study attempted to bridge this gap. The case study has contributed to an in-depth description about how participants experience and perceive this approach to educational change.

This chapter summarises the general findings that answer the research questions. It also highlights the contribution to knowledge and provides recommendations based on the empirical and theoretical findings and suggestions for further study. It concludes with theoretical and practical implications and the limitations of the study. Finally, the researcher presents her reflection on the research journey.

11.2   General Findings

It was clear from the findings in general that the majority of the participants were happy about the Tatweer Project and they perceived it as the best project in the history of Saudi educational reform. This project has had a positive impact on the work organisation, schools' culture, professional development, integrating technology, enhancing the teaching and learning strategies and distributed leadership. However, the participants also revealed some difficulties and dilemmas that they encountered as a result of being involved in this reform.

This next section will synthesize the empirical findings to answer the study's sub-questions, which stem from the main question.

1.   What are Tatweer Schools?

This case study of the Tatweer schools' system has shown that these schools were ordinary schools, which had been chosen to implement the change. The Tatweer system is the initiative of King Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz to reform education. The philosophy of the system of Tatweer schools is based on restructuring the schools; it plays a major role in the achievement of the programme's vision in creating Professional Learning Communities. The Tatweer Project adopted the method of development, which relies on the school and requires change in the school's function, structuring as well as the roles of teachers and administrative staff. The Tatweer Project approach concentrates on school based reform on learners' achievement levels and skills as well as to build students' character to ensure that learners will be able to join higher education and be able to participate effectively within the labour market.

The Tatweer School system is keen on providing an innovative educational environment, to encourage the learner to practice self-learning and to be able to search for knowledge and produce it. The school also aims to make learning a permanent process that learners practice

for all their life. Effective learning in Tatweer schools is the learning that ensures the learner has a positive attitude towards national and global surroundings rather than negative attitudes, which might affect the environment, society and the entire world. Therefore, the Tatweer School has to be:

➢ A self-evaluation and planning school that enhances its performance according to its needs and aspirations.
➢ A school, which helps its members to release their potential by using innovative techniques.
➢ A school, which provides opportunities for continuous learning and training for all members.
➢ A school, which encourages innovative work and enhances effective participation as well as supporting bold and new ideas.
➢ A school, which provides interesting and enjoyable learning experiences.

Whilst innovation is regarded as an important element in Tatweer schools "Research has taught us that the problem of change is much deeper than the adoption of new innovations" (Riley & Louis, 2000, p. 3). The level of innovation cannot be measured in Tatweer schools as stated by the Excellence Team: "There is no measurement of the innovation" (Sawsan, TU, 03/06/13, focus group).

ما فيه مقياس للابداع

This finding concurs with the finding of Terhart (2013), that it is not easy to estimate the success and the failure of the educational innovations, as it can be attributed to interpretation and post hoc reconstruction.

Furthermore, this programme aims to achieve the following purposes: to achieve personal development of learners and improve their thinking skills; to have high expectations for all students; shift from concentration on cognitive content to educational processes; and to encourage partnership with society.

The Tatweer program of developing curricula seeks to build national standards for educational subjects and to develop processes and practices for teaching, learning and processes of evaluation to include the concentration of these efforts around the learner. It also aims to improve the educational environment, where the learning environment is considered as a significant element. The Tatweer Project seeks to use and integrate technology in learning and teaching for achieving the following purposes: to improve the learning and educational environment for raising students' attainment; to make technology available in the school environment; to integrate technology into learning and teaching processes; to make learning resources available for all, and to facilitate accessing these resources. All the previous aims were emphasised by the participants and have been validated by the documentary analysis.

The Tatweer School will, therefore, need to change from the norms of the traditional Saudi schools, to make shifts in its resources, pedagogy and move from exclusion to inclusion.

When examining the philosophy of the Tatweer Project, it can be concluded that it has been influenced by global concepts such as the knowledge economy, knowledge-based capital, competitiveness, accountability and long-life learning. In addition, reviewing the components of Tatweer School, suggests that they have concentrated on the school infrastructure, curriculum and the community as well as improving students' achievement. However, the Tatweer system does not consider value-added as a tool to assess the school performance where a successful school can be identified when its students develop more than the expectancy of its intake. Relative to other schools that have the same intake, this school most likely adds greater value to the students' results (Sammons & Bakkum, 2011). Finally, development education has been defined by the Development Awareness Raising and Education (DARE), which is:

> An active learning process, founded on values of solidarity, equality, inclusion and co-operation. It enables people to move from basic awareness of international development priorities and sustainable human development, through understanding of

the causes and effects of global issues to personal involvement and informed actions (McCloskey, 2014 p. 4).

This definition expresses the philosophy and the framework of Tatweer School system that attempts to adopt it.

2. How is the system being implemented and financed?

The results of this study have led to better understanding of the process of implementation and financing schools in the Tatweer school system. The findings show that in the first phase in 2007, the Tatweer Project had the main role to organize, implement and finance schools in the 25 districts in the country (Ch.7 p.181-182). The Tatweer Project provided schools with the provisions, training and guidance to follow in their practices and policies. They also encourage schools to be think tanks as well as creating networks to share experiences, knowledge and ideas for the practitioners and administrators in different levels (Ch.8 p.193). At the beginning and in the first year of the implementation, the Tatweer Project provided individual schools with an amount of money to support them in the technical aspects. The Project also supported schools by providing them with a highly advanced technology as well as giving every single student an individual laptop. These schools were called smart schools in this phase, which included 25 girls' schools and 25 boys' schools in 25 districts (Ch.7 p.181-182).

The first scheme was considered as a pilot scheme. Although the aim was to generalise the idea of Tatweer Schools to cover all public schools in the country, providing schools with highly advanced technology would cost a huge amount of money and would need maintaining and replacing. Therefore, the first scheme of the Tatweer Project has been modified and it changed to be self-evaluation and planning schools working with its current potential. This new scheme has moved the project to the second phase. In addition, there was a modification in the Tatweer Project role, where it was the main supporter to the schools and

where it had sent supervisors and tutors to schools to follow up their work. The Tatweer Project transformed to become a think tank or an execution arm to the Ministry of Education in the second phase (Ch.7 p.155); it moved the role of following up schools and training them to the Tatweer Units, which was established in 2011 and work under the educational administrations. This action helps the work to not be centralised and not concentrate the authority in the Tatweer Project, and would support the notion of distributing the leadership at different levels (Ch.8 p.197).

In terms of schools' funding, it is evident that Tatweer schools have the same funding as ordinary schools, which comes from the Ministry of Education based on the students' number to every single school. The financial control comes from the Ministry of Education as it holds the schools accountable if they do not follow certain policies regarding the budget that comes from the Ministry (Ch.8 p.194-197). Therefore, the funding system is considered to be a top-down approach in Tatweer schools' system.

3. **What level of autonomy do Tatweer Schools have with regard to organisational management, staff appointment, student assessment, and curriculum development in Saudi Arabia?**

The findings of the study show that the Tatweer schools' system is semi-autonomous when it comes to internal management (Ch.8 p.205-211), but it lacks autonomy when it comes to staff appointment (Ch.8 p.213), student assessment (Ch.8 p.214), and curriculum development (Ch.8 p.216). This is because the Tatweer schools cannot hire and fire staff since this is the responsibility of the Civil Service Ministry in the Saudi government (Ch.8 p.211). The curriculum development process is also restricted by the Ministry of Education, and teachers in Tatweer schools have to implement the already designed curricula (Ch.8 p.216). In addition, the assessment of students conducted is based on policies and guidance by the Ministry of Education (Ch.8 p.214). Although head teachers practice effective management of the internal affairs of the school, the Ministry of Education has provided

guidance to be followed in the work distribution, which may restrict head teachers in managing internal matters (Ch.8 p.199).

4. How do Tatweer schools leaders and teachers work with and in Tatweer schools?

It was evident that there is a significant difference in terms of organisation in the Tatweer School (Ch.8 p.205-211); the Excellence Team plays a major and fundamental role in the Tatweer School when it comes to decision making since the school depends on the decisions made by the team, which does not exist in the non-Tatweer schools. In addition, the managerial work has been distributed through teams and members; the Excellence Team conducts and plays a critical role in achieving school effectiveness and leading an efficient change. According to the data the Excellence Team was able to meet the targets. In addition, external and internal units and committees collaborate to hold schools accountable for the performance as discussed in Chapter 9.

Professional Learning Communities have been introduced to enhance the work within Tatweer schools. This strategy is regarded as a gradual development process; it is a model of development towards an open system (Ch.9 p.241-242). These communities also have a core goal to focus on and work with; therefore, the notion of Professional learning communities (PLCs) is to promote the school and its system in order to sustain improvement in students learning (Bolam et al., 2005).

5. What is the nature of culture shifts taking place within Tatweer Schools?

The findings of this study indicate that there was a significant shift in many aspects of the Tatweer schools. It is a major shift moving from centralisation to semi-decentralisation; moving from the culture of the individual to the culture of community (Ch.9 p.247); a shift from a traditional school to be a self-evaluating and planning school (Ch.9 p.256); a shift

from being a manager to be a leader (Ch.9 p.254); moving from being an isolated school to be open to society (Ch.9 p.256); and moving from traditional teaching to integrating technology into teaching and learning (Ch.9 p.249). These shifts have impacted positively on the attitude of students, parents and teachers as per participants (Ch.9 p.251).

6. What are the opportunities and challenges within the Tatweer Schools' system from the perspectives of teachers, head teachers and Tatweer Unit members?

Being a member of the Tatweer School has offered a major opportunity in terms of providing leaders and teachers training programs and engaging them in practicing skills that they were coached in as well as improving their professional development (Ch.10 p.265). In addition, integrating technology into learning and teaching helps teachers and learners to be updated with advanced technology and to not be left behind in the era of technology (Ch.10 p.269). Moreover, this project has impacted on students and developed more positive attitudes amongst them towards learning and the school (Ch.10 p.268).

The majority of the teachers were pleased to be part of the implementation team of the Tatweer Project in the Tatweer schools (Ch.10 p.265). Most of them had positive perceptions about their involvement and working in Tatweer schools. Implementation of the Tatweer Project in Tatweer schools was difficult at the beginning but most teachers say that the programme is very useful since it gives the learners more confidence and encourages them to be innovative (Ch.10 p.266). The programme has enabled the teachers to feel comfortable and enjoy learning (Ch.10 p.268). It also makes teachers have positive attitudes towards learners (Ch.10 p.269). The majority of teachers expressed their gratitude on how they have benefited from being part of the Tatweer school community. They explained that their involvement in training and use of technology has enabled them to understand the various activities, skills and programs in the Tatweer school (Ch.10 p.269-270). Moreover, the implementation of the Tatweer Project has made teachers have high and optimistic expectations that the programme will be successful and improve the performance of the students in the school and would enable them to compete globally (Ch.10 p.265).

The three head teachers seem delighted about the new ways of working in the Tatweer School. They perceived that they gained knowledge and experience as a result of being the head teacher of such a school. However, one head teacher thought that there had been no change in the new management and criticised the new management style in the schools; she thought that the management of the school had not changed at all even after the implementation of the Tatweer Project in the school. She assumed that the only change that has taken place is the change in the role of supervisors and head teachers (Ch.10 p.286). In general, the head teachers have also high expectations on the implementation of the project, as they perceived that this project will succeed and has a positive impact on leading, learning, and teaching (Ch.10 p.284-288).

The perspective of the Tatweer Unit members was in line with the previous participants (Ch.10 p.294-296). They demonstrated expectations of high performance of schools and students alike. However, they expressed concern about freedom to act as a supporter of the Tatweer schools as well as the regulation that has limited their autonomy (Ch.10 p.296-297).

However, the participants highlighted barriers to the implementation of Tatweer Project. The critical issue perceived by all the participants was the workload (Ch.10 p.271); this challenge has prevented teachers and leaders in general to be innovative, as the majority of the time has ben spent in doing technical and managerial work (Ch.10 p.290). Nonetheless, the official stated that the senior teachers have been helped by being given fewer lessons to teach in the school and therefore they do not suffer from workload. It could be argued that a serious weakness with this comment, however, is that senior teachers have different responsibilities and roles to be accountable as well as the number of lessons to be conducted as teachers. Therefore, their comments that they suffer from the workload of implementing the Tatweer Project deserve attention.

In addition, participants emphasised that lack of financial support would affect them and the initiative goals negatively (Ch.10 p.275-278). One significant finding showed that the financial situation has caused to reduce the loyalty of doing the work as discussed in the previous chapter. In fact, this is a serious issue that must be taken into consideration when reforming the educational system, where teachers' performance should be appreciated and the system of incentives ought to be improved to gain the job satisfaction (Ch.10 p.277).

Moreover, immediate implementation of change as well as frequent change that prevented school members' work from going ahead (Ch.10 p.282-283). The implication of new organisational guidance on distributing leadership is another major issue perceived by head teachers as restricting their freedom in distributed leadership (Ch.10 p.292-293).

Another important challenge was teachers' resistance to change which caused inconvenient situations for some senior teachers to conduct and lead the change (Ch.10 p.279). Campbell and Williams (1982) argue that in complex educational institutions, such as schools, the managerial roles dealing with academic and administrative functions usually involve dealing with human elements and require premium quality people and skills to deal with the human component, especially during the implementation of a change strategy. Therefore, considering people and their views are important in leading the change.
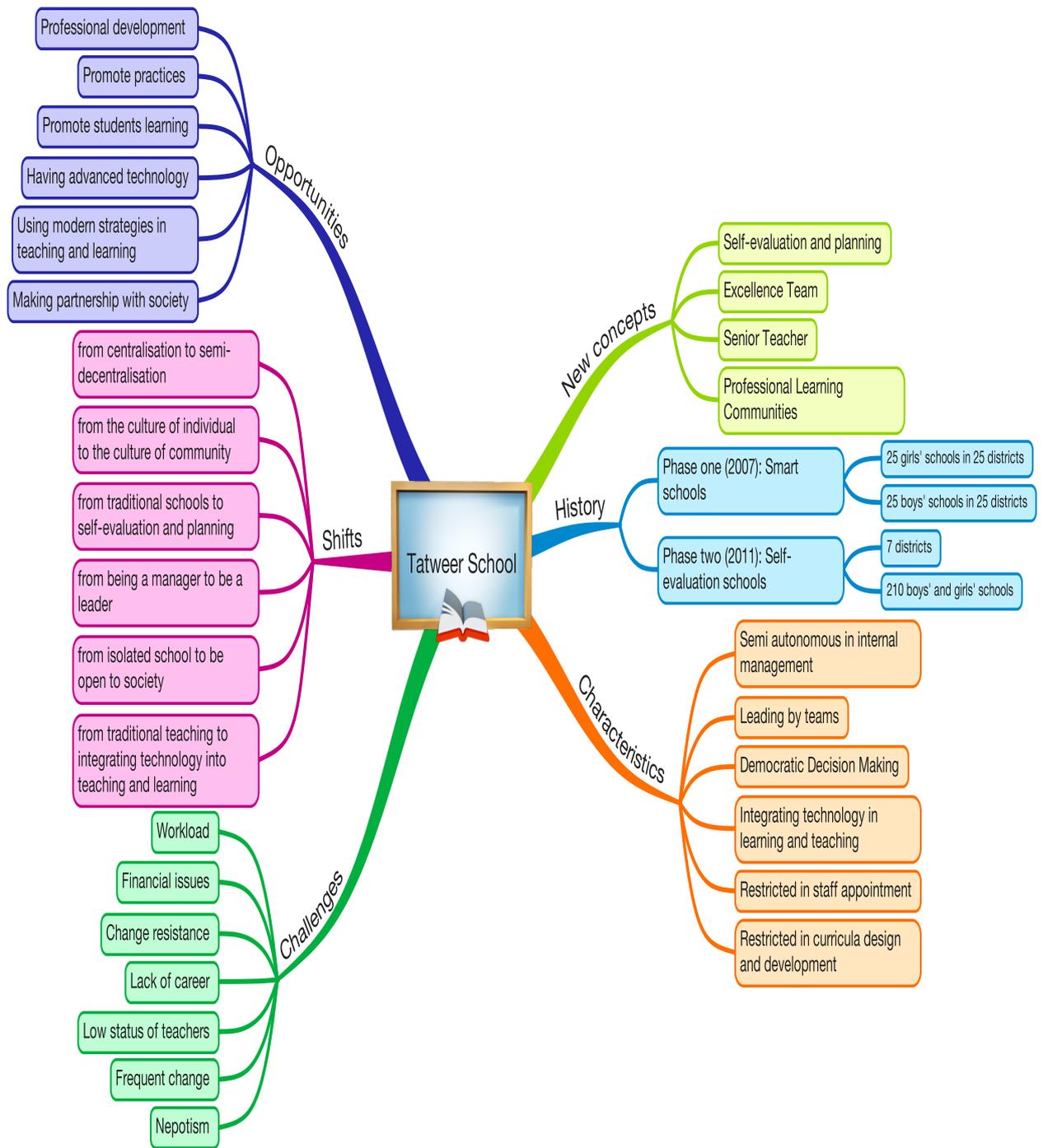
Figure 11- 1: Overview of Tatweer School system

The following section highlights the contribution of this study to knowledge in the field.

11.3   Contribution

Although much has been written about educational change and reform elsewhere, the educational reform movement in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a relatively recent phenomenon with little systematic documentation as yet. Hence this study aims to bridge the gap in this knowledge by investigating the educational reform in the Saudi Arabia context represented in the Tatweer Schools system. Investigating current educational policy reform in Saudi Arabia in general and the Tatweer Schools system in particular is the major contribution to knowledge of this study; to the best of my knowledge there is a lack of research in this area. There is also a lack of literature that discusses the Tatweer Schools system which started in 2007; I have faced difficulty in this research to write about this system as a result of lacking local sources. This study contributes to the knowledge based on school reform in Saudi Arabia in several ways including the development of a better understanding and analysis of leading educational change in the Saudi context; the decision making model and its practices, and distributed leadership practices in this context where to best of my knowledge, there is no study that has been conducted in the same area and context. It is hoped that this study provides researchers and stakeholders with useful data and information about this innovative system.

Examining the experiences and perceptions of females about leading the change in Saudi Arabia is the major contribution to the study; to give the silenced voice a chance to be heard in a society where males are dominant in many aspects of life. It also includes diverse perceptions and views from both administrators as leaders of this change, and practitioners, who implement the change in their educational practice daily. These diverse perspectives are important to understand the shift in the policy and practices in the Saudi Arabian context. Although some studies have discussed leading change in other sectors in Saudi Arabia such as the universities sector (Ageel, 2011; Baki, 2004; Lindsey, 2010; Onsman, 2011; Saleh, 1986) or in the social reform area (Al-Qahtani, 1998; Alsuwaigh, 1987) none of them focused on leading educational change in the context of Saudi Arabia from the view of point of females.

This research also provides background to the research context by describing the impact of globalization on the educational system in Saudi Arabia represented by the introduction of the Tatweer Schools system.

In addition, this study sheds light on the Tatweer schools' culture and the process of the culture shift that has taken place within these schools. The study was able to highlight the significant shifts that have occurred during the course of change.

Finally, the case study of this reform is the first to be conducted in this system and on this topic, to allow in depth of understanding regarding the reality of human issues.

11.4   Implications

The implications for school reform theory and practice are developed in this study. This section reveals the implication for theory, methodology, practice, policy makers and the profession of the researcher.

11.4.1 The implication for theory

This study builds on the current literature that relates to educational change as well as leading educational change in the Saudi context. This is in order to place the local within the global. The perspective of the educational reform and leading the change would be best written from the voice of practitioners and administrators who live with the changing phenomenon, and this study has illuminated these voices and also their experiences of them to be evident to other stakeholders.

In addition, the Excellence Team is a unique and innovative idea that plays a crucial role in leading educational change. Therefore, highlighting this team in my study to illuminate its experiences, roles, and practices within the Tatweer reform is important to be considered by other studies.

Another implication is to create some definitions linked to the study; the following are some procedural definitions by the researcher, which could have an impact on theory of the educational reform:

> I have defined school reform as the positive and planned changes that aim to enhance school performance and student achievement.
> Change has been defined "procedurally" as: "intentional activity that aims to improve the status of the school by making the necessary adjustments in its elements, to be able to achieve its goals in an effective way".
> Change management has been defined in the context of this research as the organised activities that affect the performance of the school to improve the status of the school, to be more effective than before, and to achieve its objectives through the optimal use of the available knowledge, skills and human resources.

Additionally, as has been argued throughout the thesis the change in schooling requires more than just changing the examination process and the results. It must also focus on what actually occurs during the phase of change and define measures with which to gauge subsequent change. At times, many attempt to measure the results through changes achieved within conventional parameters, such as student learning and parental attitudes, while a few others attempt to gauge the change in terms of changes happening in scope and sites (Thomson, 2010). Yet, there is no study (to best of my knowledge) that has attempted to measure the impact of the Tatweer Project on students' learning or even in changes in scope and sites. There is only one paper by the researcher, which is the first to investigate the impact of educational policy development on practice within Tatweer Schools; it focused on

which aspects of Tatweer schools are innovative and to examine the level of autonomy within these schools (see Appendix 7). This paper was part of the study as it built on the preliminary study of this research.

Finally, it is useful to think about the implications of the findings of this case study to examine if the results can be transferable or applicable in other Tatweer schools or even in other contexts.

11.4.2 Implication for the methodology

Using the focus group as a data collection method to examine teamwork, is very useful, and the most beneficial method in this sense. This is when the aim is to investigate the team about their perceptions or experiences among certain topics especially when the topic is not personal or sensitive. From my experience in this study I found all my focus group members supporting each other in their answers and completed the uncompleted ideas of one other. The members of the Tatweer Unit also expressed the view that the setting in the focus group was very beneficial to them as questions made them think and reflect on their experiences. In addition, using the focus group for these participants has had an impact on their knowledge and practices as they announced that this is the first time for them to engage in such a setting and were happy to have had such an experience.

11.4.3 The implication for practice

The findings of this study are very important to shed light on the actual life within the context of Saudi Arabia's education system. The link between research and practice is very important to develop leading educational change. The practical findings illuminate experiences of the practitioners that could be useful to be presented and highlighted in the Saudi context. This might be helpful to the policy makers in Saudi Arabia.

The participants showed a good understanding of the real challenges affecting their practice during leading the change. It would be useful if this could be considered when making decisions about education reform. Considering the practitioners' view is essential in any context to participate in decision making of leading educational change.

I think that I was also successful practically, when I interviewed the key people in leading the change in the Tatweer Schools' system including head teachers, senior teachers, the Excellence Team members, and officials. In the feasibility study I had also interviewed the educational expert who no longer worked with the Tatweer Schools.

Moreover, it is likely that Tatweer schools could potentially help shape the style of the government in the long-term impact in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi government highly centralised and bureaucratised whereas Tatweer schools emphasise democracy in the decision-making and they bring the voice of the student, the teacher, the gatekeeper, parents and stakeholder to the discussion. As a result, Tatweer schools could produce citizens who are able to participate in the democratic process that, in turn, would affect the whole society.

11.4.4 Implication for policy makers

The interest of this study would reflect issues and experiences, which are important to be considered by the policy makers to achieve the educational reform objectives. This study is important in terms of timing, as the Tatweer Programme is a new policy innovation. This research provides policy-makers with insights into actual practice and the real-life context within such schools. It opens up a hitherto largely ignored, but fast developing field, of the educational change and school reform in Saudi Arabia. It is hoped that it will encourage further national studies into the school reform in Arab countries to help structure and shape some of globalisation's implications for the country.

In addition, this study highlighted some professional development needs for staff, for example, providing them with training such as emotional intelligence to be able to deal with different type of people and reduce resistance to change as well as improving social skills and communication channels. Therefore, following up teachers' learning needs to be considered by policy makers in order to improve this system.

This study has used empirical findings to show that current educational reform policy in Saudi Arabia is unique and important. The theoretical arguments for educational reform suggest the need for policy review, which will enable the government to implement an effective change.

11.4.5 The impact on my professional development

I benefited greatly from the experiences of the participants when I was working in the field of the schools in Saudi Arabia. The experience of investigating this topic helped me to learn more about the actual system, the culture of the schools, and the practices. I have the impression that the Tatweer schools have made significant progress that could make them a good model to be learnt from in the Arabian Gulf. I have also gained much more knowledge in the field settings with participants compared to the knowledge that I could gain when I worked as a teacher or a head teacher.

Finally, after finishing this thesis, I feel that I have improved myself academically and technically by broadening my knowledge in the area of research in general and specifically in terms of being based in a western context.

11.5   Limitations of the study

This thesis is limited by several factors; the first limitation is the case study itself, because of the difficulty in being able to generalise the data as the small number of the schools limits gaining a wide range of data. It is important here to clarify that this study aims to not generalise the findings as the purpose is to obtain an in depth understanding of the Tatweer initiative.

The time constraint is another limitation that also had affected choosing the number of the schools and participants. I was restricted also by the schools' schedule where I conducted my research before the final exams period, where the schools at that time prepared themselves for this event and participants were not more likely to be available. However, I managed to access these schools during the exam days and also afterwards by scheduling a timetable with these three schools. The schools' days had also two working weeks after the exam period; therefore, I used to visit them during these days although they were busy marking the students' answers as well as building the operational plan for the following year.

Another important limitation is that the study has been conducted in Arabic, so different stages have been done for the translation; the first stage was the translation from English to Arabic. The second translation was done from Arabic to English of the transcripts, which was the most time consuming part. The difficulty for me as a researcher has been to deliver the main idea of the question in Arabic without confusion, or making the question unclear, or losing the meaning as well as attempting to not change the meaning of participants' views.

The other limitation was that bias might occur from the participants especially since some interviews had to be held in the Head Teachers' office where sometimes there was a head teacher present in the room.

The limitation of reviewing documentation was another barrier; it was difficult to access all managerial documents in the schools. However, the participants were helpful in providing me with documentation that I sought.

Finally, there is also a lack of Arabic literature that can provide knowledge about school reform.

11.6   Recommendations

In light of the findings of this study the researcher came to a number of recommendations including:

> The voice of the head teachers and teachers is very important and crucial when change is considered; therefore, it is important that the policy makers have to think and invite these practitioners to be involved in giving their views and perceptions about the desired change. These practitioners are more able to contribute to building a suitable national plan by providing insights, knowledge and experiences about schools.

> It is important to consider the value added to examine school effectiveness as this concept has been ignored in the Saudi educational system. From the data and documentary analysis, it appears that this concept has been overlooked where it is essential to be adopted and practiced in the education. Murphy's (1991) (cited in Townsend, 2007) emphasises that success of schools do not have to be assessed through external elements, but it could be done through use of value addition in students' capabilities. The extent of previous accomplishments of each student is required to measure the value added. This would be a reference point against which ensuing development could be evaluated. Progress is also seen to be influenced through other aspects like socio-economic status, gender, fluency in the majority language used at school, and mobility (Sammons & Bakkum, 2011, p. 11).

- The system of employment needs to be addressed as it is highly centralised by the Civil Service Ministry (Ch.8 p.212). It needs at least to be delegated to the local authority in each province in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is a large country and centralization would cause slow progress in terms of responding to the demands of society. The system still needs to transform significant regulations in decision making especially those that are associated with teachers' recruitment or fiscal authorities with increasing the accountability policies.

- The head teachers should be empowered and given more authority in their schools in terms of building matters and its maintenance. This is to give them more autonomy to create a suitable learning environment for their students and staff (Ch.8 p.210-211).

- Teachers' participation in designing the curriculum and the assessment is crucial in order to have more autonomy in building and designing curricula and assessment based on the students' needs (Ch.8 p.214-219).

- A reward system should be considered; teachers considered it unfair to treat all teachers equally financially regardless of their hours of work or even rewarding innovative teachers or based on their students' performance. Teachers' salary bonuses depend on the years of experience of teaching and being in the education sector; therefore, Tatweer school teachers are equal with other teachers in ordinary schools as they received the same payment. Hence, it might be beneficial for the Ministry of Education to allocate a budget for schools to reward performance with a policy to account for the way of spending this fund (Ch.8 p.194-197).

- Following up teachers' learning needs to be considered in order to improve them as well as providing them with a sufficient monitoring system to ensure they apply what they learn in the training courses (Ch.10 p.270-271).

- Inclusion is essential to be considered in Tatweer reform, as there is a serious need for all students to be included in the curriculum and school's provision. In addition, there is no Music, Drama, Dancing, or lessons that teach about different type of religions and ideologies.

Therefore, these types of curricula need to be considered as they build the spiritual, social, cultural, and moral aspect of learners (Ch.7 p.159-160).

The next section provides suggestions for further research.

11.7 Further research

The findings of this study can be used for further quantitative study to examine to what extent Tatweer Schools share common issues and experiences. Further study could be conducted also:

- in relation to the perceptions of parents and students
- to investigate the importance of using value-added as a concept of the school effectiveness in Saudi Schools as there is no study about it to the best of my knowledge.
- the impact of the Tatweer Project system on students' achievements and school effectiveness
- more case studies at the local level in Saudi Arabia to allow further assessment of local dimensions of the school reform
- on boys' Tatweer schools to compare the results of this study with the actual practices and experiences of leading the change by Tatweer project from the perceptions of male leaders and teachers.

The study also highlighted the need for further study to be conducted to measure job satisfaction in Tatweer schools as participants showed a high level of expectation of this project whilst at the same time they did not feel supported enough financially and professionally (Ch.10 p.277).

11.8   Reflection

My impression about the Saudi female leaders who have been chosen to lead the change in Tatweer Schools, those I met in the feasibility study and those who I met in the final study, is that these people are the right people who can lead the change. I believe that these leaders are that they impressed me with their knowledge, experience, wisdom, inspiration, confidence and the enthusiasm that they possess to lead the change.

Notes: During the study there have been some major developments in the educational policy arena. King Abdullah passed away on 23 January 2015. In the new government the Minister of the Ministry of Education has been replaced by Azzam Al Dakhil, Prince Khalid Bin Faisal (the previous minister of education) has been appointed as an advisor to the King and the governor of Mecca, on 29 January 2015. Finally on the same date, the Higher Education Ministry and the Ministry of Education were combined to be one ministry called the Ministry of Education.

11.9   Conclusion

The study has offered a descriptive perspective on educational development policy program represented in Tatweer Schools system and was conducted in Riyadh through a case study of Tatweer system. This study has contributed to knowledge significantly by bridging the gap in the area and the context of this research. Although the study has limitations, it has generated significant findings in the field of Saudi educational reform. This study might assist the Tatweer School Project in improving its system by considering: a teacher reward method, improving the autonomy of designing curricula and the choice of teaching forbidden subjects (for example Music, Drama and Dancing) as well as emphasising the need towards more autonomy in the recruitment system. This study has also showed that Tatweer system provides teachers and leaders with professional development. In addition, it has highlighted the improvements in the school environment where the investment can be seen in integrating technology and new pedagogy into teaching and learning. The challenges of implementing

this system were highlighted and relate mainly to the workload and financial matters discussed above.

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Appendix (1): Permission letter from MoE

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التربية والتعليم
تعليم البنات
إدارة التربية والتعليم للبنات بمنطقة الرياض
إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

الرقم: ١٤٦٨٦٢٣٢/١١
التاريخ: ٩/٤/١٢٣٤ه
المشفوعات: .....

إفــــادة

الموضوع: الموافقة على تطبيق أدوات دراسة في مدارس تابعة لإدارة التربية والتعليم بمنطقة الرياض

اسم الباحث	رفعة اليامي .
الكلية / الجامعة	University of reading.
عنوان الدراسة	– مدارس تطوير في المملكة العربية السعودية: الإبداع والاستقلالية .

إلى سعادة الملحق الثقافي ببريطانيا   حفظه الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته   وبعد ،،،

بناءً على تعميم معالي وزير التربية والتعليم رقم ٥٥/٦١٠ وتاريخ ١٤١٦/٩/١٧هـ بشأن تفويض الإدارات العامة للتربية والتعليم بإصدار خطابات السماح للباحثين بإجراء البحوث والدراسات ، وبناءً على تفويض مدير عام إدارة التربية والتعليم إدارة التخطيط والتطوير ذي الرقم ١١/٣٣٦٧٤٨٢٣ والتاريخ ١٤٣٣/٤/١٤هـ بشأن تسهيل مهام الباحثين والباحثات ، نفيدكم أنه لامانع من تطبيق الدراسة على نطاق عينة من مدارس تطوير التابعة لإدارة التربية والتعليم بمنطقة الرياض ، مع ملاحظة أن الباحثة تتحمل كامل المسؤولية المتعلقة بمختلف جوانب البحث ، ولا يعني سماح الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم موافقتها بالضرورة على مشكلة البحث أو على الطرق والأساليب المستخدمة في دراستها ومعالجتها ، وبناءً على طلبها تم منحها الإفادة .

شاكرين طيب تعاونكم .

مدير إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

عن : نورة سلطان الصونحي

وضحاء بنت سعد الشريف

• ص/ قسم الدراسات والبحوث .

نموذج (١/٦)

البريد الإلكتروني AI-takhteet@hotmait.com / planingm@rge. Gov.sa /   رقم الفاكس/الهاتف(٤٠٢٧٠٥٨)

Appendix (2): Permission to Conduct Research Study

RE: Permission to Conduct Research Study

Dear Mrs. Nourah Aldhuaihi (official in Ministry of Education in Riyadh)

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study at your institution. The study is entitled (Tatweer schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Innovation and Autonomy) and the aim is to:

• Identify the reason of introducing Tatweer Schools.

• Identify Tatweer schools' goals that they seek to achieve.

• Identify the way that Tatweer system is organised.

• Identify the way that Tatweer schools are organised.

• Identify a level of innovation in Tatweer schools.

• Identify a level of autonomy in Tatweer schools.

• Identify challenges that might distributed pose within Tatweer schools.

• Identify the perceptions of head teachers of the new piece of working of management.

• Identify the perceptions of head teachers about new ways of management in these schools.

• Identify how is the culture shift.

• Identify type of training that has been provided to teachers and head teachers within Tatweer Schools to implement the changes.

• Identify the teachers' views of working in Tatweer Schools.

• Identify the way that tatweer schools finance.

I hope that you will allow me to recruit (approximately 21 members of three Taweer schools) to be interviewed (copy enclosed). Interested staff members, who volunteer to participate, will be given an information sheet and a consent form to be signed and returned to me at the beginning of the survey process (copy enclosed).

If approval is granted, participants will be interviewed in their own time and no costs will be incurred by either your school or the individual participants. All information collected will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations). In order to protect the anonymity of each participant, pseudonyms will be used to ensure participants cannot be identified and individual school names will not be used. All electronic data will be held securely in password protected files on a non-shared PC and all paper documentation will be held in locked cabinets in a locked office. In line with University policy, data generated by the study will be kept securely in paper or electronic form for a period of five years after the completion of the research project. This data maybe used in future publications in appropriate academic journals and/or books. All participants will be able to have access to a copy of the published research on request.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. If you agree, kindly reply to this email acknowledging your consent and permission for me to conduct this study at your Name, position and contact addresse of Researcher

Rfah Hadi Alyami

PhD students

University of reading

Institute of education

4 Sutcliffe Avenue, Reading

United Kingdom

RG6 7JW

Yours sincerely,

Rfah Alyami

University of Reading

CONSENT FORM

Research Project:
Tatweer Schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Innovation and Autonomy

Name, position and contact address of Researcher
Rfah Hadi Alyami
PhD students
University of reading
Institute of education
4 Sutcliffe Avenue
Earley
Reading
United Kingdom
RG6 7JW

This application has been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

Please initial box

1.   I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for
     the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2.   I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I
     am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

3.   I agree to take part in the above study.

Please tick box

	Yes	**No**

4.   I agree to the interview being audio recorded.

5.   I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in
     publications.

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

University of Reading

Participation Information Sheet
Tatweer schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: innovation and autonomy

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study?

The main objectives of this study are to:
- Identify the reason of introducing Tatweer Schools.
- Identify Tatweer schools' goals that they seek to achieve.
- Identify the way that Tatweer system is organised, implemented and financed.
- Identify the level of autonomy in Tatweer schools.
- Identify the perceptions of head teachers about new ways of management in these schools.
- Identify the perceptions of teachers about working in Tatweer School.
- Identify how is the culture shift.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been identified as someone who is involved in the Tatweer Schools and would facilitate the purpose of this study by taking part in interviewas your answers will have a profound effect on this study to serve educational improvement.

What will happen if I take part?

You will be invited to take part in interview. It is proposed to interview 18 subject leaders of threeTatweer schools. Each participant will be interviewed for approx 45 mints and interviews will be recorded and transcribed. The interviews will be undertaken face to face.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide not to take part, this decision will have no bearing on your involvement with the research. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time, and without giving reason, by emailing the researcher using the email addresses listed at the end of this information sheet.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

In agreeing to take part in this study there will be a time commitment to consider. While this is true, it is felt that the benefits of involvement will outweigh the costs. You are, of course, able to withdraw from the study at any time.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The main benefit for the individual will be an opportunity to reflect in detail on their engagement with king Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz educational development Project (Tatweer Project) that represent in Tatweer Schools, which has considerable potential for professional development.

This study will also help to:
- Improve leadership and school reform in Tatweer school in particular, and in Saudi schools in general.
- Contribute to knowledge of educational leadership and management.

Will what I say be kept confidential?

All information collected will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations). In order to protect the anonymity of each participant, pseudonyms will be used to ensure participants cannot be identified and individual school names will not be used. All electronic data will be held securely in password protected files on a non-shared PC and all paper documentation will be held in locked cabinets in a locked office.

In line with University policy, data generated by the study will be kept securely in paper or electronic form for a period of five years after the completion of the research project.

What will happen to the results of the research?

All interview data will be transcribed and subjected to respondent validation where each participant will be provided with the transcription and account of the findings in order to check that they agree with the researcher's interpretation of the interviews. This data will then be used in future publications in appropriate academic journals and/or books. All participants will be able to have access to a copy of the published research on request.

Who has reviewed the study?

This application has been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

Name, position and contact addresse of Researcher

Rfah Hadi Alyami
PhD students
University of reading
Institute of education
4 Sutcliffe Avenue
Reading
United Kingdom
RG6 7JW

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet. Please contact the researcherif you require any further information.

Rfah Alyami
January 2013

Appendix (5): Arabic version of the participation information sheet

معلومات حول البحث

مدارس تطوير في المملكة العربية السعودية: الإبداع والاستقلالية

يتم دعوتك للمشاركة في الدراسة البحثية أعلاه. قبل أن تقرري المشاركة أو عدم المشاركة، من المهم بالنسبة لك أن تفهمي لماذا يجري البحث وما سوف ينطوي عليه. يرجى أخذ الوقت الكافي لقراءة المعلومات التالية بعناية.

ما هو الغرض من الدراسة؟

الأهداف الرئيسية لهذه الدراسة هي:

• لمعرفة سبب نشأة مدارس تطوير.

• تحديد الأهداف التي تسعى مدارس تطوير إلى تحقيقها.

• دراسة نظام مدارس تطوير وتنفيذها وتمويلها.

• تحديد مستوى الاستقلال الذاتي في مدارس تطوير.

• التعرف على تصورات المديرات تجاه الطرق الإدارية الجديدة داخل نظام مدارس تطوير.

• التعرف على تصورات المعلمات حول طرق العمل الجديدة في مدارس تطوير.

• التعرف على كيفية التحول الثقافي

لماذا أنا دعيت للمشاركة في الدراسة؟

لقد تم استدعاؤك للمشاركة في البحث بناء على كونك معلمة في مدرسة وتطوير وذلك من شأنه أن يسهل الغرض من هذه الدراسة، وذلك تمشيا مع أسئلة البحث.

ماذا سيحدث إذا اشتركت في البحث؟

سيتم دعوتك للمشاركة في مقابلة. حيث متوقع أن يتم مقابلة 18 معلمة أولى في ثلاث مدارس تطوير. كل مشاركة سيتم مقابلتها حوالي 45 دقيقة والمقابلات سيتم تسجيلها ونسخها مع أخذ الموافقة. ستكون المقابلات وجها لوجه.

هل يجب أن أشارك؟

الأمر متروك لك لتقرر ما إذا كان سوف تشاركين أم لا. إذا قررت المشاركة، سوف تعطى لك ورقة المعلومات هذه للحفاظ عليها وسوف يطلب منك التوقيع على استمارة الموافقة. إذا قررت المشاركة فأنت لازلت حرة في الانسحاب في أي وقت، ودون إبداء أي سبب، وذلك بإرسال رسالة عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني للباحثة والمدرجة في نهاية هذه الورقة المعلومات.

ما هي الأضرار الممكنة نتيجة المشاركة؟

في الموافقة على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة سوف يكون هناك التزام بالوقت ويجب أخذه بعين الاعتبار. وهذا صحيح، ولكن الفائدة من المشاركة سوف تفوق التكاليف وأنت بطبيعة الحال، قادرة على الانسحاب من الدراسة في أي وقت.

وما هي الفوائد المحتملة من المشاركة؟

فإن الفائدة الرئيسية للفرد أن يكون فرصة للتفكير في التفاصيل بشأن مشاركتها مع مشروع الملك عبد الله لتطوير التعليم، والتي لديها امكانات كبيرة للتنمية الشخصية والمهنية.

هذه الدراسة سوف تساعد أيضا على:

• تحسين الممارسة و الإصلاح المدرسي في مدارس تطوير على وجه الخصوص، وفي المدارس السعودية بشكل عام.

• المساهمة في فهم القيادة التربوية والإدارة في المملكة العربية السعودية.

سوف ما أقول أن تبقى سرية؟

وستبقى جميع المعلومات التي تم جمعها في سرية تامة (تخضع لقيود القانونية). من أجل حماية هوية كل مشارك، وسوف تستخدم أسماء مستعارة لضمان عدم امكانية تحديد المشاركين ولن يتم استخدام أسماء المدارس الفردية. وستعقد جميع البيانات الإلكترونية بشكل آمن في الملفات المحمية كلمة المرور على جهاز كمبيوتر غير المشتركة وجميع الوثائق الورقية سيعقد في خزائن مقفلة في مكتب مقفل.

تماشيا مع سياسة الجامعة، سيتم الاحتفاظ البيانات التي تولدها هذه الدراسة بشكل آمن في شكل ورقي أو إلكتروني لمدة خمس سنوات بعد الانتهاء من مشروع البحث.

ماذا سيحدث لنتائج الأبحاث؟

سيتم نسخ جميع بيانات المقابلة وتعرض للمدعى عليه التحقق من صحتها حيث سيتم تزويد كل مشارك مع النسخ وحساب النتائج من أجل التحقق من أنها تتفق مع نص المقابلات. ثم سيتم استخدام هذه البيانات في المستقبل في منشورات في المجلات الأكاديمية المناسبة

و / أو الكتب، وسوف لن تعزى أي تعليقات إلى المشاركين الذين قدمت لهم، كما سيتم إخفاء هويتهم في المنشورات الناشئة عن البحوث. وسيحصل جميع المشاركين على ملخص النتائج الرئيسية .

تم مراجعة هذا الطلب من قبل لجنة أخلاقيات البحوث جامعة وأعطيت رأي أخلاقية مواتية للسلوك.

الاسم والمنصب وعنوان الاتصال من باحث

رفعة هادي اليامي

طالبة دكتوراه

رقم الاتصال: 07553498684

البريد الإلكتروني:r.h.a.alyami @ student.reading.ac.uk

المشرفون:

الأستاذ ناز Rassool: N.Rassool @ reading.ac.uk

الدكتور آلان فلويد:alan.floyd @ reading.ac.uk

معهد التعليم

جامعة ريدينغ

شكرا جزيلا لأننا أخذنا من وقتك لقراءة في قراءة هذه الورقة. يرجى الاتصال بالباحثة إذا كنت تحتاجي إلى أي مزيد من المعلومات.

اليامي مارس 2013

Appendix (6): Extract of coding the Data

- Typical school
- Attractive environment
- Meeting expectation
- High proportion in PD
- Positive expectation
- TP has become better
- Lack of trusting TP in providing support
- The HT put pressure on officials to support
- Student achievement
- Socio-economic
- Seeking professional development
- Competition
- New strategies
- School provide trainings
- MoE issues
- Poor of coordination
- Poor of distribution
- New curricular
- Innovation and technology
- Internal motivation
- TP highlights the innovation
- History does not consider main subject

How is the system organized, implemented and financed?
- No differences between TS and Non TS
- New regulation
- Criticize the reality
- Positive attitude about TP
- Delegation with new regulation
- Work details
- Delegation related to having successful HT
- Feeling about new regulation
- Lack of money
- Advantages of the new regulation
- Complement about TU and TP
- Communication
- Media role
- Using social media for school performance
- The impact of media on staff and the school

(margin note: more delegation, freedom in the internal matters, restriction on financial matters)

How is the system organized, implemented and financed?
- The way of implementing TP
- Expectations
- TS similar to public schools in the organization
- TU guidance
- Freedom in organizing school
- Fiscal matter
- Ministry provide TS budget
- Freedom in schools' matter
- No freedom in curricula
- Assessment Guidance

- Exam approaches
- Hiring and firing teachers
- Distributed leadership

What about organizing and implementing Tatweer , how do you do it?
- The way to implement TP
- Distributed leadership
- Implementing TP
- Projects
- Responsibilities
- Lack of fiscal support
- HT initiative
- Organizing the school matters
- TP neglect vocational work
- Serious school
- TP has become better
- Internal organization
- MoE and operational budget

What level of autonomy do TS have with regard to organizational management, staff appointment, student assessment, and curriculum development in Saudi Arabia?
- Freedom
- Example of the freedom
- Hiring and firing
- Assessment approach has to follow the guide

(margin note: freedom in school's matters, restriction on firing and hiring, students' assessment and designing curricula.)

What level of autonomy do TS.....
- Freedom in schools' matter
- No freedom in curricula
- Assessment Guidance
- Exam approaches
- Hiring and firing teachers
- Distributed leadership

What level of autonomy do TS.....
- Free freedom
- Flexibility
- The leadership
- Building issue
- Firing based on conditions
- Useless system in assessment
- Suggestions to develop curricula
- Curricula can be revised
- ------ need to be completed-----

What is the nature of culture taking place within Tatweer Schools?
- Partnership with society
- New incidence (dads' visit)
- Comparing before and after TP
- Impression of Dads' visit
- Questioner to parents
- Shift to technology
- Shift in students' role
- Staff and Learning IT

(margin note: opening to society, adopting technology, moving from isolated individual to be opened and being professional learning communities)

- Lack of awareness of PLC
- Example of PLC
- Typical lessons
- Before and after TP
- Learning community
- Professional ethics
- Definition PLC
- Cooperative team
- Mechanism
- Professional development
- Applying PLC
- Good community

What about decision-making type and how to make it?
- Example of collective decision
- Collective decision
- Head teacher tolerance
- Teachers do not have experience in planning for projects.
- Time scale not suitable for designing the plan
- Opinion and decision
- Vote in decision-making
- Type of decisions
- Example of sharing decision
- Consultation
- Meetings
- Recording the meetings
- Rewarding
- Governor body meeting
- Teachers do not involve in each school decisions
- Tutorial task
- Solving behavioral issue

(margin note: collective decision, voting, consultation, opinions. excellence team plays the most important role in the DM. collective work means collective decision)

What about decision-making, how is it taken place in TS?
- No differences between TS and non TS
- Consultation
- Engaging students in decision-making
- Type of decision
- Operational budget
- Excellence team
- Decision-making approach
- Flexibility
- Views and decision
- Student achievement
- Reasons of low achievement
- Decision and position
- Aspiration to autonomy
- Desire to support school
- School building design
- Suggestion
- Disable need

How is the decision-making take place in TS?

- Consultation
- Investigation
- Examining the issue
- HT personality
- Morale treatment
- Promises
- Frustrating
- Smart solution
- Comparison between 81 & 43
- New term (decision owner)
- Wisdom
- Excellence team
- TP before and after
- Engaging parents
- Collective work lead to collective decision
- Decision's stage

What is the level of innovation in TS?
- Competition
- Supporting students
- Innovation definition
- Gifted teachers
- Confusing in defining concepts
- Lack of support
- Talent definition
- Lack of resources
- Difference between innovation and talent
- Innovation and freedom
- Criticism
- Comparing the freedom in UK and USA with Saudi Arabia
- Technology
- Innovation and talent
- Talent and intelligent
- Factors of innovation
- Trainings
- Impact of projects
- Enable students to higher education
- Innovation and achievement
- Innovation before and after TP

(margin note: talent, intelligence, creation, modern and innovation overlapping concepts winning in the competition has link to the innovation)

What is the level of innovation at TS?
- The School before and after TP
- Distinctive students and teachers
- HT has been rewarded nationally and internationally
- Competition
- Innovation definition
- Example of innovation
- The level of school
- Class of talented students
- Why 81 Sc to be for talented
- Level of innovation

Appendix (7): Paper No 1

Appendix (8): Paper No 2