

Full Length Research Paper

The effective school: The role of the leaders in school effectiveness

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This study focuses on investigating issues that are currently raising serious concerns in the education system in Saudi Arabia with regard to state school effectiveness. In order to understand the factors that prevent its efficiency and to enable reliable policy recommendations to enhance the quality of Saudi education and ensure greater efficiency, the researcher conducts this research on the effectiveness of the school by creating a comprehensive frame work that helps to explain why efforts to increase effectiveness succeed or fail, and what promotes or hinders effective school improvement. In order to fulfil the aims and objectives of this study the researcher used a survey approach with sample of 179 teachers and 11 school leaders. Research instruments included a questionnaire (quantitative data) and interview (qualitative data). The school leaders were interviewed. This exploratory study highlighted some key issues likely to affect effectiveness in Saudi State schools. It appears that the main problem facing the state schools is the lack of the main factors to effectiveness that are effective leaders, effective teachers, and effective environment. The purpose of the study was to find answers to the inquiry as how these schools can be improved to be effective. The findings of the study affect the researcher in terms of acquisition of knowledge and experience in school effectiveness and they are basis for further studies on this field. Moreover, being aware of the main factors to school effectiveness will be very helpful and provide fruitful reflections to those who are interested in the improvement of the effectiveness of schools.

Key words: School effectiveness, leaders, education, Saudi Arabia.

INTRODUCTION

Context

Many nations aspire to social equality, a strong economy, a highly skilled and motivated workforce and the most advanced health provision possible. This ambition can be brought to fruition by only one means: education (Levin and Kelley, 1997). As a result, investment in education has received much attention, in both develop-

ed and less developed countries, for future prosperity. The sector of education is often among the largest claimants on governmental budgets as a result. This is on top of significant private spending on education, the money spent by people in educational institutions to develop their human capital, and the costs of public resources related to education.

Worldwide, educational authorities have demonstrated

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an increasing level of concern about the effectiveness, quality and standards of achievement in schools (Macbeath and Mortimore, 2001). Since the mid-1950s the issue of schools effectiveness has been the concern of the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) and Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in the UK, and increasingly in the UK and elsewhere the focus is on finding the approaches and techniques that enable the effective improvement of educational institutions. Harris (2002: 6) states that "In England and Wales, in particular, there has been increased central government control over core aspects of the educational process". Therefore, the issue of identifying the effective schools has been of great concern for researchers and policy makers in recent decades.

Educational authorities worldwide have shown increasing concern about the efficacy, quality and standards of achievement of their schools (Macbeath and Mortimore (eds), 2001). Success in this area is difficult to gauge because it is not easy to measure or to conceptualise. There are no universally used measures for the effectiveness of educational institutions, although different attempts to describe the characteristics of an effective school will be considered in this essay.

Being the researcher is a teacher, this study is originated from an interest and the need to find the effective strategies that teachers and managers can use to create effective schools and colleges in her country. The other reason for choosing to conduct this topic is that she hopes by the findings of this study she can give a fruitful knowledge for those who want to develop themselves and increase their effectiveness to reach to the job satisfaction of teachers and managers.

However, as Saunders and Stockton (2005: 7) have pointed out "more recently school effectiveness research has become increasingly sophisticated and has challenged the notion of a school's overall effectiveness and the concept of differential effectiveness has developed". One basic premise is that an increase in competition from independent schools, which are trying to be more effective than state schools at raising standards and then achievement levels. These independent schools offer a very attractive alternative to the wealthy and middle-class parents (Creemers, 2001). Therefore, state schools must recognize what they should do to be effective and "what kind of support and challenge from external sources is most conducive to their effective development" (Macbeath and Mortimore, 2001: 2); and they need to improve their performance to be able to attract enough numbers of students.

Saudi educational system

When King Abdul-Aziz entered Makka in 1925 and

established the directorate of education, Makka became the cornerstone for a modern educational system in the Kingdom. As King Abdul-Aziz was interested greatly in education, he builds a lot of libraries and schools to spread knowledge all over the kingdom. He made the primary education obligatory, but free to urge people to join. The king divided education into 4 stages; A: elementary (from 6 to 12 years of age), B: Intermediate (from 12 to 15 years of age), C: Secondary stage (from 15 to 18 years of age), D: University stage (from 18 to 22 years of age) (Al-Huqail, 1998).

The main goals of education varied in the four stages and all of them are listed in the national policy of education. This educational system provides students with free education, books, health services and it is open to everyone in Saudi Arabia. It is a given fact that education is the cornerstone of any developmental plans and achievements. Saudi government allocated about 153 billion SR to the improvement of human resources. The sector of education received about 27.5 Billion SR from the budget of 1996 (SAIC, 1996: 48).

The Saudi administration of education is centralized and educational policies are controlled by the government. The main aim of this administration is to uniform curriculum and textbooks all over the kingdom. There are four main institutions that are responsible for the educational system in Saudi Arabia (A): the Ministry of Education which supervises the general education from kindergarten stage until the secondary level for male students. (B): The General Presidency for Girls' Education, which controls and manages programmes including all stages of general education and after secondary training for female students. (C): The Ministry of Higher Education, which controls post secondary education for both men and women at the universities. (D): The general organization of technical education and the vocational training, which is responsible for the training programmes at the sectors of industry, trade and agricultural subjects (Al-Huqail, 1998).

The educational system in Saudi Arabia is mainly built on a series of examination promotion every year and all students must pass these examinations to join the next stage or grade. Each school has the responsibility of preparing and supervising the exams for their own students. Students are required to pass and succeed in all subjects. If students fail any subject, they are required to enter another exam before starting the next new academic year, but if they fail again, they must repeat the grade. The school year has two semesters. Each semester consists of fourteen weeks plus two weeks for exams. The schedule of the school day has either 6 or 7; each class period is about 45 min long (SACM, 1991).

There is equality in education for both men and women; the schools of each are strictly separated throughout

except in nursery and kindergarten. Both male and female students study the same curriculum, except for some small differences in the specialization of home economics for girls and physical education for boys (Ministry of Education, 1970).

Al-Baadi (1995:844) describes Saudi education as follows: "it has grown remarkably fast, satisfying most of the immediate needs of a burgeoning population. As it approaches the twenty-first century, it shows normal signs of fatigue and maladjustment. Its challenge now is to tune itself so that it becomes more ...effective". Because it is struggling to meet a high demand for education, it is possible that, to a point, quality and efficiency have been compromised. It is time now to focus more on these important issues. The current Minister of Education, Arrasheed, acknowledged in 1998 that Saudi education has some serious shortcomings. He stated that, among other indicators, the low quality of education is suggested by the prevalence of poor examination results, and the poor performances of the graduates of the general education in universities and vocations. More recently, the Deputy Minister for Education Development recognized many indicators of inefficiency in the education system and emphasised the need to focus on increasing its quality and changing the ways in which it resources (Al-Awad, 1998).

Identifying school leader

"It used to be the case that leadership was thought of wholly in terms of the head teacher or principal" (Dimmock, 1995a: 7). The leader of a school in Saudi Arabia is the principal who directs, administrates and manages human and material educational resources as well as performing other administrative tasks and representing the authority role within a school. Because of this multi function role of a school principal, the title 'leader' is used by the researcher in this study instead of the term 'a school principal' as he/she is considered the leader of a school.

Purpose and aims of the research

In Saudi Arabia there is a great deal of concern about the need to improve the quality of state schools so that an acceptable level of education among citizens can be reached. Saudi educational professionals often have a faith in education as a tool that can ease social change. They believe that improving methods of teaching and therefore opportunities of education will create new generations that are focused on improving social conditions in the country. In light of this belief, and the demands being voiced by parents in Saudi Arabia for improved teaching standards, it is important to check the

factors that affect the provision of education in Saudi Arabia. Since the number of schools with the government being the only source of funds grows continuously, and because of current resource policies, the educational finance is increasingly likely to expand the government budget. Indeed, there has been a common belief that education resources could be more effectively managed by focusing on reducing the level of inefficiency. This view has grown along much concern about the quality of education that is on offer.

Although there is a general view that it is imperative to improve the quality and efficiency of education in Saudi Arabia, there has not been enough research evidence about improvement policies. The existing research on efficiency has been limited in terms of both measure and scope. These reasons lead the researcher to conduct this study which focuses on investigating issues that are raising serious concerns in the education system in Saudi Arabia. In order to understand the factors that prevent its efficiency and to enable reliable policy recommendations to enhance the quality of Saudi education and make sure greater efficiency, the researcher conducts this research on the effectiveness of the schools by creating a comprehensive framework that helps to explain why efforts to increase effectiveness succeed or fail, and what promotes or hinders effective school improvement. The findings of this study affect the researcher in terms of acquisition knowledge and ability in school effectiveness and they are the basis for further studies in this field. Moreover, being aware of main factors to school effectiveness will be very helpful not only for the researcher's future practice as a teacher in state schools but also might offer fruitful reflections to those who are interested in the improvement of the effectiveness of schools. Through these ideas, the researcher intends to investigate some of the school effectiveness by eliciting some questions.

Research questions

The rationale for conducting this study and its purpose have been discussed above; it remains to explore the following questions:

- 1- What do we mean by effective school?
- 2- What are the characteristics of an effective school?
- 3- What are the main factors affecting effectiveness in Saudi schools?
- 4- What is the role of Saudi school leaders in school effectiveness?
- 5- What are the barriers facing Saudi leaders in creating effective schools?

In order to get a range of data that is needed to

investigate the above issues, the researcher will adopt both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This will be possible by means of constructing and distributing a questionnaire among teachers and conducting semi-structured interviews with leaders of state schools in Jeddah city in Saudi Arabia.

The next section will check the relevant literature, to tackle the above questions as well as to show more about the situations facing the state schools in Saudi Arabia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, some relevant studies will be reviewed to identify the questions presented in this research.

Identifying the effective school

There is no universally accepted definition of the term 'effectiveness' as it has itself always been elusive. It is not always easy to separate definitions of effectiveness and success. However, there has been no agreement on its definition, and the cause of this disagreement may have its roots in the differences between researchers in terms of cultural background, belief and environment (Alamri, 1992).

There are a number of interpretations of what makes up or defines effectiveness. One interpretation, from Fullan (1993: 265), is that "It is the total of formal and informal learning pursued and experienced by the student in a compelling learning environment under conditions of complexity and dynamic change". Other definitions of effectiveness state that it involves using the resources and the means that are at the disposal of an educational organization to fulfil its goals without working staff too hard (Reynolds et al., 1996).

There is no definition of effective school that accepted universally. However, any acceptable definition has to take into consideration both what the student learning and teacher does. While Mortimore (1995: 7) states that the effective school can be defined as "One in which the pupils progress further than might be predicted from consideration of their attainment when they enter the school", Creemers and Reezigt (1997:401) have defined school effectiveness as the result of "all theories and research studies about the means-ends relationships between educational processes and outcomes, in particular student knowledge and skills... aiming at explanations for differences in student achievement between schools and classrooms". Creemers (2001: online) insists, "School effectiveness is strongly focusing on student outcomes and the characteristics of schools and classrooms that are associated with these outcomes

without automatically looking at the processes that are needed to bring changes". Therefore, effective school can be defined as the facilities, materials, equipment and physical environment of the school which enhance effect on the goals that teachers set for their students. However, these definitions make no allowances for the nature of the goals that are achieved, or of any difficulties that inhere in establishing them.

There are no universally used measures used to measure the effectiveness of educational institutions, although a number of attempts to describe the characteristics of an effective school will be considered in this essay. Some critics of school effectiveness research claim that it is not reasonable to call a school effective simply because at the end of the last school year the average level of achievement is demonstrated by a test to be relatively high. Ralph and Fennessey (1983) state, for instance, that if a school is effective it should be able to prove relatively high levels of achievement at every stage. Moreover, they feel that schools only deserve to be labelled 'effective' when they have attained well over several years. However, as Sammons et al. point out, "school effectiveness research results do not give a blueprint or recipe for the creation of more effective schools" (1995: 2).

Conceptualizing effectiveness and efficiency

Effectiveness is clearly often seen as being related to a means-end relationship. When applied to educational situations, effectiveness refers to the level to which educational practises result in the attainment of educational targets. In the language of a simple input-process-output systems of education, it is possible to refer to effectiveness as the transition of inputs using processes into sought-after outputs and outcomes (Scheerens, 1992: 11). Campbell et al. (1977: 93) suggest that "effectiveness is system oriented and has to do with the achievement of organization goals. Effectiveness of a school is measured according to its yearly intake, which could partly be attributed to intensive canvassing or school marketing"

Efficiency is "person oriented and has to do with the feelings of satisfaction a worker derives from membership of an organization" (Campbell et al., 1977: 93). Scheerens (1992:3) defines it as "the maximum output for the lowest possible cost. In other words, efficiency is effectiveness with the other need that is achieved in the cheapest possible manner". The term 'efficiency' is closely related to the term 'quality', but it is more specific. As Belfield (2002: 6) points out, "efficiency involves getting the most out of the resources available and therefore has two sides: what is 'got out' compared to what is 'put in'. Both sides need to be considered;

efficiency can be improved either if more is obtained from the same inputs or if the same amount is obtained but with less inputs". Efficiency analysis should look at the effect of various resource factors on the quality of education. Resources that do not enhance quality can actually cause inefficiency. Often, levels of resources could be reduced without negatively influencing the standard of education provided.

Conceptualizing effectiveness and quality

In discussions of education the term 'effective' is often associated with the quality of education. Effectiveness is defined differently by people in different disciplines, but can be broadly described as "the extent to which the desired output is achieved" (Scheerens, 1992: 3). The term 'quality' is usually used in education in reference to the 'goodness' of education, in contrast with the term 'quantity' which is used to refer to the aspects that are more easily measured, such as years of education, number of graduated pupils or enrolment rates. In the literature of economics of teaching and learning, the term 'quality' is used as an exchange with 'effectiveness' (Kingdon, 1994), to refer to the extent to which or how successfully the desired results are achieved (Windham, 1988). Education output has many facets and dimensions and cannot be gauged by one measure, but it is commonly agreed that student attainment, as measured by examination results, is the most accurate indicator of the success of the education system. Thus, students with higher attainment levels should be those who received a better education.

Conceptualizing effectiveness and improvement

Hopkins (1996: 32) claims that there are two ways in which the term school improvement can be applied. The first "is a common sense meaning which relates to general efforts to make schools better places for students and [for] students to learn". The second is a more technical in which he (1996: 32) defines school improvement as a "strategy for educational change that enhances the student outcomes as well as strengthening the school's capacity for managing change". This stresses that school improvement is very important to enacting changes to school culture. It views the school as the focal point of change and teachers as a basic part of the improvement process. It suggests that if school improvement is to occur teachers must show a dedication to the process of improvement which will involve them not only in examining their own practice but also in changing it as well.

School improvement research differs from research

dealing with school effectiveness because it seeks both to improve and to understand the effectiveness of schools and classrooms. It focuses on raising achievement by placing emphasis on the teaching and learning processes and those factors that support it. School improvement is most efficient when a clear and practical attention for development is combined with work on the internal conditions of the educational institution, as Hopkins et al. (1997) point out. In contrast, school improvement is usually connected with each school and colleges, and relies on the professional experiences of teachers to name areas that need to be concentrated on for improvement. This has tended to lead to a stress on changes to processes and not directly on outcomes, and has typically been associated with qualitative and not quantitative evaluation (Creemers, 2001). The characterization that contrasts school effectiveness and school improvement can be seen in Table 1.

To summarise, school effectiveness concerns trying to find out what needs to be changed in schools if they are to become more effective, since school improvement concerns trying to find out how schools can change to make improvements.

Characteristics of the effective school

Establishing the characteristics of effective schools has long been considered an important issue. Since the mid 1970s a number of studies have focused on this concept. In the mid 1970s in Britain and elsewhere there was a considerable amount of studies undertaken to uncover the characteristics of effective educational institutions. According to Creemers (1994) about 15% of the differences between students' achievements are the result of differences between schools. Reid et al. (1986: 5-32) note a range of factors that have been identified by different studies as being linked to school effectiveness. Though it is not doubted that there must be many interacting causes for a school to be effective, it is sensible to believe that some factors are more important than others in establishing and support the conditions for school effectiveness.

Focusing on the situation in the UK, but drawing on research and inspection evidence from around the world, Sammons et al. (1996), Harris (1996) and others have analysed the effectiveness of the schools and the ways in which they differ in their approaches. Some British researchers such as Rutter et al. (1979), Rutter (1980), Reynolds et al. (1976), Reynolds (1982, 1985), and Mortimore et al. (1988), and a number of American researchers such as Purkey and Smith (1983), Levine and Lezotte (1990) as Reid et al. (1986: 4) state "have published books and research reports with similar findings, all of which support the notion that schools are

Table 1. The contrast between school effectiveness and school improvement (after Reynolds et al.1993) cited in Harris et al (1998:131).

School effectiveness	School improvement
1.Focus on School	1.Focus on each teacher or groups of teachers
2.Focus on school organization	2.Focus on school processes
3.Data driven, with emphasis on outcomes	3.Rare empirical evaluation of effects of changes
4.Quantitative in orientation	4. Qualitative in orientation
5.Lack of knowledge about how to carry out change strategies	5.Concerned with change in schools exclusively
6.More concerned with change in pupil outcomes	6.More concerned with journey of school improvement than its destination
7.More concerned with schools at a point	7.More concerned with schools as changing
8.Based on research knowledge	8.Focus on practitioner knowledge

Table 2. The characteristics of effective schools identified by Purkey and Smith, (1983) and Sergiovanni (1995).

Characteristics of effective schools outlined by Purkey and Smith (1983)	Characteristics of effective schools identified by Sergiovanni (1995)
1. Curriculum-focused school leadership;	1. Student centred
2. Supportive climate within the school;	2. Offer academically rich programs
3. Emphasis on curriculum and teaching;	3. Practice shared leadership
4. Clear goals and high expectations for students;	4. Provide instructions that promote student learning
5. A system for monitoring performance and achievement;	5. Have positive school climate
	6. Foster collegial interaction
6. Ongoing staff development and in-service training;	7. Have extensive staff development
7. Parental involvement and support;	8. Foster creative problem solving
8. LEA support.	9. Involve parents and the community

different and can have an important impact on the lives of their pupils, teachers and communities". After conducting a study of secondary school practice based on a sample of 185 schools the HMI summarizes that an effective school is one which is efficiently governed by leaders who have the ability to stimulate others, have a vision and supported by important agents. They state that there must be effective communication as well as clear shared goals and objectives... good environment that encourages pupils to express their views and interact with the teachers, fostering the pupils' personal and social development, qualified staff and well deployed expertise (DES, 1988 cited in Reynolds and Cuttance, 1993: 14; Purkey and Smith, 1983) cited in Reid et al., 1990:18) and Sergiovanni (1995) name some of the characteristics of effective schools shown in Table 2.

Commenting on the above studies, Reynolds and Cuttance (1993: 13) note that it is "important not to over-emphasize the extent of the agreement between the various British studies and between these British studies and the international literature." Rutter et al. (1979) found that high levels of turnover among school staff is the

result of levels of effectiveness in schools, which contradicts Reynolds's (1976, 1982) findings about high levels of staff turnover and ineffectiveness. In a similar vein, as Reynolds and Cuttance (1993: 13) note, "the consistent American findings on the link between frequent monitoring of pupil progress and academic effectiveness is not in agreement with the findings of Mortimore et al. (1988) that pupil monitoring which involves frequent testing of children is a characteristic of ineffective school".

Factors affecting the effective school

Any attempt to improve the standards of education must focus on a number of interrelated factors, related to the curriculum, the skills of education professionals, educational supervision, the quality of financial provision, school buildings and co-operation of and with parents and the wider community. It is often believed that educational development and change is dependent on the quality of teaching and of school management. The duties

Table 3. A comparison of Lezotte's (1990) and Mortimore et al's factors of school effectiveness (1988).

Factors of effective schools (Mortimore et al., 1988)	Factors of effective schools (Levine and Lezotte, 1990)
1.Purposeful leadership of the staff by the head	1.Productive school climate and culture
2.The involvement of teachers	2.Focus on student acquisition of central learning skills
3.The involvement of the deputy head	3.Appropriate monitoring of student progress
4.Consistency among teachers	4.Practice-oriented staff development at the school site
5.Structured sessions	5.Outstanding leadership
6.Intellectually challenging teaching	6.Salient parent involvement
7.A work-centred environment	7.Effective instructional arrangements and implementation
8.Limited focus within sessions	8.High rationalized expectations and requirements for students
9.Maximum communication between teachers and pupils	9.Other possible correlates
10.Thorough record keeping	
11.Parental involvement	
12A positive climate	

and responsibilities of school professionals involve enhancing the quality of life, and helping students to show self-awareness, develop themselves, and understand wider issues involving their society and culture. Therefore, education authorities consider teaching an investment in the future of their society, as it helps to nurture and develop the minds of future generations. In order to improve teaching and, therefore, improve the education system as a whole, and to be able to recognize problems and know how to deal with them, it is important to investigate factors which can have an effect on teaching. Al-Bashaireh (1995) considers that identifying factors that affect teaching will help to provide an accurate picture for parents and those who have responsibility for the education of children. Salamah (1995) supports Al-Bashaireh's (1995) idea, stating that when the factors affecting teaching are made clear, satisfactory solutions can more easily be found.

The earliest major study conducted in this area in the UK was undertaken by Rutter et al. in 1979. They compared the 'effectiveness' of ten secondary schools in inner London in a number of student outcome areas. In doing so they reached a similar conclusion to that in the survey conducted by the HM inspectorate of Education. Both studies found that effective schools benefit from strong leadership and a 'climate' that facilitates growth.

Rutter et al. (1979) found that 'effective schools' are characterized by factors "as varied as the degree of academic emphasis, teachers actions in lessons, the availability of incentives and rewards, good conditions for pupils, and the extent to which children are able to take responsibility". In reference to this study by Rutter et al. (1979), Reynolds and Cuttance (1993: 8) point out that the "study found that certain factors are not associated with overall effectiveness, among them class size, formal academic or pastoral care organization, school size,

school administrative arrangements... and the age and the size of school buildings".

Levine and Lezotte (1990) have produced a general list of the factors of the effective school (presented in Table 3) which is based on 400 studies of school effectiveness in the United States (cited in Reynolds et al., 1998: 113). However, Mortimore et al. (1988: 250-6) only found twelve factors that are comparable with the factors mentioned by Levine and Lezotte (1990).

Commenting on a similar list, Fullan (1985: 400) says that these factors "say nothing about the dynamics of the organization", and goes on to state that: "To comprehend what successful schools are really like in practice, we have to turn to additional factors which infuse some meaning and life into the process of improvement within the school".

Fullan (1985: 400) goes on to note that there are four 'fundamental factors' which lie behind processes that are a success:

- 1- A feel for the process for leadership
- 2- A guiding value system
- 3- Intense interaction and communication
- 4- Collaborative planning and implementation

These process factors according to Fullan (1985: 400) instigate the "dynamics of interaction and development of the earlier organization variables".

However, Macbeath and Mortimore (2001:7) present a later study conducted by Sammons et al. in 1996, in the subject of meta-analysis, where the factors of effective schools were reduced to the following 11 prominent factors:

- 1- Professional leadership
- 2- Shared vision and goals

- 3- A learning environment
- 4- Concentration on teaching and learning
- 5- Purposeful teaching
- 6- High expectations
- 7- Positive reinforcement
- 8- Monitoring progress
- 9- Pupil rights and responsibilities
- 10- A learning organization
- 11- Home-school partnership.

To summarize it, effectiveness of any school depends mostly on the following three factors:

- 1- Effective leaders
- 2- Effective teachers
- 3- Effective environment

Role of the school leader in school effectiveness

“The issue of leadership for school improvement is now high on the research and policy agendas of many countries” (Lambert, 1998: 5). The success of school improvement is dependent upon the way in which it is directed and managed internally (Harris, 2002). The principal of a school in Saudi Arabia is the leader of a school who directs, administrates and manages human and material educational resources as well as performing other administrative tasks and representing the authority role within a school. For this importance of this multi function role of a school principal, the title ‘leader’ is used by the researcher in this study instead of the term ‘a school principal’ as he/she is considered the leader of a school. This part of the literature review will highlight the role of the principles as leaders in the schools effectiveness:

Maintaining a consistent set of targets is essential to success, as Sammons et al. (1997: 199) notes: “Leadership helps to set up a clear and consistent vision for the school, which emphasizes the prime purposes of the school as teaching and learning and is highly visible to both staff and students. Benefitting from involved guidance and vision from leaders, schools are able to build and focus on sensible goals with regard to their progress. However, as Creemers (2001) argues, it is important to encourage teachers to set targets together, and to work towards these targets together.

An effective leader adds value to the work of their staff, as well as being responsible for it by contributing to outcomes and giving direction to help the group (Reynold and Cuttance, 1996). This requires involvement in the activities of the classroom, including curriculum, and monitoring students’ progress and teaching strategies. Teachers tend to undervalue the achievements of the school and thereby to detract from the effectiveness of

the learning environment in achieving its goals. This will add value and motivation to the work of these members of staff. Under such guidance, education professionals can learn the most effective teaching methods to enable effective learning, so that teachers and students alike will be encouraged to meet as much as possible and schools can develop a purposeful approach to their progress (Cornforth and Evans, 1996).

Leadership is collective and it requires the participation of everyone in an institution. A good leader can build these diverse relationships with others, and knows how to overcome the difficulties that inhere in teaching and learning practices. Sharing in endeavours that require the collaboration of school staff should be encouraged. This means working and learning side by side with the same last targets. An important aspect of this model of leadership is that it concerns “the ability of those within a school to work together, constructing meaning and knowledge collectively and collaboratively” (Lambert, 1998: 5). Hopkins et al. (1996: 177) points out that “successful schools create collaborative environments which encourage involvement, professional development, mutual support and help in problem solving”. It concerns the environment in which work takes place and people focus on a shared aim. The learning environment of a school is as Reynolds et al cited in Harris et al. (eds) (1998: 129) state “the ethos of a school is partly determined by the vision, value and goals of the staff ... and also by the climate in which pupils work”.

Fullan (1985, 400) states that intense “interaction and communication” are important to good leadership, to enable the easy and full transmission of important information, as “this reduces uncertainty and the risk of rumour and misinformation filling the vacuum caused by stoppages in the flow of information” (Dunham, 1995: 120). As Harris et al (2003) note this kind of leadership shows a sharing out of power and a new type of authority within the organization.

The leader of a school must be able to competently oversee resources. To make sure that their school is effective, leaders should use the resources at their disposal (both physical and financial) with great care and efficacy, maintaining a focus on sustaining the curriculum. They should keep a checklist of resources and make sure they make allowances for differentiation and allow for the differences in requirements related to the ability levels and ages of pupils. In educational establishments, how they ration their money to cater for the human and material needs and meet their aims is of paramount importance. Everard et al. (2004: 10) argue that managers can solve many problems related to limited funds by looking after the resources a school does have. Bush and Middlewood (1997) go on to note that by placing emphasis on securing the means for learning, leaders can help all teachers to focus on students’

abilities to learn by creating the necessary environment, structures, resources and support to motivate staff and encourage creativity.

Leaders can aid in encouraging developments by taking risks, and by encouraging others to challenge their views about how things should be managed and what can be achieved. Teachers can be encouraged to search for better answers to problems at school (Tomlinson, 2004). Leask et al. (1999: 2) point out that "If [school leaders] show in their work that ICT is a genuinely useful tool, then their staff are more likely to accept the challenge of change and development which access to ICT brings". They can encourage teachers to test their circumstances to understand the need for change and the measures that are preferred for facing problems in the learning environment. Moreover, good leaders make it known to teachers why a particular plan is to be preferred to others to create an effective learning. Teachers must be encouraged to understand how the learning process occurs, and how to use effective teaching approaches to create an effective learning so that pupils and teachers are able to fulfil their potential (Cornforth and Evans, 1996).

Furthermore, sharing leadership positions and involving teachers in curriculum planning and the management of school affairs, and consulting teachers about other practical decisions in school is important for good school leadership. As Harris (2002: 30) points out that: "Essentially, school improvement necessitates conceptualization of leadership where teachers and managers engage in shared decision-making and risk-taking". To increase motivation, Bush and Middlewood (1997) state that it is essential to include teachers in organizing schools and the curriculum, which will lead them to work as a team. Involving teachers in these ways can bring about effective changes and as Harris (2002: 70-71) notes, these values are "derived from the explicit and shared values of a community". Moreover, as Field points out, leaders have the "intellectual ability to handle several issues and to integrate the range of skills, knowledge and understanding according to specific context and situations" (Field, 2000: 7).

An important factor of any effective school is a leader with "the ability to think creatively, to anticipate and forecast changes in the subject (internally or externally driven), and to help others prepare for and take greatest advantage of any changes" (Field, 2000: 6). Tomlinson (2004) agrees with Field (2000), pointing out that creative people or team leaders must be ready to alter a school's normal practices, which otherwise would only be able to give acceptable or traditional answers to challenges. However, Tomlinson (2004) suggests that if a leader is to be creative and successful he must not be afraid to alter or challenge an educational institution's routines and norms. This outlet for creativity motivates

staff and thus helps to build a sense of success in the institution (Bush and Middlewood, 1997).

It is important to support teachers to develop their abilities to perform effectively and motivate them in different ways to improve their performance attitude towards work through non-financial aspects such as training as the Teacher Training Agency, (TTA), (1998a: p.4) states, the role of the leader is "to provide professional leadership and management for a subject (or area of work) to secure high quality teaching, effective use resources and improved standards of learning and achievement for all pupils". Supporting teachers to perform as effectively as possible, and motivating them to build upon their performance can be achieved by successful and thorough training and rewards of a non-monetary nature. As Harris et al. (1998: 1) note, "Effective management should be central to the professional development of all teachers and lectures irrespective of their place within the organization". Leaders have a responsibility to limit teaching loads to allow for more effective teaching and learning. School leaders must employ their motivational skills to sustain good performance, build high morals and avoid overload (Bush and Middlewood, 1997). A school leader is responsible for limiting teaching loads, to enable the most effective teaching and learning to take place. The best leaders focus on establishing high morale, sustaining performance levels and avoiding problems related to the stresses of overwork (Bush and Middlewood, 1997).

Barriers facing leaders in creating effectiveness school

Several factors work together to diminish effectiveness in a school and reduce the levels of students' success. One of these barriers is the need for improved management skills. Any successful change or innovation will need direction and leadership. If school improvement 'fails' this is often because of failings in leadership within the school, or because leadership has been handed down to others who lack the skills or authority to take it forward (Harris, 2002: 19). Lack of training has been identified to be a major cause of some of the biggest problems experienced by schools (Dunham, 1995), as is lack of support to carry out the changes schools need to give adequate technical, professional and emotional support for teachers (Harris, 2002: 19). According to Bush and Middlewood (1997), an effective school will exist most easily with enough financial resources and time.

Trust is also something that leaders need to generate school effectiveness. Walker et al. (1998: 2) suggest that trust "is a necessary element for building a learning community". Without the ability to trust each other, full cooperation between teachers and senior management is

unlikely to occur. Mitchell and Sackney (2002) state that without trust, people focus attention on self-protection rather than learning, and school staff will not take the risks needed to set up successful changes in schools. Moreover, the school will be a place for self-preservation instead of motivation. When staff disagree about the aims and values of their school and figure not to follow through with preconceived aims through collaborative working practices, the leaders are rendered hopeless. As has been noted by Harris (2002: 19), "any change requires teachers to take part in planning and decision-making" and that can happen only by promoting "sharing ideas and the open exchange of opinions and experiences" (Harris, 2002: 109).

Harris (2002) notes that help from 'supporting agents' including inspectors, policy makers, educational consultants, researchers or LEA advisors can encourage or even force schools to improve by providing demands and suggestions for improvement. Therefore, the lack of external agents in schools can be a major barrier to effectiveness. Earl and Lee (1998) claim that the external agent of change can help in providing necessary extra support and training for schools as 'Just in time' in-service training of this variety has proven to be useful in school improvement programmes.

According to the characteristics of the effective schools, factors of effectiveness and the role of the leaders of schools that are presented above by the various studies, the researcher will be able to identify, justify and then conclude the standards of the schools that are involved in this study. The next section will present the research method that has been conducted for this study. This will be followed by an analysis which will discuss factors that help or disrupt the effectiveness of some Saudi School schools. Finally, some suggestions about how teachers and leaders can be helped and supported in creating effective schools, and then a conclusion will sum up the findings of the research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The above literature review has identified the characteristics of the effective schools, the roles of the leaders and the barriers they may face in the schools effectiveness. The starting point for a research study is at a philosophical level, the position of the researcher towards ontological, epistemological and methodological instances (Opie, 2004). Researcher's assumptions over these concepts will influence the choices on methodological approaches and methods (Opie, 2004). This raises a number of issues. One concerns the degree to which choice of methodology should be determined by the philosophy, resources or abilities of the researcher, another concern the degree to which such studies should be seen primarily as a means of individual development or whether ways can be found to disseminate and accumulate the results of such work. The main focus of this study will be:

1. To examine the factors to effectiveness in Saudi schools such as

teachers' professional needs, responsibilities, tasks, constraints, support, tension and job satisfaction and the teaching/learning environment.

2. To examine the role of the Saudi schools' leaders including their professional needs, responsibilities, tasks, constraints, support, tension and leaders' authority and power.

3. To determine the link between the effectiveness of the leaders and the effectiveness of the schools.

4. To offer suggestions for improvement through an increased focus on the role of the schools leaders.

Research frame work

A quantitative framework seeks to reach at conclusions from the data collected and then quantify and generalize them. As O'Neill (2006: online) points out "Generally, quantitative methods are designed to provide summaries of data that support generalizations about the phenomenon under study. In order to accomplish this, quantitative research usually involves few variables and many cases, and employs prescribed procedures to ensure validity and reliability". Quantitative framework is appropriate for the collection of data which is described by Harvey (2002: on line) as the "data which can be sorted, classified, measured in a strictly "objective" way - they are capable of being accurately described by a set of rules or formulae or strict procedures which then make their definition (if not always their interpretation) unambiguous and independent of individual judgments".

In contrast, qualitative frame work is used to understand a particular person's actions, "and the influence that this context has on their actions" (Maxwell, 1996: 17). Moreover, Maxwell (1996: 17) goes on to state that: "Qualitative research studies are sought in collecting and providing data about small number of cases or about a single-case. By using qualitative frame work, the researchers use methods as Straus and Corbin (1998:11) state enable them to "obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings...and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional research methods" In addition, to explore reasons and concepts, a qualitative method is used as it is more likely to suit complex social situations and enable the researcher to interpret the findings and provide alternative explanations (Morrison, 2002, p. 3-25).

The researcher considers the mixed methodology framework. This decision is taken by the notion of 'fitness for purpose' that governs the research design (Cohen et al., 2000: 27). The mixed methodology is used in this study because in combination they provide the best opportunity to address the questions set. Moreover, it makes the triangulation of the evidence possible, as well as that the various methods complete each other in investigating the research issues. It is in this sense ideally suited to this study. Robson (2002: 373) argues, "... you need not be the prisoner of a particular method or technique when carrying out an enquiry". It is thought that every method has its weakness, but weakness vary for methods; so combining methods will reduce weakness and have the advantage of strengths as Brewer and Hunter (1989: 16-17) put it "Our individual methods may be flawed, but fortunately the flaws are not identical. In this exploratory design, a diversity of imperfection allows us to combine methods not only to gain their individual strengths but also to compensate for their particular faults and limitations".

Since this study aims to provide information about the effectiveness of the schools in Saudi Arabia, the mixed methodology is the appropriate means to arrive to the conclusion that the researcher hopes to be useful in order to understand the factors that prevent the state schools efficiency and to enable

reliable policy recommendations to enhance the quality of Saudi education and ensure greater efficiency. The quantitative framework is used in this study to explore the factors that enhance or prevent the schools effectiveness through collecting data from large numbers of teachers and make generalizations of the conclusion that are reached from the collected data. The qualitative research method is appropriate for investigation of the strategies that the leaders of the state schools use in order to improve and enhance the performance of the schools to be more effective as Weinreich (1996: online) points out that "The messages and materials developed based upon the exploratory research should be pretested using both qualitative and quantitative methods so that the results provide depth of understanding as well as generalizability".

Briggs and Coleman (2007:29) state that "in combination they provide the best opportunity to address the question set, or specific sub-facets of the research topic" as Fraenkel and Wallen (2003: 443) comment: "Can qualitative and quantitative research be used together? Of course and often they should be... The important thing is to know what questions can be best addressed by which method or combination of methods". According to Brown and Dowling (1998: 83), "the adoption of a dual approach involving both qualitative and quantitative techniques can help in overcoming such tendencies to what we might refer to as naïve empiricism".

The research approach

There are many research approaches that might have been used to undertake a study of this nature. However, the survey approach is considered as being adopted for this study and start by identifying what is meant by it. In defining the survey approach, Hutton (1990, 8) wrote: "survey research is the method of collecting information by asking a set of questions in a predetermined sequence in a structured questionnaire to a sample of individuals drawn so as it is the most frequently used research method". A survey is a strategy that aims to provide a wide panoramic and detailed view of a topic (Denscombe, 2003, 31). Before looking in detail at the reasons that support this decision, it is important to consider briefly the other research approach.

With consideration to several research strategies, a case study approach seems to be infeasible for this study. Denscombe (2003: 32) claims that "case studies focus on one instance (or a few instances) of a particular phenomenon with a view to providing an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences or processes occurring in that particular instance". As a purpose and intention of this study, this method would only be useful if it is used as a "Follow Up" investigation which is used in relation to the survey and may intend to explain a certain phenomenon with a long term period. (ibid:11). In evaluating the case study as a research approach not to be adopted for this proposed study, the researcher needs to mention its disadvantage regarding the instance of generalization (Bell, 2005; Cohen et al., 2000; Denscombe, 2003; Opie ,2004). In addition, this approach focuses on "a single person, a group of people within a setting, a whole class, a department within a school" (Opie, 2004: 74). In other words, case studies do not use large samples but involve the exploration of a single instance or a narrow spectrum of instances. Moreover, it requires significant amounts of time and constant access to a team study. Methodology of this approach requires much expertise and skilful planning.

It would have been ideal for the researcher, as a teacher, to conduct an action research study, since its effect into the practice is greater. However, an action research is a cycle process of researching (Denscombe, 2003; Opie, 2004) that starts from the practice and finishes by changing it. Kemmis and Mc Taggart (1992), cited in Cohen et al., 2000: 227) claim that "to do an

action research is to plan, act, observe and reflect more carefully, more systematically, and more rigorously than one usually does in everyday life". There are some disadvantages in this approach such as the difficulty of generalizing findings that "originate from a bounded reality" and the difficulty researchers may encounter in trying to be free from bias (Denscombe, 2003). Being the researcher an individual is involved in collecting data and then generalizing the findings for once, this kind of approach is not appropriate for her study.

Turning now to consider the survey approach which is appeared to be suitable to the main objectives of this investigation, the information elicited from the group respondents is consistent in nature and expresses both real and professional points of view (Johnson, 1994). The survey approach allows information to be easily collected and as Bell notes (1999: 13) "analysed and patterns extracted and comparisons made". Furthermore, the researcher will then as Bell (1999: 13-14) states "be able to present the findings as being representative of the population as a whole". Surveys usually obtain data from a large spectrum of participant, which must be representative of the whole population. By studying the sample of a survey the researcher will be able to draw conclusions about the whole population and the information collected must be as far as possible (Bell, 2005). Because this study is conducted by an individual researcher with constraints of time and resources, the above features of the survey approach seem to be feasible for this study as it is the strategy that provides the researcher with a great quantity of data about the characteristics of the effective schools and the barriers that prevent some schools in Saudi Arabia from being effective through involving a wide number of teachers there in short time and less effort. It is mainly useful for those who seek to describe a phenomenon and to identify standards and relations between some aspects. The main elements of this approach stated by Cohen et al. (2000: 171) are:

1. gather data in an economical and efficient way;
2. gather numerical data that can be statistically processed;
3. make generalization from a great quantity of data;
4. involve a wide population.

The survey method was chosen because of all these reasons and the elements that follow will summarise the advantages of using this method:

1. The mentioned information is collected from various people to define and describe some characteristics of the population from which they are a part. The information is collected by asking questions (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1993: 343).
2. The responses of the group members form the data of the study (ibid).
3. The survey approach can result in a huge amount of information as Johnson states "cross-tabulated in many ways to produce a wealth of description" (Johnson, 1994: 18).

To sum up, despite the fact that the method used in this survey is viewed as giving the researcher the various and relative simplicity that help completing the study, the used method has some disadvantages including as Johnson, (1994:104) states "peoples' views, are ambivalent, sometimes because they feel they lack the information or understanding to make proper judgment" (Johnson, 1994:104). Further, Johnson, (1994) explains that the interpretation of the data in the survey should take into consideration the method's limitations. Nevertheless, it is viewed as being: "...essentially [...] a means by which we can document, analyse and interpret past and present attitudes and behaviour patterns" (ipid:104).

Research instruments

Considering several research strategies, the researcher decided to use a combination of research tools to acquire valid data free from any kind of bias and perception which she thought would reveal as much detail about managing effective schools. Relying only on one method "may bias or distort the researcher's picture of the particular slice of reality she is investigating" (Lin, 1967, cited in Cohen et al., 2000:112). By using triangulation, the researcher has aimed to address the issues of validity and reliability in relation to the research which the researcher will operate honestly to avoid bias analysis of the data collected which aimed to be valid and reliable. Semi-structured interviews in conjunction with questionnaire provide a means of "triangulation between methods" (McFee, 1992: 215) in order to confirm the validity of the research.

Semi-Structured Interview

The first research instrument to be selected is the semi-structured interview. It is considered as the most suitable instrument for the proposed research. There are a lot of interview types; such as; structured, unstructured, semi structured, formal and informal interview. Considering the nature of this study, the specific chosen technique was short, semi structured interviews. This type of technique allows the investigation to get the feelings, intentions, views, expectations, current anxieties, and previous experience of the sample to be in detail, and related to the research question. The semi-structured interview approach also allows reducing alignment as it does not trace answers which support ideas that are pre-conceived. In this type of interview, Bell (1993: 94) recommends to give the respondent the opportunity to talk freely about what is more significant and important to him/her than what is important to the interviewer.

Drever (1995,1) states that by using the semi structured interview, the researcher "sets up a general structure by deciding in advance what ground is to be covered and what main questions are to be asked". According to the interviewees' responses, 'semi-structured' interview helps the interviewers to be flexible and adaptable. Through interviewing, the researcher will try to explore the factors and barriers to effectiveness of the schools in Saudi Arabia. Despite their general structure, 'semi-structured' interview enables interviewers to be flexible and adaptable according to the interviewees' responses. In other words, a response to one question can lead to another question.

A key aim of this enquiry is to explore perceptions and investigate effective schools. The main benefit of using the interview is its flexibility to follow up the thoughts and ideas, check responses, and investigate and examine incentives and feelings. The response can be in the form of the tone of voice, facial expression, or hesitation which can provide information that the written response may not reveal. While questionnaire responses have to be taken at face value, in an interview responses can be developed and clarified (Bell, 1993). In this survey, the interviews were made intending to achieve the following aims;

1. To identify the main problems that face leaders in managing schools.
2. To be aware of current situation within Saudi state schools.
3. To explore the whole situation within the leading profession.
4. To gain insight into the factors that may currently affect effectiveness in Saudi Schools.

Interview sample

In order to help the progress of the research and obtain the

appropriate data, leaders of Saudi state schools will be interviewed. According to time constraints the researcher enabled to interview eleven leaders in order to obtain the appropriate data, which will help the progress of the research (appendix 4). The researcher will try to discover the approaches that leaders use in managing the schools, and what they need to be more effective. The questionnaire and the letter were designed in English and translated into Arabic (appendices 5 and 6) for respondents in Saudi Arabia. The interview samples were the leaders of the same schools that were concerned. However, the researcher was able to interview 11 leaders of the 12 schools, 6 females and 5 male leaders as one of the leaders was unavailable.

Questionnaire

In order to approach the subject of teachers' perception of the leader's role and effectiveness of the schools, a questionnaire was considered to be the most effective research tool due to its relative ease of distribution. It carries some advantages, one of which is that this kind of method is appropriate for researchers who want to get reliable data on a large scale in a systematic way (Gay, 1992). At its best, the questionnaire allows information recording, analysis and interpretation (Bell, 1999) and is "a good way of collecting certain types of information quickly and relatively cheaply" (ibid: 119). Furthermore, questionnaire empowers the respondent (Johnson, 1994, 37) and this was deemed vital when considering the potentially sensitive leadership matter. Johnson points out that there are two major considerations that should be discussed when designing the questionnaire:

1. understanding the questionnaire by the respondents and to find it suitable to his\ her experience and knowledge;
2. the researcher should try out the questions before distributing the questionnaire in the final form (Johnson, 1994: 37)
3. Moreover, the questionnaire gives the researcher many types of questions that enable her to get relevant information. The question types include; the Quantity, Ranking, Grid, Category, List and Scale system questions. In this study, all the questions used are based on the scale system. This type of analysis is known as the Likert Scale which helps analyzing the respondent's "strength of feeling and attitude" for a statement (Bell, 1999:185). The Likert scale may be of the most straight scale devices and as he writes, "Ask respondents to indicate strength of agreement or disagreement with a given statement or series of statements on a five- or seven- point range" (Bell, 1999: 186).

Although, the researcher thought that the questionnaire is an adequate research instrument for the study, it is noted that using this research instrument has some disadvantages. Bell (1999) and Johnson (1994) stated that questionnaires should not be so long because this may increase the high non-response rate. Moreover, questionnaires do not let the respondents explore the questions clearly. Instead respondents are inclined to a structured focus more than unstructured one. Nevertheless, researchers found out that using both questionnaires and interview, a lot of the negative effects of using questionnaire alone are removed.

Questionnaire sample

12 state schools were chosen randomly, four schools of each level of boys' and girls' state schools from different areas in Jeddah city in Saudi Arabia (Table 4) and number of correspondents) and sent a copy of the questionnaire to twenty teachers in each of these

Table 4. A list of the schools concerned and number of correspondents.

Level of schools	Female schools	Male schools	Distributed questionnaire
Elementary level	EGS1	EBS1	40
	EGS2	EBS2	40
Intermediate level	IGS1	IBS1	40
	IGS2	IBS2	40
Secondary level	SGS1	SBS1	40
	SGS2	SBS2	40
Total	6	6	240

schools.

Piloting procedures

To purify and consolidate the questionnaire, and to recognize and overcome any potential problems in distributing and completing the questionnaire, it was necessary to guide the questionnaire. Johnson (1994:39) recommends that the respondent pilots for the questionnaire be normally qualified persons. Therefore, three Saudi teachers studying in the UK were asked to pilot the questionnaire (all of them were eligible to participate in the study). Those teachers were asked to lead as they; (a) have an experience to control research instruments, (b) have undertaken similar post graduate courses, and (c) have statistical and analytical understanding and knowledge.

The teachers were supported by the objectives of the study besides the above listed items, (Bell, 1999: 128). The pilots gave the researcher confidence in the compatibility of the instruments to be used in the basic field of work. Moreover, it is believed that this procedure may help. After piloting the questionnaire, its order was refined so as to allow more reasonable stream open-ended response with enough space to note down their opinions freely.

Questionnaire procedures

After obtaining permission from the Saudi Ministry of Education to conduct the questionnaires among the teachers, the researcher travelled to Saudi Arabia to collect data. The questionnaire was distributed and collected personally from the head teacher at each school. The reason was to make sure that all questionnaires were completed. According to Peil et al. (1982) there is a greater likelihood of obtaining a higher response rate when questionnaires are handed out in person. Since the time of distributing and collecting the questionnaire was the time of pupils' exams, the researcher faced difficulties in gathering the data as all teachers were busy in marking the exam. However, most of the interviewees were helpful and cooperative because they were excited about the topic.

Alternative research instruments

Diaries

In this survey, the researcher rejected using the diaries as research instruments because there was no requirement in this study.

Additionally, diaries oblige a quite heavy demand on the teachers who accept to co-operate and was rejected for research being conducted for this purpose. Collecting data from diaries is not feasible and consume the teachers' time consuming (Bell, 1999: 147). Holly (1984) cited in Bell (1999: 150) states that the diary method is a problem as:

"...diary writing is interpretative, descriptive, on multiple dimensions, unstructured, sometimes factual and often all of these, it is difficult to analyse, and it is not easy to separate thoughts from feelings from facts".

Observation

Observation also can be a "powerful research tool" (Moyle, 2002: 172). A combination of the interview and observation is beneficial; as Marshall and Rossman note, "combined with observation, interviews allow the researcher to understand the meanings that people hold their everyday activities" (Marshall and Rossman 1999: 108). Moreover, "the body language is considered as a very important factor, which contributes to the understanding of the validity of the responses given in an interview" (Drever 1995: 3). However, these features of observation are not significant for the purposes of this study. It was decided not to use it due to lack of experience in the techniques and the "high demand of time", as noted by (Moyle, 2002: 174).

Reliability and validity

Bell (1987: 50-51) quoted in Bush, 2002: 60) states that reliability is "the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions" and demonstrates that 'the operations of a study can be repeated, with the same results'. Moreover, reliability is defined as "the probability that repeating a research procedure or method would produce identical or similar results" (Bush, 2002:60). According to Cohen et al. (2007: 151) "One way of controlling reliability is to have a highly structured interview, with the same format and sequence of words and questions for each respondent".

In contrast, validity, according to Sapsfords and Evans (1984: 259) quoted in Bush, 2002: 65) is "the extent to which an indicator is a measure of what the researcher wishes to measure". It shows "us whether an item or instrument measures or describes what it is supposed to measure or describe" (Bell, 2005: 117). Cohen et al. (2007: 151) add that "The most practical way of achieving greater validity is to minimize the amount of bias as much as possible. The

sources of bias are the characteristics of the interviewer, the characteristics of the responder, and the substantive amount of questions”.

About trust and reliability, the researcher used semi-structured interviews in the current study. This kind of interview has a general structure that is explained clearly in the interview, moreover, it includes open-ended and close-ended questions. This kind of interview enables the researcher to collect real and true information about people's opinions and circumstances and to discover their motives and experiences deeply (Dever, 2003: 1). Because of this, the researcher developed a schedule based on the research questions for the leaders to achieve trust and reliability (appendix 2).

Bias

Bias can be reduced by using a schedule for an interview. Using a schedule can guide the interview and remind the researcher of the state and condition of the discussion. It also as Dever (2003: 18) notes “guarantees consistency of treatment across a set of interviews, which allows you to compare peoples' answers to questions which you have posed in the same way to everyone”.

Additionally, the schedule of interview was managed to ensure its fineness. The previous objective was realised by eliciting interviews from volunteers that would not take part in the study. In this method, the author had the opportunity to get rid of obscure, perplexing or insensitive questions and to check the time needed for each interview considering the importance of not being monotonous, and being sure that trust and privacy were emphasised (Opie, 2004: 115). Within this pilot study, the researcher decided to produce more indications and decrease the number of questions so as to accomplish a more structured interview, hence, decreasing alignment and the needed time in order not to make the leaders to be annoyed, (Appendix 2).

Statistical design method

For the objective of this study, the questionnaires were designed by following the Likert Scale system. The questionnaire was intended to measure the attitudes and strengths of the respondents' feelings on the subject area. Every statement had a five-scale, point system; for example (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) undecided, (4) agree and (5) strongly agree. The questions for each statement were coded and data-coded tables of the findings were inserted into the computer using Excel spread sheet, tables and bar charts. The findings were also analysed and produced in computer printout and frequency table formats from which the researcher obtained some of the following data:

1. Totals
2. Averages
3. Frequencies

For the interviews, statements of the respondents were analysed and compared to find similar key phrases and words. After that, a comparison was made between the findings of the questionnaire and the schedule of the interview (Bell, 1999; Johnson, 1994), to show trends.

Ethical issues

Some ethical issue will be followed in this study in order to avoid any risks to the participants involved in the investigation as Bell

(1999: 38) states that there are: “... Different types codes of practice or protocols which require researchers to ensure that participants are fully aware of the purpose of the research and understand their rights”. General agreement is protected by the researchers as “the interests of the participants by ensuring the confidentiality of information that is given to them” (Denscombe, 2005: 136).

Therefore, letters with each transcript of the interview questions (appendix 1) and with each questionnaire (appendix 3) were forwarded to each respondent. Knowledge of the researcher's identity is provided in the letter with brief information about the research study, its purpose and what are the possible benefits gained from it.

In addition, the participants' identity and the name of the specific schools in which the research will take place will not be given in, all information was coded for filing in order to maintain the anonymity of the investigation. Johnson (1994: 81) suggests that: “...job titles rather than names should be referred to, as this stresses the professional rather than the personalized input which individuals have made to your research”.

However, the study of value-added data made it possible to observe which schools were effective or ineffective. It would have been valuable and interesting to not only identify the effective schools but also ineffective, and make comparison between them. Furthermore, Busher (2002) states that “Questionnaire and surveys like interviews are intrusive and their questions can be distressing for participants if they are asked to confront aspects of their work or lives they may find uncomfortable” (ipid: 81).

Therefore actions were taken, (for example, explanatory letter, gaining permission) to ensure willing response and to create a research study with reliable and valid outcomes.

The next section will present analysis which will discuss factors that help or disrupt the effectiveness of the schools, some suggestions as to how teachers and leaders can be helped and supported in creating effective schools, and then a conclusion will sum up the findings of the research.

FINDINGS

The aim of this study is to assess whether or not the state schools in Saudi Arabia are effective. In this section the evidence gathered from the various research tools employed will be presented as well as detailed descriptions of the results from the questionnaire to show trends and summaries of the interview responses. Comparison is made between the results of the questionnaire and the information obtained from the interviews. The discussion will be informed by the literature reviewed earlier and the research questions.

Questionnaire findings

As previously noted, the questionnaire was distributed to teachers of 12 state schools chosen randomly. These included four schools of each level of boys and girls from different areas in Jeddah city in Saudi Arabia. Although around 240 questionnaires were distributed, only 179 of them were received as shown in Table 5.

Although, the main idea of this section is to discuss the

Table 5. A list of the schools concerned and number of correspondents.

Level of schools	Female schools	Male schools	Distributed questionnaire	Collected questionnaires
Elementary level	EGS1	EBS1	40	31
	EGS2	EBS2	40	27
Intermediate level	IGS1	IBS1	40	26
	IGS2	IBS2	40	37
Secondary level	SGS1	SBS1	40	28
	SGS2	SBS2	40	30
Total	6	6	240	179

Table 6. Distribution of the research sample by sex.

Level of schools	Female respondents	Male respondents	Total
Elementary level	35	23	58
Intermediate level	40	23	63
Secondary level	36	22	58
Total	111	68	179
percent	0.62	38	100

Table 7. The respondents' age.

Age	Frequency	percent
20-30	5	0.03
31-40	81	0.45
41-50	86	0.48
Missing value	7	0.03

Table 8. Respondents' qualification.

Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Master Degree	8	0.04
Ed BA Degree	101	0.57
Non-Ed BA degree	25	0.13
Higher Diploma	45	0.26
Total	179	100

factors that affect effectiveness of Saudi state schools in Jeddah city, a short section on respondents' personal and general information will be also presented. Therefore, the components of this section will be presented as follows:

1. Analysis of Respondents' Personal and General Information.
2. Resources and Facilities within the School.
3. Learning Environment

4. Factors to Teachers' Effectiveness
5. Leaders' Roles in the School Effectiveness.
6. Barriers to effectiveness

Respondents' personal and general information

Respondents' sex

In this part some information will be provided regarding respondents' age, sex, qualification, experience, and salary. Of the total sample of 179 teachers in twelve schools, there were 111 female teachers (62%) and 68 male teachers (38%) in the sample of respondents (Table 6).

Respondents' respondents' age

The respondents' age is shown in Table 7.

Respondents' qualification

Respondents' qualifications ranged from Higher Diplomas to Master Degrees. It was found that the great majority of the respondents held a Bachelor Degree. As shown in Table 8, of the 179 teachers who were surveyed, only 0.04% reported that they have a Master Degree, 0.57% reported that they have a BA/Ed Degree, 0.13 % have a Non-Ed BA degree and the last portion, who form 0.26%

Table 9. The respondents' experience.

Years of experience	Frequency	percent
1-5	6	0.03
6-10	60	0.33
More than 10	113	0.63

Table 10. The respondents' salary in Saudi Riyals.

Salary in Saudi Riyal	Frequency	Percent
6000-9000	54	0.30
More than 9000	114	0.64
Missing value	11	0.06

have Higher Diplomas.

Respondents' experience

The respondents reported varying amounts of previous teaching experience. More than half of them had more than 5 years experience. Only around 12% reported 15 years or more of experience.

Table 9 shows 6 teachers had less than 5 years of experience forming only 0.03% of the total sample, 33% reported 6-10 years of experience and 63 % reported more than 10 years of experience.

Respondents' salary

Regarding the respondents' salary, as it is shown in Table 10, apart from 11 of the surveyed teachers who did not respond to this part of the question, it was found that none of the respondents who were surveyed in this study receive less than 6000 Riyals a month while those whose salary are 6000-9000 make up 30 and 64% have more than 9000.

Just less than 19% of the teachers reported that they had received in-service training.

Presentation, explanation and interpretation of data

In this and the following three sections, teachers were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement (or undecided) with each item of the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to rate their response according to an accompanying scale: Strongly Disagree (SD); Disagree (D); Undecided (U); Agree (A); Strongly Agree (SA). The results are summarized in Table 11 with both strongly agree and agree as a positive opinion and disagree and strongly disagree as a negative. For research purposes,

this section is divided into three parts:

The first part is concerned with factors related to the curriculum, financial resources, school buildings, facilities, laboratories and school libraries, and equipment and teaching aids (12 statements). The overall results are presented in Table 11.

Teachers' perception of resources and facilities within the school

Table 11 shows that the majority of teachers (39, 35 and 38%) disagree that the curriculum content, the adequacy of the teaching aids, the availability of the financial resources and the adequacy of the class size are good while only about one third of the respondents believed the opposite. Regarding the school building, although more than half of the sample agreed that the school buildings are good, 33% of them believed that the facilities in schools are not adequate for teaching and learning. 44% of the respondents strongly disagree that neither the school library has sufficient and appropriate books nor the school laboratory contains adequate equipment.

The situation of the insufficient resources in the concerned schools identifies with Bush and Middlewood (1997)'s opinion as it prevents teachers' motivation and affects their creativity. Moreover, an effective school will exist more easily with sufficient financial resources and time (Bush and Middlewood, 1997).

Teachers' perception of the learning environment

Table 12 reveals that the majority of the respondents (35%) strongly disagreed with the existence of the relationship between the schools and parents. Also 44% of the respondents disagree with the existence of the students' self-esteem while according to Mortimore et al. (1988) Levine and Lezotte (1990) and Sammons et al. (1996), the students' self-esteem and home-school partnership are considered important factors to school effectiveness.

On the contrary, 38, 51 and 36% of the respondents agree with having a collaborative environment, the existence of good school management and a good staff relationship in their schools. These agree with Hopkins et al. (1996: 177) who point out that, "successful schools create collaborative environments which encourage involvement, professional development, mutual support and assistance in problem solving". In addition, this situation is matched with Bush and Middlewood (1997) who note that by the unavailability and inadequacy of the teaching and learning facilities teachers are unable to focus on students' abilities to learn.

Table 11. Teachers' perception of resources and facilities within the learning environment.

The following are available in your school:	Strongly disagree (1%)	Disagree (2%)	Undecided (3%)	Agree (4%)	Strongly agree (5%)
Good curriculum content	0.29	0.39	0.01	0.15	0.15
Adequate teaching aids	0.25	0.35	0.01	0.30	0.07
Availability of the financial resources	0.32	0.35	0.01	0.20	0.10
Adequate class size	0.33	0.38	0.005	0.15	0.14
Good school building	0.29	0.33	0.02	0.51	0.11
School library has sufficient and appropriate books	0.44	0.31	0.01	0.11	0.11
School laboratory has adequate equipment	0.44	0.30	0.02	0.11	0.11

Table 12. Teachers' Perception of the learning environment.

The following are available in your school:	Strongly disagree (1%)	Disagree (2%)	Undecided (3%)	Agree (4%)	Strongly agree (5%)
Good school/parents relationship	0.28	0.35	0.03	0.21	0.10
Existence of the students' self-esteem	0.16	0.44	0.01	0.35	0.01
Collaborative environment	0.13	0.21	0.02	0.38	0.18
Good school management	0.10	0.18	0.01	0.51	0.18
Good staff relationship	0.18	0.21	0.01	0.36	0.21

Table 13. Factors to teachers' effectiveness.

In your work you are	Strongly disagree (1%)	Disagree (2%)	Undecided (3%)	Agree (4%)	Strongly agree (5%)
Provided with technical support to enhance your performance	44	16	2	24	11
Assisted in problem solving	13	16	6	23	40
Not over loaded	41	32	7	10	8
Granted autonomy in choosing what suits students	46	31	1	13	6
Recognized for your accomplishment	29	30	6	18	17
Shared in organizing the school	12	17	5	34	30
Provided with enough time to correct the pupils' work	53	28	5	6	6
Provided with enough time to be creative in your work	42	30	5	10	10
Receive in-service training to enhance your performance	41	36	2	10	8
Receive useful feedback from periodical evaluation	11	15	1	37	33
Obtain useful information and advice from your supervisor	8	11	2	43	34
Satisfied with your salary	11	16	5	33	32

Factors affecting teachers' effectiveness

Table 13 shows that the majority of the teachers strongly disagreed with being provided with the technical support

to enhance their performance (44%), not over loaded (41%), granted autonomy in choosing what suite students (46 %), provided with enough time to correct the pupils' work (53%), provided with enough time to be creative in

Table 14. Teachers' perception of their school leaders' roles to the school effectiveness.

c-Your leader:	Strongly disagree (1%)	Disagree (2%)	Undecided (3%)	Agree (4%)	Strongly agree (5%)
Establishes a clear and consistent vision for the school	6	7	4	42	38
Builds a learning community by trusting you	12	14	1	22	48
Monitors the students' progress	8	13	2	20	55
Is highly visible to both staff and students	6	11	4	39	37
Engages the teachers in the decision-making	24	18	3	25	39
Uses the financial resources with great care and efficacy	6	21	5	20	45
Solves problems of limited financial problems	12	18	2	23	43
Achieves success in continuing development of the school.	10	11	2	38	36
Focuses on building high morale	10	5	1	49	43
Raises the teachers' self- esteem	6	15	3	31	43
Monitors and evaluates teaching of the subject area	8	20	2	20	49
Offers adequate teaching resources	36	50	1	11	16
Ensures teaching rooms are suitable	13	16	3	25	40
Arranges useful meetings to teachers and the school as a whole	10	12	3	25	48

their work (42%) or receive in-service training to enhance their performance (41%) in respective while only 30% of them disagreed of being recognized for their accomplishment.

This situation of the teachers not being supported or satisfied with their work affects the students' learning as Bush and Middlewood (1997) note. By placing emphasis on securing the means for learning it enables teachers to focus on students' abilities to learn by creating the necessary environment, structures, resources and support to motivate staff and encourage creativity. Also, the lack of training has been identified to be a major cause of some of the biggest problems experienced by schools (Dunham, 1995).

However, 40, 34, 37, 43 and 33% of the teachers agreed with being assisted in problem solving, sharing in organizing the school, receive useful feedback from periodical evaluations, obtain useful information and advice from their supervisors and are satisfied with their salary. This situation is significant as it is considered one of the characteristics of a schools success as Hopkins et al. (1996: 177) points out, "successful schools create collaborative environments which encourage involvement, professional development, mutual support and assistance in problem solving".

It is important to support teachers to develop their abilities to perform effectively and motivate them in different ways to improve their performance attitude

towards work through non-financial aspects such as training. As the Teacher Training Agency (1998a: 4) states, the role of the leader is "to provide professional leadership and management for a subject (or area of work) to secure high quality teaching, effective use of resources and improved standards of learning and achievement for all pupils". In addition, supporting teachers to perform as effectively as possible, and motivating them to build upon their performance, can be achieved by means of successful and thorough training and rewards of a non-monetary nature. As Harris et al. (1998: 1) note "effective management should be central to the professional development of all teachers and lecturers irrespective of their position within the organization".

Teachers' perception of the school leaders' roles in school effectiveness

As it shown in Table 14, the majority of teachers agreed that being the leaders of their schools establishes a clear and consistent vision for the school, highly visible to both staff and students. Their leadership helps achieve success in continuing development of the schools and focuses on building high morale. These findings are significant because effective leaders as Sammons et al. (1997: 199) note, "...helps to establish a clear and

consistent vision for the school, which emphasizes the prime purposes of the school as teaching and learning and is highly visible to both staff and students maintaining a consistent set of targets is essential to success”.

The respondents also strongly agreed that the leaders of their schools build a learning community by trusting the staff, monitoring the students' progress, engaging the teachers in the decision-making, using the financial resources with great care and efficacy, solving the financial problems, raising the students' self-esteem, monitoring and evaluating teaching of the subject area as the rate rates shown in Table 14.

This agreement is linked to an argument raised by Cornforth and Evans (1996) that with the leader's guidance, education professionals can learn the most effective teaching methods to enable effective learning. Teachers and students alike will be encouraged to achieve as much as possible and schools can develop a purposeful approach to their progress. Also these findings are similar with Harris (2002: 30) who points out that, “essential school improvement necessitates a re-conceptualization of leadership where teachers and managers engage in shared decision-making and risk-taking.”

However, half of the respondents disagree that the school leader is able to offer adequate teaching resources. This situation is significant as the leader of a school must be able to competently oversee resources. To ensure that their school is effective, leaders should use the resources at their disposal (both physical and financial) with great care and efficacy, maintaining a focus on sustaining the curriculum. Leaders should keep a check-list of resources and ensure they make allowances for differentiation and allow for the differences in requirements related to the ability levels and ages of pupils. In educational establishments, how they ration their money to cater for the human and material needs and meet their objectives is of paramount importance. However, to implement the changes schools need in order to provide adequate technical, professional and emotional support for teachers (Harris, 2002: 19). Moreover, an effective school will exist most easily with sufficient financial resources and time (Bush and Middlewood, 1997).

Findings of the open-ended questions

Need to enhance school performance

The first open question of the questionnaire was, “What does the learning environment of the school where you work need to enhance its performance”? The teachers responded to this question in depth stating some of the schools' needs to enhance its performance such as:

The fulfilment of audio-visual aids inside the schools was convincing although, they represent only 10% of the sample. During the survey, SGS2 teacher A explained that “the condition of the facilities in the school is considered one of the most urgent and affecting factors for the teacher and the teaching process”. When the facilities are in a good condition, this improves the teaching process, while if they are poor or not sufficient the teaching process cannot be improved (3 teachers). EBS1 teacher B added that, “all schools should have adequate facilities before they open”. The fulfilment of teaching aids is considered essential and urgent for the efficiency of the teaching process. Schools should have special financial allocation to manage any shortage of resources or facilities (2 teachers).

Many teachers confirmed the necessity of school libraries to help students to enrich their opportunities for learning. Some teachers said that it is very important to get help and support from the parents in gaining knowledge of the pupils' lives. IGS1 teacher C presented this idea: “collaboration with parents enables teachers to build a better relationship with the pupils and promotes the teaching process. This collaboration with parents makes teachers recognize any extra help needed because of the student's own background at home”. Teachers believe that it is necessary for curriculum to be developed in a good quality and to fit the time available. Some teachers say that the curriculum should be shortened, and more relationships, should be made between the subjects taught and the pupils' lifestyle.

The policies and attitudes management showed towards teachers and the ability of the teachers to teach effectively are strongly related. The better the relationship between teachers and management, the more effective teachers will perform. This can be a strong deadlock affecting the teaching measurements. In order to improve the current situation of teachers at governmental schools, continuous training programmes should be carried out. Most of the teachers agreed that it is an important matter for the teachers to have experience and knowledge, to possess good teaching skills, to have good training programmes and to use effective methods. Only the qualified teacher is the person who can help students quickly, and produce a better harmony for the class. If special rooms were at hand for teaching different subjects, teaching would be more beneficial. The teachers also informed the researcher that it would be better to integrate related subjects, like basic science, so as to outline the curriculum and to facilitate understanding it for the learners. Many teachers agreed that there should be a connection between the yearly utility and the ability and competence of teachers to develop the teaching level or between the wages and the level of teaching.

Concerning the curriculum, many of those surveyed

discussed that the relation between the curriculum and the real needs of the learners is unsatisfactory. Also they added that there is no equilibrium in the curriculum, and that the time assigned is insufficient to cover the entire syllabus. Three teachers of SBS1 thought that it is necessary to develop a curriculum of a good quality that is appropriate to the time available. EBS 2 teachers believe that if the curriculum was shortened it would be better, and to allow more relationships between the subjects taught and the real life of the pupils. The teachers suggested that it would be useful for the teaching process, and for the education generally, to ensure enough teaching aids, to encourage co-operation between parents and the school, to reduce the weekly teaching hours, to simplify the curriculum, to unify the relation between the knowledge and skills with the real needs of learners, to strengthen teaching ability by providing teacher-training programmes, and to enhance parental perceptions of the importance of school (7teachers).

Many teachers agreed that, to improve the level of teaching, teachers should be provided with residence and health insurance to enable them to focus on their work effectively (10 teachers).

To keep their dignity and to be respected by the students, teachers emphasized that they should be supported by the Ministry of Education. They could be by forming policies related to the relation between the teacher and students, instead of publishing teachers' mistakes in the public newspaper, in order to control the students' bad behaviour against their teachers within and outside the school (9 teachers).

Respondents suggested that it would be beneficial for the teaching process and for education in general to:

1. Provide sufficient teaching aids.
2. Foster co-operation between parents and school.
3. Reduce weekly teaching hours.
4. Simplify the curriculum.
5. Link the knowledge and skills with the actual needs of students.
6. Enhance teaching ability through teacher-training.
7. Raise parental awareness of the importance of school.

Barriers to enhancing teachers' performance

Teachers encounter some barriers to enhance their performance. The respondent teachers discussed, in depth, many issues presented as follows:

About 40% of the teachers confirmed that too many managerial and monotonous burdens waste the time available for preparation and teaching. Moreover, it makes it difficult for them to focus enough time on teaching. When time is divided between teaching and too many administrative assignments, this makes it very

difficult for teachers to teach effectively. The teachers are influenced directly by the shortage of time available for actual work (30%). After reviewing the factors related to pupils and parents which affect the teaching process, the researcher found that more than 80% of the sample regarded that collaboration between schools and parents is not enough and around the same ratio emphasised that there is not enough. Communication between parents and teachers as IBS1 teacher C raised this idea when he said, "collaborating with parents helps the school to develop a better relationship with the pupils and strengthens the teaching process... in many cases it makes teachers decide if any more help is needed because of the student's particular background at home".

Concerning class sizes, there was disagreement. Most teachers emphasised that they are too big. 60% of the teachers claimed that the classrooms are packed out and do not have enough equipment for effective teaching and learning. A few objections appeared as to what is a good class size. The majority of teachers agreed that the standard number of pupils inside the class should be between 20 and 23, while a few said only 20-25 is the ideal number. One experienced teacher of SBS2 stated that "paying attention to an individual's attention is difficult when the teacher is obliged to control a huge number of pupils. Both the teacher and the pupils lose some of the understanding which is important in the relationship between the teacher and the pupil". When the class is overcrowded by pupils, a lot of different problems occur. The teachers thought that they are unable to assess what pupils have learnt if they are responsible for a large number of pupils. Not attending the training programme can be considered one of the most serious problems. Most teachers thought that the training for teachers is not enough. Most of teachers said that they did not receive enough support and assistance from their school management. It was discussed by EBS1 teacher D that, "the training during-service is effective especially if a good time is chosen to carry out this work, not when the teacher is too busy". Most of the respondent teachers thought that the relationship between teachers and the school management is beneficial, nevertheless, the great majority also appealed that teachers are not enhanced sufficiently to progress and develop their teaching.

If there are problems between teachers and management, this hinders the teachers' capability to introduce effective teaching. Teachers may be more able to decide what assistance and support they need, and more attentive to the problems they face with the school management, which may be hidden on a short supervisory visit.

The schools' management climate

Regarding the third open question of the questionnaire,

“Do you think that the management climate of this school could support the success of the education process?” it is found that the great majority of the respondents think that the management climate of this school could support the success of the education process. However, 0.09% of the respondents claimed that they are not satisfied with it and they explained the reasons by saying:

1. Most of leaders, in general not only in this school, had the job by favouritism as they are not qualified to deserve this position (1 teacher).
2. The leader is limited by rules and systems that he will be blamed by the Ministry of Education if he does not follow. All he has to do is follow and implement these rules even he has no knowledge about them and without have a look at the legal side (4 teachers).
3. The management is not built on scientific basis but always use bureaucratic means and the leaders believe that their ideas are the best. There is no chance for the teacher to introduce an opinion that does not match with theirs or he/she will be considered as an enemy or even a terrorist and should be fought (2 teachers).
4. The management is centralised and does not listen to the teacher's voice and there does not exist real solutions to school problems (5 teachers).
5. The financial resource is only used for what the management wants (4 teachers).
6. No availability of increments for good teachers as the hard worker and bad one are equal (7 teachers).
7. The management uses a routine system (2 teachers).
8. Leaders are not opened minded in the way they deal with teachers as future builders (3 teachers).
9. The effective teacher is not recognized by the management to be encouraged to continue his/her good work (6 teachers).
10. Because the rules are issued from the ministry without giving the school leader any power, all instructions are issued to show only the success of the school and not related to the educational process (5 teachers).
11. Any efforts from the management are done only for the leader's show and money is spent on the wrong places and no matter if that affects the teachers or the pupils (3 teachers).
12. The school leader does not attend the school regularly as he/she busy in doing some matters outside the school and believe that the existence of his deputies is enough after distributing duties between them (1 teacher).
13. The leader duty is only to satisfy the Educational Coordinator as he/she follows what he/she is ordered without looking at the teacher overload (3 teachers).
14. Most leaders watch teachers and reports any mistake to the Ministry of Education while the creative teacher does not receive any reward or recognition (4 teachers).
15. Leaders are stuck with the traditional methods and

Table 15. The respondents' experience.

Years of experience	Frequency
Less than one year	1
1-5	2
6-10	1
More than 10	6
Missing value	1

they are not ambitious or do not think creatively.

Clearly, if teachers are not satisfied with the management work, this impedes the teachers' effectiveness. Teachers are presumably more able to identify what help and support they need and are affected by the problems they have with the school management which may not be mentioned on a brief supervisory visit.

Interview findings

The analysis of respondents' personal and general information

The first section contained closed-ended questions about respondents' work status, qualifications, work experience, and related to the leaders' developmental performance training and authority supporting agents. The aim of this section is to obtain a clear picture of leader characteristics and to examine an independent demographic variable (9 items).

The findings of this section are as follows.

All the respondents had a Bachelor Degree. The respondents reported varying amounts of previous experience in leadership. More than half of them had more than 10 years experience. Only around 12% reported 15 years or more of experience (Table 15).

Regarding training in school management, eight of the leaders reported that they had received various in-service training in strategic and administrative leadership, while three of them did not mention that they had received any in-service training.

Nine of the interviewees stated that they have enough support from the Ministry of Education to help them run their schools properly while the rest said that do not.

Regarding the level of the power and the authority that school leaders have, it was found that 5 of them are able to get good staff in their schools who can serve the particular needs and wishes of their community while 6 leaders stated that they do not have this ability. Moreover, only 3 of them stated that they have the power and authority they need to make the changes in the school while the other 8 stated the contrary.

Improving staff performance

EBS2 leader ensures this procedure by saying, "it is necessary to reward the good teacher with a bonus incentive or at least by estimating his work and inform him that who does not work well to improve his work". IBS2 leader declared "If a teacher works to a higher standard than her workmates, it is necessary to show approval, her work should be estimated by gifting her extra salary or by giving a thanking certificate as an enhancement. This way can urge the teacher to go on working harder".

Another method that was presented by a leader is that by explaining to the team the new spreading of the presidency of education and allowing them to implement it (2 leaders). A good relationship amongst the staff, have confidence in them and work faithfully (3 leaders). Recognising and providing teachers with any new knowledge and assisting them with any equipments or tools that assist them to motivate their performance (1 leader). Transmitting teachers and staff to other schools to motivate their performance, introduce standard lessons and workshop inside the school, attend lessons notices and make discussions with teachers about their efficiency (3 leaders). Consider teachers' circumstances and collaborate with them to the most extent (4 leaders). Be trustful and allot works among the staff equally as possible (1 leader).

The majority of leaders agreed that in order to enhance the standard of the teachers' and their work, they need to be provided with residence and health insurance to enable them to focus on their educational goals effectively.

These findings gathered from interviews confirm Harris et al's opinion "effective management should be central to the professional development of all teachers and lectures irrespective of their position within the organization" (1998:1). Bush and Middlewood (1997) also argue that leaders have a responsibility to limit teaching loads to allow for more effective teaching and learning. School leaders must employ their motivational skills to sustain good performance, build high morals and avoid overload.

Actions to enhance staff contribution

The second broad question posed to the leaders was, "If a teacher is not contributing adequately to the school, what action are you able to take?"

Answering this question, three of the leaders recommended meeting the teacher alone and explaining some negative aspects related to his work for the first time and informing him/her officially for the second time if he/she does not change. Supervise and encourage him (5 leaders) and observe him/her (2 leaders). Creating a corporation of the efficient staff to find those who don't

participate enough and find solution to encourage and assist their work (1 leader).

After presenting the findings, it seems that leaders' actions towards inadequate staff contribution are supported by Cornforth and Evans (1996), who suggest that teachers must be encouraged to understand how the learning process occurs, and how to use effective teaching approaches to create an effective learning so that pupils and teachers are able to fulfill their potential. In addition, the leaders' actions with Reynold and Cuttance (1996) of the effective leader who adds value to the work of their staff, as well as being responsible for it by contributing to outcomes and giving direction to help the group and that of Cornforth and Evans (1996) who claim that under the leader's guidance, education professionals can learn the most effective teaching methods to enable effective learning, so that teachers and students alike will be encouraged to achieve as much as possible and schools can develop a purposeful approach to their progress.

Resources and facilities

The school building

School buildings are perceived to be inadequate for effective teaching and learning. EBS2 explained: "The facilities available for teachers did not give them the opportunity to use different teaching methods and strategies". 3 leaders found it poorly designed, without a scope for adding science facilities. SBS1 leader emphasised that by saying "Where schools are based in rented building, classrooms are small and overcrowded and are not equipped adequately for efficient teaching and learning". Some leaders complained about other facilities of the school buildings such as poor quality of toilet and washing facilities (3 leaders). Most of the leaders claimed that there are no conference or lecture halls, praying area or entertainment equipments (7 leaders).

The school library

All respondent leaders agreed that school libraries are necessary to help students to extend their chances of learning. However, only one of them was convinced by it while the rest leaders complained that the school library has not enough books. EGS2 leader introduced this idea by stating:

"There is a place for a library, but unluckily there is no person who is responsible for managing it. As a result, its role is insufficient and only a few students benefit from it".

There are not enough books to assist the students (4 leaders). Many of the books are inconvenient to the subject and age-rate (10 leaders). Resources for studying inside the school libraries need to be developed to encourage students to read (7 leaders).

The teaching aids

Concerning the teaching aids, only 4 of the managers found them enough while the other 7 managers were not convinced. They pointed to the shortage of teaching aids, and SBS1 leader stated: "even when the teaching aids are found, there is shortage of training on their usage".

Seven of the leaders mentioned that practical activities in laboratories lack of equipment and materials. Another critical problem is the facility of audio-visual aids inside the schools, which only 4 of the sample were satisfied with. Another problem was stated by the manager concerning the teachers which is the problem of work burden.

A need for additional human and material resources

Apart from one of the leaders who said that there was no need for additional human or material resources, the rest claimed that they need human resources such as deputy principal and tutors. Two leaders identified that they need some teachers to teach specific subjects and some to help teachers to work effectively, while another leader needs some administrative staff, computer processors and a general physician to take care of health problems within the school. Although human resources are considered a very important element within the school, material resources seem to have significant influence too. Eight leaders stated that they need material resources such as financial resources, computers to all students, English language laboratory, science subject laboratory, support from the Ministry of Education, students' parents and from wealthy members of the community(5) Leader SGS2 claimed that:

"All schools should be provided with adequate facilities before they are opened" and added "The school needs a high amount of money to be improved that can only be provided by business men or rich students' parents".

These findings seem to confirm the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) (1998a: p.4) report that to achieve an effective school it is important to "provide professional leadership and management for a subject (or area of work) to secure high quality teaching, effective use of resources and improved standards of learning and achievement for all pupils." Bush and Middlewood (1997)

also suggest these findings because all leaders noted that by placing emphasis on securing the means for learning, they can help all teachers to focus on students' abilities to learn by creating the necessary environment, structures, resources and support to motivate staff and encourage creativity.

Barriers to school effectiveness

The interviewees discussed in depth many issues regarding barriers to this kind of effectiveness in their schools. EGS1 leader emphasised that "The effectiveness and development of the school are impeded by lazy and careless teachers". SBS1 explained "Uncooperative and careless teachers delay the development of the school as they do not recognize the importance of changing".

Two other problems were mentioned by the leader regarding the teachers, one is the problem of work overload.

"By following the current methods of teaching, teachers have to stand for 18 h to explain 24 lessons each week as they have to speak for the same length of time which make them exhausted and uncreative", said IGS2 leader. There is a lack of cooperation between the parents and the school as IBS2 leader stated,

"there is insufficient financial and nonfinancial support from the parents and the society in general" and EGS1 leader explained "to gain information of the pupils' lives, it is necessary to create a good relation with the parents".

There are some other barriers mentioned by the leaders that are related to school facilities and resources such as financial resource (3leaders), quality of the school, shortage of administrative staff and expert staff who could enhance the level of the school (2 leaders), unavailability of supervision staff and halls to practise activities or sport exercises (2 leaders), unauthorised make training courses for students without obtaining an authority from the Coordinator of Education (2 leader), shortage of human resources (3 leaders) and that barrier mentioned by only one interviewed leader which was teachers' absenteeism.

Barriers to school effectiveness leaders can not do anything about

Regarding the barriers to effectiveness that the interviewed leaders can not do anything about were ineffective teachers who do not enjoy teaching but work for the money only (2 leaders), some routine regulation (3 leaders), the curriculum which is not linked to the actual needs of the students (4 leaders), the leaders lack of

autonomy to change things in the school (3 leaders), unavailability of a deputy leader.

“Teachers are obliged to stand for 24 lessons (18 h) per week and under the present procedures of teaching, they have to talk and discuss for the same length of time which makes him/her exhausted and uncreative”, stated IGS2 leader.

“the deputy leader of the school is a very important member in the school and his absence cause a big obstacles to the leader’s educational performance as the leader has to do all administrative and supervision works”, EGS2 leaders claimed.

The other barriers mentioned by the interviewees are the financial resources, mandating teachers to another school by the Ministry of Education, teachers’ position change and the teachers working hours (3 leaders).

The leaders’ answers come to agreement with Bush and Middlewood (1997) that an effective school will exist most easily with sufficient financial resources and with Harris (2002) who notes that the lack of external agents in schools can be a major barrier to effectiveness.

The findings from these interviews helped the researcher to construct her questionnaire as the main instrument of the study. Also taken into account in the preparation of the questionnaire were findings from previous literature.

Conclusion

This study focuses on investigating issues that are currently raising serious concerns in the education system in Saudi Arabia with regard to school effectiveness. In order to understand the factors that prevent its efficiency and to enable reliable policy recommendations to enhance the quality of Saudi education and ensure greater efficiency, the researcher conducts this research on the effectiveness of the schools by creating a comprehensive framework that helps to explain why efforts to increase effectiveness succeed or fail, and what promotes or hinders effective school improvement.

In order to fulfil the aims and objectives of this study the researcher used the following methods and procedures. A survey approach was used, with a sample of 179 teachers and 11 school leaders. Research instruments included a questionnaire (quantitative data) and interviews (qualitative data), a cover letter and consent forms. The schools leaders were interviewed. The research instruments were piloted by three experienced teachers. Ethical procedures were strictly adhered to. To analyse findings which are presented in this report, the Likert scale method was used alongside charts and table formats.

This exploratory study highlighted some key issues likely to affect teaching in Saudi schools. It appeared that the main problems facing the state schools are as follows:

1. The centralized curriculum
2. The lack of facilities and educational resources.
3. The deficiency in teacher training, including in-service.
4. The dual burden of teaching and administrative duties.
5. The lack of teachers’ motivation.
6. The lack of co-operation between parents and schools.
7. The limitation of the school leader’s power and authority.
8. The lack of autonomy among leaders and teachers.

The main findings of the survey and the interview can be summarized as follows:

It is perceived that the school library is not adequate for learning and teaching. The majority of teachers believe that the audio-visual materials are inadequate or unavailable in the schools. The most serious problem is lack of facilities and educational resources in schools which could impede teaching and the learning standard. State schools are perceived as having insufficient equipment, laboratories and inadequate materials. The available facilities for teachers are insufficient and did not give them the autonomy to use different teaching methods and strategies. The deficiency of the libraries is another problem as both leaders and teachers agreed that it is seriously deficient and lacks sufficient or appropriate books.

Regarding the school buildings, the majority of teachers agreed that they are inadequate and the classes are too big. It is felt that although the time to cover the syllabus is sufficiently adequate, the respondents disagree that the curriculum provides enough weight to skills and practical work. Also the curriculum is found to be insufficiently modern and not relevant to the students’ present lives. Teachers and pupils do not have enough autonomy to develop their own ideas as the curriculum is highly centralized. Respondents claimed that in the curriculum of the state schools, pupils’ ideas were ignored. Among curriculum content efficiency, this item received the majority of negative answers, which suggests that giving insufficient autonomy for pupils’ ideas is one of the main deficiencies of the current curriculum.

Most of teachers agreed that there is collaboration between them and parents, while many of them felt that there is insufficient co-operation between schools and parents. It was claimed by teachers that pupils’ absenteeism is the more serious problem because they have much more contact with them. Both teachers and leaders agreed that there is a need for a training either pre or in service, as they believe that there are shortcomings in the performance of teachers. Although teachers’ responses agree that there is a satisfied relationship between teachers and school leaders, most teachers felt that they are supported and helped sufficiently from their school leaders. This point was emphasised by teachers because of the length of time

they spend in the school and the fact that they are best placed to identify what support and help they need, rather than by school leaders.

Clearly there is overall agreement among both leaders and teachers that too many managerial and routine duties affect the preparation and teaching time which make it difficult for teachers to teach adequately. Moreover, teachers are not encouraged sufficiently to improve the quality of their teaching. There is overall agreement between leaders and teachers that teachers need to be provided with residence and health insurance to enable them to focus on their educational goals effectively. The majority of teachers claimed that they should be supported by the Ministry of Education by forming some policies relating to the relation between the teacher and students to regain their dignity and be respected by the students and, to control the students' bad behaviour.

It is unfortunate that the findings of this investigator's study were negative. According to characteristics of effective schools, there are three main factors to effectiveness; effective leaders, effective teacher, and effective environment. These factors are explored through the interviews and the questionnaires and found that they were inefficient and insufficient to effectiveness. The purpose of the study was to find answers that would answer the inquiry as how these schools can be improved.

Before forming any firm conclusions here, further research is definitely needed by using a larger sample of the whole state schools, students' inclusion and conducted over a longer period of time and adopting other possible instruments.

Limitations

In spite of the fact that there were time and resource constraints which did not allow the researcher to gain the perceptions of the entire staff in state schools and a lack of more scientific methods to quantify the effectiveness of the schools, the findings of the study point to the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the analysis of the data and based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations would be made:

1. Facilities and resources need to be sufficient, modern and relevant to life outside the school. As many state schools in Saudi Arabia have poor facilities and resources that are insufficient, it would seem very important to pay attention to the provisions such as materials,

equipment, library and laboratories and provide adequate and regularly renewed audio-visual aids.

2. The curriculum must be improved to leave adequate space for teachers' own creativity and pupil's ideas to have a better relationship between skills and the knowledge needed by the pupils' personal needs.

3. The school time-table needs to be modified to give sufficient time for professional and practical aspects of the curriculum.

4. There is a need for material and nonmaterial incentive to encourage effective teachers to continue being effective and encourage the others to improve the standard of their work.

5. Access to quality in-service training is required as the great majority of the teachers need in-service-training during their career.

6. School leaders and school teachers should be supported by external agents to train them to enhance their relationships within the school community.

7. Teachers overloaded with too many routine administrative tasks beside the teaching work. These need to be reduced to enable teachers to have free time for effective teaching.

8. Policies within the schools need to be developed to enhance the relation and co-operation with parents. This may solve the problems of students' absenteeism and motivation.

9. Leaders and teachers need to be provided with residence and health insurance to enable them to focus on their educational goals effectively.

10. To maintain their dignity and be respected by the students, teachers and they should be supported by the Ministry of Education.

In conclusion, it is hoped that the recommendations above could be achieved to facilitate an effective, developmental learning environment where teaching and learning can take place.

Suggestion for further studies

1. More research needs to be conducted into each factor mentioned in the study that affects effectiveness of state schools in Saudi Arabia.

2. Similar studies are needed to investigate the factors that affect effectiveness of state schools in other cities in Saudi Arabia.

3. Special studies could be carried out to investigate the factors affecting teaching in state schools in individual subjects such as maths, science, religious education, languages, etc. in both girls' and boys' schools in Saudi Arabia.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interest.

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