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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

The Perceptions of Stakeholders in The Field of Education Regarding New
Decentralisation Efforts in Saudi Arabian Schools.

by

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Supervisor: Dr. Gary Kinchin

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 2016

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

Moving toward decentralisation in education and giving schools more autonomy has become a global phenomenon (Fiske, 1996; Walker, 2002), as 80% of the world's countries have experienced a decentralised education system in one form or another (Channa and Faguet, 2012). Moving towards educational decentralisation in Saudi Arabia is a current issue and it is an objective of the MOE's plan to improve the administration system. The administration of the Saudi Arabian education system is currently highly centralised (Alahmady; 2008; Oyaid, 2009; and Althmaly, 2013). The MOE implemented a new management policy in 2010/11, in order to increase the authority of school headteachers and school councils. This policy consisted of a set of guidance statements designed to offer schools more scope to decentralise and greater control of the range of their activities.

The aims of this thesis are to investigate participants' understanding of decentralisation and the benefits and challenges of implementing the new policy, to examine school autonomy in the light of international literature on School-Based Management (SBM), the level of parental and student involvement in school decision making and CPD.

This thesis utilizes the case study as a research design, and gathers both qualitative and quantitative data by using multiple data collection techniques such as: interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, document analysis, unstructured observations, and photographs/images. Six participant groups are involved: headteachers, supervisors, deputies, teachers, parents and students.

The findings of this thesis are as follows: the new management policy is considered to be a positive step towards decentralisation, however there have been no significant changes in practice and in Tatweer and public schools, a highly centralised system still exists where there is a lack of power in terms of knowledge, information, admissions, ability to hire/fire teachers and staff, school start time, student assessment, securing resources, and finance. In contrast, positive steps have been taken in both types of school to increase the use of technology and the methods of student assessment. Private schools showed more autonomy by working more independently from the MOE and DOE in terms of; use of technology, supplying resources, managing school time, controlling school finances and raising funding from parents, hiring/firing teachers and staff, and admission processes. However, private schools lack power in terms of knowledge and information.

There is a lack of democracy in electing members of school council. Parents and students have limited opportunities to make their voices heard in school decision making in both types of school (Tatweer and Public). Private schools have established specific councils for parents and students, which have election procedures. There is a lack of suitable training (both general and policy related) for headteachers and school staff in both public and Tatweer schools. Private schools arrange their own CPD programmes and staff claim to receive high levels of training.

FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

THE PERCEPTIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION REGARDING NEW
DECENTRALISATION EFFORTS IN SAUDI ARABIAN SCHOOLS.

Abdulrahman Awdah Albeladi

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
List of tables	vii
List of Figures	ix
DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP	xiii
Acknowledgements	xvii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 The context and reflexivity of the researcher	1
1.2 Problem statement	2
1.3 Significance of the study	6
1.4 Research questions	9
1.5 Study contribution	9
1.6 Study limitations	9
1.7 Structure of the study	10
Chapter 2: Background of the study	13
2.1 Geographical background	13
2.1.1 Population growth	13
2.1.2 Government political system	14
2.2 The educational system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.....	14
2.2.1 The history of the Ministry of Education.....	15
2.2.2 Stages of public education	16
2.2.3 Policy in education	16
2.2.4 Administration of education	18
2.2.5 King Abdullah’s programme: Tatweer.....	19
2.2.6 The process of becoming a head teacher or deputy.....	19
2.2.7 The roles of heads (head teachers and deputies) in Saudi public schools ..	20
2.2.8 Difficulties in Saudi school administration	22
2.2.9 The relationship between schools and parents	22
2.2.10 Implementing decentralisation in Arabic countries	23
2.2.11 The movement towards a decentralised system in KSA	25

2.2.12	The new management policy (2010)	26
Chapter 3:	Literature Review	29
3.1	Educational decentralisation	29
3.1.1	The definition of decentralisation	29
3.1.2	The focus on decentralisation in literature	30
3.2	Forms of decentralization.....	31
3.2.1	Political	32
3.2.2	Administrative	32
3.2.3	Fiscal	33
3.2.4	Market	33
3.3	Relevant literature.....	33
3.3.1	Evidence from international literature.....	34
3.3.2	Research evidence regarding decentralisation in Arabic countries	40
3.3.3	Evidence from Saudi Arabia.....	42
3.4	Theoretical framework.....	48
3.4.1	School-based management	49
3.4.2	The theory behind SBM.....	54
3.4.3	Theoretical framework: factors of analysis	61
3.4.4	Implications of shifting the authority	62
Chapter 4:	Research methodology.....	65
4.1	Introduction.....	65
4.2	Qualitative approach	66
4.3	Quantitative approach.....	68
4.4	Mixed method	70
4.5	Research design: Case study.....	71
4.5.1	The concept of the case study.....	71
4.5.2	The importance of the case study	72
4.5.3	Type of case study	74
4.5.4	Selecting multiple cases	76
4.5.5	Accessing the field	77

4.5.6	Case boundaries.....	78
4.5.7	Selecting settings and participants	79
4.6	Methods of data collection	80
4.6.1	Interview	80
4.6.2	Focus group interviews	83
4.6.3	Questionnaire	84
4.6.4	Document analysis	87
4.6.5	Unstructured observation.....	88
4.6.6	Photographs.....	88
4.7	Trustworthiness	89
4.7.1	Credibility.....	89
4.7.2	Transferability	90
4.8	Data Analysis.....	90
4.8.1	Coding process	91
4.8.2	Constant comparison	93
4.8.3	Quantitative analysis.....	94
4.9	Ethical concerns	95
4.10	Summary.....	96
Chapter 5:	Findings.....	97
5.1	Introduction	97
5.2	SECTION ONE	97
5.2.1	Understanding decentralisation.....	97
5.2.2	Summary	100
5.3	SECTION TWO	101
5.3.1	Headteacher Interview findings.....	101
5.3.2	Supervisor interview findings.....	112
5.3.3	Physical and online evidence; benefits and challenges	115
5.3.4	Summary	131
5.4	SECTION THREE	131
5.4.1	Teacher interview findings.....	131

5.4.2	Interviews with deputies	135
5.4.3	Teachers' questionnaire	138
5.4.4	Summary	154
5.5	SECTION FOUR.....	155
5.5.1	Student interview findings	155
5.5.2	Students' voices.....	155
5.5.3	Student assessment.....	159
5.5.4	Teachers' assessment.....	159
5.5.5	Decisions about school resources and use of technology	159
5.5.6	Summary	160
5.6	SECTION FIVE	161
5.6.1	Parents' interview findings.....	161
5.6.2	Parental involvement in the School Council.....	161
5.6.3	School communication with parents.....	162
5.6.4	Quantitative findings	162
5.6.5	Results of the parents' questionnaire	163
5.6.6	Comparing the three types of school	171
5.6.7	Summary	173
5.7	SECTION SIX	174
5.7.1	Limitations of training programmes.....	174
5.7.2	Suitability.....	175
5.7.3	'On Needs'	177
5.7.4	Lack of motivation to attend training programmes	178
5.7.5	Summary	178
Chapter 6:	Discussion Chapter	181
6.1	Introduction.....	181
6.2	SECTION ONE.....	181
6.2.1	Meaning and understanding of decentralisation	181
6.3	SECTION TWO.....	183
6.3.1	Participants' perspectives on the new management policy.....	184

6.3.2	School building	186
6.4	SECTION THREE	188
6.4.1	Progress against specific elements of decentralisation	188
6.4.2	Knowledge.....	188
6.4.3	Schools' power	190
6.4.4	Technology.....	194
6.4.5	Materials; supplying resources	195
6.4.6	School time	196
6.4.7	School finance and funding.....	197
6.4.8	People; hiring\ firing school staff	198
6.4.9	Admissions	200
6.4.10	Assessment	201
6.4.11	Information	202
6.5	Summary	203
6.6	SECTION FOUR	204
6.6.1	Policy and the 'voices' of teachers, parents and pupils	204
6.6.2	Teachers' voices	206
6.6.3	Students' voices	207
6.6.4	Parents' voices	209
6.7	Comparing the academic results of three types of school.....	214
6.8	SECTION FIVE.....	216
6.8.1	Training for headteachers as 'leaders' in policy implementation	217
6.8.2	Lack of training programmes	217
6.8.3	Suitability	219
6.8.4	Needs	220
6.8.5	Lack of motivation to attend training programmes	221
6.9	Summary	222
Chapter 7:	Conclusion and recommendation chapter	223
7.1	Introduction	223
7.2	Overall findings for each school.....	223
7.3	Study contribution	232

7.4	Study limitations.....	234
7.5	Implications	235
7.6	Recommendations.....	236
7.7	Future research directions	238
7.8	Final remarks	238
Appendices		241
Appendix A	Pilot study procedures and findings.....	243
Appendix B	The new management policy: powers of school head teachers.....	255
Appendix C	Interview questions:.....	277
C.1	Individual interviews with head teachers	277
C.2	Individual interviews with deputies	278
C.3	Individual interviews with teachers	280
C.4	Individual interviews with parents.....	282
C.5	Focus group interviews with pupils.....	282
C.6	Individual interviews with supervisors	283
List of references		285

List of tables

Table 1 Total number of male and female student by sex and education stage, (CDOSDS, 2012)	16
Table 2 An analysis of the new management policy based on the responsible figures.....	27
Table 3 Adapted from: di Gropello, (2006), School Council Characteristics (comparing different countries).....	64
Table 4 Questions, purposes and design frames (Thomas, 2011 p. 37)	73
Table 5 Plan for selecting participants and the method of data collection	81
Table 6 Number of students involved in the focus group in each school.....	84
Table 7 Number and percentage of useable parent questionnaires, distributed and returned...	86
Table 8 Number and percentage of useable teacher questionnaires distributed and returned	87
Table 9 Example of transcript ID.....	92
Table 10 Findings of descriptive analysis (mean, standard Deviation, median and mode) for the teachers' questionnaire	139
Table 11 Results of findings from the 'Power' of teachers questionnaire in all three cases	141
Table 12 Results of findings regarding 'Knowledge' in all three cases.....	144
Table 13 Results of findings regarding 'Information' in all three cases	146
Table 14 Results of findings regarding 'Rewards' in all three cases.....	147
Table 15 Results of findings regarding 'Leadership' in all three cases.....	148
Table 16 Results of findings regarding 'Resources' in all three cases	150
Table 17 Results of findings regarding 'Use of Technology' and 'Admission'	150
Table 18 Results of findings regarding 'Assessment' in all three types of school	151
Table 19 Results of findings regarding 'Time' and 'Building'.....	152
Table 20 Comparing the mean between three types of school (Tatweer, public and private)	153

Table 21 Descriptive analysis (mean, standard deviation, median and mode) of the five themes from the parent questionnaires164

Table 22 Results of responses to the five themes from the parent questionnaires167

Table 23 Comparing (average mean of) parental responses towards each theme between the three types of school.....172

Table 24 Four models of parent participation in School-Site Council213

Table 25 Results for three types of school from the National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education (NCFIHE, 2015)215

Table 26 Comparing the mean of findings from the parent questionnaires216

Table 27 Summary of key findings from all three types of school (Tatweer, public and private)229

Table 28 Analysing the new management policy functions (thematically)247

Table 29 Assessment criteria for the new management policy (2010) and participants’ responses249

List of Figures

Figure 1 Map of Saudi Arabia: The Central Department of Statistics' Demographic Survey (CDOSDS, 2012).....	13
Figure 2 Di Gropello, (2006) Conceptual Framework (Decentralisation Reform in Central America)	56
Figure 4 Types of case study (Thomas, 2011, p.33)	75
Figure 5 Case study design for this thesis (policy and setting)	76
Figure 6 The staffroom in a Tatweer School	117
Figure 7 Strategic Plan published on a private school website.....	118
Figure 8 Administration hierarchy positions in a private school	118
Figure 9 Student Consulting Council in a private school.....	119
Figure 10 Using technology in private school	120
Figure 11 Homepage of a Tatweer school website.....	121
Figure 12 Timetable of a Tatweer school.....	121
Figure 13 Student-Learning Resources (Tatweer school)	122
Figure 14 Student activities	122
Figure 15 Homepage of a public school website	123
Figure 16 Old man using the public school gym	123
Figure 17 An agreement between a Tatweer school and the Tatweer Department.....	124
Figure 18 Football field at a Tatweer school.....	125
Figure 19 The newly built Social Club at a Tatweer school.....	125
Figure 20 Resource Centre at a Tatweer school	126
Figure 21 Computer lab at a public school	126
Figure 22 Resource Centre at a public school.....	127

Figure 23 Self-study space in the Resource Centre at a public school	127
Figure 24 Computer section in the Resource Centre at a public school	128
Figure 25 Overhead-projector at all three types of school	128
Figure 26 Smart-board at all three types of school.....	129
Figure 27 Using TV to present (school news, events, activities etc.)	129
Figure 28 Traditional shop at a private school	130
Figure 29 Traditional shop at a private school	130
Figure 30 Comparing the means between three types of school (Tatweer, public and private)	153
Figure 31 Percentage of parental responses regarding 'Educational progress'	167
Figure 32 Percentage of parental responses regarding 'Engagement in School Policy Making and Activities'	168
Figure 33 Percentage of parental responses regarding 'Taking advantage of the local community's assets'	169
Figure 34 Percentage of parental responses regarding 'Communication with the local community'	170
Figure 35 Percentage of parental responses regarding 'School Environment'	171
Figure 36 Comparing (average mean) between the three types of school from parent questionnaires.....	172
Figure 38 Typical classroom in a public school.....	251
Figure 39 An English laboratory in a public school.....	252
Figure 40 Wall of a girls' public school	253

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I Abdulrahman Awdah Albeladi, declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

**THE PERCEPTIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION REGARDING NEW
DECENTRALISATION EFFORTS IN SAUDI ARABIAN SCHOOLS.**

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission [or] Parts of this work have been published as: [please list references below]:

Signed:

Date:

List of presentations:

The researcher has presented some parts of his work in the following international conferences:

Posters:

Albeladi, A. (2011) Learning Organization and ICT. In: The fifth Saudi international Conference (SIC2011) Coventry, UK.

Albeladi, A. (2013) Moving Towards Administrative Decentralisation of Education in Saudi Arabia. Showcase at Southampton University. Presenting at Faculty of Social and Human Sciences Research Showcase on 30 January 2013.

Presentations:

Albeladi, A. and Kinchin, G.D. (2015). Headteachers' and supervisors' perceptions of available training programmes related to a new school management policy in Saudi Arabia. Presentation at the Annual BELMAS Conference, University of Reading.

Albeladi, A. and Kinchin, G. (2013) The Influence of Saudi Head Teacher and Teacher Relationships on Teacher Motivation. Paper presented at *the 40th Anniversary, The British Educational Leadership Management and Administration Society (BELMAS) Conference 2013 Edinburgh, UK*. Available at: <http://www.belmasannualconference.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/0143.pdf>

Albeladi, A. (2013) Moving Towards Administrative Decentralisation of Education in Saudi Arabia: case study. Paper presented at *the Oxford Education Research Symposium*, available at: <http://www.oxford-education-research-symposium.com/>

Albeladi, A. (2012) School leaders' responses toward decentralisation in Saudi Arabia. Paper presented at *The Commonwealth Council For Educational Administration and Management Conference (CCEAM, 2012) Limassol, Cyprus*.

Albeladi, A. (2011) The Impacts of Globalisation on Higher Education in Saudi Arabia. Paper presented at *the 5th edition of the Annual International Conference "Globalization and Higher Education in Economics and Business Administration", (GEBA 2011) Iasi, Romania*.

Albeladi, A. (2011) An analysis of evidence concerning Learning Organization, with a view to proposing the structure of a possible ICT solution, to facilitate organizational change. Paper presented at *the fifth Saudi international Conference (SIC2011) Coventry, UK*.

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Chapter 1: Introduction**1.1 The context and reflexivity of the researcher**

In 2003, I graduated from the School of Teacher Preparation – Arabic Language, at Taibah University in Medina, Saudi Arabia. I taught for six years in four schools in different regions across Saudi Arabia. It was a significant period and I gained valuable experience. Most of my work was undertaken in the classroom with pupils and alongside administrative staff. Over time I formed the opinion that the relationship between the Department of Education (DOE), and school administrators required some restructuring in order to clarify where inspectors' powers ended and what authority head teachers could have in order to maximise the effectiveness of their decision-making. I advocated a system, which would minimise bureaucracy and give leaders and teachers more freedom in order to respond to the needs of the pupils and the schools.

I recall one experience which involved a lack of communication between the DOE and a school head teacher and centralisation in the decision-making. I was teaching in a primary school where Year One and Year Two were in the same classroom. I taught them together with 'different' lessons and had to ensure that there all pupils progressed. There were 32 pupils in the class. This dual year group situation was quite popular in the village school due to the limited number of staff members and pupils.

The school had a free classroom and an additional member of staff, so I asked the school head teacher to divide the class in half. The other teacher and the head teacher were both happy because it was felt that this reorganisation would improve the pupils' performance and allow the researcher to manage the class more effectively. Once we had agreed to do this and re-scheduled our lessons, the head teacher contacted the DOE to ask for their permission. The DOE asked the school to complete the necessary paperwork requesting the separation of the two classes. We followed the correct procedures and documentation, and sent this directly to the DOE. However, for some unknown reason the DOE asked us to resend the documentation.

After a month the school contacted the DOE and asked about the status of this documentation. We were told that they needed more time to make a decision. After ten months, they finally agreed and gave the school permission to split the class. Unfortunately, by that time we were into a new academic year and the pupils concerned had moved on to the next stage. The decision was too late and totally unhelpful for the school. It was particularly frustrating that a reasonably straightforward decision for positive educational outcomes was beyond the 'power' of the head teacher. The school did not have the autonomy to consider the needs of its pupils.

Chapter 1

This real-life event demonstrates how, in Saudi Arabia, such decision-making at school level is, at best, difficult and illustrates the need to give schools greater freedom and autonomy to take decisions that are of benefit to pupils and staff. Indeed research has revealed that one of the major difficulties that school administrators face in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the conflict between the DOE's responsibilities and the needs of head teachers, which typically leads to persistent delays in decision-making (Aldossary, 2008; Albeladi, 2011).

Therefore, some questions began to emerge such as what had the pupils in the story lost? What was the impact of this type of delay on head teachers and their profession? Is there another approach to decision making within school with less control from the DOE and the MOE? Many studies from the Saudi education system have provided evidence of the lack of headteachers' powers in term of decision making within schools such as Mathis, (2010); Kurdi, (2011); Algarni and Male, (2014); Alyami (2014); Meemar, (2014); Almoray (2015).

1.2 Problem statement

The decentralisation of public services has become a major feature of institutional innovation throughout the world (The World Bank, 2004). Moving toward decentralisation in education and giving schools more autonomy has become a global phenomenon (Fiske, 1996; Walker, 2002). Decentralisation is one subject central to discussions regarding political, social, and economic reforms (The World Bank, 2009). Education and health systems have been decentralised in many countries. Channa and Faguet (2012) reported that more than 80% of the world's countries had experienced a decentralised education system in one form or another. When the system is decentralised, school level decisions can be made more efficiently and can match school needs more effectively (Channa and Faguet (2012)). It is worth remembering that one of the main benefits of decentralisation is bringing decisions to a local or lower level, where people have more knowledge about needs than the central bureaucrats (Hanushek, et al. 2012; Channa and Faguet, 2012). Such delays in decision-making can have a negative impact on students' educational processes, and may affect their educational outcomes. Moreover, clear evidence from the examination of results in PISA, tends to demonstrate the link between students' high performance and a high level of autonomy (Caldwell, 2015).

Moving toward decentralisation in Saudi Arabia is a current issue and it is an objective of the MOE's plan to improve the administration system in education. Currently the administration of the Saudi Arabian education system is highly centralised (Alahmady; 2008; Oyaid, 2009; Althmaly, 2013). A hierarchical system can be set out as follows:

(1) The Ministry of Education (MOE) is located in the capital city of Riyadh. It determines national policy and the budget of each district and oversees the delivery of the national curriculum (printing all books and distributing them). The MOE controls the employment of all employees in the education sector and determines their salaries and pay increases. According to Algarni and Male (2014):

the MoE represents the government in providing and supervising free general education for all residents (MoE 2004: 6). This includes producing the national curriculum (NC), issuing policies, providing training programmes and evaluating the educational performance of schools, leaders, teachers and students at various stages. This demonstrates how the Saudi school system has been highly standardised and centralised. (P. 46)

After data collection for this thesis was completed, there was a major shift in the hierarchical system in Saudi Arabia, as the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) merged to form one Ministry, called the Ministry of Education (MOE). Zaman, (2015) reported that this movement would lead to reduced centralisation and allow for more autonomy for educational institutions.

(2) The Department of Education (DOE) sits within each district and has responsibility for ensuring that the national policy is implemented appropriately. Also, schools are assessed through regular visits by supervisors. Those supervisors work across a number of districts, depending on the number of schools.

(3) In each city there are supervision centres to maintain the supervisors' work. In Medina City, the setting for this thesis, there are four centres.

(4) Schools, in this thesis the focus is only on secondary schools (students aged from 16 to 18 years old). The government schools (public and Tatweer), were built and are owned and supervised by the MOE. Private schools are owned and managed by private companies, but they are still supervised by the MOE and the DOE.

One of the main challenges in the Saudi Arabian education system has been an apparent imbalance between responsibility (functional tasks assigned to a head teacher) and power (the authority granted to a head teacher), which has led to prevented leaders from working more effectively (Alotaby, 2000; Alshehry; 2000; Alahmady; 2008; Alsalhi, (2010); and Althmaly, 2013). For that reason, the Ministry of Education, in an attempt to improve the performance and autonomy of schools, implemented a new management policy in 2010/11 (incorporating new functions and levels of authority with older ones with greater explanation), to expand school head

Chapter 1

teacher authority. This policy consisted of a set of guidance statements designed to offer schools more scope to decentralise and greater control of the range of their activities.

After a review of the related literature, very little is known about the implementation of this new management policy in Saudi Arabia, the way that the MOE promotes the policy or how the leaders practitioners and other interested parties at school level perceive it. However, concerns have been articulated about:

- The policy itself, to what extent can it help with the attainment of a more decentralised system (which is the aim of the policy) using international literature and School-Based Management as the most widely used model;
- The challenges and opportunities afforded by implementing the new management policy, and the readiness of practitioners at school level to gain more autonomy in school decision-making;
- The preparation of the people in the field who will implement the new policy within the Saudi Arabian context, how the policy was communicated to them and how they received it;
- Stakeholders' (internal and external to a school) needs with regard to building school capacity and working effectively with minimal negative impact upon students during the period of change.

There has been a considerable amount of research into the challenges faced by the education system in Saudi Arabia, but little work has been undertaken to examine this 'shift' over time and its impact on school improvement. A handful of studies focus upon the new management policy such as Allheaniy's study (2012), which investigated the attitudes towards the new administrative, technical and financial authorities, using questionnaires to gather data from 320 headteachers in Makkah City. The main finding was that headteachers' attitudes regarding their administrative and technical authority were positive, but that they needed more power in terms of finance. Alhumaidhi's study (2013), aimed to find the barriers to practicing new authority among secondary headteachers. A questionnaire was used to gather data from 122 headteachers and 33 supervisors in the capital city; Riyadh. The main findings were that the new authority was highly inflexible, there remained a vast amount of administrative tasks, lack of staff, facilities, equipment and funds. Alotaibi (2013), studied the degree to which headteachers practiced their new administrative and technical authority and the impact of this authority on school performance. 110 headteachers from Taif City responded to the questionnaire. The findings were as follows; the degree to which technical powers were used was high when arranging sick leave for school staff and moderate when arranging for school programmes to solve school problems. In contrast, the

use of technical powers for signing contracts with the private sector and selecting school deputies was reported to be low. Meemar's study (2014), focused only on Tatweer schools, and examined the ability of headteachers to implement their new authority, the support they perceived that they had for implementation, and what they wanted to add. Using an online questionnaire completed by 173 headteachers, findings indicated that; headteachers believed that they had limited ability to implement their new authority and a lack of support. There was a statistically significant relationship between beliefs about the effectiveness of the new authority in accomplishing MOE outcomes. In arguing for the study undertaken in this thesis research by Allheaniy (2012); Alhumaidhi (2013); Alotaibi (2013); Meemar, (2014) have some limitations;

(1) They focused on headteachers' perspectives only, except Alhumaidhi (2013), who combined the views of headteachers and supervisors. While this thesis gathers evidence from numerous stakeholders such as headteachers, deputies, teachers, supervisors, parents and students. The voices of parents and students are rarely heard in education research in Saudi Arabia.

(2) All previous studies have placed emphasis on public schools. Only Meemar studied Tatweer schools, while this thesis examines three types of school in Saudi Arabia. These three types of school are public schools, Tatweer schools and private schools. This is the first study to compare these three types of school and their levels of autonomy as a function of the 2010/11 policy.

(3) A major difference is the methodological approach. This thesis is the first study in the field to use a qualitative case study and survey, while previous studies in Saudi have only relied on quantitative approaches.

(4) Moreover, the main limitation is the data collection tools, as all these studies rely on one tool (a 'questionnaire'). This thesis has added several tools such as interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, photographs, observations and document analysis.

(5) This thesis focuses on Medina schools and the DOE in this district only, while the other studies examined different districts.

(6) In terms of research objectives, the other studies focused mainly upon attitude, barriers, ability to practice the new authority, the level to which the new authority was practiced, the support that headteachers perceived that they had to implement, the new authority and what they wanted to add. This thesis uses a qualitative case study and survey, which is focused on this 'shift' and examines the perceptions of a range of stakeholders regarding decentralisation and the new management policy and how they make sense of the policy in practice. Also, it provides a critical comparison with international literature to provide a better understanding of what value

Chapter 1

the policy is seeking to promote using School Based Management (SBM) as a theoretical framework. The overarching aim is to put the policy in its cultural context, informed by the perception of the stakeholders and taking into account existing literature on the subject.

1.3 Significance of the study

This research project comes at a landmark period within the educational system in Saudi Arabia. In the past, the MOE in the capital city, Riyadh, and its agents (DOE) around the whole country, had the authority to control almost all decision-making, all resource allocation, the curriculum offered and procedures for the employment of all staff members in schools. The (MOE) mandated planning activities in schools, procedures for pupil assessment, school budgets and continued training and professional development for staff.

However, in 2010/11, the MOE introduced a plan to develop a new management policy to begin to move from a centralised system to a more decentralised system by progressively empowering head teachers and school councils. The speaker of the Ministry, Al Barrak (MOE, 2011), anticipated that these authorities within the new management policy would cause a shift in educational work and enhance school performance through empowering head teachers in order to reach a decentralised system, leading in turn to increased student outcomes and the raising of standards. Moreover, the MOE established a new programme called Tatweer, which aimed to improve the education system through establishing a new department for Tatweer schools within each district's DOE. This programme will be discussed in the next chapter.

The new management policy at issue is composed of a set of guidelines for head teachers and school councils to work under and creates a new system by shifting some powers from the DOE to the school. The new management policy comprises several aspects. For some examples and for more details see Appendix B, these aspects are;

- Financial, where the school budget and resources for teacher development are increased. This budget is referred to as the 'operational budget';
- Administrative, such as dealing with absent pupils and teachers, organising the timetable and overseeing procedures for closing schools in emergency situations;
- School Council development and leading the school through this council;
- Decentralising the educational process by providing procedures for evaluating students and teachers in the classroom;
- Evaluating the performance of all school employees, and re-evaluating the students during the semester;

- Suspending the school day in emergencies;
- Determining which teachers should be moved from the school;
- Approving the admission of students who fit the provisions of admission;
- Representing the school on the rental committee of the school building that is under the head teacher's authority;
- More autonomy in terms of school activities, the school building, safety and security;
- Allowing schools to sign a contract with training companies to provide CPD for school staff;
- More collaborative relationships and general engagement with parents, the private sector and local communities to find sponsors for the school programs in accordance with educational needs;
- Approving professional development programs for school staff and students;
- Making contracts with specialized organizations and companies for the emergency maintenance of the school buildings according to the assigned budget.

The MOE and the DOE previously held responsibility for most of these aspects.

In order to improve the education system, in 2007, the Saudi government launched the 'King Abdulla bin Abdul-Aziz Project for Public Education Development', to reform the education system. In Arabic language this programme is called 'Tatweer', which means development. The plan for the Tatweer programme was to improve schools on a small scale and then expand this through to other schools. It started with 25 girls' schools and 25 boys' schools spread across the whole kingdom (Alyami, 2014). For example, Medina started with five Tatweer schools in 2007 and had 30 schools by 2013. The Tatweer programme was introduced in two phases; the first goal was to focus upon school development and advanced technology. In more detail, the aim of the Tatweer programme is *"to provide students with 21st century capabilities and attitudes that will help them grow into productive citizens who engage with the rest of the world positively, and make the school as learning organisation, with students as central of the educational process"* (Tatweer 2010, P. 4). The second phase focused more on self-evaluation in school, a professional learning community, self-planning, professional development and more autonomy to manage the school. This phase began in 2011 according to Alyami (2014).

The link between the new management policy and the Tatweer programme is that the policy was distributed to all schools around the country, to expand head teachers' authority generally and Tatweer sought to improve specifically selected schools to provide a good example for other schools. The new management policy and Tatweer will be discussed at length in the next chapter.

Chapter 1

With limited evidence about the new policy in the literature, from school staff, parents, students or policy-makers in the DOE, the policy may in fact have had a negative impact upon schools, failing to meet the MOE's expectations and its desire to improve schools and empower head teachers, or at least the policy makers may lose:

- The direction to reach the next step to implementing SBM or school autonomy in general;
- The ability to learn from the experience of practitioners in the field.
- Lessons from private schools, which can be applied to government schools.

In order to learn about the new management policy, this thesis seeks to:

- Examine the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the new management policy and their views on the policy, in order to provide in-depth understanding for Saudi educators about recent reform;
- Provide evidence regarding the possibility of implementing SBM which provides more autonomy at school level in the light of analysing the schools' needs;
- Provide new evidence for the MOE and policy makers in Saudi Arabia about the policy and the issues relating to its implementation which could be considered in future plans (next steps);
- Provide future researchers with an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the new policy and the current situation in the Saudi Arabian education system from the perspective of a range of stakeholders, particularly in the Saudi context.
- Provide evidence about continued professional development (CPD), in general and in terms of its application for school staff practicing the new management policy.

The findings of this project will be relevant to educators in Medina specifically and will afford them the opportunity to learn from a range of different types of school (Tatweer, public and private) through a qualitative case study approach and quantitative survey. In relation to the initial previous research (Albeladi; 2011), it is claimed that this study is the first to investigate the implementation of the new management policy from the perspective of a range of stakeholders (headteachers, deputies, teachers, supervisors, parents and students), as experienced and understood in schools at a time when policy makers in Saudi Arabia seek to restructure the education system. It provides the views and experiences of a number of key stakeholders regarding this policy in their respective settings/contexts, from policy makers through to pupils.

1.4 Research questions

In acknowledging the purpose and intent of the new school management policy in Saudi Arabia, this PhD thesis aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What understanding did stakeholders have of decentralisation?
2. What did headteachers and policy makers view as the benefits and challenges of implementing the new decentralisation policy in schools?
3. How did deputies and classroom teachers assess the implementation of the new decentralisation policy?
4. To what extent were students involved in decisions related to their school?
5. How did parents view their relationship with schools as a function of the new decentralisation policy?
6. What training issues and needs were identified by head teachers and policy makers as relevant to implementing the new management policy in their schools?

1.5 Study contribution

There is a lack of research in the literature. Only a few studies, mentioned above, share practical experiences of the early stages of implementation of SBM and decentralisation. On the other hand, there is large amount of research concerning the outcomes of decentralisation. This work aims to provide an overview of experiences of the early implementation of decentralisation in the Saudi Arabian context, which is original and based on the available resources.

Beyond the previous research of Allheaniy (2012); Alhumaidhi (2013); Alotaibi (2013); Meemar, (2014) and Albeladi (2011), there is no previous research that uses both qualitative and quantitative data to investigate the new management policy. This thesis aims to provide critical analysis of the new policy, informed by the literature and compared with the actual perceptions of a range of stakeholders in Saudi Arabia from three different types of school. This too can be considered as a novel contribution.

1.6 Study limitations

This thesis has a number of limitations. It is not intended to discuss all the problems of the management education system. It is intended to provide intensive evidence and guidelines for the future implementation of decentralisation in the education system in Saudi Arabia. Some lessons can be learned about this movement towards decentralisation from international literature. Also,

Chapter 1

there are limitations as a result of the context, as decentralisation has not taken root in the education culture, and thus might be not applicable in all schools. As the new management policy was distributed in 2010/11, the impact of its implementation might not yet be clear and may not yet have materialised.

Another limitation comes from the units of analysis in the case study, which are three boys' secondary schools. The researcher cannot gain access to girls' schools as regulations in Saudi Arabia restrict accessibility for religious and cultural reasons. This thesis utilises a qualitative case study and survey, and the aim is not to provide a generalisation from the findings, but rather to provide intensive evidence. Three schools were selected for the data collection; a Tatweer school, a public school and a private school, in order to examine the different types of school. The sample is not on a large scale, but it does include a range of participants with different perspectives and collects data using multiple tools. Considerable pilot work was undertaken in preparing for fieldwork. This pilot work is outlined in Appendix A.

1.7 Structure of the study

This thesis consists of seven chapters. The first provides an introduction to the problem in Saudi Arabia, including the context and the reflections of the researcher, the significance of the study, the research questions, the contribution of the study to the field and its limitations. The second chapter describes the context for the study, which comprises the geographical background of Saudi Arabia, the government political system and a brief description of education policy, structure and management. It also discusses the role of headship, the relationship between parents and schools, difficulties and finally a review of decentralisation in Arabic countries and Saudi Arabia (the new management policy). The third chapter reviews relevant literature relating to the research questions, evidenced internationally, in Arabic countries and in Saudi Arabia. Finally, it focuses on the theoretical framework of SBM.

Chapter four describes the methodology, starting with qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. It illustrates a case study approach and the research setting (three secondary schools: Tatweer, public and private). In addition, it reveals intended data collection techniques such as interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, document analysis, unstructured observations and photography. This chapter discusses a number of issues, such as the participants in the study, trustworthiness, ethical issues and the process of data collection. Chapter five reports on the findings of the data collection. The findings are presented by research questions. Chapter six presents a discussion of the findings in relation to the literature based on the research questions. Chapter seven consists of the conclusion and recommendations, which also contains contribution,

limitations, implications, recommendations for policy makers and practitioners in the field of education and for the direction of future research.

Chapter 2: Background of the study

2.1 Geographical background

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is situated in the Arabic Peninsula, in the South West of Asia. It occupies approximately 2,250,000 square kilometres (868,730 square miles). The north of the kingdom borders Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait; on the east is the Arabic Gulf, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates; on the south is the Sultanate of Oman and Yemen; and on the west is the Red Sea. Figure (1), shows the countries that border KSA and the major cities.



Figure 1 Map of Saudi Arabia: The Central Department of Statistics' Demographic Survey (CDOSDS, 2012)

2.1.1 Population growth

Before petroleum was discovered, KSA was a difficult place in which to live due to water scarcity, land mostly consisting of desert, poverty, lack of security in some parts, lack of rainfall and high temperatures for much of the year, rising to between 45 - 50 degrees celsius in summer (Hammad, 2011). However, with oil came growth in the economy and immigration. In 1962, one million people appeared on the census. The government was sceptical of these results due to the lack of infrastructure and the lack of involvement from people.

Chapter 2

In the 1974 census, the Kingdom's population was 7 million. The population had grown dramatically due to the high birth rate and immigration. The 1992 census indicated that the population was 16.9 million. In 2000, the Central Department of Statistics' Demographic Survey (CDOSDS) found that the population of KSA was 20.8 million, and 54.3% were male and 45.7% were female (including Saudi and non-Saudi population). Finally, in 2011, the national census revealed a Saudi population of some 19.4 million, and a non-Saudi population of 8.9 million, giving a total of 28.3 million (CDOSDS, 2012).

2.1.2 Government political system

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a monarchy whose constitution is based on the Holy Book, the Quran (Koran), and Shari'ah law with the absence of codification of the laws of such other countries (Wilson, and Douglas, 1994). The King is the head of the government and the Council of Ministries, which are the executive and administrative bodies. The King is the head of the Royal family. The eldest son of King Abdelaziz, who established the new state of the Saudi Kingdom in 1932, will be the next king. The culture is centred on Islamic religion. The government system is an absolute monarchy, where the Kingdom is divided administratively into 13 districts. There are no political parties, and a clear legal system (Rudolph, 2006).

2.2 The educational system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

As a Muslim society, all aspects of Saudi social and cultural life centre on Islam and the Muslim religious identity, with a strong emphasis on education. Islam views education as a religious duty for all, males and females. In fact, religious belief and Islamic concepts play a significant role in all aspects of education, such as shaping the curriculum, separating girls' and boys' schools and in terms of school buildings and staff (MOE, 2012 a).

The aim of the policy of the education system in the Kingdom is to ensure that the entire education system becomes more effective, in order to meet the religious, economic and social needs of the country. The Ministry of Education has overall responsibility for the education sector (public and private) and for special education, which is provided for children with additional educational needs. The educational policy set by the Ministry puts forth the overall standards for planning, supervision and the evaluation of school performance (MOE, 2012 a). According to Oyaid, (2009)

In Saudi Arabia, all education policies are subject to government control. The administration of the general education system in Saudi Arabia is highly centralised. Curricula are unified

throughout the Kingdom and there is a curriculum department in the Ministry of Education. This department is responsible for curriculum development and the preparation of subject textbooks. For each subject and for every grade there is a textbook which must be used in all the Kingdom's schools, including public schools (p. 19).

2.2.1 The history of the Ministry of Education

Back in the early 1920s, there were a few schools throughout the country with many others located in Mosques. In 1925, the government established a formal education system through the General Education Management Centre. It focused mainly on building an official education system and opening new schools around the country. Also, the scheme for hiring teachers from The Ministry of Education was established in 1952. The first education minister in the Kingdom was the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahad Bin Abd-Alaziz. The aim of this Ministry was:

- To provide opportunities for education to every citizen of learning age, according to his\her abilities and inclinations, and to facilitate these opportunities by providing the appropriate infrastructure and services.
- To design and execute projects that cater for the requirements of the Ministry such as the construction of educational buildings and renovation of existing educational sites and investing capital sums in the private sector for the implementation of such projects.
- To improve the curriculum and constantly upgrade the general education system so that it is in accordance with contemporary societal and industry requirements (MOE, 2012 a).

In 2009, the number of employees in education was 886,889, (484,769 male and 402,120 female). The average weekly working hours for employees in education in 2009 were as follows; for Saudi employees, 34.5 hours for male employees and 33.7 hours for female employees (CDOSDS, 2012).

The school week runs from Saturday to Wednesday for all education stages, and the schools' opening times are from 7am until 1pm for primary schools and from 7am until 2pm for secondary schools. The students attend seven periods per day, each one approximately 45 minutes in length. Pupils have 20 minutes for lunch and 30 minutes each day is devoted to noon prayer (MOE, 2012 a).

2.2.2 Stages of public education

The public education system comprises over 24,000 schools. Elementary education lasts for six years (age level 6-12 years old). Intermediate education runs for three years (age level 12-15), and secondary school education comprises three years (age level 16-18). When these stages have been completed, the students can study for their high school diplomas. University applications occur where students are aged 18.

Stage of education \ sex	Male	Female	Total
Elementary	1,691,107	1,629,959	3,321,066
Intermediate	814,654	780,380	1,595,034
Secondary	766,976	674,428	1,441,404
Total	3,272,737	3,084,767	6,357,504

Table 1 Total number of male and female student by sex and education stage, (CDOSDS, 2012)

Table (1) shows the number of students in the KSA. In 2005, the number of male students was 2,322,536 in 13,893 schools under the direct supervision and guidance of more than 187,420 teachers. The number of female students was 2,235,000 in 15,840 schools and there were more than 219,000 female teachers and more than 14,900 administrators (Ministry of Education, 2007). The number of students has grown dramatically over time. As Table 1 illustrates, the number of male students increased by around 1 million between (2005 to 2012). The total number was 3,272,737 in 2012 compared with 2,322,536 in 2005, and the number of female students increased by around 850,767. In 2012, the number was 3,084,767 compared with 2,235,000 in 2005 (CDOSDS, 2012).

2.2.3 Policy in education

Education policy can be defined as the laws and regulations that govern an education system (Weidman and DePietro-Jurand, 2011). State decisions normally come from interaction between many people and organizations, and this interaction occurs within a complex institutional framework (Rui, 2007).

Policy has been conceptualised in various ways within the literature (Ozga, 1990). There is no single agreed definition of policy, and understandings of policy have developed and expanded over time. Both traditional and more contemporary definitions are still present in education

research, and are continually being added to and debated as policy theory evolves (Levinson, et al. 2009).

In the literature, policy is described as “*a set of laws or guidelines within a ‘governing text’*” (Callewaert 2006, p. 767). Policy can be a written document or any form of a text that determines the communication between policy-makers and a specific group. Other researchers, such as Sutton and Levinson, see policy as practice, referring to the processes of decision-making that occur on a daily basis in schools and classrooms, or a set of standards or patterns within a particular site (Sutton and Levinson, 2001). In other words, Levinson, et al. (2009) claim that policy is a kind of social practice, specifically, a practice of power and a downwards direction of influence. In addition, they indicate that the various stakeholders organize their interests, resources and power and attempt to influence decision-making within an educational system. These interactions can often influence how the state acts or does not act with respect to education needs and interests.

Jones, (2013, p. 8) referring to number of theorists, showed the development of the conceptualisation of policy and local participants:

Within the 1990s the view that policy may indeed be seen as a process in it self became more widespread, and was particularly popularised by policy theorists such as Stephen J. Ball (Ball 1993; Bell and Stevenson 2006; Fulcher 1989; Kenway 1990; Lingard 1993). This modelling of policy can be seen in research exploring how local actors and dynamics within implementation affect education policy outcomes (Alexander 1997; Sabatier 1986) and research considering ‘failed’ implementation using backward mapping approaches (Allen 2007; Angelides 2008). Such research can acknowledge unanticipated policy impacts through localised institutional effects (Alexander 1997; APA Task Force 2009; Raab 1994).

Of relevance to this thesis, we can define stakeholders as “those who have rights or interests in a system, and they can be individuals, communities, social groups, or organisations” (Lied, 2005, p. 3). The number of stakeholders in education policy can be quite high due to the number of people that may be impacted by decisions; the perceived importance of the issues; and the variety of stakeholders engaged (children and parents, teachers, school principals and administrators, politicians, religious leaders, academics, and private school owners). A number of these stakeholders participate in this thesis and share their perception of policy change in KSA schools. Societies need ways to address education policy that are consistent with broader development goals and which encourage diverse stakeholders to find common ground. Hodgson and Irving

Chapter 2

(2007) state, "Policy is changing because the world is changing" (p. 192). In the education system in KSA the policy changed to meet the desire of headteachers and stakeholders to improve education outcomes in general.

2.2.4 Administration of education

In KSA the public education system provides students with free education, books and health services. The government allocates over 25 per cent of the total budget to education including vocational training, and it spends around \$US13.17 billion on education and research. Of this, more than \$US2 billion is allocated annually to universities (Onsman, 2011).

In the KSA, the administration of education is centralised and the government itself controls education policies (Alsalihi, 2010; Althmaly, 2013). At the beginning of this study, the government controlled education through the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), but after the data collection finished, and the work was being written up, a major shift occurred when the two ministries (the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Education) combined to become one ministry called the 'Ministry of Education', which is considered to be a movement towards decentralisation. According to Zaman, (2015) one of the benefits of this combination is that it will lead to greater integration of guiding policy and procedure, reduce centralisation and give more autonomy to educational institutions, either public schools or higher education institutions. The MOE aims to standardise uniform and oversees curricula and textbooks across the country. Employing all staff, buildings, the maintenance of schools, supplying the equipment for all schools are further key features of the work of Ministry. This level of control means that head teachers in schools have limited freedom to employ staff, choose from a range of curricula or purchase resources to enhance educational provision. According to Mathis, (2012) "The Saudi education system trains principals to be managers, not leaders" (p. 23).

However, as referred to in the introduction of this research thesis, the new management policy seeks to provide the authority for head teachers and the school community to take a range of decisions that respond to these daily needs. Before the new policy, there were 83 Departments of Education around the Kingdom that controlled schools, but of late the Ministry reduced the number to 45 Departments (MOE, 2012 b).

2.2.5 King Abdullah's programme: Tatweer

King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud initiated a reform project for General Education Development known as Tatweer. The project started in 2007 and aimed to bring changes to the education system to improve student outcomes and raise standards of knowledge and expertise. The project seeks to train school educators in several areas such as school management structures and planning, educational supervision, developing curriculum, computer science, training and self-development skills, and to apply new technology in the educational process (MOHE, 2010).

This project started with \$2.4bn from King Abdullah and the MOE reorganised it to be a company owned by the multibillion-dollar Public Investment Fund. "Tatweer includes issues such as teaching and curriculum; however, little attention has been focused on the individuals who will be responsible for overseeing the educational reforms at local level - school principals" (p. 15).

2.2.6 The process of becoming a head teacher or deputy

In KSA, head teachers and deputies occupy significant roles in the educational system and are key to school improvement. Ensuring quality and equity in the selection process for schools requires specific and clear requirements. The guidelines and the mechanisms for selecting head teachers and deputies were created by the Supervision Departments (SD) at the DOE without consulting head teachers or school communities. The guidelines have been improved using ten stages between the DOE and the MOE (Guidelines for the Selection of Educational Directors, 2009. GFTSOED, 2009).

These stages are as follows: (1) writing a first draft of the guidelines; (2) consulting expert SDs; (3) contacting all the SDs at the MOD, in case they have special conditions; (4) presenting the guidelines at the annual educational supervision meeting; (5) running a meeting with all heads of SD to raise awareness of its importance; (6) the deputy of MOE establishes a committee to prepare the final draft; (7) presenting the final draft to the law department of the MOE; (8) resending the final draft to all the supervision departments to obtain feedback; (9) considering the feedback and rewriting; (10) completing the procedure and printing the guidelines (GFTSOED, 2009).

This section summarises the expected qualifications for a head as published by the MOE (GFTSOED, 2009). These are divided into four sections. First, educational qualifications: (1) the candidate should hold at least a bachelor's degree with a minimum of a good grade; (2) he\she

Chapter 2

should have educational qualifications within the bachelor degree or have had a diploma for at least one year.

Second, experience: (1) the candidate must have at least four years of teaching experience; (2) the candidate must have achieved excellent grades in their annual performance for the previous two years; (3) he\she must be effective in the areas of research and training; (4) competence in using a computer, particularly programs related to education. Normally a teacher needs eight years of experience to become a head teacher.

Third, professional ability: (1) the candidate must understand educational aims; (2) know the rules and regulations of administration; (3) have a training certificate in leadership; (4) pass an exam and an interview with the DOE.

Fourth, personal characteristics: (1) candidates must set a good example; (2) have a good professional record ; (3) have the ability to use dialogue and persuasion; (4) be willing to improve his\her skills; (5) have the ability to lead a group and build positive relationships; (6) not be the accused or found guilty in a case which conflicts with educational ethics (GFTSOED, 2009).

The process begins when the DOE send a form out to all the schools in the district and open the competition for these jobs. If a teacher wants to become a deputy or a deputy wants to become a head teacher, one of the required documents is a recommendation letter from the previous head teacher to show his\her ability in leadership and other skills. After receiving all the documents from a candidate, the DOE reviews them, arranges the interviews and checks that the candidate fulfils all the requirements, as explained above. Even if the applicant is successful, they cannot choose their school. They are allocated a school based on DOE needs.

2.2.7 The roles of heads (head teachers and deputies) in Saudi public schools

The roles of both head teachers and deputies in public schools are different depending upon the type and size of school and school district. Generally, the role of head teacher can be divided into two aspects: first, administrative and financial and, second, technical. In the following section, I will summarise the main findings of Mostafa (2002), who focused on the roles of head teachers in Saudi schools. Mostafa clarifies administration and finance roles as follows:

1. Implementing the rules and guidelines that are provided by the MOE and DOE.
2. Accepting new pupils and those who transfer from other schools, and organising the class sizes.

3. Determining the roles of deputies.
4. Ensuring that school buildings are suitable and safe.
5. Approving the pupils' certificates.
6. Organising the timetables at the beginning of the first year, including observation timetables.
7. Determining the school's needs (e.g. human resources, materials and financial needs) and applying to obtain them from DOE.
8. Organising the schools' committees, such as teacher and parent committees.
9. Determining the need for and planning school meetings.
10. Dealing with school documentation and implementing a system to keep it safe.

The second section centres on technical roles, which are concerned with improving educational and teaching processes with a view to increasing pupil achievement.

1. Planning the educational process and pupil improvement programmes.
2. Providing educational, social and psychological services for pupils.
3. Increasing the number of educational classes, if needed, to improve the teaching process.
4. Planning and organising evaluation (exams or continued evaluation) and supervision under the MOE regulations.
5. Providing technical and administrative reports to DOE.
6. Cooperating with MOE's supervisors to improve the educational process.
7. Applying research findings in schools.
8. Building relationships with the local community (Mostafa (2002)).

The roles of head teachers in schools are various because they depend on the head teacher's characteristics and experiences, the culture in the school and the district, school size and stages. Some studies have sought to identify common practices of head teachers during the school day.

Chapter 2

Alshehry (2000) provided evidence about the challenges that face school head teachers, and also identified the most common activities of head teachers across the school day. The findings of his study showed that the most significant roles of a head teacher were: (1) preparing documents about teacher and pupil attendance and absence; (2) organising a timetable for teachers to observe and supervise pupils; (3) reading and understanding DOE letters, reports, regulations and then making teachers aware of these; (4) ensuring that teachers prepare lessons; (5) ensuring that the curriculum is distributed to staff for the whole academic year and that teachers are following the required plans; (6) visiting teachers in classrooms and evaluating them; (7) following the educational supervisors' suggestions and working to achieve these. Alsufyan (2002) supposed that school head teachers had a greater impact on school improvement, but in fact, they had limited authority, as the (MOE) did not allow them to work in their ideas for school improvement.

2.2.8 Difficulties in Saudi school administration

Alotaby, (2000) researched the nature of the administrative pressures within which head teachers work. Data were collected from 217 head teachers in Makkah city in KSA and the findings were organised into three aspects; organisational, human resources and financial. The major administrative pressures were; (1) huge responsibility but with lack of power and authority to address a school's problems and needs; (2) work relating to perceived unprofessional behaviour such as teachers and other staff attending lessons late and leaving pupils without supervision; (3) lack of human resources; (4) lack of relationship with parents; (5) DOE supervisors imposing workloads exceeding head teachers' ability and available resources from a financial point of view; (6) poor maintenance of school buildings and insufficient equipment in classrooms and labs.

According to Fahmiy and Mahmood (1993) the educational system in KSA and the Arabic gulf suffers from both a centralised system and a lack of professionalism among staff members in schools. They concluded that educational policy needs reshaping. AlBolaihed (2002), outlined the workload and pressure that faces some head teachers in girls' schools due to: (1) a lack of response from the MOE to school needs, (2) changing regulations, (3) lack of preparation for the role of deputy and head teacher.

2.2.9 The relationship between schools and parents

The educational process requires strong collaboration between parents and schools to improve pupil achievement. In a decentralised system, schools are encouraged to enhance their relationships with parents via different channels, for example through engaging with parents in school decision-making and by involving them in a range of activities. Research indicates that in a

centralised system people see the school as belonging to the government and that parents are unlikely to engage with schools (Sayd, 2008).

In KSA, the most formal relationship appears in the School Parent Association (SPA), or School Council (SC), but this is not applicable in most schools (Alkhanjer, 2001; Albeladi, 2011). Informal relationships, such as phone communication are common in KSA schools, but not formal meetings. The relationship between school and parents varies from school to school depending on two main aspects; first, the willingness of the school to involve parents and of parents to work with a school. The second aspect is socio-economic factors, such as the educational level of parents, family size and their welfare. The new policy in KSA invites greater involvement from parents. Parents will be interviewed to determine whether their aspirations are a reality.

For example, according to Altoajery (2001) school administration faces several problems in KSA such as: low student performance, an increasing number of illiterate parents (especially women), the general lack of relationships between parents and schools, reducing teachers numbers which leads to additional workload for other teachers, and unwillingness among teachers to attend training courses. This is supported by Alkhanjer (2001), who found that parents had little interest in SPA and did not attend meetings. They were unwilling to support schools regarding pupil problems, while at the same time they tended to blame teachers and head teachers for the lack of performance and progress of their pupils.

The impact of the lack of a relationship between schools and parents was studied by Mohammed (1999), and he found that one of the main reasons for students' failure at school is the lack of engagement between parents and schools.

2.2.10 Implementing decentralisation in Arabic countries

The debates around a shift towards decentralisation within the educational sector in the Arabic world date back to 1980 (Abdulhafedh, 2011). However, the implementation of decentralisation was not completed as MOEs within Arabic countries kept control of the organisational and administrative aspects. For example, in Egypt in 1981 the MOE implemented act number (139) which made mention of a move of some authorities from the MOE to school level in terms of decision-making and financial support from the community, but this still required permission from ministers (Abdulhafedh, 2011).

The Egyptian government initially worked with schools in Alexandria in 1981, and then implemented a second program of decentralisation, which was supported by UNICEF. In 1992, work was undertaken with four schools and this has grown to 352 schools in three regions. These

Chapter 2

two stages led to a number of positive changes: (1) use of new teaching methods and changing classroom organization; (2) a reduction in the number of students in classrooms and the provision of extra curricular activities; (3) use of new technologies; (4) enhanced classroom performance from teachers; (5) the development of more effective and productive relationships with parents and school boards; (6) the empowerment of pupils to interact with Egyptian local communities (Abdulhafedh, 2011).

In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), reform to the education system is characterized by a move towards decentralisation. The UAE government decided to provide schools within more financial support and decision-making authority in order to decrease bureaucracy and to encourage school creativity. Planning and setting standards remained the role of the Ministry of Education (Al-Taneiji and McLeod, 2008).

According to the DOE in Qatar, (2013), the government started implementing decentralisation in 2004, through a reform called the 'Independent Public Schools Initiative' as part of the public school system. The policy of these schools emphasised a decentralisation culture through encouraging schools to work collaboratively with the local community, setting their own strategic plans, gaining authority of day-to-day decision making and increasing the role of parents and communities. The schools had the right to choose their own philosophy, teaching methods and operational plans under general standards provided by the government. The standards focused upon four subjects; Arabic and English language, mathematics and science. Moreover, schools operated with more autonomy and flexibility. This could be seen in their ability to: (1) select staff members; (2) control budgets; (3) select curricula to support the needs of their students; and (4) manage school utilities such as electricity, water, gas and waste management and school maintenance (DOE in Qatar, 2013).

Albalushy, (2011) states that this initiative in Qatar relied upon four principles: (1) school autonomy, which encouraged creativity, productivity and the development of student achievement through 'independence schools' with an appropriate budget from the government. (2) accountabilities, i.e. the schools had responsibility for assessing and evaluating student learning outcomes. (3) diversity, i.e. the provision of choice for parents, communities and the business sector to establish their schools under national standards. (4) choice, i.e. giving parents and students the opportunity to select the school which matches their preferences.

2.2.11 The movement towards a decentralised system in KSA

“The Ministry of Education (in KSA) tends to delegate all operational and administrative responsibilities to the regional and provincial education bodies. Therefore, the Ministry’s headquarters concentrates on the strategic issues, as well as planning and supervising developmental and promotional activities” (World Data on Education, 2010, p 5). This thesis is set within the context of education within KSA, where the MOE is working in different ways to undertake a move towards decentralisation. The proposed research examines the perceived changes to schools from the perceptions of multiple stakeholders.

The first change involved a reduction in the number of agencies, such as the DOE and its inspectors that were based in each region. The MOE witnessed huge development and reduced the number of DOE departments from 83 to 45 around the Kingdom to make the system more decentralised (MOE, 2012 b). This has helped to reduce the bureaucracy between policy-makers and schools and the number of inspectors around the KSA. Moreover it will help to shift the power to school level. Reducing the number of DOE employees was part of a combination of management systems for boys’ and girls’ schools, which in the past operated under different regulations and bodies.

The second change involved shifting some authority from the MOE to the heads of DOE, such as allowing them to open new schools if needed, and to sign contracts with construction companies to build new schools. Moving this action to the DOE has led to an increase in the number of new schools [1100] in the last two years (MOE, 2012 b, p. 1).

The third change was to increase the number of national conferences at different levels of management such as those for the heads of the DOE and their deputies, inspectors, head teachers and teachers. These meetings are spaces in which to discuss existing challenges and suggest solutions. The increase in the number of these conferences illustrates the intended change in the decision-making process, as in the past the MOE made the decisions with little if any communication with different educational levels.

The fourth change, one that is particularly to this research, is the empowerment of head teachers in schools, by establishing new guidelines leading to a document containing 52 items. This document is discussed in detail in the next section.

2.2.12 The new management policy (2010)

Historically the new management policy was an improvement on a previous version, which was implemented in 2000. After the head teachers national meeting in MOE-Riyadh, in 2000, the MOE set out 31 guidelines for head teachers.

These guidelines were reformed in 2010 and now comprise 52 items or powers. There was some repetition and there were also some differences. The new version is more precise and leads to better organisation with an explanation of how to implement each item and a suggested lead (head teacher or particular school council, committee) all intended to increase collaboration at school level and to avoid a top-down approach. In 2010 the MOE established a new management policy in order to empower school head teachers. This policy acts as a guideline for head teachers to clarify their responsibilities and those of a range of school-level committees.

The new management policy can be divided into four groups according to the responsible figures. In Table (2), the researcher analysed the new management policy based on those involved, including head teachers, school council members and 'others', as follows: (1) powers directly held by school head teachers which cannot be delegated to others, (2) powers agreed by School Council, (3) powers that can be delegated from head teachers to others or that can be implemented by others (4) powers held by school head teachers only, but with some conditions.

Who is responsible?	The powers (item numbers in the policy)
(1) Powers directly held by school head teacher which cannot be delegated to others	9, 13, 21, 22, 42, 48, 50
(2) Powers agreed by School Council	School Council: (1, 2, 8, 10, 31, 39, 43, 44, 45, 46) Guidance and counseling committee: (4, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 34, 38, 41) School fund committee: (47) Financial committee of the school: (52)
(3) Powers that can be delegated from head teachers to others or that can be implemented by others	3, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 26, 33, 25, 26, 27, 39, 40, 51
(4) Powers held by school head teachers only, but with some conditions	5, 6,7, 49

Table 2 An analysis of the new management policy based on the responsible figures.

The MOE put in place four structures, condition at the time:

1. The MOE formed an executive committee to support the implementation of the policy and to address any obstacles to effective implementation.
2. The MOE runs an annual meeting for school head teachers with the participation of local and international consulting firms to encourage good practice in educational leadership. These meetings include workshops and activities designed to increase the professional development and learning of head teachers.
3. Implementing these new guidelines without changing any of the rules without agreement with the Department of Supervision in the MOE.
4. In 2013, the Department of Supervision in the MOE would submit a study that will evaluate the effectiveness and impact of this new policy. Until now, the MOE has not published any documents regarding evaluation of new policy.

To summarise, this chapter provides background information about the KSA and discusses some important issues regarding the context of KSA education system such as history, stages, policy, current reform program and Tatweer. Education administration, the process of becoming a head teacher and the role of head teachers have all been illustrated. In addition, the main challenges facing the KSA education system have been explained. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of the implementation of decentralisation in KSA schools, how the MOE intends to reform the system and the new management policy, which aims to improve the education system. This thesis therefore seeks to investigate changes in the field as a function of implementation of the new policy.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1 Educational decentralisation

3.1.1 The definition of decentralisation

To provide a clear definition of decentralisation, it is important to distinguish between decentralisation and centralisation. Caldwell states:

In theory and in practice, centralization and decentralization are in tension, with centralization indicated when the values of control, uniformity and efficiency are in ascendance, and decentralization indicated when freedom, differentiation, and responsiveness are preferred. Whether centralization or decentralization is better if innovation is sought is uncertain" (2005, p. 3).

According to Hossain (2005), decentralisation is not an alternative of centralisation, as both can work in combination. National and sub-national actors within one system can support each other and determine the most effective ways to achieve decentralisation objectives.

There are numerous definitions of decentralisation in the literature due to the number of different ways of viewing the decentralisation phenomenon. It is important to clarify some definitions from international organisations and to note the key authors in this area. One of the biggest organisations working in developing the countries across the world is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and they define 'decentralization' based on local practitioners' views as:

One of the most critical prerequisites to translate decentralization from theory to practice is a clear understanding of the concept. To be able to better envision what decentralization means, how best it can be planned and implemented, what its intricacies are, and how its challenges can be overcome, development practitioners should be equipped with appropriate tools which could provide an analytical knowledge of decentralization from a conceptual viewpoint accompanied by real and field-tested examples of the concept in practice (UNDP, 1998, A, P. 6).

Decentralisation can also be defined as "the transfer of authority for decision-making, finance, and management to quasi- autonomous units of local governments" (Litvack and Seddon 1999: pp.3). This definition focuses on the process of shifting authority from higher levels of government to lower levels. The difference between this and the UNDP definition is the scope of decentralisation, as the UNDP is broader in its conceptualisation of decentralisation. The Litvack

and Seddon definition emphasises the process of moving the authority of decision-making from one level to another, but both of these definitions fail to recognise the multiple forms of decentralisation, which are: deconcentration, delegation, devolution and privatization. A more comprehensive definition was provided by Rondinelli (1981), who placed emphasis on the right to plan, gain and manage resources at lower levels either in the hierarchical government or public bodies. Rondinelli, et al. define decentralisation as: the transfer of responsibility for planning, management, resource-raising and allocation from the central government to (a) field units of central government ministries or agencies; (b) subordinate units or levels of government; (c) semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations; (d) area-wide regional or functional authorities.

Although differences of opinion still exist in the understanding of decentralisation in the literature, there is a clear distinction between definitions from the western world and the less developing world. As Ebel and Yilmaz (2001, p. 13) indicate that:

The western world sees decentralization as an alternative to provide services in a more cost effective way whereas developing countries are pursuing decentralization reforms to counter economic inefficiencies, macroeconomic instability and ineffective government. Post-communist transition countries are embracing decentralization as a natural step in the shift to market economies and democracy. Latin America is decentralizing as a result of political pressure to democratize. African states view decentralization as a path to national unity.

Differences in the understanding of decentralisation between region to region appear in the literature and may indicate the different tactics for the implementation of decentralisation in each country. Moreover, the evidence shows different results of implementing decentralisation in developed and developing countries. From my point of view, decentralisation is a process of shifting authority from central government or from higher level to local people or lower levels of an organisation, including planning, making decisions, raising funding and shifting some authority to other levels.

3.1.2 The focus on decentralisation in literature

The sources for the definition of 'decentralisation' are extensive. For example, the web site ERIC gives us around 3260 results. However, searching in Google Scholar by using the term 'educational decentralization' gives some 107,000 results. The term 'decentralisation' overlaps with several research areas such as politics, education, management, and finance. As a result, it is difficult to review all these documents, thus the researcher will concentrate on the most relevant

work to the research question with a specific focus on management level acceptance of decentralisation within the Saudi context [and some of its neighbouring countries].

In fact, decentralisation is a multifaceted phenomenon involving international, national, sub-national and local levels. Also, it encompasses different social sectors such as the political, social, cultural, educational and environmental (UNDP, 1998, B). In the late 1990s it was estimated that 80 percent of countries around the world had implemented decentralization in one form or another (Manor 1999). From that point, either new or deepening reforms have been announced in many other countries such as Bolivia, Cambodia, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, South Korea and Turkey. Therefore, it can be concluded that experiments with, and enthusiasm for, decentralization are essentially ubiquitous across the globe (Channa, and Faguet, 2012).

Rahman, (1996) indicates that the main objectives of decentralisation are removing the distance between the people in the field and bureaucracy in order to generate a climate of trust and increase collaboration between them; the second objective is improving dynamic leadership at local level; the third objective is encouraging local people to participate in governance and policy implementation. Nevertheless, although decentralisation is considered essential to increase democratic, cultural and local culpability and local governance, decentralisation does not necessarily lead to greater efficiency, empowerment, transparency, civic engagement or poverty reduction (The World Bank, 2009).

3.2 Forms of decentralization

In the literature, the forms of decentralisation are various depending on the point of view of the author, but most of the literature discusses three forms: administrative, fiscal and political (UNDP, 1998, B). It should be noted that some literature has drawn attention to a fourth form, which is marketing (Cistulli, 2002). In this respect, Bennet (1990) expresses a useful distinction between two general decentralising thrusts:

1. intergovernmental decentralisation, which consists of the transference of authority, responsibility, power and resources downward to different levels of government,
2. market-based decentralisation, when authority is transferred from governments to the market and Non-Governmental Organizations.

Furthermore, Falleti (2004) excluded the 'market' from decentralisation, and indicated that decentralisation is related to state reforms; it does not include the transfer of authority to non-state sectors. Also, Collins and Green (1994) confirm that decentralisation is concerned with

Chapter 3

transferring authority from the centre to the periphery; while privatization is concerned with transferring aspects of the public sector to the private sector.

These above forms take on different shapes in each country, depending upon the choices governments make, and what types of authorities, powers and recourses transfer to local government or sectors, considering the goals of decentralisation and the capability of local people (Weidman, and DePietro-Jurand, 2011)

Decentralisation may take various forms. Cistulli, (2002) identifies the main four forms of decentralisation, which are: political, administrative, fiscal, and marketing. In the next section, a summary of each follows. According to Peckham, et al. (2005): *“the definitions and frameworks for decentralisation shows that there is no single theory of decentralisation and that a key problem with decentralisation is that its explanation relies invariably on another set of contested concepts (e.g. power, authority, autonomy)”* (p 76).

3.2.1 Political

Political decentralisation is concerned with increasing the power of citizens and their representatives in public decision-making. In general, this involves a representative political system constructed on local election jurisdictions and pluralistic parties (Cistulli, 2002).

3.2.2 Administrative

Administrative decentralisation shifts authority from central government to sub-national or units of government. Administrative decentralisation can be divided into three sub-elements, which are: deconcentration, delegation and devolution.

Deconcentration refers to a redistribution of decision-making authority and financial and management responsibilities among different levels of central government. In other words, according to Paqueo and Lammert (2000), “deconcentration involves shifting management responsibilities from the central to the regional or other lower levels so that the centre retains control” p 131. It can address transferring functions or tasks but not authority. Therefore, this form is often considered the weakest form of decentralization (Cistulli, 2002). Larson and Ribot (2004) conceptualises decentralisation in two primary forms: democratic decentralisation (also called political decentralisation or devolution) and deconcentration (also known as administrative decentralisation).

Delegation arises when central authorities lend authority to lower levels of government, or even to semi-autonomous organizations, with the consideration that the authority can be removed

(Paqueo and Lammert, 2000). Cistulli, (2002) has argued that delegation is removing responsibility to a lower level without full control and with central government retaining accountability.

Devolution is the shifting of authority such as administrative, financial or educational to lower levels, and this transference cannot be revoked (Paqueo and Lammert, 2000). Devolution is a full form of decentralisation.

3.2.3 Fiscal

Transferring responsibility from central government to local government units occurs in two ways; funds to deliver decentralised functions; and the revenue-generating power of the decisions regarding expenditure of these funds (Hossain, 2005). Fiscal decentralisation aims to organize policies which are designed to increase the revenue or financial autonomy of subnational governments. For example, when the central government allow for establishing new subnational taxes and the delegation of tax authority (Falleti, 2004). In the light of the new management policy in KSA, the MOE provided schools with an 'operational budget' for five main purposes; school supplies, expenses for sports and cultural activities, training, cleanliness and emergency maintenance (PMSOB, 2012). While this is a good step towards empowering head teachers and increasing school capacities, the 'operational budget' limits the decision-making for school head teachers under the umbrella of the DOE and specific procedures presented in the (PMSOB, 2012), that should be followed.

3.2.4 Market

Market decentralization aims to transfer decision-making power from public to private organizations. It can take two different forms: privatization and deregulation (Hossain, 2005).

Privatization involves allowing private organizations to achieve functions that had previously been monopolized by the government, or continuing to finance public sector programs via the capital market and allowing private organizations to participate (Hossain, 2005).

Deregulation refers to the transfer of service provision or production activities previously owned by the public sector to competing private organizations (Hossain, 2005). For instance, electricity or broadcasting provided by various and competing companies.

3.3 Relevant literature

There is considerable literature on educational decentralisation. What follows is an examination of relevant literature, which meets my research questions and interest. In this section, the

researcher will focus on the studies that employ the qualitative approach and in particular case studies. The review also identifies examples from different countries around the world. The second section aims to review studies in a number of Arabic countries, which share similar characteristics with KSA education, such as religion (Islam), language (Arabic) and culture especially the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries such as United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar, due to the similarities in terms of political government characteristics.

3.3.1 Evidence from international literature

Leithwood and Menzies (1998) reviewed 77 empirical and case studies on the implementation of SBM between 1985 and 1995 from different countries. In terms of method design, 45 studies employed a qualitative approach and in particular 19 of them used a case study design. Leithwood and Menzies investigated the forms of SBM in practice and how these forms affect students, parents, teachers, principals, schools and districts. Interviews, focus groups, document analysis, observations, field notes, analysis of minutes and media analysis were also tools for data collection. In this thesis, the researcher will use interviews, focus groups, document analysis, observations and photographic images. The data for the review by Leithwood and Menzies was collected using five strategies, such as searching via ERIC, Education Index and Dissertation Abstracts by using key words such as 'school council', 'site council', 'school community council', 'improvement council', 'school based decision making', 'site based decision making' and so on. The second strategy is using Eloise, an Ontario electronic database with the same descriptors. Third, the 1994 and 1995 American Educational Research Association annual meetings were examined and research papers appropriate to the search were gained directly from the authors. Fourth, principal researchers in the field of SBM were contacted and asked to send copies of their latest work. Finally, a Social Sciences Citation Index search was completed on-line. This variety of strategies allows large amounts of data to be obtained, both qualitative and quantitative research methods to be used and provides the opportunity to select a sufficient number of papers. They found that SBM normally takes four forms:

1. administrative control when the principal is central
2. professional control when the authority is held by the teacher
3. community control when the community or the parents, through a board, are in charge
4. balanced control when the authority is between the parents and the professionals (teachers and the principal)

Wohlstetter and Odden's (1992) study identified three similar forms, but omitted balanced control, which was revealed by Leithwood and Menzies (1998).

Leithwood and Menzies (1998) summarized the positive and negative effects on students, teachers, principals and districts. The positive effects of the implementation of SBM on teachers are increased collaboration, changing the instruction in classrooms, a sense of improved control over one's work and a sense of increased accountability. The positive impacts on the principal are to shift the managerial role to become the producer of information and to improve accountability. The community and parents have increased satisfaction with their schools. Even though none of these results relate to a change in student achievement, the effects seem to increase the overall quality of the educational environment and better student outcomes are implied.

A study undertaken by Theodorou (2006), investigated Cypriot primary school head teachers' perceptions of decentralisation through transferring decision-making regarding school finances. The study applied a qualitative approach to investigate the views of seven primary school head teachers through semi-structured interviews. Similar to the proposed study in KSA, a qualitative approach was used to emphasise individual meaning and experience. Theodorou aimed to investigate the decentralisation system based on his informers' beliefs about financial delegation, and to clarify why and where these beliefs had accumulated. Additionally, he investigated the head teachers' limits and tolerance with regard to accepting the changes. Theodorou, revealed that three aspects generally motivated the transfer toward decentralisation: policy, funding and efficiency. Although the new education system in Cyprus tended to delegate some financial management to school level, the head teachers believed that they had limited authority to control budgets and saw themselves as 'executives' following instructions from the Ministry of Education and the Local School Boards (LSBs). The system was seen as highly centralised and inflexible and very time consuming, which discouraged active leaders. While there were some disadvantages of a centralised system in Cyprus, the head teachers (interviewees) mentioned some advantages, such as a reduction in workload and the responsibilities of managing the school money at school level. Also, schools had limited staff and insufficient infrastructures to extend their autonomy in terms of financial management. However, this implementation of LSBs controlling money did not support the autonomy of schools as Hannaway (1992) outlines that the greater the amount of money allocated to a school, the greater the amount of decentralisation.

The findings of Theodorou's study emphasised the need for training to improve head teachers' skills in order for them to be able to manage school finances. This view is generally supported by Baganda (2008), Al-Taneiji and McLeod (2008) and Botha (2006). Lack of training for school staff members causes a reluctance to implement SBM as outlined by Mitchell, (1990). These findings shed light on the disadvantages and advantages of a centralised system in Cyprus.

Chapter 3

Botha (2006) employed multiple case study designs in South Africa, to conceptualise the crucial role of the school principal in school improvement via effective school-based management. The study targeted four schools as case studies, two of them were described as 'good' schools and two as 'less effective' schools based on an independent study. This selection is considered to be acceptable as an objective selection for the units of the case study. Similar participants were sampled from each unit; one head teacher and four educators in each school.

The findings of the study were as follows: (1) in terms of the perception of SBM, head teachers in good schools have a clear understanding of the concept of SBM, while in less effective schools they link SBM with SI (School improvement); (2) head teachers in good schools have a clear vision and philosophy, such as a clearly defined identity and purpose (ideology), but in less effective schools they do not; (3) head teachers in good schools participate in the decision-making with teachers and staff using a democratic style, head teachers of less effective schools do it alone; (4) head teachers in good schools were innovators, motivators, coaches, mentors, change agents and liaison officers, while in the less effective schools they did not have varied roles; (5) in terms of leadership challenges, in good schools the head teacher determined their challenges to be 'improving the school' and 'making the community more involved', however, in less effective schools, the biggest challenges were 'keeping out of trouble' and 'keeping everybody happy'; (6) good schools understand SBM needs: a good school management team and principal and delegation of authority, but less effective schools said that SBM required a strong leader, but it was the Department of Education's role to show them what to do and how to do it.

Botha provides a thick description of his findings with clear structure and mission. The findings of this study are similar to those in my earlier work (Albeladi, 2011) in particular in less effective schools where the head teachers did not have a clear understanding of SBM or decentralisation as a concept and in the process of decision-making where in KSA head teachers take most decisions alone and there is a lack of democratic culture. Botha highlights the need for Continued Professional Development (CPD), and the preparation of head teachers to take on a decentralised agenda which is one of the main themes that will be discussed in this thesis. This links with the findings of Al-Taneiji and McLeod (2008) in the UAE context. Botha's study shows the differences between good and less effective schools, which may allow policy makers to focus on how schools receive policy and how they deal with it in order to bridge the gap between high and low performing schools. This thesis employed a qualitative case study with a quantitative survey and the researcher used a similar sampling technique by selecting higher and lower performing schools (Tatweer and public schools and in addition a private school) as a result of advice from DOE in KSA.

The limitation of both Botha's (2006) and Theodorou's (2006) studies is that they only focus on head teacher perceptions rather than those of other staff/school members. Theodorou, presented findings gained through interviews and drew a picture of head teachers' perceptions of financial delegation. This acts as a guideline for my research project to conduct research in KSA using interviews. In order to overcome the limitation of Botha's and Theodorou's studies, the researcher obtained triangulation between participants such as head teachers, deputies, teachers, parents, pupils and supervisors from the DOE, through multiple data collection techniques such as interviews, questionnaires, document analysis, observations and photography. The use of triangulation arose from the ethical need to verify the validity of processes. In qualitative case studies, this could be done by using multiple sources of data (Yin, 1994).

Oryema, (2008), tries to investigate the impact of prismatic society traits on the decentralisation policy in Uganda. The study benefits from the Riggs 'prismatic Society Theory' as a rationalization for the many and frequent failures of evidently good policies in developing countries. The researcher uses a qualitative case study, with 'critical theory' as an epistemological context. The boundaries of the case study were from the central government head office in the Ministry of Education and Sports down to two primary schools at grassroots level, located in different settings: urban and rural areas. The data were collected through interviews, notes, observations, documentary evidence and photography. This is the only study that has used these tools to collect qualitative data on the topic. Oryema used photos to provide a deeper understanding of the educational facilities and cultural context. The researcher believed that the use of photography enhanced the readers' understanding of decentralisation efforts in KSA.

The study found that; prismatic society traits have a significant influence on the effectiveness of Uganda's decentralization policy and consequently Riggs's theory is highly relevant for administration in Uganda even today. The main influences of prismatic traits on the implementation of decentralisation policy are as follows; family size and structure; blood link solidarity; superstition and witchcraft; perceptions of authority; specialization problems; age and gender; documentation and record problems; and precision problems.

Baganda, (2008) utilised a qualitative case study to investigate the implementation process of decentralisation in primary education in Tanzania. Interviews, field notes, observations, focus groups and documentary analysis were used as data collection tools from 46 participants who included policy-makers, council officials and councillors, head teachers and members of the school committee. This range of participants and data collection tools will be similar to those in the current study.

Chapter 3

After more than a decade of the implementation of decentralisation, the findings were as follows: (1) there have been some improvements in terms of access, quality and management of primary education; (2) the enrolment ratio increased from 77.6 percent in 1990 to 114.4 percent in 2007. the pupil book ratio in Mbeya District Council increased from one book to three pupils (1:3) in 1999 to one book to two pupils (1:2) in 2007. There was some expansion of school buildings such as teacher houses, classrooms and offices, some improvement in teaching and learning environments and the transparency and management of primary schools also improved.

While capitalizing on decentralisation policy resulted in some improvement in the education sector (the successes mentioned above), the study also found some challenges. There were some limitations with regard to financial and human resources which made it difficult for decentralisation to succeed. In addition, about one fourth of the teachers have less than the required qualifications in the two districts and there was less engagement with local communities. The third challenge was related to the lack of knowledge and experience of some of the school committees. This concern is related to the findings of this thesis. Fourthly, the relationship between central and local agencies had some conflict and finally, extreme poverty was found to be one of the main challenges with implementing decentralisation initiatives. This is not the case in KSA, where the government spends a considerable amount of money on its education system.

While this study produced significant findings, it is difficult to generalise these results. This study confirms that the notion of decentralisation is not 'the magic stake'. It can provide valuable solutions to some problems while at the same time bringing some challenges, especially when the local community has less experience and knowledge. These findings are relevant to one of the objectives of this thesis, which refers to the extent of autonomy needed for a school community to restructure and organize classrooms or buildings in order to respond to student learning needs.

Hoque, et al. (2011) used a quantitative questionnaire in Bangladesh to investigate the relationship between school improvement and (1) strategic planning, (2) supportive and comprehensive roles (3) shared decision-making. The research sampled 697 teachers and 127 principals from 127 secondary schools. The roles of head teacher were: executive officer, sharing authority, instructional manager and shared decision maker with stakeholders. The findings of the study were as follows:

1. the impact of principal roles on school improvement is significant
2. strategic planning has a significant and positive effect on SI.
3. supportive ability has a significant and positive effect on SI

4. comprehensive planning under SBM has a positive and significant effect
5. shared decision making is not significant and no spreading a democratic system
6. the facilitating capacity of principals has no significant effect on SI

Bangladesh implemented SBM, but school essentially work to a centralised system. This relates to the findings of the pilot study for this thesis, where the new policy in KSA does not appear to take root at ground level. Moving from a centralised education system to a decentralised system requires investment, time, political will and local drive.

In a more comprehensive review of the literature, Channa and Faguet (2012) evaluated the literature about decentralisation in health and education in developing countries, focusing on the quality of the evidence. They collected evidence from a range of resources such as JSTOR, SCOPUS, Google Scholar and Web of Knowledge. They reviewed more than 1000 scientific papers. The studies were selected based upon criteria such as: (a) empirical nature, (b) whether they dealt specifically with the decentralization of service delivery of health and/or education in developing nations, and (c) whether they dated from 1992 or later. The number dramatically reduced to 35 studies, which were divided into two main themes: technical efficiency and performance matching.

Channa and Faguet attempt to differentiate between two types of studies: which focus mainly on technical efficiency and preference matching. The evidence varies from high to lower quality and the stronger evidence shows that decentralisation increases the technical efficiency of and preference for matching local people to education, which means that public goods provided by local governments match citizens' preferences or demands. The final conclusion is that decentralisation as reform can show clear, positive consequences in some cases and this will guide this thesis to carefully investigate the implementation of decentralisation in the Saudi context and to examine the new policy under the themes 'technical efficiency' and 'preference matching'. The main limitation of this systematic review, by Channa and Faguet, is that the criteria used to judge the quality of the evidence rely too heavily upon a quantitative perspective, a paradigm not employed in the proposed study.

Autonomy in England has its roots in the 1970s (Glatter, 2012) and the Education Reform Act 1988 (ERA), which established a new policy framework for schools (Whitty, 2008). According to Higham and Earley (2013) "Local Management of Schools gave schools control over their own budgets and daily management, devolving 85 per cent of the LEA [Local Education Authority] budget to schools" (p. 3). Also, the Education Act 1992 provides a national framework in order to ensure regular inspections of schools under the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

Chapter 3

Three elements of ERA 1988 introduce school autonomy in England, financial delegation with freedom to control schools with national accountability such as inspections, central target setting and a competition system. In more detail, Higham and Earley (2013), state that;

First, the nature of school autonomy, which from 1988 focused on the delegation of financial and site management and aspects of deregulation, while the traditional fields of professional autonomy, including curriculum and assessment, were prescribed through the National Curriculum and tests. Second, the national accountability, which included from 1992 national inspections and published tests, but which subsequently expanded, to include central target setting, intervention and oversight underpinned by government analysis of pupil level data (Ozga, 2009). Third, the operation of the quasi market, which created incentives for schools to respond to competitive pressures to attract (particular types of) students and which, while varying locally, has further intensified the significance of external accountability judgments and resultant league tables (p. 14).

Helgoy and Homme (2007) claimed that in England there is strong accountability and re-regulation where the centre retrieves control, normally indirectly, by setting targets, measuring performance and implementing quality indicators at the same time as the government places emphasis on decentralisation and autonomy. This may indicate a mixed system approach.

A recent study by Higham and Earley (2013), used a mixed method approach (survey and case study) in order to investigate head teachers' perspectives on school autonomy, accountability, external support and managing change. They found that school leaders see autonomy existing within the broader policy framework. They normally expect superior authority over aspects of school management but not over the aims and purpose of schooling. School leaders perceived that they had the capacity and freedom to act in a different manner. The studies of Higham and Earley (2013) and Helgoy and Homme (2007) helped me to conceptualize the view that the combination of a high level of decision-making within school and a high level of government accountability can be a significant step towards the next step of implementing decentralization in the KSA education system. Jumping to a fully decentralised system may have a negative impact, as schools may not have the capacity to make such decisions. As Clune (1993) indicates, it is difficult to develop a high level of curriculum at school level, and this is usually developed by experts.

3.3.2 Research evidence regarding decentralisation in Arabic countries

Al-Taneiji and McLeod (2008) studied educational reform in the UAE in terms of the recent implementation of decentralization. They used a qualitative approach and semi-structured individual and focus group interviews as data collection methods. Their sample was six school

head teachers and a group of five teachers from each school, which equals 30 teachers. The main findings were: that there is a need to provide schools with clear goals, purpose and information about decentralisation from the MOE; that there is a need to create a decentralisation culture and structure and to prepare a strategic plan, including a timeline for all phases of the strategy; there is a need to develop the foundations of a decentralisation culture and to consider its potential effects. The authors concluded that; 'Training and preparation will be required for the whole education community before decentralization can be successfully implemented' (Al-Taneiji and McLeod, 2008, p.289). This study pointed to the significant preparation and training required for school staff members to be ready to implement decentralization. This is relevant to one of the aims of this thesis, to determine whether KSA staff feel prepared for the implementation of decentralization.

Zellman, et al. (2009) provided a study commissioned by the RAND Corporation and the Qatar government. The study included two approaches: a case study analysis of classroom and school level data from 16 schools (12 belonging to the Independent Public Schools Initiative and 4 Ministry schools). The data were collected long term by 104 visits to the selected schools between 2004 and 2007. They interviewed 180 head teachers and administrators and 114 focus groups consisting of teachers, students and parents. Also, they observed 204 classes to assess the practices of independent school classrooms. They analyzed the national survey from 2004 to 2006 to examine teacher behaviour and the attitudes of teachers, parents, students and administrators as well as students' academic achievement in both independent and Ministry schools. This long-term technique of data collection is beyond the resource capability of the author of this thesis, but the findings are of interest.

The main findings of the study by Zellman, et al. are: (1) there is a big difference between independent schools and Ministry schools in many ways and principals, teachers, parents and students recognized and appreciated those differences. (2) Ministry schools showed few changes during the early years of the reform process. (3) There was uncertainty and concern among stakeholders during the early years of implementing the reform as a consequence of policy changes, potentially limiting the reform's future power. (4) Students in independent schools outperformed students in Ministry schools during the period studied. (5) Parents and students in independent schools demonstrated a higher level of satisfaction than those involved with Ministry schools. (6) On the one hand, teachers in independent schools raised concerns about workloads when developing new curriculum, long working days, lack of job security as the School Board had the new right to hire and fire them, but on the other hand, they received more professional development activities such as sessions on using technology, planning curriculum and assessment. (7) The authors concluded that: *"Qatar's reform has shown significant early success and its huge*

potential for offering Qatar's children a world-class education has not abated" (Zellman, et al. 2009, p. 5).

Haleq (2012) aimed to identify significant requirements for achieving decentralisation in public school administration in Syria. The study was conducted from the perspective of administrators of secondary and primary schools via a questionnaire. There were 200 participants, including head teachers both male and female who represented 16% of the total number of head teachers in the target population. The findings revealed that; (1) the requirements of achieving decentralisation can be divided into four categories; cognitive, human, legislative or organizational and equipment or materials. (2) gender, experience, qualifications and educational diplomas have no significant effect on the achievement of these organizational and equipment related requirements, however, (3) there is a significant statistical indication that head teachers, who are qualified with a diploma in education, achieve greater knowledge and fulfil more of the human requirements.

3.3.3 Evidence from Saudi Arabia

Having reviewed some special studies from neighbouring Gulf States, this thesis investigates decentralisation in KSA. The new management policy, provided by the MOE aims to shift some authority from the DOE to schools, which can be described as a 'delegation', so theoretically it is part of intergovernmental decentralisation. The new management policy focuses on administrative aspects and has limited fiscal reference points. Therefore, this thesis will focus on 'administration'. As Cohen and Peterson, (1999, p. 19) state, "administrative decentralisation is by far the most common and accepted (conceptual) form of decentralization, insofar as development is concerned". According to Hossain (2005) *"in most Asian countries decentralization has taken two major reforms: one has been the deconcentration of responsibility development functions to field agencies without giving them discretion or autonomy the other has been delegation of functions to agencies that are outside the regular administrative system"* (p. 7).

There are numerous challenges facing Saudi's current educational system, particularly at school level. These challenges can be divided into two sections. Internal challenges, which relate to staffing include lack of teacher professionalism, student misbehaviour and class size, the national curriculum which is provided from the MOE and which teachers refuse to follow, buildings and regulations within schools.

As one example of an internal challenge, Alshehry (2000) revealed that school head teachers in Beshah City KSA faced multiple barriers, which limited their efforts to improve their schools. These barriers were related to administration and specifically included a lack of; (1) sufficient budget to manage the school; (2) sufficient training for administrators to prepare strategic

planning to run schools; (3) collaborative working among staff; (4) human resources; (5) training for head teachers and deputies; (6) in-service training for staff members; (7) lack of democracy with instead a clear dictatorship among head teachers, for example, unwillingness to share any decision-making with teachers.

The second section is external, such as the relationship with the MOE, DOE, parents and the local community. In terms of external challenges Alshehry (2000) found that head teachers had limited communication with parents and they found it difficult to gain support from parents. Moreover, the previous research by the researcher indicated that some parents' attitudes towards the School Council was negative, as one participant stated that:

The school normally asks us to come to pay money for school. In addition, cultural attitude towards the public sector may be the main reason for the refusal of parents to join the school board. The general atmosphere is not involving a public voice in decision-making. Therefore, they see that the education process is the government's responsibility (Albeladi, 2011, p.42).

Alsufyan (2002) studied the perceptions of Saudi male head teachers in secondary schools about the major problems they faced in terms of educational leadership. He conducted 50 interviews in public secondary boys' schools in Riyadh. He found that the major problems are the centralised bureaucratic operation of the Ministry, the lack of authority with regard to the decision-making powers of the head teachers. Similar to this design, this thesis will interview 51 stakeholders in one city, but the difference is the range of groups that will be interviewed (head teachers, deputies, teachers, policy makers, pupils and parents) in order to gain multiple views. The findings of Alsufyan (2002) encourage the researcher to investigate the current situation with regard to the implementation of decentralization, and to find out what has changed in the education system in KSA after one decade of implementation.

Alahmady (2008) found that there was a lack of response from DOE with regard to supplying equipment to schools. In a similar context, a study conducted by Aldossary (2008) in the East of KSA (Alkhubar city) involved 92 head teachers as participants and also used a questionnaire to obtain data. The findings revealed many challenges facing heads such as the relationship between DOE and head teachers, lack of support from DOE for head teachers, lack of school budget, financial resources and facilities. Interestingly, participants indicated that the main reason for most of these challenges was DOE. With this in mind, this thesis will try to establish the need for changing the DOE's role in the education system from the view of school leaders.

Chapter 3

A lack of preparation for educational staff members is a further and common challenge in the Gulf countries. According to Alolaqi, (2000) there is a lack of head teacher preparation and in-service training in all Gulf countries. This may indicate the need to increase preparation and in-service training for all staff members, to ensure that a school's entire community can work together to raise standards. Of relevance to this thesis, this may be an impediment to implementing a fuller decentralised system given the lack of relevant training and development for the whole school community. Similar to Alolaqi, (2000), AlKhanjer (2001) found that, in KSA, head teachers had limited preparation and training, and there was inequality between the ways in which head teachers managed staff.

As Alotaby (2000) also revealed, school head teachers faced various challenges such as: considerable administrative responsibilities, limited powers and authority to address their school's specific problems and needs. Similar findings have been reported by Alhamdan (1996) in Kuwait, BaAbad (1995) in Yemen and Jarges (1991) in Egypt. Moreover inspectors within the MOE ask the head teachers to undertake a huge amount of work, such as the completing the school's plan, maintenance of the school building, supervision of teachers, responding to DOE requests and paper work for most of the school's decision-making, including sending it to DOE. Also, there is lack of administrative help for staff members, the school buildings are not suitable and are not maintained, and finally the parents do not support the school sufficiently (Alotaby, 2000).

Moreover, Alsahy (2006) found that 85% of his study participants (supervisors, head teachers and deputies) indicated that the reason for their reluctance to work as secondary head teachers is a lack of head teacher authority in schools. To make SBM effective, Conley and Bacharach (1990) argue that teachers should be involved in the decisions in areas that are important to them.

These findings were confirmed by Alahmady (2008) who identified the challenges facing secondary head teachers in Medina, KSA where this thesis will be conducted. A questionnaire was used as a data collection tool, and 59 head teachers participated in the study (this number represented all the head teachers in Medina, at that time). The findings of Alahmady were: (1) a lack of response from DOE with regard to supplying equipment to schools; (2) lack of authority in schools; (3) little chance for teachers to complete their postgraduate study and CPD; (4) lack of school budget. Such barriers and challenges in the KSA education system might be solved through implementing SBM. As Cotton (1993) concludes, the conceptual idea of SBM consists of the school as the primary unit of change through; (1) people who work with pupils having a better understanding of their needs; (2) school head teachers working as key figures in school improvement, (3) increasing teacher professionalism, which can lead to more desirable schooling outcomes.

Alsalih, (2010) conducted a study to identify secondary head teachers' authority in KSA and provided an initial perspective regarding these authorities. He used a questionnaire as a data collection instrument, and the samples were: 38 head of DOE, 36 district managers, 244 school administration supervisors, and 622 secondary head teachers. The findings were: (1) head teachers have limited authority as they work in a highly centralised system; (2) there was a big gap between head teachers' responsibilities and their authority; (3) unclear functions and legislation led to conflict with the DOE; (4) overall an average of 85% participants support increasing head teachers' authority in the following: school planning and improvement, governance of students and teachers, teaching and learning methods, building relationships with society and mass media, buildings and curriculum and especially decision-making in terms of administration. These findings show the need to apply a form of decentralisation within the KSA education system and this thesis aims to investigate the range of opinions and experiences regarding the new management policy which, as explained above, is the first step toward implementing decentralization. Alsalih's study was published as the new management policy was starting to be implemented, further studies by Mathis (2012) and Althmaly (2013) indicate that the system is still highly centralized with a lack of authority at school level.

Mathis (2012) investigated the leadership role of Saudi female principals in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia and their perspectives on that role. The researcher used interviews to collect data from twelve female head teachers who led elementary, intermediate and secondary government Schools in the Eastern Province. The findings of this study were as follows;

1. The 12 head teachers described their visions for their schools as the successful running of a physical environment to disseminate learning and achieve excellence.
2. They explained their visions, focusing upon elements of the national religion, which is Islam.
3. The effect of the MOE on their leadership shows that they had limited authority and were not working to act or be decision makers.
4. Their role was as a school manager more than an educational leader.

These findings concur with the researcher's initial work (Albeladi, 2011). Even with a small number of head teachers, findings showed that head teachers working under a centralised system did not see themselves as decision makers and existed at the lower level of a hierarchy system (Albeladi, 2011).

According to Al-Shammari, and Jubran, (2011), from an educational leader's point of view the possibility of applying school self-administration in public schools in the Riyadh region in Saudi

Chapter 3

Arabia is high, particularly in the areas of student affairs, school mission, school supervision and school finance with means of 4.3. In addition, teachers' affairs and school building comes with a mean of 3.8, while in the third stage, designing the curriculum only achieved a mean of 3. This indicates that there is a high expectation of implementing school self-management in most school aspects, but a lower expectation of schools' ability to build and design curricula.

Althmaly's (2013) study aims to identify the reasons for teachers' reluctance to work as secondary heads in Mekkah City, from the perspective of teachers and deputies. The main findings are related to a lack of financial and moral incentives to be a head teacher, the large amount of responsibility and heavy workload and the lack of authority or power granted from both MOE and DOE.

There has been a considerable amount of research into the challenges faced by the education system in Saudi Arabia, but little work has been undertaken to examine this 'shift' over time and its impact on school improvement. A handful of studies focus upon the new management policy such as Allheaniy's (2012) study, which investigated attitudes towards the new levels of administrative, technical and financial authority, using a questionnaire to gather the data from 320 headteachers in Makkah City. The main finding is that headteachers' attitudes were positive regarding their administrative and technical authority but they required more financial power. Also, the findings suggested the need for enhancing headteachers' understanding of how to implement the new authority. In contrast, Alhumaidhi (2013) provided negative results about the new management policy. Alhumaidhi's study aimed to find the barriers to practicing the new authority for secondary headteachers. A questionnaire was used to gather data from 122 headteachers and 33 supervisors in the capital city; Riyadh. The main findings are; the new authority is highly inflexible, as it comes with large number of administrative tasks and a lack of staff. The schools suffered from lack of facilities, equipment and funds. In terms of School Council members, the headteachers indicated that they are often poorly prepared and do not always help schools. Alotaibi (2013), studied the degree to which headteachers practiced their new administrative and technical authority and the impact of this on school performance. 110 headteachers from Taif City responded to the questionnaire. The findings were as follows; technical powers such as managing sick leave for school staff were used to a high degree, whilst they were only moderately used for arranging school programmes to solve school problems. In contrast, technical authority was not employed to a high level to sign contracts with the private sector or to select new school deputies. Technical authority can lead to better maintenance of school buildings, but it was only used moderately to promote extra-curricular activities. There is no statistically significant link between the role of the headteacher and the new levels of authority and improved school performance. Meemar's (2014) study focused only on Tatweer

schools and examined headteachers' ability to implement their new levels of authority, the support they perceived that they had to implement their authority, the headteachers' viewpoints about the effectiveness of their new authority in terms of accomplishing MOE outcomes and what they wanted to add. An online questionnaire was completed by 173 headteachers. The findings indicated that; headteachers believed that they had limited ability to implement their new authority as there was a lack of support; there was a statistically significant relationship between headteachers' beliefs about the effectiveness of the new levels of authority and accomplishing MOE outcomes.

However, these studies (AlIheaniy (2012); Alhumaidhi (2013); Alotaibi (2013); Meemar, (2014)) have some limitations, such as;

(1) they focused on headteachers' perspectives only, except Alhumaidhi (2013), who combined headteachers' and supervisors' views. While this thesis gathers evidence from numerous stakeholders such as headteachers, deputies, teachers, supervisors, parents and students, the voices of parents and students are rarely heard in education research in Saudi Arabia.

(2) All previous studies have placed emphasis on public schools and only Meemar studied Tatweer schools, while this thesis examines three types of school in Saudi Arabia, which are public schools, Tatweer schools and private schools. This is the first study to compare these three types and the levels of their autonomy.

(3) A major difference is the methodological approach, as this thesis is the first study in the field to use a qualitative case study and survey, while the other studies only rely on quantitative approaches.

(4) Moreover, the main limitation is the data collection tools, as all these studies rely on one tool, a 'questionnaire', but this thesis added several other tools such as interviews, focus groups, photographs and observations and document analysis.

(5) This thesis focused on Medina schools and the DOE in this district only, while the other studies examined different districts.

(6) In terms of research objectives, these four studies focused mainly upon attitude, barriers to implementation, ability to practice the new level of authority and the degree to which it was used, the perceived support received for implementation and what teachers wanted to add. This thesis uses a qualitative case study and survey, focuses on this 'shift' and examines the perceptions of a range of stakeholders regarding decentralisation and the new management policy and how they

make sense of the policy in practice. Also, it provides a critical comparison with the international literature to provide a better understanding of what the policy is seeking to promote, using SBM as a theoretical framework. The overarching aim is to put the policy in its cultural context, informed by the perceptions of stakeholders and taking into account existing literature on the subject.

3.4 Theoretical framework

It is important to go to the field with a plan based on a theoretical framework. Schultz (1988) states:

any research problem may be approached from more than one theoretical perspective...The choice of a theoretical model\conceptual framework ... will guide the research process in terms of the identification of relevant concepts ' constructs, definition of key variables, specific questions to be investigated, selection of a research design, choice of a sample and sampling procedures, data collection strategies ... data analysis techniques, and interpretation of findings" (p. 34) cited in Merriam (1998).

Warmbrod (1986) defines the theoretical or conceptual framework as *"a systematic ordering of ideas about the phenomena being investigated or as a systematic account of the relations among a set of variables" (p. 2).*

At this point, there were two challenges, which faced the researcher. Firstly there is no clear theoretical framework that can be used in the context of educational decentralisation. The term 'decentralisation' has been used in a number of areas such as management, political science, development studies, geography, education and social policy and appears in conceptual literature. In public choice theory, principal/agency theory, fiscal federalism and central–local relations. It has links with many cognate terms such as autonomy and localism, which themselves are problematic (Peckham, et al. 2005). Second, it is difficult to decide which of these fits with the objective of this thesis. The researcher worked in a pragmatic way, through analysis of some of the theoretical assumptions in the literature, focusing specifically on school autonomy or SBM, seeking to apply contingency theory in order to analyse the data from the field and integrating specific criteria and elements from the literature to serve as an umbrella for analysing the new management policy in Saudi Arabia.

3.4.1 School-based management

School autonomy can be described as schools independently managing themselves, as school-based management or as self-governing schools (Levacic, 2002). School autonomy as a concept is not widely used. There is a general preference for 'school-based management', which has the widest currency, or 'local management of schools' or 'self-managing schools' Caldwell (2005). This thesis will use the concept of 'school-based management' as it is widely used in the literature and easy to translate to the Arabic language when compared with 'local management of schools' or other terms. SBM can be defined in an educational system as:

public education is the systematic and consistent decentralization to the school level of authority and responsibility to make decisions on significant matters related to school operations within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, curriculum, standards and accountabilities (Caldwell, 2005, p. 3).

The limitation of the Caldwell definition is that there is limited school authority with government control of school goals, policies, curriculum, standards and accountabilities and this is one of the critiques from Higham and Earley (2013). On the other hand, a broader definition is provided by Marsh (1992), who defined SBM as "decentralizing power, knowledge, information and rewards within school organizations" (p.10). Candoli (1991) focuses on achieving a balance between freedom and accountability at all levels of education, which leads to tension between autonomy and accountability. As the school receives greater autonomy, the central government needs to ensure accountability and appropriate spending and that schools are managed in the right way. Other researchers such as Etheridge, et al. (1992), refer to the role of participation from local people such as principals, teachers, parents, students and community residents [stakeholders] in school-decision making, which is a central point of SBM, and very pertinent to this particular study in Saudi Arabia.

3.4.1.1 SBM characteristics

The main factors of SBM are (1) participation by staff, parents and the community in the school; (2) making schools more competitive; (3) using action research to make schools more effective; (4) delegating power and authority, which leads to commitment, trust, and a sense of ownership (Pushpanadham, 2006). Moreover, shifting decision-making and fiscal decentralisation can have a positive impact on school outcomes such as test scores or graduation rates by holding the schools accountable for the 'outputs' that they produce (The World Bank, 2007).

Chapter 3

Cotton (1993) reviewed sixty-nine documents about SBM, and she states that the modern rationale for decentralised schooling, and particularly school-based management, has grown. She concludes that;

- The school is the primary unit of change.
- Educators who work directly with students have the most knowledge and the most credible opinions as to which educational actions will be most beneficial to students.
- Significant improvement takes a long time and local schools are in the best place to sustain improvement efforts over time.
- The school head teacher is a key figure in school improvement.
- Significant change requires staff and community participation in project planning and implementation.
- School-based management aims to increase the professionalization of the teaching and can lead to more desirable schooling outcomes.
- The structure of SBM keeps the focus on achievement and other student outcomes.
- Alignment between budgets and instructional priorities develop under SBM (Cotton, 1993. p. 5).

Pushpanadham, (2006) also reviewed the literature on SBM and he summarised the main points which appear in a range of models in different countries;

- Involving school staff in decisions about programs and organization;
- Strong leadership and focusing on educational concerns;
- Involving parents and other parts of the community in the school;
- Efficient and effective distribution and usage of resources, depending on school budget;
- Building an environment which supports professional growth and collaboration;
- Long-term academic development;
- Positive attitudes toward and support for the school determined by staff, students, parents, and the community; positive behaviour, modelled by the staff; and
- The school must be successful and effective in achieving its goals.

3.4.1.2 Advantages of SBM

Decentralisation in education can take several forms, such as school decision-making, school choice, admissions, curriculum, activity planning and assessment of students, selecting school materials and maintenance of school buildings, choosing and employing teachers and staff, organizing the relationship with community, funding, information and so on. A shift to decentralisation needs to take a long-term view on the process by which these elements become the 'possession' of schools.

A study by Beuermann and Amelina (2011), revealed that local public services were highly affected by the type of intervention. Short-term interventions resulted in less satisfaction with local public services. In fact, it appeared that improving local administrative efficiency in delivering public services is a long-term process and that intensive interventions tended to lead to better outcomes.

The benefits of applying SBM include: reducing bureaucracy which will lead to school improvement (Neal, 1991), increasing school diversity, parents' choices and flexibility and more effective responses to school needs. In most decentralised systems there is a School Council holding such responsibilities.

3.4.1.3 SBM and school performance

Theorists and practitioners seek the outcomes and the benefits of implementing any program or strategy. There are numerous studies which have sought to investigate the relationship between decentralisation and school performance and in some cases, specifically pupil performance. Gunnarsson et al. (2004) studied primary schools in 10 Latin-American countries, with the aim of establishing the impact of decentralised school decision-making on student performance. The data showed that school autonomy had a positive impact on student performance and decentralised decision-making had a strong positive effect on test scores. Moreover, of relevance to this thesis, the results emphasized that parental participation in schools has a positive influence on pupil achievement. These findings are significant because effective and appropriate implementation of decentralization can improve student achievement through involving local people and stakeholders at several stages in the education process. This involvement in decision-making can for example, increase the feeling of school ownership.

Caldwell (2002) examines the evidence for a link between school self-management and student outcomes in 39 countries, and suggests that school self-management is more likely to be successful when it focuses on learning outcomes. However, Caldwell (2005) found that "*there has*

been little evidence that school-based management has had either a direct or an indirect effect on educational outcomes” (p. 4).

On the other hand, Eskeland and Filmer (2007) found a positive correlation between school autonomy and primary school performance in Argentina. Based on their findings, they argued that student learning could be increased by school autonomy and parental participation via various paths. They used cross-sectional data from Argentinian schools (6th and 7th grades) and found that autonomy has a direct effect on learning with high levels of participation and participation influences learning only through mediating the effect of autonomy. Their results might support the move to decentralisation in two ways. First, decentralisation shifts responsibility from the centre towards province/state level and/or towards local government, so the results should be directly relevant if this increases autonomy and participation in schools. Second, if the results are understood to represent the more general effect of moving decision making towards users and the local community, the results have relevance even if little happens to autonomy and participation in schools.

In schools, decentralisation can have a crucial impact on pupil outcomes. Many studies highlight the positive relationship between decentralisation and student achievement. According to Cotton (1993) many authors such as Arterbury and Hord (1991); Collins and Hanson (1991); and Peterson (1991), have investigated the relationship between SBM and student outcomes, especially achievement and have found that there is no direct link, either positive or negative between SBM and student achievement or other student outcomes, for example attendance. In some sites, student scores (in standardized or local tests) have increased a little, in others they have decreased slightly, and in most sites no differences have been noted. There are similarities between the findings of these researches and the findings of the study by Leithwood and Menzies (1998).

Galiani et al. (2008) found that decentralisation had an overall positive effect on student test scores in Argentina, particularly in maths, which increased by 3.5 per cent and in Spanish tests, which rose by 5.4 per cent on average after five years of decentralised management. Also, Galiani and Schargrodsky (2002) found that development in overall school achievement in Argentina was related to decentralisation. Improving the outcome of public school student test scores fell under the decentralisation policy, and the authors found a positive effect when schools were transformed to fiscally ordered provinces, but a negative effect when provinces incurred significant fiscal deficits.

Hanushek, et al. (2011) studied the impact of school autonomy on pupil achievement. They analysed data from four waves of international PISA tests between 2000 to 2009, comparing over

one million students in 42 countries. They found that autonomy affects student achievement negatively in developing and low-performing countries, but positively in developed and high-performing countries. These findings might be interpreted by the account of Astiz (2006), who indicated that the amount of school autonomy relies upon social and political support. Where there are highly pressured political environments, control is retained at the centre rather than given to subunit authorities.

A further explanation for lower levels of achievement in low-performing countries, such as Tanzania, was produced by Baganda, (2008) who indicated some significant positive findings, but concluded that lack of knowledge and experience in the local community, lack of human and financial resources, and poverty were the main challenges to successful decentralisation.

3.4.1.4 SBM disadvantages

The disadvantages of decentralisation can be seen in the workload, the use of undemocratic local elites and the disenchantment of people if insufficient financial resources are made available from the central government and if there is a lack of local institutional capacity to fulfil their given mandates (Work, 2002).

Alzaidi (2008) states that organisational structure plays a vital role in whether the structure is highly centralised or decentralised. Identifying the level of centralisation or decentralisation tends to rely on the amount of decision-making participation and the autonomy, which the individual employee has. The impact of the two structures is clarified by Lambert et al., (2006) as follows; in a highly centralised system employees tend to be dissatisfied and uncommitted, while in a decentralised system research shows they are more likely to be satisfied and committed. According to Alzaidi (2008, p.166):

The impact of the organisational structure, especially that of centralisation, appears as a dissatisfying factor in a number of studies representing different educational contexts..., where bureaucracy and lack of autonomy were found to dominate and to cause equal job dissatisfaction for both teachers and head teachers.

Constructive engagement of school staff and their involvement in decision making will increase the chance of success. According to Drury, when employees "*are deeply involved in the ongoing improvement of the organization they are committed to its success,*" Drury (1999, p. 3). Therefore, one of the challenges of the new management policy in Saudi Arabia is to encourage school staff to become involved in school decision making despite their workloads. The fact that it is too time consuming for staff to develop curricula and implement a decentralisation policy was a clear disadvantage reported by Zellman, et al. (2009) in Qatar. Another disadvantage is the high cost of

implementing decentralisation. According to Geo-jaja (2006), decentralisation is not a cheap option, because usually implementing changes in the public environment requires more spending.

3.4.2 The theory behind SBM

Building good education requires more than physical input such as classrooms, teachers and textbooks. It needs incentives that lead to better instruction and learning (The World Bank, 2007). The demand for education increases every year, and that leads to a considerable amount of managerial, financial and technical work for governments. Therefore education is too complex to be efficiently produced and distributed in a decentralised system (King, and Cordeiro-Guerra, (2005).

Based on this, Hanushek and Woessmann (2007) propose that any significant effect on learning outcomes is institutional in nature, and they provide three factors from SBM theory: (1) choice and competition; (2) school autonomy; and (3) school accountability. The assumption behind choice is that the parents, who are mostly interested in maximizing their children's outcomes, have multiple choices about which is the most beneficial school (in terms of academic results) for their child. Therefore, schools will work in a competitive system to improve their performance to attract students and gain a good reputation (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2007).

Many analysts now argue that the strategy of public choice and competition as the main source of school improvement has not been successful as most successful countries tend to have less differentiated systems. Levin and Fullan (2008) for example, critique the approach of choice and competition, as this has not been shown to work in England or elsewhere. Similar to this criticism William (2010) argued that the quality of individual teachers has a greater impact upon student achievement than differences between schools; therefore, it is important to emphasise leadership and teacher development rather than structural change.

In the light of this theory, and after some analysis of the new management policy document, it is clear that it is far away from implementing these elements: (1) choice and competition; (2) school autonomy; and (3) school accountability, where the KSA education system has not yet offered a choice of curricula to schools for example. The MOE has not yet employed the competition system to measure school performance. School autonomy, which was highlighted as one of the strongest reforms according to Patrinos and Fasih (2009), is limited compared with neighbouring countries such as Qatar. School accountability in KSA is controlled by the DOE. Therefore, this thesis will try to shed light on the challenges of and opportunities provided by implementing the new management policy, and analyse the need for schools to recognise the SBM strategy in their

future plans. This leads to the need to clarify SBM framework or model that is implemented in different countries, such as Di Gropello, (2006) and the United States.

3.4.2.1 Di Gropello Conceptual Framework

Di Gropello, (2006) draws a conceptual framework from a combination of the World Bank work (2004) on empowerment and accountability and from principal-agent literature to evaluate the impacts of decentralisation reforms (see Figure 2). The framework argues that:

Educational decentralisation reforms have a positive impact on the efficiency (technical and social) and effectiveness of educational services due to: (a) allowing providers (e.g. schools) to utilise information about local preferences; (b) increasing the chances for the service receiver (e.g. the community) to hold the accountability, which may lead to developing teaching and learning.

The formal context of decentralisation reform refers to specific designs for the provision and operation of programmes, mostly involving decentralising functions and giving responsibilities to schools, this reform determines the authorities, rights and responsibilities of communities and schools to work together and implement specific programmes. For school empowerment it can take over administrative or teacher management responsibilities and special training programmes for head teachers, which is the main aim of the new management policy in Saudi Arabia.

The informal context includes a range of socio-political factors, which can be adopted and sustained. This series of socio-political factors can appear in the relationship between government and teachers' unions, can affect the efficiency of the organisation and the informal areas of independent decision-making, standardise evaluation and ensure the publication of information about educational outcomes at both national and local level.

School and community empowerment will not be sufficient to guarantee the achievement of some national objectives such as national targets in learning achievement. Also, the government (and/or policy makers) are concerned about equity and local institutional weakness. In this situation the government need to find mechanisms to lead schools to follow the national interests.

School empowerment refers to school autonomy, which includes strengthening school decision making powers in terms of pedagogical or administrative matters. Community empowerment refers to parents' ability to have a strong voice vis-a-vis school staff, such as their employment (hiring and firing teachers) or to have a say in teaching methods.

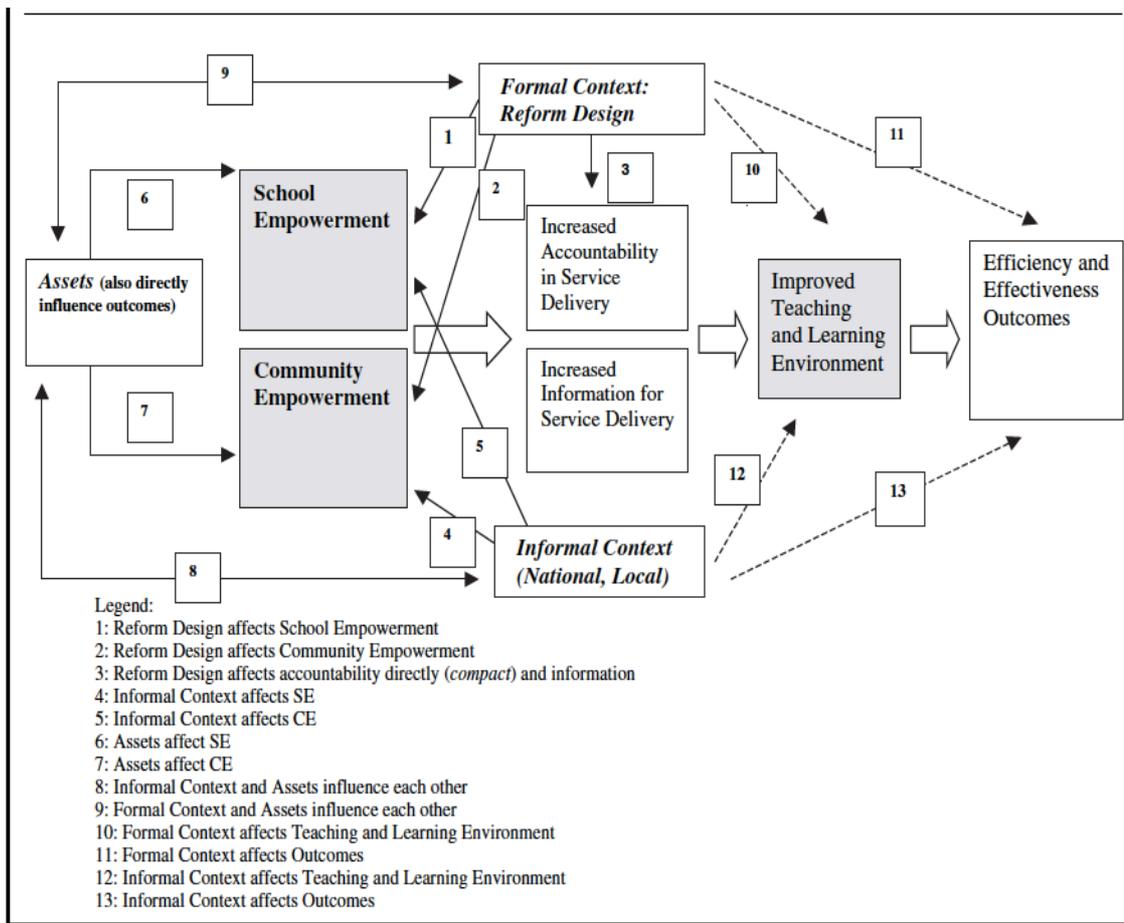


Figure 2 Di Gropello, (2006) Conceptual Framework (Decentralisation Reform in Central America)

An effective accountability relationship between the policymaker and the school is vital to success. The level of school and community empowerment and the effectiveness of the accountability relationship between school and policy makers are influenced by (a) the strength of the school and community (mostly refers to parents), participant factors such as skills, organisational ability, psychological factors, financial and material assets and (b) the context in which the school community exists. These two factors have a significant impact on teaching, the learning environment and students' educational results.

This theoretical framework supposes that SBM is a positive strategy, and that be a result of the background of the author who has significant experience of Latin America (2006). Also, the author focuses on the empowerment of school and community at the same time and building effective relationships to improve schools.

Di Gropello's conceptual framework informs the researcher's analysis of the findings in four ways: (1) puts emphasis on the empowerment of school and community in order for them to work together to improve the school environment; (2) increases the School Council's power to manage employment (such as hiring and firing staff); (3) in the light of the relationship between policy maker and school, the researcher prefers to promote reshaping this relationship from a top-down

to a bottom-up relationship, and the DOE to work in supporting schools not controlling them; (4) to succeed it is vital to focus upon the teaching and learning environment and the researcher prefers any changes to be part of a process (early implementation of SBM) rather than an outcome.

3.4.2.2 The United States Model

According to The World Bank (2007) the idea of SBM is promoted by the Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) 1990. The reform emphasised three ideas: (i) change should be radical rather than marginal, which is why it is termed 'reform' rather than 'change'; (ii) reform should be comprehensive for all aspects of school work such as administration, pedagogy and relationships and (iii) the reform should be at school level rather than at district or classroom level. The second stage is promoting the CSR Act of 1999, which outlined the 11 components of school autonomy (Borman et al., 2003 and Cook, 2007). These 11 elements are quoted from The World Bank (2007, p. 11-12) in the following:

1. *Each school must adopt a model of SBM that is known to be successful or has the promise of being so. The school can choose one of the empirically tested models of SBM; this is not the case in most countries other than the U.S.*
2. Proven methods of teaching, learning, and management should be used in the school, whether as part of the adopted CSR model or grafted onto it.
3. The methods for teaching, learning and management should be integrated into a coherent package.
4. There should be continual professional development for staff.
5. Staff should support the SBM initiative.
6. Formal and informal responsibilities should be distributed widely within each school.
7. Parents and the local community should be involved in the school.
8. There will be external technical support for whatever changes the school is making.
9. Measurable benchmarks should be used.
10. Annual evaluations are needed of how SBM is being implemented and of any changes in student performance.
11. Mechanisms are needed for finding additional human and financial resources from external sources.

In addition to this model, Wohlstetter et al. (1994) extended the definition of SBM and defined it as 'the high involvement model', where the school increases its capacity through training (for all participants) in order to increase participants' knowledge and skills which are vital to create a high performance organisation. Also, participants at school level need to access information about the

performance of the organisation, which is similar to the Di Gropello (2006) conceptual framework presented above. Wohlstetter et al. (1994) additionally refer to the individual's need to be rewarded for their efforts to ensure continued motivation. Wohlstetter et al. (1994) conclude that *“those schools that were introducing significant changes in the teaching and learning process had invested more heavily in the development of both team process skills and instructional staff development”* (p. 283).

From the researcher's point of view, the United States model is a broader model rather than a specific one, as it is hugely diverse and most of the functions can be adopted by schools and communities. It is limited to providing specific functions for School Council and specifying the extent of their authority. This diversity can be understood and may work in the US educational system as one of the biggest countries in the world with different education and different federalisation system in each state, but this is not the case in Saudi Arabia as it is smaller than the US, its political system is centralised and the education system is also standardised. The researcher disagrees with this diversity for two reasons; (1) it may bring different understandings and implementation of SBM; (2) those schools with limited resources may not find a way to improve their student outcomes.

The US model has several distinctions from the Di Gropello (2006) framework such as it focuses on the method of implementation (radical rather than marginal), while Di Gropello did not indicate that, and it seeks to be fully comprehensive for all aspects of school. The US model also notes the significance of staff support for the SBM and CPD, as the basis of success. This model assists the researcher with the theoretical framework of this thesis, helps with the addition of involving community in school decision making in order to ensure the quality of the education system in Saudi Arabia and confirms the need for CPD for all staff and community representatives.

3.4.2.3 Gamage's revised theory of SBM

Gamage (1996) proposed a revised theory of SBM based on his twenty years of experience in the Australian SBM system (cited in Bandur, 2008 p.32-33). He concluded with seven points necessary for a more realistic application of SBM, as follows:

- 1) School Council should include all appropriate stakeholders such as the head teacher, representatives of staff (either teaching or non-teaching), parents, students in secondary school (expected to be elected) and local community representatives (nominated by the head teacher and other elected members).

- 2) Authority and responsibility transfer should be affected by a legislative arrangement from advisory body to a democratic governing body.
- 3) Involving and relying upon the voluntary participation of the community, parents and students at different stages of policy preparation is important in relation to governing the school.
- 4) Lay councillors should obtain sufficient knowledge through induction and training to act as equal partners, so that lay-members' knowledge and experience, when they come from any field other than education, can be useful to educational improvement.
- 5) Working in marketing competition mode is important for increasing the number of enrolments. Because of de-zoning structure the school needs to work effectively to improve its image and reputation as a private company.
- 6) SBM should cost effectively as the rationale for that is an ownership of the policies and increase the commitment to minimization of cost and better use of limited resources.
- 7) The central government needs to ensure the accountability of school finances and that schools work under the Ministerial or Departmental guidelines relating to the procedure of school councils. Therefore, school administrators should submit progress reports to the governing body and annual reports to other relevant authorities and the school community regularly (Bandur, 2008).

One interesting element of the Gamage (1996) theory is its emphasis upon the norm of the voluntary participation of community and CPD for both staff and community members to ensure that they work towards the same aims, which is similar to high involvement model of Wohlstetter et al. (1994). Also, Gamage assumes the effectiveness of allocating sources and that reduced school running costs will strengthen feelings of ownership and commitment. This can be linked to Di Gropello's (2006) findings, which state "*promote more civic engagement in education and to cost-effectively get better or similar educational results than traditional programmes*" (p. 53). However, the findings of Zelman, et al. (2009) in Qatar indicated the high cost of implementing decentralisation.

The Gamage theory helps the researcher to: (1) define the School Council and its members; (2) confirm the significance of CPD for all participants and; (3) the accountability of central government to ensure that schools spend money in the 'right' manner through issuing guidelines with flexibility, particularly in the early stages of implementation. However, the researcher disagrees with Gamage's theory of working in a marketing competition mode to attract students to schools, which disadvantages schools with limited facilities such as buildings or accessibility to students and this may cause inequality among schools. In the case of Saudi Arabia, a huge number

of school buildings are "rented", i.e. the DOE rents buildings from local people to use as schools, (see Figure 40 in appendix A, for further detail about this phenomenon).

3.4.2.4 Contingency Theory

The main purpose of decentralisation is to bring decision-making closer to local people, the rationale being that they know their needs better than central government. In the education system this means providing schools with a level of autonomy. Applying the concept of school autonomy varies from country to country (Creemers, et al. 2000).

In the 1960s, Contingency Theory was developed by Fred Fiedler (Seyranian, 2009). The fundamental assumption of Contingency Theory is that no single form of organizational structure is equally applicable to all organizations (Islam and Hu, 2012). In other words, there is no best way to make decisions or lead organizations, some decision-making or leadership styles can work in some situations but are not effective in others, depending on various factors both internal and external (Islam and Hu, 2012).

According to Hanson (1979) the Contingency Theory assumes that within the organization, different management approaches and leadership styles can be suitable for different events and situations. This theory can be related to the application of decentralisation where the assumption of standardisation or a centralised system may not work in all different institutions, because of a range of differentials such as geographical, socio-economic, cultural, size and capacity. Also, it will help the researcher to examine different types of school management structure.

Therefore, the best way to organise the educational system is to allow local people to have a level of autonomy in terms of holding responsibility for selecting their curriculum, hiring and firing staff, professional development and so on. This theory supports the rationale of implementing decentralisation in education through allowing school autonomy.

Contingency Theory analyses internal changes in an organization (e.g., the decision making process, structure, technology, instructional techniques) and responds to its external or internal needs (Hanson (1979)). Rather, the effectiveness of any organization is dependent on a match or fit between several factors, such as the size of the organization, available technology, environmental volatility, the features of the organizational structure and its information system (Islam and Hu, 2012). With more school autonomy through SBM, the evidence shows that involving school staff in the decision-making process helps to raise their commitment to and accountability for decisions (Neal, 1991).

This thesis relies on this theory as a guide for the data analysis, to help conceptualise the current situation of the KSA education system after implementing the new management policy, and to provide recommendations for the next steps for policy makers. It is worth comparing the three different types of school management existing in KSA, to show the challenges and the opportunities provided by implementing SBM across the whole education system on a long-term basis.

3.4.3 Theoretical framework: factors of analysis

While the researcher focused on the analysis of the data, this framework identifies the scope of educational decentralisation. The aim of applying these factors is to build themes after coding, and to categorize qualitative data. These factors are borrowed from two studies; Caldwell and Spinks (1992) and Bullock and Thomas (1997). According to Caldwell and Spinks (1992), decentralisation contains seven main factors such as: knowledge, technology, power, materials, people, time and finance.

***Knowledge** (decentralisation of decisions related to curriculum, including decisions related to the goals or ends of schooling); **technology** (decentralisation of decisions related to the means of teaching and learning); **power** (decentralisation of authority to make decisions); **materials** (decentralisation of decisions related to the use of facilities, supplies and equipment); **people** (decentralisation of decisions related to the allocation of people in matters related to teaching and learning); **time** (decentralisation of decisions related to the allocation of time); and **finance** (decentralisation of decisions related to the allocation of money) (p.5).*

The researcher integrated the Caldwell and Spinks (1992) factors with those from Bullock and Thomas (1997) who suggested four further factors; (1) admissions: decentralisation of decisions over which pupils are to be admitted to the school; (2) assessment: decentralisation over decisions as to how pupils are to be assessed; (3) information: decentralisation of decisions over selection of data to be published about the school's performance; (4) funding: decentralisation of decisions over the setting of fees for the admission of pupils.

These factors were brought together and considered alongside the new management policy guidance in Saudi Arabia. They will offer a useful deductive analytical framework around which some of the data will be analyzed. In addition further synthesis factors may be used should they emerge from the participants.

3.4.4 Implications of shifting the authority

When shifting authority and responsibility from a central or high level to a local or lower level of management, the implications need to be considered. When the policy makers seek to restructure the education system, they also need to clarify the level to which they delegate authority and responsibility and how they reorganize the role of districts, School Council and head teachers.

3.4.4.1 Changing the role of districts

In the implementation of moving authority from middle management DOE towards schools, one question should be asked, what will be the role of the DOE? In the literature, many authors discuss this issue and in particular Cotton (1993) concludes that: (1) superintendents communication about significant issues and the ways of implementing SBM with the community to increase the chance of success through their understanding and support; (2) supporting change in the culture of management from top-down towards bottom-up; (3) supporting diversity and uniqueness among different schools; and mainly (4) providing direct support to head teachers such as *“(1) increased accessibility, (2) mutual development of growth plans with and for principals, (3) allocation of resources for planning and training at school level, (4) arranging for training and development activities based on jointly identified needs and (5) assessing progress and providing follow-up assistance as needed”* (Cotton, 1993 p. 6).

“Functions typically include: (1) facilitating the development of student and staff performance standards, (2) offering technical assistance to the schools, (3) locating and providing resources and materials, (4) establishing funding formulas and (5) carrying out systemwide planning, monitoring, and evaluation” (Cotton, 1993. p. 7).

While the MOE in Saudi can provide: (1) formal legislation to run the education system, (2) funding for schools and districts, (3) national exams to measure students' academic outcomes, (which have already started and will be presented in the discussion chapter of this thesis), (4) curriculum guidelines, in particular for subjects such as Arabic and English language, Mathematics, and Science.

3.4.4.2 People's voices

One of the main benefits of SBM is that it involves different groups, such as parents, teachers, pupils and the local community in school decision-making. This can appear in a School Council or Parent Teacher Association or other form of participation. The aim of this involvement is to increase their ownership (Pushpanadham, 2006) of the school and their commitment to these

decisions. Accordingly high levels of participation have a more positive influence on pupil achievement as Gershberg, and Winkler (2003) state that *“Decentralization of real decision-making power to schools or school councils is a means of increasing the voice of education’s clients and can significantly increase parental participation in the school, ... and high levels of parental and community participation are associated with improved school performance”* (p. 8). Gunnarsson et al. (2004) support the findings that parental participation in the schools has a positive influence on pupil achievement.

Shaeffer, (1994) identifies six elements that justify participation and collaboration among members of the community (parents, teachers, pupils, members of the community);

1. Participation is a 'good' in itself, and more likely to carry benefits to all society and individuals.
2. “Participation has become a necessary, if not sufficient, aspect of development. Projects and programmes of development are likely to be more relevant, more supported, more successful, and more sustainable to the extent that they involve their ‘targets’ in their planning, implementation, and evaluation” (p. 12).
3. Participation and collaboration cannot solve all problems.
4. Participation and collaboration depend upon social, cultural and political context and this means that they might not be successful in all countries.
5. The disadvantages of participation and collaboration are the difficulty of implementation, risks and cost.
6. The evidence from different case studies shows that when implemented in the right conditions, participation improves the quality of education.

3.4.4.3 School council

In this section, the researcher will describe different examples of the characteristics of school council in many countries and compare these with the Saudi education system. In most countries there is no agreement regarding the way that the community is involved in school decision-making. The researcher adapted Table (3), from the study by di Gropello, (2006) who compared school council characteristics and membership in different countries in Latin America. The situation in KSA is added and set alongside the other countries.

Characteristics	EL Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua	KSA
Size of Council	Five members	Fifteen members	Six members	Five council members if school has less than	Minimum 10 and not more than 14 members.

				(500) pupils. Or seven if school has more than (500) pupils.	
Council Membership	All are members of the community	All are members of the community	All are members of the community	Five member council: principal, one teacher, three parents. Seven: principal, two teachers, four parents.	Head teacher, deputies, school advisor (usually teacher), council secretary (must be member of school). Three parents, three students, two from private sector.
Key decision maker within council	Community members	Community members	Community members	Head teachers and community members	Head teacher

Table 3 Adapted from: di Gropello, (2006), School Council Characteristics (comparing different countries)

3.4.4.4 Teachers' involvement in decision-making

Sarafidou and Chatziioannidis (2013) investigated the involvement of teachers at different stages of the decision making process in the Greek context. They found that there was a high involvement in decisions regarding student and teacher issues, however, there was less involvement in terms of managerial decisions and the rate of participation increased depending upon the teacher's level of experience. Also, the findings show the impact of participation from three dimensions, which are management, student and teacher issues and more positive insights into the leadership and collegiality factors of the school climate. The authors indicate that there is no link between the level of participation in decision-making and job satisfaction, but according to Alzaidi (2008) in the KSA context, teachers and head teachers show dissatisfaction with the high level of bureaucracy and the lack of autonomy in their schools.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

4.1 Introduction

Selecting the research method is one of the most significant decisions in the research process. Research quality relies upon the appropriate selection of a research method and the design of the data collection strategy. Therefore, these critical decisions should be taken carefully. This research will use a mixed method approach to gather data, including qualitative and quantitative data, with a major qualitative case study focus. The reason for choosing this method is to gain an in-depth understanding of the decentralisation issue in the education sector from a range of perspectives based upon three schools as case studies.

This research project aims to explore the perception of stakeholders regarding recent efforts by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Saudi Arabia to improve the management of the educational system by implementing a trend towards greater decentralisation. The research methodology should therefore be guided by the research questions, which are as follows:

1. What understanding did stakeholders have of decentralisation?
2. What did headteachers and policy makers view as the benefits and challenges of implementing the new decentralisation policy in schools?
3. How did deputies and classroom teachers assess the implementation of the new decentralisation policy?
4. To what extent were students involved in decisions related to their school?
5. How did parents view their relationship with schools as a function of the new decentralisation policy?
6. What training issues and needs do head teachers and policy makers identify that are relevant to implementing the new management policy in their schools?

These open-ended research questions can be answered through the application of a number of data collection tools such as interviews, focus groups, capturing photographic images, documents and unstructured observations, while the close-end questions need a questionnaire. A qualitative case study with small quantitative element was selected as the researcher believed this to be an appropriate approach to answer these research questions as a similar studies into decentralisation have also employed similar qualitative case studies (Theodorou, 2006; Botha, 2006), with some adjustments such as adding a questionnaire. One of the advantages of qualitative research is the kind of flexibility or emergent design (Marshall and Rossman, 2010), which means the plan for conducting the research can be changed after entry to the field and

Chapter 4

after starting the data collection. The researcher sets out the initial plan for this research in this chapter considering the flexibility of potential changes during the data collection process. This means that the researcher can modify the research sites based upon accessibility, research questions or even research methods, in order to explore the perceptions of participants toward decentralisation if necessary. For example, if a school head teacher restricts the use of photographs and the researcher identifies the need to capture some changes within the school, it might be helpful to ask the participants to comment about these changes within their school. As Creswell (2013) states, *“the key idea behind qualitative research is to learn about the problem or issue from participants and engage in the best practices to obtain that information”* (p.47). In this thesis the participants are the key stakeholders with interests in both educational provision and educational authority in Saudi Arabia.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the main educational research approaches: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. It attempts to reflect upon and explore the most appropriate philosophical paradigm related to this thesis, which relates to the newly adopted policy by the MOE, and its perceived development in a selection of schools.

This chapter is divided into four sections; the first examines qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. The second section discusses the selection of the research design, which in this study is a mixed study with a qualitative case study design, selecting the case studies and the participants. The third section describes the research methods, which were semi-structured interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, documents analysis, photographic images and unstructured observations. The fourth section discusses the ethical considerations and procedures for data analysis.

Research is a process of stages of collecting and analysing information in order to enhance our understanding of a topic or issue (Creswell, 2008). Research methods in education and other social sciences are often separated into three main types: quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches. All types of research seek to explain phenomena (Muijs, 2004). Research philosophy is concerned with how people see the truth; so quantitative is described as ‘positivist’ and qualitative research as ‘subjectivist’ or “social constructivism which is often described as interpretivism” (Creswell, 2013, p. 24), while mixed method refers to a pragmatic perspective.

4.2 Qualitative approach

The tasks of researchers are: first, to construct knowledge from participant views through collecting data from them, second, to construct knowledge from the data gathered from multiple

sources such as literature reviews, interviews and surveys. Third, to learn from, reflect on and represent this information.

The qualitative approach sees the truth as multiple and constructed from the mind of the individual (Cohen, 2000). Gregor, and Hart, (2005) state that “Intrepretivism and constructivism are related approaches to research that are characteristic of particular philosophical world views” (p. 8). Theory in this paradigm takes on a different perspective:

Knowledge consists of those constructions about which there is a relative consensus (or at least some movement towards consensus) among those competent (and in the case of more arcane material, trusted) to interpret the substance of the construction. Multiple ‘knowledges’ can coexist when equally competent (or trusted) interpreters disagree (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 113).

Constructivists argue that truth is relative and is reliant on one’s perspective. This paradigm “recognises the importance of the subjective human creation of meaning, but doesn’t reject outright some notion of objectivity. Pluralism, not relativism, is stressed with focus on the circular dynamic tension of subject and object” (Miller and Crabtree, 1999, p. 10). One of the features of this approach is the close collaboration between the researcher and the participant, which allows informers to tell their stories (Crabtree and Miller, 1999). Through these stories informers can explain their views of reality and help the researcher to better understand the participants’ actions (Lather, 1992). In this instance the views relate to the policy from the perspective of classroom teachers, for example.

In terms of ontology, which connects to the nature of reality and its characteristics, when researchers employ a qualitative research method, they embrace the view of multiple realities (Creswell, 2013), which in this thesis will emerge from the range of stakeholders. Therefore in this study the researcher is interested in how individuals make meaning from their experiences within an education system that is seeking to shift towards a more decentralised position (from the perspective of senior leaders, teachers, policy makers, parents or pupils), which forms the qualitative focus.

Qualitative research interested on understanding the world from the perspective of people who were rarely listened to, and ‘giving voice’ to the points of view of people marginalized by society (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). In this thesis, the most rarely listened to group are parents and students, and no previous study has examined their voices on educational policy in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 4

This study will give them an opportunity to express their views either through interviews, focus groups or a questionnaire.

Qualitative research is a concept that covers numerous forms of inquiry, which facilitate the understanding and explanation of the meaning of social phenomena while reducing the natural setting as much as possible (Becker, 1986). In qualitative research the crucial tool for data collection and analysis is the researcher. The processing of data goes through a human instrument rather than a questionnaire or computer. It is frequently used in fieldwork; the researcher physically goes to the people or the institution (e.g. a school) to observe behaviour in a natural setting (Bryman, 2001). The research builds on concepts, theories or hypotheses rather than examining an existing theory. Also, it is focused on meaning and understanding, so the product is mostly descriptive data; data which takes the form of words or pictures rather than numbers (Merriam, 2009). This thesis seeks to understand the implementation of the new management policy in practice from different stakeholders' points of view using multiple data collection tools.

There are numerous limitations of implementing qualitative research, as described by Creswell, (2013):

1. it is time consuming to collect data and to analyse them compared with quantitative techniques such as a questionnaire;
2. qualitative research can be costly because of the time it takes to collect the data and the use of several researchers and assistants. This concern can be minimised in the case of this research as the researcher is sponsored by the Saudi Cultural Bureau in London;
3. it is difficult to gain generalisations from qualitative research, however Yin (2003) argues that the case study can be used for theoretical generalisation not statistical;
4. it can be difficult to set out clear guidelines or a framework as qualitative research is flexible, as discussed earlier in this chapter (Creswell, (2013)).

4.3 Quantitative approach

Quantitative research can be defined as 'explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that is analysed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics)' (Muijs, 2004, p.1) in this thesis, the researcher combined non-numerical and numerical data. The aim of this thesis is to investigate the current implementation of the new management policy through analyzing the participants' language and their meaning and by gathering an overview of the policy outcome numerically through two questionnaires, one for teachers and another for parents.

There are different understandings of positivism; some philosophers refer to logical positivism, which is the belief that the meaning of a statement is obtained by the method of its verification. Other philosophers and social scientists hold that it derives from natural science as the paradigm of human knowledge (Duncan, 1968). According to Cohen et al, (2011, p. 8) *“Positivism has been a recurrent theme in the history of western thought from the Ancient Greeks to the present day. It is historically associated with the nineteenth-century French philosopher, Auguste Comte, who was the first thinker to use the word for a philosophical position (Beck, et al. 1979)”*. Positivist thought suggests that the truth is out there and the researcher should use objective research methods to discover it (Merriam, 2009). These methods aim to minimize the involvement of the researcher in the research and to maximise objectivity, which is more related to natural sciences such as physics and biology (Muijs, 2004). However, it can help the researcher to gather a more general view by using a survey with a large number of participants.

Positivist forms of research, education or schooling consider the object, phenomenon or delivery system to be studied. In this perspective, reality is stable, observable and measurable (Merriam, 1998). The realists in positivist research seek to uncover an existing reality. The truth is ‘out there’ and the researcher's task is to be objective, to uncover that truth, which means the researcher should follow those methods which minimise involvement in the research and be as objective as they can (Merriam, 1998). The best way is to look at natural sciences, such as biology or physics, and adapt them to social research, such as education (Muijs, 2004).

The characteristics of the quantitative approach are: firstly, the approach depends on inductive reasoning, which draws a conclusion or generalisation based on a limited number of observations, which is not the aim of this thesis. It is considered the gold standard of research as it is derived from natural science where the issues or phenomena are lawful (Creswell, 2003). Secondly, positivism believes that the world works according to fixed laws of cause and effect. The task of science is to test theories about these laws (Muijs, 2004).

By developing reliable measurement tools, the truth of how the world works will be understood. This view is not, however, unproblematic as people are integral to the world and they cannot be removed from research. This means the involvement of the researcher in the research is, to some degree, subjective leading to the appearance of qualitative research (Kratwohl, 1998).

Quantitative research is particularly helpful when “answering questions of who, where, how many, how much, and what is the relationship between specific variables” (Adler, 1996, p. 5). However, quantitative research is not suitable for answering ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions. Another limitation of quantitative research is the *“lack of documentation of the challenges encountered in*

implementing interventions designed to change or reform existing practice” (Nastasi and Schensul, 2005, p. 186).

In summary, quantitative research relies on deductive reason; qualitative research is more reliant on inductive reason. Quantitative researchers are looking for the objective truth, while qualitative researchers try to interpret the participants' perspectives (stakeholders in Saudi). Quantitative researchers seek to understand cause and effect by using variables, but qualitative researchers try to understand and describe these relationships through open-ended questions (Krathwohl, 1998). If the researcher wished to gain a national picture of decentralisation, then a survey would have been appropriate to collect data from multiple sites across Saudi Arabia rather than an in-depth study of experiences and perceptions of decentralisation, which is the intended purpose of this research.

4.4 Mixed method

A philosophical foundation for mixed methods approach is pragmatics, which focuses on ‘what works’ and the solutions to problems (Patton, 1990). Pragmatics has several bases and Creswell, (2003) states that *“Pragmatism is not committed to any system of philosophy and reality; individual researchers have a freedom of choice (methods, techniques, and procedures of research) to meet their research purposes; pragmatists do not see the world as an absolute unity”* (p. 28). Creswell (2013) identified several terms in the literature referring to the mixed method approach such as ‘integrated’ or ‘combined’ with regard to two sources of data (qualitative and quantitative); ‘methodological triangulation’ or ‘mixed methodology’. He also defined the mixed method approach as combining quantitative and qualitative data and analysis techniques through involving multiple sources of data in order to gain a better understanding of the research problem.

In the researcher's opinion, each approach has its advantages and disadvantages, but the key issue is how each approach can answer the research questions and how it fits with the objectives of the research. Therefore, it is not about which approach is better than the other, but which one is most appropriate and which can facilitate the collection of sufficient evidence to understand the research problem and answer the research questions.

While quantitative methods are better suited to assess causality and reach generalisable conclusions, qualitative methods allow the in-depth study of selected issues, cases, or events and can provide critical insights into beneficiaries’ perspectives, the dynamics of a particular reform (Gertler, et al. 2007, p. 32).

The researcher in this thesis therefore seeks to;

- 1) understand the implementation of the new management policy through both analysis of the participants' language and numbers;
- 2) gain evidence from the field in a natural setting by distributing a questionnaire to collect the data);
- 3) be in the field observing and interviewing participants which will allow for a more in-depth understanding (Yin, 2012);
- 4) focus on the process, as Bogdan and Biklen (2007) have reported that qualitative research is concerned with process, while quantitative research seeks to find outcomes or products. This enables the current study to focus upon the process of implementation and examine the outcomes of the new management policy in Saudi Arabia.
- 5) Use the survey of parents and teachers in this thesis to gather additional insights into stakeholders' attitudes towards the implementation of the decentralisation policy by drawing data from larger populations. These surveys are grounded in what is otherwise a qualitative study.

To summarise, the researcher argues that a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative approaches is most suitable for this thesis and can answer the research questions by selecting the case study design as setting with the benefits from multiple data collection tools.

4.5 Research design: Case study

This thesis attempts to implement the case study as a design for the field work and collection of the data using three schools as case studies. In the next section, the researcher will discuss the meaning of the case study, the rationale for choosing it compared with other designs, and how it will be implemented and determined.

4.5.1 The concept of the case study

There are two key approaches that guide case study methodology; one proposed by Robert Stake (1995) and the second by Robert Yin (2003, 2006). Both of them founded their approach to conducting a case study on the constructivist paradigm. In the educational field, the case study approach has a long history, as it does in other areas such as clinical psychology and the study of divergences in personality. Yin (1994) defined the case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 23). In addition,

Merriam (1998, p. 21) stated, "A qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit". However, a more comprehensive definition is provided by Simons (2009) and this differs from the definitions provided by Yin (1994) and Merriam (1998) by adding the purpose and the research focus, which this thesis will follow and employ. Her definition is as follows;

A case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a 'real life' context. It is research-based, inclusive of different methods and is evidence-led. The primary purpose is to generate in-depth understanding of a specific topic (as in a thesis), programme, policy, institution or system to generate knowledge and/or inform policy development, professional practice and civil or community action (p. 21).

A case study deals with a variety of factors as Stake (1995) explains; whether the case is a single child or all the schools in a country, the emphasis remains on the relationship between schools, such as the reasons for innovative teaching. However, each case offers a specific situation unique in and of itself. Case studies have featured in educational research and in studies of decentralisation, for example: Oryema, (2008); and Botha, (2006). Yin (2003) argues that a case study is representative of a comprehensive research strategy, which integrates techniques for collecting and analysing data. In SBM, according to Gertler, et al. "Case studies are of dubious casual value but are good for describing implementation dynamics" (2007, p. 39).

Thomas (2011) identifies two parts of case study; first, the 'subject' which can be a person, place, policy and so on and the 'analytical frame' or 'object' which is the theory underlying the case or scientific basis. In this thesis, the subject is the new management policy, which is a step towards decentralisation and the analytical frame is SBM as one of the main forms of educational decentralization reform.

4.5.2 The importance of the case study

Comparing the case study to other research designs can show the reasons for its selection, according to Thomas (2011) who provided four basic kinds of questions in order to identify the best research design:

1. *What's the situation? You are describing something.*
2. *What's going on here? You are trying to understand what is happening in a particular situation.*
3. *What happens when...? You introduce a change and look to see its effects.*

4. *What is related to what? You examine how one thing is related to another. (p. 35).*

Design frame	Purpose – especially good for	Kinds of questions
Action research	Helping to develop practice	All of those above
Case study	Understanding the details of what is happening	All of those above
Comparative research	Looking at different situations and making comparisons	What's the situation?
Evaluation	Seeing if something is working	What happens when? What's the situation?
Experiment	Establishing causation – does X cause Y?	What happens when?

Table 4 Questions, purposes and design frames (Thomas, 2011 p. 37)

Table (4) summarises the different design frames, purposes and kinds of questions. Different questions can lead to different research designs and each one has its own advantages and disadvantages. For example, if the research question is concerned with cause and effect, it might be more appropriate to select experimental research. In this thesis, the aim is not (1) to improve the practice of the policy which leads the focus of the research to use action research or (2) to provide a policy as a treatment or restructure in the education system by dividing schools into groups according to whether they are implementing the policy (intervention groups) or not implementing it (control groups), in order to examine them, which leads to experiment research. This is outside the researcher's ability, as the policy implementation in all schools in Saudi Arabia started in 2010/11, so the focus of this thesis will be to investigate the current situation concerning policy implementation. Also, the aim is not (3) to compare different policies within Saudi Arabia or within different countries, but this thesis has the benefit of being able to analyse three case-units within one case study, or as Yin (2009) called it an 'embedded design'. In the evaluation context, it can be regarded as an evaluation case study for the policy itself, which is popular in policy research and which influenced this thesis to investigate the participants' views regarding policy and their implementation of it and to compare their implementation and the policy with due reference to SBM.

The researcher has chosen a case study as one approach to conduct his research. There are multiple reasons for deciding to use the case study, in particular to obtain a fuller understanding of the phenomenon (Adelman et al., 1983). It allows the gathering of information from a wide range of sources, such as observations, interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, photographic

evidence and documentary analysis. The case study may also explain the reasons behind a specific problem by providing the background to a situation and by illustrating how and why something happens from the viewpoints of different groups (Walton, 1992). On occasions where multiple cases are used, researchers can provide a detailed account of each and then employ some form of cross-case comparison, either using prose or a tabular summary (Creswell, 1998). The researcher chose three secondary schools as the sites for his research as these schools had sought to implement the new management policy since 2010/11, and represented different types of schools in Saudi Arabia (Tatweer, public and private schools).

There are normally multiple reasons for deciding to utilise the case study, such as issues relating to concerns over a specific event, problem, assumption or anything of interest to researchers in which they wish to obtain a fuller understanding of a phenomenon (Adelman et al., 1983). Stake (2000) concurs, suggesting that case studies have become "*one of the most common ways to do qualitative inquiry*" (p.435). A case study can show the impact of personalities and the passage of time on an issue. Stake (2000) for example, examined how the head teacher's role has changed in the light of the new policy. This can be done by gathering information from a wide range of sources, using methods such as observations, interviews and documentary analysis. It can also involve the presentation of information in a wide variety of ways and from the viewpoints of different groups. Moreover, Yin (2012) stated that a case study the evidence collected through could be both quantitative and qualitative.

Yin, (2012) provides three situations in which it is appropriate to apply a case study: firstly, with regard to the nature of the research questions and purpose, he emphasises the descriptive question such as "what is happening or has happened?" or the explanatory question such as "how or why did something happen?" (p. 5). Secondly, emphasizing the study of a phenomenon within its real-world context, compared with other methods such as experiment or responses to questionnaires in a survey, which rely on 'derived' data, would provide the researcher with greater understanding about the phenomenon. Thirdly, the case study is commonly used in conducting evaluations, which meets one objective of this thesis, to evaluate the implementation of the new policy from the viewpoint of the participants (Yin, 2012).

4.5.3 Type of case study

It is not easy to define the type of case study. Scholars have several definitions looking from different angles. For example, Merriam (1998) identified three types; descriptive, interpretative and evaluative, while Stake (1995) called them; intrinsic, instrumental and collective. Yin (2009) talks about: critical, extreme or unique, longitudinal, representative and revelatory. Other

scholars provide different definitions with emphasis on different angles. The researcher found a clear explanation for this conflict in Thomas's (2011) book, which divided them into four categories: the subject, purpose, approach and the process. These are presented in Figure (4).

The researcher applied Thomas's (2011) categories to this thesis in order to clarify the research design. First, the subject of this research is the new management policy and how the local people in Medina perceive its implementation, so the focus will be on local knowledge and based on three schools with different management systems. Second, the purpose of this research is to explore the field and find out perceptions of the policy. Third, in terms of the approach, the aim is not to test or build a theory, or even to undertake experimental research which is discussed in the above section (The importance of the case study), the approach will be to draw a picture or illustrate the current situation regarding the implementation of the policy. Fourth, the process will involve selecting multiple case studies (Tatweer, public and private schools).

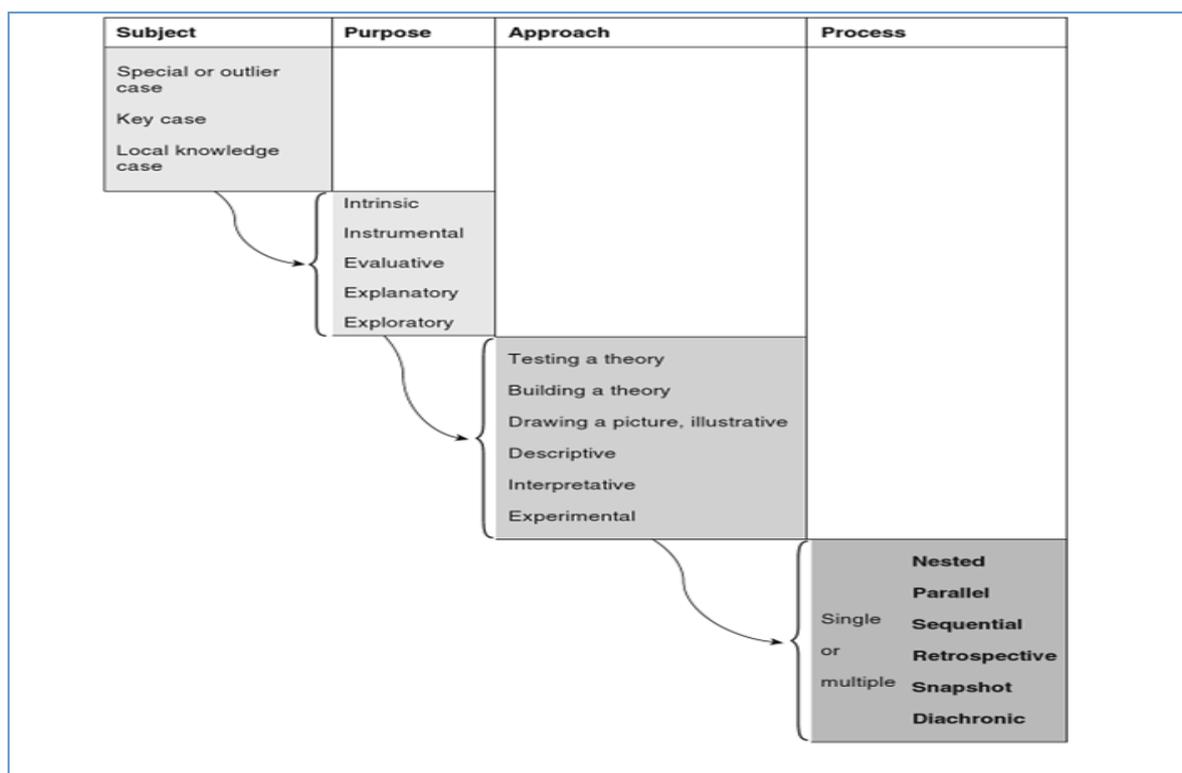


Figure 3 Types of case study (Thomas, 2011, p.33)

Multiple case studies facilitate exploration of differences within and between cases. The purpose of this is, in fact, to replicate findings across cases. Comparisons of cases can be achieved through careful design, meaning that the researcher is able to reasonably expect similar results across cases, or predict contrasting results based on theory (Yin, 2009). If necessary, which was not the

aim of this thesis, to increase the potential to generalise the findings, multiple case studies can bring analytical generalisation rather than statistical generalisation (Yin, 2009).

4.5.4 Selecting multiple cases

Using a single case study is suitable when a need exists to study a critical case, an extreme or unique case. However, the embedded design starts with an examination of subunits and allows for a detailed perspective should the questions begin to shift and change during fieldwork (Yin, 2009). Yin provided some further advantages of the multiple case study design: (1) increasing the chances of a better piece of research as the findings are more powerful than those resulting from a single-case design; (2) increasing the chance of overcoming the shortcomings and maybe filling the gaps in the findings of the first case. *“The evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust (Herriott & Firestone, 1983”* cited in Yin, 2009, p. 53). Most case study research uses a purpose-based method due to its advantages, which consist of: (i) showing the best and worst cases, (ii) showing what happens at a typical site and why, (iii) allowing for special interest (GAO, 1990).

In order to achieve research that incorporates multiple cases the researcher selected three (boys’) secondary schools (Tatweer, public and private schools), which provided education across three school years (ages 15-18). The design of the case study used in this thesis started from the new management policy, moved on to the DOE in Medina city, then on to three secondary schools and ended with the participants (see Figure 5).

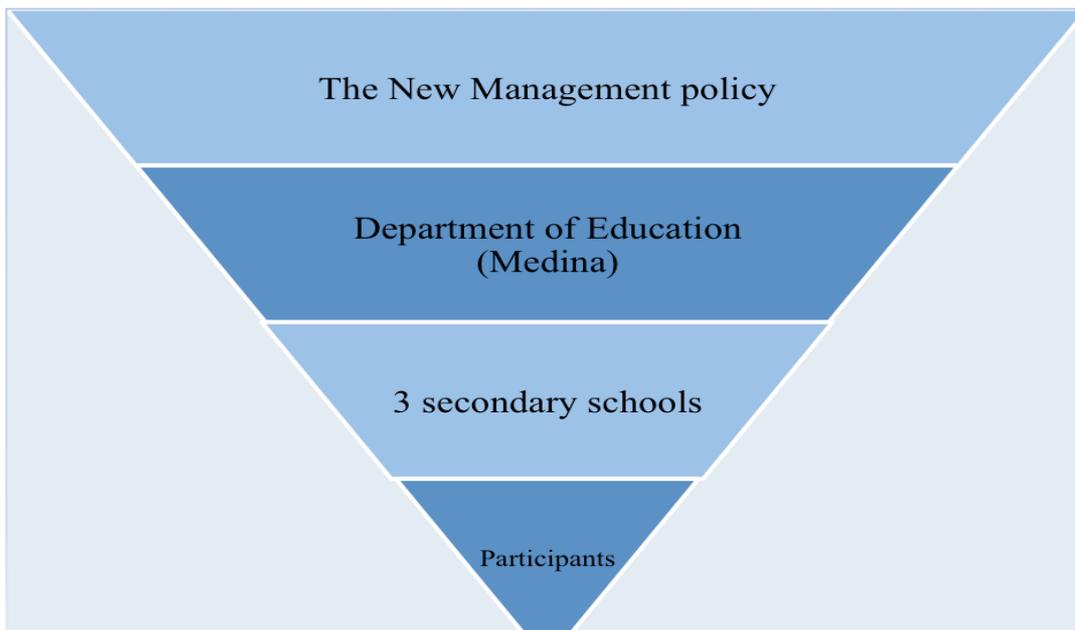


Figure 4 Case study design for this thesis (policy and setting)

4.5.5 Accessing the field

The ability to access data in qualitative research can be affected by the researcher's relationship with the participants. Gaining access, building trust with interviewees and establishing a good relationship are instrumental in obtaining a personal interpretation of events (Mikecz, 2012). Ezzy (2010) claims that good interviewing requires reflexive awareness of, and engagement with, the emotional, embodied and performed dimensions of the interview.

The first step was to seek and gain approval from the ERGO committee at Southampton University (see Appendix D). The second step was to gain permission from the Saudi Cultural Bureau in London who received a detailed letter about the project, its design and the expected period of time required in Saudi Arabia to undertake fieldwork. The third step, when the researcher had received this permission in writing from the Cultural Bureau, was to submit this official document to the Department of Education (DOE) in Medina asking them for permission to conduct the study and to seek their assistance in identifying potential case study schools within the criteria explained above. For the fourth step, the DOE sent a request to several schools seeking their agreement to participate in the study. Fifth, upon gaining this agreement, the researcher contacted the three headteachers by telephone and asked their permission to enter the schools. He explained the aims of the study, the ways in which data needed to be collected; semi-structured interviews, focus groups, observations, document analysis, questionnaires and photographs and the number/kind of participants required. For the sixth step, potential school-based participants were approached, provided with a copy of the research proposal, and asked if they would like to volunteer to take part in the study. No coercion was employed. For the seventh step, Informed Consent forms was distributed and signed. Parents of potential pupil participants received a copy of the Informed Consent form, proposal and a list of focus group questions to be asked during the interviews. Only the pupils whose parents gave informed consent were interviewed.

All of these schools work under similar conditions and are controlled by the DOE in the Medina region, which at the time of the study fell under the supervision of the MOE in Riyadh (the capital city). Sampling a school from the private sector might shed light on any similar or different perspectives related to policy development and similarly between Tatweer and public schools.

4.5.6 Case boundaries

There are numerous types of boundaries that can be applied to make the case study clear and effective. For instance, (a) time and place (Creswell, 2003); (b) time and activity (Stake, 2000); (c) definition and context (Miles and Huberman, 1994); and (d) social and cultural.

In order to establish the boundaries for the researcher's cases; the first point that the researcher considered was time; the researcher collected data between April 2014 and June 2014, so the findings were limited to this period. The costs associated with this investigation were covered by the researcher's sponsor 'the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia Cultural Bureau, London'. The funding helped to cover the expenses of the research, so there was no problem with regard to spending enough time in the field to thoroughly investigate the research environment or to building a strong relationship with participants. This engagement aimed to increase the credibility of the research findings.

It is significant that the researcher can provide an in depth description of the places in which the case studies are set, focusing on how the environment of the study can help to draw a real picture for the reader to help him to imagine how the participants interact throughout the whole educational process. More detail about the three schools will be presented in the 'settings' section.

The total number of (male) students in Medina was 15,6981 (DOE, 2014), studying in 674 schools around the city, 13593 school staff in general, and 11359 teachers. The researcher's PhD project used a mixed approach and three case studies in Medina (Saudi Arabia). It included a range of stakeholders such as school head teachers, policy makers/supervisors, teachers, students and parents.

Using pre-prepared guidelines helped the researcher to increase the number of opportunities to capture sufficient case study research. The guidelines detail the duration associated with each activity within the field study, considering the participants' circumstances.

Within Muslim society, schools are single-sex and schooling takes place in separate buildings so that there is no opportunity for men to enter girls schools and, conversely, no women enter boys' schools. Despite this segregation, the same system and conditions govern both types of school, although there are some curricula differences. As a consequence of this segregation, the researcher's case studies were limited to boys' schools.

4.5.7 Selecting settings and participants

Large samples have several advantages when investigating an overall picture, especially in light of the fact that qualitative research seeks out multiple truths. With case studies, however, the situation is different; it is difficult to gain in-depth knowledge from larger samples because this consumes too much time. Furthermore, in some cases there is also a limit to the number of available expert participants. Due to this limitation, purposeful sampling was the main strategy adopted in identifying settings and participants. This contrasts with quantitative research studies, which involve a large number of participants and often rely on random sampling. Therefore, the researcher purposefully selected three secondary schools (which were recommended by the DOE in Medina as explained above) as the sites for the research out of 48 possible choices. The reason for this variety is to reveal any differences in the management structures within each case and to highlight examples (if any) of good and less than satisfactory practice and development. The three schools were selected due to the fact that; (a) they were undertaking decentralisation efforts, (b) this enabled different types of schools to be included as case sites. The criteria for selecting schools were as follows:

- 1) All the schools have been implementing the new management policy since 2010/11,
- 2) All the schools are under DOE supervision in Medina city, within Saudi Arabia, geographically close to the location of the researcher, so as to reduce travel time,
- 3) All the schools are secondary schools, (age of students 15-18),
- 4) All the schools have existed for more than five years, which means they have implemented the policy since its inception and have sufficient experience in the education system,
- 5) One is a Tatweer school, one is a public school and the third is a private school.

All the three cases are similar and set in Medina and at the time of the study, received the same attention from the DOE, access to the same information, worked under similar conditions and within the same culture. However, there were differences between them; e.g. the size of the schools, the style of leadership, the collaborative nature of the environments, the socio-economic status of the students and the willingness of parents to become involved with school administration.

Case number 1, the school works under the King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Public Education Development Project (Tatweer). It is located in an urban setting in Medina City, and the school has one headteacher, 410 students, 38 teachers, one deputy, two student advisers and three secretaries. Students are tribe, non-tribe and about 4% are from overseas. Their parents are mostly government employees, and the headteacher described their financial status as middle

Chapter 4

class. The school was established in 1995 and joined the Tatweer Project in 2011. The school building is of a high standard, is an ideal MOE building, and seemed to have been renovated recently. The classrooms are big enough for 25-30 students.

The second school is a 'typical school', described as a 'public school' in this thesis, which is located in a suburban area. The school has one headteacher, 500 students, 35 teachers, two deputies, two student advisers and two secretaries. Students are mostly tribe and their parents are mostly government employees. The headteacher described their socioeconomic status as middle class, they are mostly educated but some are illiterate. The school was established in 2002. The school building is of a high standard, an ideal MOE building, and seems to be a new building. The classrooms are big enough for 25-30 students.

The third case is the 'private' school, which is located in an urban area of Medina City. The school has one headteacher, 382 students, 26 teachers, two deputies, three student advisers and two secretaries. Students are a mix of tribe, non-tribe and about 25% are from overseas. Their parents are a mixture of government employees, private sector workers and businessmen and the headteacher described their financial status as upper class, and parents as well-educated. The school was established in 1972. The school building is of a high standard, but generally has smaller classrooms than those in Tatweer and public schools. The building seems old and the classrooms are large enough for 20-25 students but smaller than Tatweer school classrooms.

4.6 Methods of data collection

4.6.1 Interview

The interview was one of the main tools chosen for the purpose of collecting data for the study. Interviews can offer a 'way in' to interpret human experience and reflect a participant's interaction with educational, social, cultural, religious or political dynamics (Mears, 2009). By communicating and listening, the researcher can draw out private meaning and related memories. Exploration of how ideas and feelings about activities and people change over time and through experience can be achieved well through in-depth interviews (Mears, 2009).

There are three types of interview: the structured interview, unstructured interview and semi-structured interview. All of these types have associated advantages and disadvantages. Sarantakos (1998) noted that the advantages can be: flexibility to match various individualized situations; a high response rate because the participants can discuss the questions and identify any queries; and answers to all questions are guaranteed. Face-to-face interviews helped me to

observe the participants' behaviour, whether verbal or non-verbal, and provided an opportunity to record this in as much detail as possible. Thus, identifying precise and specific information can be considered to be a key goal of the in-depth interview method. *"In-depth interviewing aims at understanding the beneficiaries' views of a programme, their terminology and judgments"* (Gertler, et al. 2007, p. 32).

This study examined a number of questions related to the implementation of the new policy in education, focusing on a move towards decentralisation, and a number of groups were involved in this investigation, including headteachers, deputies, teachers, parents, students and government supervisors. Purposeful sampling was the main strategy adopted in selecting participants. Purposeful sampling involves looking for information-rich cases, which can be studied in depth (Patton, 1990).

Participants	Number of participants	Methods	Place	Selection strategy
Headteacher	3	Individual semi-structured interview (1 hour)	School	Purposeful
Deputies	4	Individual semi-structured interview (1 hour)	School	Purposeful
Teachers	8	Individual semi-structured interview (1 hour)	School	Purposeful
Supervisors	6	Individual semi-structured interview (30 minutes)	DOE	Purposeful
Pupils	61	Focus group 9 (45 minutes)	School	Purposeful
Parents	5 (3 from public school and 2 from private)	Individual semi-structured interview (25-35 min)	1 at school and 4 in public places	Purposeful

Table 5 Plan for selecting participants and the method of data collection

Chapter 4

Moreover, Table (5) summarised who was involved in the qualitative data collection, types of methods, place and selection strategy. Columns one and two show in detail the number of participants: the three headteachers, one from each school, with one hour individual interviews. The interviews with the deputies were completed at each school. Three of the four interviews were recorded; one deputy (from the Tatweer school) did not wish the interview to be recorded. The researcher took notes in this interview and continued to write after the interview was completed. Two deputies from the public school, one from the Tatweer school and one from the private school also participated.

Interviews with teachers took place at schools, and the number of teachers was 6, 2 from each school. 45 minutes was the average time for each individual interview. Six interviews were undertaken with supervisors. Each supervisor was interviewed for approximately 30 minutes.

Student details will be discussed in the 'focus group' section of this thesis. Parent interviews were only possible in two schools (the public school and the private school), as mentioned earlier in the methodology chapter. The headteacher in the Tatweer school rejected the idea of involving any parent interviews in this research and did not allow me to contact them. Therefore, the qualitative findings are limited to two schools. Quantitative data was gathered from parents at all three schools, and more detail is offered in the 'parent questionnaires' section.

The total number of parents who participated in the interviews was five, three from the public school (P1, P2, and P3) and two from the private school (P4 and P5). One interview took place in the school, while the parent was visiting the school, while the others were arranged outside the schools in a public place. The interviews lasted about 25-35 minutes. The purpose of the interviews was to investigate one of the main objectives of implementing decentralisation: involving local people, particularly parents, in School Council, decision-making and making sure that parents are aware of the new policy. The second aim was to shed light on school-parent communication.

The researcher designed the interview questions with reference to the movement of the MOE in Saudi Arabia towards decentralisation and in line with the new management policy. The interview questions were developed following analysis of the international literature and documents relating to the new policy. The follow-up questions were constructed, in some interviews when necessary, in order to gain an understanding of the overall picture. All planned questions for the various stakeholders (headteachers, deputies, teachers, supervisors, parents and students, are shown in Appendix C.

In this thesis, the researcher used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, in order to focus on one area and to obtain access to a wide range of information. As Yow (1994) stated, the open-ended nature of oral history questions requires narrators to focus on what they consider to be significant and offers them the authority to manage the content and scope of the interview. Niekerk and Savin-Baden, (2010, p. 34) stated that: *“In the process of data construction, more attention was given to explore multiple truths at every step of the process, without an expectation that there would be a single or stable answer to complex questions”*.

4.6.2 Focus group interviews

Focus groups can be defined as a group interview, as focus groups rely on *“interaction within the group based on topics that are supplied by the researcher (Morgan 1997: P.12)”*. Krueger (1994: p. 6) defines the focus group as *“a carefully planned discussion, designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment”*. The aim of utilising focus groups is to encourage in-depth discussion (Carey, 1994), and the reason for using this method rather than others, is because participants may have less experience in participating in research and they may need encouragement to express their voices, with the researcher encouraging them to take their turn in the conversation. Moreover, it may reduce the threat to any one individual and gain a sense of a level of the agreement among individuals (Simons, 2009), which is also a benefit of using focus groups with students in schools, when it could be difficult to conduct several single interviews in depth.

Involving pupils in research is significant and rare in Saudi studies, for me as a researcher believe they are the people who benefit most from the education system. It also fits recent trends in that; indeed *“Over the last two decades developments within childhood studies have led to increased recognition of the importance of listening to children’s voices and experiences, and emphasis on their rights to participation and expression of their views is recognised in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)”* (Powell, et al. 2012; p 1).

This thesis used focus groups to interview pupils (aged 17-18 years). The aim was to gain their perceptions about the new management policy and using focus group interview encouraged them to indicate the ways in which they felt school involved them in decisions of an educational nature (Morgan and Kreuger 1993). Focus groups permitted the collection of information about perceptions of the new policy and pupils’ willingness to participate in school administration. These interviews were challenging, as most students had little experience of being interviewed and had rarely been asked for their views on schooling. In addition, they generally had limited opportunities to discuss their school experience. Hence answers were routinely quite brief.

Chapter 4

Table (6) shows the number of students who were involved in the focus group interviews at each school. At each school (Tatweer, public and private), three focus groups were set up. At the Tatweer school 16 students participated; one focus group included 6 students and the other 5 students. In the public school 15 students participated; 5 students in each of the three focus groups. The private school had three focus groups with 10 students in each one. The reason for increasing the number was that the classroom-teacher asked me to take half the class and kept the other half with him.

Schools	Case number 1 (Tatweer)	Case number 2 (public school)	Case number 3 (private school)
Number of students	16. students (3) focus groups	15. students (3) focus groups	30. students (3) focus groups

Table 6 Number of students involved in the focus group in each school

4.6.3 Questionnaire

Adding a questionnaire as a tool for this study was one of the suggestions from the examiners in the upgrade viva, in order to increase the number of data collection methods and the number of participants, particularly teachers. Moreover, the parent questionnaire was added due to the lack of response to interviews in one case (the Tatweer school). *“Case study research is not limited to a single source of data, as in the use of questionnaires for carrying out a survey. In fact, good case studies benefit from having multiple sources of evidence”*, Yin, (2012, p. 10). The questionnaires were only excluded to the participants from three case studies (Tatweer, public and private schools).

4.6.3.1 Parent questionnaire

The researcher obtained the parent questionnaire from the ‘Arab Bureau of Education for The Gulf States’ (ABOEFTGS, 2010). This is the official organisation for the Gulf States and it serves six countries; Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, United Emirates, Bahrain and Oman. The questionnaire was part of a project to evaluate the quality of the education systems in the six countries, titled “Quality of education: instruments to evaluate the teaching and learning process, 2010”. This project employed some 17 tools/instruments (mostly questionnaires), in order to evaluate the teaching and learning process. Expert researchers in the gulf countries designed these questionnaires. The target audiences included teachers, headteachers and supervisors. The questionnaire was written in the Arabic language and the researchers who designed the questionnaire piloted it and confirmed its validity and reliability. They submitted the

questionnaire to four experts in evaluation and measurement in education. Then, they implemented (in the pilot study) these questionnaires to a sample of 1200 (750 teachers, 300 headteachers, 150 supervisors) to assess its reliability and validity. Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, I did not change anything in the questionnaire as I found it related to my research questions, particularly in terms of parental involvement in school decision-making and the extent of communication between schools and parents. All the questions in the questionnaire are positive statements and distributed in Arabic language. Also, I translated the questionnaire statements and the results.

The questionnaire was printed on paper and distributed manually to each school. I introduced myself as a researcher in each class and encouraged students to give the questionnaire to their parents (who would need to sign a consent form). After a few days, I returned to these classes and asked for any completed questionnaires which had been returned to the schools. Parents had been given information (including a consent form, including the ethics approval number from Southampton University) about how their information would be kept in a secure place and used only for the purposes of the research. I distributed 40 questionnaires at each school. Between April and June 2014, I distributed (by hand) 120 questionnaires [40 questionnaires for each school]. I asked the students (17-18 years old), to pass them to their parents (students acted as moderators and were not allowed to fill in the questionnaire, as I emphasised). The response rate was about 19% in the first two weeks, but after following up with students the rate increased to 45% (53 questionnaires returned). The returned questionnaires were: 16 units from school 1; 22 units from school 2; 13 units from school 3. In February 2015, I distributed 120 questionnaires in an effort to get a higher response rate, this time by mail to the headteachers, who did not participate in the first round, but only 17 questionnaires were returned. After following up the headteachers by phone four times and giving them one month to return the questionnaires, the number of returned questionnaires was as follows: 7 units from school 1; 5 units from school 2; 9 units from school 3. The total number of responses was 72. Two of them were uncompleted; one from a private school and one from case number 1, the Tatweer school. These two were excluded, as five questions were not answered. Table (7) shows the number and percentage of useable parent questionnaires distributed and returned. Therefore, the final number of responses was 70, divided as follows;

- Case number 1, Tatweer school (22 parents);
- Case number 2, public school (27 parents);
- Case number 3, private school (21 parents).

Distributed questionnaires	Returned questionnaires	Percentage returned	Useable questionnaires	Percentage of useable questionnaires
240	72	30%	70	97.2%

Table 7 Number and percentage of useable parent questionnaires, distributed and returned

To maintain confidentiality, all participants submitted the questionnaire in official envelopes to the researcher in person, or to the headteachers directly. There were four questions on the front page of the questionnaire asking about; name, gender, school name, district and date, which were (optional) for participants. Most of the parents did not fill in this section, so the researcher did not include it in the analysis. It is also not the main focus of the parents' participation.

4.6.3.2 Teachers' questionnaire

The aim of using this questionnaire with teachers was to gather their perspectives on their influence on school decision making and other aspects of school life, around 11 themes; Power, Knowledge, Information, Rewards, Leadership, Resources, Use of Technology, Admission, Assessment, Time and Building.

This questionnaire was adapted (with permission) from Robertson, et al (1995). Their study was part of an education reform program supported by the US Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Office of Research, under contract RR 91-172002. In the Robertson, et al study, the aims of this questionnaire were to assess the implementation of new reform in schools, with regard to SBM. They sought to investigate the factors that support or hinder SBM schools in their use of the new authority passed to them from a higher level (districts). The questionnaire built upon the previous work of researchers who found that power, knowledge, information, rewards, leadership, resources and use of technology play a significant role in helping schools to adapt their work under SBM. *"Data from a set of schools that have been successfully using SBM for a number of years were analysed to assess the extent to which these elements serve as supporting condition to facilitate the implantation of meaningful reforms in these areas"* Robertson, et al (1995; p. 383).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher made some changes such as deleting four sections/themes from the questionnaire; Instructional Guidance System, Teaching for Understanding, Educating all Students and Integrated Approaches. The main reasons for this adjustment are that these sections/themes were not related to the research questions and were not applicable to the Saudi Education system. Moreover, the researcher added four new sections/themes to the questionnaire, with only eight items, in order to match the research

questions. The new sections/themes are admission, assessment, time and building, which emerged from the new management policy in the Saudi Education system.

The questionnaire mainly collects ordinal data, but two questions can be categorised as collecting nominal data. According to Cohen, et al., (2007, P 502): *“Nominal data include items such as sex, age group (e.g. 30–35, 36–40), subject taught, type of school, socio-economic status”*. All the other questions collect ordinal data, which is defined by Cohen, et al. (2007, p. 502) as follows: *“the ordinal scale not only classifies but also introduces an order into the data. These might be rating scales where, for example, ‘strongly agree’ is stronger than ‘agree’, or ‘a very great deal’ is stronger than ‘very little’”*. The teachers’ questionnaire allowed participants to choose one of three options in response to items; (low, medium or high), for other questions; some, most or all, two further questions used multiple choice and in another six questions respondents indicated yes or no.

The questionnaire was printed on paper and distributed manually to teachers in all three schools (Tatweer, public and private). Table (8) illustrates that the total number of printed questionnaires distributed among the three schools (Tatweer, public and private), was 99 and the number returned was 74, a high rate of return of 74.7 %. Some of returned questionnaires were uncompleted, so they were rejected. The usable questionnaires totalled 71, divided by school as follows:

- Case number 1 (Tatweer school) 27 out of 38 teachers;
- Case number 2 (public school) 24 out of 35 teachers;
- Case number 3 (private school) 20 out of 26 teachers.

Distributed questionnaires	Returned questionnaires	Percentage returned	Useable questionnaires	Percentage of useable questionnaires
99	74	74.7%	71	95.9%

Table 8 Number and percentage of useable teacher questionnaires distributed and returned

4.6.4 Document analysis

Document analysis was an important tool for data collection in this research, as its aim is essentially to investigate the new management policy of decentralisation and how educators

Chapter 4

receive it. The reason for using document analysis is to understand the policy itself and the way it is implemented, according to Simons (2009):

A common example (of using document analysis in a case study) is where a school's practices have to be in line with local authority policies... an analysis of relevant policy documents in the larger unit may be necessary to help you understand the reasons and context for the policy as well as how it is being implemented in practice (p. 63).

The aim of using document analysis is to examine the exact words policy makers employ to promote decentralisation. The researcher started this research by analysing the policy document itself, to understand the context and how it will be implemented. These documents will be analysed thematically to link with the findings of the other methods. Drawing a big picture of the case study requires triangulation between multiple methods to increase the credibility of the findings, in addition to triangulation across participants and across settings. The websites of the three schools were accessed and publicly available material was analysed.

4.6.5 Unstructured observation

This research utilised observation as one of the data collection methods. Simons, (2009) indicates several factors relating to the importance of informal observation (or unstructured); first, it allows the researcher to “(a) gain a comprehensive ‘picture’ of the site, and ‘sense of the setting’ which cannot be obtained solely by speaking with people, (b) it can provide a rich description and the basis of interpretation; (c) it can allow the researcher to understand the culture and the norms and values of an institution; (d) it acts as a cross-check on data obtained in the interviews” (p. 55). These advantages encouraged the researcher to use this particular tool to increase the validity of the findings and to provide a detailed description of the three case studies.

It is important to state that the aim of using observations in this study was not to observe pupils or teachers in the classroom. Observations looked at the interior and exterior physical environment of the case schools (e.g. any new extensions to the school such as ICT or resource rooms, notice-boards, noticeboards of upcoming meetings and the school website). Observations were undertaken in school corridors, administrators' offices, the staff room, teachers' lounge etc.

4.6.6 Photographs

As part of the researcher's unstructured observations, the researcher walked around the school and when he saw evidence related to his research questions it was documented both in writing and where deemed necessary, through a photograph. All images taken during the data collection

will be deleted from the digital camera after the project has been completed. These images informed discussion during interviews with members of school staff. Photographs were collected where the researcher saw physical evidence of a school taking advantage of the affordance of the new policy. Photographs can play a significant role in documenting the researcher's observations, which is described above, according to Thomas (2011) *"image-based methods provide a powerful extension of observation and open up a range of possibilities for case study research"* (p. 166).

4.7 Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) specified that "trustworthiness" is vital to ensure the quality of a research in the interpretive paradigm. They provided criteria that must be considered for any research to be accepted as trustworthy are set out. A central point for any inquiry is to which extent the findings reflect the "truth" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In the case of positivist research, the truth-value is defined by 'internal validity', meaning the relationship between the findings and the phenomena that the data represents. *"However, because naturalistic inquiry does not make an assumption of a single objective reality, the objective ascertainment of an isomorphism ceases to have any relevance"* (Erlandson, et al. 1993. P. 30).

4.7.1 Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) have proposed some strategies to maximise credibility. The researcher spent around three months in the study settings. Further, the researcher had prolonged exposure to the culture and the processes underpinning the education system. The researcher worked as a teacher for six years in Medina and has also worked in administration. Most of the data collection was conducted in schools, which gave the researcher extended insight into the daily lives of the participants.

Triangulation can be achieved through several strategies. In this thesis, the researcher presents information from three secondary schools as case studies (Tatweer, public and private) from different sites within Medina city. Erlandson et al., (1993) state that *"...different questions, different sources, and different methods should be used to focus on equivalent sets of data"* (p. 31). Triangulation added an assurance because the events described were taken from different sources and so were more likely to match reality. Therefore, triangulation was achieved (1) across participants from different socio-economic backgrounds, (2) across tools for data collection; interviews, focus groups, document analysis, questionnaires, unstructured observations and photography, and (3) across settings; three secondary schools.

Chapter 4

The researcher involved his supervisor in all stages of the research project, in order to include a critical and professional eye and to increase external validity. Moreover, to increase the credibility, after analysing the data, the researcher gave sample transcripts to his supervisor. The supervisor played 'devil's advocate' and challenged the interpretations emerging from the analysis of data.

The interview questions were discussed and agreed with the researcher's supervisor to obtain feedback and suggestions. The Arabic translations of the interview questions and teacher and parent questionnaires were submitted to four PhD students at Southampton University, originally from Saudi Arabia, in order to validate the accuracy of the researcher's translation. The researcher encouraged all participants to review and check the transcripts and the inquiry process by which the findings were obtained. Following analysis, the findings were shared with some of the participants to gain member' checks to enhance credibility, as recommended by Erlandson et al. (1993). This was undertaken to ensure that the findings matched real life and that the feedback increased the quality of the whole work. No comments/changes were received from participants.

4.7.2 Transferability

As Lincoln and Guba (1985) state, generalise the truth is not possible in the naturalistic research. This thesis is in not aiming for generalisation as it's designed upon three case studies. In detail, the naturalistic researcher believed knowledge determined from one context cannot be relevant exactly to other contexts in another time frame. "Transferability" through contexts may occur because of shared characteristics. Moreover, transferability can be accomplished by pursuing two approaches. The first is called a "Thick Description" which the researcher represented in the findings chapter. The second approach is "Purposive Sampling"; in this thesis the researcher selected three case study secondary schools (Tatweer, public and private) as they had implemented the new policy in the academic year 2010-2011.

4.8 Data Analysis

This thesis is based on multiple case studies, and one of the aims was to analyse the data through cross-case analysis. There are several reasons for choosing cross-case analysis and these are (1) obtaining a deep understanding of the case or the phenomenon; (2) identifying negative cases in order to strengthen a theory, built through examination of similarities and differences across cases (3) knowing something about the significance or applicability of the final findings to other similar settings (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

The aim when analysing the interviews, observations and image data is to decrease the number of words presented to the researcher. Analysing data is the main process involved in this research, and involves extracting significant meaning from the interviews and summarizing the survey. For the qualitative data, according to DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006, p. 318) *“a commonly used approach relies on using codes from a codebook for tagging segments of text and then sorting text segments with similar content into separate categories for a final distillation into major themes”* see also: Miles and Huberman (1994). Coding is not data analysis; it is part of the lengthy and necessary process of qualitative research (Silverman, 2005).

The qualitative data analysis started with the questioning and continued during the collection of the data, coding, reflecting, categorising, building themes and presentation. The process of analysing data consisted of organizing what had been seen, heard and read so that sense could be made of what was learned (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). The researcher employed the suggestions of Taylor-Powell (2003); the first step involved reading and re-reading the transcripts many times for a full understanding of them. The second step was to choose a reflective framework. The third step involved categorising information, coding the data and extracting the themes.

4.8.1 Coding process

“A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldaña, 2009; p. 3). Therefore, with coding, the researcher is looking for behaviours, events, activities, states, strategies, meanings, participation, relationships, conditions, consequences, settings and reflections (Richards, 2009). The researcher identified codes from transcripts and these codes referred to attitude, relationships or needs. Although this led to a large number of codes, it was important to sort these into groups; a process known as axial coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Coding can be formulated in two main stages, the first is open coding. Open coding is the allocation of a code label, a word or phrase found in the transcript or text, while axial coding means creating themes or categories by grouping codes or labels given to words and phrases (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Richards, 2009). Also, Strauss and Corbin, (1990) referred to ‘selective coding’, which is the process by which all categories are unified around a “core” category. All forms of coding seek to enhance internal validity.

Similar to this, Saldaña (2009) outlined two types of coding process, the First Cycle and the Second Cycle. The First Cycle can range in magnitude from a single word to a full sentence, to an entire page of text or to a stream of moving images. The Second Cycle involves coding methods, if needed, which are advanced ways of reorganising and reanalysing data coded through First Cycle

Chapter 4

methods. *“The goal of Second Cycle coding is to develop a sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual, and/or theoretical organisation from your array of First Cycle codes”* (Saldaña, 2009; p. 149).

The researcher employed three stages during the analysis process. First, preparation of transcripts by organising every interview transcript such as adding ID numbers for each question, interview transcript, observation in field notes, memoranda, comment on document analysis and photograph. The ID data included the name of the participant, date, place and any important information, as in the example (see Table 9). Second, the researcher used manual coding using a pen and highlighters. Third, during the coding process, the researcher used memos to improve quality. Glaser and Strauss (1967) support the process of using ‘memoing’ which involves making a note of key thoughts, hunches and lines of enquiry during data collection. The coding process concludes when all segments of the transcripts have been allocated a code.

Date: (day\month\year)	Experience:
Informer’s name: e.g. Headteacher N. (2)	How long?
Interviewer’s name:	Where?
Place:	Page number:
	Date of completion:

Table 9 Example of transcript ID

The outcome of coding, categorisation and analytic reflection involves continuing the coding process starting with: (1) codes, then (2) categories and sub-categories, then (3) themes and finally (4) theory (Saldaña, 2009). Berkowitz (1997) states that themes and categories do not emerge on their own. They are driven by what the researcher wants to know and how he/she interprets what the data is telling him/her according to theoretical frameworks, subjective perspectives, ontological and epistemological positions and intuitive field understandings.

There are numerous strategies that can be used to identify themes from the data and the researcher will follow the suggestions of Mathers et al., (1998) and Miles and Huberman, (1994) who provided appropriate steps to assist with the recognition of common themes and categories systematically.

- 1) Write the name of the theme in the margin of the text, for example, ‘school need’, and cut up the transcripts and group the relevant sentences in this theme.

- 2) Highlight common themes.
- 3) Transfer themes and concepts to index cards, so all common themes will be located on the same card giving a reference for each one. This will allow the researcher to classify themes and identify repetition of concepts and themes.
- 4) Use a matrix to clarify the patterns and the relationship between key themes, according to different participants or case units.
- 5) Build a list of themes for each group and each case; for example, participants from school 1 have a common understanding about decentralisation, which affects decision-making practice.
- 6) Compare between groups and cases to uncover the best practice for implementing the new policy and why. This will assist in the transfer of knowledge to another case.
- 7) Finally, the researcher will map the concepts and themes graphically using a cognitive map, so the researcher can draw links between themes and discover how one theme influences another.

4.8.2 Constant comparison

In this thesis, the researcher employed constant comparison in two stages: within each case and in cross-case analysis, as suggested by Merriam (1998).

The main intellectual tool is comparison. The method of comparing and contrasting is used for practically all intellectual tasks during analysis: forming categories, establishing the boundaries of the categories, assigning the segments to categories, summarizing the content of each category, finding negative evidence, etc. The goal is to discern conceptual similarities, to refine the discriminative power of categories, and to discover patterns. (Tesch, 1990, p. 96).

Boeije, (2002) suggested five stages of constant comparison for analysing interview data. For the purposes of this study the researcher adopted four of these steps. These stages were as follows:

1. Comparison within a single interview (for example, Headteacher 1) by looking into the meaning of the participant's response and comparing it with the researcher's previous knowledge.

Chapter 4

2. Comparing interviews within the same group (for example, head teacher 1 with teacher 1 and parent 1, in school 1).
3. Comparison of interviews within the same role across groups (for example, Headteacher 1 in School A with Headteacher 3 in School C or teacher 1 in School 1 and teacher 2 in School 2).
4. The fourth stage was cross-case comparison such as comparing the final findings of School A with Schools B and C.

4.8.3 Quantitative analysis

The questionnaires gathered data from two groups (parents and teachers). The researcher employed descriptive analysis, which included;

1. a descriptive analysis for each theme, which include (mean, standard deviation, median, and mode) for all three cases;
2. presenting the overall frequency and percentage for each theme, for all three cases also;
3. comparing the mean for each school to show which school achieved better results.

Mean, median, mode and standard deviation are explained separately:

Mean: the average score. According to Muijs, (2010), *“the mean is simply the sum of the values of all the cases divided by the total number of cases”*. p. 86. I used Excel to calculate the sum of scores for each theme and then used the function of average to gain the mean. For example, the first theme in the parent questionnaire contained three questions, in school number one the participants needed to chose one of five options on a Likert scale (1 never; 2 rarely; 3 sometimes; 4 very often and 5 always). In Excel, I used the function average to find the mean, by selecting all the cases and then using descriptive analysis in order to find mean, median, mode, and standard deviation. I repeated this for all the themes in the two questionnaires.

The researcher employed the technique of Robertson, et al (1995) to code and rank schools, and this is an example of the first theme from the parent questionnaire. If the mean score for School 1 is above the median, this school would be coded as “high”; if it is at the median or below, it would be coded as “low” (Robertson, et al (1995).

Standard Deviation (SD): *a measure of the dispersal or range of scores, calculated as the square root of the variance.*

Median: *the score obtained by the middle person in a ranked group of people, i.e. it has an equal number of scores above it and below it.*

Mode: *the score obtained by the greatest number of people. (Cohen, et al., 2007: p503-504)*

All these measurements were processed using Microsoft Excel (2011) functions.

4.9 Ethical concerns

Ethical concerns are about human rights, and the researcher made sure that the participants' rights were respected. In order to protect the participants' identities, the researcher did not disclose their names or the names of the schools. Instead, the participants were represented using the terms 'head teacher 1' or 'deputy 3'. The researcher informed the participants that the information collected would be used in the academic study only and so should have no effect on them and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Also, to protect the participants' data, the researcher followed the ethical framework set out by Southampton University. The researcher sought and received ethical approval from the ERGO committee at Southampton University (see Appendix D).

The major issue to consider as a researcher using this technique is the potential for disclosure, particularly if the research topic is sensitive. As researchers we are obliged to ensure that the participants in our studies are not harmed (physically or psychologically) by our research. This was not the case in the research reported in this thesis.

While using a focus group with pupils (17-18 years), ethical considerations were applied, as the researcher asked 17 year old pupils and their parents to sign a consent form. The schools served as the place for the interviews, where pupils study every day, know the buildings well and there are safety procedures with which all pupils are familiar. The data collected was only for academic purposes. In due course, the parents of participants will be able to read an outline of the research project, which explains the outcomes of the study. Pupils who were 18 were asked directly to consent to participate.

While the researcher cannot guarantee absolute anonymity, the responses were anonymous, as participants were neither asked to indicate their name on their responses nor identify the name of their schools. Only the researcher and supervisor had access to the interview transcripts and other data. All information was treated as confidential and participants were not identified

Chapter 4

through their responses. Interviewers participating in the study signed a confidentiality agreement and were fully briefed prior to and following the interviews, which included clarifying the confidentiality requirements of the study. While focus group participants were requested to keep the entire conversation confidential, this could not be guaranteed on an individual basis.

4.10 Summary

This chapter presents the following main points. First a comparison of the methodological approaches (qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods respectively). Second, a discussion of the selection of the research design of this thesis, which is a qualitative case study mixing both qualitative and quantitative data, and in particular a definition of case study; determining the boundary, which involves starting with the new management policy, DOE, selecting three secondary schools and selecting the participants. Third, describing the data collection tools, which were semi-structured interviews, focus groups (students), questionnaires (teachers and parents only), document analysis (the new management policy), photographic images and unstructured observations and the rationale for the use of each of them. The fourth section discusses ethical considerations and procedures for data analysis.

Chapter 5: Findings

5.1 Introduction

The findings chapter presents the qualitative and quantitative data. Interviews, focus groups, photography, observations and questionnaires were the main data collection methods. The findings are organised around the six research questions, which are;

1. What understanding did stakeholders have of decentralisation?
2. What did headteachers and policy makers view as the benefits and challenges of implementing the new decentralisation policy in schools?
3. How did deputies and classroom teachers assess the implementation of the new decentralisation policy?
4. To what extent were students involved in decisions related to their school?
5. How did parents view their relationship with schools as a function of the new decentralisation policy?
6. What training issues and needs were identified by head teachers and policy makers as relevant to implementing the new management policy in their schools?

5.2 SECTION ONE

In this section, the researcher presents the findings of research into the first question in this study, which is 'what understanding did stakeholders have of decentralisation?'

5.2.1 Understanding decentralisation

In this section, I present the respective understandings among headteachers, deputies, supervisors, classroom teachers, parents and students. Interview questions with the headteachers focused on their perception of decentralisation and probed deeper into the practical issues related to the new management policy and its implementation as experienced in their schools. In addressing the first question in this section headteachers were asked about the meaning of decentralisation and each provided a definition.

Headteachers started by clarifying their understanding of decentralisation, the need for decentralisation within the current Saudi education system and finally the perceived obstacles they face in overseeing and specifically leading the implementation of the new management policy in their schools.

Chapter 5

All headteachers defined decentralisation as ‘independence’ and specifically leading schools independently from the DOE. Headteacher 1 from the Tatweer school stated that there was a need to;

empower the school to be a Minister in itself, which means that the school holds all the authority, similar to the Ministry, and that will make the school work independently.

Similarly Headteacher 2 from the public school gave his understanding:

the new management policy seeks to replace the school ‘manager’ and make them a ‘leader’, and that means working independently and working with freedom from DOE control. Until now we did not feel that we were working as leaders in the highly centralised system.

In addition to a sense of freedom and control, Headteacher 3 from the private school added “*the need to change the school culture by delegating authority from higher level to lower level and empowering school council*”.

Deputies also provided their understanding of decentralisation. Deputy 1 from the Tatweer school stated that “decentralisation means independence in decision making, and working with no high level control from the DOE”. A near similar view was presented by Deputy 2 from the public school, but he added that decentralisation involved parents and the community in decision making. The other deputies defined it in a similar way, making reference to a more independent school and being able to work with less central control. Deputy 2 from the public school, in addition offered some potential benefits;

Decentralisation has benefits such as equality among staff and reducing nepotism by involving community that is a norm. In terms of curriculum, decentralisation can bring benefits for students in lower performance schools.

Supervisors indicated several meanings for decentralisation such as increasing headteacher authority, involving different stakeholders in decision-making and delegation. Only one mentioned the move towards (SBM) as the longer-term target of applying decentralisation within the Saudi education system.

A more cautious view was shared by supervisors with a hint of centralised oversight evident. Supervisor 3 stated that schools needed to have opportunities to work independently, but this should be under the watchful eyes of the MOE and DOE to avoid mismanagement. Supervisor 5 agreed with this view; “*the meaning of decentralisation is delegation of authority to school level under the umbrella of the MOE and DOE*”. A ‘step-wise’ approval to decentralisation was evident

in a further response. Specifically, Supervisor 1 provided his understanding of decentralisation, *“it means not jumping to decentralization in one step, but we need to give headteachers more authority and reduce restrictions from the DOE until we reach School Based Management (SBM).”*

Interviews with supervisors pointed to a number of challenges to the successful implementation of decentralisation. Data from supervisors highlighted some of the challenges to successful implementation, including lack of financial support, educational reform and available training.

Teachers defined decentralisation in their ways, but the most common reference was again to schools being independent in terms of decision making and working without control from the DOE. Teacher 3 from the private school provided this definition:

Actually I believe that decentralization is giving freedom to make educational decisions for example, we are a branch for the main company in (Riyadh), the branch of Madinah must be independent in making his own decisions especially in terms of things which the headteacher sees as suitable for students and the school, that is called decentralisation, but there are also powerful decisions that come from the top management, but I think decentralization means that every institution will be independent In terms of making its own decisions.

Along the above lines, Teacher 1 from the Tatweer school and Teacher 6 from the private school indicated that decentralisation is achieving independence as a school, where a school can take their own decisions without referring to the DOE. Unlike supervisors, teachers largely envisaged complete separation from central control.

Parents' awareness of the new policy was as expected, due to the lack of engagement between schools and parents. No parents had any detailed knowledge about the policy. When I asked them about their perceptions of decentralisation, they offered some opinions. The response of Parent 2 from the public school was indicative and made reference to an awareness of local contexts:

The advantage of decentralization is that every school is aware of the environment around it and what can work in their local area. Also, that may not work in another school in the country so decentralization helps the student to acknowledge his own environment and benefit from its resources.

In the context of the extent of decentralization and parents' participation, Parent 2 added:

Not a full independence but just independence in some decisions or things that serve its own area or environment. Regarding the curriculum, teaching methods and hiring and firing teachers I do not think so, because the school administrators may know better than me.

Chapter 5

This reference to local needs was supported by Parent 4 from the private school who commented specifically on *“the meaning of decentralisation is working independence from the MOE in Riyadh, as the people in our city know their needs better than those who live a thousand kilometers away”*. On the other hand, Parent 1 from the public school provided a more general definition of *“decentralisation which is working independently from the central government, either in education, health or politics”*.

Students tended to associate decentralisation with being ‘independent’, which is a common meaning understood from the Arabic language. Also, it was evident not all students were aware of the new management policy and its implementation in their schools. As some of the older learners in the setting, (aged 17-18), their secondary schooling spans the policy to date. They consistently indicated the limited communication about the policy that existed between school administrators and them as students.

5.2.2 Summary

Understanding the new management policy and decentralisation is vital for the move forward towards a new management system in Saudi education. The policy does not provide an operational definition of decentralisation. Supervisors have a more comprehensive understanding of decentralisation and they see it as a process which requiring careful and gradual implementation, focusing on training, while headteachers tended to opt for full control. All headteachers defined decentralisation as ‘independence’ and specifically operating independently from the DOE. Deputies and classroom teachers indicated a similar understanding, stating that it meant working independently from the DOE and they were aware of the new policy and its functions. However, parents and students were not explicitly aware of the policy and have less understanding of decentralisation, tending to locate it within local needs and environment or seeing it as synonymous with independence.

5.3 SECTION TWO

In this section, I present the findings related to the second question: What did headteachers and policy makers view as the benefits and challenges of implementing the new decentralisation policy in schools? The findings are divided into two main sections: (1) Headteacher and supervisors interviews and (2) physical and online evidence, observations and findings from photography/Image capture.

5.3.1 Headteacher Interview findings

5.3.1.1 A positive step towards decentralisation

As this thesis focuses on decentralisation and the new management policy in Saudi Arabia, it is essential to find out headteachers' perspectives on this policy and its implementation. All headteachers confirmed that the new management policy was a positive step towards decentralisation. However, they confirmed that the centralised system was still very much in existence. Headteacher 1 believed that "the aim of applying decentralisation is not achieved yet", and he commented on the extent of the shift in power as a function of the specific policy;

the MOE works in the same line – to implement the decentralisation - but not as fast as we expect, in that regard the MOE has introduced the new management policy containing 52 powers, for school head teachers to increase their authorities among schools..., however we still don't implement the full-decentralised system, and most of the powers are still held at DOE level.

Headteachers illustrated several reasons for implementing decentralisation, such as its benefits, its potential to improve the education system and the limitations of the current management system, which is 'centralised'. Regarding the benefits of decentralisation Headteacher 3 confirmed that "decentralization lead to better work in education system" and he claimed that both the;

DOE and MOE cannot understand schools problems and needs compared with staff and headteacher who understand their problems, so we need decentralisation.

Some noted that speaking to parents within the School Council was a benefit of decentralisation. Headteacher 1 indicated the benefit of the new management policy by saying that the "new policy strengthens the role of the School Council". Also, Headteacher 3 affirmed:

the new management policy increases the confidence of headteachers and school staff and it shows a high level of trust from the MOE and DOE for the school community which contains the headteacher, teachers, parents and local community members.

5.3.1.2 Limitations of centralisation

Headteachers made mention of the limitations of current system, which is 'centralised', and still characterised by persistent delays in decision making from the DOE, and lengthy waits over supplying resources. Headteacher 2 confirmed that:

An example of a delay in supporting schools by allocating resources was that we required student' tables and it took one year to replace them, and more than that staff tables have only just arrived.

He also suggested that one solution would be to give schools sufficient budget to buy what they needed without waiting for the DOE to make decision. All headteachers mentioned some obstacles regarding the implementation of the new policy. These issues centred around: (a) a set of policy elements; (b) headteacher selection and preparation, and (c) the relationship with both the DOE and parents.

5.3.1.3 Headteachers' power

Headteachers spoke of a perceived lack of power. While the new management policy seeks to increase headteacher powers, the data from headteacher interviews indicated the contrary in that, there was a feeling among both Headteacher 1 from the Tatweer school and 2 from the public school that they do not possess the power to take decisions. This lack of power related to information, admissions, hiring\ firing teachers and staff, school time, student assessments, supplying resources and finally budget. In contrast, the Headteacher from the private school worked under the MOE and DOE authority regarding the curriculum (knowledge) and information, however, the headteacher in the private school indicated that he had more space to practice some aspects of decentralisation, particularly using technology, supplying resources, student assessments, school time, controlling school finances, raising funding from parents, hiring/ firing teachers and overseeing staff and the admissions process.

5.3.1.4 Information

As a requirement of the MOE all schools in the country must submit all information to the NOOR the system, including demographics/outcomes about the school e.g. number of staff, students, equipment and student grades. The aim of the NOOR programme is to gather all the information about schools across the whole country in one place (the MOE). It allows parents to apply for

school admission and contact school teachers directly; it helps teachers to send homework to students and students can interact with a teacher remotely when doing homework and receive comments from their teacher. This seems to some headteachers as a continued element of a centralised system. As one aspect of this research is to find out to what extent schools benefit from this information in the NOOR system, Headteacher 2 from the public school stated what he saw as a major limitation of the system;

The NOOR system requires us to update all the information about the school regularly, which is time consuming and we cannot get the results of our students for previous years, to compare and see if there is an improvement or not in the school's outcomes.

It seems to me that the headteacher can only access the analysis of the data rather than the raw information.

5.3.1.5 Knowledge

It is important to mention that all the schools in Saudi Arabia are required to follow the MOE curricula and textbooks are provided by the MOE for all schools. These textbooks include lesson plans, instructions for teaching and the subjects that should be taught. Both Public and Tatweer schools cannot add extra curricula, however, the teachers can add some extra activities. As Headteacher 1 from the Tatweer school indicated, *“we do not have special curricula for the Tatweer school and we have to follow the national curricula from the MOE with no right to increase or change any subjects”*.

In contrast the Headteacher 3 from the private school confirmed that:

the new policy brings a positive impact especially on curriculum, the new curricula comes from the MOE and it is better than the previous one. We have to follow the national curricula from the MOE, but we can increase the lessons and give the students extra activities, for example we launched new curricula to teach students about the National Assessment Test (QIYAS) and (GAT).

5.3.1.6 Admissions

As part of efforts to move towards a more decentralised system, schools should have more power over admissions. In the current system in Saudi Arabia, even after the new policy, schools have no right to set specific criteria for accepting students and all students come directly from the nearest schools. The headteacher cannot reject any student unless the school has no place available. This is the current situation in the government schools: Tatweer and public.

Chapter 5

Also, the student's admission process goes through the NOOR system (by parents) first, then the headteachers receive the student's documents. Headteacher 1 indicated that the current centralised system is still gave authority regarding admissions rests to the DOE and not the school. Additionally, this headteacher perceived that this system impacted school performance outcomes, because low achieving students were sent to his school. The school that worked under the Tatweer department viewed themselves as of a 'higher standard' than other public schools, and felt that low achieving students were not capable of meeting Tatweer expectations, so should be placed elsewhere:

Tatweer schools should select their students based upon their previous achievement and the current system of admissions sends us high and low achieving students, which prevents our improvement. Low achieving students cannot reach the Tatweer standard or the standard of the new subject-based curriculum (Headteacher 1, Tatweer).

However, the situation in the private school was different as the school has their own admissions criteria. The students first complete a test and when they pass, they have an interview and only those who pass both can be accepted by the school.

In summary, more control over admissions has not yet reached the Tatweer and the public schools. Given the remark by the Tatweer headteacher,, it seems that there is a danger of a more explicit 'tiered' system with low achieving pupils being clustered into the same schools, illustrating such control be released by the centre.

5.3.1.7 Hiring\ firing teachers and staff

Hiring and firing teachers and staff is a central element in the decentralization document. All headteachers wish this issue to be in the policy in the long term, as they describe it, so that a school can become like the Ministry. Headteacher 1 set out the shortcomings:

The change that I want to see in the future policy is a fully independent school including the ability to hire and fire staff and teachers. The current system is not suitable for implementing decentralization. The DOE moves teachers with no consultation with headteachers and they send us new teachers with no voice for us to select who is appropriate. Sometimes the DOE send us teachers who are not qualified enough or not willing to work hard to improve the Tatweer school and they just come to our school because it is near their home and the disappointing thing is that you cannot do anything with them.

Moreover, the headteacher cannot employ anyone in the public schools, even if he/she suffers from a shortage of staff. Headteacher 1 from the Tatweer school pointed out his concern over senior management support; or more accurately, a lack of it:

while the policy gives us much power, we receive some restrictions from the DOE or MOE to control our actions. As an example of that, the new policy indicates that headteachers should work with three deputies: a deputy for student affairs, a deputy for teacher affairs and a deputy for education affairs. However, I have only one deputy to work in all of three sections.

In this situation the headteacher cannot employ a new deputy or assistant to cover the work of two deputies and this can also be linked to the workload of headteachers. In the private school, headteachers can practice this function through the School Council. Headteacher 3 indicated that in the private school he can hire/fire teachers through School Council, while in the public school they are still hiring from the MOE and headteachers have no right to choose among those teachers available. Headteacher 1 from the Tatweer school stated his vision, *“this was the main element of headteacher strength in private schools, and I wish for public and Tatweer schools”*, to have this freedom to make decisions about staffing. This needs to be considered for the future to improve the current education policy.

5.3.1.8 School time

In the new management policy (in numbers 5, 6, 7 and 29), the headteacher can now cancel or delay the program of morning line-up and increase the length of some student studies to a maximum of one hour when needed. Headteachers 1 and 2 did not refer to any efforts to provide lower achieving students with extra lessons, compared with headteacher 3 who provides extra lessons for the whole school in preparation for the National Exam (Qiyas) and General Aptitude Test (GAT).

As already indicated, the curriculum is under the control of the MOE and each subject comes with a specific timetable and textbooks that schools and teachers in the classroom must follow. This statement was confirmed by all the headteachers. Indeed headteacher 2 indicated that they can cancel a lesson only with permission from the DOE, while headteacher 3 indicated that a private school can add lessons after the school day in order to prepare students for Qiyas and (GAT), (two tests that are run by the National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education).

School time management is still perceived as being centrally controlled by the DOE. The school still cannot close even if the policy allows headteachers to do so. One example will be explained in the section; Conflict in implementing the policy.

5.3.1.9 Student assessment

The new management policy indicates that headteachers can allow teachers to reassess some students if they fail. Also, there is no national exam for students, which was stopped several years ago. Currently all schools set their own exams for their students. However, to ensure the quality of learning that students receive, the government introduced two tests that all students who are looking to progress to universities should take, Qiyas: SAAT and GAT exams, which are controlled by the National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education (NCFIHE, 2015). Both headteachers 1 and 2 indicated several methods of assessing students based on: *“using portfolios, team projects and research and there is no national or comprehensive exam from the MOE”* (Headteacher 1, Tatweer school).

However, headteacher 3 added that: *“we have special permission to provide our students with some extra training, one lesson each day after school on the National Assessment Test (QIYAS) and (GAT)”*.

5.3.1.10 Supplying resources

The headteachers in the public schools still consider the supply of resources for their school as a centralised issue within the DOE, but this is not the case in the private school. Both headteachers (Tatweer and public school) in the interviews confirmed that most of the equipment in the school still comes from the DOE, but Tatweer schools have their own sub-department (Tatweer department), which response to their need will less bureaucracy. This causes significant delays in getting these resources from the DOE. Headteacher 2 provided one solution, to give schools sufficient budget to pay for their needs, with no need to refer to the DOE. In some extreme cases, headteachers buy resources from their own money or ask teachers to make small donations to meet their urgent requirements and students' learning needs (Headteacher 2 from a public school).

5.3.1.11 School budget

According to two headteachers (Tatweer and Public schools), school budget comes from two sources; the executive budget, which is provided by the MOE through the DOE, and second, by renting the school canteen to a private company. Tatweer and Public schools cannot ask parents or students for any financial support. However, in Private schools, the budget comes from three sources; mainly parents (tuition fee), renting the school canteen to a private company and the MOE support.

Headteacher 2 stated that; *“the school budget is not enough at all, it does not cover the cleaner’s salary”*. Researcher: can you give it a ranking where 1 is very limited and 10 is more than enough? *“I think it is just 1 out of 10”*. Researcher: How do you cover the difference? *“We ask the teachers to donate to the school and we cannot ask parents to do that”*.

School budget is one of the themes that emerged many times during the interviews. Headteachers referred to the limitations of the budget for their schools and what they deemed to be its impact on; school performance, limiting training courses in the school, supplying resources, student activities, teaching materials and general school maintenance.

5.3.1.12 Conflict in implementing the policy: moving teachers, closing schools and activities

Data from the interviews describe persisting conflict between headteachers and the DOE in applying the policy. Headteachers in the interviews provide several examples of this problem. While the policy refers to the release of some power or functions to the headteacher or the School Council, the DOE prevents the action of these powers. As the first example, the policy indicates that (in number 44, see Appendix B) a headteacher can transfer teachers who are achieving less than 85% of annual assessment to other schools. These powers cannot yet be held by a headteacher, as the DOE has not yet allowed this. Headteacher 1 from the Tatweer school confirmed:

we can only send a report about those teachers who achieve less to the DOE and they take the decision about whether to transfer them, as we do not know the other schools’ needs, we wish to do that in the future, when the school becomes like the MOE.

The second example involves closing schools when there is dangerous weather. The policy allows headteachers to close schools in emergency cases for a maximum of one day and then they must inform the DOE (see Appendix B, number 13). All headteachers in the interviews indicated that there was one day where the weather was dangerous in their view and most of the schools in Medina were closed. However, the DOE issued a letter reproaching them and sent a reminder that headteachers must gain permission from the DOE and not take this decision at school-level. Only the DOE can decide if the weather is dangerous or not for the students.

The third example involves running activities in the school. While the policy allows headteachers to arrange these activities, such as inviting a scholar to give a lecture to students, the DOE and the MOE subsequently issued a letter in 2013 banning this activity.

5.3.1.13 Headteacher selection and preparation

From the point of view of the headteachers, only the MOE has the right to employ headteachers and staff in the education system, while firing them and moving them to other schools is the DOE's responsibility. School Council, parents and the local community are all absent from these decisions. Headteacher 2 from the public school stated that;

One of the major obstacles to implementing decentralisation is the way of choosing headteachers. We need criteria to select school leaders such as intellectual and personal characteristics and sufficient academic skills. Now there are some exams and interviews you need to pass to be a headteacher, but it depends on your relationship.

The second response was from Headteacher 3, who confirmed that:

the current system of choosing headteachers depends upon favouritism and nepotism and unfortunately some of those chosen are not suitable to be headteachers.

5.3.1.14 Maintaining the relationship between schools and the DOE

Several functions in the new policy require schools to refer to or inform the DOE before or after taking action. The DOE has controlled most of the decision making in schools for a considerable amount of time and schools rely upon the DOE to provide all resources. Headteacher 1 from the Tatweer school confirmed:

Generally speaking, we always need the DOE. We need the DOE to produce books, school equipment, chairs, tables and money, but, for technical decisions or daily decisions we don't need to refer to them.

Supervisors from the DOE visit schools regularly to ensure that everything is going well. Communication between schools and the DOE takes a variety of forms, depending on the situation, such as requests by post, phone or online through a portal on the DOE website. Findings suggest that there is improved communication between headteachers and the DOE, but not in the speed of decision-making by the DOE. Headteacher 1 from the Tatweer school explained:

in recent years the DOE have used technology in their communication with schools, they built a new website to communicate with schools quickly and easily, that solved the postal problem, but not the delay in their response or supplying resources.

Headteacher 2 from the public school indicated that there was a lack of emotional support from supervisors at the DOE and a lack of financial support for headteachers. He also confirmed "the

salary of a headteacher is similar to that of a teacher so that is the reason for teachers' unwillingness to become a headteacher. We need more financial incentives".

5.3.1.15 Policy plus: Strengthening leadership support

All the headteachers concluded that, in theory the new policy had the potential to change positively: school organization, security and safety, decisions within school council and communication with parents. Changing in school organization by increasing the number of deputies to three and making their role in the school more explicit, in particular supporting school planning and improvement. These new positions should include: a deputy for student affairs, a deputy for teacher affairs and a deputy for educational affairs. In practice, ironically Headteacher 2 from the public school claimed that, *"the DOE had not yet provided three deputies, instead only sending one"*.

In addition to senior leadership, headteachers spoke of the accountability benefit of allowing headteachers to control some aspects previously owned by the DOE, including:

deductions from a teacher's salary when they are absent from school, an oral or written warning, annual assessment arranged by the headteacher and a supervisor from the DOE, (Headteacher 1, Tatweer school).

The headteacher can now write a report and send it to the DOE, indicating what they are deducting from the teacher's salary.

Security and safety has become a vital issue for schools in KSA. In recent years, there have been some accidents and the media have got hold of these. In one example, according to the Al-Madina newspaper, (2012), in Medina city one student was killed under a loader's tyres while playing football with his classmates. As the school did not have a playground area, pupils played in the road in front of the school.

In that regard, one question for all headteachers is whether there have been improvements in security and safety as a result of the policy. All headteachers indicated that there was improved attention to security and to raising awareness among school staff, students and parents. Headteacher 2 from the public school provided this statement:

there is an increasing awareness of security and safety in schools, and the DOE name one teacher to be responsible for school safety, and give him/her some training and criteria to work with. Then, we have safety training for all school staff and students and emergency evacuation drill to show students the assembly points.

Chapter 5

Headteacher 1 from the Tatweer school stated how they had responded to safety and security:

we allocated part of our school budget to increase safety in the school, for example we put in an alarm system, a smoke detector, an assembly point, CCTV and emergency exit doors.

Moreover, Headteacher 3 from the private school indicated that the school already had alarm systems, smoke detectors and an assembly point and were training school staff how to act in emergencies.

The new management policy provides guidelines for headteachers to operate a school council or board. School Council consists of the headteacher, deputies, regular class teachers, parents, students and members of the local community.

In the first case, headteacher 1 from the Tatweer school, indicated that the process of decision making is under taken in several ways, in some instances the headteacher takes the decision alone if urgent, some decisions are made through a small council or the entire School Council, such as reviewing the school annual plan. Regarding parents' involvement in school decision-making, Headteacher 1 from the Tatweer school explained what appeared to be some variation on the use of a council:

Always, we make our decisions through small school council. Administrative staff and expert teachers are normally involved, no parents or students are involved in the council. This is not the general School Council which runs twice a year, this is an informal council to work effectively and to respond to school needs quickly.

In the second case, Headteacher 2 from the public school indicated that they mostly take decisions without parents, due to the absence of school meetings, and the school council consists of administrators and teachers. He stated that;

The process of decision-making within our school is through our excellent teamwork, mostly teachers and parents, but parents do not attend our meetings regularly, so we take decisions without them sometimes.

In the third case, Headteacher 3 from the private school stated how they make decisions within their school through the council and he argued that delegation is one benefit of the new management policy;

We can argue that centralisation should be dead. One benefit of implementing decentralisation is changing the culture within school, for example now I delegate most of

the decisions to deputies. We make decisions through a small council after consulting with deputies and teachers and this school council runs regularly, about every two weeks.

Also, he provided more details about other school councils in this quotation:

The main School Council members are; the head teacher, two deputies, 5 teachers, 5 parents. We normally run one meeting every month. We have other councils for students, a consulting council (head teacher, deputies, student advisors and 10 students from each grade as representatives to tell us about their needs, problems and involvement in arranging activities.

For the purposes of communication with parents, all headteachers used three channels; SIM messages, official letters and the website. While one headteacher indicated the method most preferred by parents is 'word of mouth'. Headteacher 3 indicated that: *"Most of the parents come to school in person to visit us and ask about their children, they prefer to communicate directly"*. Headteacher 1 from the Tatweer school discussed communication in his school:

The school communicates with parent and the local community through SIM messages (through mobile) and sometimes through sending letters to the parents if needed. We also have a website to communicate with them and students use it to register for their modules and subjects.

Moreover, he indicated that the School Council was one of the positive impacts of the policy. The school operates the council twice a year, once in each term. The aim is to involve parents in school decision-making. This is a quote from Headteacher 2 from the public school:

Yes, there is an impact of the new management policy, especially on parents, we run the School Council twice a year and try to involve parents in school decision making. We are also aiming to open the school to our local community and increase the school's administrative power, which will improve the school outcomes either in terms of student academic outcomes or in terms of the strength of the school-community relationship.

Moreover, the DOE gave some schools, which have suitable buildings, funds to run evening social clubs for parents and students and the local community and these are run through the school administration. These clubs open in the evening from 5 pm to 8 pm and focus on sport and building relationships with parents. These clubs are government funded and so there are no fees for parents and students to join them.

5.3.2 Supervisor interview findings

This section focuses on the themes that emerged from the interviews with supervisors. The findings from six interviews undertaken with supervisors will be presented. For some, movement towards decentralisation was seen as bringing many benefits to the educational process. Within an inverted-pyramid, these supervisors claimed that schools would have greater responsibility for planning and more power to determine policy than previously with the MOE or the DOE. Specifically, Supervisor 2 indicated that the benefits were that headteachers had been given trust and the opportunity to develop their skills as supervisors. Not all supervisors were as enthusiastic as this. Supervisor 3 had a different view about the policy, saying, *“most the powers are not applicable, due to the conflict of different groups’ interests. For example, the DOE want to control most of the power and the MOE has centralised the employment process, which means that the headteacher cannot practice this function”*.

A similar view was put forward by Supervisor 6, who mentioned that the authority which is passed to headteachers in the new policy was still held by the DOE. He stated that:

I think headteachers’ authority is not real, for example if there’s a problem in the school with some teachers; the school’s headteacher isn’t able to do anything and he needs to refer this to the DOE - through teachers affairs, so, where is his authority then?

In addition to some inconsistency over their views of the policy, supervisors were critical of this aspect of the current system, which they deemed to be very standardised. The lack of incentive and rewards for those who were working hard as leaders was equated with others who did not. This standardised system was therefore not sufficient for decentralisation, as the MOE require headteachers to invest considerable time managing their schools to receive the same salary as teachers.

5.3.2.1 Need for general educational reform

All supervisors tended to want to support reform to the current system and viewed the new management policy took a different approach such as more comprehensive change, independence for schools and privatization. Supervisor 2 explained, *“we need a comprehensive change either in technical management, administration management or finance. Also, we want a reduction in the control of the DOE”*

Supervisor 4 indicated the need for the government to reshape the structure of managing public schools through privatization. He said,

we need to reform the current system of educators' salaries in the new sector to make it similar to the Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu, We need a new system for hiring\ firing teachers and paying salaries, as the new policy does not allow headteachers to hire/fire teachers and staff, while allocating teachers is controlled by the DOE. The headteacher cannot access the school's needs and it is impossible to move lower achieving teachers to other schools, as this is not fair for the other school.

At the school level, the current system of selecting headteachers was placed under some scrutiny. Supervisor 2 indicated that *“the selection process for headteachers is missing some types of teacher, as some groups of teachers cannot compete with others, for example, now we have shortage in Maths and Science teachers and we cannot allow them to leave teaching to become headteachers, as we cannot replace them”*. Supervisor 4 stated *“there is a need to choose good leaders in order to implement decentralisation, but with the current system it seems to be a challenge. Moreover, after selecting headteachers, we need to provide them with intensive training”*.

Supervisors also made mention of necessary reforms to the education system and specifically to the role of the DOE. All supervisors provided their opinion about the role of the DOE. A collection of these opinions is presented as follows; first, the DOE needs to be independent in terms of legislating (to meet local needs) under the umbrella of the MOE, in order to implement a decentralised system. In the current system the DOE follows the MOE, which centralises several processes such as hiring/firing teachers. Second, the DOE should provide guidelines related to accountability, e.g. rewarding outstanding employees and addressing poorer employees. A third task is to decrease the influence of the DOE on school administration and give schools greater freedom to make decisions. Fourth, an accreditation system needs to be developed in order to give higher achieving schools formal certificates based upon their results. Fifth, the system of leader preparation and continued professional development needs improvement and finally to bureaucracy needs reducing and flexible working opportunities should be provided.

In terms of the role of the DOE in applying the new policy, supervisors 3, 4, and 6 indicted that; the DOE needed to build a national school executive plan and DOE centres needed to provide better training programmes and workshops for headteachers and teachers, which emphasise the implementation of the new policy and encourages headteachers to implement this guidance related to school reorganisation effectively.

As a further example of a large agreement at this level of managements, four supervisors indicated that there were changes following the implementation of the new policy, however two countered these claims saying they had noticed little change. Those who noticed the changes provided some

Chapter 5

examples; headteachers now (after the new management policy) have a new approach to leading schools, which is “management by objectives” (Supervisor 1). Moreover, Supervisor 2 specified, *“the transformation from school managers to school leaders, gives the school headteacher authority to establish a school plan, objectives and self-evaluation”*.

Two supervisors (4 and 6); indicated that they had not noticed any change after implementation of the new management policy. They believed the new policy had not impacted the education system. Supervisor 6 said;

I am an honest man, the new policy did not bring much change, it is only in the papers and propaganda, but in term of students and schoolwork nothing has been improved, maybe something has improved that I do not know about.

Questions focused on specific aspects of school administration. All but one supervisor (6) stated that there were changes in school organisation, such as work being distributed among deputies and increasing the number of deputies per school. The remaining supervisor was adamant that little if any change had occurred and stated, *“I notice through my work as a supervisor that some leaders are depressed with lack of motivation to improve their school or the way of their work”*.

In terms of the question of the impact of the new policy on teachers in the classroom, all supervisors said that the new policy had impacted positively on teachers and encouraged them to use new methods for teaching students and to use technology, as they noticed when visiting schools (teaching and classroom facilities).

In terms of student outcomes, four of the supervisors said that the new policy had made a positive impact on student outcomes. The remaining two indicated that the new policy had not yet improved student outcomes. One such supervisor indicated, *“even when we can see some improvements, we cannot link them with the new policy”* (Supervisor 1).

On a more positive note, the positive impact of the policy was seen as building relationships between schools, parents and local communities. Supervisor 6 stated, *“some schools have established parent-teacher associations and that has worked so far, but we need to emphasise this more, to strengthen this relationship”*.

In summary, the benefits of the new policy were described by the supervisors as follows: (1) increased trust between headteachers and the DOE, (2) more freedom and flexibility to take some decisions at school level, and (3) improved work among schools. In response to a question about the implementation of decentralisation, one supervisor indicated that:

There are some school issues about management; the headteacher is the best person to know what's best for the school, but I think they need more training.

5.3.3 Physical and online evidence; benefits and challenges

5.3.3.1 Findings from observations

The aim of using these methods was to identify potential differences between schools from the researcher's point of view as an observer and to substantiate when or where the school staff mentions developments in their schools relative to the new management policy. The observations focused on rooms; buildings, outdoor spaces and displays and no images were taken of pupils or staff.

From my observations and field notes, I noticed that in the public school parents appeared more welcome and were visiting school regularly, more than at the Tatweer or private school. The reason might be because the deputy's office was next to the school door. The office was large (about 40 square meters) with eight armchairs and with free Arabic coffee, tea and dates. This welcoming and open environment is part of the Arabic culture, in which you are expected to provide these facilities for visitors. I noticed a friendly relationship between parents and school staff. I saw several conversations between parents and teachers about pupils' achievement, plus chats about political, religious and social topics.

In the Tatweer school, the nearest office to the school door is the headteacher's office, which was closed most of the time during my visit. The school secretary was based at the entrance to arrange meetings with the headteacher. This might be a barrier for parents trying to contact the headteacher and staff directly. I observed no specific place for parents to meet or chat. The staff room was on the third floor, which is not easy to access as there was no elevator.

In the private school, the headteacher's office was small (about 10 square meters) with only two chairs in it (which is unusual for the office of a headteacher in Saudi Arabia). I did not sense a friendly relationship between parents and staff that was present in the public school.

Across the three schools, the school day starts at 7 am, and usually finishes at 1:30 pm, although on some days it is 2 pm. The only difference is that the private school added one lesson in order to prepare students for Qiyas and (GAT), two tests that are run by the National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education. The policy gives schools freedom to do so.

Chapter 5

All three schools had emergency exits and fire extinguishers. Only the public school had a clearly marked assembly point and this school had trained the students to leave the school as part of its safety policy.

In the Tatweer school and the public school, the number of students in each class was about 30 to 35. Classrooms were generally large. In the private school the number was about 25 as the classrooms were smaller.

Generally, the size of this room was bigger in the Tatweer and public schools compared with the private school, which seemed to me smaller and quite messy. Before visiting the private school for the first time, I was expecting the opposite, as this school is one of the most expensive (in terms of student tuition fees) and popular schools in the region where the research was undertaken.

The staff were welcoming in all three schools, but the main difference is the nationality of staff. In the Tatweer and the public school all the staff members are Saudi, while in the private school there was a mixture of staff members, with more than half from Egypt or Jordan (which is normal in all private schools).

5.3.3.2 Findings from photographs; Image capture and online evidence

During my observations, I searched for evidence of schools appearing to take advantage of the increased autonomy in the new policy, be this physical, through publicity or through online sources. In this section, the researcher presents the findings from the images and from accessing the respective school websites. Images were captured with permission from headteachers.



Figure 5 The staffroom in a Tatweer School

Above is a figure (6) of the staffroom in a Tatweer School. The staffroom is luxuriously furnished compared with other schools I visited.

In all the headteacher interviews, they mentioned that the 'school website' was a way of communicating with students, parents, the local community and the general public or was a method of improving teaching styles and increasing the use of student time at home, through using a MOOC. I visited all three websites for the three case study schools and found the following, during my period of fieldwork. I was especially looking for the ways in which the schools were engaging with parents, pupils and the local community.

The private school website was designed well compared with the websites of the Tatweer and public schools. The content included; the strategic plan for the school published on the website-homepage (see Figure 7).

the first place by allowing them to have a representative from each year through election. The text on the site states that students have the right to practice democracy, organise their activities and participate in the Student Consulting Council, or 'School Parliament' (see also Figure 9). In contrast, the Public and Tatweer schools do not yet present such images or have any evidence of such advanced organisation on their website.



Figure 8 Student Consulting Council in a private school

Using technology is vital for the private school to attract more students and the website indicated that all the students use laptops or ipads to access lessons. Also, the school claims, on the website, that they have several labs for Maths, Science, English and Computer Studies, which was also recorded in my observation. During my observations, I felt that there was a greater emphasis on using technology in the private school, compared with the public and Tatweer schools. This can be linked to the autonomy of the school budget, which allow schools to spend with less control and oversight from the central ministry.



Figure 9 Using technology in private school

Figure (10) presents students using technology on the private school website. Also, on the front page there is a poll concerning parents' levels of satisfaction and offering online communication between school administrators and parents. Students can communicate with teachers and submit their homework through the portal on the website. Each student and teacher has their own account and teachers can provide feedback and use Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) to teach. I could not access this part of the website as a visitor, but this was confirmed by the headteacher in the interview with him.

This website was launched two years ago and when I visited this website, most of the links were not working or had no content inside them, for example; see image (11).

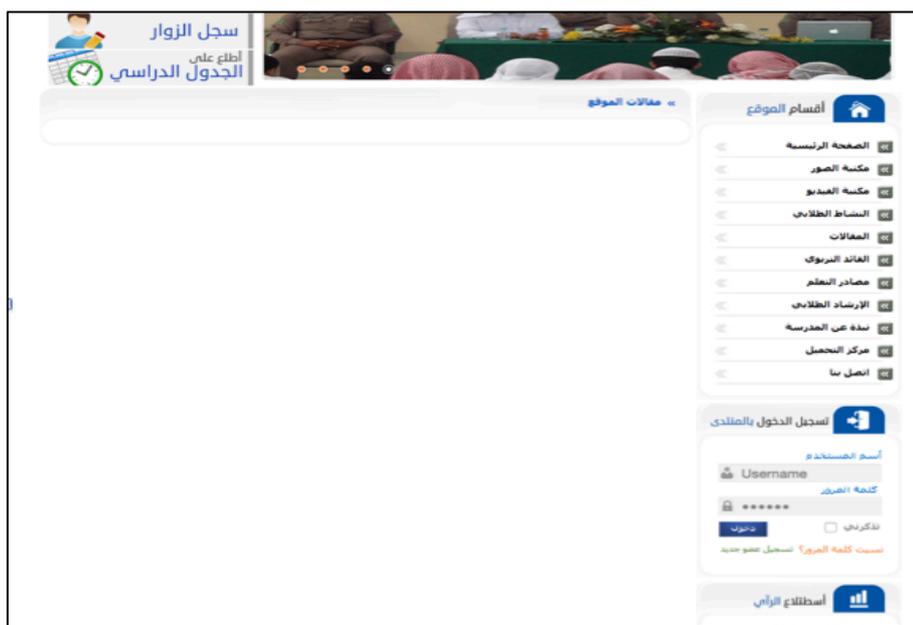


Figure 10 Homepage of a Tatweer school website

Figure (11) presenting the homepage of a Tatweer school website, which has no content on its links. In the right hand menu is the website map, including home page, gallery, student activities, articles, learning resources and at the bottom, a poll for students about the website and school services.

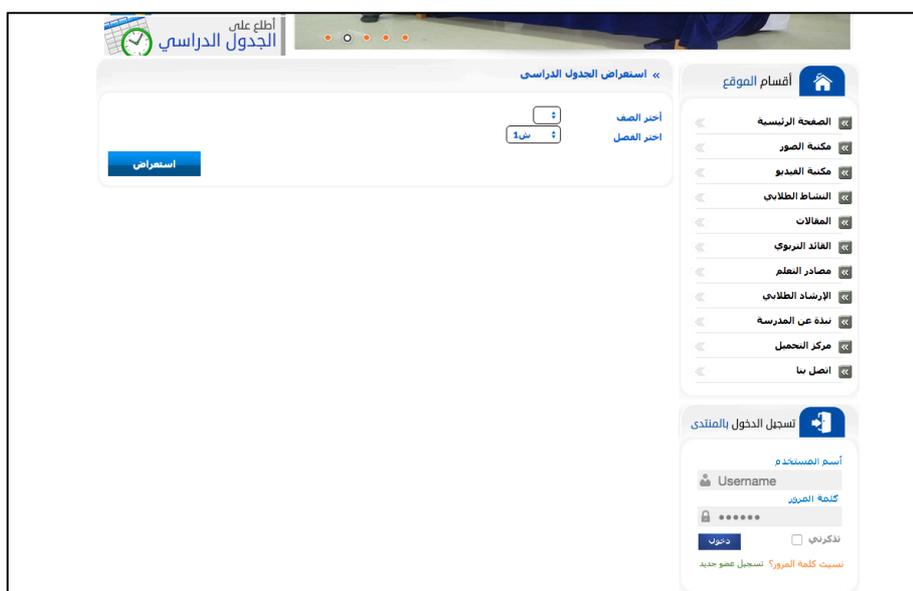


Figure 11 Timetable of a Tatweer school

Figure (12) shows a page from the Tatweer school website. The title of the page is 'School Timetable', but it is not available on the website. Moreover, the page for 'Student-Learning Resources' was empty, (see Figure (13)).

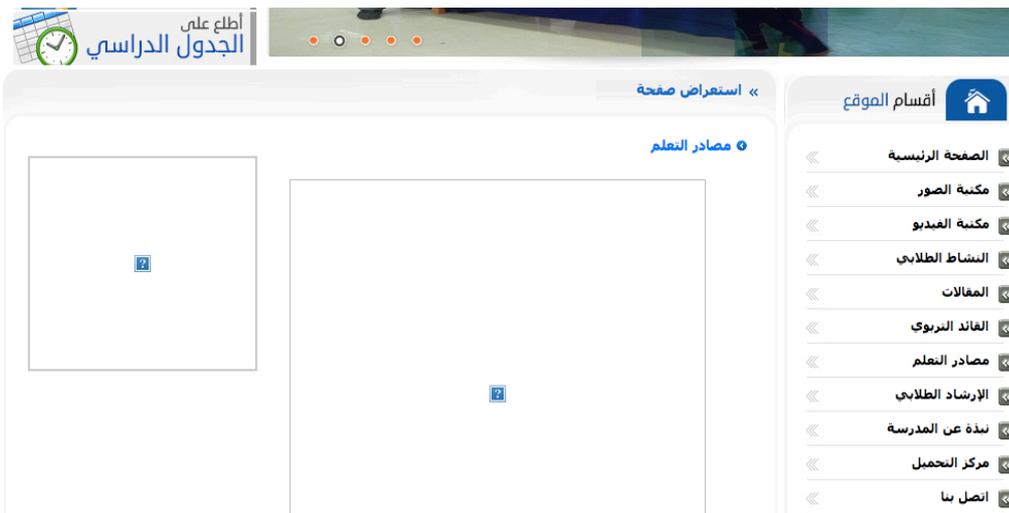


Figure 12 Student-Learning Resources (Tatweer school)

In the next image (Figure 14) the title is ‘Student Activities’, but it only presents a ‘definition’, there is no detail about what kind of student activities occur in the school.



Figure 13 Student activities

For the duration of my fieldwork the public school website was down, so I was not able to determine any content as I could access it, see Figure (15).

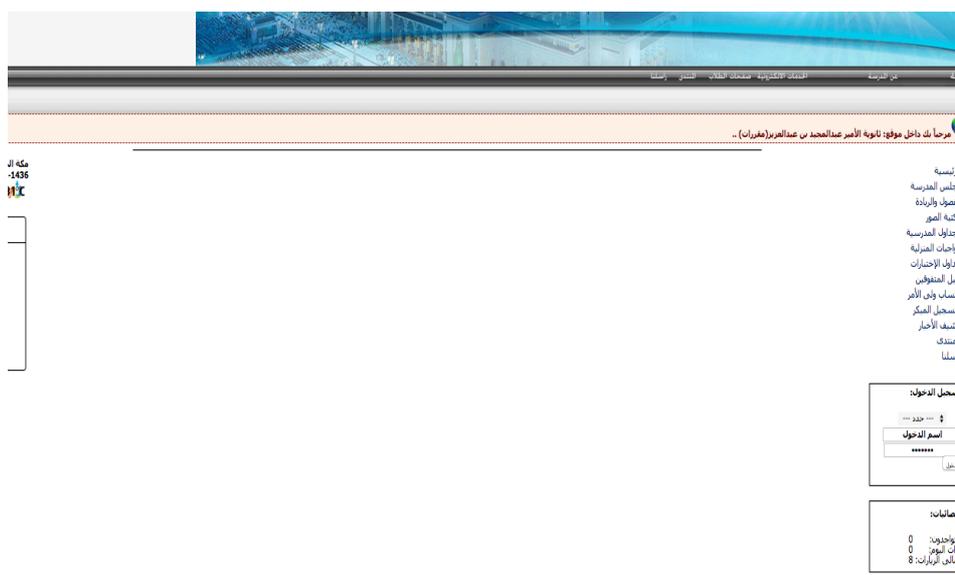


Figure 14 Homepage of a public school website

However, the school had a Facebook page and it shows some of the activities that were launched at the social club. These activities included gym exercise such as Figure (16), football and outdoor activities. Images demonstrate that the school involve parents and the local community with students and school staff at the evening in a safe and friendly environment.



Figure 15 Old man using the public school gym

A fitness club/gym building had been added to the school for the use of the community and I did discover evidence of community member using it (see Figure 16).



Figure 16 An agreement between a Tatweer school and the Tatweer Department

Figure (17) shows the agreement between the National Tatweer Program (Tatweer Department) and one of the Tatweer schools. This agreement was on display at the entrance to the school. On the other hand, the other two schools (public and private) did not have such agreement on display. It shows the aim, which is to improve the school's leadership and performance. It illustrates the relative responsibilities for each part of the agreement and the plan to improve this school in light of the new management policy at issue in this thesis. Before the inception of the 2010/11 policy, no school would have displayed any such agreement.

I undertook some observations within open spaces. In all three schools there had been an increase in school activities as a result of new facilities granted through the policy document particularly in the public and Tatweer schools which had social clubs. In the next two figures (18 and 19) the playground/football field and the building are evidence of the social clubs supported by the DOE and the schools benefit from their use in the mornings and in the evenings. Furthermore, they are open for parents and local people to use under the supervision of the headteacher and some teachers and I did witness this during my fieldwork.



Figure 17 Football field at a Tatweer school



Figure 18 The newly built Social Club at a Tatweer school

As a function of the new management policy, a school can use some of its budget to open new labs, resource centres and new classrooms. Figure (20) was taken in the Tatweer School, which had established this resource centre and my notes refer to it as new and not complete with the

Chapter 5

bookshelves and some computers inside. The school uses this Resource Centre for training students and staff. All teachers are able to use this centre as stated by the headteacher.



Figure 19 Resource Centre at a Tatweer school



Figure 20 Computer lab at a public school

During my observation at the public school, I captured the above image (Figure 21) of a computer lab that had been developed through budget spending not previously permitted before the 2010/11 policy.



Figure 21 Resource Centre at a public school

The above image (Figure 22) captures the new Resource Centre at the public school funded through the school budget for the hardware, software, furniture and fittings, as evident in figures 23 and 24.



Figure 22 Self-study space in the Resource Centre at a public school



Figure 23 Computer section in the Resource Centre at a public school



Figure 24 Overhead-projector at all three types of school

My field work indicates that all three schools had invested in overhead projectors to be used during teaching (see Figure 25).



Figure 25 Smart-board at all three types of school

In addition to the projectors, white/smart boards had been purchased by all schools free from central authorisation (Figure 26).



Figure 26 Using TV to present (school news, events, activities etc.)

I noticed that all three schools had a TV similar to the above (Figure 27), but the Tatweer school had a greater number of these. These are now freely funded from the executive school budget.



Figure 27 Traditional shop at a private school

While in the private school I was invited to attend the 'traditional shop' (Figure 28 and 29). The headteacher uses the school hall to build these small shops and rents them to the students for three school days. Each shop costs about £35 and the students can sell traditional food to other students and parents. The aim is to develop the students' business skills by allowing them to market their food and items, as the headteacher stated. I observed this event and most of the students I asked were excited about it.



Figure 28 Traditional shop at a private school

5.3.4 Summary

The new management policy allows headteachers to practice some functions of decentralisation, and schools are implementing these functions differently. During my observations, the Tatweer school had less engagement with parents compared with the public school, which had an open environment and a friendly relationship with parents where they were able to meet teachers and school staff at the deputy's office with Arabic coffee and dates, which is part of Arabic culture for guests. The private school use their school budget to provide students with high quality technology and to communicate with students and parents through the school's website, which was not the case in the public and Tatweer schools.

In terms of the school council, the private school has achieved an advanced level of engagement with parents and students in a democratic culture, compared with the public and Tatweer schools which have invested far less in school councils and cancelled them due to their workload and lack of parental engagement. In contrast, the Tatweer and public schools used their funding from the DOE in different ways through (1) improving their resource centres, smart boards and computer labs; (2) using school buildings to open social clubs, which allowed parents and the local community to engage with school staff in the evenings. I observed these clubs and found that the schools provide a safe and friendly environment for their students and parents. Moreover, the private school used the school hall to create a new experience for students by allowing them to work for three days in traditional shops, which is something that I consider to be very new in Saudi schools.

5.4 SECTION THREE

In this section, the researcher will present the findings from the interviews with teachers and deputies and from the teacher questionnaires to address the following question: How do deputies and classroom teachers assess the implementation of the new decentralisation policy?

5.4.1 Teacher interview findings

5.4.1.1 Implementation of decentralisation: 'no real change'

Teachers indicated they were infrequently involved in decisions in schools. In the next section, teachers present different views about their involvement in school decision making. Teacher 2 from the public school provides a clear statement about lack of decentralisation, he said;

There is no decentralisation yet, the curriculum is centralised, I cannot add to the student anything, which is not in the textbook. The second element of centralisation is that the

headteacher cannot close the school, for example, when we had heavy rain this year and it was dangerous for students and staff. The third element is that teachers are not involved in school decision making or drawing up school plans. The headteacher selects a group, mostly his friends and they put together the school plan.

Moreover, Teacher 1 from the Tatweer school indicated that *“teachers are less involved in school decision making. The headteacher works with his selected group and if the decisions relate to teachers, he ask us for our opinion”*. Also, Teacher 6 from the private school evaluated the new management policy, *“no big change in the working process or decision making, we are still centralised and the new policy did not affect daily work”* also, he clarified this by saying *“most of the school decisions go back to the main company in Riyadh”*.

5.4.1.2 Changing after the new policy

The change after implementation of the new policy was seen as limited, as Teacher 1 from the Tatweer school indicated;

There is no real change in the education system even after the new management, it is just in the media. The whole system in the government is centralised and the MOE is centralised, so how can the school as a small unit change? It is important to change the culture and think about how schools should be managed, by giving trust to well educated people to work independently.

This perceived lack of involvement in some aspects of the implementation of the new policy, and limited success in changing the education system was further mentioned.

There is no big change; teachers are not involved in the school plan, curriculum, organisation or budget. The school has not published the plan for all teachers, students and parents (Teacher 2: Public school).

Teacher 5 from the Tatweer school indicated that, in the school administration and organisation;

the change was limited and there is the same way of dealing with teachers. Teachers' voices are not significant in school decision making. The headteacher works with his selected friends (close friends).

Teacher 3 from the private school indicated that teachers were ready to take part in decision making and to work alongside the headteacher in the school councils, but their power was limited and they had no involvement in issues relating to school finance and spending.

Positive changes were mentioned, such as changes in the curriculum, an emphasis on the role of school boards, more societies and clubs, better school facilities, a greater number of deputies, an executive budget and an increase in school activities. The teachers can participate in the school timetable and change some lessons after arranging them with the school headteacher.

5.4.1.3 Resources supply

In terms of resources, all teachers indicated that they did not notice any significant change. Teacher 2 from the public school spoke of speed of delivery:

we order the resource from our headteacher and he asks the DOE to supply the equipment,, but it takes a long time to arrive at the school. We order small things such as a computer mouse or a keyboard and it takes months to arrive.

This statement was confirmed by Teacher 5 from the Tatweer school;

we ordered data-show projectors from the DOE and they told us if they had some of them in the store, it would take two weeks, but if they had to order them from the MOE it would take several months.

In the private school, the situation was different. Teachers spoke of excellent support from the headteacher when they needed resources or equipment and it took about one or two weeks to arrive at the school. Teacher 6 from the private school detailed that;

I worked in different private schools in Medina, and most of them responded quickly to teachers' needs and supplied resources to the school in one or two weeks, and this school is the best, our headteacher is supportive and invited us to use different sources to deliver a high quality education.

5.4.1.4 School budget

Regarding school budget, teachers from the public and Tatweer schools indicated that it is not enough to cover all the activities and some claim that they pay money to do some activities in schools from their own pockets. Also, they confirmed that they cannot ask parents for donations to the school. However, this is not the case in the private school. Teachers confirmed that the school has sufficient budget, and when they require anything the headteacher supports them. As mentioned in the resources section. Teacher 1 from the Tatweer school stated that *"the school budget is not enough, it is about 30,000 Saudi Riyal, (about £5000), and we cannot ask parents to pay anything to schools"*. Teacher 3 from the private school mentioned that;

this is a private school and we have no right to be involved in the school budget, the headteacher, deputy and budget manager are the responsible people. We just do our lessons and when we need anything we ask them.

5.4.1.5 Teachers' evaluation

In terms of teachers' evaluation, the teachers stated that the procedure for evaluation had not changed after the new policy. Only the headteacher and supervisors are involved. Teacher 1 from the Tatweer school, stated *"I did not notice any change in the evaluation system, the headteacher and supervisor are in charge to do that, no parents or student voices are considered"*. On the other hand, the private school considers parents and students voices in the evaluation. Teacher 3 from the private school illustrated this point:

The headteacher and deputies are responsible for teachers' evaluation and at the end of each year they send a questionnaire to parents and students to evaluate teacher performance. The results of the questionnaire affect our contract renewal.

5.4.1.6 Using technology

Technology was seen as a good way to improve communication between the DOE and schools, as it can help both sides to speed up responses, working with less paper work. However, there were some limitations of employing technology. Teacher 2 from the public school provided this;

The activities and culture committees arranged two activities this year, one involved a community figure coming to our school and providing a lecture for students and the second was a trip to Alrais (a small city 180km away). The DOE has a website and the school has to submit all the details about the event to gain permission. Unfortunately, the date of the events passed and we had not received any response from the DOE. This delay in response caused us to cancel both the event and the trip and frustrated us. On the other hand, the DOE has foreign visitors and they call the school and arrange their visit to our school within two days.

As a function of the policy, use of technology inside the classroom has increased. All teachers indicated that they have in the classroom projectors, smart boards, computers and other technology to facilitate their teaching. This increase was part of the new policy and new curriculum and a result of the new executive budget.

5.4.1.7 CPD for teachers

Teachers in the public school illustrated their needs in some areas such as dealing with new curriculum, teaching instruction and technology. Annually the training plan is sent from the DOE at the beginning of each academic year. According to Teacher 2 from the public school;

the training courses are based on the DOE preferences, not our school preferences and they are not enough for us. Most of training courses do not fit with our timetable in school, so that is why we cannot get much benefit from them.

In the Tatweer school the situation is similar to public schools, with no special training for teachers. Most of programmes provided focus on leadership. Teachers indicated that they did not receive training which was related to the new management policy.

On the other hand, teachers in the private school claimed that they received a high level of training. The training courses were run in school and teachers participated in the preparation for these courses. Training courses run by specialists were through contracts with training centres and in some cases teachers offered training courses for their colleagues. Teacher 3 from the private school elaborated;

we have training programmes constantly, we have a training course almost every week. The topics of training courses are several such as 'Educational materials', 'Educational training courses', 'Dealing with the students', 'Active learning', 'Computer', 'Teaching methods', 'Technology'. In fact, each department has its own team for training. We are divided into teams such as Arabic, Mathematics, English and so on. The teachers constantly ask for what they need and then the headteacher meets their requirements directly.

5.4.2 Interviews with deputies

5.4.2.1 Obstacles to implementing decentralisation

All deputies pointed to some obstacles to implementing decentralisation. These can be summarised as (1) lack of preparation for staff; (2) a centralised culture; (3) limitations of the policy functions; (4) high control from the DOE. These are referred to in the following indicative statements.

Deputy 1 from the Tatweer school offered his view on the issue of training and what he saw as the long-term practice,

it is difficult to implement decentralisation with lack of training and preparation for staff. It needs long-term investment to build a democratic culture among schools and to reduce the centralised system step by step.

While deputy 3 from the public school made reference to four issues in the following account:

there are some reasons such as lack of training and the limits of the new policy itself as the headteacher usually still needs permission from the DOE. Even if the new policy allows us to practice some decision making such as signing a contract with a private company or maintaining the school building, we need to refer the company to the DOE for a signature and they need to give us the permission to do that, we cannot do it alone. Moreover, it part of the reason is lack of support from the supervisors; they work with centralised minds and want to control everything.

In the private school, where according to the deputy, there is some evidence of emerging decentralisation, there seemed to be some release of control from the DOE over the curriculum.

Deputy 4 from the the private school indicated that;

most of our decision making in school no longer needs to have permission from the DOE, but sometimes we still need to consult them, for example, when we changed the school times by adding one lesson after the school day, we asked the DOE officially and they agreed.

5.4.2.2 The impact of the new policy

Deputies from both the Tatweer and public schools felt that the new management policy had led to some changes in school organisation, such as an increase in the number of deputies, which was helping senior staff and headteachers to achieve their goals. Also, Tatweer schools were trying to build school capacity through training for headteachers and deputies (Deputy 1 Tatweer).

On the other hand, Deputy 3 from the public school indicated that:

the impact of the new policy is limited and has not taken root. We do not yet work independently from the DOE and one reason might be that the MOE does not have much experience of democracy and working independently. Also, the shortage of workshop and long-term training programmes is a problem. The current training programmes are only lectures and do not aim to change the leaders' thoughts about their working methods. We need to change the system of selecting headteachers, plus we need to provide pre-service and in-service training. Moreover, there are limited training programmes for deputies and second level managers, the DOE mainly invites us to join their meetings when they launch new programmes, not providing us with specific training programmes.

5.4.2.3 School Council

Deputy 1 stated that the idea of Tatweer schools was to build collaboration between headteachers, administration staff, teachers, parents and students within the School Council. However, at the beginning of the Tatweer Programme the focus was on the whole school plan and school council 'structure work', then the focus shifted to the curriculum, self-evaluation and school environment. In the last few years, Deputy 1 claimed that the school board was inactive, workload and obstacles had prevented meetings and the need for quick decisions impacted the effective work of the School Council.

This statement was confirmed by Deputy 2 (public School), *"the school have to involve parents in the School Council, however the parents in our school did not attend the board, so we cancelled it this year"*. A different picture was evident in the private school, when Deputy 4 indicated that;

The school board is part of the school decision making process, it involves parents and teachers. There is a consulting board for students, but it is mainly focused on activities either in school or outside.

Deputy 3 from the public school discussed the need to involve parents in multiple stages of school organisation, putting them on the school board or allowing them to arrange activities and help school staff if needed. He emphasised that instead;

The school and the DOE need to encourage parents to be part of the school, while in reality parents are not involved in school board and do not contact the school about their activities. The only thing concerning parents is their child's performance and they come to the school if there is a behaviour problem or if we invite them.

Also, he noted the importance of changing views of the school. His opinion was that people see the public sector as belonging to the government;

the bureaucratic culture means less engagement with improvement as it is the DOE's and headteacher's responsibility. Parents and teachers are less engaged with the school board and the general atmosphere is that people are waiting for the top management (MOE and DOE) to improve the school.

5.4.2.4 School budget

School budget forms one part of the new policy and the budget has increased in addition to schools being provided with an 'executive budget', which aims to help them to maintain the building, spend on activities and so on. How this budget is spent depends upon school needs and

Chapter 5

there are specific guidelines from the DOE for the school on how to spend the money. In addition, by the end of each academic term, schools have to submit the budget in order to obtain the funds for the next term. Deputy 1 from the Tatweer school commented on this;

the school budget is used for building maintenance, safety and security, student and teacher rewards, support programmes for lower achieving students, non-classroom activities and buying new equipment for the Physics and Chemistry labs. However, the budget is not enough to cover all the activities that we intend to do. There is an urgent need to increase school budgets.

5.4.3 Teachers' questionnaire

5.4.3.1 Introduction

The questionnaire contains 47 items divided into 11 themes. The findings are presented in three sections;

1. providing a descriptive analysis of each theme, which includes the mean, standard deviation, median, and mode for all three cases (71) responses;
2. presenting the overall frequency and percentage for each theme, for all three cases also;
3. comparing the mean for each school to show which school achieved better results.

5.4.3.2 First section: descriptive analysis (mean, standard deviation, median and mode)

In this section, I present the descriptive analysis (mean, standard deviation, median and mode) for the all themes of the teachers' questionnaire, to offer an overview of the findings (Table 10).

All Schools; 71 participants						
	Themes	Number of questions	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	Mode
1	Power	7	1.49	0.67	1	1
2	Knowledge	4	1.56	0.70	1	1
3	Information	11	1.51	0.67	1	1
4	Rewards	1	1.36	0.59	1	1
5	Leadership	3	1.62	0.65	2	1

6	Resources	3	1.44	0.67	1	1
7	Admission	1	1.53	0.67	1	1
8	Assessment	4	1.44	0.66	1	1
9	Time	1	1.84	0.78	2	1
10	Building	2	1.95	0.81	2	1

Table 10 Findings of descriptive analysis (mean, standard Deviation, median and mode) for the teachers' questionnaire

The first theme (in Table 10) is 'Power' with seven questions; one question (item 8) was excluded as it is multiple choice and will be presented by frequency and percentage. The average mean (M) of this theme is 1.49, which is low, with Standard Deviation (SD) at (0.67), Median (MD) at (1), and Mode (MO) at (1) which reflects (low) as the most common score in the teachers' questionnaire. The second theme is 'Knowledge' with four questions, one question was excluded as it is multiple choices and will be presented in the next section by frequency and percentage. Similar results were found in this theme as follows; (M = 1.56, SD = 0.70, MD = 1, MO = 1), which collectively means that it is rated as 'low' or rare for teachers to influence school decision making in relation to Knowledge. The third theme is 'Information', which had 11 questions. The findings were similar to the first and second themes, as follows; (M = 1.51, SD = 0.67, MD = 1, MO = 1), which again was echoed as low. The fourth theme was 'Rewards', with one question on the Likert scale (low, medium and high) and one question (item 25) which was excluded, as it is a 'yes or no' question, which will be presented in the next section. The findings were as follows; (M = 1.36, SD = 0.59, MD = 1, MO = 1), mostly rated as low and the lowest rated theme.

The fifth theme is 'Leadership', with three questions, and six questions were excluded, as they are 'yes or no' questions, which will be presented later. The findings were as follows; (M = 1.62, SD = 0.65, MD = 2, MO = 1), which mostly rated as low. The sixth theme is 'Resources', with three questions; and the findings were as follows; (M = 1.44, SD = 0.67, MD = 1, MO = 1), which are seen as low. Use of technology was excluded as it is a 'yes or no' question, but will be presented in the findings in the frequency and percentage section. The seventh theme is 'Admission', with only one question and the findings were (M = 1.53, SD = 0.67, MD = 1, MO = 1), which is low. The eighth theme is 'Assessment' with four questions, and the findings were as follows; (M = 1.44, SD = 0.66, MD = 1, MO = 1), which is similar to the previous theme 'Admission'. The ninth theme is 'Time' with one question only, and the findings were as follows; (M = 1.84, SD = 0.78, MD = 2, MO = 1), which can be considered as low also. The last theme is 'Building' with two questions, and the

findings were as follows; (M = 1.95, SD = 0.81, MD = 2, MO = 1), which was the highest rated theme in the teachers' questionnaire.

5.4.3.3 Second section: frequency and percentage findings of all themes

Table (11) shows the teachers' responses from all three schools to the questionnaire theme of 'Power'. The theme of 'Power' is one of the important aims of the new Saudi management policy and features in the introduction of the new policy as follows; "Considering the school's basic level of development and in order to achieve that, the schools need more powers and flexibility in its operations, which will help to achieve its objectives."

1 Power		Low	Medium	High
1	How much influence does the school have on decisions related to curriculum?	35	30	6
		49%	42 %	9%
2	To what extent is the school able to fire/hire teachers?	48	10	13
		68%	14%	18%
3	How much influence does the school have on decisions related to budget?	35	26	10
		49%	37%	14%
4	How much influence do teachers have in decision-making?	42	25	4
		59%	35%	6%
5	How much influence do members of the community (e.g. parents) have in decision making?	49	15	7
		69%	21%	10%
6	How much influence do	47	16	8

	students have in decision making?	66%	23%	11%			
		Limited	Some	Almost all			
7	How many teachers are involved in decision making groups?	46	22	3			
		65%	31%	4%			
		School council	Parents and Teacher Association	Guidance and counselling committee	Financial committee	Other please specify	None
8	How many mechanisms exist for involving people in decision making?	53	22	24	9	1	3
		75%	31%	34%	13%	1%	4%

Table 11 Results of findings from the 'Power' of teachers questionnaire in all three cases

In the teachers' questionnaire, I started with this theme by asking eight questions. The aim of this theme 'Power' is to investigate the perceptions of teachers about school power in relation to curriculum, firinh/hiring teachers, budget, decision-making, involving parents and teachers in school decision-making and finally, the mechanisms of involving people in decision-making.

The results from teachers indicated that there is a clear lack of power in their schools, as the collective low and limited choice options take the high percentage between 49% and 69% from questions 1 to 7. In other words, about half of the teachers who participated in the questionnaire see the level of power as low. This was confirmed by the percentage of teachers' responses in the 'high' category from a minimum of 4% to the maximum of 18%. In the main, the mean of this theme 'Power' is 1.49, which is low and the mode was reported as 1 which further confirms its low rating.

The first item of this theme refers to the level of school influence upon decisions related to curriculum and about the half of the teachers believed this to be low in their school, with only 9% of teachers rating this as 'high'.

Chapter 5

Data related to the curriculum is substantiated by the headteacher interviews, where they indicated the high level of centralisation related to the curriculum and noted that schools have very limited power to change or develop the curriculum.

For the second item, teachers see the school as having a limited influence on hiring and firing teachers. (68% answered low, 14% answered medium and 18% answered high). This factor is one of the biggest challenges to decentralisation. Schools must have more autonomy over staffing. In addition, it was confirmed by headteachers that the policy did not allow them to hire or fire teachers as this is part of the MOE's authority. The DOE's role is to move teachers between schools.

In his statement, Headteacher 1 noted that he wished that the policy allowed him to hire/fire staff and teachers: *"The change that I want to see in the future policy is a fully independent school, which has the ability to hire and fire staff and teachers"*.

The third item relates to the level of school power on decisions related to budget. About half of the teachers see the school as having a low impact on budget (37% answered medium and 14% answered high). In the headteacher interviews, they indicated that the lack of ownership of budget in their schools meant they could not take advantage of potential community access or parental financial support.

The fourth item refers to the power of teachers in relation to general decision-making in their school (59% of teachers answered 'low', 35% answered medium and 6% answered high), which points to a lack of power felt by teachers regarding school decision-making. This lack of power contradicts the aim of the new policy, which is to increase the power of headteachers and teachers in terms of school decision-making. The policy advises dividing the responsibility of decision making within school amongst different committees and teachers should be a central part and key voice within each committee.

The fifth item pertains to the level of influence that members of the community (e.g. parents) have in decision-making (69% of teachers said that the community had little influence on decision-making, 21% answered medium and only 10% answered high).

The sixth item refers to the influence of students on decision-making. Data indicated that teachers believed that there was little student involvement of in school decision-making (66% of the teachers answered low, 23% medium and only 11% high).

In the seventh item, the teachers answered questions about the number of teachers who are involved in decision-making groups, 65% answered limited, 31% answered some and only 4% chose almost all.

The eighth item asked about the mechanisms for involving people in decision making in schools. This multiple-choice question revealed the most used mechanism to be the School Council as 75% of teachers chose it. The second highest mechanism was the guidance and counselling committee (34%). The third was the parent and teacher association (31%) and only 13% chose the financial committee, which mostly contains teachers.

2		Knowledge							
		Some		Most		All			
9	What is the percentage of teachers who participate in professional development activities?	56		10		5			
		79%		14%		7%			
		Teaching and instruction	Participative	Managerial	Use of technology	Other please specify	None		
10	In what knowledge and skill domains do staff receive professional development?	58		14		12			
		82%		20%		17%			
		39		1		1			
		39		55%		1%			
		1%		1%					
				Rare		Sometime		Always	
11	How regularly do staff participate in professional development activities?	31		26		14			
		44%		37%		20%			
12	Are the head teacher and school management team consulted in the design of professional development activities?	44		19		8			
		62%		27%		11%			

13	Do professional development training programmes (which are provided by the DOE) meet teachers' needs?	28	35	8
		39%	49%	11%

Table 12 Results of findings regarding 'Knowledge' in all three cases

Table (12) presents the findings about the second theme; 'Knowledge'. This theme aims to investigate the level of autonomy and flexibility for schools to develop their own professional development training programmes. The first question on this theme (Q9) is about the percentage of teachers who participate in professional development activities (79% of the teachers answered 'some', 14% chose 'most' and only 7% chose 'all'). This indicated a general lack of involvement from teachers in CPD activities.

The second item of this theme 'Knowledge', investigates the types of knowledge and skills provided in the CPD programmes which were received by school staff. Teaching and instruction occupy 82% of the total programmes. The use of technology occupies 55% of the CPD programmes, 20% consists of participative and collaborative work and finally managerial CPD occupies 17%. The third item is about how regularly staff participate in CPD activities. The findings showed that 44% of teachers answered 'Rare', 37% answered 'Sometimes' and only 20% answered 'Always'. This endorses the findings relating to the lack of training provided via the DOE in Medina.

The fourth item of this theme 'Knowledge', seeks to investigate the level of decentralisation and how much the headteacher and school management team are consulted in the design of CPD activities. Findings indicated that 62% of teachers chose 'Rarely', which is not unexpected as the DOE controls the process of designing and promoting CPD activity. This was confirmed by Headteacher 1 from the Tatweer School, who critiqued the DOE for working through a highly centralised process to determine training programmes;

DOE training programmes are centralised and the DOE do not return to school staff in order to consult with them about their needs and the type or content of training programmes that they require.

The fifth item concerns whether professional development training programmes (which are provided by the DOE) meet teachers' needs. Teachers responded to this question as follows; 39% of teachers answered 'Rare', 49% answered 'Sometimes' and only 11% answered 'Always'.

3		Information		
		Low	Medium	High
14	To what extent is information about goals regularly disseminated internally (to staff inside school)?	31	30	10
		44%	42%	14%
15	To what extent is information about school performance regularly disseminated internally?	31	30	10
		44%	42%	14%
16	To what extent is information about activities or the strategic plan regularly disseminated internally?	29	32	10
		41%	45%	14%
17	To what extent is information about research/innovations taking place elsewhere regularly disseminated internally?	48	18	5
		68%	25%	7%
18	To what extent is information about goals regularly disseminated externally (to the school community or parents)?	43	21	7
		61%	29%	10%
19	To what extent is information about school performance regularly disseminated externally?	40	23	8
		56%	32%	11%
20	To what extent is information about the school strategic plan regularly disseminated externally?	42	22	7
		59%	31%	10%
21	To what extent is information about research/innovations taking place elsewhere regularly disseminated externally?	41	24	6
		58%	34%	8%
		Never	Once a year or less	More than once a year

22	How often are staff surveyed for input to guide school decisions?	47	19	5
		66%	27%	7%
23	How often are community members surveyed for input to guide school decisions?	54	12	5
		76%	17%	7%
24	How often are students surveyed for input to guide school decisions?	50	15	6
		70%	21%	8%

Table 13 Results of findings regarding 'Information' in all three cases

The third theme 'Information' investigates the level of distribution and sharing of school information among school staff 'internally' and externally with parents and the local community. The data were gathered from all three schools' teachers (71 participants). The overall picture points to a lack of sharing of information either internally or externally (Table 13). The first item is about the level of sharing of information about school goals with staff inside schools. Teachers responded to this question as follows: 44% answered low, 42% medium and only 14% chose high. Similar results come in the second item with regard to the level of sharing information about school performance with staff inside schools, who responded to this question as follows; 44% answered low, 42% said medium and only 14% chose high. In the same context, the third item examines the level at which the school shares information about school activities and the strategic plan internally. The findings were as follows; 41% answered low, 45% said medium and only 14% chose high. The fourth item addressed the degree of spread of information about research/innovations, which takes place internally. The findings were mostly low (68% indicated low, 25% answered medium and only 7% answered high). This was the lowest item in this theme.

The fifth item investigated the sharing of information externally with the school community and parents. Teachers responded as follows; 61% answered low, 29% said medium and only 10% chose high. The sixth item concerned the level of sharing of information about school performance externally and teachers responded to this question as follows; 56% responded low, 32% chose medium and only 11% indicated high. Similarly, the seventh item was about spreading information about the school strategic plan externally, and the findings were; 59% answered low, 31% responded medium and only 10% selected high. The eighth item examined sharing information about research/innovations which takes place elsewhere externally. The findings were; 58% responded low, 34% answered medium and only 8% selected high. The ninth question was about how often staff are surveyed to guide school decisions. Teachers responded as follows;

66% chose low, 27% answered medium and only 7% selected high. A similar question was related to the regularity of consulting community members for input to guide school decisions. The findings were as follows; 76% responded low, 17% selected medium and only 7% believed high. The last question in this theme 'Information' was about involving students by surveying them for input to guide school decisions. Teachers responded to this item as follows; 70% answered low, 21% indicated medium and only 8% chose high.

To sum up, the findings from the teachers' questionnaire indicated that information is rarely shared either internally or externally across the three cases. This shows the limited opportunities for communication between school and community and between school staff. A top-down system has the impact that schools have to provide information to the MOE through the NOOR system as mentioned in the findings of the headteacher interviews and the school has little opportunity to disseminate the information to the staff and local community.

4 Rewards					
			Yes	No	
25	Is the teacher evaluation system based on performance in terms of goals and outcomes?		25	46	
			35%	65%	
		Low	Medium	High	
26	To what extent are informal rewards used at the school?		49	18	4
			69%	25%	6%

Table 14 Results of findings regarding 'Rewards' in all three cases

Table (14) show the result of the theme 'Rewards', and seeks to find out how schools reward staff. It contains two questions, the first seeks to find out to what degree a teacher evaluation system based on performance in terms of goals and/or outcomes is used. The findings indicated that 65% of teachers believed that they were not evaluated based on performance in terms of goals and outcomes. The second question seeks to identify the number of informal rewards used at the schools and 69% of teachers believed that number to be low, 25% answered medium and 6% selected high.

5 Leadership				
		Low	Medium	High
27	To what extent do teachers have a general understanding of the school plan and goals?	25	36	10
		35%	51%	14%
28	To what extent does the head teacher encourage engagement in school decision making	40	24	7
		56%	34%	10%
29	How many teachers delegate school management tasks	35	32	4
		49%	45%	6%
			No	Yes
30	Does the principal focus on managing the change process?	35		36
		49%		51%
31	Does the principal focus on building the school climate?	29		42
		41%		59%
32	Does the principal focus on optimizing the availability of resources (i.e., finding ways to get them and/or reallocate them)?	33		38
		46%		54%
33	Does the principal focus on involving the local community in school decision-making?	50		21
		70%		30
34	Does the principal focus on bringing in information regarding educational research and innovative practices?	40		31
		56%		44%
35	Is there a clear school vision precisely specifying the school mission, objectives and values?	34		37
		48%		52%

Table 15 Results of findings regarding 'Leadership' in all three cases

Table (15) shows the findings of the fifth theme: 'Leadership'. This theme seeks more detail about how school headteachers practice their leadership role in school, which connects with a teacher's role. The first question addresses teachers' levels of general understanding regarding the overall school plan and goals. The findings showed that 35% of teachers believed this to be low, 51% answered medium and 14% selected high. The second question refers to the encouragement from the headteacher to engage in school decision making; 56% of teachers indicated that as low, 34% answered medium and only 10% said high. The third question concerns the level of delegation of tasks for teachers. The findings were as follows; 49% of teachers rated low, 45% answered medium and 6% selected high. The fourth item examines the role of the headteacher and whether he focuses on managing the change process and the findings show that 49% of teachers answered no and 51% selected yes. The fifth item is whether the headteacher focuses on building the school climate. The result showed that 41% answered no and 59% selected yes. The sixth item concerns whether the school headteacher optimises the availability of resources (i.e., finds ways to get them and/or reallocate them), and the findings showed that 46% answered no and 54% indicated yes. In the seventh item, 70% of teachers believed that the headteacher did not focus on involving the local community in school decision-making. The eighth item concerns the role of the headteacher in sharing information regarding educational research and innovative practices. 56% of teachers said no and 44 indicated yes. The last item concerns whether the school has a clear vision, mission, objectives and values, which links to strategic management practice. Here 48% of teachers answered no and 52% said yes.

In summary, this theme was focused on the way in which school headteachers practice their leadership role in school from the point of view of teachers. Some positive findings emerged, which indicated that headteachers understand the school plan and goals. However, there is limited delegation of tasks from headteachers to teachers, although the new policy allows headteachers to delegate some of their authority to teachers. The overall involvement of communities in school decision-making is also limited.

6	Resources	Almost none	Some	A lot
36	How much outside grant funding with which to implement innovations has the school received?	54	16	1
		76%	23%	1%
37	How many partnerships has the school developed with the	55	15	1

	business community that provide resources for the school?	77%	21%	1%
		Disagree	Neutral	Agree
38	School budget is enough to manage the school activities	31	20	20
		44%	28%	28%

Table 16 Results of findings regarding 'Resources' in all three cases

Table (16) shows the result of the sixth theme 'Resources', which examining the ability of the school to gain funding from outside. Indeed 76% of teachers believed that their schools received no outside grant funding. This was evident in the headteacher and deputy interviews. For the second item, 77% of teachers believed that their schools had not developed partnerships with the business community to provide resources. The last question was whether the school budget was enough to manage the necessary school activities and 44% of teachers disagreed, 28% were neutral and 28% agreed.

Generally, schools have not achieved one of the policy goals, which is to build relationships with the private sector in order to raise some funding for their activities, which impacts on the school budget.

7	Use of Technology			
			A little	A lot
39	How much technology has been made available at the school for students to use for educational purposes?	33	38	
		46%	54%	
8	Admission			
		Low	Medium	High
40	To what extent has the school set admission criteria?	40	24	7
		56%	34%	10%

Table 17 Results of findings regarding 'Use of Technology' and 'Admission'

Table (17) presents the finding of two themes; (1) Use of technology and (2) Admission. The theme is about the level of technology use in all three schools. This theme contains one question, which is about the available technology at the school for students to use for educational

purposes. 46% of teachers answered that little technology was available and 54% indicated a lot. The eighth theme is 'Admission' and 56% of teachers believed that the ability of schools to set admission criteria was low, 34% indicated medium and only 10% believed high.

9	Assessment			
		Low	Medium	High
41	To what extent has the school set student assessment criteria?	37	26	8
		52%	37%	11%
42	To what extent has the school set staff performance assessment criteria?	31	24	16
		44%	34%	23%
43	To what extent are students involved in the teacher evaluation process?	58	11	2
		82%	15%	3%
44	To what extent has the community been involved in staff performance assessment?	60	9	2
		85%	13%	3%

Table 18 Results of findings regarding 'Assessment' in all three types of school

The ninth theme in the teachers' questionnaire is about 'Assessment' which investigated the school procedures to assess students and teachers (Table 18). The first question is whether the school set student assessment criteria, and 52% said low, 37% indicated medium and 11% answered high.

The second item is about school assessment criteria for staff performance and 44% selected low, 34% said medium and 23% believed high. The fourth item is about involving students in the teacher evaluation process. The findings were as follows; 82% of teachers believed that students were not involved in teacher evaluation and that was supported by evidence from the teacher, headteacher and student interviews. Similar results were achieved when examining the involvement of the community in staff performance assessments, as 85% of teachers answered low.

In conclusion, the top-down system in the Saudi education system has an impact on the theme of 'Assessment', as schools have not able to set student and staff assessment criteria and communities and students are not involved in teacher evaluation.

10	Time			
45	To what extent has the school changed the timetable of the school day?	28	26	17
		39%	37%	24%
11	Building			
46	To what extent is the head teacher in charge of building maintenance?	21	25	25
		30%	35%	35%
47	To what extent is the head teacher able to close the school due to an emergency event (e.g. weather, security)?	29	24	18
		41%	34%	25%

Table 19 Results of findings regarding 'Time' and 'Building'

Table (19) presents two themes: 'Time' and 'Building'. The tenth theme is about school 'Time', as 39% of teachers believed that their school had changed the timetable of the school day. This is linked with the power of the new management policy and 37% indicated medium and 24% selected high. The final theme is 'Building' and the first item is about the extent to which the headteacher is in charge of building maintenance and the findings were as follows; 30% selected low, 35% answered medium and 35% indicated high. The second question is whether the headteacher is able to close the school due to an emergency event (e.g. weather, security) and the findings were as follows; 41% of teachers selected low, 35% indicated medium and 25% said high.

5.4.3.4 Third section: Comparing the average mean of three cases (Tatweer, public and private)

The collective means for each theme are presented across the three schools.

Themes \ The average Mean for each school					
	Themes	Number of questions	School 1 Tatweer	School 2 public	School 3 private
1	Power	7	1.33	1.42	1.79
2	Knowledge	4	1.42	1.36	1.98

3	Information	11	1.39	1.42	1.79
4	Rewards	1	1.2	1.52	1.70
5	Leadership	3	1.37	1.75	1.83
6	Resources	3	1.39	1.36	1.61
7	Admission	1	1.40	1.41	1.80
8	Assessment	4	1.26	1.29	1.86
9	Time	1	1.59	1.83	2.2
10	Building	2	1.81	1.87	2.22
Total average of mean			1.46	1.52	1.87

Table 20 Comparing the mean between three types of school (Tatweer, public and private)

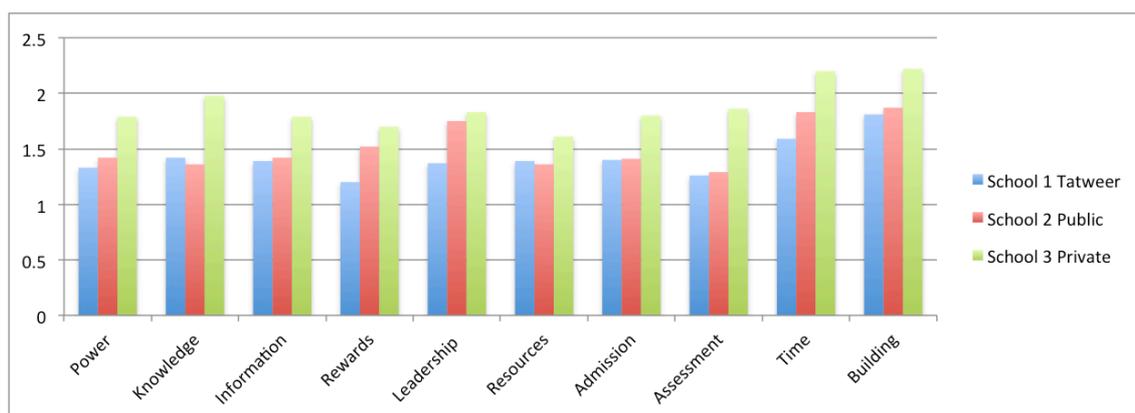


Figure 29 Comparing the means between three types of school (Tatweer, public and private)

In Table (20) and Figure (30), the findings are presented in order to compare the three settings. The number of responses was as follows; 27 out of 38 teachers in the Tatweer school, 24 out of 35 teachers in the public school and 20 out of 26 teachers in the private school. The findings present the average mean of the teachers' questionnaire, across the three cases (Tatweer, public and private). Generally, teachers in all three schools do not have much influence upon the school decision making process across all themes. The private school achieved 2.2 and 2.22 in two themes; ('Time' and 'Building'), which is broadly considered as medium. The Tatweer school achieved the lowest ranking, as the overall average rate of all 10 themes is 1.41. The highest rated school was the private school, as the overall average score is 1.87, and the public school was in the middle with an overall average score of 1.52. The Tatweer school and the public school gained similar results across seven themes, which are 'Power', 'Knowledge', 'Information', 'Resources',

'Admission', 'Assessment' and 'Building'. The public school has a better score compared with the Tatweer school in terms of 'Leadership', 'Rewards' and 'Time'. The gap between the Tatweer school and the private school is clear in most themes such as 'Power', 'Knowledge', 'Information', 'Leadership', 'Assessment', 'Time' and 'Building'.

5.4.4 Summary

The findings from deputies showed some similarities between the public and Tatweer schools. The private school had taken further steps towards implementing decentralisation and had benefitted more from the new policy. Overall, all deputies indicated that there had been a positive change in organisation, which had led in one case to an increase in the number of deputies in the school and clearer specification of their role. Tatweer and public school deputies perceived that there was a lack of training and emphasised two main issues; (1) no specific training courses for the new policy (2) limited training courses for deputies and middle managers. Moreover, deputies from the Tatweer and public schools called for the need to encourage parents to participate in school life and the need to change the existing headteacher selection procedure. Tatweer and public schools have cancelled the School Council and are not implementing what the new policy aimed to do. The reasons as explained by deputies were; (1) workload for school staff; (2) parents not attending the council, as they see the schools as belonging to the government, and they were waiting for the MOE and DOE to improve them. On the other hand, the private school involved students, parents and teachers in the School Council.

The aim of the questionnaire was to gather teachers' perspectives on their influence on school decision making and other aspects of school life. The findings from 71 useable questionnaires allocated on 11 themes were examined, which were 'Power', 'Knowledge', 'Information', 'Rewards', 'Leadership', 'Resources', 'Use of Technology', 'Admission', 'Assessment', 'Time' and 'Building', with 47 items. The findings were presented in three sections; (1) providing a descriptive analysis for each theme, which included mean, standard deviation, median, and mode in all three cases (71) responses; (2) presenting the overall frequency and percentage for each theme, for all three cases also; (3) comparing the overall mean for each school.

The overall findings of these themes showed that teachers have little influence in terms of school decision making and other aspects, as the highest theme was 'Building' with a mean of 1.95 and the lowest was 'Rewards' with a mean of 1.36. The mode was 1 in all themes, which reflected low as the most common rating in teachers' responses. When comparing schools, the private school achieved the highest rating across all 11 themes, compared with the Tatweer and public schools.

5.5 SECTION FOUR

To what extent were students involved in decisions related to their school?

5.5.1 Student interview findings

The aim of this section is to gain students' perceptions of the new management policy and their involvement in the School Council and decision making process. Focus groups were used to encourage them to offer their opinions and emphasise their needs and to determine the extent to which they feel part of the decision making process within their schools. Focus group interviews were used with students aged 17 and 18 years. The eldest pupils were selected as they would more likely to have been in school before and after the policy.

5.5.2 Students' voices

The main aim of involving students in this research was to build a picture of their thoughts on decentralisation system, as it might be significant to give students the chance to put their voice forward and to be heard and be part of the decision making process in the school. The findings were different from school to school and in the next section, I present the findings from the three schools (Tatweer, public and private) and then bring these together for the purposes of comparison.

In the first school (Tatweer), all students claimed that they had not been involved in school decision-making and were not part of any committee. All participants in the focus group answered that they had no opportunity to give their opinions on the school. They claimed that when they complained about the school facilities, the school administration did not respond to them. They said:

We complained about the quality and diversity of food in the cafeteria but they do nothing
(Student 9, FG 2).

It was evident that the school appeared to oppose student engagement. The following was indicative;

we do not participate in decisions or anything ...of course, we want to participate in school decision-making, but they do not let us to be part of any committee" (Student 8, FG 2).

As further evidence of students' participation, student (5, FG 1) indicated the ways in which students could participate in the decision-making;

Chapter 5

such as arranging some activities and schools trips, giving feedback to teachers and administrators about their performance, having some funding to pay for what they think is important e.g. books, materials, equipment.

Attention was centred on the issue of elections to choose a student to represent them in front of the school administration or School Council. Progress on this issue was as follows;

We hope that the school has an election for a student, in order to practice democracy, but nothing yet (laughs). We tell you the truth, they do not care about our voices (Student 4, FG1).

Students were asked if they had noticed any change in their school in the last three years. The following was indicative;

Nothing has improved. The school changed the system to be subject based and that has put a heavy workload upon us, heavier than last year and now we have to move for each lesson to the teacher's classroom (with a heavy bag) and teachers do not come to us. And we do not participate in decisions or anything (Student 7, FG 2).

In the second school (public school), students claimed to have had opportunities to participate in school decision-making. The students agreed that they had a good relationship with the headteacher and his deputies and they were of the opinion that their senior leaders listened to them. The students in this school provided two examples of their recent participation in school decision-making. The first related to their participation in a study about the curriculum;

in the English modules the supervisors from the DOE with the headteacher asked us (three students in a private conversation) to review the curriculum (grammar, activities and clarity of the books) and to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of it, then they gave us a questionnaire for the all the students to give their opinion about the English books (the student did not provide further details to the researcher about the results of this).

The second example, concerned the exam timetable and activities, one student said:

"The headteacher consulted us about the exam timetable and he agreed with the changes that we suggested about making the Maths exam on the first day of the week and putting two exams on different days" (Student 1, FG 1). Also, they said: "Sometimes they take our voices into account and they choose five or six students to consult in a meeting about activities, such as cultural activities, sport, or school trips and they give us the opportunity to plan workshops about making films or publishing on YouTube" (Students 6, 8, 11, 15, FG 2 and 3).

While under the policy the schools have to set up a council to help oversee the implementation of the new management policy, the school did not involve students in the School Council. Indeed in this second school, the students thought that such a council was exclusively for teachers. The students did not feel that they had the right to participate. One student outlined the position as he saw it;

Yes, we have the School Council but it is only for teachers, in some cases they select some students to be representatives for the school but they are not members of the council (Student 9, FG 2).

Also, in response to the follow up question; why did you not ask to be a member of School Council? One answered: *“It is not our business. Our relationship is with our academic advisor (teacher) and if you have 40 people how will they agree on an issue?”* (Student 12, FG 3).

In the third case (the private school), students gave instances where they had put their voice forward and the school administration had sought to meet their needs. Data from the focus groups highlighted different examples relating to issues such as the school timetable, organising school activities, assessing teachers and being involved in school clubs. One student summarised the range of participation;

We participate in arranging some school activities and assess teaching in school. Also, we are involved in many activities and clubs. The school has a variety of clubs, such as Islamic Club, Culture Club, Science Club, Computer Club etc. Regarding the timetable, if there are any problems we contact the headteacher and he responds to us if the majority of students complain (Student 15, FG 3).

Although the students gave a number of examples, there were also limits to their involvement:

We are not part of the main School Council officially; we have Students Consulting Council, which consists of the headteacher, deputies and 10 representative students. Each student grade has an election to select their representative on the Council. It is an enjoyable experience for us. Moreover, sometimes (outside the council) the headteacher or deputy comes to ask us about some activities or issues and we give him our opinion, or tell him if there are any problems (Student 2, FG 1).

Another student confirmed this and added an example;

in the Student Consulting Council we discuss our needs, fears, hopes and we can suggest new activities or events, e.g. we asked them to visit the Historical Museum to see the

Chapter 5

Ottoman Era exhibition and how the old train linked Medina-Saudi Arabia to Istanbul-Turkey. The trip was very exciting and educational (Student 7, FG 2).

It was vital to understand how students communicate with their headteacher, deputies and teachers if they want to participate in school decision-making. What emerged was a personal and somewhat unofficial level of communication, which was typical in all three schools. There were no elections for student representatives or any official/formal meetings to listen to students in the public or Tatweer schools.

With regard to the chance of an election in school the collective view was:

No, we do not have any elections or a voting system to choose a representative to be on school committees or councils. If we need anything we have to talk to teachers, deputies or the headteacher.

Only the private school had introduced a Student Consulting Council, which involved students chosen by election. Each class voted to choose their representative on the Council and they put their images on the school website [see Image 7]. The students can express themselves on this council and arrange some activities. Moreover, the private school makes use of its website to communicate on matters both internally and externally. One student mentioned;

Yes we have a website for the school and we communicate with teachers and other students, work as a team for projects and submit some homework through the site. Our parents can also communicate with teachers through it (Student 4, FG 1).

The students were asked to give their opinion about the curriculum and whether they had the chance to make choices. The students criticized the computing curriculum and said:

The curriculum is very old. In the computing module we study XP and Visual Basic and the Office is 2007 and no one uses these now. We asked them to change it but they did not (Student 10, FG 2; Public school).

Some students from the Tatweer School also discussed the issue of choices in the curriculum;

That's what the school should do, but until now all curricula have come from the MOE. Even if you have some optional modules, you cannot choose among them, the teachers tell you what you have to take (Student 5, FG 1).

In the third case (the private school), students referred to the availability of extra resources from teachers, and they said:

Yes, sometimes we need to change the lesson, or we need the teacher to give us additional resources to understand some subjects and they always do, but we cannot change the curriculum.

5.5.3 Student assessment

Teachers used different methods to assess students. All three cases have similar methods to assess students, such as student portfolios, projects, exams, research and assignments and exams at the end of the academic year. However, the main important tests are run by Qiyas; the General Aptitude Test (GAT) and the Standard Achievement Admission Test (SAAT). In all three cases, students raised their concerns about these tests, which are more important than the school assessments as they have more weight in the overall evaluation and performance in these tests can influence what they can study at university.

5.5.4 Teachers' assessment

This aspect is about the involvement of students in teacher assessment. In the first school (Tatweer) students said, *"no, we do not participate in teachers' assessment"* (Student 4, FG 1), but in school 2, (public school); the students said, *"some teachers may ask us to assess their teaching, but it is not official and the feedback forms are anonymous"* (Student 11, FG 2). In the third case, (private school), arrangements are in place for students to assess teachers each term. They said: *"at the end of each term we receive questionnaires to assess the performance of each teacher"* (Student 1, FG 1). These questionnaires are significant as the headteacher and the School Council use them when renewing teachers' contracts (as stated verbally by the headteacher in this setting).

5.5.5 Decisions about school resources and use of technology

Here students painted a picture indicating that they were not involved in any decisions about investing in new school resources. According to them, even through complaining, they do not always receive a positive response. Students from the Tatweer school stated: *"We talked to the headteacher about changing books and computers but he did not do anything"* (Student 11, FG 3). With regard to using technology, one student in this school confirmed *"no, we are not consulted about decisions relating to using technology"* (Student 3, FG 2).

Furthermore, students from the public school said: *"it is available for us to use, but not all the time and they do not respond to some inquiries about improving them. The headteacher changed some computers in the lab, but there are some old ones; we do not participate in any decisions"*

Chapter 5

about using technology or have any say about ways in which we could improve our learning process” (Student 8, FG 2).

Students from the private school confirmed *“no, they do not ask about our opinions on that matter, you know it is a private school and they care about money”* (Student 5, FG 1). Other students from the second focus group provided different opinions. This school seemed to have a much better response to students’ inquiries about technology and one said; *“yes, they listen to us sometimes and if we ask to change some computers or to buy a new computing programme, the headteacher normally does it for us”* (Student 1, FG 2).

5.5.6 Summary

It is common in Saudi Arabia that students are rarely if ever consulted about decisions related to their learning and school. The aim of involving students in this research was to gather data about their role in the School Council, which was emphasized in the new management policy. The findings from the student focus groups are vital. Students in all three schools showed a lack of understanding about decentralisation and referred to its general meaning in the Arabic language, ‘independent’. It was surprising to me as a researcher that students were not aware of the new management policy and its implementation. Students in the Tatweer School were not involved in the School Council, or the general decision-making process. While they want to take part in the decision making process, they have few opportunities to participate. In contrast, students from the public school claimed that they had opportunities to be involved in the school decision-making process, be that in terms of curriculum or school activities, but there was still a suggestion that they did not see it as ‘their business’. The private school innovated and found a new way to involve students via a ‘Student Consulting Council’. Students in the private school have a greater opportunity to participate in school decision-making and they have an election to choose their representative. Students in all three cases have little say with regard to the curriculum or using technology. Only some students from the private school referred to extra resources being provided for them when needed or improved technology being provided in response to their inquiries.

5.6 SECTION FIVE

5.6.1 Parents' interview findings

In this section, I will present the findings from the parents regarding the fifth question: How did parents view their relationship with the school as a function of the new decentralisation policy?

5.6.2 Parental involvement in the School Council

The new management policy includes a guideline that three parents should be part of the School Council. Parents who participated in the interviews indicated that they visited the school three or four times a year and the main reasons were to meet with the teachers about their child's academic progress or if the school asked them to attend because of misbehaviour. None of the parents indicated that they visited the school to attend School Council or claimed to have participated in school decision-making at any level. All parents confirmed that they were not involved in any School Council meetings, as one stated: *"we have never attended any School Council"* [Parent 2 from the public school]. All parents knew about the School Council, but Parent 4 from the private school indicated that;

I know that the school has a 'School Council' but it is not effective and it depends upon the headteacher's opinion, if he wants to involve parents or not. In the last two years, I have not received any invitation to attend any meeting in the school

This statement demonstrates that the School Council is seen as ineffective by parents, which was confirmed by the parents that participated in the interviews. Within the quantitative findings, 71% of parents answered 'never' and 16% answered 'rarely' when asked the question about their involvement in the whole school plan, its programme and its activities.

Parents have different opinions about their participation in school decision-making. They believe it would be difficult to be involved in all school decision-making. With some frustration, Parent 1 from the public school indicated that parents are ready to be involved in some decisions in school:

The schools have to have some kind of parent participation, even if it is simple, yet there are some issues that they are not ready to get involved in, such as curriculum or school finance. Parents can help the school administrators, with issues such as school safety, children's activities, training and gathering some funding.

A similar perspective was offered by Parent 5 from the private school:

Parents should be involved in the school timetable. We care more about our children's academic aspects, parents for example need their kids to study maths, physics, chemistry or biology in the first or second lesson of the morning, not in the afternoon. On the other hand, the school doesn't care about that, it just wants to reach the goal of equivalence between the teachers.

This statement suggests a perceived tension between stakeholders and that parents' voices are claimed not to be heard on these aspects of school decision-making.

5.6.3 School communication with parents

Schools use different mechanisms to communicate with parents, such as personal communications, formal letters, phone calls, text messages and the website. Most schools have a text message programme to communicate with parents. Parent 1 from the public school indicated that:

The school uses text messages; there is a program to exchange messages between the school and parents when necessary, for example if the student is absent or late, or if the student has behaviour problems. Also, sometimes we are informed as parents by formal letters when our children will participate in school trips or outside activities.

Parent 4 from the private school provided a different view about school communication:

My relationship with the school is formal. I do not have any preferred communication tools, but sometimes I go to the school to talk to them directly. There are some text messages only for student absence but not for school news or anything else and the school uses phone calls if the student has a health problem or something urgent. I can also check the school website and access my child's portfolio.

Moreover, parents indicated that they did not receive any requests from school administrators to support them, even financially, or to participate in managing activities. Parent 1 from the public school specified, *"I have never received a letter from the school asking me to donate or to support any programmes but we are happy to help if they ask"*. In summary, it would appear that parents are willing to help, but the issue is that they are not asked.

5.6.4 Quantitative findings

There were two main reasons for employing the questionnaire as a tool to collect data from parents. The first links to the need to understand the perceived barriers that parents face in

engaging in decisions related to school life and the second relates to their feelings about their relationship with the school.

The second reason for using the questionnaire to gather data from parents was a lack of response to being involved in interviews. This was partly a result of headteachers not supporting interviews with parents inside their schools and partly because some did not provide me with their contact details. One headteacher refused to give the researcher any parent contact information and said “this is private information, and I have had complaints from parents about giving some previous researchers their contact details”.

5.6.5 Results of the parents’ questionnaire

In this section, the findings from the parents’ questionnaire are presented thematically; the questionnaire was built on these five themes;

- Educational progress (parents evaluate their children's educational progress),
- Engagement in policy making and activities,
- Take advantage of the local community’s assets,
- Communication with the local community,
- School environment.

The parents’ questionnaire allows participants to choose one of five options (Likert scale: 1 never; 2 rarely; 3 sometimes; 4 very often and 5 always). Therefore, the findings are presented in three sections; (1) a descriptive analysis (mean, standard deviation, median and mode) for the five themes of the parents’ questionnaire; (2) for each questionnaire item, the frequency and percentage for each item; (3) a comparison of the three cases (Tatweer, public and private) in order to understand if there are any high achieving schools under these themes.

All three schools (Tatweer, public and private), 70 participants						
N	Themes	Number of questions	Mean	Standard deviation	Median	Mode
1	Educational progress	3	2.38	1.33	2	1
2	Engagement in policy making and activities	4	2.49	1.49	2	1

3	Taking advantage of the local community's assets	4	2.72	1.37	3	3
4	Communication with the local community	4	2.84	1.51	3	1
5	School environment	5	3.47	1.25	4	4

Table 21 Descriptive analysis (mean, standard deviation, median and mode) of the five themes from the parent questionnaires

In this section, I present the descriptive analysis (mean, standard deviation, median and mode) for the five themes of the parents' questionnaire. Table (21) shows that the lowest rated themes, compared with other themes, was 'Educational progress' with an average mean (M) of 2.38, which indicates that most participants have negative views about educational progress. Standard deviation (SD) is 1.33, median (MD) was 2, and mode (MO) was 1 which reflects the most chosen score. The second theme 'Engagement in policy making and activities' had results as follows; M = 2.49, SD = 1.49, MD = 2, MO = 1. The third theme is 'Taking advantage of the local community's assets', which rated as follows; M = 2.72, SD = 1.37, MD = 3, MO = 3 and the mode is 3, which means 'sometimes'. The fourth theme is 'Communication with the local community' and the findings indicated that M = 2.84, SD = 1.51, MD = 3, MO = 1. The last theme is 'School environment', which was rated as the highest theme across the three schools and the findings were as follows; M = 3.47, SD = 1.25, MD = 4, MO = 4.

Three out of the five of themes (1, 2 and 4) have a mode of 1, which corresponds to 'never' and the lowest rated score. The highest rated theme was 'School environment' which had a mean score of 3.47 and a mode of 4.

In the previous section, the findings were presented as a 'descriptive analysis' to offer an overview (mean, standard deviation, median and mode) of the five themes of the parents' questionnaire. In the next section, the descriptive analysis continues by presenting frequency and percentages for all three schools (Tatweer, public and private). In Table (22) I will present the questions and the response options for participants and their percentage.

Questions 70 responses	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Sometimes	4 Very often	5 Always
1. Educational progress					

Q1. The school provides me with regular reports describing my child's educational progress.	25	9	13	14	9
	36%	13%	19%	20%	13%
Q2 . Teachers provide me with feedback about my child's achievements.	26	18	16	5	5
	37 %	26%	23%	7 %	7 %
Q3. There is a cooperative link between parents and school, leading to an excellent education system and well-educated children.	26	15	14	11	4
	37 %	21 %	20%	16%	6%
2. Engagement in policy making and activities.					
Q4. Schools involve parents in drawing up the school plan, its programmes and activities.	50	11	4	2	3
	71 %	16%	6%	3%	4 %
Q5. Schools send copies of the annual report to the parents.	22	10	6	7	25
	31 %	14%	9%	10%	36%
Q6. Students participate in the local environment programme with special social institutions.	24	22	12	6	6
	34.3%	31.4%	17.1%	8.6%	8.6%
Q7. Schools host public figures and experts from the local community.	9	15	17	16	13
	12.6%	21.4%	24.3%	22.9%	18.6%
3. Taking advantage of the local community's assets					
8. Schools take advantage of the local environment and surrounding facilities and link students' learning with real life.	9	23	21	10	6
	12.9%	32.9%	30%	14.3%	8.6%
9. Schools have student exchanges with other schools in the local area.	28	16	18	5	3
	40%	22.9%	25.7%	7.1%	4.3%
10. Schools participate in the membership	29	12	18	3	8

of scientific and educational associations (local, national, international).	41.4%	17.1%	25.7%	4.3%	11.4%
11. Schools participate in national and international events.	2	12	14	10	32
	2.9%	17.1%	20%	14.3%	45.7%
4. Communication with the local community					
12. Parents and visitors are shown respect and appreciation when visiting the school.	3	4	8	19	36
	4.3%	5.7%	11.4%	27.1%	51.4%
13. Schools send invitations to parents and public figures to attend activities and concerts.	13	12	15	13	17
	18.6%	17.1%	21.4%	18.6%	24.3%
14. Parent council meetings are held on specific dates throughout the academic year.	32	13	13	8	4
	45.7%	18.6%	18.6%	11.4%	5.7%
15. Schools take parent council decisions into account.	34	13	17	5	1
	48.6%	18.6%	24.3%	7.1%	1.4%
5. School environment					
16. The learning environment at my child's school encourages creativity and innovation.	9	12	17	19	13
	12.9%	17.1%	24.3%	27.1%	18.6%
17. The general atmosphere at my child's school is one of mutual respect between students and teachers.	3	6	18	27	16
	4.3%	8.6%	25.7%	38.6%	22.9%
18. School facilities, halls and rooms are clean.	8	13	13	19	17
	11.4%	18.6%	18.6%	27.1%	24.3%
19. The school provides a variety of sources for learning.	6	4	23	19	18
	8.6%	5.7%	32.9%	27.1%	25.7%

20. School administrative staff have good relations with the local community and the parents.	6	11	14	17	22
	8.6%	15.7%	20%	24.3%	31.4%

Table 22 Results of responses to the five themes from the parent questionnaires

5.6.5.1 Educational progress

This theme contains three questions, which aimed to examine how parents evaluate their children's educational progress. The following pie chart (Figure 31) summaries the percentage distribution of all participants from the three schools regarding the first theme, "Educational progress". This chart shows that more than half of parents indicated that they sometimes received a report from the school about their child's progress. Over half the parents reported that they never or rarely saw cooperative work between parents and schools for the purpose of enhancing learners' achievement.

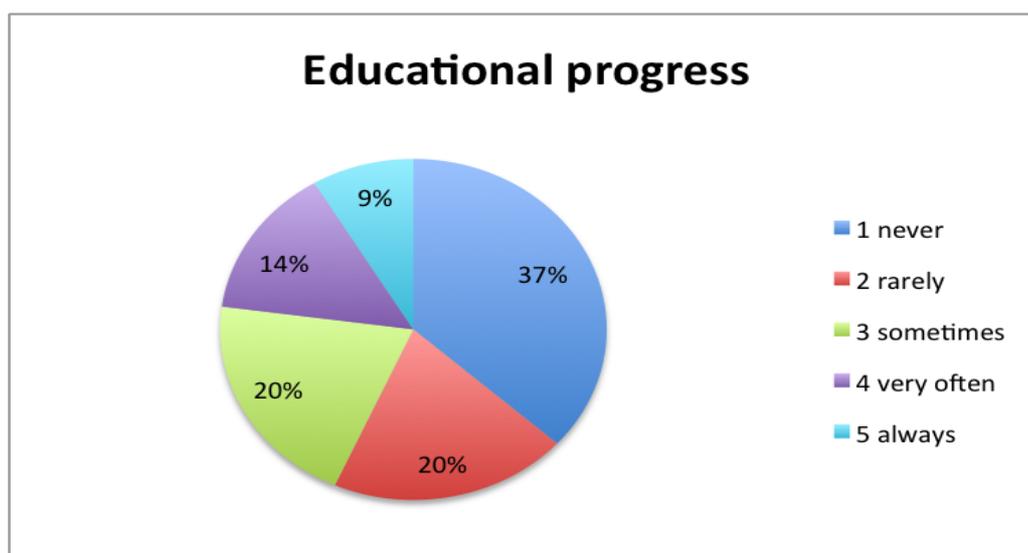


Figure 30 Percentage of parental responses regarding 'Educational progress'

A little over half of parents reported that they either 'never' or 'rarely' received reports or feedback from schools. Across the three items, a more negative picture is presented concerning efforts by schools to communicate with parents regarding the progress of their children. On the other hand, 35% of parents choose "sometimes, very often or always" regarding how often they received reports or feedback about their children and in terms of cooperation between schools and parents pertinent to communication about the progress of pupils.

5.6.5.2 Engagement in the policy making and activities

This theme seeks to examine the level of parental engagement in school policies, decision-making and activities. Figure (32) shows the lack of engagement of parents on matters relating to school policy making and activities, as more than half of the parents chose 'never' or 'rarely' when asked how often they engaged in school policy making. In more detail, the first question asks parents about the engagement of parents in drawing up the school plan, its programmes and activities. Interestingly (which was also confirmed by the qualitative findings), 71% of parents chose 'never' as the answer to this question.

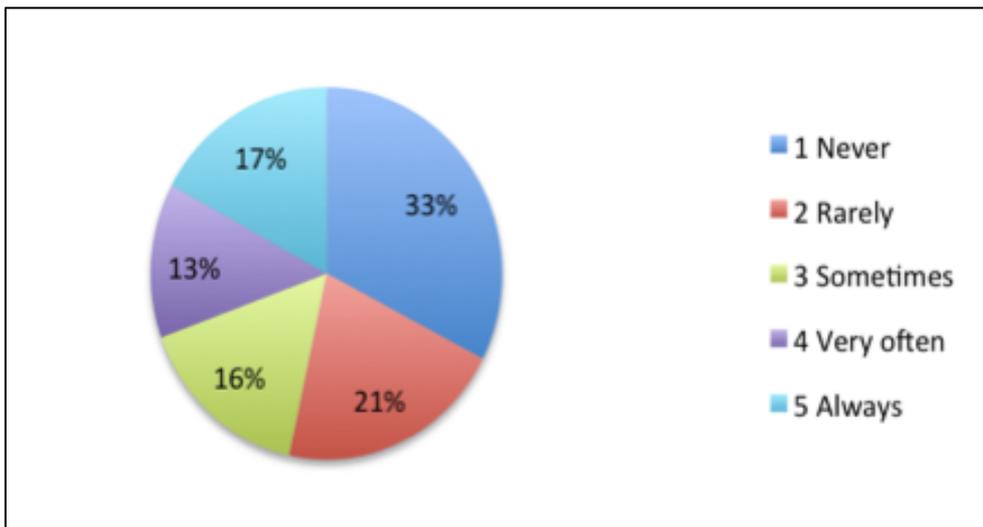


Figure 31 Percentage of parental responses regarding 'Engagement in School Policy Making and Activities'

This points to a lack of parental engagement in school planning and shared decision-making. Indeed, only 7% of parents selected "very often" or "always" when asked about the frequency of their engagement in school planning (question 4; Table 22). This finding demonstrates the existence of a sustained centralised system in Saudi and the lack of local community power and engagement in school decision-making and policy building.

Generally, responses towards the theme of engagement in the policy making and activities of schools illustrate that more than half of parents are not engaged in any way with school decision making. This engagement (via school councils) is significant for facilitating the successful implementation of the new management policy. As indicated, 21 out of 51 items of the new policy make reference to enhancing school councils, including the fact that they should include at least three parents. It can be inferred that little progress has been made along such lines.

5.6.5.3 Taking advantage of the local community's assets

In this theme, the aim is examine how parents evaluate the ability of schools to take advantage of the local community's assets. Four questions offer insight into school activities and the implementation of "opening the school" to the local community. Figure (33) shows that almost three quarter of parents offered 'sometimes' as their response to these questions. Twenty-seven responded to this item positively.

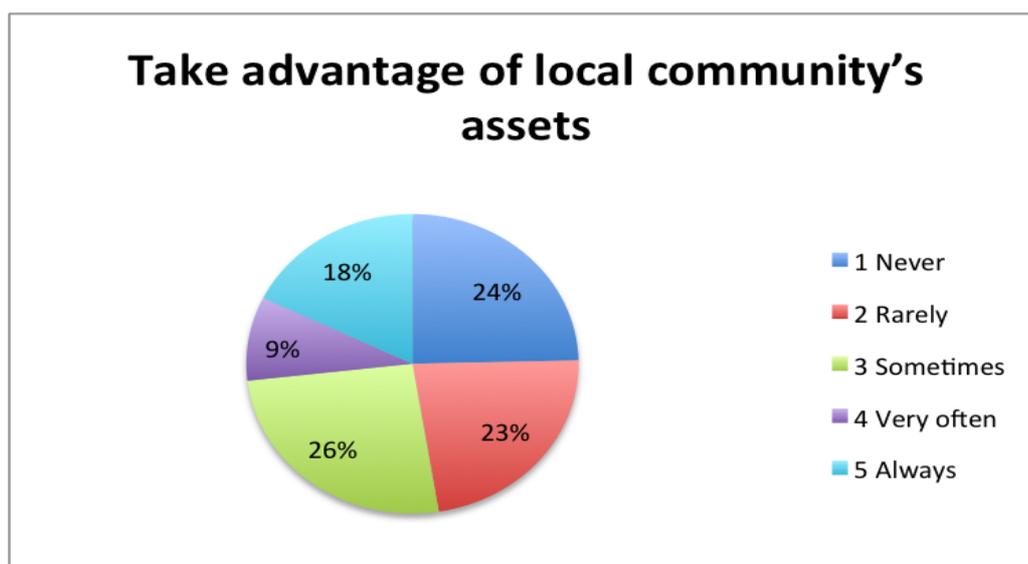


Figure 32 Percentage of parental responses regarding 'Taking advantage of the local community's assets'

In the new management policy, some items are directly linked to educational excursions through the School Council such as; "Adopt a program of trips and educational student visits". This is item number 8 in the new management policy, and under the jurisdiction of the School Council. In addition, "Agree with the private sector to sponsor school programs" is item (number 46 Appendix B). These are intended to encourage schools to open themselves up for the local community, allowing students to be more familiar with their local environment. In fact, question number 9 in Table (22) is about student exchange visits with other schools in the local area and saw 63% of the parents offering a negative response by choosing "never" or "rarely" in answer to the question about how often these visits occur. In contrast, question number 11 in Table (22), which is about participating in national and international events, saw 60% of the parents choosing "always" and "very often" and only 20% indicated "never" and "rarely" in answer to the question about how often this type of participation occurs. There is a more positive view of schools successfully running national and international events.

5.6.5.4 Communication with the local community

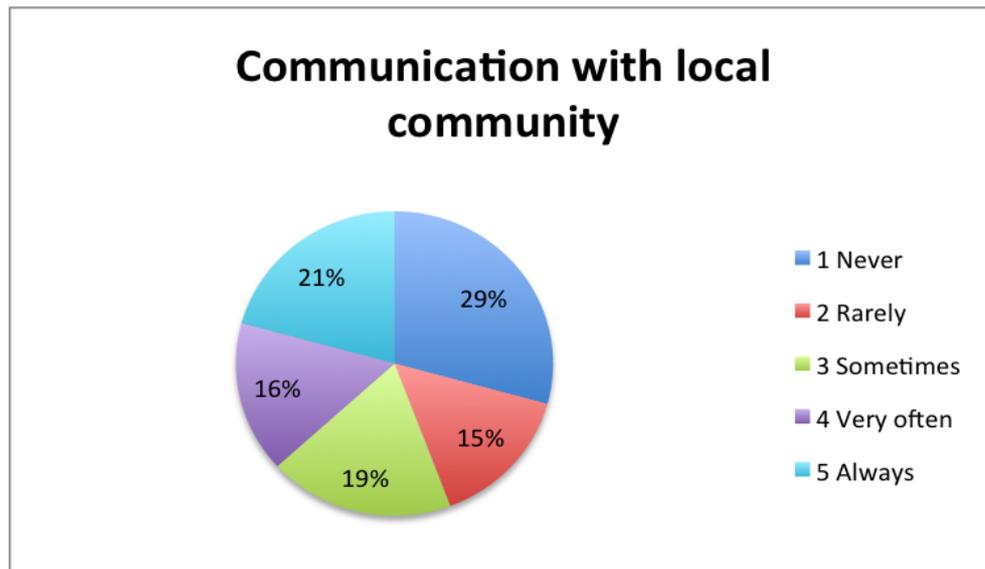


Figure 33 Percentage of parental responses regarding 'Communication with the local community'

The fourth theme of the parents' questionnaire is about the relationship between parents and schools. Figure (34) shows that 44% of parents evaluated this relationship negatively by choosing 'Never' or 'Rarely', while 37% indicated positively by selecting 'very often' and 'always'. Question number 12 in Table (22) is about "Parents and visitors are respected and appreciated when visiting the school". Some 87% of the parents choose "very often" and "always" as an indicator of how often they receive respect when they visit the school. This could be a positive sign of a future increase in the level of engagement between staff and parents and an enhancement in collaborative work.

Of particular relevance to the policy at issue in this thesis are two items in the questionnaire (see Table 22), which refer to "Parent council meetings are held on specific dates" and if the "Schools take parent council decisions into account". The responses to these questions showed that there was low engagement of parents in the parent council and that schools did not consider their decisions to be important. Specifically, 46% of the parents choose "never" and 19% choose "rarely", in response to questions 14 and 15. These findings can be triangulated with the interview data.

5.6.5.5 School environment

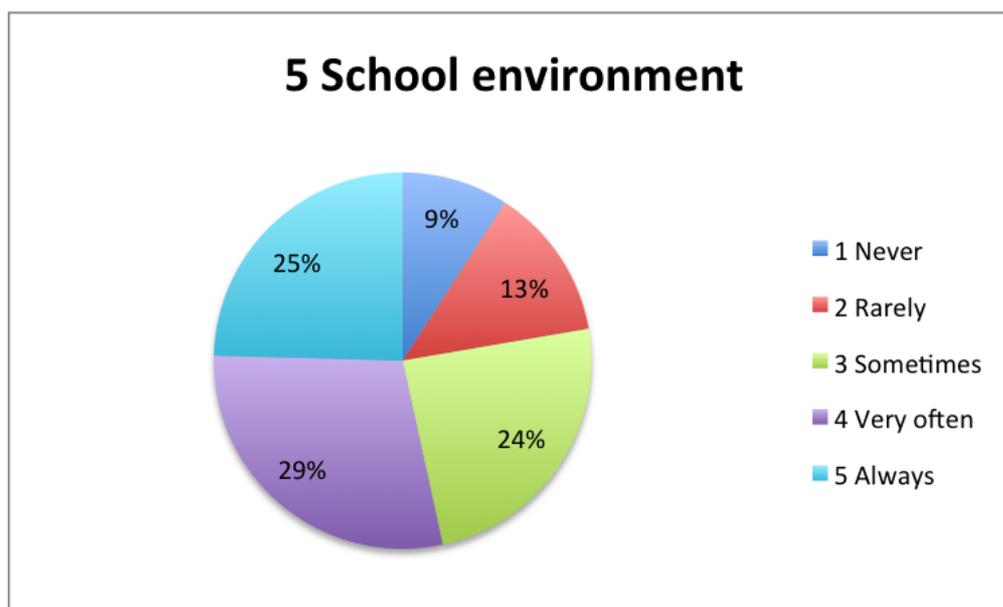


Figure 34 Percentage of parental responses regarding 'School Environment'

The fifth theme is about the school environment and how parents evaluate the school environment. The theme can be rated as high-ranked compared with the four themes discussed above. Figure (35) shows that over three-quarters of the parents choose “sometimes” “very often” and “always” which suggests that schools are in the main being successful when building a positive school environment for children from the parents’ point of view. The last question in Table (22) points to a good relationship between parents and school administrators, with more than 75% of parents choosing, “sometimes” “very often” and “always” and only quarter “never” and “rarely”.

5.6.6 Comparing the three types of school

Themes \ The average mean		School 1 Tatweer	School 2 public	School 3 private
1	Educational progress	1.98	2.56	2.57
2	Engagement in policy making and activities	2.27	2.56	2.61
3	Taking advantage of the local community's assets	2.54	2.85	2.74
4	Communication with the local community	2.32	3.13	3.01

5	School environment	3.00	3.81	3.50
	Total average of mean	2.42	2.94	2.88

Table 23 Comparing (average mean of) parental responses towards each theme between the three types of school

Responses from the 70 parents were then sorted into School 1 Tatweer; 2 public and 3 private. Table (23) and similarly Figure (36) presented below, shows a comparison of parents rating of the overall themes in the questionnaire across the three settings. In the main, the mean scores for school 1 (Tatweer) are lowest for all the themes in the parents' questionnaire. School 2 (public) and 3 (private) are more similar in their mean scores across all five themes. Indeed, parents are most positive about the school environment across all three schools. There is a more positive picture of the efforts made by School 2 (public) to communicate with the local community, which was evident through my on-site observations. School 2 (public) achieved the highest rank out of the other two schools in terms of the total average mean, which is 2.94. While the private school gained a similar average mean of 2.88, the Tatweer school comes last with a mean of 2.42, which was not expected by the researcher.

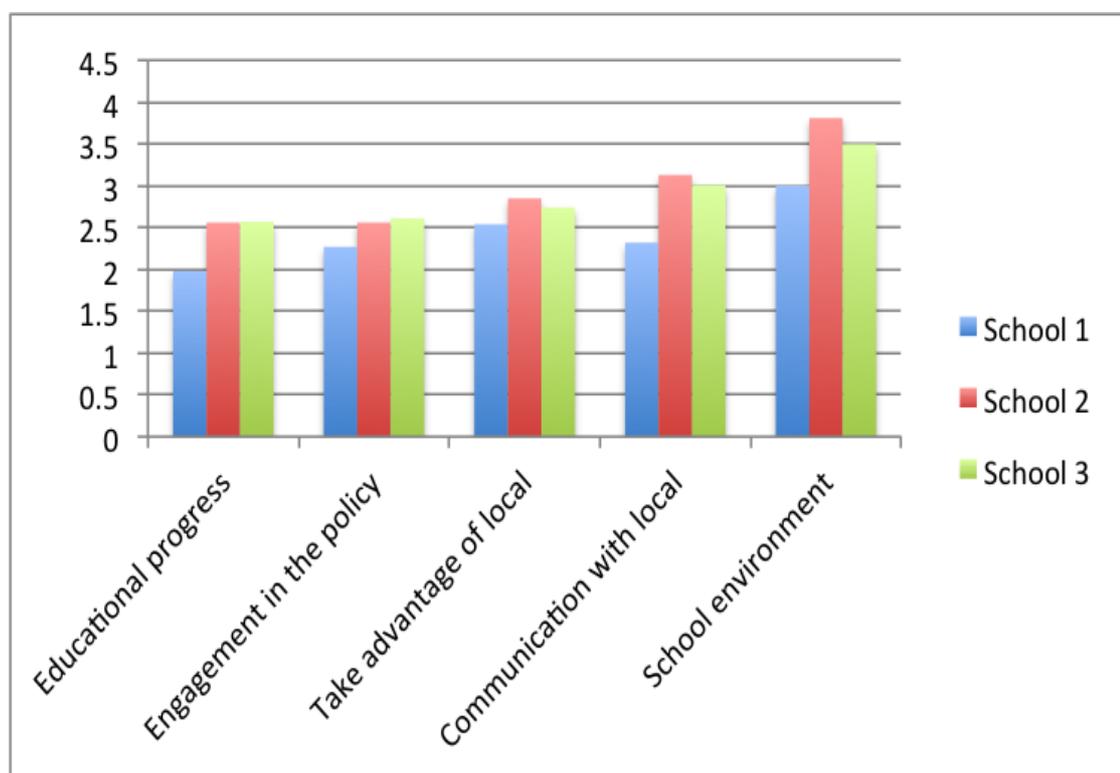


Figure 35 Comparing (average mean) between the three types of school from parent questionnaires

In Figure (36), the blue bar (first one from the left) is for the Tatweer school, the red (which is in the middle) is for the public school and the green is for the private (which is the last one). An overview of the findings shows that, all three schools achieved low scores on; educational progress, parental engagement, taking advantage of local. In terms of communication with the local community, the public school achieved the highest average: 3.13, and the last theme of school environment was rated highly across all three settings by parents.

5.6.7 Summary

In conclusion, parents had very general opinions about decentralisation, but were quite unaware of the new management policy in any detail. Parents are not very engaged in developing school plans or in school decision making. The new management policy confirmed that three parents should be part of any school council. This lack of engagement is reflected in parents' absence from school councils, as none of the parents in the interviews claimed that they were part of a school council. With regard to communication, the policy indicated that parents should be aware of when the school changed the timetable, closed for an emergency, or carried out school trips. The findings show that parents received text messages as the main communication method from schools and phone calls and formal letters in some cases. On a positive note interview data tended to suggest parents would like to be more involved, if asked.

The overview of the findings of the parents' questionnaire regarding their relationship with schools further supports the view that there is a lack of communication between parents and schools and that parents are not very involved in school decision making. All three schools were however rated highly on the theme of 'school environment'. The Tatweer school achieved the lowest mean score compared with the public and private schools, which was not expected by the researcher, as Tatweer schools receive a significant amount of attention from the MOE and DOE, and greater funding than other schools. In the main, the new management policy has had little impact on the relationship between parents and schools and parents perceive that there are many barriers to their engagement in decisions relating to school life.

5.7 SECTION SIX

What training issues and needs do head teachers and policy makers identify that are relevant to implementing the new management policy in their schools?

This thesis investigates the implementation of a new school management policy in Saudi Arabia. One of the main research questions focuses on the training programmes provided for head teachers and staff related to this implementation. The question is; what training issues and needs do the participants identify that are relevant to implementing the new management policy in their schools more effectively? Data are presented from interviews based on procedures for qualitative analysis (coding, categorising and building themes). Analysis led to four main themes regarding training programmes: 'Limitations of training programmes', 'Suitability', 'Needs, and 'Lack of motivation to participate'. These themes are presented as follows.

5.7.1 Limitations of training programmes

In the interviews, headteachers highlighted issues relation to training in a range of ways. Training programmes were mostly run by the DOE, which covers some 586 schools (DOE, 2015). Schools (typically) received training programme options from the DOE either in the form of booklets online or through the DOE website. However, headteachers found it difficult to find training that matched their needs. Headteachers therefore saw the intended benefits of the training programme as limited for the following reasons: (1) relevance of the training programmes; (2) conflicts between the training programme schedule, set by the DOE, and their responsibilities and duties in school; (3) a lack of motivation to attend.

There was agreement over the lack of available training programmes. Headteacher 3 stated that: "Training programmes are limited in number and you have to search for them, and maybe you won't find what you need." In addition to not being easy to find, all headteachers in the interview expressed that the training programmes did not sufficiently address their needs. Headteacher 1 offered his experience:

I did not get enough training on the new policy. There was a short meeting for three hours to discuss it, and that was not enough to gain a general understanding of how to implement the policy.

Other headteachers indicated that they did not even attend this short policy meeting. Headteacher 2, also confirmed "there was no training specific for the policy". According to Headteacher 1, this limited training programme led to different 'understandings' of the new

policy and in particular its language, and this could lead to different interpretations of its implementation.

On a more positive note, the Tatweer department provided specific training programmes for Headteacher 2 to increase his knowledge in order to meet their requirements of leading the Tatweer School. These programmes were titled, 'Practitioner School Leadership' and 'School Self-Evaluation'. These two programmes were aimed at increasing a headteacher's ability to work more independently, which was seen as helping to promote decentralisation within the education system and offering sufficient guidelines regarding the implementation of the new management policy.

From the supervisor interviews, five out of six supervisors indicated that a suitable number of training opportunities were available which covered several areas of educators' interests such as: the new policy, focusing on strategic management, headteacher authority and effective leadership. Indeed only Supervisor (2) stated that these programmes had limited usefulness. The lack of preparation for all staff, either headteachers or teachers, was seen as one of the obstacles to policy implementation. Supervisor 3 clarified;

we need to prepare all educators through training to enhance school capacity to work independently. We need staff to take responsibility in their schools and work in a professional manner.

Supervisor (2) critiqued the process of implementing the training courses:

The education training centre in Medina has training courses for teachers and school headteachers, there is always training and preparation, but the point is what next? What happens after these training courses? What is the impact of the training on school performance generally? How can the training be applied in the real world? That's the point. In fact, from what I have seen so far, the training courses are not going to significantly change practice without follow-up, and they are based on the lecture method, which has limited impact.

5.7.2 Suitability

Participants also talked about the suitability of the training programmes from different perspectives, including time, place and content. Headteacher 1, stated:

I could not attend many programmes this year, because of the time, as the DOE only publish the training programmes schedule at the beginning of year and normally the dates coincide with events in our school.

Chapter 5

This issue may be solved by a school organising their own training programmes based on the school timetable. Headteacher 2 indicated what had been difficult for him:

Sometimes I plan to attend a training programme, but I cannot because of the workload on my shoulders, events in school or visitors from the DOE, who come without appointments.

In addition to hosting 'unexpected visitors', setting the time for the training programme after the school day was seen as a further obstacle. Headteacher 2 said:

it is difficult to attend training programmes in the evening, after a long day of work. This time is for our family not for work, but at the same time we do not get rewards for attending these programmes in the evening.

In terms of place, Headteachers 1 and 2 confirmed that the DOE centre is not a suitable location for the training programmes and each suggested their school as the most suitable setting. Headteacher 1 commented, *"the DOE training centre is far away from our school, it is between 20-25 miles from the school and due to traffic this can take 45 minutes or so, and sometimes over an hour"*. While this is seen as a disadvantage for some headteachers, it could be argued that the schools are not suitable because not all have the infrastructure to run training programmes, for example they may not have suitable equipment, lecture theatres, projectors and so on. Schools outside the cities suffer more in this regard, as one headteacher explained that: *"in my previous school in a village the nearest training centre was 200 kilometres from my school"*.

Supervisors had different opinions about the suitability of the training centre. This training centre is responsible for providing training course for school staff and distributing the courses among four supervision offices in Medina and outside the city. Supervisor (5) stated his view about the centre and claimed that *"they provided hundreds of training courses and they have specialists in some areas such as using technology, leadership, management and organisation, teaching methods and dealing with the new curriculum"*. Supervisor (3) reported *"the centre has many training course for headteachers and teachers and the advantage is that they are provided by specialists, while if each school had their own training courses, you could not ensure the quality."*

Supervisors tended to support the 'mass in-service' model as given the number of schools that they oversee they felt that this training worked best in the local training centres rather than devolving it to individual schools. It might be cost-effective from their point of view.

The cost of training programmes was, in the eyes of headteachers, seen as central to successful implementation. The lack of school budget impacted accessibility to training programmes in schools given that the policy suggests that the headteacher should sign contracts with local

training companies. Headteacher 1 from the Tatweer school and 2 from the public school in the interviews made mention of this lack of budget and said that neither of them had the resources to sign any contracts with local training companies. On the other hand, Headteacher 3 from the private school indicated that, they had a specific budget to be used for improving their staff and CPD.

All supervisors indicated that there was a lack of budget for both schools and the main training centre, which had an impact upon the quantity of training courses. The centralisation in allocating money for schools and supervision offices means that the biggest budget is allocated to the main training centre.

A further concern for all headteachers was the quality of the content of the training programmes, provided by the DOE. Headteacher 1 from the Tatweer school and 2 from the public school claimed that some presenters only used a lecture method (which also confirmed by Supervisor 2) or relied more on ‘theories’ around policy implementation, while headteachers needed more practical methods and ideas such as case methods, case studies, workshops and discussion scenarios. Also, some presenters were perceived as having limited field experience and not being specialists in the course topic. As Headteacher 3 confirmed, the quality of any programme is dependent on the trainer, and that can lead to large differences in the quality of programmes offered by the DOE. Headteacher 3 from the private school stated that he has the ability to choose the best training company, collectively identify staff needs and then set a suitable improvement plan.

5.7.3 ‘On Needs’

Headteachers spoke of the training programme content required to improve their policy implementation skills and capabilities to manage a school. Specific needs deemed urgent by headteachers included; budget planning, leadership training, decision-making, using technology, communication and day-to-day running of a school. Head teacher 2 from the public school offered his view on the necessary content of training:

We need more training to deal with new changes. Last year we had a budget deficit because we did not get enough training to deal with new functions in the new policy and the new executive budget, which was increased compared with the last few years. We need special training for budget planning, finance and supervision of teaching of the new curriculum.

Second, staff training especially for deputies, assistants and teachers who can cascade the knowledge to others was proposed. This training could help the head teacher in a range of ways,

for example reducing workload and allowing for the delegation of tasks, allowing headteachers to focus more on planning, evaluation of teachers and improving overall school outcomes. However, such training for senior management staff is at best very limited, in their view.

Headteacher 1 critiqued the DOE, as they work through a highly centralised process of determining training programmes:

DOE training programmes are centralised and they do not consult school staff about their needs and which types of training programmes they require.

5.7.4 Lack of motivation to attend training programmes

From the interviews it was evident that there was a lack of motivation to attend training programmes from head teachers and staff. This served as a further obstacle to maximising the potential benefits of these programmes. There were several reasons for this lack of motivation to attend, such as the quality of training programmes. Headteacher 2 indicated *“the quality of some training programmes leads to weak motivation to attend these programmes”*. He also confirmed that motivation to attend was *“dependent on the trainer, as some of them are not specialists in the subject they are training and that was noticed by some of our teachers”*.

Headteacher 3 further commented upon the lack of motivation. There appeared to be no consequence for either a headteacher or a teacher who was absent from a training programme. A suggestion was put forward by Headteacher 1 that attendance at training programmes could be linked with salary enhancement and contracts. In response to one question from the researcher, ‘What is the consequence if headteachers/teachers do not attend any training programmes? The typical response was *“nothing unless any of them want to enter a competition for a higher job, then the DOE may look at his/her CV to see how many training courses were attended”*.

5.7.5 Summary

The data from both the Tatweer and the public school headteachers (1 and 2), indicate that the training programmes provided by the DOE in response to the new policy are perceived as limited and have not gained headteachers’ satisfaction. The data show four main themes regarding training programmes: ‘Limitation of training programmes’, ‘Suitability’, ‘Needs, and ‘Lack of motivation to participate’. The emerging picture from these themes indicates the following suggestions: (1) increasing the cooperation between the DOE and headteachers in organise training programmes within schools; (2) allowing headteachers to manage training programme budgets; (3) increasing the voice of the beneficiaries (administrators and teachers) to identify

their needs. Technology (e.g. conference calls or virtual classes) can be useful when the training programmes are based on a lecture method and are targeting large groups.

Chapter 6: Discussion Chapter

6.1 Introduction

The discussion chapter is intended to interpret the findings in chapter five in light of the literature reviewed in chapter three. This study aims to examine the perception of stakeholders regarding the new management policy, which seeks to implement a shift towards decentralisation in the Saudi Education system. In this chapter, I present a variety of themes such as: the meaning of decentralisation, participants' viewpoints on decentralisation, the implementation of the new management policy, obstacles to applying the new policy and policy pluses. The research questions are as follows:

1. What understanding did stakeholders have of decentralisation?
2. What did headteachers and policy makers view as the benefits and challenges of implementing the new decentralisation policy in the schools?
3. How did deputies and classroom teachers assess the implementation of the new decentralisation policy?
4. To what extent were students involved in decisions related to their school?
5. How did parents view their relationship with schools as a function of the new decentralisation policy?
6. What training issues and needs do head teachers and policy makers identify that are relevant to implementing the new management policy in their schools?

6.2 SECTION ONE

In this section, the research will discuss the findings of the first question in this study, which is 'What understanding did stakeholders have of decentralisation?'

6.2.1 Meaning and understanding of decentralisation

The purpose of examining the participants' understanding of decentralisation is to determine if they have different ideas, how they perceive this concept and if the policy offers a clear definition about decentralisation. In the interviews, all headteachers conceptualized decentralisation as 'independence' and specifically operating independently from the DOE. Both Headteacher 1 from the Tatweer school and Headteacher 2 from the public school provided similar definitions. Headteacher 1 stated "*empower the school to be a ministry in itself, which means that the school holds all the authority of the Ministry and that will make the school work independently*". This

Chapter 6

meaning is related to the concept of devolution, which can be defined as the shifting of authority (such as administrative, financial or educational) to lower levels and this transference cannot be revoked (Paqueo and Lammert, 2000). In addition, devolution “...is autonomous lower-level units, such as provincial, district, local authorities that are legally constituted as separate governance bodies” UNDP (1999; p. 6). Along the above lines, Headteacher 3 from the private school added ‘delegation’ of authority from a higher level (which is MOE and DOE) to a lower level (which is the School Council). This concept is similar to UNDP’s (1999) definition which states “*delegation... is semi-autonomous lower-level units, such as urban or regional development corporations to whom aspects of governance are delegated through legislation or under contract*”. UNDP (1999; p. 7).

Both the deputies and teachers provided similar definitions, referring to their school as independent, with freedom in terms of decision making and working without control from the DOE. Deputies and teachers also claimed they were aware of the aim of the new management policy, which was to increase headteacher and school council powers. Meanwhile, parents in the interviews defined decentralisation as working independently from the DOE or independence in some decisions and not full independence. This seems to be a common meaning in the education field, while the interesting finding from the parent interviews is that not all parents are aware of the new management policy in any detail. Students had some idea of the new management policy and tended to speak of decentralisation, from what was essentially a dictionary definition.

It is worth noting here that the meaning of decentralisation expressed in Arabic is “Lamarkaziah”. According to the Almaany Dictionary, decentralisation is defined as “*turn the power to the regions and the state, and make them enjoy independence/autonomy in their own affairs*” (Almaany, n.d.).

In the interviews, supervisors pointed to several meanings of decentralization, such as increasing headteacher authority, working independently from the DOE and MOE, involving different stakeholders in decision-making, and delegation. Supervisor 1 mentioned that the movement towards (SBM) was the final target of applying decentralisation in the education field.

These articulations of decentralisation from supervisors appeared to show a more sophisticated level of understanding about decentralisation and how through its implementation, a school could achieve SBM. This higher level of understanding is very likely to be linked to the supervisors’ position and their role in promoting the policy through schools, in addition to the training they have received inside or outside the country, either via the MOE or other organizations.

From the author’s point of view, the meaning of decentralisation is a process of shifting authority from central government or from a higher level to the local people or a lower level of

organisation, including planning, making decisions or raising funding. This is a definition that I have allegiance to and one which would seemingly fit with efforts in the context of Saudi Arabia.

The importance of having a clear understanding of SBM or decentralisation is confirmed by Botha (2006), who found that in terms of a perception of SBM, head teachers in good schools tended to have a clear understanding of the concept of SBM, while in less effective schools, SBM tended to be associated with SI (School improvement). There is no data in this study which explains how staff build their understanding of decentralisation. Interestingly, the new management policy does not provide any definition (operational or otherwise) of decentralisation. The policy only mentions the word 'decentralisation' in the introduction, gives no specification for its meaning, or more importantly how the policy makers intend to implement decentralisation at the school level. This finding is consistent with Al-Taneiji and McLeod, (2008), who indicated that the MOE in the UAE also did not provide schools with sufficient information or guidance about the purpose and goals of decentralization. It raises the question of why it is so common among the Ministries of Education in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to implement policies without enough explanation or preparation for school leaders and practitioners. A similar finding was found by Al-Ghefeili, and Ghani, (2014), who reported that in Oman (which is one of the GCC countries), participants considered SBM as very complex and having various meanings and elements which can be illustrated in different ways.

According to the researcher, there is no published research which has investigated the meaning of decentralisation from the perspective of multiple stakeholders. This therefore can be claimed as one of the key contributions of this thesis. This study is different from other studies such as those by Meemar (2014); Allheaniy (2012); Alotaibi (2013); which focused only on headteachers' perspectives, except Alhumaidhi (2013), who combined the views of headteachers and supervisors, Al-Shammari and Jubran, (2011); Alsalhi, (2010) who examined the views of headteachers and deputy ministers in the MOE and Althmaly (2013) who examined the views of teachers and deputies only. Furthermore Mathis, (2010); Alahmady (2008) investigated the leadership role of Saudi female principals, whilst Alahmady (2008) identified the challenges facing headteachers and Almannie, (2015) chose to investigate supervisors only.

6.3 SECTION TWO

This section presents the findings of the second research question; 'What did headteachers and policy makers view as the benefits and challenges of implementing the new decentralisation policy in schools?'

6.3.1 Participants' perspectives on the new management policy

The new management policy was established in 2010 and comprises 52 items. This policy acts as a set of guidelines for headteachers to clarify their responsibilities and those of a range of school-level committees. Moving towards decentralisation in education was derived from both school and community pressure and government desire to improve the Saudi education sector. Numerous studies have called for an administration change in the MOE in Saudi Arabia and for a reduction in existing centralisation such as Alotaby, (2000); AlBolaihed (2002); Sayd, (2008); Alahmady (2008) Alsalih, (2010) Al-Shammari, and Jubran, (2011) Algarni and Male (2014). On a national scale, moving towards decentralisation was indeed a target for several countries in the Middle East. As far back as 1981, UNICEF launched an initiative to implement decentralisation in one of the biggest countries, Egypt (Abdulhafedh, 2011). In the gulf countries, the UAE and Qatar have implemented similar decentralisation programmes (Al-Taneiji and McLeod, 2008); Zellman, et al. (2009). This thesis investigates the process of implementation of SBM in the field of Saudi education, government schools (Tatweer and public) and taking advantage and learning lessons from private schools.

In the main, all headteachers and some supervisors confirmed that the new management policy was a positive step towards decentralisation in Saudi. Other groups involved in this study, such as teachers, parents and students held broadly similar positive views regarding independent schools working with less control from both the DOE and MOE. This finding is consistent with studies by Al-Ghefeili, and Ghani, (2014), who stated that headteachers, deputies and teachers in Oman considered SBM a useful and important system, which would help them to enhance their decision-making. However, most of the participants in this study, particularly headteachers, supervisors and teachers believed that the centralised system was still very much evident and they perceived that most of the power was still in the possession of the DOE and MOE. This also resonates with the findings of Althmaly, (2013); Meemar, (2014); Algarni, and Male (2014). With a small number of participants in this study and the predominance of qualitative research, particularly with headteachers' views, caution needs to be applied, as the headteachers confirmed that the policy has to date had limited success with regard to decentralisation (the major aim of the new management policy). This opinion was very recently confirmed by the new Minister of Education, Al-Issa, (2016), who said, "our education system needs reform in terms of legislation, improving administration and dismantling centralisation as much as we can" (p. 1). Historically, Walberg et al., (2000) argued that holding the real power of decision-making in the centre (e.g. MOE) inhibits decentralisation even if school councils are elected and established. This is one of the main obstacles to the spread of decentralisation cited in this thesis, as the findings show that most of the powers have not been moved to school level and are still held by

the DOE and the development of such councils in the three case schools is either minimal or completely absent.

Supervisors provided two different opinions; firstly they see the policy as a positive step, but are of the opinion that headteachers are not capable (skills, training in leadership) of implementing all the powers in the new management policy, as some of these powers in their view contradict with DOE and MOE authority. This finding was confirmed by Alsalhi, (2010) who stated that head teachers in Saudi Arabia had limited authority and continued to work under a highly centralised system. The lack of training mentioned by headteachers in this study tended to compound the issue, and only serves to further illustrate the limited faith in their ability to lead a school that has more autonomy.

It is important to mention that efforts have been made by the MOE and DOE to shift the headteacher's role from that of 'manager' to 'leader' in order to build school independence. Moreover, in 2015 the MOE changed the name of 'school manager' to 'school leader'. According to MVR (2015), and the comments from the interview with Headteacher 2, while the Tatweer programme prepares headteachers to work as 'leaders' not 'managers', under the maintained highly centralised system this is not possible. Therefore, headteachers in public and Tatweer schools were certainly not feeling that they were acting as 'leaders' and were still working as 'managers'. This notion was confirmed by Mathis (2010), who reported that "*The Saudi education system trains principals to be managers, not leaders*" (p. 23). Also, Meemar (2014) found that 51.4 % of the participants in his study disagreed with the statement that the new management policy fostered the leadership role of the principal.

In the new management policy, 21 out of 52 functions speak of the role of school councils and in fact the headteacher is the key actor in such school councils. This emphasis has not been not recognised in the process (particularly in public and Tatweer schools) of developing such councils. Another benefit of the new policy is that it seeks to involve the community and school staff in the decision-making through the School Council. In the parent interviews, none of the parents who participated in the interviews had any detailed knowledge about the policy. Moreover, in the parent questionnaires, 87% believed that parents were not involved in the school plan, programmes or activities. This indicates a lack of parental engagement with schools, which is discussed in more detail later. Moreover, the new management policy is designed to increase the confidence of headteachers and school staff, as this can be seen as evidence of the MOE's trust in them. However, in the view of some headteachers, the DOE shows a lack of trust in headteachers and school staff and the opinion among supervisors was that some headteachers were not capable of running their schools under less centralised control.

6.3.2 School building

Refurbishing and extending schools was the MOE's responsibility, and the maintenance was also part of the DOE's work. The MOE was responsible for school building maintenance (Oyaid, (2009); Alsharari, 2010). In this thesis we have learned that the new management policy moves this responsibility to school headteachers and allows them to sign contracts with private companies to oversee building maintenance (see item 52 of the new management policy, Appendix B). This finding was also confirmed by Al-Shammari, and Jubran, (2011). In this study the deputies interviewed indicated that, even when the policy allows schools to sign contracts with private companies for building maintenance, they still need to refer to the DOE to gain permission. This finding is consistent with the findings of a study by Alotaibi (2013), who notes that signing contracts with the private sector was 'low'. Alsharari (2010), recommended that the MOE provide an employee for school building maintenance, who has experience and qualifications in this kind of work.

School building maintenance is now part of headteachers' authority and this was confirmed by all headteachers, but the financial support is limited, as the policy indicates that a school with 200 students receives about £900 for emergence maintenance, which is not sufficient for the whole academic year (see Appendix B). 35% of teachers reported 'high' and similarly 35% reported 'medium' that headteacher was in charge of building maintenance. In the main, in the parents' questionnaire, school environment scored higher than other themes; as this was the highest scoring theme across all three schools (mean of 3 in Tatweer, 3.81 in public and 3.50 in private school). In addition, in the teachers' questionnaire the findings show that the theme of 'building' was the highest scoring theme with an overall mean of 1.95. This finding is consistent with the findings of Meemar (2014) who noted that headteachers need more freedom with regard to school building maintenance. However, 41% of teachers indicated that there was a lack of power in terms of being able to close school buildings when needed (in the event of a weather emergency). More details will be discussed in the theme 'School Time'. Recently, the Public Education Evaluation Commission (PEEC, 2015) published findings of a national survey, in which 1686 teachers took part. 59% of teachers reported that their school buildings needed maintenance and major refurbishment, which indicates the lack of support for the implementation of this power through headteachers. As Headteacher 2 indicated, the budget is not sufficient to maintain the school building. In this regard, such authority to practice some elements of decentralisation e.g. maintenance of school buildings, is not enough in itself, without financial support from the DOE.

Another issue regarding school buildings is the kind of building. Rental buildings are popular in the Saudi education system and have a long history. The new management policy allows headteachers to represent *“the school on the rental committee of the school building that is under his authority”* (power 17, Appendix B). About 41% of schools in Saudi Arabia are rented buildings and are not fit for educational purposes (Alshaya, 2015). These buildings were built by the private sector for residential purposes, then the DOE rented them as schools. Kurdi, (2011) indicated that the reason for using rented buildings is *“the rapid expansion in basic education, the government was unable to build enough new schools to cater for all the children, so it leased some houses and converted them into schools. This is not ideal for the teaching-learning process”* (p. 16). Alsharari, (2010) reported that most school buildings are not appropriate for educational institutions as they are rented, have small rooms, a lack of activity halls and laboratories and low health and safety standards. Alsharari (2010) *“stresses the need for urgent work to construct purpose-built schools and to phase out the rented buildings, as well as to take a census to discover the number of future students in order to avoid having to rent inappropriate buildings to house schools”* (p. 49). Algarni, and Male, (2014) mentioned that unsuitable buildings and an overloaded curriculum impact the headteachers’ capabilities in terms of organising school time, space and learning activities. In this study, none of the three schools were rented and the buildings were purpose-built as schools. The findings of this thesis indicate that more than half of parents are satisfied with school facilities, halls and the cleaning of the rooms. This explains why parents are satisfied with the school buildings as they are comparing their child’s school with others (e.g. rented schools). Moreover, the findings of this thesis indicate that, headteachers cannot make any adjustments to the building premises to meet educational purposes and this is consistent with the findings of Algarni and Male (2014).

One main improvement as a result of the policy was security and safety in school buildings. All three headteachers highlighted the emergency exits and fire extinguisher and they spent part of the budget on these items. The Tatweer school had spent money from the school budget to increase safety and had established an alarm system, fitted smoke detectors and CCTV. Headteacher 2 from the public school reported that there was an increased awareness of security and safety and the DOE had selected one teacher to be in charge of school safety and they had received training. Similarly in the private school, school safety had been increased through the installation of an alarm system, smoke detectors and an assembly point and they had trained their staff for emergency evacuation. Only the headteacher in the public school indicated that training was also provided for students. This is a further contribution, as according to my knowledge; no other study has found this improvement after the implementation of the new management policy. Further evidence of wider school building improvement.

Chapter 6

The Tatweer and public schools have taken advantage of autonomy by opening social clubs in order to encourage parents to visit schools in the evening and to join the school staff in the gym. The private school used the school hall to innovate and offer new experiences for students by allowing them to work for three days in traditional shops, which is something I consider to be very new in Saudi schools and is indicative of efforts to connect schools with their local community. This would not have been possible under previous policy.

6.4 SECTION THREE

This section is about answering the third research question; 'How did deputies and classroom teachers assess the implementation of the new decentralisation policy?'

6.4.1 Progress against specific elements of decentralisation

One of the main aims of this thesis is to examine the new management policy from the perspective of participants and in order to do so the researcher analysed qualitative and quantitative data to identify major themes of success and failure in respect of the implementation of the new management policy. The main framework for this thesis was borrowed from the work of Caldwell and Spinks (1992) and Bullock and Thomas (1997). Caldwell and Spinks refer to seven elements, which are knowledge, technology, power, material, people, time and finance. Bullock and Thomas offered an additional four elements, which are admissions, assessment, information and funding. These 11 elements collectively can show the extent of decentralisation in the education system. These elements will now be discussed in relation to the data gathered in Saudi. One adjustment was made, which was to combine finance and funding.

6.4.2 Knowledge

One of the main decentralisation elements of the theoretical framework is knowledge, which was described by Caldwell and Spinks (1992) as decisions relating to curriculum, including decisions relating to the goals or outcomes of schooling. The findings of this study indicate that there is a perception that the MOE maintains this power without involving the DOE or schools (headteachers, teachers and school councils) in their design or reform of the curricula. Also, all headteachers confirmed that the school is still not permitted to change or add any extra elements to the curricula, unless permission is sought and received from the DOE. At the same time, the private schools have to follow the national curriculum from the MOE. Alsharari, (2010) recommended that the MOE should involve school headteachers in the process of curriculum development, but at the time of data collection for this thesis, little movement had occurred on

this front. In the literature and in the national Tatweer Plan, Tatweer schools can develop their own curriculum. According to Meemar (2014);

“The main goal for Tatweer is developing curriculum and learning materials to meet current and future skill needs. It also aims to promote learning and provide professional development for leaders, managers and all school staff (Tatweer Plan, 2010)”.

However, the findings from the Tatweer headteacher, deputy and teachers contradict Meemar, as the Tatweer school had not been able to establish any kind of development in their curriculum. Both the public and Tatweer schools perceived a lack of power in terms of curricula. The improvement in the Tatweer school is that they are moving towards self-evaluation and being able to developing their own school plan. Quantitative data from the teachers’ questionnaire confirmed the lack of autonomy regarding curricula (the mean of this theme is 1.56, which can be described as low). In addition, about half of the teachers believed that the level of school influence in decisions relating to the curriculum was low. Headteachers similarly spoke of the persistent high level of centralization in terms of curriculum decisions, which are largely controlled by the MOE. Schools are hence still not able to change or develop the curriculum. In practice, each subject is required to follow a specific timetable and textbooks that schools and teachers in the classroom must use. This was confirmed by all three headteachers. This thesis argues that the decentralisation of this power and allowing schools to develop their own curriculum can better meet student needs and improve their skills based on their ability and their interests and supports the view of Algarni, and Male (2014); *“The centralisation of decision-making, a lack of resources, unsuitable buildings and an overloaded curriculum impact on leaders’ abilities to organise time, space and learning activities, which are significant elements for any learning environment”* (p. 54).

Evidence from this study is unable to demonstrate benefits in the Tatweer School, as the headteacher stated *“we do not have special curricula for Tatweer schools and we have to follow the national curricula from the MOE with no right to increase or change any subjects”*. This finding supports recent observations by Alkinani (2013), who stated; *“The government has allocated some SR9 billion for the Tatweer (development) project, which began in 2008. We don’t yet feel that there has been any development in our working environment and classrooms (p. 1)”*. Observations undertaken in all three schools revealed no major differences in curricula design or content, they remain very detailed, static and prescribed (Algarni, and Male, 2014).

The issue of developing the curricula is fraught with complication. Even the Saudi government received some critique about elements of curricula which were considered to be linked to the events of 11 September 2001. After this, the MOE sought to develop new curricula. Therefore,

Chapter 6

one of the main reasons for developing the education and curriculum is the international influence. According to Alyami (2014);

After the event of Sept 11, it was required that the policies regarding education must be altered in Saudi Arabia. Their curriculum must not consist of any subject that stresses extremism. Thorough evaluation of the curriculum has been demanded by officials within and outside the nation in order to refrain from introducing such concepts in the classroom. King Abdullah has demanded the implementation of the Tatweer project which requires improvement within the educational system and managing the issues present in the curriculum of the schools, which are under his region (p. 1516).

Moreover, Yamani (2006), referred to the challenges faced by the government when changing the curriculum given the conservative nature of KSA;

since the conservative religious establishment controls the whole Saudi educational system, from primary to university level, the government cannot simply undertake sweeping modernization efforts with regards to education reform. In order to avoid internal instability, the monarchy can only take careful moderate steps that would not threaten the conservative nature of its society.

In 2015, the MOE and the Ministry of Interior established a new programme called “Faten” which aims to protect children from intellectual and behavioral deviation, such as becoming involved in suspicious extremist groups (Alriyadh newspaper, 2015). This appears to demonstrate unrest and worry within the government with regard to children becoming involved in extremist behaviour, and may give some indication of the difficulties with transferring curriculum development to school level. Reducing the chance of any misinterpretation of curricula, particularly Islamic curriculum and culture seems to lay at the heart of “Faten”, a top-down initiative in the education system.

Moreover, the Minister of Education recently indicated that there are obstacles to improving the education system, due to intellectual conflict and fear of change. He also asked, “Does our education system satisfy the ambitions of our children who look forward to a better future? I think the answer is a big no.” Al-Issa, (2016).

6.4.3 Schools’ power

The new management policy was a landmark in the Saudi Education system. This policy acts as a guideline for head teachers to clarify their responsibilities and the scale of their authority. In order to examine the improvement or changes that the policy has brought on the ground, this theme is

now placed under discussion. This theme 'Schools' power' is one of the most important aims of this new management policy and it is foregrounded in the introduction of the new policy as the following statement indicates, *"Considering the school's basic level of development and in order to achieve that, the school needs more powers and flexibility in its operations, which will help it to achieve its objectives"* (Appendix B).

The researcher analyzed the new management policy based on those involved, which included the head teacher, school council members and others, in order to describe the possession of power and to whom it has been delegated. Findings revealed: (1) powers directly held by school head teachers which cannot be delegated to others, (2) powers agreed only by school councils, (3) powers that can be delegated from the head teacher to others or those which can be implemented by others, (4) powers held by school head teachers only, but with some conditions. The main point of the policy is to link all the powers via the headteacher's authority, and if (teachers, parents, student and others) are involved in or agree with any decision, that decision will not be valid without Headteacher permission. However, the administration of education is centralised and the government itself controls educational policies (Alsalhi, 2010; Althmaly, 2013; Alhumaidhi, 2013).

One of the main findings of this study is that headteachers perceived that they had a lack of power. The lack of power appears in terms of the level of independence that they have when taking decisions relating to school members of staff or within the School Council. There are several studies which have confirmed this finding across the Saudi education system (Alsalhi, 2010; Mathis, 2010; Alsharari, 2010; Althmaly, 2013; Alhumaidhi, 2013; Algarni, and Male, 2014; Alyami 2014; Meemar, 2014; Almoray 2015).

The lack of power was evident through the perceived limitations of headteacher authority. This related specifically to: information, admissions, hiring\ firing teachers and staff, school start time, student assessment, securing resources and finally the budget. This was confirmed by both the quantitative and qualitative data. The analysis of teachers' responses to the questionnaire concluded that the mean of the first theme 'School power', which is considered to be low is 1.49. The finding was further confirmed as half of the teachers across the three schools viewed their decision-making ability as limited and 59% of teachers deemed this item to be 'low'.

These findings are consistent with Algarni and Male (2014), who found that the MOE is still responsible for providing the national curriculum, delivering policy, providing training programmes and evaluating school performance in terms of the success of headteachers, teachers and students, which could suggest that the highly standardised and centralised system in Saudi Arabia is largely being maintained.

Lack of power, as one of the main findings of this study, is in accord with recent studies. Mathis, (2010) revealed the effect of the MOE on school leadership, pointing out that school leaders had limited authority and were not able to act or be decision-makers. Their role is more like a school 'manager' than an educational leader. According to Almoray (2015), most headteachers have a lack of authority and are not very confident about implementing the new management policy. The researcher perceived that the headteacher of the private school was the only one with a high level of confidence. Moreover, Alahmady (2008) reported that there is a lack of authority among schools in Madinah-KSA, while several studies confirmed that headteachers have limited authority (Alsalih, 2010; Alzaidi, 2008; Almannie, 2015). Also, Algarni and Male (2014), found that the education system is still centralized and they recommended giving school headteachers more autonomy and flexibility in order to improve the education process. Overall, these studies indicated that there is a highly centralised system and a need to move towards greater flexibility and a decentralised system, as Alhumaidhi (2013), found that the new management policy is highly inflexible. This thesis contributes to the field through identifying several aspects of headteachers' power and seeks to examine the implementation of the new policy and whether there has been any improvement in headteachers' power in practice.

This study takes the position that the new management policy seems to be more about rhetoric than shifting the Saudi education system towards greater decentralisation. Limited success in government schools was evident in the move towards decentralisation. The private school appeared to be in a better position to practice some autonomy. The new management policy has not brought great change in relation to power for Tatweer and public schools, as schools still work under a top-down system. We are mindful of a comment by Supervisor 6 who reported "*I am an honest man, the new policy has not brought much change, it is only in the papers and propaganda*".

There are two way to transfer power from the 'higher level' or the MOE to schools, either to the school leaders directly or through the agent of the MOE, which is the DOE. Headteachers and supervisors in this study had contrasting views on 'power'. Headteachers believed that they should hold the power without control from the DOE, while the supervisors believed that schools were not ready yet to hold the power and needed close supervision in the transition period. Almannie, (2015) stated that supervisors believed that in order to implement decentralisation successfully, decision-making power needed to be transferred to the local school districts, which seems to suggest a reluctance to release this power.

The researcher is of the view that in order to successfully move towards a state of decentralisation, power should be transferred to school level directly, a position that has been supported by Bush, (2010);

The international evidence (e.g. Caldwell, 2008: OECD, 1994) suggests that self-management has been largely successful. It also expands the scope of leadership and management, providing the potential for principals and senior staff to have a greater impact on school outcomes than is possible in centralized systems.

According to Briggs and Wohlstetter (2003) *“successful SBM schools have decision-making authority in the areas of budget, curriculum, and personnel and they use that authority to create meaningful change in teaching and learning” (p. 357).*

This can be linked with the need for a transformational leadership model, as Caldwell and Spinks (1992: 49) argue that in order to implement school self-management, transformational leadership is essential:

Transformational leaders succeed in gaining the commitment of followers to such a degree that ... higher levels of accomplishment become virtually a moral imperative. In our view a powerful capacity for transformational leadership is required for the successful transition to a system of self-managing schools.

To sum up, evidence in this study concerning this theme confirmed that schools perceived they were still working under a centralised system and the policy, from the point of view of headteachers, deputies, and teachers, had brought little difference to school level. There are five factors which might explain the limited success of the policy. First, the policy is not sufficiently far reaching and the language is not always clear. This is consistent with findings by Almannie, (2015) as 56% of the supervisors who participated in his study had a low level of agreement with the statement, *“their work in the school district/offices have clear policy and procedures, and have clear vision in the office”*. Second, the speed of implementation of the policy, as the MOE did not spend enough time or money providing relevant training [this will be discussed in the training theme] to headteachers and DOE supervisors in order for them to implement and oversee the policy in appropriate ways. Third, the conflict between the DOE and school leaders about the possession of power in schools. Fourth, the lack of finance that affects training resources. Fifth, cultural factors play a role in this transfer, as there are hierarchies and centralised systems in all government work and this affects the participation of parents and communities in schools. Cultural factors in this instance relate to a history of centralization, the mechanisms by which the government works and the structures within which people are used to work. Also, culture can be

linked to family structure and the traditional relationship between parents and schools. This can be linked with the findings of Onsmann (2011), who reported that Saudi society is considered as a monoculture; a conservative and centralized society.

6.4.4 Technology

Caldwell and Spinks (1992) identified several elements that could be delegated to school level in order to achieve SBM and one of these elements was technology, which includes decentralisation of decisions relating to the means of teaching and learning.

Alahmady (2008) found that there was a lack of response from the DOE to requests to supply equipment to schools. In this thesis, using technology appeared to be helpful with making the communication between schools and the DOE faster and more effective. Headteacher 1 claimed that:

in recent years, the DOE has used technology in their communication with schools. They built a new website to communicate with schools quickly and easily. That solved the postal problem, but not the delay in response or the supply of resources.

Moreover, Teacher 2 from the public school provided an example of a delay in decision-making about a school trip, which the school had to cancel. The question can be raised as to why the school should need permission from the DOE to arrange a trip for their students, as it is clear in the policy (power 8, see Appendix B) that the School Council can oversee school trips lasting for no more than one day, within the area of the DOE. A lack of trust along the above lines is preventing the movement towards SBM and frustrating school staff, who are anxious to offer these educational opportunities.

6.4.4.1 Technology for teaching

A positive feature of the policy was the increased use of technology within schools to enhance teaching. With regard to student-teacher activities and teaching, the use of technology inside the classroom has increased. All teachers in this study indicated that they have a projector, smart board, computer and other technology in the classroom to facilitate their teaching. This increase was in their view part of the new policy and the new curriculum. The ability to secure these resources was one of the benefits of the new executive budget in school and all headteachers and supervisors confirmed this. Indeed the findings from the quantitative data revealed that 54% of teachers believed that there had been an increase in the availability of technology at school for students to use for educational purposes. In contrast, a national survey indicated that 40% of Saudi teachers reported a lack of support to use technology in their schools (PEEC, 2015).

Also, the observations by the researcher and the photographs gathered in classrooms indicated that headteachers were able to supply new projectors and smart boards. All three case study schools had very recently developed their computer labs as one outcome of the new policy. The public, Tatweer and private schools appeared to have improved the availability of technology and the methods of teaching using new technology, although no teaching was observed in this study. However only the private school has developed ways of using technology to communicate with parents and students through the school website. Their students also have their ipads to use as tools for learning, while in the government schools (public and Tatweer), these were not present and their websites were either under-developed or partly non-functional.

6.4.4.2 Student involvement in decisions regarding technology

The importance of making technology readily available is best captured by Nassuora, (2012) who stated *“In developing countries, such as Saudi Arabia, the most important tool for learning at anytime, anywhere is still a personal computer or PC”*. However, it was apparent from the findings that students in all three cases were not engaged in any decisions about using technology. Moreover, in both the Tatweer school and the public school, even if the students complained about the quality of computers, or if they needed some specific software programmes, headteachers tended not to respond positively. However, in the private school, students indicated that when they asked for change or a new programme, the headteacher was supportive. The reason in my opinion is that the private school is working in a competing business model and if they do not meet students’ demands they will lose their share of the market, which relates to an SBM theory of relevance by Hanushek and Woessmann (2007), who identify three principles for SBM: (i) choice and competition; (ii) school autonomy; and (iii) school accountability. Therefore, when parents and students have a choice of schools and schools work under a competitive system, this will have an impact upon the quality of the schools and the ways in which they seek to make parents and students satisfied.

6.4.5 Materials; supplying resources

In Saudi, schools have limited space to supply their resources in order to support students’ learning, according to the headteachers, deputies, teachers and supervisors interviewed. The DOE supplies books, equipment, chairs, tables, smartboards etc. unless they are small things that the headteacher can pay for from the school budget such as paper, pencils or highlighter strips, paper clips, etc. Their absence in the new management policy could be because each school has a limited budget and therefore what is needed cannot always be readily supplied. The responsibility for supplying resources to schools rests within the MOE and the DOE has responsibility for

government schools (public, Tatweer). Therefore, it is still deemed to be centralised. However, private schools have their own budget and in this aspect are not under the umbrella of the DOE. This finding is confirmed by the study of Alsharari (2010), who found that school furnishings and equipment are in the DOE's hands. Alhumaidhi (2013), found that government schools suffer from poor equipment and facilities. This highlights the need for urgent responses to school needs and an increase in school budgets to enable them to react to students' learning needs.

The problem with this procedure is the delay in supplying resources to the schools, which can have negative consequences for students, headteachers and teachers. Supervisors, headteachers and teachers describe the system as weak and insufficient, which is confirmed by Alhumaidhi (2013). One example provided by a teacher in this study was when he asked for a new computer mouse or keyboard. He needed to ask the headteacher, then the school completed a form and sent it (by post or through the DOE website). The mouse took months to arrive! A single example such as this points to the presence of previous systems and indicates that efficiency has not improved under the new policy. This could also suggest that the DOE still wishes to maintain overall control of school finances. This also affects the availability of resources in schools, as Headteacher 2 indicated that in some cases, he buys resources 'from his own pocket' or asks teachers to make donations to meet their students' learning needs or urgent requirements. This was also consistent with the findings of Algarni and Male (2014). Moreover, 75% of teachers who participated in a recent national survey indicated that they lacked resources to support their teaching and they relied only on textbooks (PEEC, 2015).

However, the private school pays for their equipment needs directly and one teacher said *"I have worked in different private schools in Medina and most of them responded quickly to teachers' needs and supplied resources to the school in one or two weeks and this school is the best,"* (Teacher 6). In the quantitative data the findings show that the mean was 1.5, which is considered to be low for the theme of 'Resources'.

6.4.6 School time

In the new management policy, there are several powers that allow a headteacher to manage school times based on different circumstances, such as: increasing school time for some students; or closing the school (for one day) in emergency situations (see powers 7 and 13 in Appendix B). This theme illustrates the conflict between the DOE and school headteachers regarding the language of policy and practice. The data did not show that headteachers were discharging these powers. The reason for this is the restrictions from the DOE about school times and the emphasis on the headteacher to return to the DOE in order to ask for permission.

The resistance to changing school times comes from the DOE and they seek to control the school by holding this power of 'closing the school when there is a danger to students or staff'. Headteachers reported their frustration when they tried to enact this power and closed their school when the weather was dangerous for all and the DOE disagreed with them by confirming that only the DOE can decide whether the weather is dangerous or not, which does not take account of any local knowledge about weather. This incident seemed to signal to headteachers the DOE's lack of trust in their ability to hold this power and prevents the successful implementation of the new management policy. Moreover, the MOE in 2015 completely reclaimed this power. According to Arab News (2015):

In all situations the meteorology department will continue reporting weather conditions to the Ministry of Education and the education departments through text messages and faxes. The Security and Safety Department in the Ministry will receive the reports and pass them on to the relevant bodies.

Only the headteacher from the private school showed that he was able to increase the school time for some students, particularly those in the third year of secondary stage, who need to focus on QIYAS and SAAT exams, which was in his view reflected in better student performance in the last three years (assessment will be described in the next section).

6.4.7 School finance and funding

As previously mentioned, this theme was a combination of two elements from the work of Caldwell and Spinks (1992) and Bullock and Thomas (1997). One of the main issues raised in the interviews was the procedure for transferring money to the school. A headteacher and relevant committee responsible for the school budget need to spend the money at the beginning of the academic year (from the catering budget or their own in some cases), then they submit the budget sheet and invoices for their spending. Alsharari (2010) reported that headteachers are accountable for maintaining detailed records of all transactions and need to be financially skilled in communicating with the DOE if there is a 'shortage' in the school budget. In some cases in this study, the school only received the money at the end of the academic year. The potential impact of this delay in receiving funds from the DOE emerged as a finding in this thesis.

Both the headteachers at the Tatweer and the public schools referred to this lack of budget. Furthermore, they are not allowed to ask parents for funding or any kind of financial support. This finding adds to the existing research of Alahmady (2008), Aldossary (2008), Alhumaidhi (2013) and Almoray (2015), who collectively found that headteachers worked with limited finances. Similar to this thesis, Alyami (2014) reported that there was no significant increase in financial autonomy

after the implementation of the new policy (Tatweer programme), which would help the school to undertake its activities and programmes. Meemar (2014) argued for the need to increase headteachers' authority regarding operation of the school budget. The headteachers in this thesis also want this authority.

This lack of budget could negatively affect school performance and services and is one obstacle to implementing the new policy. Alhumaidhi (2013), reported frustration among school staff, as they had to work within a limited budget, with lack of support from the DOE and parents; lack of CPD training opportunities and difficulties with the supply of school resources, student activities and school maintenance. Moreover, increasing school budgets might open the door to encouraging parents to support schools. When the role of parents shifts from passive to active this might encourage a school council and a headteacher to take their voices into account, which in return could increase their commitment and sense of ownership of the school.

Not surprisingly, the private school was not 'suffering' from a lack of budget, as the parents pay the tuition fees at the beginning of the academic year and a school can raise extra funding from them when needed for certain activities such as the traditional shop [see Figures 31 and 32]. One lesson which can be learned from the private school (parents from the middle and upper classes who send their students to study at private school pay an annual tuition fee of about £3,000) is that it would probably not be difficult for Saudi families in both public and Tatweer schools to raise a little amount of money to support their child's school, when needed. The challenge is for this to be permitted.

6.4.8 People; hiring\ firing school staff

This theme emerged from the data and was part of the framework of Caldwell and Spinks (1992), which concerns the decentralisation of decisions related to the allocation of people in matters relating to teaching and learning. In more detail, this theme relates to allocating teachers and staff and hiring\ firing them. One limitation of the new policy, according to headteachers, is that it does not allow school leaders or the School Council to hire/fire teachers or staff even if there is a shortage of staff in schools. This power is still centralised and held by the MOE and not passed to school level, and this finding is confirmed by Alsharari (2010). Headteachers need to ask the DOE to supply new teachers/staff. The Tatweer programme did not lead to any freedom in terms of hiring/ firing staff, which is consistent with the findings of Alyami (2014). Al-Shammari and Jubran (2011), interviewed seven Deputy Ministers in the MOE and the study revealed that six of them did not support the idea that a school could hire/fire teachers or school staff. This certainly points

to a further lack of trust from top management in the MOE for schools or even for districts, as the DOE also cannot hire/fire staff. The policy makes no allowance for a change here.

The situation in this study appeared more centralised than this, as the headteachers/school councils had no voice on allocating/moving teachers or staff to other schools. Alyami (2014), reported that the Tatweer program also did not allow headteachers to remove teachers from their school. The policy indicates that (power number 44, see Appendix B) a headteacher can transfer a teacher who is achieving less than 85% in annual assessments to another school, but this power is only on paper and not applicable in government schools, as evident in the findings chapter. Supervisor 4 indicated that headteachers cannot access information about school staffing needs, so they cannot transfer teachers to other schools.

In my view, this power could lead to conflict between schools and it is not appropriate to move a lower achieving teacher as all schools are looking for high-qualified teachers. It is a complex situation for schools, as headteachers/school councils cannot hire/fire teachers, but on the other hand, as Alnahdi (2013) stated, teachers in Saudi Arabia have quite good job security with little chance of losing their job regardless of performance. We are left with a situation where headteachers must often work under stress because the MOE, DOE and community require them to provide children with high quality teaching, whilst the regulations do not allow them to be part of the employment process, or even to have their voice heard in allocating/transferring teachers between schools. I will provide my recommendation in the next chapter to address this problem.

Only the MOE has the authority to employ teachers and staff in the education system and the DOE can allocate them to schools (public and Tatweer), based upon their needs. However, this is not the case in private schools, where school councils can hire/fire teachers and staff with no control from the MOE or DOE unless they use their general criteria for who can be accepted as teachers, such as those holding a bachelor's degree.

The headteacher at the Tatweer school commented on this power as the main element of a headteacher's strength in private schools, where the headteacher is in a strong position in terms of teachers' accountability. According to Alnahdi (2013) one of the obstacles in Saudi Arabia is a lack of accountability for teachers' performance. The only advantage of the new policy is that it allows headteachers in government schools to deduct money from a teacher's salary when they are absent from school, which is linked directly to the DOE and the headteacher's task is to write to the DOE with this information. The advantage of involving the community and parents in hiring and firing teachers, which increases the accountability, is that it enhances the quality of teaching, which in turn impacts positively on student learning (see Carr-Hill, et al. 2014).

Chapter 6

To sum up, the differences between working in a private school and a government schools are: (1) teachers receive higher salaries in government schools; (2) in terms of job security, working in a government school teachers have less chance of losing their job and they have lifetime job security (Alnahdi, 2013), even if they do not work effectively. However, teachers in a private school can lose their job if they do not perform well and the contracts are renewed each year. In addition, private schools take into account the voices of parents and students in their evaluation of teachers.

Finally, it is important to consider that the ability of school councils to hire/fire teachers and school staff is an advanced stage of decentralisation implementation according to Bellenberg et al., (2001), which may take a long time to implement in the Saudi education system.

6.4.9 Admissions

In order to move towards a decentralised system, schools need autonomy to set specific criteria for accepting students. In this study, the school councils in the public and the Tatweer schools lack power in terms of admissions, as all the students come directly from the nearest schools. The headteacher cannot currently reject any students unless there is no available place for them. A recent example illustrates the power of the DOE. In 2016 three headteachers in Jeddah were fired for not following the rules about accepting students. They rejected some students who were sent from the DOE (Alriyadh, 2016). In the quantitative data, over half of teachers responded 'low' to the question about the school's ability to set admission criteria.

The headteacher in the Tatweer school spoke of the negative effect of this procedure and in particular the free transfer of pupils into Tatweer schools, impacting the numbers on the roll. This point concurs with the findings of Alsughair (2014), who reported that overcrowded classrooms have a negative effect upon students and teachers and that schools have no control over this.

The only advantage of the new management policy was the freedom to develop a 'School Guidance and Counseling Committee', which is lead by the headteacher and which oversees the acceptance of students from outside the district who meet admission criteria. Meemar (2014), revealed that this admission process was highly praised by headteachers.

The private school was able to set specific criteria for accepting students who pass their entrance test and interview. They believe that students who are low achievers face difficulties in their school, as it has a high rank in Medina.

6.4.10 Assessment

Schools need to establish authority over how pupils are to be assessed. The data in this study shows that the new management policy grants headteachers the power to reassess some students if they fail, which can give headteachers space to make internal decisions based on individual student circumstances. Also, the policy allows headteachers to identify teachers to design examination questions, even if they do not teach that class “Assigning the appropriate teacher to set questions for the school subjects within their specialization for their classes; this is assigned to the head teachers of the preparatory and secondary schools” (see power 35 Appendix B). This can solve some problems when a new teacher (for example) has limited experience in designing examination questions.

Such autonomy can be advantageous as the school can set their own criteria for assessment based upon student needs. In this study, all headteachers indicated that they practice this power with teachers. Students no longer take the national exam and each school can adopt their own methods of assessment such as: examinations, portfolios, projects, research and assignments. In my view, this is a positive step towards increasing school independence and maybe in the future transferring curriculum and assessment design to school level, or at least to the DOE in each district. However, this finding tends to contradict Algarni and Male (2014), who indicated that the MOE was at the time of this study, still responsible for evaluating school performance for students.

A different set of disadvantages is related to the whole evaluation system in Saudi education. While the MOE allows schools to set their own assessment criteria, there remains a lack of trust in their results. Subsequently, the MOE established national assessment for students who want to study at university. These new national tests are Qiyas: SAAT and GAT exams (NCFAIHE, 2015) (Qiyas; is an Arabic word that means assessment). Each university has their own calculation method for combining SAAT, GAT and secondary school results for each student. Acceptance is based upon a specific calculation, for example, Taibah University (in Medina) give the secondary school result 40%, SAAT 30% and GAT 30%, but generally other universities give between 20% and 60% to the school result and 30% to 50% for SAAT and GAT exams (Alansary, 2011). In this study, students raised their concerns about SAAT and GAT tests during interviews, saying that they were more important than the school assessment as they have more weight in the overall evaluation, and can allow them to study the subject they wish to study at university.

6.4.11 Information

In the Saudi education system, schools must submit all information to the NOOR system, which is controlled by the MOE. The NOOR system gathers data from all public, Tatweer and private schools. This information includes demographics and outcomes, e.g. the number of staff and students, the amount of equipment and students' grades. Also, there are several services for parents and school staff such as: (1) acceptance of students in the first grade; (2) transfer of students from one school to another; (3) inquiries about student results (Alghamdi, 2012). In this study, concern was expressed about the NOOR system by headteachers. However, the viewpoint of the policy makers in the MOE is that it controls student outcomes and allows parents to access their child's results automatically (Alghamdi, 2012). This new system gathers all the raw data about education and allows the MOE to know everything about schools' performance and demographic data in order for them to supply staff and resources and draw up a sufficient national plan. The only limitation noted by the headteachers was the lack of access to the data and the inability to compare schools in the same city to see if school outcomes have increased over time after the implementation of the new management policy. According to Kussau and Brusemeiter (2007), one of the essential aspects of implementing decentralisation in education is the availability of information for school administrators and teachers. It is recommended that policy makers in Saudi should allow school administrators access to data so that they can make long-term comparisons and see trends in data over several years to inform school development plans.

In the quantitative data from the teachers' questionnaire, the theme 'Information' was scored 'low' and only 56% of teachers who participated in the questionnaire believed that schools' information about pupil performance was disseminated externally. Moreover, from the parents' questionnaire, the findings reinforced the lack of communication about school information, as 62.8% chose 'never' or 'rarely' in relation to the frequency of feedback from teachers about their child's achievements. It may be that children chose not pass the information on to their parents and that happened when I was a teacher and some students kept their exam results in their bags and did not mention them to their parents! To the question of whether the school provided parents with regular reports describing their child's educational progress, parents' answers were slightly similar, as 49% chose 'never' or 'rarely', 18% sometimes, 20% very often and finally 13% 'always'. The findings of Robertson et al (1995), showed that SBM has led to more formal mechanisms for spreading information among school staff and the community, while struggling schools have limited ways of sharing information among stakeholders and tend to be informal rather than formal in their communication.

One of the main objectives of the NOOR centralised system is linking parents and schools and allowing parents access to their children's data, including exam results and teachers' feedback. The lines of communication ensure that parents receive information directly from the school and not by hand from the pupil. Also, another advantage is that it saves parents time by allowing them to send inquiries to teachers through the system. Parents and students can open an account on the NOOR system and check their progress anytime, anywhere, even from a mobile. The MOE aims to provide consulting, supervision and training courses through the NOOR system in the future (Alsakran, 2012).

The findings in this theme are considered to be a new contribution to the field of education, as the researcher has not found any published studies discussing the NOOR system or how schools disseminate their information to the community.

6.5 Summary

The overall evaluation of the new management policy is that it is a positive but small step towards decentralisation, but has had limited success in terms of changing work in schools. The following statement from Teacher 2 in the public school is indicative of the general view: *"There is no big change; teachers are not involved in the school plan, curriculum, organisation or budget. The school has not published the plan for all teachers, students and parents."*

This overall conclusion about the policy was supported by the findings of the study by Almannie, (2015) who stated that:

there are major efforts to develop leadership at school level in order to initiate SBM, but the developments are still in the initial stages and will be limited because the emphasis is still on the centralization of decisions, although there have been some positive developments toward decentralization, and these are more significant than before the Tatweer project.

The positive changes include some adjustments to the curriculum, an emphasis on the role of school boards, societies and clubs within school buildings as a means to opening new lines of communication with parents and the community, increasing the number of deputies, use of the executive budget and increasing general school activities.

6.6 SECTION FOUR

6.6.1 Policy and the 'voices' of teachers, parents and pupils

This section will answer the fourth and fifth research questions: 'To what extent were students involved in decisions related to their school?' and 'How did parents view their relationship with schools as a function of the new decentralisation policy?'

6.6.1.1 Lack of democracy: school council selection procedures

The new management policy provides guidelines for headteachers about how to operate a school council or board. A school council should consist of the headteacher, deputies, school counselor, lead teacher, three parents, three students and two members from the private sector. In the Tatweer guidelines, school councils should meet at least once a month (Tatweer School Council Guideline, 2013). School councils operate under headteachers' authority. The aim of the council is determined by the school's needs and objectives, and it should support the school to achieve these. Therefore, in this section the discussion will be focused on the voices of three particular groups: teachers, students and parents, in relation to school councils and general decision-making opportunities. The new management policy in Saudi tends to be under 'administrative control', as the headteacher holds the main powers and makes most of the decisions, when we recall the four forms of school council described by Leithwood and Menzies (1998) which are;

1. administrative control where the principal is central
2. professional control when the authority is held by the teachers
3. community control when the community or the parents, through a board, are in charge
4. balanced control when the authority is balanced between the parents and the professionals (both teachers and the principal)

Headteacher 1 indicated that the process of decision-making goes through several stages. In some instances the headteacher takes the decision alone if it is an urgent matter. Some decisions go through a small council or the School Council, such as actions related to the school's annual plan. At the Tatweer school, the policy states that the School Council should run every month, but the findings contradict this. In fact, Headteacher 1 said that the School Council ran twice a year, which does not follow the expectations set out in the policy. Parents need encouragement, and meaningful involvement in school decision-making. Shatkin and Gershberg (2007) highlight that in order to build a successful decentralised system, parents need to have an active role in elected school councils to share decision-making opportunities. The headteacher is central to developing and sustaining these links.

As previously mentioned, the headteacher in this school (Tatweer) refused to involve parents in the interviews or provide any of their contact details. Therefore, the researcher conducted a parent questionnaire to gather data.

Not unsurprisingly, this school had little enthusiasm regarding the involvement of parents and the quantitative results and the observations confirmed this. In the parents' questionnaire, this school achieved the lowest mean score for the item 'Engagement in policy making and activates' (2.27). This might be explained by the workload placed upon the headteacher's shoulder as he has only one deputy, while similar schools have three deputies and the headteacher indicated that this was one of the biggest challenges of his job. In addition, AlSultan, (2016) found three reasons for negativity in terms of school-parent relationships; (1) the workload of school staff reduces the chance of building suitable relationships with parents; (2) lack of school staff; (3) the number of students is greater than the school's capacity.

In the public school, Headteacher 2 indicated that they mostly take decisions without parents, due to their absence at school meetings. He claimed that the School Council contained administrators and teachers only, with no parents and no students. He also claimed that letters had been sent to parents, but no responses had been received. Alshehry (2000), found that headteachers had limited communication with parents and they found it difficult to gain support from parents.

At the private school, teachers had some involvement in decision-making, if these decisions related to their work. Teacher 3 indicated that teachers are in a position to take part in decision-making and work with the headteacher at the School Council, but their power is limited and they are not involved in matters relating to school finance. Headteacher 3 described the mechanism of making decisions through three councils, (a) main School Council, which includes parents and five teachers, (b) small council, which addresses daily work for deputies and some senior teachers, and (c) Student Consulting Council that consists of the headteacher, deputies and 10 students from each grade, who act as representatives. He argued that delegation is one benefit of the new management policy. This headteacher indicated that he ran the main School Council meeting every month and parents participated, but no students were members. However, not one of the parents on this council was involved in the interviews. This is the only school which involved parents in the council, which had established a student council and a commitment to set a monthly School Council meeting. This democratic environment can be taken as an inspiration for other schools and school leaders and is evidence of how the private school is taking advantage of this specific element of the policy.

6.6.2 Teachers' voices

School decision-making and policy planning has traditionally not involved teachers, but the trend of educational reforms globally seeks to involve teachers and empower them in school decision-making (Cheung and Kan, 2009; Gaziel, 2009; Lucey and Hill-Clarke, 2008). The findings of this thesis show that teachers have limited involvement in school decision-making. In the teachers' questionnaire, more than half of teachers responded to the question about their involvement in school decision-making, as being 'low'. Also, 65% teachers had limited involvement in decision-making groups (such as school councils) at their school. This finding was confirmed by Alsalahi (2014), as one teacher involved in his study said; *"We lack voices on the main issues that relate to our teaching. We are forced to apply and follow the teacher's guide book, this is only one example. We are always watched by our head teachers"* (p. 1417).

According to Lin, (2014), in an educational decentralisation system, teacher empowerment could be considered as a fundamental factor in shifting authority from high level (MOE) towards lower levels. Also, Caldwell and Spinks (1992) indicated that the role of teacher should be less passive practitioner and more active participant in school decision-making. Therefore, it can be considered that the policy has had limited success in changing the role of teachers within the Saudi education system from passive practitioners to more active participants. The benefit of involving teachers in any school development plan is that it can lead to greater commitment (Caldwell, 2004; Cheung and Cheng, 2002; Gaziel, 2009). This involvement can bring greater success in the implementation.

The policy did not indicate the process of empowering teachers or how to involve them in school decision-making. Rather the policy provides guidelines for headteachers about each power or responsibility, such as some powers are held by headteachers only and some by the School Council only. Therefore, teachers as a group were not specifically referred to in the policy unless as a member of school council or actors in decision-making, which confirms that the system does not tend towards professional control according to the categorization of Leithwood and Menzies (1998). Data from the teacher questionnaire shows that some 56% of teachers perceived that there was little encouragement from headteachers to be involved in decision-making, and 34% felt that the level of encouragement was 'medium'. It might be as a result of the cultural influence of not encouraging more stakeholders to take part in the School Council. Cheung and Cheng (2002), recommended that headteachers should establish strategies for teachers to encourage them to contribute to school decision-making in order to move towards a more decentralised system. Finally, in order to make decentralisation successful in schools, the role of students and parents

on the school councils should be defined and be clear (Walberg et al., 2000). Those roles did not appear to have been clarified in any of the three case schools in this thesis.

Another limitation of the policy is that it does not provide guidelines for headteachers to choose eligible teachers to become members of school councils. The selection is typically based on headteachers' preferences and sometimes the oldest teachers are selected to show respect for expertise. This is part of the Saudi culture, as the hierarchical system is significant and the eldest always come first. In the Tatweer school, teachers indicated the lack of engagement in decision-making, that the headteacher was working with his selected group and that he had not encouraged them to be part of the decision-making process. This is one of the weaknesses in the policy, as there is no structure for headteachers or school councils to follow in order to choose who would be a good representative of teachers' voices. It can also be linked to the lack of a democratic culture in Saudi, where public people have little engagement in politics, elections or democracy in general. In the Saudi context, Alsalahi (2014) found that teachers were disempowered to practice their leadership capacity, due to two reasons: (1) school culture and (2) top-down policy. Davison and Martinsons (2002), stated that it is important to consider teacher empowerment in terms of its suitability to specific cultural contexts, to move towards giving them more influence and gaining more input from them, rather than distributing propaganda about the education reforms (Lin, 2014). When teachers and staff participate in the decision-making, more effective outcomes are achieved (Botha, 2006).

Teachers at the private school had a better chance of working with the headteacher at the School Council and their voices were heard. In turn, the students' results were higher, which may be linked to teacher engagement. This finding is also consistent with Botha (2006), who found that South African headteachers in good schools participate in the decision-making with teachers and staff using a democratic style, whilst the headteachers of less effective schools do it alone. Moreover, similar results showed up in a study by Robertson et al (1995), which shows that headteachers in highly innovative schools tended to empower teachers and involve a range of groups in decision-making and teachers are the primary source of new ideas about new practices, which is linked to the general level of improvement in these schools.

6.6.3 Students' voices

Students' participation in decision-making and learning within a democratic environment can have a positive impact on school decision-making and activities. Bäckman and Trafford (2006), argued for involving students in decision-making about school governance, improving school discipline, relationships between teachers and students, improving student learning and making a

Chapter 6

school more competitive. In the first case, a student in the Tatweer school illustrated the absence of student participation in any decision-making by saying: *“we did not participate in this decision or anything ... we want to participate in school decision-making, but they do not let us to be part of any committee.”* (Student 8, FG 2).

This could be a sign that the student voice is being ignored within the school and possibly a sign of an unhealthy relationship between students and administrators. This finding was also supported by Algarfi (2010), who reported that students' voices were absent in the classroom and teachers did not allow them to talk or participate, which was attributed to the traditional teaching style in the Saudi Education system. Engaging students in decision-making was one of the main pillars of education reform in Finland, which is considered as one of the top systems in the world (Hargreave and Shirley, 2009). However, in Saudi Arabia, school works with fixed schedules and students have no opportunity to pursue favorite activities (Alnahdi, 2013). Also, Alnahdi (2013), claimed that in any future reform, students' voices should be taken into account, particularly in terms of the school curriculum. It was evident that students in this case were frustrated that they were not consulted.

Students in the second case, the public school, reported that they had a better chance of taking part in school decision-making, and they gave two examples of recent participation in school administration; in an evaluation of the English curriculum and with regard to exam timetables and activities. Moreover, the headteacher took their voices into account by choosing some students to consult with them at a meeting about cultural activities, sport and school trips. This mechanism of involving students is not very formal compared with the private school, which has a specific council for students and is run at certain times with elective members. The private school has clearly found a way of involving students and taking their voices into account, students reported that *“we participated in a Student Consulting Council to discuss our needs, fears and hopes* (Student 7, FG 2)”. Another student confirmed that and stated;

and we can suggest new activities, we can also be involved in teachers' assessment and several activities such as Islamic club, culture club, science club, computer club etc.”
(Student 15, FG 3).

Some of the emerging clubs were apparent during the observations undertaken by the researcher. The researcher also observed photographs of pupil council representatives, but did not collect images of them.

6.6.3.1 Students' voices regarding teachers' evaluation

One particular development at the private school was the involvement of parents and students in teacher evaluation. The headteacher indicated that they renewed teachers' contracts each year based upon certain criteria, including parent and student evaluations. On the other hand, both the Tatweer and public schools did not involve parent or student in teachers' evaluation. The reason might be the nature of the contract between teachers and the MOE, as even the headteachers' evaluations are not taken into account as part of the contract renewal because working in the government sector is a life-long career. Alnahdi (2013), stated that teachers in Saudi Arabia have job security as losing a government job is almost impossible.

6.6.4 Parents' voices

Research has found that there is a positive impact on children's performance if parents are involved in school life. Orazem, et al. (2004) reported the positive impact of parental participation in school life upon pupil achievement. Moreover, there is significant research both nationally and internationally, which indicates that parental involvement has a positive impact on children's performance and there is a need for more engagement between parents and schools (Robertson, et al 1995; Goodall, and Vorhaus, 2011; and Campbell, 2011).

In this study there was little engagement between parents and schools in two of the settings. The private school showed some movement towards involving teachers, students and parents in school decision-making at school councils, which is considered a positive step towards decentralisation and achieving one of the aims of the new management policy in Saudi Education. This finding aligns with AlMakadma and Ramisetty-Mikler (2015), who found that one-third of the students (35%) in a study reported that their parents never attended any school events.

Parents' involvement has a positive impact on satisfaction (Leithwood and Menzies 1998). The community and parents have increased satisfaction with their schools. In the gulf region, moreover, in Qatar, parents and students in independent schools demonstrated a higher level of satisfaction compared with those in Ministry schools (Zellman, et al. 2009). Similarly, in this study, private school parents were more satisfied with their child's school than those from the Tatweer and public schools.

In order to move to a decentralised system, the role of parents needs change, from passive to active. Lewis, et al. (2007), provided several ways to involve parents in school life, such as school newsletters, gathering parents' views as part of school self-evaluation, encouraging parents to contact and or visit the school, special events for parents (e.g. information or discussion

evenings), a school website, an active Parent Teacher Association, parents involvement in out-of-school learning activities, parental involvement in the classroom, educational opportunities for parents (e.g. ICT/Literacy, numeracy classes). In all three Saudi cases, the main communication channels were (1) official letters, (2) a SIM text message system, and (3) calling via mobile phone. The differences between the three cases were as follows; Tatweer and public schools gain funding from the DOE to open social clubs in the evening for students and parents (see Figure 21). On the other hand, the private school (1) uses special events such as the traditional shops (see Figures 31, 32) and (2) uses the school website effectively by allowing each parent to have a username and password to access to the student portal (3) involves parents in the evaluation of school staff, which is a further step towards a more parent-engaged system.

Cheong Cheng, (1993) described the role of a parent in externally controlled management schools, as that of a “passive receiver”. There was no chance for them to be involved in the school process or to emphasise their expectations. This observation concurs with the situation in two schools in this study. On the other hand, in the SBM system (decentralised model) the situation is different, as the role of a parent is that of a “partner” and “supporter”. This would be a new step for Saudi Arabia and it is recommended that Saudi parents should be involved in the school process, decision-making and should put an effort into assisting with healthy development, contributing resources and information and more (Cheong Cheng, 1993).

This lack of parental engagement in school decision-making or participation in the annual plan of schools, resonates with AlMakadma, and Ramisetty-Mikler, (2015) who stated, in Saudi schools there is “low parental involvement in school related activities, demonstrating the need for school officials to plan activities that promote parental involvement” (p .132). All parents who took part in the interviews (parents from the public and private schools as Tatweer school parents were not included) confirmed that they were not involved in any school council meetings and knew little about the activities. One stated: “we never attend any school council”. Not only the interviews, also the quantitative findings, revealed that the majority of parents do not engage with school-decision making. These findings are supported by Altoajery (2001); Alkhanjer (2001) and more recently, AlSultan (2016), who reported that 72% of parents do not engage in school activities.

The findings in this thesis show that parents mainly visit schools when they have an inquiry about their child’s behaviour or their academic performance. Similar results were found by Gessler and Ashmawy (2014), who indicated that several headteachers claimed that one of the difficulties of involving numerous stakeholders in school decision-making is the passive role of parents who only visit the school when there is a problem with their child. Students also reported that their parents had no time to discuss what they study in school with them (PEEC, 2015).

Supervisors indicated that some schools had established parent teacher associations and they believed that this was one of the positive impacts of the new policy. As reported by Almoray (2015), 82% of his study participants believed that there was a lack of community involvement in schools and that this was a barrier to school improvement in the Saudi education system. Also, it is evident from Alsharari (2010) study, that headteachers (female and male) are criticized due to their lack of collaboration with parents who only visit school in emergency cases or if there is an issue relating to the future of their children. Alsharari (2010), referred to the culture factor, as a mother cannot visit a boys' school. The negative impact of the lack of engagement of parents and students is further supported by Zellman, et al (2009) who found that parents and students in independent schools demonstrated a higher level of satisfaction compared with those in Ministry schools, due to the engagement of these stakeholders.

From my perspective as a researcher and my experience in the education field, this practice is common in Saudi Arabia and it might be linked with the culture and political system, where there is no spread of democracy. Also, I believe that in Saudi culture, people see the government sector such as schools, as a government responsibility and they do not involve themselves in school decision-making (Albeladi, 2011). Democracy and the involvement of the public are not evident in the work of the MOE or in its policies. Bynner and Parsons (2006), found that there was a positive impact of parental involvement upon children's exam results. Moreover, Topor et al (2010), found that there was a positive relationship between parental involvement and children's academic performance. AlMakadma and Ramisetty-Mikler (2015) discussed the role of Saudi culture in parental involvement with schools, as follows: (1) there is less emphasis upon extra-curricular activities in general, which means that it is more difficult for parents to be involved with their child's school; (2) there are limited official opportunities for parents to meet with teachers in school, apart from at the annual parent-teacher meeting; (3); "it is not a social expectation nor is it painted into the "ideal family picture" that parents should attend their children's school activities, which is typical in Western cultures; (4) social roles in Saudi culture are strictly defined, such that the father is the sole bread-winner and the mother is the housekeeper" (p. 132). Moreover, as a result of gender segregation in Saudi culture, women are not allowed to enter boys' schools and men cannot enter girls' schools, which makes it more difficult for a father to be involved in school activities in addition to his work responsibilities. Moreover, AlSultan (2016), suggested another cultural factor that might impact negatively on the relationship between school and family, which is family social problems, including divorced parents, lack of communication between parents, both parents are busy with their work and reliance on schools for children's discipline.

Chapter 6

One advantage of the new policy might be the movement towards building evening social clubs in school buildings in order to open them in the evenings for student, parents, teachers and the local community (see Figure 21). These clubs can enhance the relationship between the local community and schools and allow schools to ask for parent support when needed. The researcher observed these clubs and attended the schools in the evening. The advantage of these clubs is that they link the community unofficially to the school staff, build a new environment and create opportunities for the community to use school facilities, which is a common feature of the new education system. It was not evident in the private school. One recommendation is to open the school building in the evening and use the outdoor playground in order to encourage parents to visit the school. These social clubs are also noted by AlSultan (2016), who believes that they provide a good opportunity to increase the level of partnership between schools and families.

The researcher believes that headteachers could develop decision-making and involve multiple stakeholders in school life, if they wanted to do so. It is vital for headteachers to believe in parent and student involvement in school decision-making, as without this belief, the process of engaging parents and students can be at best difficult. As Shatkin and Gershberg (2007) found, effective leaders can successfully engage parents in school decision-making. In the private school case, the researcher found that the headteacher emphasised the role of parents and students and mentioned the school website many times as a fast and reliable channel to communicate with parents and students. The challenge is how to develop a similar channel in the other two schools, which are less developed.

In my view, the reasons for the greater involvement of parents and students in the private school are; (1) the level of autonomy (working with less control from the DOE); (2) the nature of the private school sector, which is based on competition to attract students to enroll, thus schools work hard to meet the high expectations of students and their parents. These can be linked to the characteristics of SBM theory. Working under a highly centralised system limits the chance for school autonomy and affects creativity and competitiveness among schools (Algarni and Male, 2014). Specifically, Hanushek and Woessmann (2007), identify three principles for SBM: (i) choice and competition; (ii) school autonomy; and (iii) school accountability. Applying these principles to the Saudi context, based on these, (1) the availability of many private schools in Medina and the competition between them to attract students: (2) the private school (as revealed in this study) has greater autonomy than the public and Tatweer schools, in terms of hiring/firing staff, finance, involving parents and students and less control from the DOE in terms of independence of decision-making.

Shatkin and Gershberg (2007), in Table (24) describe the four models for parents' participation in school-site councils. Three levels explain the degree of parents' authority in each model. In the first one, the authority is based at school level and there is a high level of decentralisation in terms of parents' involvement, school accountability and the headteacher is the centre of decision-making. There is a low level of bureaucracy. The second model is authority-led with the School Council being in charge, high involvement of parents and a high level of school accountability, but a low level of authority for the headteacher and bureaucratic oversight. At the third level, only parental involvement is high, with a low level of school accountability, headteacher centra and bureaucratic oversight. The four models can be explained as follows; (1. Parent participation) parents are the majority on the School Council and are elected. There is a high level of democracy within school, the school performance is based upon parents' commitment and organisation (Bryk et al., 1997, cited by Shatkin and Gershberg (2007)); (2. School accountability) allows numerous "school-level stakeholders a voice in order to increase their acceptance of politically sensitive attempts to hold them accountable" (p. 593), with little emphasis on community development and participation. (3. Principal centered), this decentralised model passes the power to headteachers and the role of School Council is advisory. (4. Bureaucratic oversight) in this model the authority is district-centered, with limited authority for school headteachers and School Council.

Model of School-based management	Degree of authority at school level	Degree of authority of councils	Parent representation in decision-making
Parent participation	High	High	High
School accountability	High	High	Low
Principal centered	High	Low	Low
Bureaucratic oversight	Low	Low	Low

Table 24 Four models of parent participation in School-Site Council

By comparing the findings from all three schools in this study to these four models, the findings of two schools (Tatweer and public), which are government schools, suggest that the Saudi education system can be located within the lower level of 'Bureaucratic oversight', as the parents' participation, school accountability and headteacher as the centre of decision making are all generally rated as low. The authority is held by the MOE and the DOE as explained in the previous section in each of the themes of the analysis such as 'School Power', 'Knowledge', 'Information', 'Rewards', 'Leadership', 'Resources', 'Admission', 'Assessment', 'Time', 'Building' and 'Training'.

The authority at school level appeared to be centred on using technology and the benefits of school buildings through opening social clubs to involve parents and the local community.

In contrast, the private school shows a high level of authority in some themes, which can be aligned with the first model in Table (28), the authority based on the school level as the headteacher and the small council hold most of the decision-making power relating to 'Power', 'Rewards', 'Leadership', 'Resources', 'Admission', 'Assessment', 'Time', 'Building' and 'Training'. Two themes are centralised by the MOE and the DOE, which are 'Knowledge' and 'Information'. Findings indicated that the headteacher and the school staff in the private school showed innovation by improving their methods of involving parents and students in school decision-making (through Student Consulting Council which can be linked with space for autonomy and flexibility). This finding is consistent with Drummond and Bani Al-Anazi (1997), who found that *"Saudi-Arabian managers are apparently averse to innovation and risk, restrained by fear of failure. Such caution is reflected in relatively high reliance upon authority and relatively low delegation compared to North American organisations"* (p. 3). Botha (2006), revealed that the role of the headteacher in 'good' schools was that of an innovator, motivator and mentor while the role of the less effective headteacher did not change. From my on-site observations, it was evident the headteacher in the private school was more welcoming and encouraged parents and students to participate in decision-making and school activities.

6.7 Comparing the academic results of three types of school

Given this research, the next section considers exam performance. There are several studies which support the notion of the positive impact of involving the community and implementing SBM upon student performance and test scores, such as Eskeland and Filmer (2007), Galiani et al. (2008) and Hanushek, et al. (2011). There are some major differences between the three cases in the national examination according to the National Center for Assessment in Higher Education (NCFAIHE, 2015) school rankings. The rank is based on students' performance in the General Aptitude Test GAT (QIYAS) and the Standard Achievement Admission Test (SAAT). Using the average of the last three years (2013/2014/2015), the findings will be presented in the next table (26). Interestingly, the private school achieved a high score in QIYAS and was ranked as the fourth best school in Medina out of 145 schools. It was also ranked as number 30 in Saudi Arabia out of 2132 schools. In contrast, the Tatweer School was ranked as number 24 in Medina and 473 in the whole Kingdom, while the public school came very close at number 26 in Medina and 490 in Saudi Arabia. In the SAAT test, the private school achieved a higher rank as the second best school in Medina out of 147 schools, and number 32 in the whole kingdom out of 2132 schools. The Tatweer school was ranked at number 24 out of 147 schools in Medina, and number 400 in the

KSA. The public school was number 34 in Medina and number 560 in the whole Kingdom (see the Table (25)).

	SAAT		GAT	
School name	Medina	Saudi Arabia	Medina	Saudi Arabia
Tatweer School	24	147	24	473
Public school	34	560	26	490
Private school	2	32	4	30

Table 25 Results for three types of school from the National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education (NCFIHE, 2015)

These results show the differences between the private school and the Tatweer and public schools in the national assessment and provide an indication of the quality of school outcomes and students' performance. The private school achieved a higher score compared with the public and Tatweer schools. The private school ranked as the second and fourth best school in Medina in the respective tests and this was presented on the wall of the headteacher's office and he was proud of this achievement. The headteacher believed that this was a positive impact of the implementation of SBM and an advantage of decentralisation and involving parents, students and teachers in decision-making (Hanushek et al., 2011). Moreover, the Tatweer school achieved the lowest score of all three schools in the theme "Educational progress", with a "mean" of only 1.98, compared with the public school (2.56) and the private school (2.57). The Tatweer school achieved the lowest score in the theme "Communication with local community" at 2.32 and the other schools obtained 3.13 and 3 respectively. Generally, the Tatweer school achieved the lowest score in all five themes in the parents' questionnaire, gaining an overall average of mean (in the five themes) of 2.42 compared with the highest ranking school which is the public school (2.94) and the private school (2.88) (see Table 26). Also, in the teachers' questionnaire, the Tatweer school achieved the lowest result as the average mean was 1.46, the public school achieved 1.52 and the highest ranking school was the private school at 1.87. This was not expected when the researcher started this study, as in the media the Tatweer programme is portrayed as producing top schools and the government funded it with 9 billion Riyal in 2007. It is difficult to judge the whole programme, as this is only one school out of 30 in Medina, but it shows some of the

limitations of the implementation of the new management policy in this case compared with other schools in the same city and under the same DOE.

Themes \ Mean		School 1 Tatweer	School 2 Public	School 3 Private
1	Educational progress	1.98	2.56	2.57
2	Engagement in policy making and activities	2.27	2.56	2.61
3	Taking advantage of the local community's assets	2.54	2.85	2.74
4	Communication with the local community	2.32	3.13	3.01
5	School environment	3.00	3.81	3.50
Total average of mean		2.42	2.94	2.88

Table 26 Comparing the mean of findings from the parent questionnaires

It is difficult to simply link the students' high performance with one factor, but there are numerous lessons which can be learned from the private school where the headteacher works in a flexible environment, with more independence to increase school time for students to prepare for tests, with high accountability among staff and where parents and students are involved in the assessment of school staff, where there is competition with other schools to attract students and the head has the authority to take decisions for the benefit of staff and students. In the study by Alzaidi (2008), bureaucracy and lack of autonomy were found to dominate and to cause equal job dissatisfaction for both teachers and head teachers.

6.8 SECTION FIVE

Issues around training for headteachers and staff were one of the emerging themes in this study. It is important when introducing any policy or programme to provide sufficient training for practitioners in the field. The need to train headteachers and staff who are responsible for applying SBM is supported by Baganda (2008), Al-Taneiji and McLeod (2008) and Botha (2006). This study sought to reveal 'what training issues and needs do headteachers and policy makers identify that are relevant to implementing the new management policy in their schools?'

6.8.1 Training for headteachers as 'leaders' in policy implementation

One of the main features of the new policy is that it allows a headteacher to adopt a Professional Development programme for school staff, including training programmes, exchange visits, workshops and discussion groups inside schools (power 40, Appendix B). Also, in power 48 Appendix B, the School Council can arrange for the provision of training programmes for school staff from the private sector. Neither the Tatweer or the public school showed any evidence of arranging training programmes with the private sector, and the headteachers indicated the lack of budget as the main challenge to implementing this power. However, the private school has achieved this power and has signed contracts with the private sector.

6.8.2 Lack of training programmes

All participants from the public and Tatweer schools indicated the lack of available training programmes provided by the DOE for school staff, including headteachers, deputies and teachers. Not unlike Algarni and Male (2014), participants in this study felt that the MOE was still responsible for offering training programmes for school staff. Training courses remain centrally controlled (the number of boys' schools in Medina is 674, (DOE, 2014)) and Medina is served by one main centre called the 'Educational Training Centre'. It could be argued that such centres do not have the capacity to deal with policy related training.

In the private school the situation was different and the staff claimed that they received a high level of training, as the school does not rely on the DOE training centre, can adopt their own training courses by signing contracts with the private sector and school staff can run training groups for their colleagues. As Teacher 3 indicated:

we have training programmes constantly, we have a training course almost every week. The topics of the training courses are several such as 'Educational materials', 'Educational training courses', 'Dealing with the students', 'Active learning', 'Computing', 'Teaching methods' and 'Technology'.

Therefore, the next themes 'suitability', 'need' and 'motivation' are not examined in relation to the private school, only in relation to the public and Tatweer schools.

The perspective on training provided by teachers was in contrast to the perspectives offered by supervisors, who claimed that the DOE provided sufficient training course for school staff and that their content covered several areas of interest such as strategic management, effective leadership and so on. However, there was evidence which showed the lack of such training courses. This is confirmed by Alsalahi (2014), who found that teachers believed that they received poor training

Chapter 6

courses, which in turn impacted negatively upon their leadership ability. The researcher searched for published information about training courses on the DOE website. On the DOE website, the total number of training programmes provided for school staff in Medina City was 168 courses during the second semester of the academic year 2014/15 (there are two semesters in the Saudi education system). Nine of these training courses can be considered as related to the new management policy and only one course specifies the name of the policy “the new management policy”.

Most of these courses have a capacity of between 20 and 25 persons. The number of school staff in Medina totals 13593, including teachers, headteachers and deputies (DOE, 2014). If we divide the number of school staff in Medina by the number of courses, we find that there are 80 trainees for each course, but as mentioned above, the number of available places only totals 20 to 25 (DOE, 2015). This suggests a shortfall of some 55 staff per course who will not receive any training this semester.

The lack of available training programmes is confirmed by several studies in Saudi Arabia, such as Alahmady (2008), who revealed that there was little chance for teachers to complete their postgraduate study and CPD. Other studies found that headteachers and deputies in KSA lack (in-service) training (Alshehry, (2000); Alolaqi, (2000); AlKhanjer, (2001); Alzahrany, (2013)). Moreover, the voices of the two supervisors in this thesis were not consistent with the study by Almannie (2015), who found that 69% of the supervisors disagreed with the statement, ‘Training programs are designed for the professional development of school principals and teachers’.

Alyami (2014), claimed that in Tatweer schools: *“Teachers and head teachers have had intensive training to gain a high level of qualifications”*. However, the findings of this study did not show that. It is quite likely that in the capital city of Riyadh, and in Alqasseem, there are more chances for Tatweer staff to attend training courses. In this study, the headteacher in the Tatweer school indicated that they have a specific policy programme, but overall, training courses are limited, a point also confirmed by teachers. The finding of my study is supported by Alghamdi and Higgins (2015), who found that 60% of teachers in their study did not obtain any training either from the Department of Education or the private sector.

The headteachers all indicated that they did not receive enough training to implement the new management policy. The only course was a short meeting for three hours, which was not nearly enough in their view. This observation is similar to the work of Al-Taneiji and McLeod (2008), who found that in the UAE no one had received professional development in order to prepare them for decentralisation. It is important to emphasise to policymakers in KSA that all educators need to receive sufficient training before any implementation of decentralisation or SBM, and they need

to be mindful of the following: *'Training and preparation will be required for the whole education community before decentralization can be successfully implemented'* (Al-Taneiji and McLeod, 2008, p. 289). Like others, Theodorou (2006) also emphasised the need for training to improve head teachers' skills in order for them to be able to manage school finances. In this thesis, headteachers confirmed that the lack of training provided for them was one of the biggest challenges to successfully implementing decentralisation. This was also consistent with the findings of Mitchell (1990), who outlined that a lack of training for school staff members led to a reluctance to be involved in SBM. Many studies confirm that teachers' capacity and their professional development can determine the quality of schools (Borko, 2004; Fendler, 2003). Public and Tatweer schools do not have the financial capability to operate CPD in their buildings and so their capacity to improve quality remains limited.

In the absence of available training programmes, school staff are likely to rely upon their ability to improve their skills through 'self learning' or through their colleagues. To that end, Alghamdi and Higgins (2015), reported that the main sources of training for teachers in using technology in schools, such as 'interactive whiteboards', were; (1) self-training and (2) their colleagues.

6.8.3 Suitability

The centralized system overseeing training was viewed negatively. Some participants indicated that the time, place and content of the training programmes were not suitable for them. Timing tended to clash with school events, programmes and unexpected visitors from the DOE. Algarni and Male (2014), argued that the MOE are responsible for organising the training programmes, which can be held in the DOE. The location of the DOE main training centre is, in some cases, far away from the case schools. Supervisors tended to support a 'mass in-service' model given the number of schools they oversee and claim that their centre is ready to receive a huge number of school staff. The idea of mass in-service training has been criticized in the literature (Duncombe and Armour, 2004). In my opinion, it is not about the capacity of the centre, but rather about the suitability. Providing training courses inside schools can bring multiple benefits for staff who understand their work environment and their needs and is more in line with current thinking in CPD (Duncombe, and Armour, 2004; Kempton, 2013).

Also, the quality of content and the ability of the presenter discouraged the teachers to attend these courses, as some trainers, it was claimed, do not practice what they preach and were not specialists in the course topic. Alsalahi, (2014) similarly quoted this from one of the teacher interviews: *"frankly speaking, our training programmes were done by non-specialists"*. In government schools, staff have no choice but to attend the courses, as the DOE sets everything in

advance. In contrast, in the private school, a headteacher can choose among different training companies and ensure the quality of the programmes. After reviewing the literature about training in Saudi Arabia, Al Mulhim found that *“the quality of the training programmes in ICT in Saudi Arabia is not as professional as it should be”* (2014: p. 490).

In my view, the main reason for these challenges (time, place, content), is that the DOE set the training programmes without consulting schools. The DOE sets the content, time and place based on their preference and not based on the needs of school staff. One benefit of implementing decentralisation is that the setting understands its needs at ‘the lower level’. The new policy seeks to respond to these challenges by allowing schools to sign contracts with training companies from the private sector, in order to provide training courses in school based on the needs of school staff. Although there was much support for this authority, all participants from the public and Tatweer schools confirmed that the lack of budget for schools was not helping them to take advantage of this power. These headteachers stated that building maintenance, cleaners’ salaries and cleaning services tend to absorb the available budget, leaving nothing for training. Both the public and Tatweer schools show no evidence of signed contract with private company to do training based on schools. The headteacher in the private school indicated that they have contracts with some private companies to provide courses when needed. Also, from my observations and collected images (see Figures 23 and 25), ironically each school has a suitable space in their resource centre in which to host training courses with projectors, whiteboards and seating for more than 30 attendees, but whilst it was evident that this opportunity was being taken to some extent in the private school it was not being taken at all in the other two case settings.

6.8.4 Needs

The idea of this theme emerged from both the interviews and the questionnaire data, and was designed to find out if the training programmes provided for school staff matched their needs. Headteacher (1) critiqued the DOE strategy for determining the needs of school staff and claimed that it is a highly centralised strategy. This was recently endorsed by Alsalahi’s (2014) study of teachers, one of whom said, *“They did not consult us or engage us in choosing them. They are one size fits all”* (p. 1418).

This centralised process is particularly inflexible in determining the needs of these professionals. The DOE needs to design training programmes for individuals on the basis of an analysis of school performance and priorities. Headteacher 1 in particular pointed to an urgent need to work

together to bridge the gap between what the DOE provide and what each school actually needs, in term of embedding policy into practice.

In terms of the content of training courses, Headteacher 2 from the public school indicated their needs as follows:

we need more training to deal with new changes. Last year we had a budget deficit because we did not get enough training to deal with new functions in the new policy and the new executive budget, which was increased compared with the last few years. We need special training for budget planning, finance and supervision of teaching of the new curriculum.

In the quantitative data, teachers received training to enhance their knowledge and skills as follows: (1) 82% in Teaching and instruction; (2) 55% in Use of technology; (3) 20% in Participation; (4) 17% in Management. This shows the importance of training in teaching and instruction and the lack of training aimed at increasing managerial skills for teachers. These skills are important for classroom and time management, allow teachers to cooperate with school administrators and prepare them to be manager/leaders in their schools. Alsalahi's (2014) recommendation that teachers need to be engaged in decision-making in order to improve school leadership, is echoed in this study. Also, he described the reasons for teacher disempowerment as follows: (1) the system ignores their role; (2) top-down policy; (3) excessive work; (4) weaknesses in training.

6.8.5 Lack of motivation to attend training programmes

Lack of motivation to attend training programmes can affect the organizers of CPD, who are the DOE and school staff. Headteachers and teachers indicated that there was a lack of motivation to attend training programmes at the DOE centre. The poor quality of these programmes was one of the main reasons for this. The second reason is that when school staff choose to absent themselves from these training programmes, there are consequences for their salary, contract or annual premium pay. Participants link CPD with their salary and the renewal of their contracts and annual premium pay suggest that this is the case. Also, there is a need for some training programmes inside schools, working with teachers to assess and develop their skills in the classroom. These reasons for teachers' lack of motivation to attend training may be resolved by allowing schools to arrange training based upon their needs, which was theoretically set out in the new management policy, but which is not practiced due to the lack of financial support.

Chapter 6

Alzahrany, (2013) claimed that Saudi teachers lack motivation to attend training courses in the DOE training centre generally, and these centres lack money and professionalism. He supposed that the reasons were: (1) headteachers do not encourage teachers to attend; (2) the impact on the school timetable as a lack of staff means that the school is often reluctant for teachers to be absent from school for several days; (3) teachers' perceptions of trainers, i.e. they need to have had at least ten years of experience in the subject and the educational field; (4) the quality of the training programmes as they are based upon lectures not practical work; (5) lack of financial support for teachers to attend compared with other government employees.

6.9 Summary

Suitable training and professional development programmes are a vital part of applying any new policy in the education field. The policy permits public and Tatweer schools to sign contracts with private companies in order to provide relevant training programmes for school staff. However, neither school showed any evidence of having done this; the key reason being the lack of budget. The DOE training programmes are limited in number. While public and Tatweer schools are struggling with (policy – based) training for their staff, private schools have greater space and budget to provide training courses and sign contracts with private companies. The latter example illustrates the ability of educators to practice these powers, if they have suitable support from the DOE.

Participants from the public and Tatweer schools spoke of the consequences of centralised training programmes provided by the DOE, in terms of the unsuitability of timing, place and content. This needs to be considered in the future and a combination of a central in-service model and a more decentralised approach is advised, which would develop specific training programmes for each school's needs in a meeting of 'top down' and 'bottom up'.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and recommendation chapter

7.1 Introduction

This study aimed to investigate the extent to which schools had implemented a new management policy, which was launched in Saudi Arabia in 2010/11 by the MOE in order to empower school headteachers and give schools greater autonomy. The policy contains 52 powers, which serve as guidelines for headteachers to discharge their responsibilities with a view to moving to a more decentralised school system. The study used mixed methods to gather qualitative and quantitative data including: interviews, focus groups, observations, photographs/images and questionnaires. Three schools were selected as case studies and served as the settings for data collection. The three cases represent different types of schools in Saudi: public school, Tatweer school and private school. Participants in the study included headteachers, deputies, teachers, parents, students and supervisors.

The research questions are as follows:

1. What understanding did stakeholders have of decentralisation?
2. What did headteachers and policy makers view as the benefits and challenges of implementing the new decentralisation policy in schools?
3. How did deputies and classroom teachers assess the implementation of the new decentralisation policy?
4. To what extent were students involved in decisions related to their school?
5. How did parents view their relationship with schools as a function of the new decentralisation policy?
6. What training issues and needs do head teachers and policy makers identify that are relevant to implementing the new management policy in their schools?

7.2 Overall findings for each school

Table (27) provides a summary of the key findings from all three types of school (Tatweer, public and private). The table contains five columns, the first column indicates key themes, then in three columns are the schools and the final column matches the themes with policy text from Appendix B. The aim of this comparison is to give an insight into the extent of the implementation of the new management policy. In the policy text, there were some themes where I indicated 'Not applicable' as the text did not support the theme, but the reasons these were indicated are (1) to link them with the theoretical frameworks of Caldwell and Spinks (1992) and Bullock and Thomas

Chapter 7

(1997). For example the theme 'Information' was not in the policy text, but it is important to discuss it and present the limitations of the policy in order to consider these limitations in the future, future versions of this policy in KSA might include; (2) some themes emerged from the data as the participants believed there were connections with the research questions, for example 'Understanding of decentralisation'.

The private school had implemented decentralisation to the greatest degree, followed by the public school and finally the Tatweer school. There are similarities between the three schools in some themes such as 'Understanding of decentralisation', 'Knowledge', 'Information' and 'Building'. In both the Tatweer and public schools, there were similarities in some themes as follows; current situation in terms of centralisation, hiring/firing teachers and staff, power, using technology, leadership, resources, admission, assessment, time, school finance, training and building relationships with the private sector. Data indicated that the private school had shown more progress in the implementation of these themes.

Themes	School 1 Tatweer	School 2 Public	School 3 Private	Policy text (Appendix B)
Understanding of decentralisation	Similar understanding of decentralisation Students and parents need to be aware of the policy	Similar understanding of decentralisation - Students and parents need to be aware of the policy	Similar understanding of decentralisation - Students and parents need to be aware of the policy	
	* Supervisors showed a high level of understanding and mentioned SBM as the final aim of implementing decentralisation.			
Current situation in terms of centralisation	centralisation still exists and more independence is required - NMP good step	Similar claim about centralisation still existing and more independence required - NMP good	Working with less control from the DOE - NMP good step	The aim of the policy is to shift to decentralisation

		step		
Relationship with parents	Parents are enjoying the social club and are meeting teachers and students in a safe environment	Parents are visiting more and the school has a friendly relationship with them Parents are involved in the social club	Events such as the traditional shop are innovative and involve parents and students. May need to build a social club to encourage parents to build a relationship with the school	Parents are members of School Council and must be informed when there is, for example an increase in school time, a school trip, the school day is suspended, there are dangerous students
Hiring/firing teachers and staff	Remains centralised by the MOE	Remains centralised by the MOE	Full independence to hire/fire teachers and staff	Not applicable
Power	Lack of power lack of school council Needs more work to spread democracy, elect members of school council and involve students and parents	Lack of power lack of school council Needs more work to spread democracy, elect members of school council and involve students and parents	Greater power in decision making, and involving teachers in the School Council, Established two councils (for parents and students) Students have elections to choose representatives	Powers (1) approving school council, (2) merging school councils when necessary (3) approving the operational plans of the school and student activities (4) approving the increment of the number of the school classes or decreasing them (11) giving school staff emergency leave (12) accepting sick leave (21) assigning staff tasks (25) approving the students' distribution in classes (26) approving the fixed teacher classes and moving students (36) minimizing the equation of the teacher who gets assigned with extra tasks under a condition (38) minimizing the

				academic plan when there are not sufficient teachers
Knowledge	Centralised by the MOE	Centralised by the MOE	Centralised by the MOE Provide extra lesson and activities for students	Not applicable
Information	Centralised through NOOR - MOE	Centralised through NOOR - MOE	Centralised through NOOR – MOE	Not applicable
Rewards	Slight improvement in the rewards, and teachers have not been evaluated on school goals.	Slight improvement in the rewards, and teachers have not been evaluated on school goals.	Performing better than other schools. Teachers are evaluated and rewards are based on school goals and their performance	(28) Giving rewards to the students under a condition; (49) determining the teachers who deserve to have awards
School website	Limited information on the website and needs to make more effort to build this platform	No content on the school website and needs to make more effort. Many links non-operational	School website is effective for communication with parents and student learning, presenting and school activities	Not applicable
Using Technology	Invested in developing resource centre and computer labs smartboards, projectors - needs to involve students in decision-making about technology	Invested in developing resource centre and computer labs smartboards, projectors - needs to involve students in decision-making about technology	High quality technology, and invested in developing resource centre and computer labs, smartboards, projectors - needs to involve students in decision-making about	Not applicable

			technology	
Leadership	<p>Little improvement in the leadership, and teachers have less influence on school decision-making.</p> <p>Tatweer programme trained Headteacher for self-evaluation in school, and professional learning community</p>	<p>Little improvement in the leadership, and teachers have less influence on school decision-making.</p>	<p>Good progress in this theme compared with other schools and teachers involved in some decisions related to the policy and their teaching</p>	<p>Linked with 'Power' in this table</p>
Resources	<p>Centralised with less bureaucracy Tatweer schools have their own sub-department (Tatweer department) and recvied fund by the DOE to open the Resource centre</p>	<p>Centralised, and recvied fund by the DOE to open the Resource centre and Fitness club/gym</p>	<p>Full independence</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
Admission	<p>Lack of autonomy in admission and cannot set admission criteria</p>	<p>Lack of autonomy in admission and cannot set admission criteria</p>	<p>School can set admission criteria and interview students</p>	<p>(24) Approving the admission of the students who fit the provisions of admission and acceptance of those who are out of the school's geographic field.</p>
Assessment	<p>Lack of parent and student involvement in the teachers' assessment process</p>	<p>Lack of parent and student involvement in the assessment process</p>	<p>Parents and students involved in teachers' assessment process by receiving a questionnaire from the Headteacher to assess each teacher at the</p>	<p>(33) Accepting the apologies of students who come late for the first stage test in both semesters (34) re-evaluating the students during the semester (35) assigning the appropriate teacher to set exams for school subjects within their specialization for their classes; (42) evaluating the performance of all the school employees.</p>

			end of each academic term.	
School Time	Lack of power in this theme, and need permission from the DOE to change school time/cancel the school day	Lack of power in this theme, and need permission from the DOE to change school time/cancel the school day	Can add some lessons for students, with permission from the DOE	Power Number (5) Delaying or cancelling the morning queue and the school break in the school yard, according to the weather circumstances (6) Temporary changes to classes and break timings in accordance with educational benefits. (7) Increasing the school day time for a group of the school students (no more than one hour daily) for an educational program. (13) Suspending the school day in emergency cases, (no more than one day) and informing the DOE in a formal way about the procedure and the reasons for it on the same day
Building	Improvements in security and safety Building social club to use by students, staff and community	Improvements in security and safety Building social club to use by students, staff and community	Improvements in security and safety No social clubs, but the school use the facilities to do some activities e.g. Traditional shop	(17) Representing the school on the rental committee of the school building that is under his authority (18) representing the school on the committee to prepare a cost estimation for the school building assigned to be managed (19) representing the school on the committee of receiving the school after the completion of maintenance or restoration or rehabilitation
School finance	Limited progress and lack of budget, - no funds can be raised from parents	Limited progress, and lack of budget - no funds can be raised from parents	Sufficient budget, parents can make contributions	(47) Making deals with approved specialized entities from the public sector to operate the school canteen (51) providing cleaners for the school if there is a problem with cleaning service staff contracts (52) Drawing up contracts with specialized organizations and companies for the emergency maintenance of the school according to the assigned budget.

Training	Lack of available training courses - Need budget to sign contracts with private companies to practice the policy - need to involve the school in designing CPD - school invests in resource centre - suitable place for training	Lack of available training courses - Need budget to sign contracts with private companies to practice the policy - need to involve the school in designing CPD - school invests in resource centre - suitable place for training	The school over controls its CPD programme and provides enough training courses for staff and teachers - The school already has a good place for training	(48) Making deals with approved private training institutes to supply training programs for school staff according to the school's abilities.
Building relationships with the private sector	Lack of relationship with private companies	Lack of relationship with private companies	Already established relationship with a private company to provide training courses	(46) Making deals with the private sector to sponsor school programs in accordance with educational goals along with the system, rules and official instructions.

Table 27 Summary of key findings from all three types of school (Tatweer, public and private)

The key findings were: (1) participants showed varying levels of understanding about decentralisation. The policy does not provide an operational definition of decentralisation and supervisors tend to show a more detailed knowledge of it than headteachers, deputies and teachers. Supervisors also referred to SBM, which should involve multiple stakeholders in school decision-making. They viewed the change as a slow process, to be achieved in stages rather than by 'jumping'.

In contrast, headteachers show a lower level of understanding and conceptualized the process of decentralisation as working independently and the delegation of authority from higher levels. Deputies and teachers had more in common and defined decentralisation according to the Arabic dictionary definition, to "*turn the power to the regions and the state*" (Almaany, n.d.). Unsurprisingly, parents and students knew little about decentralisation or the new management policy.

(2) The new policy was considered to be a positive step towards decentralisation, but the findings suggest that considerable control remains with the MOE. Varying levels of progress with policy implementation were apparent across the three case schools. Therefore, it can be concluded that the new policy has 'spread' in limited ways in two of the schools. More progress was evident in the private setting. In 2015, the two main Ministries; the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education combined to form one Ministry; the Ministry of Education. There are multiple views of this significant movement. Zaman (2015), indicated that the benefits of this combination are that it leads to greater unification of guiding policy and procedure and reduces centralisation, giving more autonomy to educational institutions (either public schools or higher education institutions), although evidence from the Tatweer and public schools might question this. (3.A) Regarding the theoretical framework of SBM by Caldwell and Spinks (1992) and Bullock and Thomas (1997), which was used to analyse some of the data of this study, headteachers in the public and Tatweer schools perceived that they lacked power. Their view was that these elements were still highly centralised by the MOE and DOE, therefore, it can be argued that the current system in Saudi schools is still a step behind compared with SBM. In particular; the public and Tatweer schools perceived that they lacked power in: knowledge, supplying resources, school time, school finance and funding, hiring/firing teachers and staff, admission and information.

In contrast, more positive steps towards the implementation of the new policy were evident in the increasing use of technology and methods of student assessment. (3.B) Private schools showed more evidence of a trend towards decentralisation and were working more independently from the MOE and DOE, particularly in their use of technology, supply of resources, managing school time, controlling school finances and raising funding from parents, hiring/firing teacher and staff and admission processes. However, the private school lacks power in terms of knowledge and information. (3.C) Through the elements of the framework (Caldwell and Spinks, 1992: and Bullock and Thomas, 1997), the findings showed that there were limited differences between public and Tatweer schools. Generally, the new management policy did not reach the standard of the theoretical framework provided by Caldwell and Spinks (1992) and Bullock and Thomas (1997), as most elements of the framework were not yet evident from the discussions with the Tatweer and public school staff, parents and pupils.

(4.A) A lack of democracy in terms of electing members of school councils was evident. Moreover, teachers were not very engaged in school decision-making either in the public or the Tatweer schools. One teacher from the Tatweer school indicated that his headteacher worked with his selected group (of close friends) and did not involve all teachers in school decision-making. Similarly in the private school, teachers are not very engaged in decision-making, unless these decisions relate to their work. (4.B) Neither students in the Tatweer or public schools were

engaged in school councils, while students in the public school had more opportunities to take part in decision-making and to share their voices informally. Students from the public school indicated several examples of their involvement; in an evaluation of the English curriculum and arranging activities such as school trips. Students in the private school have a greater chance to be involved in decision-making than their peers in either the public or Tatweer schools as they are officially involved in a specific council for students. They have an election to choose their representatives. (5.A) Parents in all three schools have a limited presence and little engagement in school decision-making. However the private school showed more progress in working with parents through giving more choice to parents, competing with other schools in Medina, having a high level of autonomy in decision-making and a high level of accountability in terms of school staff as the parent voice is taken into account to assess teachers and that in turn is reflected in the renewal of their contracts.

(5.B) Decentralisation can have an overall positive effect on student performance (Orazem et al. (2004); Leithwood and Menzies (1998); Galiani and Schargrotsky (2002); Filmer and Eskeland (2002); Galiani et al. (2008); Hanushek, et al. (2011); Zellman, et al. 2009). According to the headteacher in the private school, there was a positive impact of SBM elements on students' performance. Students' performance was different in the public and the Tatweer schools. The students in the private school performed well in SAAT and GAT tests (QIYAS). The private school ranked second and fourth in Medina in both tests respectively, which was presented on the wall of the headteacher's office and he was proud of this achievement.

(6) There was a lack of suitable training (both general and policy related) for headteachers and school staff in both the public and the Tatweer schools. The private school arranged its own CPD programmes and staff claimed to receive high levels of training. Beyond this, training was still deemed to be controlled by the DOE. Time, place and content of courses were all seen as impediments. CPD was described as unsuitable and not matching the needs of school staff. A lack of motivation existed among school staff to attend any training programmes provided by the DOE centre, be these policy-related or otherwise.

There are some studies in Saudi Arabia which support the movement towards greater decentralisation in schools. Al-Shammari, and Jubran, (2011) found that 69% of his study participants supported this movement. Algarni and Male (2014), argued that the education system in Saudi is still characterised by centralisation, as echoed in this thesis. The recommendation remains to give school headteachers across all school types more autonomy and flexibility in order to improve the education process. Meemar (2014), recommended giving school headteachers more authority and more autonomy without deference to the MOE. The private

school headteacher in this thesis perceived that he had greater independence and there were a number of other developments that illustrate Meemar's vision.

7.3 Study contribution

The literature on decentralisation is considerable, but there is little focus on Saudi. There is no general agreement concerning the benefits or otherwise of a decentralised system, so it is difficult to argue that any country works under a completely centralized or decentralized system, or whether the position is mixed. The findings of this thesis tend to show that under the new management policy the government schools (public and Tatweer), still work broadly under a highly centralised system. On the contrary, the private school showed evidence of greater autonomy and worked more independently from the MOE and DOE, in particular in terms of use of technology, supplying resources, managing school time, controlling school finances and raising funding from parents, hiring/firing teachers and staff and admission processes. On the other hand, knowledge and information are still centralised in all three schools.

In the literature, there are some studies which raise concerns about the preparation of the people in the field who will implement the new policy within the Saudi context. My study contributes to the field by engaging a range of practitioners in the field in the early steps of evaluating the policy to increase the level of understanding and commitment. A main concern is the lack of training for practitioners. The policy has had limited success in terms of progress and implementation. It was found that there were differences between supervisors in the DOE and school staff in their understanding of decentralisation. This thesis suggests that giving people a level of trust and resources can lead to more innovation, as the headteacher in the private school brought in one new method in order to engage parents and students in decision-making. In both the Tatweer and public schools, students are not very engaged school decision-making, but showed a genuine wish to be involved.

There are multiple understandings of decentralisation and the policy was not introduced with a specific definition or clear guidelines, which resulted in somewhat different implementations and conflict between school headteachers and the DOE, a particular example being the issue of closing a school when the weather is dangerous. There are several themes which emerge from this study and it is considered as the first study attempting to apply the SBM framework in order to evaluate the new management policy in the Saudi context, examining issues such as; knowledge, which is highly centralised by the MOE, school information and the NOOR system, school time and the conflict with the DOE to hold power. Culture plays an important role when practitioners in the

field copy the practice of top management. Headteachers were never involved in building the policy and their marginalization might be reflected in their practice, as they do not involve others.

This study is seen as a small step towards understanding the lived experience of decentralisation among head teachers and how other stakeholders deal with the new guidelines and functions that have been delegated to them. The perception of classroom practitioners in the Saudi context is unique and can provide an appraisal of the guidelines for policy makers to improve the education policy and take the next steps. The thick description of case study and current evidence from the field can be used and multiple stakeholders should be involved in drawing up the next steps and giving schools more space in order to increase their ownership and level of innovation. The fact that pupils and parents were consulted across the three case schools is quite rare in the Saudi context.

The private school arranged its CPD programmes and staff claimed to receive high levels of training. Staff in both the Tatweer and public schools have limited opportunities to receive suitable training programs, as the training programmes are still controlled by the DOE, and time, place and content were seen as obstacles. A lack of motivation existed among school staff to attend any training programmes provided by the DOE centre, be these policy-related or otherwise. The adoption of photographic images is arguably an innovative data collection technique. It allowed some assessment of the impact of the policy on the 'estate' and internal buildings and revealed that some developments had take place in terms of technology and community links.

Limited research has addressed the movement towards decentralisation in the KSA context, such as Allheaniy (2012); Alhumaidhi (2013); Alotaibi (2013); Meemar, (2014). The limitations of these studies are: (1) they used quantitative data with headteachers mainly, and Alhumaidhi (2013) gathered data from headteachers and supervisors only and (2) they focused on public schools and only Meemar, (2014) focused on Tatweer schools; (3) all previous studies rely on a 'survey' only. This thesis is distinct and original, as it is one of the first empirical research studies that investigates the progress of the new management policy, which was first implemented in 2010/11, by; (a) using a case study with mixed methods of data collection, qualitative and quantitative; (b) using three case schools (Tatweer, public and private schools); (c) visiting schools for data collection; (d) asking multiple stakeholders by consulting parents, teachers; (e) using different techniques to collect the data such as interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, observations and photographic imagery. Moreover, this is the first study which applies the a combination of the frameworks developed by Caldwell and Spinks (1992) and Bullock and Thomas (1997), and uses it in order to understand perspectives concerning decentralisation and to

undertake an evaluation of the new management the policy in light of the framework. Furthermore it can help policy makers to identify gaps between the new management policy and its implementation in Saudi schools.

7.4 Study limitations

This study has a number of limitations. This thesis is not intended to discuss all the issues surrounding the management of the Saudi education system. It aims to provide evidence of progress and some guidelines for the future implementation of decentralization in KSA. Lessons have been learned about the movement towards decentralisation from the international literature. The main limitation comes from the context, as whilst the settings cover all types of schools, it cannot be claimed that the findings would be applicable in all schools or in other Saudi regions. As the new management policy was distributed in 2010/11, the impact of its implementation may not yet be clear and may not yet have appeared explicitly. The study revealed limited data on how participants had built their understanding of the policy.

This thesis utilizes a case study with both qualitative and quantitative data, and the aim was not to provide a generalization from the findings, but rather to provide detailed evidence for evaluation. Though the study examined only three schools, it was able to offer a range of perspectives from participants and collect data using both qualitative and quantitative methods to enable an in-depth understanding of the extent of the implementation of the policy.

One strength of this study is that it provides empirical evidence from a variety of stakeholders in three focus schools: Tatweer, public and private. One limitation concerned the Tatweer school, as parents were excluded from participating in interviews as the headteacher refused to give permission. In order to overcome this limitation, the researcher used a parent questionnaire to find out their perceptions of the policy. The use of questionnaires permitted some triangulation of data.

Considerable pilot work was undertaken in preparation for the main fieldwork, which increased the researcher's skills in order to gain the data. The study was unable to investigate more than three schools, and therefore, a larger, perhaps regional or indeed national survey to examine development in other districts or schools is warranted. Another limitation is some reliance on self-reporting (interviews, focus groups, questionnaires). It might be preferable for policy makers to undertake a quasi-experimental design by selecting some schools in each district and giving them full decentralisation guidelines and then examining the school's performance over several years in order to find out whether the fully decentralised system can work in the Saudi education system, and what areas need to be developed. Internationally, the evidence from the quasi-experimental

design is limited, and the gap in the literature needs to be covered (Carr-Hill et al., 2014). This thesis was unable to implement such a design as the Saudi education system is restrictive and only the MOE can arrange and approve such designs and allow schools to have fully decentralised systems.

Time for the data collection was a further limitation. The researcher gathered data between April and June 2014, and for the parents' questionnaire, the second round of distribution of questionnaires was undertaken by mail in February 2015. Policy evaluation may need more time if it is to consider every aspect of implementation. A further limitation of these three case studies is that due to cultural norms, only boys' schools were accessible to the researcher. Replicating the study in girls' schools would be advised.

7.5 Implications

Policymakers in the MOE and DOE need to provide a clear definition of decentralisation and more detailed guidelines of how practitioners can implement the policy. It is vital in any policy to keep the language clear and it might be helpful to involve school leaders and practitioners in revising the policy in order to secure a common understanding. Moreover, in the future when revising plans for decentralisation, it is important that engagement with the school council, teachers, parents and students is increased. In 2015, Saudi Arabia had a new King (King Salman) and some major changes have taken place since then. One of the main changes is the combination of the MOE and the MOHE (which was discussed above). There have been four ministers in the MOE for education in the last two years, which has led to instability of leadership and strategic planning as each minister brings new programmes. On a more positive note, the new minister supports the idea of 'independent schools' and is considering allowing some schools to be managed by a new privatized system Aleqtisadiah, (2016). This movement is needed and supports the findings of this thesis. According to Algamdi (2016), the new minister (Alessa, Ahmad) indicated that the key aims of the MOE are: (1) establishing independent schools managed by the private sector; (2) encouraging the private sector to invest in education, either higher education or schools; (3) giving schools and universities more autonomy. It is hoped that this thesis is a contribution to the evidence base in light of these key aims.

School councils can work with supervisors from the DOE in the first years to ensure quality and build good practice by taking advantage of supervisors' experience. School councils need to be initially established and more power afforded to them to control the elements of the framework developed by Caldwell and Spinks (1992) and Bullock and Thomas (1997); knowledge, technology, school time, finance and budget allocation, activities, hiring/firing staff, materials, admission,

Chapter 7

assessment, information. Moreover, suitable training must play a vital role in the implementation of the new policy and more investment is needed. Clearer powers and functions are required in the policy with training for schools to move towards SBM more effectively. The concern about mismanagement when the power moves from the DOE towards school councils, can be reduced by involving the community in accountability, and giving freedom to the media.

Policymakers should seek to reduce the DOE's control of schools and involve headteachers in drawing up district plans. Empowering school staff to participate in building school plans and introducing performance indicators, which permit schools to achieve their objectives, is advised. Moreover, data from Qiyas; GAT and SAAT results and general evaluation can help to rank schools. Based on this ranking the independent school initiative or SBM can be reviewed. Schools who are making good progress towards more autonomy should be actively encouraged and support others. Moreover, private schools can work with public and Tatweer schools through exchanging knowledge and CPD. It is recommended to policymakers in the MOE to increase school budgets and allow schools to raise funding from parents.

7.6 Recommendations

It is important to allow headteachers and school councils to participate in allocating teachers among schools; in the current system I believe it will be difficult to hire/fire teachers. In fact, giving schools the opportunity to employ staff may play a significant role in strengthening accountability, reducing the lack of manpower, giving schools the chance to hire qualified teachers and increasing teacher professionalism through renewed contracts. My suggestion regarding hiring/firing teachers is to give teachers a license from the MOE, which can only be obtained if they meet specific criteria. After that, each teacher can apply to a school and the school council have the right to accept them or not based on their portfolio and interview. This would increase the commitment of teachers to improve their skills all the time and force schools to work in order to raise their reputation to attract the best teachers.

In order to maximize the benefits of decentralisation, schools need greater access to historical NOOR data in combination with training for administrators on how to use these data for monitoring and school improvement planning. Such a shift would allow more focus on development that is linked to better pupil outcomes. In the main, schools were quite limited in the ways in which they communicated with parents about their achievements.

School councils can increase the methods of communication with parents and involve them in school decision-making. While all three schools; public, Tatweer and private were using text messages to communicate with parents, there was much variety in school website quality across

all three cases. Only the private school used its website effectively in communication with parents, and moreover provided a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for the students to increase their learning at home and allowed them to use the website to submit homework. Improving the quality of school websites can facilitate communication between schools and students, parents and school staff and increase pupils' engagement through their ability to study at home. The MOE needs to reform the current structure for supplying training programmes for schools and progressively adjust their strategy from top-down to more bottom-up, by allowing schools to oversee their own training courses based on their individual needs. At the same time, the DOE needs to work hard to improve the lack of quality of training and to change the delivery model for providing these courses from reproductive to a more transformative style.

Also, a combination of training courses in the DOE centre alongside those in schools could potentially address several problems such as time, content and location. Involving individuals in schools in decision-making about the types of training programmes that they need might increase their commitment. Technology can play a significant role; by allowing all schools to have a greater say and allowing them to improve, suggest, evaluate and design training courses. The discussion could also open channels between schools and the DOE, so that the DOE can understand their needs and improve the training courses.

For researchers on the international stage, my position after this journey is that decentralisation may work reasonably well and effectively in developed countries, however in developing countries the preparation and implementation is likely to take several years, where the culture has a long history of centralisation and there is likely to be much reluctance regarding the implementation of SBM.

Headteachers need considerable development and training, particularly in how to use the new powers, how to manage the steps towards decentralisation and how to widen their skill sets in terms of delegation, accountability, working with teams, using technology and communication with the community. These are essential in order to implement SBM effectively. In terms of teachers, they need to receive training and support in order to be able to reform and restructure the curriculum, develop their own management skills and feel that they have a voice and are empowered to take responsible decisions for the benefit of learners.

A possibility is the development of a MOOC in order to provide training programmes, which could solve some of the existing limitations of the training programmes provided by the DOE or by the MOE. The number of teachers in Saudi Arabia is enormous (about half of million) and when the MOE introduces some essential training programmes for teachers these technological platforms could save time and money for the MOE, a resource that can in return be transferred to the

Chapter 7

schools in order for them to implement some programmes that in the past may have been face-to-face. Moreover, in order to increase the rate of completion of MOOC training programmes, the MOE could link teachers' annual premium and progression to continued development and professional learning.

7.7 Future research directions

This study identified several factors about the new management policy in Medina. Future work can build on these findings and look for evidence in other cities/districts. Conducting other studies at different stages such as primary school or secondary school can be helpful. Also, it is necessary to replicate the study in girls' schools. The findings should be shared with the respective schools and they should be able to track them. Linking schools that could provide reciprocal support might be considered. Saudi might also look to its Gulf 'neighbor' and undertake more comprehensive work in this area. Saudi researchers could replicate the study by Zellman et al. (2009), that was commissioned by the RAND Corporation and Qatar government. Zellman et al. (2009), made a long-term evaluation of the policy reform, which was implemented in the Qatari education system, by gathering data from selected schools between 2004 and 2007. This kind of study would need to be run by the MOE or one of the DOE in Saudi Arabia in order to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of the policy and identify all its successes and limitations.

Further studies could investigate the link between highly centralised knowledge, school curricula and the government's ideology, as the Saudi government represents Sunni Islam. Also, there is a call for more research into the preparation of staff both pre-service and in-service.

7.8 Final remarks

This study seeks to provide an investigation into the implementation of the new management policy in order to move schools towards greater decentralisation. There was not much perceived change on the ground in either the Public or Tatweer settings, but there were some positive movements, particularly in terms of technology and student assessment. In the private school, the situation was more positive and the school was working with a greater amount of autonomy. The findings from this study and previous studies, taken together, emphasise the need to speed up progress towards decentralisation and SBM in government schools and to learn lessons from private schools.

Appendices

Appendix A Pilot study procedures and findings

Introduction

Considerable pilot work was undertaken to strengthen the procedures, validity and reliability of this thesis. A pilot-interview is vital because it increases the researcher's knowledge of the interviewees' backgrounds and preferences, such as their preferred means of communication and their willingness to contribute to academic research (Mikecz, 2012), as well as providing an opportunity to check the clarity and internal validity of the questions. It also provides vital experience for the interviewer. Feedback from the pilot interview will be reflected in the study's methodology.

As this thesis employs multiple qualitative case studies, there are many reasons for conducting a pilot study rather than examining the criteria for selecting the final cases in the case study. According to Yin (2003) "the informants at a pilot site may be unusually congenial and accessible, or the site may be geographically convenient or may have an unusual amount of documentation and data" (p. 92). Therefore, he suggested a pilot case study as the final step when preparing for data collection, in order to gain benefits from improved data collection plans in terms of both the content of the data and the procedures to be followed (Yin, 2003).

First stage: desk work

The first and second stages can be called 'desk work' and this started in the early stage of the researcher's PhD journey. During the first stage, following a review of a wide range of international literature on decentralisation and the educational policies of Saudi Arabia, the researcher found numerous themes linking the current situation in Saudi Arabia and international literature and these theoretical positions informed the interview protocols.

Secondly, in relation to the new management policy, the researcher started with document analysis by locating the original version of the new management policy (2010/11) and the old one (2000) and drawing up a comparison between them (Appendices 1 and 2). Then the researcher translated the old and new management policies from Arabic into English.

Thirdly, the researcher analysed the new management policy by dividing up the functions of the new policy based upon the responsibility of the participants or stakeholders involved in decision-making, or the executive body (such as head teachers, school council), and to whom they delegate functions (see Table 2, Chapter Two).

Appendix A

Fourth, the researcher used thematic analysis, beginning with coding each function (52 in total), and then categorising the emerging codes within themes. The number of themes was 14, such as organisation and management, time, activities, accountability etc. (see Table 8). This analysis is the main source of the interview questions. Most of the functions of the new management policy (14 items) came under the themes of organisation and management, while one was put under the themes of admission and collaboration with the private sector. Time, activities, student assessment and CPD had four functions each and the remaining themes contained numerous functions. This table helped the researcher to complete the qualitative thematic analysis and determine the interview questions and the ways of implementing these functions in the field. Also, this helped the researcher to identify the participants for the research, modify the research questions and clarify how these themes could be practically implemented (see question 8 in the head teacher questions - Appendix 3).

Five, mapping exercise; the researcher sought to find within the literature, criteria for assessing the educational decentralisation system. Caldwell and Spinks (1992) and Bullock and Thomas (1997) identify 11 criteria that can determine the scope of decentralisation in education. The researcher included these criteria in a table with a question on how the school exercises these elements regarding the new management policy (see Appendix 4). Then, the researcher sent these criteria via email to three educators - one head teacher, a deputy and a teacher in a school working under the Tatweer programme in Medina city. Those three educators had sufficient experience in the education system, between seven and thirteen years. The answers of these participants are shown in Table 10 and the researcher summarises their words.

Second stage: validation

As indicated, a review of the theoretical literature and a mapping exercise was undertaken and linked to the new management policy in Saudi Arabia, which led to a number of themes that informed the interview questions. Interview questions were divided by participants' roles; head teachers, teachers, parents, pupils and policy makers. Those groups are the main groups that are involved in the research area. For validity purposes, firstly, the researcher gave these questions to ten educators and sought comments on their appropriateness in view of the purpose of the study. These educators were university doctors, researchers, a head teacher and class teachers. After following them up, feedback was received from eight educators. Their feedback was helpful and enhanced the interview protocol. The researcher modified the interview questions based on their suggestions and feedback (see Appendix 5 for more details). For example;

- head teacher (N.2) suggested changing the word 'assessment' in the interview questions to 'evaluation';
- added one question to ask the parents; 'how many times did you visit the school this year?';
- added the question about 'giving teachers more space to be more innovative' in the head teacher questions;
- deleted question number (9) as it was seen as difficult to answer "How do your staff view the move towards decentralisation in the new policy?"

Secondly, the researcher asked those educators to review and correct the accuracy of the translations of the interview questions from English to the Arabic language (a sample is presented in Appendix 5 – section 2).

Third stage: exploring the field

The researcher made an initial visit to the field between 2/9/13 and 13/9/2013 in order to observe and interview pilot members to assess their response to and understanding of the research questions, and to examine the suitability of the research tools and their ability to gather sufficient data to answer the researcher's main research questions.

The researcher visited two schools; one was a typical public school and the other belonged to the Tatweer Programme. It was difficult to access the private school due to the time restrictions during the researcher's pilot study journey, which he will consider in the main data collection journey. Firstly, the researcher observed the school and walked around trying to find any evidence or indications of improvements within the school. The researcher briefly spoke with two head teachers, two teachers, two parents (one from each school), six pupils (as a focus group only in the Tatweer school, and the interview was in the school building after arrangements were made with the head teacher) and three policy makers (two in the Tatweer programme and one head of the supervision center). Pilot participants were informed of the aim and the purpose of the study and then their permission to participate in a short interview was obtained via a consent form. The brief interviews were recorded digitally and kept in a secure place. The interviews were transcribed and analysed thematically.

Interim findings

In the following table (Table 8), the researcher analyses the functions of the new management policy thematically. The researcher inductively work to categorise these functions, all the new policy items were divided in the relevant categories. Some elements of the 'type of function'

Appendix A

column were adopted from (Table 9), which derives from the theoretical work of Caldwell and Spinks (1992) and Bullock and Thomas (1997), which is referred to in the third column (as assessment criteria) to demonstrate the similarities and differences. These tables (8 and 9) may help the researcher and the policy maker to identify the gaps between the international practice of decentralisation and the effort to reach a sufficient level of implementation in Saudi Arabia.

Findings from document analysis

In chapter 2 the researcher presented the analyses of the new management policy functions based on the actors (who is responsible). In Table 2 the researcher analysed the new management policy based on the parties, which can be a head teacher, school council or other as follows: (1) powers directly held by school head teachers which they cannot delegate to others, (2) powers agreed by school councils, (3) powers that can be delegated from head teachers to others or that can be implemented by others, (4) powers held by school head teachers only, but with some conditions.

Type of function	Number of functions from the new management policy	Elements from assessment criteria (Table 9)
Organisation & Management	1,2,3,4,9,10,11,12,21,25,26,36 37,38	3 Power
Time	5,6,7,13	6 Time
Activities	7,29,30,31	
Accountability for school staff	14,16,23	
Security and safety	15,(22),32	
Relationship and communication	20,(22)	
School building	19,18,17	
Admission	24	8 Admissions
Assessment	For students 27,33,34,35, (for staff 42)	9 Assessment
Incentive or Rewards	For students 28, for staff 49	
Research	39,43	
CPD	40,41,48,50	
Collaboration with the private sector	46	
Finance	47, (for building maintenance 51,52)	7 Finance 11 Funding

Table 28 Analysing the new management policy functions (thematically)

Appendix A

For the purposes of this thesis, the specific factors identified by Caldwell and Spinks (1992) and Bullock and Thomas (1997) were mapped against the new management policy. A summary of this exercise appears in Table 9, where the findings relating to the new management policy come from Saudi Arabian participants and from document analysis. These criteria will be re-investigated during the main data collection and will help the researcher to analyse the data thematically.

Assessment criteria	The new management policy (2010) in KSA and summarising the participants' answers in relation to these criteria
1. Knowledge	The school has to follow the national curricula, but the teachers have limited space to add some extra activities to improve certain skills.
2. Technology	The school can choose the types of technology that they use to communicate with parents, while in terms of classroom teaching (e.g. smart boards) the DOE supplies most of the materials for schools.
3. Power	The school can make decisions following the legislation and the criteria of MOE, and if something is not documented or is unclear, the head teacher should contact the DOE to ask for permission (e.g. arranging a school trip, opening the school for extra lessons for pupils with special needs). So, the head teacher is an executive manager.
4. Material	Most of the standard materials are supplied by DOE (e.g. books, chairs, tables, computers, printers, laptops, equipment and educational aids), but if the school needs some extra materials, they can buy them from the operational budget if they are not expensive.
5. People	In terms of allocating teacher and staff duties, the head teacher and the School Council can organise this distribution. However, they cannot employ anyone in school, all the hiring/firing of staff remains the responsibility of the MOE.
6. Time	The school has to follow the timetable provided by the DOE, although they do have the right to close the school if there is a danger to pupils due to the weather.
7. Finance	The school has an operational budget which comes from two sources: from renting the school cafeteria to the private sector and directly from the MOE depending on the number of pupils in school. This operational budget is spent mostly on maintenance and some educational improvement programmes if

	agreed by the School Council and the DOE.
8. Admissions	The school does not have the right to set admission criteria. The school must follow the rules of the MOE.
9. Assessment	The school must assess the pupils according to the rules of MOE in primary school, as there is a continuous assessment with certain elements that the teacher must follow. However in intermediate and secondary schools where the assessment is based on examinations, the teacher can assess pupils.
10. Information	All the information about student achievement should be submitted to the MOE through a website called NOOR and there is a deadline for this submission in each academic term.
11. Funding	The school cannot ask for fees from parent or students as the public education system is provided for free, but they can manage the budget from the MOE as explained above.

Table 29 Assessment criteria for the new management policy (2010) and participants' responses

Summary of pilot interviews and pilot observation findings

- One policy maker (PM 1) explained the need for DOE control in Saudi Arabian education because head teachers have little experience and lack of knowledge about how to manage the school and its budget on their own. Also, he stated, "I cannot rely upon head teachers to run their schools alone" PM (1). This indicates (to me) the lack of trust between the DOE (policy makers) and head teachers (practitioners in the field). I followed up his answer by asking, what did the DOE do to enhance head teachers' abilities to run their school with less control? He said; "We have a lack of training budget, that is why we cannot do lots of training programmes for them" PM (1).
- Decentralisation has not taken root in the field, and HT2 indicated that "we have been hearing about decentralisation for a long time, but in reality we do not practice it, we are controlled in most of our decisions"
- Head teachers face challenges when implementing the new management policy. Deputy (2) clarified that by commenting "the policy itself overlaps with DOE powers and it is not clear where the school's authority ends".
- Schools' 'operational budget' is not enough, HT (1) said: "What can I do with 38,000 SR = £6200 a year, for maintaining the school building, providing training programmes for staff, providing additional courses for students in need and buying devices and technology for

Appendix A

classrooms? It may be enough for one thing, not everything, that is why we still need DOE support”.

- Lack of support from the DOE for school head teachers in terms of training, equipment, employees and control over the school.
- Lack of preparation programmes for head teachers and policy makers in the DOE in relation to implementing the new management policy, HT (1) attended one three hour workshop about implementing the new policy and he said: “it was a very short workshop (only 3 hours) and we did not get clarity about how to implement some of the functions, especially the new ones”.
- The need to change policy makers’ views about educational improvement.
- Policy makers had a lack of expectation with regard to school head teachers and that can be linked to a lack of trust between them.
- In the researcher's observational view there is no big difference between Tatweer and public schools in terms of management structure, buildings or types of technology, but perhaps after spending sufficient time in the field during the data collection period that view might change.

Findings from photography (researcher - led)

The researcher wanted to pilot the use of a photographic image collection as evidence of shifting decentralisation matching development in schools. Each pilot photograph was subject to descriptive and interpretative analysis.



Figure 36 Typical classroom in a public school

The head teacher indicated that after gaining autonomy to oversee the 'operational budget', they secured sufficient projectors to equip the resource centre and every classroom. In the past they had approached the DOE on many occasions requesting this equipment but the DOE had not provided it. Now such technology is available.



Figure 37 An English laboratory in a public school

This is an English laboratory club. The head teacher indicated that they now have the freedom to increase the number of computers and resource materials (CDs, books, etc.) from the 'operational budget'. The club is now able to use this technology.



Figure 38 Wall of a girls' public school

This school has waited a long time to get help from the DOE to repaint the wall. This would suggest that there are some schools that are more or less successful in seeking to improve the physical appearance of their buildings. The policy is somewhat vague in what is meant by 'maintenance'.

Appendix A

Future work

Field work:

The researcher intends to travel to Saudi Arabia and undertake field work through visiting three selected schools (secondary) and the DOE to meet with policy makers.

This will take place between March 2014 and May 2014. The following outcomes are expected from the field study:

1. To gain access to the field and contact the DOE to gain permission to undertake the study and to seek help to determine the most appropriate schools.
2. To contact head teachers of each school and identify participants who may be interested in being part of the interviews and focus group sessions.
3. To conduct (A) 36 individual semi-structured interviews with (3 head teachers, 3 deputies, 9 teachers, 6 policy makers and 15 parents), (B) together with 3 focus group sessions comprising 15 pupils (five participants in each). The breakdown is explained thoroughly in Chapter Four, namely Table 6, Plan for selecting Participants, and the way of data collection.

These activities are explained in the following Table (10), which shows the researcher's field work plan for the data collection period. These activities can be flexible according to the participants' circumstances and the gatekeeper allowances.

Appendix B **The new management policy: powers of school head teachers**

In the name of Allah

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Number: 32155521/8

Ministry of Education

Date: 26/2/1432 Hijri

Combined: - 13 -

(280)

(Ministerial Decision)

The new management policy: powers of school head teachers

The Minister of Education (in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) based on his authorities, and on the basis of the future directions of the Ministry of Education, which emphasizes on shifting to 'disciplined decentralisation'. Considering that the school is in the base level of development, by allowing schools to gain more powers and flexibility in its operations, which will benefit school to achieve its goals. These powers facilitate schools' administrators to lead their school in the right way, and increase the chance of learning and teaching. Due to the significance of the role of the school headteacher and teachers in the development process, and based on the requirement of work interest: we issue this new management policy.

P.3.

Ministry of Education Agency – Public Department of Educational Supervision - School Department – Head teachers' Authorities 1432 Hijri.

Head teachers' Authorities and Operational Actions

Head teachers are given the following authorities, they also get to delegate some of their authorities to the school deputy except for what can't be delegated. The head teacher can practice these authorities and issue all the required decisions in order to execute them.

No.	Authorities	Operational Actions
1	Approving the councils and committees of the school and deciding their roles,	1. The School Council approves the councils and committees by majority voice all the time

	meeting times and places.	<p>in addition to what's mentioned in the organizing rules of the public schools.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Selecting the members. 3. Defining the tasks and responsibilities. 4. Preparing a timeline for the meeting times and places. 5. Issuing the decisions.
2	Merging the school councils and committees – when necessary – that are mentioned in the organizational rules of the public schools – except for the School Council and the guidance and orientation committee – in a way that doesn't affect its tasks and this is limited only to schools that have 15 teachers or less.	<p>This authority is limited only to the School Council.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Studying the merging mechanism and preparing a vision that incorporates the tasks and responsibilities according to the new formation. 2. Approving the study made by the School Council by majority. 3. Issuing the decision and setting the times and places of the meetings. 4. Providing a copy of the decision to the school department in the education department and education office.
3	Approving the operational plans of the school and student activities and programs in addition to selecting their supervisors and participants.	<p>This authority is limited to the head teacher.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Selecting the school planning team. 2. Preparing the school plan for all the school fields and activities according to the school's abilities and in the light of the sector plans that were reported to the schools. 3. Obtaining the approval of the head teacher for the operational plans for all the school staff. 4. Issuing the required decisions. 5. Following up the execution of the plan. 6. Fixing and evaluating the plans, programs,

		activities and required reports
4	Approving the increment of the number of school classes or decreasing them during the first two weeks of each term according to the authorized equation of the Ministry – the number of students matches the number of classes and space – under a condition that there will be no need for more teachers.	<p>This authority is assigned to the guidance and orientation committee.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The committee study the reasons for increasing or decreasing the number of school classes at the beginning of each term according to the authorized equation of the Ministry; the decision is taken by majority. 2. Issuing the decision and informing the specialized authority in the education department and education office in a formal way.
5	Delaying or cancelling the morning queue and the school break in the school yard, according to the weather circumstances and in case of danger to students.	<p>This authority is limited to the head teacher only and can't be assigned to anyone else.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Issuing an immediate decision from the head teacher. 2. Informing the education department about it in a formal way.
6	Temporary changes to classes and break timings in accordance with educational benefit.	<p>This authority is limited only to the head teacher and can't be assigned to anyone else.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Defining the requirements of executing the approved program. 2. Designing a school program that fits with needs, in a way that doesn't affect the school curriculum under the condition of no more than two changes in a single term and for a maximum of 5 days each time. 3. Issuing the decision and informing the relevant authority in the education department and education office of the program plan in a formal way.
7	Increasing the school day for a group of school students by no more than one	<p>This authority is limited only to the head teacher and can't be assigned to anyone else.</p>

	hour daily, for an education program.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Getting the parents' approval in a formal way before execution. 2. Getting the approval of the school staff who participate in the program. 3. Issuing the decision and informing the relevant authority in the education department and education office in a formal way.
8	Approving visits and educational trips that are usually only one school day long and inside the geographic field of the education department for schools that have 500 students or more.	<p>These authorities are assigned to the School Council.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Authorizing trips or educational visits and supervisors by the Council according to the majority and the special regulations. 2. Informing the relevant department in the education department and education office. 3. Getting the approval of the parents formally before applying. 4. Reporting the program's execution to the relevant department in the education department along with a copy for the education office within a maximum of one week of the program's execution.
9	Selecting someone who can work as a school deputy from a list of names on the Headteacher's Committee and School Deputies Committee in the education department.	<p>This authority is limited only to the head teacher and can't be assigned to anyone else.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Looking at the list of those who fit with the assignment requirements and who are present on the Headteacher's and School Deputies Committee in the education department. 2. Selecting the candidate from the name list to be assigned by the Headteacher's and Deputies Committee in the education department.
10	Approval of locations for the school and library rooms, educational and	

	administrational staff rooms.	<p>This authority is assigned to the School Council.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This authority includes all the locations in the school building except for those which were built for a special purpose and can't be changed. 2. The head teacher presents the school building operational plan to the Council. 3. The Council approve of the operational plan for the room locations by majority. 4. Issuing the decisions.
11	Giving school staff emergency leave and considering the good of the educational process.	<p>This authority is assigned to the head teacher.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The person should ask for emergency leave using the approved form. 2. Checking the worthiness of the staff member who is requesting emergency leave. 3. Approving the emergency leave decision and informing the staff member.
12	Accepting the sick leave of school staff, according to the rules of accepting sick leave decisions, along with informing the education department about the leave decision in order to complete the required procedures.	<p>This authority is assigned to the head teacher.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The medical report should be in accordance with the rules of accepting sick leave decisions. 2. Issuing the decision of accepting the leave. 3. Sending the report to the relevant entity in the education department and keeping a copy of it.
13	Suspending the school day in emergency cases, (no more than one day) and informing the DOE in a formal way about the procedure and its reasons in the same day. Making sure that it won't harm the students besides informing their parents about the procedure	<p>This authority is limited to the head teacher and cannot be assigned to anyone else.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The head teacher should prepare a report about suspending study on the defined date along with the reasons for such action. 2. Securing the students and making sure they are safe in addition to informing their parents

Appendix B

	according to the regulating measures.	in a formal way about the action. 3. Sending a copy of the report and actions taken to the education department and the education office.
14	Writing up investigations of school staff and warning careless staff or sending them to be investigated by the education department when necessary.	This authority is assigned to the head teacher. 1. Investigating careless staff according to the case, system terms, rules and instructions. 2. Taking the appropriate action according to the answers of the person under investigation.
15	Preventing people who are suspected of having a dangerous or contagious disease from going to the school as long as they are sick.	This authority is assigned to the head teacher. 1. Quarantine those who are suspected of having dangerous or contagious diseases from all the other school staff in addition to sending them to the medical school unit or any other public medical entity. 2. Informing the parents of the suspected student immediately in a formal way. 3. Not to allow the suspected person to come back to the school until he/she presents a report that confirms that he/she is no longer a danger to himself/herself or others in the school, isn't suffering from any further sickness and is able to proceed with studying or working.
16	Issuing the rebate decisions for those who were absent or late for school, in accordance with the rules and the instructions and in addition, informing the education department officially about the decision in order for it to be applied to the first coming salary – wage for work.	This authority is assigned to the head teacher. 1. Investigating late and absent people according to the approved regulations. 2. Issuing the rebate decision and informing the personnel department in the education department besides sending a copy to the relevant one. 3. The personnel department in the education

		department should provide the head teacher with a copy of the rebate decision.
17	Representing the school on the rental committee of the school building that is under his/her authority.	This authority is assigned to the head teacher. 1. Including the name and signature of the head teacher in the report of the building rental committee. 2. The head teacher reserves the right to actions.
18	Representing the school on the committee to prepare a cost estimation for the school building assigned to be managed.	This authority is assigned to the school principal. 1. Including the name and signature of the school principal in the committee's estimated cost of the school building restoration. 2. The principal of the school has the right to a written reservation.
19	Representing the school on the committee after the completion of the maintenance or restoration or rehabilitation.	This authority is assigned to the school principal. 1. Including the name and signature of the school principal in the time of the receiving the school building from the construction company. 2. The principal of the school has the right to a written reservation.
20	Direct contact with the government bodies that are involved in the emergency cases.	This authority is assigned to the head teacher. 1. Preparing reports of emergency cases. 2. Immediate notifications to the relevant entity of emergency cases. 3. Providing the education department and education office officially with a copy of the action.
21	Assigning any tasks that are related to the educational field to the school staff during the school year according to the	This authority is limited only to the head teacher and can't be assigned to anyone else.

Appendix B

	instructions and regulations in this concern without affecting their main tasks.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Defining the needs of the employees. 2. Showing the school staff and students the instructions, rules and procedures that define their rights and duties. 3. Issuing the assignment decisions.
22	Immediately addressing the education manager about cases that involve religion, country policy and security or behavior issues and drugs.	<p>This authority is limited to the head teacher and can't be assigned to anyone else.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigating the case and preparing a report about it. 2. Sending a letter to the education manager and providing the education office with a copy.
23	Evaluating the performance of the student transportation companies.	<p>This authority is assigned to the head teacher.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Activating the approved evaluating tools and showing them to the companies. 2. Informing the relevant entity in the education department about renewing the contract or ending it.
24	Approving the admission of students who fit the provisions of admission and accepting those who are out of the school geographic field.	<p>This authority is assigned to the guidance and orientation committee of the school.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Committing to the acceptance of all those who are included in the field of the school before the beginning of the school year. 2. The committee starts at the beginning of the school year by accepting students from outside the geographic field of the school under the conditions that it won't affect the acceptance of the students who are inside the geographic field of the school and will not affect the school budget or the number of the students in the classes according to the space that is in accordance with the defined official ratios. 3. Issuing the acceptances for students who

		are approved by the committee and completing the official procedures of admission.
25	Approving the students' distribution in classes according to the set equation of the students, classes and redistribution according to educational benefit.	<p>This authority is assigned to the guidance and orientation committee of the school.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Studying the students' distribution in the classes by the guidance and orientation committee of the school at the beginning of each semester. 2. Deciding the committee's opinion by majority. 3. Issuing the decision.
26	Approving fixed teacher classes and moving students during the study table activities.	<p>This authority is assigned to the head teacher.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Studying the possibility of applying the organization. 2. Preparing an integrated organization that fits with the school environment. 3. Getting the approval from school teachers by majority.
27	Allowing students who keep failing, elderly students, students who fail in the third year, female elderly students etc., to continue their study in the school or referring the males to the night schools and female students to the elderly schools according to the instructions and regulations.	<p>This authority is assigned to the guidance and orientation committee of the school.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determining the students who keep failing, elderly students, those who fail in the third year and elderly female students. 2. Studying their cases through the guidance and orientation committee of the school. 3. Issuing a decision about continuing study for those who have the approval of the committee. 4. Referring the students who cannot continue their study in the school to the nearest suitable school, such as night schools for the males.

		<p>5. Referring the female students who weren't approved to study in the school to the nearest female school of the elderly.</p> <p>6. Informing the relevant entity in the education department and education office.</p>
28	Giving rewards to students under conditions that don't breach the instructions and regulations.	<p>This authority is assigned to the guidance and orientation committee of the school.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The committee prepare the standards for giving promotions to students and approval is by majority. 2. Assigning budgets for the promotions from the school resources. 3. Forming the required secondary committees. 4. Determining the students who deserve the promotions and suggesting the type of promotion. 5. Issuing the required decisions.
29	Adding, fixing or enriching classes for some school subjects in the study plan.	<p>This authority is assigned to the guidance and orientation committee of the school.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The committee determine the school subjects that need extra classes to fix delays in understanding or to enrich the talented students and superior students academically. 2. The committee approve the extra classes by majority. 3. Preparing a teaching plan for these classes by making use of the empty classes in the teachers' schedules in a way that completes their official equities and under the condition that they complete the academic curriculum plan in the school and are involved in the school plan. 4. Informing the parents of the participating

		<p>student in the program about the program plan.</p> <p>5. Assigning teachers and those who are related to the program's execution.</p> <p>6. The program is to be documented all the way from the beginning to the end of the process and a copy must be sent to the education department.</p>
30	<p>Approving the opening of educational service centers for school students according to the approved restrictions and the school's capacity.</p>	<p>This authority is assigned to the guidance and orientation committee of the school.</p> <p>1. Considering whether the school needs to open an educational service center for the students with the committee of the school according to the official regulations in this regard. Approval is by majority.</p> <p>2. Issuing the decision and providing a copy to the education department and education office.</p>
31	<p>Approving certain school activities in the school outside the school's official times, for a maximum of 3 days, according to the official instructions and procedures in this regard under the condition that this does not result in any financial commitments for the education department.</p>	<p>This authority is assigned to the School Council.</p> <p>1. All the school activities must be approved within the school plan.</p> <p>2. The council's approval of the activity is by majority.</p> <p>3. The head teacher is a direct supervisor of the activity and no one else is to be assigned such a task. He is also responsible for all the activities.</p> <p>4. Assigning special school teachers who are known by their good reputation, and no one from outside the school is to be assigned such a task.</p> <p>5. Preparing a statement describing activity and the teachers participating in the school</p>

		<p>activity and getting the parents' approval.</p> <p>6. Informing the relevant entities in the education department and education office in an official way about the work plan of this activity.</p> <p>7. Providing the education department with the required regular reports according to the official regulations.</p>
32	<p>Determining the students who are considered as dangerous because of their behaviour and moving them into another school. This is assigned to the head teachers of preparatory and secondary schools.</p>	<p>This authority is assigned to the guidance and orientation committee in the school.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Taking the necessary actions according to the behavior rules in the school. 2. Studying the student's case with the committee of the school. 3. Officially informing the parents of the student. 4. Pursuing the education department to issue a decision about moving the student into another school and providing the school with the decision. 5. The first school must provide the school that is going to have the new student with a copy of the programs that the student has been following and suggest ideas for helping him/her.
33	<p>Accepting the apologies of students who come late for the first stage test in both semesters, under the condition that it's not later than half way through the subject test and that none of the students have left the test area. This is assigned to head teachers of preparatory and secondary schools.</p>	<p>This authority is assigned to the head teacher.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allowing the student to enter the test committee and informing the system and observation committee about this. 2. The head teacher should document the students' excuses in a report that should be kept by the system and observation committee.

34	Re-evaluating the students during the semester. This is assigned to the head teachers of preparatory and secondary schools.	<p>This authority is assigned to the guidance and orientation committee of the school.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The committee should study the case and approval is by majority. 2. Issuing the necessary decisions.
35	Assigning the appropriate teacher to set questions for school subject tests within their specialization for their classes. This is assigned to the head teachers of preparatory and secondary schools.	<p>This authority is assigned to the head teacher.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Issuing a decision to assign an alternative teacher to set the questions and the answers before the test with enough time. 2. Providing the education office or the education supervisory department with a copy of the assignment decision.
36	Minimizing the equation of the teacher who gets assigned extra tasks, under the condition that it is not less than 6 classes weekly, in case there are extra classes after covering the study plan in the specialization according to the school formation that is approved in the school.	<p>This authority is assigned to the head teacher.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determining the extra classes above the teachers' equations in the school. 2. Defining the assigned tasks for the teacher who has a reduced equation and for those who are concerned with reduction according to the educational good of the school. 3. Issuing the assignment decisions. 4. This authority doesn't include new teachers who are in their trial year and who are punished because of a systematic punishment. 5. Providing the relevant entities in the education department and education office with a copy of the assignment decision.
37	Approving the distribution of the school subjects between the teachers according to their specializations, in the primary stage according to the availability of the specialization in addition to distributing the school tables at the beginning of the	<p>This authority is assigned to the head teacher.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparing the table and ensuring that it adheres to the academic plan and that the teachers fulfil their equities. 2. Preparing the supporting school tables such as the tables of waiting, late times and

	year and editing them during the academic year when necessary.	<p>observing tests, etc.</p> <p>3. During preparation of the school tables the educational good of the school should be considered and the official instructions should be applied.</p> <p>4. Issuing the necessary decisions and informing the school staff and students about them.</p>
38	Minimizing the academic plan of the classes when there are insufficient teachers in the school after the completion of all the teachers' systematic equities including those who are assigned to other tasks but teaching (the activity leader, the education resource secretary, the Islamic education leader, the student guide ... etc., except for the head teacher's deputy).	<p>This authority is assigned to the guidance and orientation committee</p> <p>1. The committee prepare an alternative classes table in order to ensure the completion of the teachers' equities in the specialization in the preparatory and secondary stages and the teachers' equities in the primary stage.</p> <p>2. Issuing the decision and informing all the school staff and students.</p> <p>3. Providing the relevant entities in the education department and education office with a copy of the reduction decision.</p> <p>4. Reverting to the main plan when there is no longer a shortage of teachers.</p>
39	Performing educational studies on the school staff.	<p>This authority is assigned to the School Council.</p> <p>1. Determine the study subject, causes, research approach, useful purposes of the study at school level and offer the topic to the council.</p> <p>2. The School Council approve the decision by majority.</p> <p>3. The specialized entities in the education department and education office should be provided with the study results.</p>

40	<p>Approving professional development programs for school staff and students during the school day such as training and exchange visits, in addition to the meetings of the teachers who work in the same specialization, workshops and discussion circles according to the good of the academic table, student good, and the nature and requirements of their work.</p>	<p>This authority is assigned to the head teacher.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classifying the school staff and students according to their technical level using their functional performance in recent years and their files in addition to the results of visits by supervisors and specialists. 2. Determining their professional needs. 3. Determining the appropriate professional development programs for school staff. 4. Approving the programs and preparing a timeline for them to be applied in the school. 5. Utilizing the school's ability to receive training and professional development using school building to host training course. 6. Evaluating the programs.
41	<p>Approving programs to fix school problems or to provide educational benefits.</p>	<p>This authority is assigned to the guidance and orientation committee of the school.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An academic, documented concept should be prepared for the program to be applied to fix school problems or to achieve educational benefits that fits the school environment. 2. The committee approve the programs by majority. 3. The programs are to be included in the school plan. 4. Assigning teachers and those who are related to the program's execution. 5. The programs should be documented from their beginning until their end. 6. The education department and education office should receive a copy of the program.
42	<p>Evaluating the performance of all school employees.</p>	<p>This authority is limited to the head teacher and can't be assigned to anyone else.</p>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Activating the approved evaluation tools and letting the employees know about these tools. 2. Classifying school staff according to their technical levels, using their professional performance in the past few years and their own separate files in addition to results of visits by specialists and supervisors – in order to determine the number of technical and field visits that are appropriate for them. 3. Investigating the supporting evidence for the given rates. 4. Showing each employee their evaluation cards. 5. Sending the original professional performance evaluation form to the education department in order for it to be authorized and keeping a copy of it after it is approved.
43	<p>Applying educational experiments in order to support the efficiency of the teaching and learning tools in the school.</p>	<p>This authority is assigned to the School Council.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A printed academic concept should be prepared for the educational idea to be applied in order to increase the efficiency of educational performance under the condition that the application duration shouldn't last for more than two years. 2. The suggested idea should be presented to the School Council and the approval is by majority. 3. The experiment is to be included in the school plan. 4. Informing the relevant entities in the education department and education office officially about the program plan.

		<p>5. The experiment is to be documented from the beginning until the end.</p> <p>6. Regular and final reports are to be prepared for the School Council along with evidence and indicators in order to help with the decision about whether to continue with the trial or to stop it.</p> <p>7. In case of the experiment's success then the school is to provide a report about the experiment to the education department, in order for it to be expanded and applied in other appropriate schools.</p>
44	<p>Determining the teachers to be moved from the school - those who got less than 85 percent in their approved professional performance evaluation in the last two years – into another one, but no more than one teacher per year, under the condition that there will be no financial commitment or external movement for the teacher or a shortage that can't be covered at the school. This is for head teachers of schools that have more than 500 students.</p>	<p>This authority is assigned to the School Council.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Studying the orientation terms regarding moving the teacher with the School Council and the approval is by majority. 2. Sending data about the teacher to be moved to the personnel department within the official date for the teacher's movement.
45	<p>Giving orders to move administrators and non-teaching employees if they get less than excellent in their approved professional performance evaluation over a two year period.</p>	<p>This authority is assigned to the School Council.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The head teacher presents the movement terms and reasons and the approval of the council is made by majority. 2. Pursuing the personnel department in the education department to ensure that they move the administrators to another place within two weeks of receiving the letter. 3. Pursuing the relevant entity in the education

		department about moving the non-teaching staff into another school within two weeks of receiving the letter.
46	Making deals with the private sector to sponsor school programs in accordance with educational goals, system, rules and official instructions.	<p>This authority is assigned to the School Council.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determining the programs and activities to be sponsored within the school plan. 2. Accepting the sponsorship and advertisements that fit with the educational goals. 3. The council approval is made by majority. 4. The head teacher makes deals with the private sector directly to sponsor the applied programs in the school according to official letters. 5. The duration of the deal can't be more than one semester for sponsorship of any school program and sponsorship is made for each program separately. 6. The financial committee should document all the expenses and costs in special records.
47	Making deals with approved specialized entities from the public sector to operate the school canteen.	<p>This authority is assigned to the school financial box committee.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Announcing the operation of the canteen according to the applied system and determining the day of opening the envelopes, unless the canteen is included within an existing bid following to the education department. 2. The committee opens the envelopes and selects the most appropriate bid that fits the healthy requirements from the DOE, and the higher bid. 3. The head teacher signs the deal with the

		operating entity of the canteen according to the united contract form of the school canteens and sends a copy to the relevant entity in the education department.
48	Making deals with approved private training institutes to supply training programs for school staff according to the school's abilities.	<p>This authority is assigned to the School Council.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The programs are to be included within the professional development plan for school staff. 2. The council approval of the training programs is made by majority. 3. Utilizing the school's ability to establish professional training and development in the school.
49	Approving and determining the teachers who deserve to have awards because of their work covering absent teachers, where this is more than their official equity (24) classes.	<p>This authority is limited to the head teacher and cannot be assigned to anyone else.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher deserves to have an award if their equity is more than (24) main classes and cover classes during the school week. 2. The teachers who have reduced equities by official decision deserve to have awards according to the number of cover classes that they take that are more than their official equity of classes. 3. The maximum limit for cover classes that a teacher can be awarded for teaching is 4 classes per week. 4. The teacher has to present new or good teaching material that is related to the school subject during the entire cover class in order to deserve the award. 5. Priority is given to maths teachers, science teachers and English teachers unless the guidance and orientation committee specify another subject.

		<p>6. Determining the teachers who take cover classes in addition to their equity during any school week on a monthly basis and reporting this at the end of each month to the personnel department in the education department so that the teachers can receive their awards – 75 Riyals – for each cover class.</p> <p>7. The education office has to study the reasons for the absence that has led to the need for cover classes in addition to working on fixing the problems if there are any.</p>
50	<p>Suggesting a maximum of 5 employees in education jobs in the school to be delegated the task of arranging professional development for the school year. This is for schools that have no less than 800 students.</p>	<p>This authority is assigned to the School Council.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The head teacher offers the council the delegation plan for the employees in educational jobs in the school. The council approval is by majority. 2. Informing the education department of the budget for their approval and issuing the delegation decision no less than 5 days before the execution. 3. Informing the chosen staff officially that they are able to attend a program. 4. Neither the school nor the education department must pay any fees that are related to the attendance of the chosen staff member at the program.
51	<p>Providing employees to clean the school in case there is a problem with the contract for cleaning service staff or in case the responsible employees don't do their work, or if they don't do their work according to the applied systems and rules.</p>	<p>This authority is assigned to the head teacher.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing the required employees according to the approved policy and rules of the DOE. 2. Sending the expenses forms and supporting documents to the education department.

52	Signing contracts with specialized organizations and companies for the emergency maintenance of the school according to the assigned budget.	<p>This authority is assigned to the financial committee of the school.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The education department deliver the money assigned for the emergency maintenance of the school. 2. Contracts are made for the schools that have less than 200 students but must not cost more than 5,000 Riyals. 3. Contracts are made for the schools that have between 200 and 400 students but must not cost more than 10,000 Riyals. 4. Contracts are made for schools that have more than 400 students but must not cost more than 15,000 Riyals. 5. The financial committee of the school documents all the expenditures and repays the loan before the end of the financial year according to the official regulations. The committee also keep a copy of the procedures and bills inside a special file in the school.
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Application requirements

First: the Ministry forms an operational committee of the education department and relevant sectors (Girls and Boys) to support the application and fix any obstacles that might appear.

Secondly: the Ministry – boys and girls education departments – hold an annual meeting for the school leaders along with the participation of some specialists, so that national and international experience meet. Trials and modern models in school leadership are presented and it should also include various workshops and activities for the professional development of some school head teachers in the field of educational leadership and its advanced skills.

Third: no entity in the Ministry or the education department is able to issue anything that could cancel any authority or change its systematic position without agreeing it with the supervisors – the general department for the educational supervision of “girls and boys” – who then offer that to the owner of the authority.

Appendix B

Fourth: The general department for the educational supervision of “girls and boys” should present a study to owner of the authority before the end of the academic year (1432/1433 Hijri) about its efficiency and its effect in the field in addition to the development requirements.

Appendix C Interview questions:

C.1 Individual interviews with head teachers

How would you describe your school demographically?

1. Can you please tell me about the movement of the Ministry of Education towards decentralisation?
2. Consider a case of two schools; one takes decisions based on a school board comprising parents and staff, the second takes decisions based on an individual leader. Which do you think is the more applicable model for schools in KSA, and why?
3. In your view;
 - What are the biggest challenges to the successful implementation of the decentralisation?
 - What are the benefits of implementing the new management policy?
 - What changes would you like to make to improve the implementation of the new policy?
4. Do you think there are going to be changes to your role as a head teacher? If yes, what are they?
5. What are the likely to be the changes to the roles of the MOE, DOE, parents, teachers and pupils within the future education system?
6. Have you noticed any change(s) after implementing the new policy? in;

School administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation and management • Time • Activities
Structure of your school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability for school staff • Security and safety • School buildings • Admission
Improvements in teaching in the classroom? If yes, what are they?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods of teaching • Collaboration with experienced teachers • Curriculum

Appendix C

Improvement in student outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment• National exam
Supplying resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• e.g. books, chairs, tables, computers, printers, lab equipment, educational aids
Relationship with the community, parents, DOE, MOE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relationship with the DOE, parents, community• Collaboration with the private sector,• Finance (funding from the local community)

7. What kind of support (from the DOE) do you think a head teacher needs in order to be a good leader in the context of the policy?
8. What kinds of training do you think that school staff might need to implement the new policy of decentralisation?
9. What is your perception of the impact of the new policy on staff, students, parents and other stakeholders?
10. What do you think about the school's autonomy and financial capacity to provide an education service?
11. What do you see as the role of teachers, parents and pupils in school decision-making?
12. How would you describe the decision-making processes in the school?

Do you have any more points?

C.2 Individual interviews with deputies

1. How would you describe your school demographically?
2. Can you please tell me about the movement of the Ministry of Education towards decentralisation?

3. Consider a case of two schools; one takes decisions based on a school board comprising parents and staff, the second takes decisions based on an individual leader. Which do you think is the more applicable model for schools in KSA, and why?
4. From your view:
 - What are the biggest challenges to the successful implementation of decentralisation?
 - What are the benefits of implementing the new management policy?
 - What changes would you like to make to improve the implementation of the new policy?
5. Do you think that there are going to be changes to your role as a deputy? If yes, what are they?
6. How do you see the role of parents in school decision-making?
7. Have you noticed any change(s) after implementing the new policy? in;

School administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation and management • Time • Activities
Structure of your school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability for school staff • Security and safety • School building • Admission
Improvements in teaching in the classroom? If yes, what are they?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods of teaching • Collaboration with experienced teachers
Improvement in student outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment • National exam
Supplying resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e.g. books, chairs, tables, computers, printers, lab equipment, educational aids
Relationship with the community, parents, DOE, MOE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship with the DOE, parents, the community, • Collaboration with the private sector, • Finance (funding from the local

	community)
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8. What kind of support (from the DOE) do you think a deputy needs in order to implement the policy?
9. What kinds of training do you think that school staff might need to implement the new policy of decentralisation?
10. What is your perception of the impact of the new policy on the staff, students, parents and other stakeholders?
11. What do you think about the school's autonomy and financial capacity to provide an education service?
12. How would you describe decision-making processes in the school?

Do you have any more points?

C.3 Individual interviews with teachers

1. Can you please tell me about the movement of the Ministry of Education towards decentralisation?
2. How much are you currently involved in the school's decision-making?
3. Over the last three years; what changes have you noticed in school management?
4. In your view:
 - What are the biggest challenges to the successful implementation of decentralisation?
 - What are the benefits of implementing the new management policy?
 - What changes would you like to make to improve the implementation of the new policy?
5. How would you describe your relationship with the school's head teacher and the pupils' parents?
6. Do you think teachers should be involved in decisions about:
 - Budget

- School organization (e.g. curriculum, time, timetable, assessment)
 - Resources
 - Setting school policy
7. How much you are aware of the changing nature of school decision-making in KSA?
8. What is your perception of the impact of the new policy on the staff, students, parents and other stakeholders?
9. Have you noticed any change(s) after implementing the new policy? in;

School administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation and management • Time • Activities
Structure of your school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability for school staff • Security and safety • School building • Admission
Improvements in teaching in the classroom? If yes, what are they?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods of teaching • Collaboration with experienced teachers
Improvement in student outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment • National exam
Supplying resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e.g. books, chairs, tables, computers, printers, lab equipment, educational aids
Relationship with the community, parents, DOE, MOE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship with the DOE, parents, the community • Collaboration with the private sector, • Finance (funding from the local community)

Do you have any more points?

C.4 Individual interviews with parents

1. How much are you currently involved in the school's decision-making?
2. How would you describe your relationship with the school's administrators and teachers?
3. Over the last three years what changes have you noticed in your relationship with school?
4. How does the school normally communicate with you?
5. What do they communicate with you about?
6. How would you like to be involved in school business?
7. Why is it important that parents are involved in decision-making?
8. Has anything prevented your involvement in the past?
9. Do you think that parents should be involved in decisions about:
 - Budget
 - School organization (e.g. curriculum, time, timetable, assessment)
 - Resources
 - Setting school policy
10. To what extent do you think that parents' involvement in school business would impact children's progress?
11. How much you are aware of the changing nature of school decision-making in KSA?

Do you have any more points?

C.5 Focus group interviews with pupils

I will use three mini focus groups with five pupils in each. I will start by explaining the topic for them and the main questions will be as follows:

1. What opportunities have you had to give your opinions on your school?
2. In your education how have you involved yourself in your school? (e.g. clubs, activities)
3. Have you noticed any changes in your school over the past three years? (e.g. being on the School Council, activities in the school, etc.)

4. In what ways would you like to be even more involved? Give me examples?
5. What do pupils need to be more involved?
6. Do you think pupils should be more involved in decisions about:
 - Curriculum
 - Assessment of their teachers
 - Resources that the school buys
 - How the school is organised
 - Use of technology
 - Timetable
 - Budget

Do you have any more points?

C.6 Individual interviews with supervisors

1. Can you please tell me about the movement of the Ministry of Education towards decentralisation?
2. In your view:
 - What are the biggest challenges to the successful implementation of decentralisation?
 - What are the benefits of implementing the new management policy?
 - What changes would you like to make to improve the implementation of the new policy?
3. Do you think that there are going to be changes in the role of the DOE? If yes, what are they?
4. Tell me about the role of DOE in the new policy setting.
5. Have you noticed any change(s) after implementing the new policy? in;
 - School administration
 - Structure of schools
 - Improvements in teaching in the classroom? If yes, what are they?
 - Improvement in student outcomes
 - Supplying resources

Appendix C

- Relationship with the community, parents, DOE, MOE

6. Do you think school head teachers can manage schools independently?
7. Do you think the local community (e.g. educators, parents, pupils) should be more involved in decisions about:
 - Curriculum
 - Assessment of teachers
 - Resources that the school buys
 - How the school is organised
 - Use of technology
 - Timetable
 - Budget
8. What kind of support do you think a head teacher needs (from the DOE) in order to be a good leader in the context of the policy?
9. What kinds of training do you think that school staff might need to implement the new policy of decentralisation?
10. What is your perception of the impact of the new policy on school staff, students, parents and other stakeholders?
11. What do you think about the school's autonomy and financial capacity to provide an education service?
12. How do you see the roles of teachers, parents, pupils in the school decision-making?
13. How can you describe decision-making processes in the DOE?

Do you have any more points?

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