

**PIONEER SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPROVEMENT IN
SAUDI ARABIA:
THE CASE OF THE SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL
INSTITUTIONS**

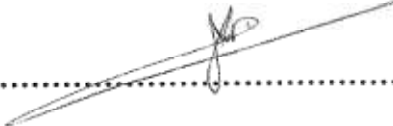
Submitted by

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**To the University of Exeter as a dissertation towards the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate School of Education**

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27 July 2011

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ABSTRACT

This study, *Pioneer Schools Effectiveness and Improvement in Saudi Arabia: The Case of the Secondary Educational Institutions*, is the first systematic investigation of school effectiveness (SE) and school improvement (SI) in relation to the Kingdom's ambitious *Pioneer Secondary Schools Programme* (PSP) first introduced in 2000. It selected all eight boys' Pioneer Schools in the Educational District of Al Madinah Al Munawwarah, as a case study to determine, a decade after its inception, how four key groups now understand and describe the attributes of an effective school: principals, teachers, students and parents. Its unique approach is to utilise a mixed research method by combining both quantitative statistical analysis and qualitative approaches, and using hermeneutics in the latter in order to triangulate the findings. The study departed from the once traditional approach which relied heavily on quantified test results or achievement scores to determine SE and methods of SI. Instead, this study posed three fundamental research questions and generated lists of identifiable indices of priorities and outlooks of the four respondent groups in relation to SESI for the schools in question. The findings of this study consistently show that, from the perspective of those surveyed and interviewed, much more has to be done in pioneer schools in Saudi Arabia before they can be considered truly effective schools in international terms. Moreover, the discussion of the data generated draws the further conclusion that international educational research on SESI issues points to a much more involved and sophisticated process than is suggested by the priorities and outlook of the respondents of this study in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the current research study on school effectiveness (SE) and school improvement (SI) of pioneer schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It comprises: 1) A Brief Background of the Issue; 2) Definition of Effective Schools; 3) Statement of the Problem; 4) Purpose of the Study; 5) Research Questions; 6) Significance of the Study; 7) Scope and Limitations of the Study; 8) Methodological Approach; and 9) Organization of the Study.

1.2 A Brief Background of the Issue

Experts contend that national ambitions to achieve social equality, a strong economy, a highly skilled and motivated workforce and advanced health provision services can be realized by means of education (Levin & Kelly, 1997). Hence, investment in education has received much attention in both developed and less developed countries in order to realize a prosperous future, focusing on qualitative advancement. Research on school effectiveness (SE) and school improvement (SI) has suggested that some schools are more successful than others, which provokes questions about what is effectiveness? What are the factors that contribute to effectiveness? and thus how might educationalists establish a basis for improvement of schools. Each society has its own and probably more than one, interpretation of “educational goods”, that consequently lead to effectiveness. For example, a good school in Africa may look very different from a good school in Uzbekistan (Acedo, 2000). However, who makes the decisions about how schools should develop is a key political question for stakeholders to address (Riley, 1998).

One development is a trend towards sharper focus on the capacity of individual schools and teachers, as distinct from the system as a whole, to deliver *educational goods* for their children. Another attempt is that education policy-makers seek to devolve decision-making to site-level operation, and sometimes financial matters; centralize decision-making on the curriculum, standards and assessment; implement evidence-based accountability arrangements; focus on outcomes more than inputs; and increase parental choice (Cuttance & Hill, 1999).

Education, SE and the related areas of SI are important processes in modern Saudi Arabia, as elsewhere, in which society, educational systems and institutions are constantly under review. SE and SI have been salient topics for an increasing body of academic research since the 1960s. Effective schools are high on the agenda of most countries' educational policies. During the 1970s and 1980s, research on schools increasingly suggested that individual schools do make a difference to pupils' learning.

Differences in pupil attainment, attitudes and behavior cannot be explained simply in terms of the home life of the pupil. This is because some schools are more effective than others (Harber, 1992:165).

Educational investment has been considered by experts as one of the most important factors contributing to economic growth and overall development of both developed and developing countries (Haddad et al., 1990). Saudi Arabia spends huge sums in the educational sectors at all levels, including the visionary *Pioneer Secondary Schools Programme* (PSP) which started in 2000. As a result, there is currently a great deal of official concern regarding the need to improve the quality of state schools at all levels so as to provide a compatible educational service that is realistic to the demands of a dynamic and rapidly advancing society. Saudi professionals have strong faith in education as a tool that can facilitate meaningful social change towards growth and sustainable development. They believe that it is important to examine the factors that affect the provision of education in Saudi Arabia (Al Semadi & Al Nahar, 2001; Al Thubaiti, 2003; Sharaz, 2006; Al Yawer, 2008; Al Ammar, 2008).

The pace of economic and social development in developing countries requires schools to teach students essential skills in their curriculum, which include literacy, numeracy, communications and problem-solving skills. Thus, those countries must try to improve in order to enhance student success (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991). Since the number of state schools has grown rapidly over the past decades, and because of the current official interest to provide quality education, huge financial resources have been allocated to education and expanded in the Kingdom. On the other hand, there has been a common belief that education resources could be managed more effectively if not wisely by focusing on reducing the level of inefficiency.

Notwithstanding, there has been relatively little research concerning SE and SI in the Kingdom, and how they relate to official policies. The dilemma in Saudi educational enterprise is the deluded assumption that what is planned by policy makers will be implemented at the grassroots level. In fact what is planned cannot be necessarily implemented. That is because the educational system of Saudi Arabia has for long been concerned mainly with quantity rather than quality. This is due to factors such as the process of indigenization or Saudization of the teaching manpower in order to lessen heavy dependence on a huge foreign labour force. As a result, educational enterprise in the Kingdom may be said to have departed from quality to primarily one of quantity.

Recently, the Kingdom's attention has been directed to issues of quality so as to cope with the worldwide movement that aims to provide all citizens with high quality educational services. This is manifested by the Kingdom's relatively recent concern with the quality of education at different levels. A classic example of the Kingdom's interest to upgrade the educational enterprise is the *Pioneer Secondary Schools Programme (PSP)*, which was triggered by the official interest to catch up with the worldwide movement of SE and SI. The Saudi interest in the development of effective secondary school can be justified in a number of ways, amongst which is the fact that the secondary stage is a crucial stage upon which the formation of both the academic and professional career of the secondary school graduate is determined. The Educational Development Centre in Riyadh insists that the primary aim is to realize the best possible learning outcomes of the educational system in all the elements (knowledge, skills, attitudes and values) that the school system aims to achieve (Educational Development Centre, 2005). This explains and justifies the introduction of the PSP, which aims to enhance the quality of educational enterprise in secondary schools in the Kingdom. Meanwhile, according to experts, more research is needed to determine the means by which poorer schools are enabled to improve and become better (Reynolds, 1996).

1.3 Definitions

Two specific conceptual terminologies used in this research necessitate clear definition. These are the notion of pioneer schools in Saudi Arabia and the idea of what is an effective school.

1.3.1 Pioneer Schools in Saudi Arabia

The Saudi Ministry of Education has defined a Pioneer School Program (PSP) as an effective school led by a principal supported by a highly qualified staff. The team is responsible for planning and school management geared to delivering quality programmes consistent with the educational policy of the Kingdom. The curriculum is flexible and based on the Islamic *Shari'ah* (Islamic Law) and relevant to the challenging demands and requirements of contemporary life and is seen as comprising a partnership between teacher and student. The most effective teaching methods, resources and advanced technology must be utilised to realise the goals and objectives of the school. That includes preparing a generation that is able to self-develop and empowered to deal confidently and effectively with domestic requirements as well as contributing to global civilization (Ministry of Education, 2006).

The major policy statements and philosophy of the PSP as espoused by the Ministry of Education includes the following ingredients:

1. Clarity of vision.
2. Internal system of quality monitoring.
3. Comprehensive evaluation of students' achievement and progress.
4. Systematic of organization.
5. Clarity and specification of roles and positions, including duties and responsibilities.
6. Keen interest on the part of school administration and local community to provide high quality educational service (Ministry of Education, 2008).

1.3.2 Effective Schools

Experts contend that however defined, the term *effective* is of a nature that remains difficult to measure. Scheerens broadly defined school effectiveness as the degree to which schools achieve their goals, in comparison to other schools that are *equal*, in terms of student-intake, through manipulation of certain conditions by the school itself or the intermediate school context (Scheerens, 2000).

More controversially, Mortimore uses pupil performance as the measure of effectiveness. He thus defined the concept that an effective school is one in which students' progress further than might be expected from consideration of its intake. In

his parlance, an effective school adds extra value to its students' outcome, in comparison to other schools serving similar intakes. In contrast, in an ineffective school, students make less progress than expected given their characteristic as intake (Mortimore, 1991).

In contrast, Townsend (1994) has suggested a goal-oriented definition of an effective school, in terms of the tasks it is expected to perform. For him, an effective school should have some its objectives that are closely in line with public educational goals. He transcends the purely academic excellence or educational policies to one incorporating the fulfillment of the larger pragmatic societal needs and expectations.

However, the reverse of this is proposed by Madaus et al., (1980) for whom an effective school is directly a function of its stated objectives, whatever they may be. The assumption is that a school is effective to the extent that there is congruence between its objectives and achievements. In other words, for them, it is effective to the extent that it accomplishes what it sets out to do. This notion is confined with reference to what the school itself sets out to do, whether or not it can be compared to other competing schools, or is in congruence to public expectations or societal needs.

For the purpose of this study, an effective school is one comes closest to approximating to its stated goals and objectives in terms of academic excellence, societal needs, public expectations and national requirements as this study will show.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Despite the laudable and ambitious national interest in developing the quality of schooling at the secondary stage, research in SE and SI in the Kingdom seriously lag behind (Al Ammar, 2008). Thus, one of the areas that require immediate investigation in Saudi Arabia is the quality of secondary education in general and secondary SE and SI in particular. This is vital to the achievement of academic excellence in graduates, addressing growing societal needs, matching high and competitive public expectations and meeting national development requirements of indigenization and Saudization, because Saudi Arabia has for long placed heavy reliance on a large expatriate population, virtually in every field and sector all across the Kingdom.

Since the establishment of the PSP, there has been no research that assessed the effectiveness of Saudi secondary schools, or the extent to which the officially named pioneer secondary schools in the Kingdom can be classified as being effective, in the light of the body of literature on SE and SI. Moreover, the researcher's direct experience as a school principal in Saudi Arabia offers him invaluable insights into the factors that make a school effective or ineffective and how the latter can be improved.

The researcher's focus on the secondary school is due to the great importance of the secondary stage as the only source of university entry. Thus, ensuring a sustainably high quality education at the secondary stage naturally leads to correspondingly high quality learning outcomes; hence, high quality university admissions and resulting thereby in high quality graduates. In addition to the direct personal and first-hand understanding of the researcher on the issue, current trends in the Kingdom show that there is a huge gap between the declared official policy for high quality secondary education and actual outcomes for high school graduates. Moreover, the degree and scale of this problem is largely unknown and therefore warrants a systematic study in order to identify the state of affairs and provide appropriate solutions for a brighter future in the Kingdom's public educational policies, in line with national development programmes. Indeed, continuous evaluations of school performances constitute one of the major objectives of the pioneer schools proclaimed by the Saudi Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2008).

1.5 Purpose of the Study

The precise purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of principals, school teachers, students and parents in PSPs in Al Madinah Educational District in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia towards issues related to the SE and SI of PSP schools. This research specifically examines the perceptions of those who are directly involved in secondary school and in order to assess the current status of their schools as PSPs and how they can be improved.

The main variables considered in this study are in five sets (see Chapter Four for more details of the theoretical framework of this study):

1. The dependent or criterion variables or that which is being studied – PSP effectiveness and improvement in Saudi Arabia.
2. Four independent or predictor variables: PSP Principals; PSP Teachers; PSP Pupils; and Parents of PSP pupils

Respondents will be asked to give their perceptions on four question sets by utilizing three data collection methods:

1. Questionnaire Survey Instruments.
2. Semi-structured Interviews.
3. Focus Groups

1.6 Research Questions

The main research question is:

- What are the key perceptions of an effective school among principals, teachers, students and parents involved in Pioneer Schools Programme in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia? This is answered in chapter five.

Subsidiary questions include:

- How can these perceptions best be researched and presented in a doctoral study? This is answered in chapter four.
- What light do these perceptions shed on current understanding of the nature of improving and effective schools in the Kingdom and in the Arab world more widely? This is answered in chapter six.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study can be understood through the following eight points.

First, by ascertaining the perceptions of key people – principals - in the PSP community related to SE and SI, this could act to raise the awareness of those interested in the quality of secondary education. This includes a focus on the importance of taking into account the perceptions of the actual implementers and clients of the educational policies that are dictated by the Saudi Ministry of Education at the central level.

Second, by exploring PSP teachers' perceptions related to the possible tasks and goals of effective schools; the elements that contribute to school effectiveness; and the effectiveness of their own schools, this is designed to provide valuable insights into how teachers, as both clients and implementers of the educational policies at both the classroom and school levels, view their world and make sense of it. Their insights are essential since they provide valuable feedback to other members of the school community, including the school administration, related to how theory is put into practice.

Third, ascertaining students' perceptions of the possible goals/tasks of effective schools; the factors/variables that affect school effectiveness; and their effectiveness of their own schools, this is beneficial for teachers, parents, the school administration and other school community members as it shows them the extent to which students' expectations and perceptions are congruent with or depart from those of other school community members.

Fourth, by eliciting parents' perceptions of an effective school, this should help to explain the extent to which the school's mission is coinciding with public expectations. In turn, this should help to shed valuable light on the necessity of congruence between the school's mission and the expectations of parents of children of the PSP.

Fifth, the findings of the study should help to shed light on the extent to which the officially stated goals of effective schools coincide or do not coincide, with the perceived roles and goals of effective schools latent in the minds of pioneer school principals, teachers, students and parents alike. This should provide educational policy makers with essential feedback as to the extent to which their policies are working or need recommended changes for improvement in the public educational system.

Sixth, this study is an attempt to come to a clear understanding of perceptions of the current system of effective schools programme in Saudi Arabia in the context of contemporary models of effective schools worldwide. This will be of great benefit for those interested since it provides insight into the possibility of the Saudi programme

to benefit from the well-established and successful experiments of school effectiveness worldwide. In other words, this study of a national programme will be a modest contribution to the body of international literature on the subject of effective schools.

Seventh, the study of a certain research phenomenon is a learning process for the researcher who is directly involved in public education in Saudi Arabia. Taking this into consideration, the research journey the researcher will be undertaking and involved in will add to the personal knowledge and expertise of the researcher and thereby significantly enhance his research capabilities on the one hand, and his administrative capabilities in the Saudi educational administration on the other.

Eighth, the exploratory notion adopted by the study aims to indentify perceptions of key participants on the variety of factors impinging upon school effectiveness in general and secondary school effectiveness in particular in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The findings of this process of exploration will surely provide fruitful reflections into why things are the way they are. Undoubtedly, they are likely also to raise more research questions for other researchers to pursue and investigate.

1.8 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study examines the opinions and views of an all-male target population comprising PSP principals, teachers, students and parents of children in those secondary schools in Saudi Arabia. This highlights several perceived limitations as follows:

1. No female participant is included due to strong cultural and societal norms in this traditionally Arab and conservative Islamic society of Saudi Arabia. The researcher does not have direct access to PSP schools educating girls due to the strict segregation of male and female sexes in secondary education . This does not mean that their views are not important, but rather suggests that another study is required by a female researcher to account for this gender bias.
2. For practical purposes, resources and time constraints, not all PSP secondary schools Kingdom-wide were examined. However, all eight PSP schools from the four local districts in Al Madinah comprised the current research sample.

Al Madinah, like Makkah, Jeddah and Riyadh is a big city. These schools were selected because they have been among the first to be established since the government initially launched this project in 2000. Moreover, they have relatively large student populations that are representative of Kingdom-wide PSP schools, which should make the findings both valid and reliable for assessing current perceptions of SE and SI in Saudi Arabia. It is, moreover, very advantageous and easily accessible to the researcher who is from Al Madinah and lives there.

3. The sample included all 8 PSP principals, 160 teachers, 160 students and 64 parents in questionnaire data collection methods. Based on considerations of manageability, all 8 principals were interviewed, while 32 teachers, 40 students and 32 parents across the eight schools participated in focus groups discussions. Aside from principals, all other respondents were randomly selected to give their views and opinions on PSP effectiveness and improvement (see Chapter Four for more details of the study sample).
4. This is in effect a cross-sectional study which is valid for only a given time period from the time the given PSPs were established to about mid-2011. The recommendations suggested here for SE and SI must be first considered, implemented and given time to work. It is, moreover, not a once and for all solution. Further studies may be required subsequently at a suitable time to measure the effectiveness of PSP in Saudi Arabia and provide yet another set of appropriate recommendations that are opportune and realistic, based on new findings.

1.9 Methodological Approach

Scholars contend that methodology is *the theory whose method and techniques are appropriate to generate and justify knowledge* (Ernest, 1994:4). Chapter four is dedicated to a full and detailed discussion of the theory of methodology and the particular methodological approach used in this study. In brief, this is primarily a triangulated study based on three primary sources: the available body of literature on the subject; quantitative or statistical data analysis; and analysis of qualitative data. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are valid empirical approaches when appropriate survey instruments are used – in this case questionnaires.

1.10 Organization of the Study

This thesis is comprised of five core chapters, Chapter One aside, and organized as follows:

Chapter Two: The Context of the Study is a background chapter on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and discusses all the vital aspects of the country directly related to the topic. It comprises five main sections: 1) KSA Country Profile; 2) The Educational System of KSA; 3) Principles of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; 4) Administration of Education in KSA; 5) An Attempt Towards SE and SI in KSA. This essential background information is necessary in order to understand the context of this study.

Chapter Three: Literature Review on Effective Schools and School Improvement examines the body of literature on the subject of school effectiveness (SE) and school improvement (SI). The primary purpose is to highlight the broad range of international perspectives on SE and SI and to find out the relations between them. The literature on SE and SI in the USA and the UK is this main focus. Six major areas of the literature are explored here: 1) Conceptual Analysis of SE and SI; 2) Literature Review on SE and SI; 3) SE in the Arab Context; 4) SER and SIR in Saudi Arabia: A Review of Empirical Studies to Date; 5) Contest and Controversy Over SER and SIR; and 6) Gaps and Opportunities for SER and SIR in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter Four: Methodology of the Study examines the two most popular methodologies and their theoretical assumptions used in educational research projects with the aim of choosing an appropriate one for this specific study. It also details the particular research design methods and procedures used in conducting the current study, including questionnaire design, distribution, data collection procedures, semi-structured interviews and data analysis techniques. Eleven directly related aspects are discussed: 1) Research Paradigms in Educational Research; 2) the Paradigm Adopted for this Study; 3) theoretical Framework of the Study; 4) Design of Data Collection Instruments; 5) the Pilot study; 6) Validity and Reliability; 7) Research Ethics; 8) Sample of the Study; 9) Conducting the Study; 10) Problems Encountered in the Data Collection Process; and 11) Data Analysis Methods.

Chapter Five: Data Presentation and Findings of the Study is a detailed presentation of the analysis and main findings of the study in the three relevant data collection methods used, respectively, for all four respondent categories – Principals, Teachers, Students, and Parents, as follows: 1) Frequency Analysis; 2) Item Analysis of the Semi-Structured Interviews of Principals; and 3) Item Analysis of the Focus Groups. The chapter also includes a section on Differences in Perceptions among the Respondents on School Effectiveness and School Improvement.

Chapter Six: Discussion of the Findings of the Study discusses the main findings of the study in four major aspects: 1) the Findings in Light of the General Body of Literature Discussed in Chapter Three; 2) the Findings in the Context of Arab Countries and Saudi Arabia in Particular; 3) Appropriateness of Theoretical and Methodological Approaches Used; and 4) Strengths and Limitations of Study.

CHAPTER TWO: CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a detailed description of the background context of this study, entailing five core considerations: 1) KSA Country Profile; 2) The Educational System of KSA; 3) Principles of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; 4) Administration of Education in KSA; 5) An Attempt Towards SE and SI in KSA. This essential background information is necessary in order to understand the importance of this study.

2.2 KSA Country Profile

Saudi Arabia is a traditional Arab and conservative Islamic country boasting the birthplace of Islam and home to two of its three holiest shrines, the Grand Mosque in Makkah Al Mukarramah and the Prophet's Mosque in Al Madinah Al Munawwarah. This section covers four pertinent aspects of the country: 1) Geography; 2) Recent Political History; 3) Economy; and 4) Population and Demographic Realities in the Kingdom.

2.2.1 Geography

Saudi Arabia is located in the South-Western corner of Asia and covers most of the Arabian Peninsula amounting to about four-fifths of its geography. The Red Sea lies on the West coast and the Arabian Gulf demarcated by Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates are on the East. Saudi Arabia shares contiguous borders with Yemen and Oman in the South; and Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait in the North. The Kingdom is geographically divided into five major provinces as follows:

1. The Central Province where the capital city Riyadh is located, and is well-known by its homogeneous Najdi culture.
2. The Eastern Province where the huge oil wells are located in an industrial region in which thousands of employees from different countries work in the oil industry. This province plays a major role in the Saudi and the world economy as it boasts the biggest oil reserves in the world.
3. The Western Province where Makkah, Madinah and Jeddah are located, and is the most active and busiest region in the Kingdom. Jeddah is the gateway to Makkah and Madinah, the two holy cities that annually receive millions of

pilgrims and visitors who come there from all over the globe to perform *Umrah* (The Lesser Pilgrimage) all year round, and the annual *Hajj* (The Great Pilgrimage). The culture in the Western Province is heterogeneous as some pilgrims in the past used to settle in these two holy cities.

4. The South-Western Province where Abha and Al-Baha are located, and is the summer resort for Saudis. The people of this province belong to different sub-cultures and most of them work in agriculture and the military.
5. The Northern Province, which is also an agricultural province. Most people in this province come from other regions in the Kingdom to work in the army, farms and schools.

According to Al Munajjed (Al Munajjed, 1997), the discovery of oil has led to a major economic boom in every sector and all fields in the Kingdom, such as social life, industry, the service sector, transportation, universities, schools and modern houses. Cities were modernized and many people in the rural areas and traditional villages moved to large cities to find better jobs and to provide their children with a better education. Since then, Saudi Arabia has become one of the richest countries in the world with a strong economic and political influence both in the Islamic world and globally.

2.2.2 Recent Political History

Modern Saudi Arabia was formed in 1932 and all of its rulers henceforth have been direct descendants of Ibn Saud, from which the Kingdom derived its name. During his rule, King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud laid the foundations of his country. He began to build the country's infrastructure and improve education, health care and agriculture. Upon his death in 1953, he was succeeded by his eldest son, Crown Prince Saud Al Saud. King Saud established the Council of Ministers and the Ministries of Health, Education and Commerce. His brother, King Faisal, succeeded him when he was dethroned in 1964 and reigned until 1975 when he was assassinated. King Faisal was thereafter succeeded by his brother, King Khalid whose reign lasted until 1982 (Al Ghamdi, 2000). Upon his death, his brother, Fahd, who had been made Crown Prince on King Faisal's death, succeeded him. In 1986, King Fahd conferred upon himself the title of 'Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques' and ruled Saudi Arabia for twenty three years – the longest period - until his death in 2005. However, because of his

ailing health in 1996 after suffering a stroke, Crown Prince Abdullah increasingly assumed more and more responsibility until the death of King Fahd on 1 August 2005. According to the line of succession, Crown Prince Abdullah became King and Prince Sultan was named Crown Prince as dictated by the country's 1992 Basic Law.

King Abdullah has continued the rapidly development and reform programmes initiated when he was crown prince. To promote increased political participation, the government held the first Municipal Councils' nationwide elections from February through April 2005 electing half the members of 179 Municipal Councils across the Kingdom (Council of Councillors in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2005). In December 2005, King Abdullah completed the process of electoral reform by appointing the remaining members of the advisory Municipal Councils. As a visionary move internationally, the King initiated and hosted an Inter-Faith Dialogue initiative in 2008 to encourage religious tolerance on a global level. In February 2009, he reshuffled the Cabinet, which led to more moderates holding ministerial and judicial positions, and further appointed the first female to a cabinet post. Thus, modern Saudi Arabia is fast pursuing domestic reforms and an assuming an increasingly active role in international affairs.

2.2.3 Economy

Saudi Arabia is an oil-based economy with strong government controls over major economic activities. Possessing more than 20% of the world's proven petroleum reserves, it is ranked as the largest exporter of petroleum and thus plays a leading role in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). The petroleum sector accounts for a huge 80% of budget revenues. High oil prices through the mid-2008 have boosted growth, government revenues, and Saudi ownership of foreign assets, while enabling Riyadh to meaningfully reduce domestic debt.

As a prudent diversification economic strategy, the government is actively encouraging private sector growth to lessen the Kingdom's heavy dependence on oil exports and to increase employment opportunities for the swelling Saudi population. Despite its vast oil wealth, unemployment is high (9%), and the large youth population generally lacks higher education and technical skills for gainful employment in the country. Given its solid economic weight, Saudi Arabia acceded to

the World Trade Organization in 2005. The government has announced plans to establish six 'Economic Cities' in different regions of the country to promote national development and diversification. Rapid economic and social reforms are continuing at great speed, including the recent opening of a gas industry, petrochemical factories, and the introduction of private universities all across the Kingdom (Ministry of Labour, 2004).

2.2.4 Population and Demographic Realities in the Kingdom

The available information on the total Saudi population census as of 2009 is 25.9 million. In 2004, it increased to 22.7 million from 21 million in 1999 and 13 million in 1985. The population growth rate in the KSA stands at an average of 3.24% and has continued up to the last available data in 2009, based on a five-year repeated census. This places the KSA population growth rate between the lowest found in the region (Kuwait: 2%) and the highest (UAE: 5.84%). However, the KSA population growth rates figure rank above the general average of 2.37%, registered across the Arab world. The high birth rate and the low mortality rate are the direct result of dedicated and intensive efforts of the government towards health care issues and improving the quality of life in the Kingdom (General Intelligence Presidency, 2011).

Inhabitants from Saudi origins form 72.9% of the population, which comprises 50.1% males and 49.9% females. Foreigners constitute a significantly high 27.1% of the population (6 million people), of whom 69.5% are males and the remaining are females. Thus, the Kingdom's education policies are geared to meet the demanding requirements of Saudization through which less reliance will be placed on a large expatriate workforce by replacing foreign workers with Saudi nationals.

This relative high number of foreign inhabitants is an outcome of the growing interest of foreigners in the Saudi investment sectors. They fill the Kingdom's growing needs for vital skills and services in its massive development projects. This is a result of the Saudi government policy of using its huge oil revenues to expand general services and build a solid infrastructure. Of all the expatriate workers from different countries, the Egyptian workforce alone makes up the single largest number, reaching 16% of foreign workers, followed by 30-40% for Indians, Pakistanis, Yemenis and the

Philippinos combined (General Intelligence Presidency, 2011). Foreign workers come to Saudi Arabia seeking a better and brighter economic future.

2.3 The Educational System in KSA

As part of the ambitious economic and social reform programmes of the Kingdom, the educational system remains a primary target for growth and expansion. Three important aspects are presented here: 1) Organization of the Saudi Educational System; 2) Education and the Role of Islam in KSA; 3) the Educational Ladder.

2.3.1 Organization of the Saudi Educational System

The educational system in Saudi Arabia is made up of five divisions as follows:

1. Kindergarten for children from 3-6 years old.
2. Elementary from 6-11 years old.
3. Intermediate from 12-14 years old.
4. Secondary level from 15-18 years old.
5. University level, typically from 19-22 or 24 years old, depending on the subjects studied, and the form of higher education.

The secondary stage is the final phase of general education in the Kingdom. It is a critical three-year period, immediately following from the intermediate stage. Students are admitted to this stage if they have obtained the intermediate stage certificate. Normally, students pursue the secondary stage education between the ages of 15 and 18 years. This stage is considered the most important period in the general education ladder because students who successfully complete this stage are eligible for admission to higher education institutions (Ministry of Higher Education, 2000). All schools at all levels Kingdom-wide utilize the same methods of instruction, textbooks, evaluation techniques, curricula, and educational policy. However, based on cultural and religious norms, as stated in Article 155 of the Educational Policy of Saudi Arabia, *there is strict separation of the sexes at all levels of education with the exception of kindergarten, and nursery schools* (Ministry of Education, 1995:29).

2.3.2 Education and the Role of Islam in KSA

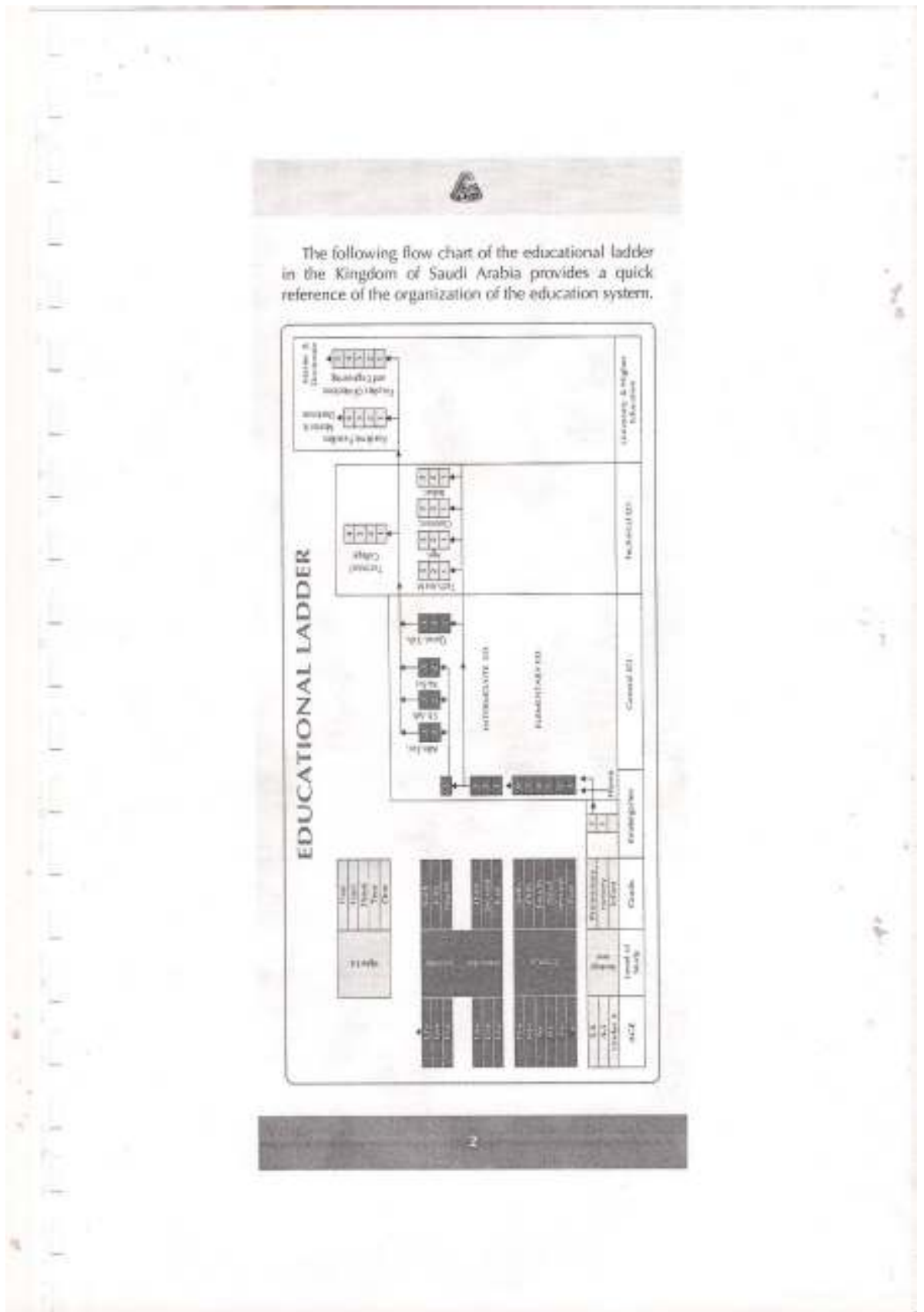
Education has been one of the first and most prominent benefits accompanying the development of the modern State of Saudi Arabia. In 1925, the Directorate of

Education was first established and was subsequently followed a year later by the Basic Instructions that laid the foundation for a centralized national system of government (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission to the U.S.A., 2006).

A new stage in the development of modern education began in 1953 with the establishment of the Ministry of Education on December 24, as part of the Council of Ministers. King Fahd Ibn Abdulaziz, who was appointed the first Minister of Education, guided the Ministry's unprecedented expansion and modernization of educational resources and establishment. With its inauguration, more schools were opened, and public education started to expand rapidly throughout the country. The expansion in education was so rapid that the Ministry of Education found it necessary to create 'School Districts' in different parts of the country to assist the Ministry by distributing some of its responsibilities to the School Districts.

In 1958, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia along with other members of the Arab League agreed upon a uniform educational system that provided for a 6-year elementary, a 3-year intermediate and a 3-year secondary cycle with a separate higher education program (see Figure 2.1). National development plans stressed a basic philosophy for the successful modernization of the Kingdom's educational programmes. This philosophy was based on two major principles: 1) developing needed human resources through education and training; and 2) building a comprehensive economic infrastructure.

Figure 2.1 – Educational Ladder



Due to their importance to the National Development Plans, human resources development along with infrastructure, economic resources and social resources, including education, were given one of the highest priority ((Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission to the U.S.A., 2006).

2.3.3 The Educational Ladder

As already cited above, the educational system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia consists of the following five levels: 1) Pre-Elementary Level; 2) Elementary Level; 3) Intermediate Level; 4) Secondary Level; and 5) Higher Education Level (Ministry of Education, 2010).

2.3.3.1 Pre-Elementary Level

The pre-elementary level prepares boys and girls for elementary education. The children are taught at this level for a duration of two years. Children are enrolled at the age of four in the nursery school and at the age of five in the preliminary school.

2.3.3.2 Elementary Level

Elementary level schooling is compulsory in Saudi Arabia and is also regarded as the foundation for the development of an overall educational program. Children are enrolled at the age of six and spend a total of six years at the elementary level. The school year consists of two semesters, each with at least fifteen weeks of classes and a two-week examination period. Grades 1 to 4 are exempted from these examinations and are instead regularly evaluated by their assigned teachers.

The daily elementary school schedule has six forty five -minute classes. The standard curriculum is studied by boys and girls in separate schools.

2.3.3.3 Intermediate Level

Upon finishing the elementary level, students between the ages of twelve and fourteen are encouraged to continue their education at the intermediate level (the equivalent of grades 7 to 9 in the US education system). The school year at this level consists of two 15-week semesters and a two-week examination period.

There are thirty three class periods per week, each of which is forty-five minutes in length. At this level, English becomes a required subject and remains compulsory throughout intermediate school. Passing a completion examination is necessary to receive the Intermediate School Certificate, which is a prerequisite for entering secondary school.

2.3.3.4 Secondary Level

The Saudi secondary educational level is comprised two main divisions: 1) Regular Secondary Education; and 2) Vocational and Technical Secondary Education.

1. Regular Secondary Education

Secondary school education spans three years and generally serves students in the fifteen to nineteen year-old age group. All students in the regular secondary schools study a general curriculum for the first year and choose for the remaining two years one of the following three majors:

- Administration & Social Science
- Natural Science
- *Shari'ah* (Islamic Law) & Arabic Studies

Students who maintain high grade-point averages in mathematics and physical science at the 10th grade level are encouraged to enrol in the natural science program. The school year consists of two semesters, each of which is twenty weeks long, including a two-week examination period. Class periods are forty five minutes long, and weekly schedules vary between a total of twenty-six and thirty three periods, depending on grade and subject emphasis. To earn a Secondary School Certificate, students must complete the required credits and pass their individual subject examinations with a grade of no less than fifty percent of the maximum score.

2. Vocational and Technical Secondary Education

National development policy makes a compelling case for the importance of technical education and vocational training in Saudi Arabia. The technical and vocational skills of the Saudi work force is a critical factor in increasing productivity and staying apace

with the rapid technological developments sweeping the international community of both industrialized and developing countries. The programs in industrial, commercial, agricultural and vocational training described here play an essential role in preparing a highly skilled Saudi workforce.

Technical education is divided into three types of formal institutional training: industrial, commercial, and agricultural. These institutes have three year programs for secondary school graduates.

2.3.3.5 Higher Education Level

The post secondary system of education in Saudi Arabia is, to a certain degree, similar to the educational system of the United States. The patterns and procedures of these educational systems have been adopted in accordance with Islamic systems, traditions and customs.

In 1975, a segment of the Ministry of Education became a separate entity, and was accordingly renamed the Ministry of Higher Education, with the purpose of dealing exclusively with higher education. Among its responsibilities were to propose the establishment of higher educational institutions and authorize them to offer special programmes in accordance with the country's needs. Creating and administering universities and colleges in the Kingdom became the primary function of the Minister of Higher Education.

According to Islamic teachings, seeking beneficial knowledge is mandatory for each Muslim. Thus, education is the essence of Islamic beliefs. In Saudi Arabia, Public education has never been fully separated from its Islamic roots. Since the country's establishment, the education policy of Saudi Arabia has always included among its objectives the promotion of the belief in the One God, Islam as the way of life, and Muhammad (peace be upon him (pbuh)) as God's Messenger (Educational Development Centre, 2005). The principles of education in 2009, formulated by the Higher Committee of Educational Policy which is held responsible for drawing the educational policy and its parameters, include the responsibility to:

1. Strengthen faith in God, Islam and in the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).
2. Foster a holistic and Islamic concept of the universe.

3. Reinforce the duty of each Muslim to seek education and the duty of the state to provide education.
4. Integrate Islamic orientation in sciences and knowledge in the curricula and teaching.
5. Stimulate human knowledge to raise the nation's standard of living.
6. Teach the importance of Saudi history and the preservation of the Islamic religion as a complete way of life (Ministry of Education, 2009).

To achieve the purpose of Islamic education, classes for reading and memorizing the Glorious Qur'an along with selections from the *Hadith* (Tradition - collection of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh)) are sponsored by the government. At most elementary levels, education takes place in the *Kuttab* - a class for Qur'anic recitation for children, directed by a professional *Qari* (Qur'anic reciter). *Kuttab* is open to all people from different levels in society on the basis of equity. Aged people usually have separate *Kuttab*s. In general it is free, but some parents may donate something, such as money or food, to the teacher, but the teacher will not usually ask for anything. Before the advent of Islam, there were only a few *Kuttab*s in few cities. In *Kuttab*s, kids memorize the Glorious Qur'an and learn basic reading, writing, arithmetic and morals

In the late nineteenth century, nonreligious or secular subjects were also taught under the Ottoman rule in the Hijaz and Al Ahsa Provinces, where the curriculum in *Kuttab* schools sometimes included arithmetic, foreign language, and Arabic (General Directorate for Educational Research , 2003). Because the purpose of basic religious learning was to know the contents of Holy Qur'an, the ability to read Arabic texts was not a priority, and illiteracy remained widespread in the peninsula: 73% for men and 48% for women based on the 2008 statistics (Saudi National Authority for Illiteracy, 2008).

Beyond the elementary level, students attend an informal network of *Halaqat* (Scholarly Lectures), a Study Circle offering instruction in Islamic Jurisprudence, Arabic Language, *Tafsir* (Qur'anic commentaries, explanation of Qur'anic verses), *Hadith*, Literature - explanation of the Prophet's sayings, Rhetoric, and sometimes Arithmetic and History. The most prestigious scholars in Arabia received specialized

training at Al Azhar University in Egypt or in Iraq. The *Halaqat* is so named because the teacher was, as a rule, seated on a dais or cushion with the pupils gathered in a semicircle before him. The more advanced a student, the closer he was seated to the person of the teacher. The mosque circles varied in approach, course content, size, and quality of teaching, but the method of instruction usually emphasized lectures and memorization, and sometimes inquiry

Since the 1920s, a small number of private institutions has offered limited secular education for boys, but it was not until 1951 that an extensive program of publicly funded secondary schools was initiated. In an attempt to institutionalize the system of scholarship in the country, the Ministry of Education was set up in 1954. King Saud University was established in 1957 (Saudi National Authority for Illiteracy, 2008). Funded education for girls began much later in 1960 (Al Ghamdi, 2000). In those days, school attendance was not compulsory for either boys or girls (The National Committee of Education, 2004).

Administratively, four organizations oversee educational institutions in the Kingdom. The Ministry of Education is responsible for boys, whereas girls' education is supervised by the Directorate General of Girls' Education. There is also a General Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training. The Ministry of Higher Education is the authority for supervising the universities (Al Harbi, 2004).

Gender segregation has been a cardinal established Islamic principle at all levels of public education. To restate, Article 155 of the Educational Policy of Saudi Arabia upholds *there is strict separation of the sexes at all levels of education with the exception of kindergarten, and nursery schools* (Ministry of Education, 1995:29). For women, the goal of education was ideologically tied to religion. While this is also true for boys, their education remains more flexible and has developed faster and enjoyed greater freedom.

Technical education and vocational training, an educational domain created for boys only, is an example of the partial detachment from strictly the religious knowledge. For girls, on the other hand, education aims at preserving strong Islamic principles pertaining to their roles in society. Arab (1999) contends that the main purpose of

educating girls is to raise them according to sound Islamic teachings and values in order for them to perform her duties properly in life. Such duties could include an ideal and successful housewife or a good mother. Females in Islamic societies should be prepared and ready to engage in activities which suit their nature, such as teaching, nursing and medical services.

Women's right to education was recognized by providing suitable education on an equal footing with men in light of Islamic laws, with girls also studying home economics (Al Ghamdi, 2000).

A major objective for education has been to develop general education to deal with technological changes and rapid developments in social and economic fields, with the ultimate goal of replacing foreign labour force with indigenous workers. Another goal has been to indigenize the secondary teacher corps. In the 1980s, about 40% of the teaching force was comprised foreigners. This was met in the early 1990s by a plan to prepare secondary school teachers and shift the enrolment to junior colleges. This move would allow graduates the opportunity to complete a university education for a bachelor's degree and thus draw more potential candidates to the teaching profession (Ministry of Labour, 2004). Then, in 1990s, other university-level institutions were established for teaching and scholarship in Islamic studies (Ministry of Higher Education, 2000).

For instance, King Saud University was established in (1957) and offers eighty two specializations (King Saud University, 2010), whereas King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, established in (1963), offers programs in engineering and science. It accommodates seven colleges. King Faisal University was inaugurated in (1974) and accommodates twenty two colleges. King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah consists of twenty four colleges and also accommodates fourteen research centres. The university's expansion plans include a medical complex with a hospital, a health services center, and a medical research facility.

The Islamic University of Medina, established in 1961 is geared primarily for Islamic studies and accommodates ten colleges. Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University was inaugurated in 1974 and is specialized in classical studies, Arabic

language and Islamic jurisprudence. Umm Al Qura University in Makkah was established in 1949 and was primarily a college for *Shari'ah*, but it had grown to include colleges of Agricultural Sciences, Applied Sciences, Engineering, and Social Sciences.

Because they are not allowed to share classrooms with men, female students attending mixed gender population universities watch the lectures through television, but there are some university campuses exclusively for women only (Ministry of Higher Education, 2009). Ever since, their establishment, the national universities have been very active and attracts significant student enrolment. Table 2.1 provides an overview of the number of university students enrolled in the academic year of 2009/2010 at twenty national universities Kingdom-wide.

Item No.	Universities	No. of Students
1.	Princess Nura Bin Abdulrahman University, Riyadh	7,955
2.	Umm Al-Qura University, Makkah	15,560
3.	Islamic University, Madinah	3,600
4.	Imam Muhammad Bin Saud University, Riyadh	21,469
5.	King Saud University, Riyadh	36,528
6.	King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah	32,600
7.	King Fahd University for Petroleum and Minerals, Dahrhan	3,300
8.	King Faisal University, Al Hasa	18,529
9.	King Khalid University, Abha	18,530
10.	King Saud University for Health Sciences, Riyadh	300
11.	Taibah University, Madinah	14,475
12.	Al Qasiim University, Al Qasiim	14,950
13.	Al Taif University, Taif	12,015
14.	Hail University, Hail	8,120
15.	Al Jouf University, Al Jouf	6,155
16.	Jizan University, Jizan	13,000
17.	Al Baha University, Al Baha	5,920
18.	Tabuk University, Tabuk	5,420
19.	Najraan University, Najran	6,395
20.	North Borders University, Arar	4,020

Sources: Extracted from Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2011).

It should be noted that the twenty universities cited here are the most popular and established educational institutions of higher learning in the Kingdom, as there are a few more government universities and several private ones in the country as well.

2.4 Principles of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

There are well over twenty affirmed principles of education as approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in the Kingdom in 1995 (Ministry of Education, 2006). These principles were drafted by the Supreme Council of Education and since that time, they remain effective and act as cardinal guidelines for the Kingdom's educational process. The principles of education are summarized as follows:

1. Belief in Allah as the One and only True God and the Sole Creator, in Islam as the State Religion and in Muhammad (pbuh) as the Messenger of Allah.
2. An Islamic view of the whole universe, mankind and life, and that everything existing in the universe is submissive to the regulation mandated by the Supreme Creator, Allah.
3. The worldly life is a stage of continuous effort and hard work in which a Muslim invests his/her resources based on *Iman* (Faith or Belief) for the attainment of *Janat* (Garden of eternal bliss) in the next world.
4. The Prophetic instructions of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (pbuh) are the bases of the ideal life which results in true success and happiness for mankind in this world and the Hereafter.
5. The teachings and ideology of Islam aim to establish a comprehensive and complete way of civilized and constructive human life enlightened by divine revelation, the Glorious Qur'an, the *Hadith* (authentic Prophetic instructions and the great perennial example of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)).
6. Belief in human dignity as established by the Holy Qur'an.
7. Chances for development are placed equally for every student whose role is to seek progress and to enhance development of society. The right of female education in particular is established based on her nature and capabilities guided by the instructions of Islam. Women represent about half of the population in the Kingdom and constitute a corner stone of national development.
8. Seeking and propagating education throughout all stages is a duty for every Muslim man or woman.
9. Religious subjects are the core subjects at all stages of education.
10. Curricula of all disciplines and subjects should take an Islamic orientation.

11. Full benefits should be made from all subjects in light of Islamic instructions since the attainment of beneficial knowledge is the target and goal of the true believer.
12. Harmony with science and technology is one of the most essential means to achieve sustainable development and perform our role in contributing to global development.
13. Education should be linked with the overall development plan of the Kingdom.
14. There should be conscientious interaction with global cultural developments through participation and directing them towards peace, progress and prosperity for society and all humanity.
15. Full confidence should be fostered in the resources and ethics of the Muslim nation as the best nation in the whole world. This entails believing in and striving to maintain the unity of the Muslim nation, regardless of the different ethnicities, nationalities, tongues and colours.
16. Strong loyalty to the history and civilization of the Muslim nation and gaining benefit from the great wisdom of our ancestors as a guide to our present and future.
17. Islamic solidarity should be advanced through cooperation and harmony among Muslims.
18. Respect for public rights are guaranteed and protected by Islam so as to maintain security and stability and establish peace in the Muslim society.
19. Social solidarity amongst society members are based on brotherhood, prioritizing public benefit over personal or selfish ends.
20. *Shura* (mutual consultation and advice) between the ruler and the ruled is a way that protects rights and duties and develops loyalty and sincerity.
21. Furtherance of the distinguished status of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia due to what Allah has conferred upon it, including the custodianship of the two Holy Mosques and Islamic values that make of the Kingdom the religious leader for the whole of humanity via Islam.
22. The call to spread Islam all over the world through good example, preaching and wisdom is one of the main duties of the State and individuals, in order to guide people to the right path by taking them away from darkness to the light of the only right way of life - Islam.

23. *Jihad* (personal and collective striving) for the sake of Allah is a continuous obligation on every Muslim until doomsday.

2.5 Administration of Education in KSA

The administration of the education system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is highly centralized. All educational policies are controlled by the government and subject to supervision by the Supreme Council of Education. Curricula, syllabi and textbooks are uniform throughout the Kingdom. Educational administration in Saudi Arabia is conducted through a total of nine agencies, four of which are main government agencies.

The four principal authorities held responsible for education in the Kingdom are:

1. The Ministry of Education (created in 1953), which supervises general education from kindergarten stage to the secondary level for male students.
2. The General Presidency for Girls' Education (organized in 1960), which controls and manages programmes including all stages of general education and post-secondary training for female students.
3. The General Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training (created in 1980), which is responsible for the training programmes that cater specifically to the needs of particular sectors of industry, trade and agriculture.
4. The Ministry of Higher Education (established in 1975), which controls post-secondary education for both males and females at the universities (Al Hugail, 1998).

The Ministry of Education, founded in 1953, replaced the Directorate of Education first established in 1925. Its responsibilities include policy making, planning, and budgetary staff to provide physical and teaching materials and supplies to elementary, intermediate, and male secondary schools. Adult and special education, teacher training programs, curriculum and teaching methods, the library system, and museums and archaeological research are departments within the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education represents the Kingdom in international organizations and promotes cultural and foreign exchanges. Saudi Arabia is divided into school districts, which implement the policies adopted by the Ministry of Education, while school

principals administer the schools on a daily basis. However, the last decade witnessed a considerable change in the school reorganization which has passed on more policy authority to the local schools. This included the formation at each school of a committee for quality and assurance to monitor its progress and evaluate the implementation of its programme in keeping with its mission. This continuous evaluation of school performance has been one of the premises of the pioneer school proclaimed by the ministry of education in 2005, the main concern of the present study (Ministry of Education, 2008).

The General Presidency of Girls' Education, organized in 1960, is the educational counterpart to the Ministry of Education, but for women only. Elementary education for girls started in 1961 and by 1963 girls' education was available at both the intermediate and secondary levels. The General Presidency of Girls' Education is divided into the Directorate General for General Education for elementary, intermediate, and secondary education and the Deputy General of Girls' Colleges which oversees junior college, undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and specialized training institutes and technical schools in the fields of nursing, teacher training, tailoring, and adult education (Ministry of Education, 1992).

The General Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training (GOTEVT) was created in 1980 to satisfy the increasing needs for specialized technical and skilled training. The educational department is divided into the Directorate General for Technical Education for industrial, commercial, and agricultural education and the Directorate General for Vocational Training for supervised vocational and in-service training programs, curricula development, program evaluation, trainees affairs, instructor training, and audio-visual aids. There are three levels of vocational training: pre-vocational training centers, vocational and commercial secondary schools, and higher (post-secondary) technical institutes.

The Ministry of Higher Education, established in 1975, provides support for the Kingdom's 20 national universities. It coordinates, supervises, and follows-up postsecondary programs with national development programs in a variety of fields. It reviews requests for study abroad and oversees twenty seven educational and cultural missions in other countries. The Minister of Higher Education heads the University

Council for each university. The sole exception is the Islamic University headed by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, the King himself.

Educational colleges and universities exist separately for the military sector. They include King Khalid Military College for National Guard training, King Fahd Security College for Security Training, Staff Military Academy, three military academies, and four civil aviation junior colleges. There are also other ministries, which have some educational responsibilities, specifically to provide education for their staff and/or their children. One such ministry is the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

Within this administrative structure, the Ministry of Education supervises about 51.4% and the General Presidency for Girls' Education about 39.0% of all schools Kingdom-wide. The other governmental departments supervise about 3.4% of the nation's schools and just over 6% of the Kingdom's schools are controlled by the private sector (Ministry of Education, 1992).

2.6 An Attempt Towards SE and SI

This section examines five essential aspects of SE and SI in Saudi Arabia: 1) Principles of the Pioneer Schools; 2) Aims of the Pioneer Schools Programme; 3) Characteristics of the Pioneer Schools for both Boys and Girls; 4) Evaluation in the Pioneer Schools; and 5) Duties and Responsibilities Within the Pioneer Schools.

2.6.1 Principles of the Pioneer Schools Programme

The Pioneer Schools Project (PSP) in Saudi Arabia was established in 2000 to be in parallel with worldwide projects, such as the Singapore project of effective schools. The pioneer school is defined by the Saudi Ministry of Education as the school that is led by a principal supported by a qualified team of teachers and staff members (Ministry of Education, 2006). This team is held responsible for planning. It is also responsible for school management with a degree of autonomy that enables it to achieve the school objectives in consistency with the educational policy in the Kingdom, within a range of responsibilities through a flexible integrated curriculum based on the Islamic *Shari'ah* and consistent with contemporary life, using the latest and most effective teaching methods that are able to create a partnership between

teacher and student. This team is supported by the up-to-date technology and works within a robust system of continuous assessment.

The school performs its environmental and societal role effectively for the sake of preparing a generation that is able to self-develop and cope with and contribute to global civilization. The pioneer school is different from the ordinary school in a number of ways, all of which can be considered as merits of the former. To restate these principles include (Ministry of Education, 2008):

- Clarity of vision.
- Internal system of quality monitoring.
- Comprehensive evaluation of students' achievement and progress;
- Systematicity of organization.
- Clarity and specification of roles and positions, including duties and responsibilities.
- Keen interest on the part of school administration and local community to provide high quality educational service.

Despite the reasons of the centralization of schools mentioned above, the unique roles pioneer schools are expected to play are different from those of the ordinary school. This is due to the official attempt to pay special attention to some schools and give them more interest as a starting point towards the generalization of the pioneer schools system on all governmental schools in the Kingdom.

2.6.2 Aims of the Pioneer Schools Programme

The Ministry of Education has identified the aims and objectives of the PSP as follows:

1. Giving a flexible and applicable developmental school model based on the sound national educational policy of the country.
2. Establishing a concept of quality and its criteria against which all teaching and learning processes are to be assessed. Standardized measures are to be used within the school environment for this purpose.
3. Introducing the concept of 'management by objectives' and directing the processes of school administration towards the achievement of school

objectives according to a school-tailored, well-established set of criteria within a framework of well defined sets of responsibilities and accountabilities.

4. Making use of technology and its tools (e.g. CBT, media and networks) in the classrooms, school departments and administration.
5. Applying newly developed curricula in a criteria-based framework leading to the achievement of instructional objectives and learning outcomes, and holding a balance amongst values, knowledge, skills and experiences. The purpose is to enhance interaction between students both educationally and socially.
6. Developing the concept of curricular instruction and applying the concept of partnership between teacher and all sectors of learners within defined learner-centred instructional projects (Educational Development Centre, 2005).

2.6.3 Characteristics of the Pioneer Schools for both Boys and Girls

Expecting to see these in reality the Ministry also officially documented the characteristics of the pioneer school through the Educational Development Centre (2005). These were declared as follows:

1. **Students of the pioneer school are active learners:** they are believers in Allah (God) and adopt the Islamic way of life. They have knowledge on the basics of research and have the ability to apply systematic and scientific criticism, in addition to evaluation and analysis.
2. **Teachers of the pioneer school are facilitators:** such teachers are a good example and model for students and seek knowledge and learning. They love their job and are knowledgeable of and experienced in the various up-to-date teaching styles. They are able to explore their students' skills and potentialities. They can direct their students to sources of knowledge and learning.
3. **The pioneer school has a flexible curriculum:** it is based on the country's policy of education. It is well-balanced and interdisciplinary. Besides, it promotes the practical aspect of knowledge and relates students to their environment.
4. **The principal of the pioneer school is a leader of the educational process:** he has a futuristic vision and planning expertise and is able to follow up

implementation of the school plans, in addition to having good interpersonal and communications relationships with everyone.

- 5. The environment of the pioneer school:** the pioneer school has an educational environment that is able to make learning an enjoying and rewarding experience in the school. The environment accommodates all the facilities and resources, such as labs, which enable teachers and other staff to promote self-learning and learning projects based on cooperative learning.

Other schools are sub-standard to pioneer schools in a number of ways. These include selection of staff, classroom student population density, school environment, resources availability, home-school partnership and building facilities.

2.6.4 Evaluation in the Pioneer Schools

In an attempt to upgrade the quality of education at the pre-university level, the Ministry of Education has launched the PSP which aims, as stated in the official documents to induce change in the current school system all over the country ((Educational Development Centre, 2005). An appropriate evaluation formula has been created and used in order to monitor whether this project accomplishes two primary objectives: a) it does theoretically achieve what is supposed to be achieved (the objectives mentioned above); and b) it is practically well implemented. Thus, self-evaluation and reviews as diagnostic measures, at the educational institution level provide good evaluations techniques that ensure that PSP stays on track.

To realize the best possible learning outcomes of the educational system, it is considered essential to assess all the elements of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that the school system is aiming to enhance within students (Educational Development Centre, 2005). The goal is to assess how much progress students have made, promote the facets of strengths within students and identify the gaps within the teaching and learning processes. Based on a testing or examinations-dominated culture, progress in the pioneer school is measured via continuous assessment which is thus important to monitor students' progress and promote quality in the school's educational process as well as quality at the national educational system as a whole. The primary reason for this policy of continuous assessment is to foster in the

achievement of quality assurance in the school system. Reviewing worldwide projects (Hopkins et al., 1994), the Ministry realized the significance of teacher development and shouldered the senior teacher, one of the school management team, a number of duties through which pioneer school objectives would potentially be attained. These are summarized in the following subsection.

2.6.5 Duties and Responsibilities Within the Pioneer Schools

There are two levels of responsibilities within the PSP system in KSA: 1) Duties of Senior Teachers; and 2) Duties of the Student Advisor.

2.6.5.1 Duties of Senior Teachers

In the PSP system, there is one senior teacher for each department or specialization. Thus, for example, there is one for English, one for Maths, one for Social Studies, and one for every major subject of the school curriculum. The senior teacher is assigned to this position by merits as characterized by excellence in teaching performance in his particular field of specialization, ability to lead, plan and supervise effectively. He or she is held responsible to lead colleagues in the specialization towards the achievement of the educational and instructional aims of the subject. The duties of the senior teacher were articulated by the Ministry as follows (Educational Development Centre, 2005):

1. Drawing up the supervisory plans.
2. Following up on the professional development of colleagues.
3. Developing other teachers or colleagues professionally.
4. Upgrading the level of teaching and learning outcomes.
5. Participating with the school deputy head teacher for teaching and learning in the assessment of the different facets of the teachers' professional performance of his or her duties.
6. Activation of the role of resource centres and other resource rooms in the implementation of the school curriculum.
7. Convening regularly with teachers of the same specialization for developing professional culture.

8. Developing forms to be used in following up and recording teachers' performance (peer visits forms, lessons planning follow-ups, students' records, homework records, etc.).
9. Suggesting and trying out new ways and methods of teaching and learning and following up on teachers in their implementation.
10. Activating the use of appropriate teaching aids and relevant resources in the processes of teaching and learning.
11. Participating actively in the school committees.
12. Participating actively in the regular meetings organized by the programme administration.
13. Participating in training of school teachers as well as teachers of other schools.
14. Following up the achievement records of students in his specialization and discussing them with students or the counsellor.
15. Reporting teachers' performance monthly to the deputy head teacher for teaching and learning.
16. Developing a portfolio for the discipline he is supervising. This portfolio should include meetings records, peer visits plan and work plan.
17. Following up teachers' realization of the items of the Teacher Performance Assessment Form.

Utilizing international research data base, the PSP realized that that responsibility of improvement should be “from within” the school leadership, a concept emphasized by Barth (1990). The document suggested a student advisor, another important management team member, who is held responsible for solving social and psychological problems that students of the school might be facing. He also works collaboratively with all staff members and school administration to monitor student progress and academic achievement and report this to parents. The student advisor's duties and responsibilities are more explicated through the following points (Educational Development Centre, 2005).

2.6.5.2 Duties of the Student Advisor

The student advisor is assigned, one or two in each school, depending on the number of students in the school. He or she is a staff member specialized in psychology and is

held responsible for solving social and psychological problems that students of the school might be facing. He also works collaboratively with all staff members and school administration to monitor students' progress and academic achievement. The duties and responsibilities of the student advisor are as follows (Educational Development Centre, 2005):

1. Cooperating with the school leadership in activating the programme of pioneer schools within the school.
2. Activating the role of the school in transferring the experiences of pioneer schools among themselves and to others.
3. Participating in school committees and helping in the implementation of its decisions.
4. Participating actively in meetings organized by the administration of the PSP.
5. Coordinating with the school deputy head teachers in following up teachers' remarks concerning students' achievement and behaviors.
6. Participating in developing the Mission or the Constitution of the school and implementing its content.
7. Training students on the scientific methods to be used in solving problems.
8. Making contacts with specialists to obtain educational, psychological and behavioural counselling.
9. Developing students' ability to interact positively with others and cooperating with them.
10. Participating in consultations to families and providing them with health and psychological orientation through brochures and pamphlets.
11. Enhancing students thinking skills and training them on that.
12. Drawing a work plan for the student counsellor.
13. Preparing the continuous assessment portfolio for students' progress.
14. Following up special needs students and making all efforts for their inclusion.
15. Studying the economic status of students and their families and providing help where possible.
16. Exploring the health problems of students and reporting them to teachers.

The PSP is a conscious attempt by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to induce the innovation of "Effective Schools" within the Saudi traditional educational context. It can be considered a significant positive change in educational policies since it reflects

the official interest to enhance the quality of pre-university education as well as the public interest by guaranteeing high level educational service for school children. This also reflects a concurrent shift in people's thinking about schooling and education in general.

Yet, for this innovation to be assimilated and accommodated by the current tradition of schooling and education in the Kingdom, it should be contextualized. By contextualization, the innovation should be assimilated and welcomed at two different yet inseparable levels of context: the internal level and the external level. The internal level of contextualization in this study is meant to refer to the set of beliefs and images that lie deep in the minds of those interested. The external level of contextualization refers to the official educational policies and the physical recourses associated with effective schools. The former level of contextualization is the core of this research since the aim of this research is to ascertain the perceptions and opinions those in school community hold about the establishment of the PSP regarding: effective schools, school improvement, the role of effective school, what constitutes an effective school and what they think about the effectiveness of their respective home schools.

2.7 Conclusion

This essential background chapter on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia highlights the geographic, socio-economic, demographic and religious importance of the country in light of the Kingdom's ambitious educational policies. More particularly to the specific context of the present study, the establishment of PSP underscores the unyielding comment of the government to speed up the process of effective education in the country in order to meet growing domestic needs and the challenges of an aggressively competitive world order. However, much has not been uncovered regarding the progress, effectiveness and real outcomes of these schools since their first establishment in 2000.

In order for effective schools be accepted as a concept for innovation and to insure successful implementation of the effective school programme, there must be a more welcoming and conducive agenda by the school community involving school principals, teachers, students and parents alike. Furthermore, a model effective school

must be presented so that educators and stakeholders ensure that change is going to occur through such a programme. Otherwise, the issue of school effectiveness will turn out to be no more than a transplanted human organ that may sooner or later be rejected by the host body. Hence, this study's interest to investigate the perceptions of the school community about the effectiveness of the secondary schools from both the internal and external context can be itself considered pioneering if not unprecedented in the Saudi public educational context.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW ON EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the body of literature on the subject of school effectiveness (SE) and school improvement (SI), also termed SESI. The primary purpose is to highlight the broad range of the world-wide perspectives on SESI and to find out the relations between them. The literature reviews also examines the criteria for assessing SESI and further identifies the key factors and how they relate to the present study of SESI in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Six major areas of the literature will be explored here: 1) Conceptual Analysis of SESI; 2) Literature Review on SESI; 3) SESI in the Arab Context; 4) SER and SIR in Saudi Arabia: A Review of Empirical Studies to Date; 5) Contest and Controversy Over SER and SIR; and 6) Gaps and Opportunities for SER and SIR in Saudi Arabia.

3.2 Conceptual Analysis of SE and SI

SESI in the light of the Pioneer Schools Programmes (PSP) are lexical terms with a lot of semantic ambiguity that often overlap involving a raging age-old debate. This is partially clarified by Slater & Teddlie (1992) and discussed thoroughly by Acedo (2000). Variations in interpreting these terms led to a conceptual variety that has a deep-rooted history. The source for these different concepts is something natural, since people vary according to the social and educational context involving individual social classes, position, level and type of education and mentality.

During the 1970s and 1980s, research on SE increasingly suggested that individual schools do make a significant difference to pupils' learning. In fact differences in pupil attainment, attitudes and behaviour cannot be explained simply in terms of the home life of the pupil. That is because some schools are more effective than others. The argument over what is meant by "effective" and what can be enrolled under the issue of "effectiveness" has always been subject to long debates worldwide. Acedo related effectiveness to availability of a combination of factors in a school to provide an atmosphere that enables learning and teaching to take place in a proper way. He portrayed the consequent outcomes of such an atmosphere as satisfactory "educational

goods”; which, in turn, create good citizens who are able to shoulder responsibility of forming a good society (Acedo, 2000:2).

However, each society has its own interpretation of “educational goods” that bring about effectiveness. For instance, the characteristics of a good school in Africa look very differently from that of a good school in Uzbekistan (Acedo, 2000). Moreover, who makes decisions about how schools should develop has been a key political question among educationalists at the highest levels (Riley, 1998). Effectiveness can mean effective school management and effective teaching, embodied in a number of factors including:

- The physical environment of the school, curriculum, and the instructional aids available.
- The teacher supply.
- Training.
- Development and support.
- Links and cooperation with society.
- Accountability mechanisms and processes, quality assurance and support systems (Scheerens, 1999).

In addition to the foregoing, the issue of *school safety* is a relatively new topic in SESI, but one that has direct consequences for the effectiveness of schools. *Safe and orderly schools* are necessary so that teachers and students can together work more mutually in quality instruction and learning which would lead to better academic outcomes (Graham et al., 2006; Allen et al., 2008). An environment with a safe and healthy atmosphere, where students and teachers enjoy the role they are playing with a high degree of satisfaction and achievement makes schools effective. This element of internal consistency and harmony between the components of the schooling processes is essential in the making of “effectiveness” (Acedo, 2000:2).

In the Fifth Edition of the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, the dictionary meaning of the word “effective” is *having or producing the desired or intended results*. Acedo further contends that different people and business types have different desired results, intentions or goals. These interpretations ranged between two

extremes: the misconceptions of some non-specialists, i.e., a layman's opinion; and that of an expert which can form an umbrella concept under which all that has been suggested about SESI can be sheltered. In this respect, other scholars submit that there are measures that achieve the national ambitions, strong economy, a highly skilled motivated workforce and advanced health provision services. These can be realized by means of education thereby confirming that a meaningful sense of "effectiveness" is attained at its full scale (Levin & Kelley, 1997).

For some scholars, a major aspect of SESI is whether schools are, in the first place, able or *willing to accurately identify their problems or weakness* in order to seriously address them and become effective. Scholars impute that whether it is SE or SI, schools that are able to identify their weaknesses take appropriate actions to improve their policy on aspects associated with teaching and their school learning environment (SLE) and are able to improve their effectiveness standing (Creemers & Kyriakides, 2010).

Scholars argue that there are historical links between SE and SI that can be utilized to reach a more sophisticated level of cooperation and attain surplus value and mutual benefits (Creemers et al., 1997). In spite of this strong relationship that can be made stronger through the potential intrinsic values within each, they acknowledge that these are two different strands, because SE is the theoretical scientific development upon which the improvement processes and practices are actual responses to a troublesome state of affairs.

Van Velzen et al., purport that the words "effectiveness" and "improvement" are basically a systematic and sustained effort geared at changing the learning conditions and other related internal conditions in the school system with the ultimate aim of achieving the educational goals more effectively (Van Velzen et al., 1985). SI in particular rests on a number of specific assumptions as follows:

- Schools have the capacity to improve themselves.
- School improvement involves cultural change.
- There are school level and classroom level conditions for change.

- SI is concerned with building greater capacity for change (Van Velzen et al., 1985; Hopking 1987 & 1990).

Some scholars tend to simplify the relationship between SE and SI as that between theory and practice with clear analytic differences. But that is not fully sustained by others. Creemers & Reezigt (1997) highlighted seven essential differences between SE and SI as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 - Major Differences Between SE and SI		
No.	School Improvement (SI)	School Effectiveness (SE)
1.	Programme for innovation.	Programme for research.
2.	Need for immediate action.	No time limits.
3.	Focus on change and problem solving.	Focus on theory and explanation.
4.	Dealing with changing goals and means.	Searching for stable causes and effects.
5.	Dealing with subjective knowledge	Searching for objective knowledge.
6.	Design/development instead of evaluation.	Strictness in methodology.
7.	Expanding universe of factors and participants.	Focus on student learning /classroom level.

Source: Creemers & Reezigt (1997:399).

Thus, Table 3.1 highlights and clarifies the following:

1. The different mission of each, i.e., research mission versus innovative programme.
2. The immediate action of improvement being a quick response to complaints or a serious deficiency in the system.
3. SI is concerned with changing goals and strategies.
4. Regarding methodological differences, while SER relies on strict analytical methodology and techniques, SIR focuses on the more practical aspects of design and development instead of analysis.
5. SE works at the class level, being interested in actual learning and the classroom processes, while SI can be expanded to include restructuring measures (Teddlie & Reynolds, (eds.) 2000; MacBeath, 2007; Townsend, 2007; Cheng & Mok, 2008).

Furthermore, an investigation into the impact of certain factors on school effectiveness concern aims at curing some deficiencies by first detecting these deficiencies and then suggests the remedy in a theoretical framework without

intervening. In other words, all effectiveness studies suggest improvement “tips” but can, by no means, be considered actual improvement plans or programmes.

In short, SE concentrates on research to identify factors, variables or stable characteristics that affect schooling, positively or negatively. Following from this, the next step is to advocate and recommend positive actions for attaining effective outcomes. Whereas SI is a programme which seeks actual intervention in education to improve effectiveness or, as Fullan (1991:165-67) calls it in his study, “Success for All”. On the other hand, it is an improvement project that, unlike most improvement projects, holds properties of experimentation, and is dependent in most of its parts on effectiveness research. Studies such as “Success for All” and others yield findings of effectiveness and are thus viewed as advanced contribution (Maden et al., 1993). However, according to Reid et al., (1987), little research made use of the *improvement or development programmes*, at least until the mid-1980s. A key assumption within the literature is that SI strategies can result in *changing school culture* and that leadership has a key role to play in defining and shaping culture (Harris, 2002). This takes time.

In terms of concern, types of SI vary as some improvers focus on career teacher development, school restructuring, changing decision making method and school-client relationship. Independent of previous studies on improvement, Peterson, McCarthy & Elmore tackled improvement at the classroom level in a detailed description of elementary school teachers and what went on in a writing class (Peterson et al., 1996). However, the improvement movement did not really start in a systematic or sophisticated way (Maden et al., 1993). According to Frankel & Wallen, one of the major principles of good research is “feasibility”, which strengthens the research scope to include studies conducted as of 1966, the start of the earliest stage of SER in the USA (Frankel & Wallen, 1993).

Thus, based on existing research the terms “effectiveness” and “improvement” vary in meaning depending on who is interpreting them and the context in which they are applied. The concepts SE and SI also face divergences in their meanings depending on the perspectives of different researchers, what they are looking for and how they

measure the concepts, which not only are clearly related, if not interconnected, but also clearly analytically different as highlighted in Table 3.1.

In another perspective on the relevant terminologies, according to Scheerens (2004:1), the term “educational effectiveness” is used as a general term that encompasses *school and instructional effectiveness*. “School effectiveness” refers to enhancing conditions defined at the school level and “instructional effectiveness” to effectiveness enhancing conditions situated at the teacher and classroom level. He further suggests that the major task of SER is to reveal the impact of relevant input characteristics on school output and show which process of factors actually work to bring about positive changes in outcomes. Following along the same lines is the notion of “school self-evaluation” which is essentially a process aimed at school improvement (Hofman et al., 2009; Schildkamp, 2009). Thus, SI can be defined:

...as a systematic, sustained effort aimed at change in learning conditions and other related internal conditions in one or more schools with the ultimate aim of accomplishing educational goals more effectively (Miles et al., 1987:3).

3.3 Literature Review on SE and SI

Research on SE and SI has suggested that some schools are more successful than others. Successful SI depends on the school’s ability to manage change and development and the context in which it takes place (Harris, 2002). This finding provoked a series of questions such as: What makes a school effective? What factors contribute to effectiveness in the light of Hornby’s (1995) definition? How might educationalists establish a reliable basis for SI? Who makes decisions on how schools should develop effectively? Answers to these questions will be sought and related perspectives will be discussed in this section in eight aspects: 1) SER Development; 2) Characteristics, Methods and Concerns of SER; 3) Key Findings of SE Studies in the Arab Gulf Countries; 4) SER in the US, UK and KSA: A Issue of Mimicry; 5) SIR Development of the 1980s; 6) Characteristics, Methods and Concerns of SIR; 7) Key Findings to SI Studies Relevant to the Saudi Context; and 8) School Leadership and Management Relevant to SE and SI.

3.3.1 SER Development

SER will be examined for two leading industrialized countries starting in 1979: 1) In the USA; and 2) In the UK. Being the most advanced in the field, studies in these countries will shed important insights on the subject.

3.3.1.1 In the USA

The first twenty years of SER in the USA were conducted between 1966 and 1985. According to Teddlie & Reynolds, no less than twenty six major studies were undertaken (Teddlie & Reynolds, (eds.), 2000; Anderson, 1982; Averch et al., 1971; Bidwell & Kasarda, 1980; Borger et al., 1985; Bossert, 1988; Bridge et al., 1979; Clark et al., 1984; Cohen, 1982; Cuban, 1983; Dougherty, 1981; Geske & Teddlie, 1990; Glasman & Biniaminov, 1981; Good & Brophy, 1986; Good & Weinstein, 1986; Hanushek, 1986; Levine & Lezotte, 1990; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Ralph & Fennessey, 1983; Rosenholtz (1985); Rowan et al., 1983; Stringfield & Herman, 1996; Sweeny, 1982; and Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993).

The first stage of SER in the USA occurred between 1966-1970s and focused on the effect of human resources, physical school environment and student social background. Typical researchers of this period were Coleman et al., (1966) who tended to overestimate the role of the students' socio-economic characteristics and devaluated the impact of variables related to school resources. According to Scheerens (2004:3), three clusters of *school characteristics* are relevant: teacher characteristics, material characteristics, and characteristics of groups or classes in which students are placed. Coleman et al.,'s views were afterwards refuted by Mayeske et al., McIntosh, and Mosteller & Moynihan (1972). They, moreover, also found some "methodological flaws" in them. At this stage standardized test scoring was the only measure of student achievement which was taken as the only indicator for effectiveness (Teddlie & Reynolds (eds.) 2000).

In addition to examination results, some scholars contend that the *perception of students* on the school process itself can influence SESI (Petty, & Green, 2007). Again, great stress was also placed on the socio-economic and ethnic background of students, in addition to class-size between 14-16 as compared to 22-24, as important factors affecting SESI (Scheerens, 2004). Broadening the enquiry, Thrupp (2001) contends that

the *background characteristics of students, composition of student populations within schools, and the curricula* used in the schools are often overlooked in the quest for explanatory variables in SESI (see also Slee & Weiner, 1998).

A reaction to the findings of Coleman et al., and Jenks et al., came from the works of Murnane, Summers & Wolfe, and others; who comprised the second stage of SER in the USA. They added a new variable to effectiveness: the teacher's role, i.e., specific teachers can significantly contribute to the making of quality “educational goods”, represented by effective student outcomes (Murnane & Philips, 1979; Summers & Wolfe, 1977). Moreover, Alexander et al. and Heyns provided a third variable. They revealed that schooling has a significant impact on the students’ achievement (Alexander et al., 1978; Heyns, 1974). Winkler highlighted the importance of “the quality of the college the teachers attended” as a fourth predictor to learning gain by students (Winkler, 1975). Exploring more factors and widening the scope of school processes can potentially contribute to the making of effectiveness. This stage in the 1970s was called “the introduction of process variables stage” (Teddlie & Reynolds (eds.), 2000:8).

The third stage of SER in the USA in the late 1970s through mid-1980s witnessed a conceptual shift. With the birth of Edmonds and his colleagues’ case, “effective schools for the urban poor”, there existed a shift from continual arguments over theoretical description of effective schools to operational establishment of a model of an effective school (Teddlie & Reynolds (eds.), 2000). Based on the studies of Edmond, and Lezotte & Bancoft, five key factors were found to have had a significant impact on SE, in which national or universal settings can be established. These are:

1. Strong instructional leadership to be shouldered by the principal.
2. Pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus.
3. A safe and orderly learning environment.
4. High expectations for achievement.
5. Using student achievement test data for evaluating the programme and school success (Edmonds, 1979; Tomlinson, 1980).

Item 1, deserves particular attention as scholars in the field believe that *school leadership* has a direct relationship to student learning with strong and effective

leadership leading to greater student learning outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, (2011; Heck & Moriyama, 2010; Nguni et al., 2006). School leaders have an important role to play in creating the conditions for change with the collective endeavour of all stake holders in order to successfully achieve SESI (Harris, 2002). Indeed, that is because as Mulford & Silins (2009:2) contend:

Successful school principalship is an interactive, reciprocal and evolving process involving many players, which is influenced by, and in turn, influences the context in which it occurs.

Another aspect of this stage was the emergence and emphasis on SI and SIR, exemplified by Clark & McCarthy (1983). However, there existed certain areas of tension in those studies. These were embodied in: a) sampling bias due to the equity orientation, of the above-mentioned SI researchers; i.e., the samples were selected from low economic student communities, rather than across contexts; b) lack of more defensible analysis strategy; and c) disregard of school context, strongly emphasized by Wimpelberg et al., (1989) the most considerable critics on such research studies. Nevertheless, the SI movement was attributed to those researchers headed by Edmonds (1978).

Then, started a fourth stage of SER. A significant critical issue in Edmonds and his colleagues' research on SE and SI was the absence of the role of school context as a key factor; hence, the concern with context and the beginning of the context studies. Renolds (2010:75), submits that:

...the role of the school is to ensure that all children learn, and that a strong 'technology' of practice should be employed to ensure that children are not dependent on their family background.

The exploration of *across different school contexts* as a major factor of effectiveness purported by Hallinger & Murphy (1986) and Teddlie et al., (1985) marked a methodological shift in SER in the USA. It is known as the stage of *context variables and methodological advances* occurring in the late 1980s and recent times (Teddlie & Reynolds (eds.), 2000:11). How we can produce *school improvement across a variety of contexts* was the researchers' concern, the fact that labelled this research a sophisticated type of research.

This stage has witnessed a number of methodological advances in SER. The first was the *multilevel mathematical models* accompanied by the utilization of sophisticated computer programmes to enable scholars to analyse and assess the impact of different elements of schooling with a high level of conceptualization accuracy. The most significant studies were done by Bryk et al., (1988), Longford (1986), Bryk & Raudenbush (1988), Lee & Bryk (1989), Raudenbush (1986), and Raudenbush & Williams (1991). A key characteristic of these works is the continual development and refinement of multilevel modeling. However, other studies have shown other kinds of advances (Stringfield et al., 1985; Teddlie et al., 1989; Virgilio et al., 1991). They have investigated the relationship among *behavioural indices of teaching effectiveness*, and used *multivariate analysis of variance* (Teddlie & Reynolds (eds.), (2000:12).

This stage has also witnessed another kind of advance in the area of SER: the development of *survey items* in order to more accurately measure the different processes occurring at the educational environment, as shown in Table 3.2.

Author	Scale	Date(s)
Rozenholtz	Dimensions of school social organization	1988, 1989
Pallas	Principal leadership, Teacher control, Staff cooperation.	1988
Brookover	School climate	1979

Source: Extracted from Tedlie & Reynolds (2000:12-13).

These scales were utilized by many contemporary researchers, including Rowan et al., (1991), Raudenbush & Kang, and some have shown a new tendency of effectiveness called “organizational effectiveness”. However this was not the end of improvement with regard to scales, since they incurred severe criticisms that doubted adequacy of these scales. Fitz-Gibbon & Williams (1991b), for example, viewed such scales as inadequate measures for SI processes. This criticism greatly influenced the forthcoming SER stage and explains why the following stage, since the mid 1980, has shown less productivity on SER. In fact, the inactive state of affairs that characterized this stage was a reaction to the critics’ hailstorm which created a sense of discouragement.

However, other reasons why the state of SER at this late 20th century stage in the USA was not active included: researchers' change of interest, discouragement caused by non-availability of multilevel analytical programmes, failure of tests to detect relationships among input variables, decreasing federal research funding, and the absence or poor communication among SE researchers (Teddlie & Reynolds (eds.), 2000:13).

Development and refinement of multilevel modeling continued to the beginning of the 21st century. SE researchers, at this stage, emphasized the *generic models*; models of school effects that are claimed to fit across a wide range of schools – *one-size-fits-all approaches* (Muijs et al., 2005). However these approaches were subject to further criticisms by Luyten, Visscher, & Witziers (2005) because they were unable to *differentiate school effects*.

The scope of SER was also expanded to include new factors such as *school inputs, practices, policies and policy makers* (Palardy, 2008); *Student characteristics* (Rumberger & Palardy, 2005); *Financial, human and material resources* (McCaffrey et al., 2003); *Teachers' expectations and efficacy* (Carbonaro & Gamoran, 2002). Moreover, existing effectiveness factors have been classified into groups. Classroom-level factors, for example, were grouped into sub-constructs including: presenting the material taught, structuring the material, and teacher evaluation. Indeed, at the classroom level, *instructional and teacher effectiveness* have indicated medium to large effects on variables such as time on task, opportunity to learn, and frequent monitoring of students (Scheerens 2004:24). *Opportunity to learn* is generally understood to mean offering pupils a range of subjects and tasks that cover educational goals. It is widely contested that assessing different aspects of the classroom environment can be a basis for improving the learning environment (Pashiardi & Georgiou, 2007).

Regarding the *teacher*, in particular, and *classmate support*, studies show that a significant number of students (one quarter and one third of students in Canada and the United States) become disengaged from school by the time they reach their high school years (Morgan et al., 2004; Whitlock, 2004). The gradual disaffection of students from their teachers and classmates is manifested by declining perceptions of

emotional support, a process that has direct consequences for their academic achievements (Barber & Olsen, 2004). Close and *nurturing relationship* with teachers and classmates are considered vital for both *student emotional and academic wellbeing*, because they provide a secure context for cultivating a sense of school belonging, which motivates students to come to school and complete their studies successfully (Baker, 2006). In developed countries, poor school attendance remains one of the greatest challenges facing teachers and school administrators, especially at the high school level (De Wit et al., 2010).

Effective and collaborative school leadership was also an international phenomenon that impacted on many countries in the Western world. It insists on developing the school's collective capacity by focusing on its members to engage in leadership roles. (Nicolaidou & Petridou, 2011; Opdenakker & Van Damme 2007). This position was argued already by Hargreaves (2003:17) who contended that: *The promise of sustainable success in education lies in creating cultures of distributed leadership throughout the school community, not in training and developing a tiny leadership elite*. The notion of “distributed leadership” was seen as various leadership functions that are distributed to multiple individuals acting as leaders in the same school (Spillane, 2006; Ross & Gray, 2006). It also includes *supportive and supervisory leadership*, delegation of tasks or reallocation of duties from one person to the other, in which various functions are stretched over the leadership team, in which all members pool their expertise and work collaboratively in an interactive way, so that their cumulative effect leads to SESI (Rayner & Gunter, 2005; Gronn, 2002; Hulpia et al., 2009). Many studies show that leadership makes a difference in schools (Hallinger, 2003; Heck & Hallinger, 2009; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Marzano et al., 2005; Day et al., 2009; Leithwood et al., 2008; Fenstermacher & Richardson, 2005; Halverson et al., 2007).

There is a worldwide trend in demand for teachers, particularly in the US, where there are acute shortages. This demand has been increasing due to several reasons: large increases in student enrolment, teacher retirements, class size reduction, an insufficient number of graduates from teacher educational programs, and a high rate of attrition from the teaching profession to alternative jobs (Grissmer & Kirby, 1997; Ingersoll, 2003; Strunk; Robinson, 2006; Marks, 2009; Gimbert et al., 2007). This has

direct consequences for SESI which researchers are now seriously focussing on. Although several *school level factors* (school policy, working conditions, salary scales, student behaviour, etc.) are responsible, Smith & Rowley (2005) contend that there is a significant relationship between *participation in professional development* (PD) and teacher retention, with increased teacher PD leading to less teacher turnover, and vice versa, with salary increases mitigating against teachers' decision to leave (Cha & Cohen-Vogel, 2011).

Wide-spread research has shown that instruction and classroom environments have the greatest impact on students' learning in which the researcher's task was to find out how these elements correlate to effectiveness (Louis et al., 2010). Apparently, focus on "teaching and learning" and "leadership" was characteristic of this period. Wahlstrom & Louis (2008) assured that instruction and leadership be examined to find out how they can collaboratively contribute to effective learning. Others inquired whether leadership behaviour represented by teacher-leader partnership, trust among professionals and instructional improvement support makes a difference in schools (Harris, 2002). Using the survey approach, responses were analyzed to conclude that leadership factors affect students' learning positively. On the other hand, the authors found that one way of SI is to have shared and instructionally focused leadership (Louis et al., 2010; Lipowsky, 2005). However, like Louis et al., there were other scholars who also investigated the issue of "trust" as a key factor to SI in that area in the USA (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

Some scholars believe that in order for leadership to be effective in the context of SESI, good leaders must possess the following core characteristics:

- Having a clear personal vision of what you want to achieve.
- Must work closely alongside colleagues.
- Respect teachers' autonomy and protect them from extraneous demands.
- Look ahead, anticipate change and prepare people for it so that it does not surprise or dis-empower anyone.
- Be pragmatic and be able to grasp the realities of the political and economic context and be able to negotiate and compromise.

- Are informed by and communicate clear sets of personal and educational values which represent the moral purpose for the school (MacBeath, 1998:63; Harris, 2002:69)

Along the lines of *shared leadership*, is the notion of *decentralization* for a more *democratic* and *participatory* system in the school administration as between the Ministry of Education and the school. Political goals, administration efficiency, educational improvement, financial efficiency, and effects on equity are the main motives for educational decentralization (Cohen, 2004). It is a global phenomenon, affecting both developing and developed countries aimed at improving the quality of schooling (Maslowski, et al., 2007). *Decentralization* provides teachers with some professional autonomy to participate in the decision making process which would lead ultimately to better academic outcomes for students. Studies also indicate that decentralization should include parents in the decision making process of their children's schools (Al Taneiji & McLeod, 2008).

3.3.1.2 The UK

Reynolds (1976) and associates (1982) began the earliest work related to SE in the UK focused on the learning environments in effective schools. Research by Rutter et al., (1979) was a second landmark in the field of SE. They followed their predecessors' steps, in terms of highlighting how different schools have different characteristics for effectiveness. Likewise, others tackled such differences among schools. They also *considered academic achievement, delinquency, attendance and rate of (non-academic) problems as basic measurements for effectiveness* (Teddlie & Reynolds (eds.), 2000:14). Other works investigated the *academic outcomes* of a variety of school authorities (Gray & Jesson, 1987) while Gray et al., (1984), Reynolds et al., (1987) and Steedman (1983) compared school systems (Gray et al., 1983). Gray (1981, 1982), and Gray et al., (1987), investigated *differential effectiveness* (Teddlie & Reynolds (eds.), (2000:15). Others studied the effect of contexts (Fitz-Gibbon, 1985; Fitz-Gibbon et al., 1989; Willms & Cuttance, 1985c), while SE and its impact on students was the interest of Nuttall et al., and Aitkin & Longford (Nuttall et al., 1989; Aitkin & Longford, 1986). Others were interested in

disciplinary problems and their relationship to the school processes (Maxwell, 1987; McLean, 1987; and McManus, 1987).

A second stage of SER in the UK was launched by Mortimore et al., and Smith & Tomlinson. Three aspects characterized these researchers: a) the researchers used of a variety of outcomes against which school effectiveness is evaluated. The most notable of these factors were behaviour and attitude; b) the bulk of data on school processes; and c) the researchers' initiative of focusing on class processes (Mortimore et al., 1988; Smith & Tomlinson, 1989). Smith & Tomlinson (1989), on the other hand, highlighted big gaps between schools in terms of effectiveness and the role of certain departments in producing effectiveness of a certain domain.

The 1990s marks the third stage of the SER in the UK. Although research related to SI continued with the same characteristics as the former stage, the broad variety is the notable characteristic of this stage. Researchers tackled a wide range of areas of interest directly related to *school effects* (Tedlie & Reynolds, 2000:15-16; and *Education: The World Bank. Key Issues Concerning School Effectiveness and Improvement*. 2000:8-14).

However, the field was expanded to include copious works by a host of authors in the field of SESI well beyond 2000 and SESI research scope was expanded to include new factors. Consequently, new research interests emerged. They tackled the finest possible effectiveness factors in school, e.g., students' family characteristics and *socioeconomic status* (SES) (Park & Palardy, 2004; Sirin, 2005; Caro & Lehman, 2009), *students' ethnic composition* (Rumberger and Palardy, 2005), and principals' leadership behaviour (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Marzano et al., 2005). Teachers' characteristics, perceived as having limited effects as claimed by Wayne & Youngs (2003), or indirect impact as stated by Smith et al., (2005) were under the microscope of this long line of SERs. However, Reynolds (2010:155), contends that teachers have a very specific role in fostering education:

Effective teachers emphasise academic instructional and see learning as the main classroom goal. This means that they spend most of their time on curriculum-based learning activities and create a task-oriented, business-like, but also relaxed and supportive environment.

Moreover, he imputes that teachers have responsibility to create a well-organized classroom with minimal disruption and misbehaviour.

Indeed, a major shift on emphasis was also on *school leadership* and the concept of continuous professional development (CPD). Scholars of SESI believe that the teaching profession is going through great transformation around the world, because of rapid advances in technology, societal changes, political unrests, and uncertainty which call for CDP programmes and especially coherent leadership and leadership development programmes to meet the challenges (Nicolaidou & Petridou, 2011:51). Muijs & Lindsay (2008), also support this stance that decentralized educational systems have positive benefits for schools and their staff in terms of professional development activities and lead to a positive impact on SI (see also Nicolaidou, 2010; Kruger et al., 2007). *Effective school leadership* embraces all members of an organization in which effective collaboration between the principal and teachers leads to positive outcomes in school performance and outputs (Nicolaiou & Petridou, 2011). But *organizational leadership* must have a shared vision by all participants and stakeholders that helps identify and articulate links between school priorities of learning how to learn by sharing knowledge that will lead to SESI (Pedder & MacBeath, 2008; Barker, 2007; Levitt & Solesbury, 2005; Harris, 2002).

Particularly in the UK, another emerging trend in SESI is the focus on *school districts*, or *local educational authorities* (LEAs), as opposed to looking at selected individual schools only for SESI strategies. Although LEAs has been important for educational administrative purposes, the results have proved disappointing for SESI, and even within a given school district, there are variations in school performance (Tymns et al., 2011; Ainscow, 2010). To better understand SESI, it is believed that the use of pupil attainment and progress data can be very important in a modern context and is considered a key element in the professional practice of teachers (Kelly, 2011).

Indeed, supporters of *data-driven decision-making practices* contend that the effective use of data will enable the school administration to learn more about their schools and guide them into more informed decisions which could leads to better outcomes (Mason, 2002; Earl & Katz, 2006). The effective use of quality data on school

systems can be used for a wide range of purposes, including evaluating progress of state and district standards, monitoring student performance and improvement, curriculum assessment and the allocation of scarce resources (Crommey, 2000; Wohlstetter et al., 2008).

Studies in the UK recognize the overwhelming multicausal, multidimensional, and multicorrelational quality of teacher learning and its impact on instructional practices (Pedder et al., 2008; Opfer et al., 2011) because learning occurs primarily as a result of the learning activities in which teachers participate (Desimone, 2009).

Advancing the field of SESI, scholars are continuing to expand the search for what other variables and factors inform SESI. In recent times, it has been considered a legitimate goal of the school, in addition to its academic focus, to ensure education for *young people*, which seeks to ensure that they become active and responsible citizens capable of contributing to the development and well-being of the society in which they live (Eurydice, 2005:10). It is no longer enough to produce academically competent graduates, but *citizenship, civic and democratic education* means that schools must provide opportunities to engage students in meaningful learning experiences...and other active teaching strategies to facilitate their development as politically and socially responsible individuals (Homana et al., 2006:2; Isac, et al., 2011). Scholars argue that proper education is much larger than mere student academic achievement and must include a larger concept of life and societal obligations (Griffith, 2002:9; Petty & Green, 2007).

Summarizing the main elements of effective schools in the UK, Reynolds (2010:8-9), submits the following:

- Have good leadership by the headteacher, including the deputy head.
- Espouse an academic push with high expectations of what the school can do and pupils could achieve.
- Encourage meaningful parental involvement in school affairs regarding their children's future.
- Encourage meaningful pupil involvement in all aspects of the learning situation and environment.

- Exercise organizational and administrative control and cohesion of the entire school system

3.3.2 Factors, Methods and Concerns of SER

Different researchers adopt different methods for investigating effectiveness, depending on their focus among the wide scope of perspectives in different contexts. Their concerns are about what make schools effective how effectiveness as a factor should be assessed. Even if we agree on the outcomes as a criterion, we are still engaged in the variety of the term's diverse interpretations. Hammond's (1973) vision of outcomes included four dimensions: a) behavioural aspects, b) cognitive characteristics, c) environmental factors, and d) cross-interaction among these three. Stufflebeam's model for evaluating a programme's effectiveness is based on four areas: a) context, b) input, c) process, and d) product (Stufflebeam, 1973). His model was used in Al Qasim's (2009) evaluation of effectiveness of Saudi institutes.

In the educational field, effectiveness is always associated with the quality of education (Scheerens, 1992). In Table 3.3, Scheerens constructs a model of the education process in which four broad elements are directly intertwined. Input (funding and resources) is considered the first necessary factor, followed logically by *Process* (instruction method). The last two factors: *Output* (final test scores and *Outcome* (dispersal of the labour market) are the acid tests in measuring SE. The first two factors can be said to be contributing factors to SE, while the last two are actual measurements of SE (Scheerens, 1992:3).

Table 3.3 - The Educational Production Process						
Input	→	Process	→	Output	→	Outcome
e.g. Funding methods		e.g. Instruction scores		e.g. Final test the labour market		e.g. Dispersal on

Source Extracted from Scheerens (1992:3, Table 1.1).

Edmonds (1981a), for example, summarized five variables or characteristics of SE: *a) strong administrative leadership, b) high expectations achievement, c) conducive atmosphere, d) emphasis on skill acquisition, and e) frequent monitoring of student progress.* Tomlinson (1980) added two more factors to Edmonds' five: *use of class time, and utilizing parents or aids.* Austen (1981a) identified twenty nine characteristics of SE; one of them is *qualifications of principals, teacher experience.*

For chronically low-performing schools (CLPS), Hochbein & Duke (2011) propose three critical factors that affect school decline: *large class sizes, diminished faculty capacity, and increased student violence*. This last factor is novel area of interest in SESI. Teachers can devote more individual attention and quality time to students in a smaller class size thereby increasing the effectiveness of learning (Blatchford et al., 2007; Reynolds et al., 2006).

The *positive outlier studies* used to determine statically highly effective schools and the *negative outlier studies* used to determine ineffective schools, so called by Purkey & Smith (1983:430), are studies whose method adopted the national data sets of students' test results as an indicator of SE. New York State Department of Education, Shneiders, and Spartz et al., (1977) are SE studies that adopted the same approach (Purkey & Smith, 1983:431).

Sheerens' (1992) perspective of *a good school* and Acedo's (2000) *educational goods* can be viewed as student achievements represented by their scores, since *what drives educational reform in the US is the concern that students are not achieving at a desired level* (Stringfield & Herman, 1996; Sterbinsky et al., 2006). This quantitative method adopts regression analyses. A mean achievement score for each school is calculated through the regression equation and is named an *expected mean score*, which is to be subtracted from the actual level of a school's achievement. The result is called the school's *residual score*. The school of the highest residual scores are ranked highly effective and vice versa, in a scale that can include all the schools in the district. Sammons et al., researched continuity of school effects using the rich set of *follow-up data* available at the Inner London Education Authority. This database included the sample's background level information, and level of cognitive gain at the entry point for three years. Then, the sample students' GCSE exam scores were used in comparison processes to detect school effects at different stages on the students' performance in the GCSE exam (Sammons et al., 1995).

A more precise type of investigation existed since American expectations of education outcomes have now been defined by the Special Study Panel on Education Indicators (Special Study Panel on Education Indicators, 1991). Another aspect of development in the US Department of Education is the establishment of longitudinal

data bases cohesive system on: a) students' achievement, b) classroom activities, and c) background information about students, teachers, and schools. These were utilized by a number of large scale research studies on SE (SE and SI Journal, 1996:165-67; Bryk et al., 1993; Puma et al., 1993). Regarding teachers as a key factor, Vescio et al., (2008:87) stress the *role of teachers on student outcomes* by the claim that *student learning increases when teachers participate in professional learning communities* (see also Lomos et al., 2011; Borko, 2004). Two dominant approaches to teacher professional development are the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) and the holistic or reflective approach (Golby & Viant, 2007); Antoniou & Kiryakides, 2011; Boyle et al., 2005).

In spite of this level of progress, three major methodological drawbacks limiting such studies were detected: a) sampling that must be multi staged; b) instrumentation of the SE questionnaires, that reflect the value judgment of their authors, and thus need to be developed in order to hold more objectivity; and c) the critical analytic problems emerging from the techniques used (Stringfield et al., 1996:165-67). These limitations led to a reaction against large-scale quantification to measure the impact of differences in variables. Interpretive researchers would argue that the major limitation is reliance on output measures as the key indicator of SE.

Qualitative case studies comprise another approach use to examine SE. The California State Department of Education (1980) and others all sought to identify SE through the case study approach (Levine & Stark, 1981; Patton, 1990). However, within the folds of strengths, there existed some areas of tension which can be summarized as follows:

1. The samples used were too small to represent a whole school.
2. The absence of criteria to identify student characteristics.
3. The absence of appropriate comparisons or the existence of inappropriate comparisons with effective school model.
4. The criteria for effectiveness they used had a great deal of subjective judgment (*The Elementary School Journal*, op. cit., p. 433).

Such areas of weaknesses found in case studies constitute a strong source of contention to the findings on which SI are supposed to rely on. More specifically, it was hard to generalise from such case studies and compose a valid basis for SI.

Program effectiveness is another case study approach to find out whether a certain programme does make a difference in SI. Two SI programmes were investigated by Doss & Holley: a programme with *Title 1* students pulled out from the regular classrooms to be taught with a different pre-structured plan; and a *school-wide* programme for classes after the pull-out processes. They evaluated effectiveness of these two school programmes and indicated a greater positive effect on achievement in favour of the *school-wide* programme (Rozenholtz, 1988:437).

It must be noted that credibility of this result is subject to argument, since at least part of the difference should be attributed the smaller size of class resulted by the pull-out of *Title 1* students, which constitute an extraneous cause-effect relationship factor. That is to say that the effect, or much of it, could be attributed to the class size, a variable that was ignored by the researchers than to the inclusion of *Title 1* students or programme differences.

Thus, there is a clear concern about the effectiveness of schooling, particularly for students making the *transition from secondary to tertiary schools* (college and university) which poses a problem for many students worldwide (Brinkworth, McCann, Matthews, and Nordstrom, 2009). The phenomenon exposed invited considerable critiques as other scholars place greater emphasis on other factors that directly affect SESI. For instance, Torenbeek et al., (2011) contend that variables at the classroom level, school-level factors such as educational leadership, the degree of achievement-oriented policy, and professional development of teachers are all important for SESI (p. 352). These scholars also place a great deal of emphasis particularly on strong teacher control of the class because he directly engages in the transfer of knowledge to students.

Progress on SER continued with a variety of techniques and methods. For example, Hallinger & Murphy (1986), and Teddlie et al., (1985, 1990) launched *context variables and methodological advances*, marking a shift in SER characterized by *multilevel mathematical models* and multilevel modeling computer programmes for more accurate analysis and assessment of the impact of different elements of schooling. A key characteristic by other scholars is a continual refinement of

multilevel modeling (Bryk et al., 1986a; Bryk & Raudenbush, 1988; Lee & Bryk 1989; Raudenbush & Williams, (eds.). 1991). In order to more accurately measure the different processes at the educational environment, other scholars developed measures for different educational processes (see Table 3.2 above) (Rozenholtz, 1988 & 1989; Pallas, 1988; Brookover et al., 1979). Such advances added much credibility to the findings of consequent studies.

According to Stringfield & Herman (1996), the mixed model studies combine detailed case studies and extensive qualitative analysis. Louisiana School Effectiveness Studies (LSES-III & IV) were landmarks of such a model. They involved a diverse sample of university students and graduates from four universities, eight districts and sixteen schools. They could reveal differences between “positive schools” and “negative schools” over a diverse set of characteristics at multi levels (Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993). The characteristics included a long list of factors: a) academic tasks, b) academic plans, c) class time employment, d) curriculum, e) teaching interaction, f) seeking innovative curricular and instructional methods, g) friendliness and seriousness of the climate, h) time respect, i) accuracy of schedules, j) regularity of instruction, k) principals’ acquaintance of curriculum, l) the instructional processes, and m) principals’ care about hiring and training teachers (Stringfield & Herman, 1996). Researchers in the International School Effectiveness Research Programme (ISERP) gave another example of a mixed model study, supporting the LSES findings (SE and SI, 1996:170).

Based on advanced theoretical development in the field of SE, researchers developed hypotheses on a wide range of factors related to SE (Slater & Teddlie, 1992; Springfield & Slater, 1992). They experimentally attempted to test those hypotheses in large scale-projects in an effort to draw a portrait of the 21st century schools termed *New American Schools*. The New American Schools Development Corporation (NASDC) shouldered the task of synthesizing designs for such effective school models (Mecklenburger, 1992; Bodilly, 1996). This was followed by the launch of US’s national goals of 2000, which defined clearly achievement standards for the main cognitive fields (Stringfield, 1996:164).

Thus, new research interests emerged in the 21st century which included students' family characteristics and socioeconomic status (Park & Palardy, 2004), students' ethnic composition (Rumberger & Palardy, 2005), and principals' leadership behaviour (Leithwood Jantzi, 2005; Hallinger, 2009 and Marzano et al., 2005). Teacher characteristics effects were also under the microscope of this long line of SER (Wayne & Youngs, 2003; Smith et al., 2005). Methodologically, researchers used large scale data. Curtin et al., 2002, though criticized as having an area of weakness because it failed to differentiate school effects. Nevertheless, a large sample is considered an advantage that strengthens representativeness of the sample and generalizability of the results.

For example, Palardy's (2008) study sample included 779 high schools, and the volume of data to be collected from some 5,326 students through a survey study that included school principals, parents, and teachers as well. Louis et al., (2010) is another survey study that exemplifies the use of large scale quantitative data. However, researcher at the beginning of the 21st century were concerned with SE based on *student characteristics* (Rumberger & Palardy, 2005), *financial, human and material resources* (McCaffrey et al., 2003; Wayne & Youngs, 2003), *teachers' expectations and efficacy* (Carbonaro & Gamoran, 2002), and *instruction* (Smith et al., 2005); Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Further Research on *school resources* (sport installations, labs, libraries) such as the basic infrastructure and services (water, electricity, sewage) do have an effect on the effectiveness of schools in developing countries, but less so on developed countries such as the US, Europe Australia (Murillo & Roman, 2011).

Creemers' (1994) comprehensive model of SE, considered by Teddlie & Reynolds (2002) to be one of the most influential theoretical constructs is based on empirical data. Thus, a dynamic model of SE has emerged as a reaction to the criticism accusing effectiveness models (Creemers & Kyriakides, 2008). On what dimension should measurement of effectiveness factors be based? was the controversial question that models up to date were unable to reveal. Hence, the need to develop and test models of educational effectiveness that could help us explain differences in student learning results by specifying the relationships between the components in the models and student outcomes (Creemers & Kyriakides, 2008:431). Kyriakides (2008) highlighted

the importance to use a framework to measure the functioning of effectiveness factors as a significant advance in the field. There appeared several studies on testing the validity of effectiveness factors in different contexts (De Jong, 2006; Kyriakides, 2005; Kyriakides & Tsangaridou, 2008).

In the Arab world and Saudi Arabia, researchers have a tendency to study each of the commonly (universally or locally) hypothesized value adders to effectiveness separately than collectively in a large scale research project. For instance, in Saudi Arabia, most researchers measured the effectiveness of *school leadership* and *teaching processes*, using the survey type questionnaire (Al Semadi & Al Nahar, 2001; Al Thubaiti, 2003; Sharaz, 2006; Al Yawer, 2008; Al Ammar, 2008).

Kensarah enquired whether Computer Assisted Teaching (CAT) can make effective teaching and used a previously designed computer-assisted programme in an experimental research. The findings were based on pre- and post-tests. This method depended on “scoring” or “outcomes” as a criterion for effectiveness (Kensarah, 2009). Other researchers also experimented with this notion (Bahkash, 2001; Ilyas & Bubsheet, 2002; Zakari, 2006; Al Ahdal, 2009).

Al Huraiqi (1994) used a classroom environment scale to measure appropriateness of the classroom environment in light of global standards. He employed a Vocational Situation Scale to measure effectiveness of training programmes. Al Sulaimani (1994) used a universally validated scale to detect learning and thinking types of students. Mousa (1992) conducted a descriptive survey study where he evaluated the effectiveness of inclusion programme for the disabled students on the basis of how many objectives were achieved and how much of each objective is achieved., He then investigated the barriers that hindered achievement of the other objectives.

Ibraheem (2006) investigated the effectiveness of the programmes designed for disabled children in Saudi Arabia as revealed by practitioners in the field. Using a 32-item questionnaire with Likert scale and *management oriented approach* categorization, the programmes effective rating was 3.65 points out of 5. Al Thubaiti's (2005) perspective on the effectiveness of the examination system is based

on whether it achieves the instructional objectives, not necessarily represented by the students, scores, but assessed somehow.

Al Qasim (2009) adopted the theory of income/outcome and tested the epistemological assumption that the more strictly the organization/institute/school implements quality assurance measures, the more effective outcomes it will gain. He developed Stufflebeam's (1973) *Management Oriented Approach* of evaluation which depended on leadership/management's capacity to take decisions about educational inputs and outputs. Relying on the assessments of the educational institution's variables, such as system, plan and programme, programme implementation, development progress, and programme outcomes, a system is classified into one of the following categories represented in Table 3.4.

No.	Level of Effectiveness	Quantitative Value
1.	No effectiveness	0 - 1.50
2.	Little effectiveness	1.51 - 2.25
3.	Average level of effectiveness	0.76 - 1.50
4.	High level of effectiveness	2.26 - 3

Indeed, in recent decades, much emphasis has been placed on what is described as the notion of leadership development and its impact of SESI. Nicolaidou and Petridou (2011:77) states:

...policymakers need to rethink about the goals that the current professional development programmes aim to achieve in order for these programmes to have an effect not only on participants but also on their schools and especially on students.

However, at the same time, they argue that it is not efficient or realistic to believe that change can be promoted through professional development programmes alone without the support of induction and preparation programmes (p. 80). In particular, head teachers can play a pivotal role in facilitating school reform. Those who ensured broad participation and representation helped school reform for SESI (Muijs et al., 2006; Fullan, 2007; Leithwood et al., 2010; Murphy & Meyers, 2008).

3.3.3 Key Findings of SE Studies in the Arab Gulf Countries

Five pertinent aspects of SE in the Arab Gulf countries are considered here: 1) The Effectiveness of Training Programmes; 2) The Effectiveness of Teaching Methods and Activities; 3) The Effectiveness of Exams; 4) Social Factors of Effectiveness; and 5) Utilizing Effectiveness of Classroom Environment.

3.3.3.1 The Effectiveness of Training Programmes

Al Thubaiti (2003) investigated effectiveness of current teacher preparation programmes carried out at the University of Umm Al Qura over acquainting the teachers with some important concepts related to gifted students. One aspect of effectiveness was to ensure that disabled students are given due care, while another aspect was to take care of the hidden abilities of gifted students (Al Semadi & Al Nahar, 2001), whose number, constituted around 3% of the student population (Webb et. al., 1982). The researcher added a significant aspect of effective schooling by exploring and caring about students who hold a high potential level of mental processing and activities in light of multi intelligence approaches (Leibowtits & Starens, 1993).

He found that the training programme, aiming at drawing the trainees' attention to gifted students' characteristics and their potential multi intelligences, does acquaint the teachers with only five basic concepts about gifted students with a high level of effectiveness: a) high ability to concentrate, b) high ability to continue, c) self-confidence, d) self motivation, and e) the students' ability to organize and classify things. Whereas, acquainting teachers with the other twenty five concepts the researcher has drawn and used as research instrument from other scholars, did not account for more than average or low effectiveness level (Leibowitz & Stanes 1993; Abu Samaha & Al Farah, 1992; Al Zahrani, 1999; and the (Saudi) Teacher's Guide 1998). While evaluating the effectiveness of the training programme's content, the researcher recommended inclusion of training programmes as a major factor of effective schooling. Ma'ajeeni (1998) and Al Tammar (2000) studied the sufficiency and efficiency of educational and scientific training provided to teachers in the Gulf and arrived at the same results and recommendations. This also coincided with Al-Otaibi (1995) who, moreover, assured the necessity to set plans for exploring and taking care of gifted students.

Al Huraiqi (1994) tackled the issue of how effective the teacher training system was in Saudi classrooms. Calling for reviewing the preparation systems at the concerned colleges (Colleges of Teachers) against the international measures of teacher education, he studied the effectiveness of the current pre-service teacher training, and whether it coped with the continually-evolving worldwide standards. He concentrated on the effectiveness of the pre-service training in acquainting trainee teachers with the professional knowledge of: a) professional identity (identity of teacher as a professional), which included the objectives, teaching interests, decision taking, adaptability with the school environment; b) professional information related to teaching including instruction, profession, training, curriculum, social and administrative morals; and c) the professional barriers based in the teaching job, such as individual characteristics and dealing with others in the field.

Using Holland's (1980) professional scale, no statistical differences were found between the teachers' scores in the educational preparation course (practicum and teaching methods) and professional situation dimensions. Students' differential scores revealed deficiency in the training programme, content of the curriculum and teaching methods courses used to achieve their goals. He criticized the organizational and professional issues in the practicum course at the Faculty of Education. He related this failure to ineffective curriculum and teaching methods courses or insufficient professional training. He considered them vital factors to international school effectiveness, a scholastic system whose standards and criteria Saudi Arabia should cope with. He also emphasized that the school is the fertile field to make improvement in education through effectively preparing teachers. He recommended more links between the curricular theoretical framework and the practical professional performance. Both scientific database and effective practical training courses should be provided. However the researcher did not suggest alternative improved programmes, neither did he detect specific areas of tension to be rectified in teacher preparation system (Al Huraiqi, 1994; Smyth & Hannan, 2006)).

3.3.3.2 The Effectiveness of Teaching Methods and Activities

Aiming to investigate the effectiveness of the teaching styles and activities based on the multiple intelligences theory in the educational district of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Al Ahdal (2009) designed an experimental research to measure efficiency of the

approach and techniques through quantitative comparison between the students' achievement in the pre- and post-tests.

Her findings assured that using the approach and activities based on the multiple intelligence theory of Gardner (1991) and Armstrong (1994) produces significant learning effect in Saudi girls' education Al Ahdal (2009). This approach is a teaching method based on articulating and activating human beings' nine intelligences determined by Gardner. Thus, its techniques are all activities used by the teacher with the purpose of expanding the range of these intelligences and consequently increasing students' comprehension in any field of knowledge. This is a package of teaching materials, tools and technological used to evoke and activate the potential/sleeping intelligences within students. Strategies and related teaching activities of the multiple intelligence approach are factors that can add significant value and thus contribute to effective schooling (Al Ahdal, 2009).

A similar study conducted by Lasheen & Abdulsamee' (2006) came out with the same results, indicating that such an approach could develop logical-mathematical thinking and induce positive attitudes towards learning mathematics. Ahdal's study confirmed previous research such as Ahmad who experimented with a learning model based on multiple intelligence theory which found it effective in enhancing students' positive attitudes towards the environment (Ahmad, 2007). This coincided with Izzuddeen & Al Owaidi (2006) who investigated Saudi pre-service teachers' learning styles according to the multiple intelligence theory. Lasheen & Abdulsamee's (2006) enquired whether multiple intelligence programmes significantly enhance students' achievement and attitude towards Mathematics was also found positive.

Disabled pupils occupy the Saudi authority's special attention. No effort has been spared, particularly in the last three decades, to provide them with the due care. Pearson & Lachar (1994) contend that preparation of this category lies in the society's provision of well-designed training programmes that lead to effectiveness in one or more aspect of schooling.

Ilyas & Boubshit's (2002) methodological assumption that effectiveness is measured through student achievement, studied teaching methods and their effects on the

academic performance psychology students. Four different teaching methods were administered with four different groups:

1. *Prior knowledge and closure strategy* - a combination of *prior knowledge strategy*, represented in a collection of teacher classroom behaviour aiming at preparing students mentally, intuitively and physically to receive and accept newly taught material, plus the *closure strategy*, represented in the teacher's class behaviour after the lesson presentation stage aiming at smoothly finishing the lesson and helping the students organize and comprehend knowledge. This is administered with one treatment group, *prior knowledge only strategy*, represented in all teacher classroom behaviour – questions, revisions, etc. – aiming at preparing students mentally, intuitively and physically to receive and accept taught material, administered with a second treatment group.
2. *Closure only strategy* - represented in all teacher classroom behaviour after the lesson presentation stage, aiming at smoothly finishing the lesson and helping students to organize and comprehend knowledge, administered with a third treatment group.
3. *Traditional strategy* - in which teaching is restricted to only new lesson presentation, i.e., none of the above strategies is used. This is administered with the control group.

Comparison of the students' post-test achievements revealed the highest mean score of the *prior knowledge* and *closure* group. The *prior knowledge* treatment effect was less, followed by the *closure method* with less mean score than the second. Then came the control group which had no intervention: it was ranked the least effective in terms of the method's impact on student achievement. The *prior knowledge and closure method* drew the students' attention, kept their senses and brains alert, created a situation of preparedness, provided an organizational framework for thoughts and information (content of the lesson). All that contributed to improving the class environment and resulted in considerable student participation. The authors assured the role of the method used in enhancing effectiveness of the teaching processes as represented by the students' achievement. These results coincided with many research findings worldwide and in Saudi Arabia (Al Aklabi & Ilyas, 1996) and assured

Hopkins et al.,'s (1994) perspectives of utilizing *approaches and methods* to make effective schooling.

To further emphasise the role of the school-level system in terms of its organization, Van Houtte (2005) contends that “organizational culture” influences the behaviour of individual members of the organization. This applies to any organization including educational institutions because individuals are pressured to adopt group customs, values and norms for consistency and smoothness of operation. In particular, Wheelan (2005) argues that school culture is born in small groups of teachers and then shared with others in the school community until a common set of beliefs and values have been developed and diffused among the whole school community. To the extent that school culture is a reality, this can have a definite impact in outcomes related to student achievement and progress (Main, 2009:458).

3.3.3.3 The Effectiveness of Exams

Al Thubaiti (2005) doubted whether school examinations do test what they are supposed to test – the instructional objectives. His study examined a number of test models in different Saudi schools and explored deficiency ranging from the examiner's lack of theoretical framework related to the instructional objectives for the need for exam guide book. The result is question forms that concentrate on measuring low cognitive levels at the cost of the high cognitive levels represented in complex logical processes such as problem solving, creative and critical thinking. SER claims too much. Such claims are larger than what the evidence permits, and too weak to allow generalization. The most considerable point Al Thubaiti made is drawing our attention for the need to be cautious as not all SER can be accepted. He doubted the credibility of such SER which constitutes a significant critique and corrective perspective to the blind faith of earlier SER which tended not to question the validity of what tests measure. Evaluation, in Al Thubaiti's view, should aim at improving the teaching/learning processes, something that was found missing. Exploring this state of affairs, he draws stakeholders' attention to a new area for improvement. Specialist committees/departments at the district's educational administration should take responsibility for increasing the value of school achievement tests and improving their effectiveness.

3.3.3.4 Social Factors and Effectiveness

Sharaz (2006) addressed the major factors that induce effective learning as measured by the students' achievement. Students' psychological, health, mental status and the external atmosphere all interact and affect the level of learning. Described by the researcher as *the school effective partner*, familial environment is considered the closest factor and, thus, the most directly influencing factor. Can the family represented mainly in the parents' qualifications be a player in SE? Can the mother's employment in education play such a role? Do any other demographic variables correlate? Does socio-economic family status have an effect? Prominent scholars covered these issues enquiring about one or more of the above questions in different contexts and assured how strongly the parental factor could correlate with enhancing the student's achievement and thus effective learning (Moore & Pepler, 1998; Wang et al., 1993); Kellaghan et al., 1993; Coleman, 1988; McLoyd, 1998). In the US, social class and students attending low *social class schools* continued to learn at significantly slower rates than their high social class cohorts. Low social class students and low social class schools need much greater attention in order to compare well with high social class students and schools (Palardy, 2008). For example, there are many serious issues with low social class students, such as poor nutrition, inadequate health and criminal behaviour, all of which seriously affect their academic performance in schools (Ylimaki et al., 2007).

Sharaz (2006) attempted to find answers to all these questions in relation to Saudi Arabia. He found that the following variables had significant function in school achievement, but he did not prioritize them:

- Parents' qualifications.
- Parents' employment.
- Family size and members' quality.
- A parent multi-marriages.
- Children's treatment by their parents.
- Socio-economic status of the family.
- Students' self-motivation.

Thus, they constitute major correlates to higher achievement and are considered important ingredients in the making of effective learning. Sharaz ranked the integrated learning process triangle according to each factor's strength of effect as shown in Figure 3.1.

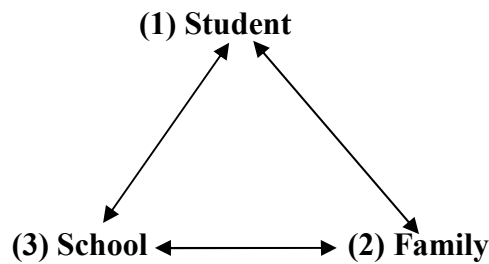


Figure 3.1 - Order of Integrated Learning Process Factors

In his analysis, he found that factor one (the student) has the most significant effect on student achievement, as measured by exam scores. The results have shown the highest score of 4% contribution by this factor. Thus, according to Sharaz (2006), the principal factor of the three in his integrated learning process model was the student himself/herself. Student level, attitude and commitment to education are key to academic progress. Factor two (the family composition) was the second in priority, as it affected students achievement by less than 4%. In other words, although the student ranks as the most important factor, it was directly affected by his family background, which includes socio economic status. In other words, coming from a strongly advantageous family background contributes positively to enhanced student learning. Factor three (the school) was the least effective factor. Yet, the school has an important role to play in the scheme of things. It is there that students acquire their basic education. Thus, when all three factors (students, family and school) work interactively together, their combined effect shows great increase on the levels of student achievement than their total effects working separately, in isolation or individually: 34% of the student's level of achievement was attributed to close collaboration of the three factors (Sharaz, 2006). According to his study, all three factors must work closely together, simultaneously and interactively in order to have the highest positive impact on student educational achievement, as measured by exam scores.

Scholars are of the persuasion that collaboration is essential for well beyond the school level. While it is vital that collaboration occurs across all members of the professional school staff within a given school, the role of social capital involving the widest collaboration and networking with all stakeholders can prove to be even more beneficial. This involves collaboration and partnerships between schools, families and communities in order to promote student achievement. Indeed, studies have shown that schools and their boards are arriving at the conclusion that collaboration at all levels is an avenue in which students' needs may be met leading to positive achievement (Hands, 2009; Henderson et al., 2007; Muijs et al., 2004; Epstein et al., 2006; West, 2010; Muijs et al., 2010; Katz & Earl, 2010).

3.3.3.5 Utilizing Effectiveness of Classroom Environment

The classroom for Al Huraiqi is *the place unit, the limited area where educational procedures take place*. Recognizing the factors that control classroom environment, and thus endeavouring to improve this environment will ensure a healthy atmosphere for teaching processes, on the one hand and will help educationalists test teaching styles used in a classroom void of any other extraneous variables – variables related to the environment, on the other hand. He introduced major social factors such as teacher-student relationship and student-student relationship, for which he used Trickett & Moss' (1974) scales of relationships, personal growth and variety of activities. He highlighted nine-dimensional scales emerging from the three above and against which classroom environment should be measured. These included:

1. Class participation.
2. Involvement with others.
3. Teacher support.
4. Competitive atmosphere.
5. Class order and organization.
6. Clarity of instruction.
7. Task orientation.
8. Teacher's control over the class.
9. Creativity.

Al Huraiqi's (1993) findings indicated integrated relationship among most of these classroom environment components, and that girls and boys' secondary schools suffer from insufficiency of educational care about issues related to class environment. However, the study identified three areas that need particularly reforms and recommended increased participation by students in the academic and social activities at school, training courses for teachers to develop their knowledge about the school/class environment, and taking care of creative and innovative initiatives.

3.3.4 SER in the US, UK and Saudi Arabia: An Issue of Mimicry

Though different for the most part, SER in the US and UK have a lot in common. A great deal of similarities involve areas of concern to researchers as educators, conditions they want to improve, difficulties they want to eliminate, and questions they seek answers for (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993). Table 3.5 shows how much SER in US and UK mimics each other.

Inter alia, this can be explained mainly by the cross-cultural relations among educational researchers worldwide in general, and between the US and UK in particular. More interestingly, there is evidence that SER in the Arab World, including Saudi Arabia mimics that of the US and UK. Egypt is the most active Arab country in this field and it is from there that Saudi Arabia derives its educational conceptual base. To show the extent of this reliability, here is an example of the Egyptian-Gulf educational relationship. The Egyptian role in education is not simply mere data source, being the most developed among the Arab countries. It goes well beyond this to more practical intervention: for instance, Egypt seconded teachers and administrators to establish an Educational Council in Kuwait in 1936. As a result of the Egyptian-oriented practices, the Kuwaiti curriculum was very similar to that taught in Egypt. In 1953, the Egyptian control over the educational activities, curriculum and methods was noticeable not only in Kuwait but all over the Gulf countries (Idrees, 2000:3-5). In fact, Saudi Arabia has derived its assumptions about SE and SI initially from Egypt, and indirectly from worldwide thoughts filtered through Egypt, since Egypt has mimicked global perspectives in the field (Ministry of Education, 2003).

Table 3.5 - Similarity of SER Concerns and Effectiveness Factors in the US and the UK		
Research Topics	In the US	In the UK
Learning environment in effective schools	Edmond (1978 and 1979); and Lezotte and Bancroft (1985).	Reynolds and associates (1976a, 1976b, 1982); and Rutter et al., (1979).
School climate and variety of school authorities	Brookover (1979).	Gary et al., (1983).
Characteristics of improvement/ emphasis on SI	Clark and McCarthy (1983); McCormach-Larkin (1985); Taylor (1990).	Gray et al., (1999).
Teacher effectiveness	Murnane (1979); Summers and Wolfe (1977).	Reynolds and Muijs (2000); Wayne and Youngs (2003); Smith et al., (2005).
Classroom environment , Instruction and classroom environments	Louis et al., (2010).	Craig et al., (1998).
Students' socio-economic / family characteristics	Coleman et al., (1966); and Jencks et al., (1972).	Park and Palardy (2004).
Student (ethnic) characteristics	Rumberger and Palardy (2005).	Rumberger and Palardy (2005).

The school mission and vision, high expectations of the learner, the learning climate, effective school management, continual professional development, community partnership, use of information and telecommunication, assuring quality, appropriate activity rooms and learning resources rooms, effective management, leadership and policy are elements of SE in the Arab World (Ministry of Education, 2003;). Some of these were the concerns of the West, such as the US or UK. Examples include “effective management, leadership and policy”, factors of SE (Stevens & Salvin, 1995; Chapman et al., 2010). Another is “high expectations for achievement”, embedded in the Egyptian/ Saudi SER and the concerns of other SE researchers (Edmond, 1978 & 1979; Lezotte & Bancroft, 1985). The learning climate as an essential element of SR in the Arab World is a third instance of similarity of concern (Brookover, 1979). Here the mimicry entails a triangle involving Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the US and UK as a result of global interaction in SER.

Establishment of a model effective school called for by Teddlie & Reynolds (2000) have practically seen the light in Saudi Arabia, represented by the PSP. They contain a great deal of Edmond and Lezotte & Bancroft’s principles of an effective school, such as strong instructional leadership, understood instructional focus, safe learning environment, high expectations, and using student achievement test data for

evaluating the program and school success (Edmond, 1978 & 1979; Lezotte & Bancoft, 1985).

As mentioned above, some of these aspects was not only seriously questioned by Al Thubaiti (2005), but other scholars in the field as well who criticized the overestimation of the role of the students' socio-economic characteristics (Mayeske et al., 1972; Mcintosh, 1968; Mosteller & Moynihan, (eds.), 1972); Coleman et al., 1966; Jencks et al., 1972). Teddlie & Reynolds (2000) refuted Coleman et al., (1996) and Jencks et al., (1972) on SER results, concepts and methodologies. Others were criticized mainly for disregarding school context (Wimpelberg et al., 1989); Clark & McCarthy, 1983). Some say the scales were inadequate (Fitz-Gibbon, 1991b; Willms, 1985; Rozenholtz, 1988; Rosenholtz, 1989); Pallas, 1988), while others dispute generic models in which one size fits all approaches failed to produce reliable results (Luyten & Witziers, 2005; Muijs et al., 2005; Thrupp & Lupton, 2006).

A deeper interpretation of the mimicry issue and common concerns is based on: the fact that educational research is of a global nature; strong educational cooperation between the two educational giants (the US and UK); strong educational cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the Arab World. This explains why Saudi SER and SI issues do not widely depart from that of the US and UK. In fact, SER and SIR in the US and UK inform, enrich, deepen and refine Saudi SER.

3.3.5 SIR Development from the 1980s

In this section, SI will be shown as a concept that is different but related to SE. Development of the SI movement started in the 1970s mainly with projects: 1) In the US; and 2) In the UK.

3.3.5.1 In the USA

The bulk of SER produced since the 1960s calls for improving practices within education. Thus, the US shifted from research theorization to programme implementation – actual improvement. In fact, McCormack-Larkin (1985) marked the beginning of collaboration between SE and SI, and an attempt to develop links. However, the history of improvement started as early as the 1960s with the curriculum reform movement on the grounds that the curriculum has a significant

effect on student outcomes, and is a major factor of SE. This was dubbed the *curriculum innovation phase*. During the 1970s, this movement did not work as a *top-down model of change* because it could not control implementation due to the lack of strategic planning and the impatient nature of the improvement process (Teddlie & Reymonds, 2000).

Following this stage of *non-feasibility* to reform the curriculum and to get teachers to practice this major highly academic change, came a phase of *comparative success*. This coincided with the publication of more SER in the UK (Rutter et al., 1979), the birth of some SIR in the 1980s (Crandall et al., 1982; Crandall et al., (1986); Huberman & Miles, 1984; Hargreaves, 1984), and the determination of *characteristics of effective schools* (Purkey & Smith, 1983; Wilson & Corcoran, 1988). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) International School Improvement Project (ISIP) was an innovative project to produce improvement strategies (Hopkins, 1987). An awareness to practically get involved in developing schools featured the third phase in the 1990s. This stage was concerned with how to *manage change* and bring it about as in Hopkins' (1995) model. Harris (2002:37), contends:

Changes that are imposed without consultation are most likely to incur resistance and sabotage. Conversely, change that is self-imposed or voluntary is more likely to succeed simply because individuals feel involved and have some power within the situation.

SI developed during the late 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century in two ways. As an approach, school improvement made use of SER as *an instrument for teacher improvement and development*. In scope, it went deep into tackling *teachers and students' characteristics, attitudes and class behaviour* (Lee & Williams, 2006:121). With the assumption that SI should start from, or at least include, classroom changes, improvers focused on: a) giving chance to any element that can potentially make improvement the classroom pedagogy (Seashore Louis, et al., 2010), and b) cooperativeness of such elements. They highlighted the importance of the triangular structure for SI: *teacher, learner and curriculum*(Lee and Williams, 2006:122), calling for reforms in the curriculum and professional communities – staff and students. Leadership effects were also highlighted in this long line of research on

SE and SI as indirect constructs (Day et al., 2009; Witziers et al., 2003; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Stringfield et al., 2008).

3.3.5.2 In the UK

In Britain, SIR started simply as a *folk-lore* style, utilizing experts in the field with no projects using research database. Following this, emerged *improvement enterprises* under the umbrella of *teacher as researcher* movement advocated by Elliot (1980 & 1981; SE and SI, 1996:143). Elliot (1996:221) contends that the view of teaching and learning is an unpredictable process in which a teacher's responsibility is to create conditions *which enable pupils to generate personally significant and meaningful outcomes for themselves*. Thus, for him, the quality of education lies not in the results but in the teaching-learning process itself. This was expanded a few years later to include *self evaluation and reviews* as diagnostic measures, at the educational institute level. A representative example of this was Clift & Nuttal (1987; SI, 1996:143).

The ISIP of Hopkins (1987; SI, 1996:143) was a significant advance at this stage of SIR. However, a remarkable consideration of this stage was viewing SI programmes as negotiable, not accepted facts and principles. They were subject to change in light of the practitioners' reviews. Improvement in the 1980s followed the *Bottom-Up approach* in that SI were decided, planned and implemented at the school level; yet, sometimes with the higher authority's consultation or utilization of an expert. Indeed, school level factors (head teacher leadership, teacher involvement, consistency among teachers, record keeping, parental involvement, and positive climate) were positively associated with student achievement (Teodorovic, 2011; Mortimore et al., 1988).

Barth (1990) emphasized changes in the school culture whose responsibility is *from within* the school leadership. As a reaction to other scholars (Coleman et al., 1966), he refuted their hypothesis which ignores the effect of the school as a considerable factor and so emerged the LEA project: *School Makes a Difference* because the authors utilized findings of SER (Reynolds et al., 1996).

Lewisham School Improvement Project (1993) is a second example of improvement efforts in the UK which was remarkable for its reliability on SE approaches and paradigm and thus gained some strength. The project worked in several dimensions:

- Increasing clients' outcomes represented in the advances they make.
- Providing wider capacity for school changes and enabling evaluative measures for these changes.
- Providing schools with databases to be utilized.
- Inclusion of such principles in the school's system.

However, Hopkins et al.,'s (1997) project, *Improving the Quality of Education for All (IQEA)*, marked a second stage in the field of SI. This project is considered unique in combining a set of *approaches and methods* (Reynolds et al., (1996). With the change of strategies based on a database, its involvement of evaluative processes for the school programmes and professional collaboration and reflections, it could reach a level of sophistication as to draw a desired model of SI. It has provided a practical example of quality schooling that resulted in enhancing the students' outcomes through the teachers' work through the organizational changes. Through this holistic approach to SI, schools tended to practically move and be a real *value adder* in the broad sense of the term (Reynolds et al., (1996). This stage was concerned with changing the internal practices of schools (Hopkins, 1995). However, Harris (2002:38), suggests that before contemplating the implementation of changes in the school system, the following questions should be first considered:

- How important is this change?
- How necessary is this change at this time?
- What priority does this change have
- How will others view this change and respond to it?
- What will be the main benefits from this change?

School research synthesized and prioritized school improvement as Hopkins et al., (1994) depicted the significance of *teacher development*. While the *student level* of improvement concentrated on the teaching/learning processes was Hopkins' second concern at this stage (Hopkins & Harris, 1997). SI researchers indicated that different schools have different improvement schemes; depending on their culture and refuted a long held assumption that *one-size-fits-all* (Hopkins, 2000). Then, attention was drawn to the vital importance of the school leadership and leaders (Harris et al., 2001), with the belief that school cultures, values and norms can be reshaped creating

a healthy climate. Effective SI projects do not necessarily fit in other contexts and solutions to school problems in one country could fail when exported to another country (Stoll et al., 2000). Thus, in their improvement projects researchers focused on establishing improvement projects that fit as a wide range of contexts as possible. Of the projects that proved to have had effective impact even outside the UK were *Success for All*, *IQEA* and *Coalition of Essential Schools* (Hopkins, 2000).

According to Hopkins & Reynolds (2001), the SI movement started as *unsystematic attempts emphasizing organizational change*, an approach that suffered from certain problems coupled by a *lack of connectivity* with real positive effect represented by the student outcomes. Then, followed a collaborative approach between SE and SI where the former provides the database and the later focuses on *implementation* characterized the second phase. In the third phase, *sophisticated professional development approaches* involving classroom processes were considered to have marked success. This perspective of managing networking and collaboration for SI was developed later by Hopkins & Reynolds (2001). Lupton's perspective is a localised, contextualised school improvement approach that addresses the community needs (Lupton, 2004). Indeed, the school system must entail vital collaboration, including consideration of the different informed ways that could lead to SESI. Harris (2002:102) states: *Collaboration pools the collected knowledge, expertise and capacities of teachers within the subject area*. This kind of collaboration is seen as a positive contribution to SESI because it increases the quality of student learning by improving the quality of teaching. Thus, collaboration with the school community is held to have positive benefits for SESI.

Considerable effort in England was made at this stage to enhance the performance of schools facing challenging circumstances in realising high output standards, which could be achieved through increasing resources, developing improvement programmes and providing professional development opportunities (Reynolds et al., 2006).

3.3.6 Factors, Methods and Concerns of SIR

Continuing for five successive years, the ISIP brought together the expertise of fourteen countries and focused on school self-renewal, growth and bottom-up change (Harris, 2002). It, moreover, refuted the 1970s top-down approach and instead established a new bottom-top approach in the 1980s. This new third approach in SIR comprised programmes which were based on a number of similar principles, rules and guidelines:

- Focus on the development capacity.
- Focus on internal (school and classroom) conditions.
- Encourage innovative work.
- Work on school level and classroom level changes simultaneously.
- Facilitate cultural change within schools.
- Define parameters for development.
- Adapt SI model in accordance with different school contexts and needs.
- Utilize external research base on effective teaching/learning (Harris, 2002:25).

A fourth approach by Hopkins (1994) – the *two-fold projects* – which distinguished between what he called *organic improvement and mechanistic improvement*. The former tackles changes of school strategies and principles, while the latter specifies changes within the strategy and gives orientations for improvement. Further examples of the organic improvement project were Mayers' (1996) *The School Make a Difference* and the *Lewisham School Improvement Project*. Both were highly concerned with school-local authority partnership (Harris, 2002:25).

On the other hand, mechanistic types of school improvement projects exemplified by Stringfield's *High Reliability Schools*, Slavin's *Success for All* and Joyce's *Models of Teaching* adopt a self-managing approach of six stages: a) setting goals; b) policy making; c) planning for change; d) preparing (infrastructure) for change; e) implementing plans; and f) reviewing for evaluative purposes. Effective schools, as assumed in these projects, were characterized by five factors: a) having effective training programmes; b) focusing on few goals; c) having standard operation

procedures; and d) having monitoring system to identify weak areas (Harris, 2002:26).

Restructuring SI projects constitutes a fifth approach to school improvement, exemplified by the IQEA. This approach focuses on four aspects: a) internal conditions; b) innovation; c) developing class room environment and d) class-level and school-level development. With such merits, the IQEA was considered as an overarching model of school change methodology (Harris, 2002:25).

Although SI projects of high effectiveness in one context are not necessarily effective in another, they nonetheless, as research have shown, can be a working solution for improving schools. Indeed, some of such projects worked very successfully not only in the UK, but also outside Britain as well (Stoll et al., 2000).

In fact, the well-known projects: *Success for All*, *IQEA* and *Coalition of Essential Schools* crossed international boundaries and held an aspect of universality (Hopkins, 2000). This resulted in an attempt to find a commonly accepted evaluative framework for gauging whether a project has an improving impact (Stoll et al., 2000). Meanwhile, barriers to implementing improvement projects internationally were investigated. This marked a sixth approach to SIR concerned with unifying conceptions and developing a language of understanding about SE and SI (Harris, 2002:24).

Table 3.6 - Summary of Approaches and Characteristics of Improvement Projects			
No.	Example Improvement Projects	Key Characteristics	Approaches
1.	International School Improvement (ISIP)	School self-renewal and growth	Down-top approach
2.	School Development Programme	Philosophical nature and principles	School improvement clubs
3.	The School Makes a Difference Lewisham School Improvement Project	Changes in strategies and principles	Organic approach
4.	High Reliability Schools, Success for All Models of Teaching	Self-managing; focus of training; few goals; standard procedures	Mechanistic approach
5.	Improving the Quality of Education for All (IQEA)	Focus on internal conditions, innovations, environment, class and school levels	Restructuring approach
6.	Pioneer Schools (KSA)	Comprehensive but borrows initiatives without full awareness of subtleties	Transported/contextualized models

The variety of improvement projects generated a variety of methods and characteristics. Nevertheless, a cross cultural memorandum of understanding was established in respect to: a) SE; b) SI; c) Criteria; and d) measures. As a result, there existed shared principles and features among improvement programmes, including those run in Saudi Arabia, as follows:

- Improvement focus on classroom practices.
- Adoption of instructional strategy.
- Systematic evaluation of improvement.
- Change at different levels: teacher, class, department.
- Having cultural and structural change.
- Teacher engagement.
- Expecting external support.
- School is the centre of change.
- Teacher is the main actor and booster for development (Harris, 2002:29).

Table 3.6 summarizes the approaches and their key characteristics in the vast study of SI programmes in a world witnessing the daily emergence of projects.

3.3.7 Key Findings of SI Studies in the Saudi Context

There are two basic areas with implications for Saudi Arabia: 1) Education Orientation Can Change; and 2) Small-Scale Improvement Schemes.

3.3.7.1 Educational Orientation Can Change

Al Yawer (2008) tackled effectiveness of the highest directly related factor in Saudi Arabia, *educational orientation*. He inquired whether such a factor and the people authorized to make changes in the different teaching processes and school practices are actually orientating effectively with a positive impact on the growth and development of schools. He sought to find out competencies for supervision and provide a model of evaluation as an improvement project.

Al Yawer (2008) and others (Al Rashid, 1991; Al Sha'lan, 2001; Al Zaydi, 2002) identified a lot of drawbacks in the supervision's method of evaluation in comparison to Cooper and Graham's model. They defined the teacher' competencies as characteristics that must be available in a competent professional teacher and educational supervisor as *a set of knowledge, skill and abilities demanded for competently practicing such a profession*. They posit six necessary characteristics: a) effective leadership; b) good general relationship; c) self-development; d) good relationships with colleagues and bosses; e) distinguished personal skills; and f) reliability of shouldering administrative responsibilities, work habits and daily routine (Copper & Graham, 2001).

Supervision in Saudi Arabia encounters serious problems among which are: a) supervisors are still using old fashioned styles of orientation/evaluation; and b) there is a desperate need for improving the methods of orientation, teacher evaluation and the form that includes the criteria for evaluations.

3.3.7.2 Small-Scale Improvement Scheme

Though concerned mainly with leadership factors that correlate to effective schooling, Al Ammar suggested a ten-pillared improvement scheme. However, she concentrated on improvement as validated by the teacher's role as a major factor, and supported Harris' view that any change requires the teacher to participate, cooperate and to spare no effort to achieve success (Harris, 2002:19). The teacher is considered the main

actor in the scene. The ten pillars of Al Ammar's (2008) improvement scheme in Saudi Arabia are as follows:

1. Provide facilities and resources (equipment, library, audio-visual aids).
2. Decentralize curriculum.
3. School schedule should ensure time for professional practices.
4. Effective teachers be rewarded and ineffective ones be supported.
5. Provide quality in-service training for ineffective teachers and leaders.
6. Enhance school-community relationships;
7. Reduce teachers' load to give chance for effective teaching.
8. Enhance parent partnership.
9. Care about teachers and leaders' residence and health insurance to achieve their goals effectively.
10. Support by the Ministry of Education to maintain dignity.

Other researchers also suggested similar schemes for SI, but by no means are improvement projects (Al Qasim, 2009). The PSP in Saudi Arabia is the only improvement project in the Arabian Gulf countries. The Saudi Ministry of Education's definition of the PSP matches in great deal of its components the world-wide shared standards of effectiveness and, whether consciously or unconsciously it derives a lot from SI projects in the UK, USA and Singapore. A qualified management shoulder the responsibility of achieving the school objectives through managing, planning, appropriate methodologies and improvement in line with the Kingdom's education policy. Continuous reviewing and assessment is the most considerable characteristic of the components of the programme.

3.3.8 School Leadership and Management Relevant to SE and SI

The American document, *The Goals 2000*, recognizes that the type of teachers and the educational system are the two criteria for reaching the desired standards of education. It also assures that the school, represented in its leadership/management and teachers, is the best environment for improvement (Department of Education, 1994). In the UK, Edmonds (1981a), synthesized variables / characteristics of effectiveness in five areas; on top of which was *strong administrative leadership*. Thus, school leaders and teachers involved in management should be given greater authority that enable them take proper decisions in relation to SI and should shoulder

full responsibility for implementation. The Saudi perspectives on SE were greatly influenced by the American experience, namely *The Goals 2000*. Researchers concerned in effectiveness in Saudi Arabia realized the potential significance of the school leadership, management and staff in the making of effective schools.

School management is continuing to take a prominent stage in the context of SESI. A new and emerging trend in international quality management is the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). In particular, the ISO 9000 registration for educational institutions is debated for its appropriateness in the context of SESI. The ISO 9000 is quality management system that can be applied to any organization regardless of the product or services being provided (Kanter, 2000). Its primary purpose is to provide a quality framework for the operation of the organization that ensures the highest consistent standards (Thonhauser, 2008). The body was established to put an end to different competing and confusing international standards. In the USA, it is called the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), and in the UK, it is known as the national body – British Standards Institute (BSI). From its inception in 1949 to date, it has changed from a body of quality assurance to an effective quality management system, focussing on customer satisfaction and continual improvement of the system through objective evaluation (Hoyle, 2003). It is debated whether it can be adopted in the educational arena in order to achieve SESI by guiding all school management and administration into a common, coherent, unified and consistent international system of the highest standards.

3.3.8.1 The Factors and Barriers of School Leadership Effectiveness

In Al Ammar's (2008) analysis, call was made to provide schools with all possible means of budgeting support. She did not only survey school leaders' perspectives about key factors that make effective schooling, but also endeavoured through in-depth interviews to detect what barriers prevent efficiency and enhancement of SE in Saudi Arabia. Using questionnaires and interviews as instruments administered to school principals; she utilized the qualitative research approach of investigating the subjects. She has drawn the barriers to efficiency and possible factors for effectiveness through the insights of participants – school leaders – measured qualitatively. Her main findings were that leadership, teachers, and the environment are not functioning well.

According to the participants, the major reasons why the school management climate is not so effective are: a) job is taken by “favouritism”, not on basis of qualification; b) ineffective use of resources; c) rigidity versus flexibility of the regulations; d) leaders are fault finders; and e) creative teachers are not recognized.

Scholars emphasize that change in the school cultures is the responsibility *from within* the school leadership (Barth, 1990). Al Qasim (2009) also focused on leadership initiative and organizational effectiveness, supported by Venkatraman (1986) who concentrated on a major dimension that reflects the quality of performance of an institute. Placing responsibility of effective schooling on the leadership and management, he utilized a “management oriented approach” tool to measure SE. The objective was to collect sufficient data about each of the effectiveness factors in the school programme, in order to enable school management/ leaders to develop an improvement plan.

3.4 SE in the Arab Context

Three areas of focus are examined here: 1) In the Arab World; 2) In the Gulf; and 3) In Saudi Arabia.

3.4.1 In the Arab World

SE, though sometimes differ in focus, holds the same principles in the Arab world in general and in the Arab Gulf countries in particular. Saudi Arabia is the biggest country and constitutes the core member of the Gulf countries. It has derived its assumptions of SE and SI worldwide. Egypt is largest Arab country most active in this field and thus a major data source of even the Gulf countries’ conceptual base in this and other domains.

Perspectives of effective schooling in the Arab draw heavily from the US, UK and world-wide SER and improvement programmes (Egyptian Ministry of Education, 2003) and holds the following correlates (Al Semadi & Al Nahar, 2001; Adam, 2000):

1. *The school mission and vision* - through which the school expresses its future vision and plans to fulfill the community’s requirement and the country’s policy. This vision is judged effective against a number of characteristics considered as criteria that contribute to effectiveness. These criteria are:

- a) Vision should be realistic and publicly announced, and documented in the light of up-to-date developments.
 - b) Mission should be formulated by all concerned parties.
 - c) All concerned people should be committed to attainment of the vision they have put forward.
2. *The learner* - to whom a number of skills, knowledge and values must be provided to enable him/her to practice critical thinking, creative achievement, self learning, life skills and bright citizenship. This can be achieved through by:
- a) Students are actually acquiring such elements and assuring long-life learning.
 - b) The learner is enjoying a bright citizenship.
 - c) Teaching activities are centred around the learner.
 - d) All learners are given equal opportunities; disabled are given special considerations.
 - e) Teachers are committed to this job's morals.
 - f) Supportive environment for the teacher is available both socially and professionally.
3. *The learning climate* - refers to the availability of a number of characteristics in the learning/teaching environment in and outside the classroom. It includes all teaching processes which should centre around the learner.
4. *Effective school management* - refers to characteristics in the school management that provides an atmosphere which supports initiatives and creative educational change, consolidates positive values, and seeks developed learning methods. Criteria for this are:
- a) Availability of a leading staff with such characteristic.
 - b) Availability of a school environment that supports initiatives and educational change.
 - c) Support for active learning processes and comprehensive evaluation.
 - d) Positive beliefs and values are consolidated.
5. *Continual professional development* - this refers to an effective system that motivates continual professional development for the staff; which will be positively reflected on their performance. This is indicated by:
- a) Staff self-evaluation of their professional performance.

- b) Financial and professional support for the continual development.
 - c) Opportunities for professional development are exploited.
 - d) Quality and training unit is functioning effectively.
6. *Community partnership and accountability* - this refers to an administration with an effective communal participation within a framework of regulations that guarantee effective communication with and investment of the local societies' resources. This is judged by:
- a) Availability of a legislative environment.
 - b) Availability of a school-community partnership.
 - c) Availability of an educational information system.
7. *Use of information and telecommunication (ITC)* - this refers to the support and facility the ITC provides to the school management and teaching/learning processes. This is measured by:
- a) Availability of an ITC infrastructure.
 - b) Actual utilization of such ITC system within the institute to support both management and learning/teaching processes.
8. *Assuring Quality and Accountability* - this is concerned with an effective system for on-going evaluation and assessment; capable of collecting and analyzing data, and accordingly use the findings in the accountability, a step towards quality improvement. This can be achieved by:
- a) Activating the role of the quality and training unit in evaluation and assessment.
 - b) Availability of regulations and techniques for accountability.
 - c) The school's implementation of self-assessment,
 - d) The school's implementation and monitoring of the improvement plans.
 - e) Fulfillment of the internal and external proficiency standards.
9. *Ideal utilization of the school building* - this factor tackles the physical environment where teaching and learning take place and the conditions and facilities that must be available. These are based on:
- a) The school is in a suitable place.
 - b) The school has all general health and safety conditions.
 - c) Sufficient, appropriate equipment and facilities are available.
 - d) Appropriate and equipped class, staff and administrative rooms are available.

- e) Appropriate and equipped rooms as activity and learning resources rooms are available.

3.4.2 In the Gulf

In their study, Al Semadi & Al Nahar (2001) highlighted the perspectives of SE as viewed or agreed upon by the Gulf countries' researchers. In their study, *Special Education Teachers' Proficiency Level of Effective Teaching Skills*, they tackled most of the above mentioned factors and added significant elements driven from the Human Rights file and recent regulations related to the disabled students. Thus, an important contribution of this paper is bringing to life the disabled students' rights. They assured that providing students of special disabilities with special requirements is a major factor to be added to effective management, leadership or policy (Stevens and Salving, 1995).

This students' category is a source of worry at the highest level in Saudi Arabia for two major reasons: a) they constitute increasingly a significant number; and b) the religious principles upon which the education principles are based consider, taking care of such case, as the community/authority's obligation. Another favoured issue in this study was the school's sensitivity for up-to-date development and readiness for change. In addition, the researchers determined new correlates to SE for the disabled: inclusion policy of this type of students is adopted here in Saudi Arabia (Rosenshine, 1987; Christine & Ralph, 1995). The findings of this study have assured a number of correlated factors to SE: the teaching process and the teacher's acquaintance and mastery of the teaching skills were on top of these. It has also highlighted the teachers' need to master other correlates, mainly planning and evaluation skills.

3.4.3 In Saudi Arabia

Teachers and students at the Department of Education, King Saud University were subject of a study by Adam (2000) to evaluate effective teaching at the Saudi university. He highlighted the teacher's action in class is a major factor affecting students achievement and effective teaching (Harris, 1998; Walberg, 1990). According to Adam, the most significant factors affecting SE in Saudi Arabia can be summarized as follows:

1. *Planning* - this refers to the teacher's preparation and organization of the teaching material, determining the teaching objectives, strategies used in lesson presentation and assuring a well-prepared class environment.
2. *Class organization management* – refers to the necessary procedures that guarantee an appropriate teaching/learning climate judged against the student's achievement criterion, which include positive supervision and implementing regulations.
3. *Teaching organization and improvement* - which is directly related to the financial capability, types of teaching tasks provided, students involvement, time organization appropriateness of tasks and tasks to be oriented towards success.
4. *Teaching outcomes* - represented in competitive atmosphere and achievement of the teaching goals.
5. *Teaching material presentation* - in accordance with the teaching morals of clarifying, using visual aids, utilizing time, evoking students' motivation, teacher-student interaction, and questions to test understanding monitoring students' performance, etc.
6. *Acquainting the students with high expectations.*
7. *Evoking students' motivations.*
8. *Feedback provision.*
9. *Teaching strategies,*
10. *Teaching methods.*
11. *Accountability.*
12. *Evaluating achievement.*

Adam found that: a) the research subjects did not correlate school/teaching effectiveness to one particular factor. For them effectiveness was a cooperative process; and b) the most effective correlates were lesson organization, class management and clarity of teaching, feedback provision and, teaching material presentation method. This led to the start of research in three directions:

1. Experimenting (or using other types to research) whether such factors explored so far apply to the Saudi context.
2. Exploring new correlates.
3. Investigating context priorities according to the communal requirements.

3.5 SE and SI Research in Saudi Arabia: A Review of Empirical Studies to Date

Zakari inquired whether pre-adjunctive questions theory can add a value of effectiveness to the teaching process. He investigated the mathemagenic response to educational videos and hypothesized that such modes of instructional designs facilitates the students' learning and enhances their retentiveness through this teaching aid. The group with pre-adjunctive questions intervention was evidenced to have performed higher than the group with post-adjunctive intervention. While the control group which had no intervention showed the lowest performance. In line with the IQEA project (Hopkins et al., 1994) of utilizing a combination of approaches and methods for comprehensive teaching effectiveness, his study supports an aspect of effectiveness related to a teaching technique: even a different technique can make difference (Zakari, 2006). His findings concur with the findings of different contexts worldwide and concluded with similar perspectives: an improvement project must take for granted the components of a teaching method and techniques (Sanders, 1971; Rothkopf & Bisbicos, 1967; Natkin & Stahler, 1969; Frase, 1968). In a previous study, Zakari (1990) emphasized the effectiveness of the instructional media in increasing student learning outcome and retention, and enhancing their motivation.

Kensarah (2009) enquired whether a) Computer Assisted Teaching (CAT), b) cooperative teaching, or c) integration of the two methods could make effective teaching. The researcher used a previously designed computer-assisted programme and experimented with it. The findings were based on data on pre- and post-tests and students scores in prerequisite courses. He found significant differences in the students' outcome represented by their post-test scores that can be attributed to the teaching method they were introduced to. In the same vein, others found that CAT is a significantly effective teaching method in different environments in Saudi Arabia (Al Shihrani, 2003). However, cooperative teaching or integrated method (Cooperative CAT) was also proved effective in terms of the students' outcomes.

Bahkash (2001) (also Goldstein et al., 1996; Mayhoob, 1996) studied whether a factor represented in a well organized programme, built on scientific theoretical professional principles of social education and behavioural schooling for improving educable mentally retarded children could produce effective social skills and raise their level of intelligence as other studies confirm. Implementing the programme have positively

affected the subjects' social behaviour and habits, and resulted in the pupils' establishment of successfully well-behaved social relations. Effective schooling according to Bahkash can be achieved through provision of such programmes on the way to effectiveness.

With the author's assumptions that diagnostic evaluation is a starting point towards improvement and effectiveness is the institute's level of achieving its objectives, Al Qasim (2009) conducted an evaluative study to detect effectiveness at the Institutes for Special Education in Al Madinah. Realizing that effective schooling can be seen in the effective function of: the school management, teachers, specialists, curriculum, parents, and buildings, the researcher designed an instrument to measure effectiveness of such ingredients in particular. Other factors, such as quality assurance programmes, accountability, provision of special service for special students, funding, training, etc. were viewed as significant factors to be included under the umbrella of effectiveness. More important than availability of these is the collaborative interaction among them. Institutes were evaluated as having average level of effectiveness, except signs of high management effectiveness in few institutes. Variations were found between individual SE and between components of effectiveness within the one school.

3.6 Contest and Controversy Over SER and SIR

The idea of having international principles/factors/correlates to SE and other core elements in SESI is still a dream and far to be achieved. This section highlights how much the issue is still controversial and SER results are still contested both in the West (the US and UK) and in Saudi Arabia, though with much in common. Innovations in this field continually emerge and more research claims appear but are hardly agreed upon or accepted. Disagreement on focus, controversy whether to refute or accept research results are the mainstay of SER.

In respect to focus, while *learning environments* was Reynolds (1976 & 1982) and associates' (Rutter et al., 1979) focus, Hallinger & Murphy (1996) and associates explored *across different school contexts* as a major factor to effectiveness (Teddlie et al., 1985); Teddlie et al., 1990). Others, on the other hand, consider *academic achievement, delinquency, attendance and rate of (non-academic) problems* as basic measurements for effectiveness (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000). While most researchers

adopted a student results approach based on *test scores or examination* results as the indicator for students' success (Purkey & Smith, 1983; New York State Department of Education, 1974a, 1974b and 1976; Spartz et al., 1977); Sheerens, 1992; Acedo, 2000), Winkler (1975) focused on *the quality of the college the teachers attended* as a significant predictor to learning outcomes.

However, Rowan, et al., (1991) focused on *organizational effectiveness*. Palardy (2003) stressed *school inputs, practices, policies and policy makers* and Rumberger & Palardy (2005) targeted *student characteristics*. *Financial, human and material resources* were the concerns of McCaffrey et al., (2003) and Wayne & Youngs (2003), while Carbonaro & Gamoran (2002) focused on *teachers' expectations and efficacy*. Louis et al., (2010) concentrated on *instruction and classroom environments*, while *teaching, learning and leadership* were the focus of Wahlstrom & Louis (2008). Bryk & Schneider (2002) and Tschannen-Morans (2004) added the element of *trust* in SI projects. Gray & Jesson (1987), Gray et al., (1984), Woodhouse and Goldstein (1988) and Williams (1987) focused on *school authorities' effect on academic outcomes*, while Reynolds et al., (1987) and Steedman (1980) studied *school systems* and their effects. Mortimore et al., (1988) and Smith and Tomlinson (1989) targeted *behaviour and attitude*, whereas Rumberger & Palardy (2005) focused on *students' ethnic composition and socioeconomic status*, and Wayne & Youngs (2003) and Smith et al., (2005) emphasized *teacher characteristics*.

In respect to refuting the research results, the studies of Coleman et al., (1966) and Jencks et al., were criticized as having *methodological flaws* (Mayeske et al., 1972; McIntosh, 1968); Mosteller & Moynihan, 1972; Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000). In the same vein, Al Thubaiti (2005) did not accept previous Saudi SER studies relying on the *exam results* as the main indicator of SESI. Wimpelberg et al., (1989) found considerable areas of tension in the works of other scholars (Clark & McCarthy, 1983); Mc Cormach-Larkin, 1985) regarding such as *sampling bias, disregard of context, and lack of more appropriate strategy of analysis*. Fitz-Gibbon (1991b) and Williams (1985) doubted the adequacy of Rozenholtz (1988 & 1989), Pallas (1988) and Brookover's (1979) *scales for measuring effectiveness of different school processes* is another example of disagreement among researchers on what makes effectiveness.

In respect to critique, Muijs et al., (2005) and Thrupp & Lupton's (2006) SER emphasized that the *generic models* of school effects *fit across a wide range of school approaches*. This claim was subject to criticism as they were unable to *differentiate school effects* (Luyten et al., 2005). A second example in this domain was the criticism of Hallinger & Murphy (1986) and associates (Teddlie et al., 1985 and 1990), to Edmond and his colleagues' research, which led to exploration of *across different school contexts* (Clark & McCarthy, 1983). Teddlie & Reynolds (2000) criticized the absence of or poor *communication among* SER.

Every day there exists a new element for SESI which researchers attempts to evaluate as a core factor for SE and advocate his/her research claims that will always be subject to controversy, criticisms, and tensions. In addition to those summarized above for the early periods of SER and SIR, a wide range of these new elements now feature prominently. For instance, *school safety, safe and orderly schools* are now being stressed as important factors (Graham et al., 2006; Allen et al., 2008). Schools must be first *able and willing to identify their problems and weaknesses* in order to have any real impact on SESI (Creemers & Kyriakides, 2010).

Other topics that have come under scrutiny include the following:

- *Changing the learning the learning conditions* (Van Velnz et al., 1985; Hopking, 1987 & 1990; Miles et al., 1987:3).
- *Changing all aspects of school culture and the key role of the principal* in doing so (Harris, 2000).
- *Self-evaluations* within the school system that will ultimately lead to improvement in SESI (Hofman et al., 2009; Schildkamp, 2009).
- *School characteristics, socio-economic and ethnic background of students*, in addition to *class size* impact SESI (Scheerens, 2004).
- The *perception of students* as an important contribution to SESI (Petty & Green, 2007).
- *Background characteristics of students, composition of student populations within schools, and the curricula* as explanatory variables for SESI (Thrupp, 2001; Slee & Weiner, 1998).

- *School leaders/leadership/effective leadership* as having a direct relationship to student learning (Hallinger & Heck, 2011; Heck Moriyama, 2010; Nguni et al., 2006; Harris, 2002; Mulford & Silins, 2009).
- *Opportunity to learn* as a factor impacting SESI (Pashiardi & Georgiou, 2007).
- *Teacher and classmate support* as vital to student achievement (Morgan et al., 2004; Whitlock, 2004; Barber & Olsen, 2004).
- *Nurturing, emotional and academic support* as important to student achievement (Baker, 2006; De Wit et al., 2010).
- *Effective and collaborative school leadership* within and across schools at all levels and encompassing the entire school community as important factors of SESI (Nicolaidou & Petridou, 2011; Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2007).
- All aspects of *school resources* impact SESI, particularly for developing countries (Murillo & Roman, 2011).

In addition to these issues, *school level factors* (school policy, working conditions, salary scales, student behaviour, etc.) (Smith & Rowley, 2005) and *shared leadership* and teachers' *participation in professional development* (PD) (Cha & Cohen-Vogel, 2011) all impact SESI. *Decentralization and democracy* are important for SESI (Cohen, 2004; Al Taneiji & McLeod, 2008). Student *ethnic composition* as contradistinguished from SES does impact achievement (Rumberger and Palardy, 2005). *School districts* and *local educational authorities* (LEAs) are also areas for explaining SESI (Tymns et al., 2011; Ainscow, 2010). *Data-driven decision-making practices* in a modern context can foster and inform on SESI (Mason, 2002; Earl & Katz, 2006). In addition to academic achievements, *citizenship, civic and democratic engagements* are all now novel aspects of proper education (Homana et al., 2006:2; Isac, et al., 2011). *Large class size, diminished academic capacity and increased student violence* (Blatchford et al., 2007; Reynolds et al., 2006). *Transition from secondary to tertiary schools* (college and university) poses a problem for many students worldwide (Brinkworth, McCann, Matthews, and Nordstrom, 2009). *Social class schools* do have an impact on SESI (Palardy, 2008; Ylimaki et al., 2007). The *ISO 9000 quality management system registration for educational institutions* is now

debated for its appropriateness in the context of SESI. (Kanter, 2000; Thonhauser, 2008; Hoyle, 2003).

Such wide-ranging issues are not to be taken as a negative aspect. On the contrary, criticism has flourished, crystallized and developed and will always work to advance SER. But this interaction indicates how SE and SI research have been contested and seen as controversial.

3.7 Gaps and Opportunities for SER and SIR in Saudi Arabia

There is a dearth of research material in general and large scale research projects in particular in the Arab world, including Saudi Arabia. Research on SE is no exception. This constitutes the first *organic* problematic case. The reason could be attributed to:

1. Instability in all sectors, including education and higher education, which can be attributed to two major causes:
 - a) The rapid pace of development Saudi Arabia is witnessing the newest and most sophisticated advances that would develop the country, which makes it hard to keep up with continual advances.
 - b) Decision are not dependent on a scientific base (typical of a third world/developing country) where changes are made just for the sake of change, as in the field of education, it is done for political reasons; to counter the negative impact of Saudization (substitution of non-Saudis by Saudis); and the rapid and immature implementation of this policy at all levels.
2. Lack of funding and encouragement for such large scale research.
3. Existence of what most educationalists/ leaders/ policy makers think of as a locally-designed effective school project – the PSP.
4. Full satisfaction within the educational leadership to take one incremental step towards effectiveness rather than quantum leap, in a situation where previous research findings are not taken for granted, and implementation is faced with big obstacles, on top of which is needed financial support. Other obstacles include:
 - a) Rareness of comprehensive SER projects in the country. Most SER have investigated a limited set of correlates, resulting in a fragmented portrait replacing a holistic picture about effectiveness or improvement. Even the

PSP as a contextualized SE project or a scheme towards effective schooling, is not based on sufficient context investigation. Most of its theorizations are derive from world-wide studies. See, for example, how over exaggerated is the claim that intermediate/secondary pupils (among other characteristics of a pioneer school) *have knowledge of the basics of search and have the ability for systematic and scientific criticism in addition to evaluation and analysis* (Educational Development Centre, 2005). This objective which is not only unrealistic but is on top of an ivory tower that could not be obtained even in the most scientifically sophisticated countries.

- b)** Researchers' creative ideas on innovation are fragmented in their individual small-scale studies. Consequently, one of the most significant factors of SE – harmony among all correlates – is not investigated by local researchers.
- c)** Unavailability of a training programme to accompany the improvement programme, resulting in misinterpretations, wrong implementation or failure of the programme.
- d)** Incompetency of the school staff in general, thus, inability to achieve positive change in the SI factors shouldered on them.
- e)** Most improvement (micro) programmes are taken at the school level and represent individual initiative, rather than comprehensive research-based projects. They are merely reflections of transported conceptions, even for the PSP. A short-sighted strategy that there is one fit-for-all formula explains why the Saudi improvement projects did not achieve the desired results.
- f)** There is no serious monitoring of the PSP, i.e., there is no research that gives evidence on how well this programme is functioning. Advocators of the PSP are just fascinated by the technological teaching aids in such schools believing in their magic effect regardless of staff's competency to use them.

Table 3.7 - Summary of the Gaps and Opportunities in SER and SIR in Saudi Arabia	
No.	Areas
1.	Rareness of research on effectiveness or improvement in the Saudi context.
2.	Research is fragmented small-scale research that tackles only a few factors.
3.	No research tackles the collaborative coordination and harmony among factors of effectiveness.
4.	Rareness in comprehensive SI projects.
5.	SI programmes only at the school level.
6.	SI projects are more transported versions than innovative contextualized research-based projects.
7.	No evidence that the currently implemented SI projects are functioning well, i.e., are accurately implemented and causing improvement.
8.	Students' achievement scores are taken as the only indicator of effectiveness.
9.	The factors studied are the individual researcher's priority classification.

The available SER on Saudi Arabia relies on standardized test scores, which are inadequate, as the only measure of student achievement, the only indicator of SE. For a summary of the gaps and opportunities of SER and SIR in the country, see Table 3.7.

With these nine gaps in SER and SIR in Saudi Arabia, concerned researchers are invited to: a) work collaboratively to study all potential correlates to SE and SI in a large-scale research to insure the database for an effective improvement project; and b) adopt a holistic approach to improve the deteriorating state of Saudi schools. Given the current gaps in SER and Sir in the country, this study is a great opportunity to at least partially fill in these gaps.

3.8 Conclusion

Discussion of the extant body of literature shows that there is no unified definition on SE and SI, with the former being theoretical and the latter being more to do with policy and programme implementation. The concepts vary according to researchers' perspectives, given local contexts at the school level, government policies on education, and even culture. The factors of SESI highlight even more disagreement as some researchers use only a few highly selected characteristics for measuring SESI, while others consider a holistic approach to include every perceivable characteristic that is likely to bear on SESI. The Arab World, Gulf countries and particularly Saudi Arabia exhibit a great deal of mimicry of the US and UK models of SER and SIR; the latter themselves coping each other. Given its unique cultural disposition, regional location, demographic realities, and a huge expatriate workforce, the Kingdom is bent upon improving its public educational school system as evidenced by the

establishment of the PSP. Moreover, with the dearth of studies in the country, this provides a great opportunity for comprehensive studies on a grand scale to deal with the issues of SE and SI in Saudi Arabia, an opportunity that the present study hopes to take advantage of.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the two most popular methodologies used in educational research projects, and their theoretical assumptions, with the aim of choosing an appropriate one for this specific study. It also details the particular research design methods and procedures used in conducting the current study, including questionnaire design, distribution, data collection procedures, semi-structured interviews and data analysis techniques. Eleven directly related aspects will be discussed here: 1) Research Paradigms in Educational Research; 2) the Paradigm Adopted for this Study; 3) Theoretical Framework of the Study; 4) Design of Data Collection Instruments; 5) the Pilot Study; 6) Validity and Reliability; 7) Research Ethics; 8) Sample of the Study; 9) Conducting the Study; 10) Problems Encountered in the Data Collection Process; and 11) Data Analysis Methods.

4.2 Research Paradigms in Educational Research

Scientific research entails a systematic investigation into the studied phenomenon that utilizes recognized methods geared to produce valid results in a coherent and reliable process. Stenhouse (1975) contends that the term ‘research’ refers to a systematic, critical and self-critical enquiry in order to advance knowledge. Along the same lines, Kerlinger sees research as a systematic, controlled, empirical and critical investigation into the phenomenon (Cohen and Manion, 1985). Objectivity is a highly stressed aspect of such research and requires selection of the most appropriate research paradigm and procedures as key to a successful research project (Crotty, 1998). Moreover, Cohen et al., (2000) contends that research is more than a *technical exercise* that is concerned with understanding the world and that is informed by how it is seen. How we see it depends on many factors particularly the prism we use – the paradigm and methodology with their attendant ontological and epistemological assumptions. There are many paradigms and methods in social science research but given practical considerations of time and space, and first following a definition of paradigm, only the two most widely used will be addressed here: 1) the Positivistic Paradigm; and 2) the Interpretive/ Constructivist Paradigm.

4.2.1 Definition of a Paradigm

Bennetts (2000) define a paradigm as a *worldview* which is held by those working in the field. It is a view of life that directs our actions and judgments. It is an implicit, unvoiced, and pervasive commitment by a community of scholars to a conceptual framework (Kuhn and Thomas, 1970); Shulman, 1986). It is a position that determines the individual's view of things. Depending on one's perspectives, there is a range of methodologies and paradigms in social science research. This plethora is profusely set forth and makes it confusing to choose from (Crotty, 1988). For simplification in this respect, however, two research stances have dominated the scene and emerged as the most popular. These are the positivistic mode of inquiry and the interpretive/constructivist mode of inquiry and both are examined here.

4.2.2 The Positivistic Paradigm

From about the nineteenth century onwards the positivistic mode of inquiry, employed by the natural and physical sciences like biology, physics, and chemistry, quickly established itself as the most appropriate model for investigating the social world (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). Positivism is historically associated with the nineteenth-century philosopher, Auguste Comte who considered that it is possible to establish sociology on a 'positive basis' just like the other sciences. Thus, positivism would be that position in the social sciences which aims at *objectivity* in social inquiry through adopting the methods and procedures of the natural or physical sciences. Its basic claim is that there is objective truth waiting to be discovered. Positivists, therefore, view studies as systematically what is clear, factual and open to empirical observation (Pring, (2000). There are many varied assumptions of positivism but its key tenets include:

1. Phenomena can be predicted.
2. Knowledge is predicted objectively and hence can be generalized.
3. Human behaviour is predictable, caused by, and subject to both internal pressures (for behaviourist psychologists) and external forces (for positivistic sociologists).
4. Aspects of behaviour can be observed and measured.
5. No qualitative differences are assumed between the natural and the social world (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995).

Three pertinent theoretical assumptions of positivism are presented here: 1) Positivist Ontology; 2) Positivist Epistemology; and 3) Positivist Methodology.

4.2.2.1 Positivist Ontology

Generally, ontology is defined as the study of being or the nature of existence (Louis et al., 2010 & Crotty, 2003). It is primarily concerned with the nature of a phenomenon human beings are seeking to understand (Flint, 2003). In positivistic modes of inquiry, reality is objective and can be verified and measured. It is represented in quantifiable fashion. Reality is recognized through stimuli-response patterns between the individual and the world. It is both context-free and value-free and is definite (Ernest, 1994). The researcher's role is similar to that of a scientist whose aim is to establish a comprehensive 'rational edifice,' a universal theory, to account for human and social behavior. Reality is objective and independent of both the researcher and the researched (Louis et al., 2010).

4.2.2.2 Positivistic Epistemology

Epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge or of how we come to know, how knowledge can be acquired and how it can be communicated to others (Trochim, 2002). Knowledge is often treated as an external body of information expressed in a technical language. Therefore, it is supposedly value-free and context-free (Giroux, 1981). Knowledge is something that can be fragmented and studied separately and reported in numerical and quantitative fashion. According to Crotty (1998), epistemology is a theoretical perspective, a way of seeing the world and a way of making sense of it. Thus, positivist methodology is a particular way of seeing the world and making sense of it, as distinguished from other paradigms. He further contends that *without a thorough objectivist epistemology, positivism would not be positivism as we understand it today* (Crotty, 1998:12).

Since the social researcher's purpose when understanding positivist research may be conceived as unraveling the truth about an objective, external and independent reality, it is imperative that he/she should not interfere in its natural workings, otherwise truth would inevitably be adulterated or contaminated. The knower and the known are detached from each other. Reliable knowledge is what is verifiable by observation, evidence and data yielding proof (Cohen et al., 2000). Moreover, according to this

viewpoint, knowledge is not affected by the fluidity of situations, because situations are static, fixed and not affected by contextual variables. In this sense, knowledge is non-negotiable, absolutist and objective (Ernest, 1994).

4.2.2.3 Positivistic Methodology

Experiments and quantitative predetermined survey questionnaires and grids are the most common data collection instruments in the paradigm. Other forms also include survey, comparative experimental and quasi-experimental methods. Emphasis is placed on quantitative data, but qualitative data can also be used, when appropriate (Ernest, 1994). Social phenomena are controlled and can be predicted based on evidence from objective knowledge in the form of laws and theories. A basic assumption of this mode of inquiry is empiricism, which holds that certain kinds of reliable knowledge can only originate in experience. Thus, the tenability of a theory or hypothesis depends on the nature of the empirical evidence obtained for its support (Cohen et al., 2000).

Crotty posits that there are four basic but logical elements to consider in the positivistic model, as shown in Figure 4.1.

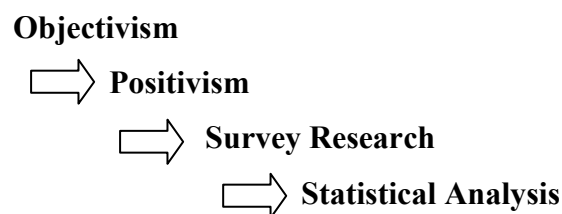


Figure 4.1 - The Four Elements of the Positivist Stance

He contends that in order to ensure the *soundness of our research and make its outcomes convincing*, the process in this mode uses arrows that go across the columns from first to last. He further argues that it is not enough simply to choose a methodology: in choosing a particular methodology, we need to justify this selection (Crotty, 1998:6-7).

4.2.3 The Interpretive/Constructivist Paradigm

Qualitative inquiry is an umbrella term for various philosophical orientations to research like ethnography, case study, phenomenology, educational criticism, the interpretive, constructivist, naturalistic and qualitative approach to educational research (Guba & Lincoln, 1991; and Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). In the interpretive paradigm, social reality is multifaceted. It is best understood through subjective understandings. Social reality cannot be separated from the meaning we give to it in the social context where it is formed or constructed. In this respect, reality is context-bound, multi-faceted and complex and is imposed on the object by the subject (Cohen et al., 2000).

This paradigm challenges the claims to objectivity by positivism and aims to come to an understanding of the natural social world where real people dwell and they themselves construe. Thus, interpretivism was developed in reaction to the strict application of the strongly held positivist paradigm of natural science to social science. In fact, Wilhelm Dilthey says that *natural reality and social reality* are in themselves different kinds of reality and their investigation therefore requires different methods (Crotty, 1986:67). The key distinguishing features of the interpretive stance are:

1. People actively construct their social world and invest it with multiple interpretations.
2. Situations are unique, fluid, changing and not law-like or rule-governed, rather than fixed and static or law-like.
3. Events and individuals are unique and therefore largely non-generalizable.
4. Situations must be examined and contextualized through the eyes of the participants rather than the researcher.
5. Social reality is multi-layered and complex entailing ‘thick descriptions’ rather than reductionism (Cohen et al., 2000:21-22).

Erickson (1986) opted for the term ‘interpretive’ which gives meaning to human beings in social life. Walsh et al., (1993:465) contend that *At the heart of interpretive inquiry is a passion to understand the meaning that people are constructing in their everyday situated actions*. As with positivism, we will present an overview of the

three theoretical assumptions of the interpretive / constructivist stance: 1) Interpretive Ontology; 2) Interpretive Epistemology; and 3) Interpretive Methodology.

4.2.3.1 Interpretive Ontology

The interpretive paradigm posits the existence of multiple, socially constructed realities that are ungoverned by any natural laws, causal or otherwise and that *are devised by individuals as they attempt to make sense of their experiences, which are always interactive in nature* (Guba & Lincoln, 1991:161). Reality is not an objective or a given, ‘out-there’ entity that needs to be discovered. Rather, it is subjective, intersubjective and relative, reality being created in the individual’s minds (Cohen et al., 2000). The researcher’s focus is attentive to subjective realities. *There exist multiple realities which are, in the main, constructions existing in the minds of the people* (Guba & Lincoln, 1988:81). According to Carr & Kemmis (1986), the aim of this paradigm is to deepen and extend our knowledge of why and how social life is perceived and experienced. In the interpretive/ constructivist perspective, the social world is studied in its natural state, without intervention or manipulation by the researcher unlike controlled conditions exerted in positivism (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

4.2.3.2 Interpretive Epistemology

In addition to what has already been said above, epistemology is *the study of the nature of knowledge and justification* (Schwandt, (1997:39). The interpretive paradigm takes its ethos from constructivism, which is *an epistemology, a learning or meaning-making theory, that offers an explanation of the nature of knowledge and how human beings learn* (Abdal-Haqq, 1998:1). Knowledge is grounded in and construed from the environment. In the interpretive stance, the world is subjectively constructed and understood (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993).

Interpretive modes of inquiry are concerned with the relationship between meaning or the perspectives of actors and the ecological circumstances of action. This is because situations are seen as fluid and changing rather than fixed and static; events and behaviour evolve over time and are richly affected by context because they are situated activities (Cohen & Manion, 1985). Subjective knowledge is situated in

context (Brown et al., 1989) and hence, central to fieldwork research is the notion of the 'social' (Erickson, 1986). Knowledge is *an active construction built up by the individual acting within a social context that shapes and constrains that knowledge, but does not determine it* (Applebee, 1993:15).

The researcher builds a picture of the different voices and dialectically constructs a synthesis of the experience under study in order to *understand the minds and hearts of the research participants in as total and unadulterated a way as possible* (Ely, 1991:122). Both the researcher and the researched are interlocked making the findings of an investigation the literal creation of the inquiring process (Guba & Lincoln, 1991; and Radnor, 1994). Knowledge is not objective. Rather, it is explored by both the inquirer and the inquired into and its growth and transformation occur in a social context (Rogoff, 1990).

4.2.3.3 Interpretive Methodology

Methodology is *the theory whose methods and techniques are appropriate to generate and justify knowledge* (Ernest, 1994:4). An important aspect of qualitative research is its concern with context (Sherman & Webb, (eds.), 1988) and the abstract and intangible characteristics of social events. Data is accessed and collected in a natural setting. The researcher is the primary instrument of data collection but not the only one.

The human experience is indivisible. Hence, the researcher approaches the phenomenon holistically to secure a better understanding and construction of *the meaning that people give to their experiences* (Radnor, 1994). Exploring the role of subjective experience in constructing social reality requires the use of a hermeneutic methodology which is able to explore the personal meanings individuals attach to experience. In this perspective, the social context has a significant and palpable effect on the way humans construct and interpret social reality. Getting a better understanding of social reality and the sense making process of people should be within this social context. It is in some sense also heuristic because of its uniqueness. Thus, according to Crotty, research using the interpretive model should proceed along the lines as shown in Figure 4.2.

Constructionism (Interpretative)

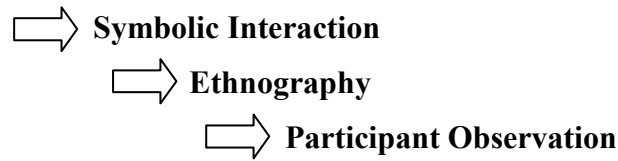


Figure 4.2 - The Four Elements of the Interpretive Stance

He contends that in order to ensure the *soundness of our research and make its outcomes convincing*, the process in this mode uses arrows that go across the columns from first to last, as with the positivist stance (Crotty, 1998:4-5). Again, it is not enough to simply choose a methodology: in adopting a particular methodology, we need to justify this selection.

4.3 The Paradigm Adopted for this Study

Over the twenty or so years of its growth, SER has tried to measure with increasing sophistication the effects and the effectiveness, of schools. School effectiveness thus now claims to be a well developed, entrenched and a quasi-scientific body of research which attempts to build up a coherent knowledge base through the replication of rigorously-designed sequential studies. There is a vast body of knowledge now in the field. Pring contends that there is a variety of research approaches to choose from with approaches chosen to answer different research questions (Pring, 2000). Yet despite the dominance of qualitative analysis, there remain two contested paradigms in this quest – the positivist and the interpretive stance, largely manifested through the use of quantitative and qualitative research methods, respectively. The former typically requires the application of statistical techniques such as multilevel modeling to large datasets acquired through carefully designed survey instruments. The latter is pursued through the application of essentially semi-structured interviews and possibly a combination of carefully designed questionnaires. It may also involve focus groups. The information or data collected through this latter method is analyzed largely through the constructivist or interpretive prism with or without some form of quantitative data analysis for triangulation.

Chapter three, dealing with the literature review of particularly relatively recent studies on school effectiveness and school improvement indicates that some studies

have depended on both quantitative and qualitative research methods. In other words, aspects of both positivism and constructivism were employed as a more sound research paradigm in order to produce valid results. The major benefit of this mixed method or eclectic approach to school effectiveness and school improvement research is that it holds out much hope for a new wave of research practices, particularly for engaging in more realistic or holistic studies in the field. Pring makes the case that qualitative research is not as straightforward as quantitative research. It embraces symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, ethnography and hermeneutics which often employ different approaches in any one piece of research, as different questions are addressed. He, moreover, rejects as *false dualism* that only one particular paradigm or approach, to the exclusion of others, can produce the desired results, a stance that this research adopts (Pring, 2000:48).

Based on the exploratory nature of the present study, the interpretive constructivist research paradigm appears to be the most appropriate method for this study. The researcher's aims and objectives will be understood as enquiring into people's perceptions and views of their world in which they live. Mainly, it will seek to uncover how actors make sense of their social realities. Given the objectives of this pioneering study of PSP in Saudi Arabia, the researcher is not primarily concerned with a single research goal to provide generalizations on human phenomena. The central aim is to uncover how this particular community of people who are directly involved in public education in the Kingdom feel about the issues of school effectiveness and improvement vis-à-vis the PSP ambitiously established by the government. This necessitates a primarily qualitative or interpretive approach to research. The principal PSP community actors, as defined by this study, are comprised four critical categories: a) school principals, b) school teachers, c) students and d) parents.

However, the study's adoption of the interpretive-constructivist research paradigm does not mean a sole dependence on qualitative data collection methods. On the contrary, the data collection process in this study will make use of a variety of data collection instruments and procedures including quantitative methods. This decision is taken according to the notion of fitness for purpose that governs the research design (Cohen et al., 2000). A mixed methods approach is used in this study because by

combining the data collection instruments, this will provide the best opportunity to address the particular research questions and yield the most valid results, as postulated by Weinreich who pointed out that the messages and materials developed based upon exploratory research should be pretested using both qualitative and quantitative methods so that the results provide in-depth of understanding as well as the possibility of some generalizability (Weinreich, 1996).

Moreover, a multi-methods approach makes the triangulation of the findings possible, as the various methods complement each other in investigating the research issues. The reluctance of this study not to stick to a particular traditional method to the exclusion of other is best put by Robson who argues that *you need not be the prisoner of a particular method or technique when carrying out an enquiry* (Robson, 2002:373). Every method has both strengths and weaknesses at different levels. Thus, by combining suitable methods, the weaknesses are minimized by the accumulative strengths. As Brewer & Hunter (1989:16-17) put it:

Our individual methods may be flawed, but fortunately the flaws are not identical. In this exploratory design, a diversity of imperfection allows us to combine methods not only to gain their individual strengths but also to compensate for their particular flaws and limitations.

Indeed, it is openly acknowledged that no one particular method is entirely satisfactory in SER or SIR. There are methodological difficulties in every method, but research methods yielding a mix of quantitative and qualitative data can overcome many of those difficulties (Riddell, 1989; and Heyneman, 1989).

As far as the context of this study is concerned, Saudi educational research has for long suffered from the dominance of the positivistic mode of inquiry and the sole use of questionnaires based on closed questions for entirely statistical data collection (quantitative studies). Thus, the paucity of qualitative research studies, especially those that address schooling and school effects, has been one of the reasons that triggered interest in using the interpretive-constructivist qualitative mode of inquiry simultaneously triangulates with some aspects of quantitative research methodology. This should also, hopefully, point to a new trend in SER and SIR in KSA for the future.

4.4. Theoretical Framework of the Study

The basic theoretical framework of this study is best represented in its simplest form by Figure 4.3. There are four basic school communities that are directly involved in public school education with consequences for school effectiveness and improvement. The diagram works as follows:

The dependent or criterion variable is that which is being investigated, i.e., in this study, PSP effectiveness and improvement in Saudi Arabia. This variable is affected or explained by four key independent or predictor variables which directly impact upon it independently and collectively. These are: the PSP principals, the PSP teachers, the PSP students/pupils and the parents of students attending pioneer schools in Saudi Arabia. The four predictor or independent variables also act upon, influence or bear on each other through their interactions and this further impacts on the outcomes. There might of course be other predictor variables that might impact the criterion variable, such as budget or course material, etc., but these are not considered key variables and are less significant, at least for this particular study. PSP in Saudi Arabia has no shortage of material resources that are likely to affect school effectiveness in any significant way as the government gives high priority to allocations for PSPs.

The solid arrows show how the independent variables bear directly on the dependent variable(s). Each acts independently of the other as well as acting at the same time, collectively. There is a kind of feedback that takes place between and among these variables that is represented by the broken lines. This feedback or interaction accounts for how responsively the system works, thereby either producing the desired results or providing suggestion for action. The desired result is of course the attainment of school effectiveness as defined: failing that, the problems will be identified and corrective actions leading to or school improvement that can be contemplated and implemented. To emphasise, although the independent variables can act independently on the dependent variable as shown in Figure 4.3, they can coordinate, cooperate, organize and orchestrate a joint strategy and collective action to bring about the desired outcomes. The dynamics between and among all variable sets can take any deliberate shape or form in order to achieve their goals. The key to all this is the feedback which indicates whether or not the desired outcomes are achieved.

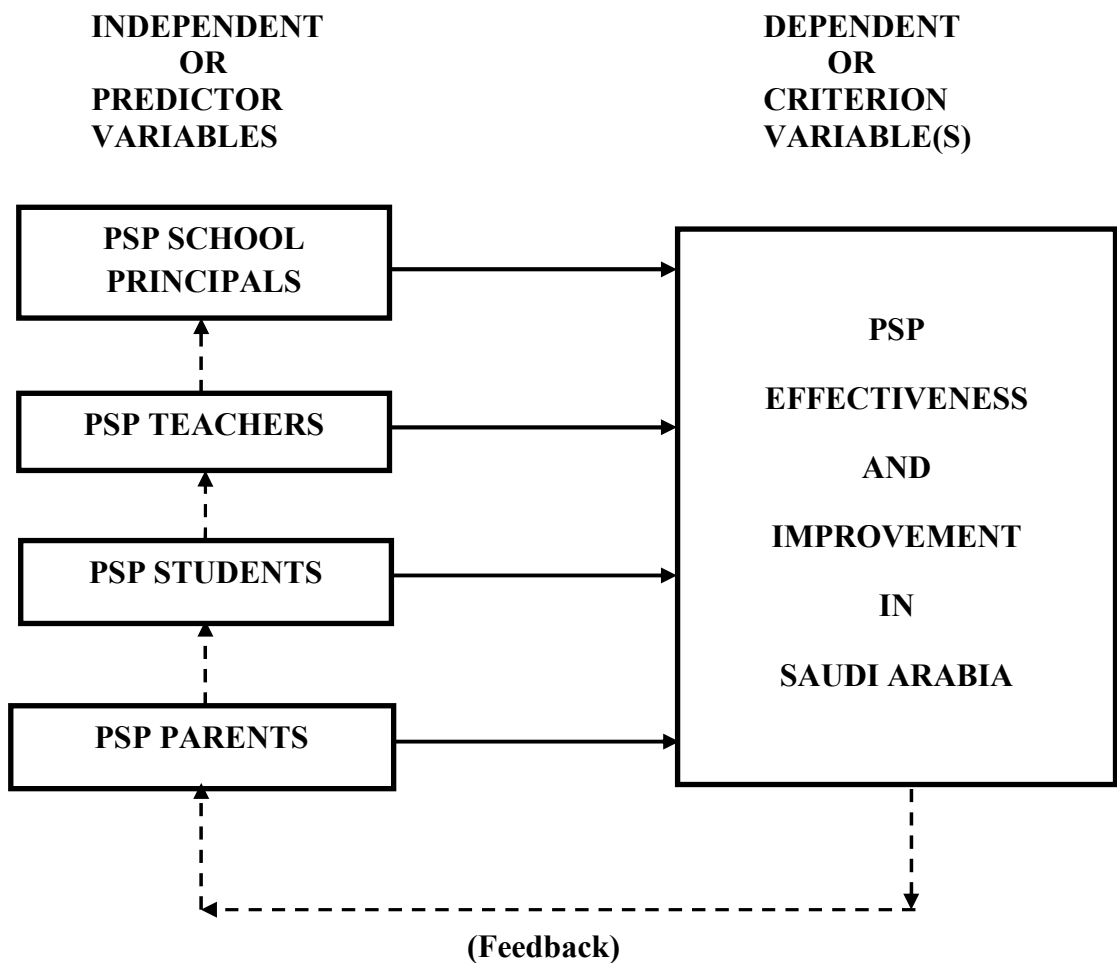


Figure 4.3 - Theoretical Framework of the Study

The way that each independent variable affects the dependent variable and how they interact will be investigated in this research. The weight or how significant each predictor is will also be ascertained. These variables will be operationalized by the use of specific data collection instruments to see if they produce the desired or expected results through their impact on and interaction with the dependent variable, as well as among themselves.

4.5 Design of Data Collection Instruments

Three basic data collection instruments are utilized in this study: 1) Questionnaire Design; 2) Semi-Structured Interviews; and 3) Focus Groups.

4.5.1 Questionnaire Design

In a survey study, the ideas and not just the observable behaviours of participants might be wanted. In order to achieve this objective, an appropriate instrument is the

most obvious way forward and this requires a carefully designed questionnaire or a set of questionnaires to accomplish the task. The first and foremost thing must be clarification of the purpose of the survey which must be translated into concrete aims or set of aims (Cohen et. al., 2000:246). For Pring (200:38-39), the most critical aspect in designing a questionnaire is the way the questions are worded. Even if they are apparently clear, the meaning can be different for each respondent. He contends:

The meanings which the respondents attribute to the questions are not something private and subjective, but the meanings which anyone conversant with the language would attribute to them. Therefore, where one can be sure that there is no ambiguity in the questions or where personal beliefs are unlikely to change the significance of the questions, it makes sense to tot up how many people agree with this or disagree with that.

The logical sequence of the questions is another important aspect of how survey instruments should be developed in order to set the tone or mind-set of respondents when answering. The first question should be so placed that all other subsequent questions follow logically and in sequence in order to ensure that the information is collected in an organized and controlled manner as in a flow chart (Cohen et. al., 2000:246). Moreover, the number of questions should not be too small or too large. Too small a number may not adequately cover all the research interests and too large a question can make the survey too cumbersome for both the researcher and respondents. To emphasize, only pertinent and appropriate kinds of questions should be asked to gather empirical data (Cohen et. al., 2000:247). Unless the research questions demand this, it is best advised to avoid personal, sensitive and complex questions.

Simply eliciting a *yes/no* answer is not always useful in addressing important research issues. Thus, it can be important to use rating scales, such as the Likert-type scale, to rate or rank the ordering of the answer in several gradations or degrees for discreet responses, say, for example, from most important to not important, i.e., (1) not important, (2) less important, (3) important, (4) very important, (5) most important (Cohen et. al., 2000:253). Other items on the questionnaires would require responses on the degree of agreement with the items. Moreover, every good questionnaire should also carry some *open-ended questions* in order to solicit additional information or comments not anticipated or covered that the respondents might wish to address.

There must be sufficient space provided to answer the open-ended question as this could contain *gems* of information (Cohen et. al., 2000:255). In all questionnaire design, the layout is very important to make it easy and attract the interest of respondents. Cohen et al., (2000:258) state:

The appearance of the questionnaire is vitally important. It must look easy, attractive and interesting rather than complicated, unclear, forbidding and boring. A compressed layout is uninviting and it clutters everything together; a larger questionnaire with plenty of space for questions and answers is more encouraging to respondents.

A final point is the cover letter (see Appendix A1-4). In the present study this was attached to all four questionnaires outlining the purpose, scope, importance and other pertinent information of the study, in addition to ensuring the confidentiality of participants (Cohen et al., (2000:259-260). Indeed, there are many other items to consider when designing questionnaires, such as paper quality, print size and font style. However, only the pertinent ones are considered here. Following the general rules and guidelines for designing survey instruments, the following four specific questionnaires were developed for this research. (see Appendix A1-4 for all four respondent categories).

The questionnaire contained four sections: 1) Section One: Background Information; Section Two; the Role(s) of an Effective School; Section Three: Elements of an Effective School; and Section Four: Effectiveness of Your Own School. The questionnaire consisted of a total of eight A4 pages, the first two comprised opening letters to the respondents and the remaining six pages dealt directly with the research questions at hand.

4.5.1.1 Section One: Background Information

There were five items in this demographic data section of the four respective respondents: principals; teachers; students; and parents. Using the principals' questionnaire the following were the five pertinent demographic items:

1. Qualifications: BA, MA, PhD and Other to be specified.
2. Specialization to be stated.
3. Years of Experience, ranging in four categories: less than 5 years; 5 to 10 years; 10 to 15 years; and 15 years and more.

4. Years Spent in School, as in 3 above.
5. Have you received any in-service training on pioneer school principals? Three possible answers: Once; Two times; Three times; and None.

To make it easy for respondents, boxes were used for them to simply tick off against the selected answers, with the exception of item 2 which required them to state clearly in the space provided their specialization.

4.5.1.2 Section Two: The Roles(s) of An Effective School

This section dealt with the roles of an effective school in one part, which contained 15 set questions on school effectiveness to be answered by the degree of agreement or disagreement, ranging from 1 to 10; with 1 being the most important and 10 being the least or not important.

4.5.1.3 Section Three: Elements of An Effective School

This section dealt with the main or key characteristics of an effective school in one part, A, which contained 13 - 16 set elements of an effective school to be answered by the degree of agreement or disagreement, ranging from 1 to 10 with 1 being the most important and 10 being the least or not important.

4.5.1.4 Section Four: Effectiveness of Your Own School

This section dealt with a self-assessment of the respondents' own school in one part, A, containing 9 main themes with a list of 4 - 9 items in each theme with four possible answers that the respondent should tick off as appropriate for each of the items. Part B contains a four-point rating of the effectiveness of his own school which the respondents was required to tick off as appropriate.

At the very end of the questionnaire, the respondent was asked to contact the researcher directly for any query regarding the questionnaire and a thank-you note was given for taking the time to fill out the questionnaire.

The other three questionnaires, were very similar in many respects, particularly the teachers' questionnaire which was identical to the principals' but with specific reference to teachers in the questions posed. For the students' questionnaire, section

one simply asked respondents to specify what grade they were in. Section two was similar to that asked of principals and teachers in their questionnaires, with the same 15 questions. Section three contained only 13 of the 16 questions that appeared in the principals and teachers' questionnaire as these only pertained to students. The last section contains the same nine themes with a list of items as they relate to students. Open ended questions which were initially contemplated at the end of each question of the questionnaire were subsequently dropped because of the planned interviews and focus groups designed to deal fully with other related issues not specified in the questionnaire.

Section one of the parents' questionnaire dealing with background information contained three items: seven items on qualifications, asking whether they were a member or non member of their Schools' Parent Council; and how many children they have attending the school and the grades they are in. Section two was virtually identical to the principals and teachers' questionnaire with the same 15 questions and response categories in part A. Section three was, likewise, the same as the principals and teachers' questionnaire but addressed to parents; the same can be said of section four as well.

In order to attain greater reliability in data collection, the questionnaire was made very similar in structure and design across all four groups of respondents to see how different respondents would answer the same questions. By asking the same or similar questions, similar responses would be elicited. Moreover, for the purpose of coding and SPSS data analysis, very similar questionnaire structure and design should make easier for conducting the analysis and relating the results by comparing or contrasting.

4.5.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Kvale (1996:11) states that an interview is essentially *an exchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest*. The primary goal is to generate data for specified reasons and this is done essentially by questions and answers in a conversational style. Thus, as with questionnaire design, the way the questions are formatted, worded or phrased in an interview is critical to how the participants will respond. Equally important is the order or sequencing of the questions put forward to the respondents and the style or manner in which it is done. According to Pring, the

researcher will typically *structure the questions* in an interview so that the answers will be relevant to the interest of the study. His preference for semi-structured interviews only, as opposed to closed or fully structured ones (Cohen et al., 2000), is based on the assumption that respondents need the scope or freedom *to expound the full significance of their actions*. He further propounds that the good interviewer should be able to draw out the deeper significance of the whole event (Pring, 2000:39).

For this reason, follow-up and supplementary questions can also be appropriately utilized on both sides for clarification of what was elicited or said. This approach is also useful in expanding on any point or issue that needs greater attention. As with questionnaire design, *yes/no* questions are not recommended in interviews because they preclude discussion which does not provide a rich context. Also, sensitive, complex and irrelevant questions are usually to be avoided altogether. In a word, all the ethical and moral considerations in any research process must be observed in semi-interviews as well.

Basically, the semi-structured interviews will be used for three central purposes as suggested by Cohen et al., as follows:

1. to explore in more detail informants' perceptions of the possible role of the effective school; the elements that contribute to school effectiveness; and the effectiveness of their own schools.
2. to supplement, crosscheck the other data collection methods.
3. to substantiate or reject a host of previously formulated hypotheses concerning the participants' perceptions based upon their responses to the questionnaire (Cohen et al., 2000).

For this research, permission was taken to both record the event and take written notes in order not to misrepresent what was transacted during the course of the interview. As with the survey instruments data collection media, the respondents were further assured of the accuracy of what was said given the option to examine both recording and written notes for verification. However, transcribing and the use of an electronic recorder are criticized for not capturing *the visual and non-verbal aspects of the interview* (Mishler, 1986; Cohen et al., 2000:281).

In order to keep discussion in the interviews focused on the topic under investigation by this research, the same questions were addressed in each interview. Only 8 principals were interviewed out of all of those who filled out the questionnaire. A total of 35 questions were prepared into four main themes as follows (see Appendix B1):

- A. Questions related to the main role(s) of an effective school (7 items).
- B. Questions related to the important factors/elements that make an effective school (8 items).
- C. Questions related to seven specified elements contributing to the effectiveness of your own school.
- D. Questions related to what specific factors/criteria make your school effective (7 items).

4.5.3 Focus Groups

Although semi-structured interviews have perceptible advantages because of more free and personalized space for independent respondents to address the researcher's question, they are, nonetheless, demanding and time consuming for the researcher. For this reason and as already stated, semi-structured interviews were only conducted with the eight principals at each of the eight pioneer schools in the City of Al Madinah. However, the sample of teachers, students and parents being substantially larger, focus groups were conducted among 32 teachers, 40 students, and 32 parents, respectively. They were randomly chosen in order to give a balanced representation of the schools they identify with. The characteristics of the sample are four teachers from each school; five students from each school, and four parents from each of the eight PSPs. Three focus groups were held at each of the respective PSPs for the three different categories of participants. Thus, a total of 24 focus groups were held for this study. Group interviewing, as Cohen et al., (2000:287) point out, also has *the potential for discussions to develop, thus yielding a wide range of responses*. In other words, group interviews can produce a wider range of responses than individual interviews, thereby yielding a richer context because they bring together people with varied opinions and experiences on the subject.

Group discussion can also easily get out of control with the strongest seeking to dominate discussion and the risk of losing focus on the topic. Watts and Ebbutt (1987)

warn against personalising the discussion and point to the role of the interviewer in taking control so as to keep the discussion focused and objective. Due to some of their inherent advantages, the focus groups is becoming more popular in conducting educational research. Cohen et al., (2000:288) define focus groups as a *form of group interview*, though not in the sense of a *backwards and forwards* between interviewer and group as in individual interviews. Instead, reliance is on the *interaction* within the group members who discuss a topic supplied by the researcher. Thus, the data emerge precisely from this *interaction* within the group and, in order to produce highly quality data, only interested and competent participants should be selected from a larger sample of respondents to form focus groups.

Morgan (1988) posits a list of concerns to be address in forming focus groups, ranging from the size of the group to the number of groups involved because it they affect the quality of information and group dynamics. Accordingly, this study selected only members of the PSP school community in Saudi Arabia and limited participants to manageable numbers and three groups only according to each category: 32 teachers; 40 students; and 32 parents, as mentioned (see also Table 4.1, below, for the sample used in this study.).

In order to keep the teachers' focus groups on track, a total of 38 questions were prepared under four main themes, as with principals and for all subsequent respondents, as follows (see Appendix B2):

- A. Questions related to the main role(s) of an effective school (7 items).
- B. Questions related to the important factors/elements that make an effective school (9 items).
- C. Questions related to seven specified elements contributing to the effectiveness of your own school (7 items).
- D. Questions related to what specific factors/criteria make your school effective (15 items).

For students' focus groups, a total of 21 questions were prepared under four main themes as follows (see Appendix B3):

- A. Questions related to why students have enrolled at this school.
- B. Questions related to the main role(s) of an effective school (7 items).

- C. Questions related to the important factors/elements that make an effective school (7 items).
- D. Questions related to seven specified elements contributing to the effectiveness of your own school (7 items).

In order to keep parents and guardians focused, a total of 22 questions were prepared under four main themes as follows (see Appendix B4):

- A. Questions related to why parents send their children to this school.
- B. Questions related to the main role(s) of an effective school (7 items).
- C. Questions related to the important factors/elements that make an effective school (8 items).
- D. Questions related to seven specified elements contributing to the effectiveness of your son's school (7 items).

4.6 The Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted for vetting the questions of the questionnaires, semi-structured interviews questions based on the questionnaires, and the focus groups questions. The pilot study involved more than simply testing the data collection instruments in the field. All three instruments for all key participants of the school community were first carefully developed in English and then distributed extensively to eleven experts for face validity, including two translation experts before being piloted. Copies of the Questionnaires, Interview Questions and Focus Group Questions were sent to Professor Debra Myhill, Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter; Dr. Brahm Norwich, Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter; Dr. Keith Postlethwaite, Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter; Dr. Robert Wegerif, Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter; Dr. Christine Bennetts, (Retired) Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter; Dr. Elizabeth Wood, Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter; Professor Abu Al Fatah Khalil, Department of Education, Taibah University; Dr. Ali Hajan Yunus, Department of Education, Taibah University; Mr. Hussain Khoja, Head of Pioneer Schools, Education Management, Al Madinah; Mr. Hamid Al Ghaidi, Head of School Management, Education Management, Al Madinah; Mr. Yakub Afifi, Head of Teachers, Pioneer Schools Management Department, Al Madinah.

I was particularly impressed by the concern and speed at which those who provided practical help responded to my request. Five experts that I contacted were unable to assist me, but they also, nonetheless, wished me the best in my endeavors. They are Professor Debra Myhill, Dr. Robert Wegerif, Dr. Christine Bennetts, Dr. Elizabeth Wood and Mr. Yakub Afifi. I remain extremely grateful to both those who provided help and also those who were unable to do so.

The process, referred to by Cronbach as testing and retesting (TRT) was then undertaken and this alone took approximately one month to complete, from 18 September 2010 to 13 October 2010. The first test was conducted on 18 September 2010 and the second test was done two weeks later on 9 October 2010. The TRT convenience sample included a total of 111 participants: one principal, 30 teachers, 60 students and 20 parents from one PSP school in Al Madinah School District. The purpose was to check whether the questionnaire would elicit consistent responses over time from the respondents.

Content validity of the data collection instruments aims to check that the statements adequately and accurately cover the variety of features under study. Experts were asked to comment on the wordings of the items and their suitability and readability for each of the target samples. They were also invited to check the ability of the instruments to assess the participants' perceptions of the tasks and goals of effective schools. Finally, the internal reliability of the questionnaire was assessed to make sure that the sections and sub-sections of the questionnaire were clear, logical and consistent.

Although the questionnaires, the semi-structured interview questions and the focus groups questions were all originally developed in English they were administered in Arabic, the mother tongue of the target participants in order to encourage their willing participation and to generate consistently clear and unambiguous responses on the issues. As mentioned, the translation was checked by two professional translators who agreed upon the final draft of all the instruments. The instruments were then piloted to a sample of respondents selected from secondary schools in the City of Al Madinah. The aim was to assess the applicability of the data collection instruments in the field

and check the readability of their items by likely or potential respondents. The most favourable comments were given and all suggestions were adhered to.

The procedures for piloting the questionnaire are as follows:

1. A total of 49 questionnaires were randomly distributed in person to one of the PSP schools in the City of Al Madinah educational district: 1 to the principal; 20 to teachers; 20 to students; and 8 to parents and were collected again in person.
2. The questionnaires were distributed on 24 October 2010 and collected back on 10 November 2010 with no significant problems.

A total of 14 copies of the questions for the semi-structured interviews and focus groups were piloted as follows:

1. One copy to the principal, a copy each to four teachers, a copy each to five students, and a copy each to four parents.
2. This was done on the same dates as for the questionnaire mentioned above, and again with no real problems.

Communication between the researcher and the respondents was initiated through mobile telephones for making the arrangements. To ensure a safe and efficient process, the instruments including questionnaires and interview and focus group schedules were personally handed to the respondents and personally collected back by him within a three-week period. The pilot respondents seemed interested and even enthusiastic with the hope that the study might provide important feedback and direction for improvement of PSP in the future. Direct personal contacts with the respondents proved to be very useful for the creation of a good atmosphere as people generally like to meet the researcher and find out first-hand what the study is all about. This public relations also served to create a genuine interest of the participants in the study and an eagerness to get involved.

The objectives of the pilot study can be summarized as follows:

1. To check whether the wording, structure and organization of the instruments met the requirements of the study.

2. To determine suitable and convenient ways and means of meeting prospective the respondents.
3. To identify ambiguities and inappropriate wording of all questionnaire, interviews and focus groups questions.
4. To gain a feel for the extent of responsiveness and interest of the target population in addressing the data collection instruments.
5. To determine suitable timing and total time required to administer the questionnaires and conduct the semi-structured interviews and focus groups for the entire study, with likely or possible constraints and appropriate ways how to deal with or overcome them.
6. To determine the adequacy of the sampling of the target population.
7. To verify the suitability and adequacy of the questions to be asked to cover all important aspects of the study.

4.7 Validity and Reliability

A major objective of the pilot study also addressed the issues of both validity and reliability. According to Cohen et al., validity is an important *key* to effective research and it is linked to reliability as they go hand in hand as a necessary requirement for both quantitative and qualitative research. They list several different kinds of validity but for qualitative research, *content validity* and *internal validity* are critical. The former is defined as the demonstration of a particular issue event, issue or set of data which a piece of research provides can actually be sustained by the data. The latter is that instrument must show that it fairly and comprehensively covers the domain or items that it purports to cover (Cohen et al., 2000:105-110). These were checked at two levels: firstly, through the coding of the data and secondly, through the analysis and categorization. Concerning coding, this aimed to ensure that codes fitted into an overall structure and with one another and that each relates to or is distinct from others in a meaningful way.

Check-coding of the transcripts was also useful as a reliability check. According to Cohen et al., (2000:117) a reliable instrument for a given research will produce similar data from similar respondents over time. For this study this was conducted in two ways: firstly, by doing the coding twice at two different times; and secondly, by asking a colleague in the same field to code two interviews and see whether he gave

the same codes for the same segments of data. The first approach to check coding must yield an acceptable reliability coefficient. The same codes were revised to check the extent of representativeness of the same data chunks. In case of agreement a tick (✓) was to be placed and for disagreement an ex (X) was to be placed. For the second approach, an acceptable reliability coefficient must be achieved between both the other researcher's coding and the coding of this study. In following this procedure it was expected that the percentage (of the coefficient number) would increase due to meetings aimed at making sure that all the codes fitted into a structure. Agreement was also achieved on the operational definition of codes through meeting with this colleague.

There is a long checklist of items that control for validity. Depending on the research methods and instruments used, the importance of some items varies considerably. For the present study five are notable: an appropriate methodology, instruments used, sample, time, and resources (Cohen et al., 2000:115-117).

4.8 Research Ethics

Using survey instruments such as questionnaires, conducting semi-structured interviews and holding focus groups in research amount to an intrusion into people's lives. You impose on their time, professional integrity, perceptions, opinions, values and beliefs that may be private or sensitive and may put them at risk. Pring (2000:142) contends that *moral judgments and decisions require a great deal of deliberation in the light of many factors which have to be taken into account*. He espouses two often irreconcilable principles in educational research: first, the principle which requires respect for the dignity and confidentiality of those who are the objects of research; and second, the principle which reflects the purpose of research which is the pursuit of truth or discovering facts. This involves the right to know versus the right of the respondents (Pring, 2000:147-149).

Educational research is no exception and no less vulnerable to abuse of the participants if necessary ethical precautions have not been taken into consideration (Pendlebury & Enslin, 2002). In this regard, Cohen, et al., (2000:66) indicated that *methodological and ethical issues are inextricably interwoven in much of the research*

we have designated as qualitative or interpretive. For instance, in volunteering information, some people may wish to remain anonymous for any number of reasons. Thus, for Walford (2005), the anonymity of participants and sites in qualitative research contexts are always under great risks of being discovered. Furthermore, he argues that researchers can utilize anonymity to present findings if respondents are concerned about their identity. Therefore, ethical aspects have to be taken into consideration while conducting the research such as privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. This requires prior negotiation of the procedures, permission and clearances in order to proceed (Pring, 2000:150).

In compliance to this, and upon the researcher's request, the headquarter of the Director General of Education of Taibah University, Faculty of Education, issued two letters to permit the researcher to apply the tools of the study and collect data in all eight PSP in the City of Madinah (see Appendix C1-2).

This research made every attempt to take these ethical issues into consideration when conducting the field work. Thus, informed consent was be first obtained from the relevant official educational authorities at four educational zones in Saudi Arabia. All participants were duly informed about the clear and explicit purpose and process of the research by telephone calls, letters and personal contact. Indeed, this turned out to be vital in securing access to the participating pioneer schools, teachers, students and parents involved. In order to ensure that all necessary ethical considerations were observed, the research proposal was submitted to the Ethics Committee of the Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter, prior to commencing the fieldwork (see Appendix D). In addition, the researcher made use of and took guidance from the full list of the *Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*, which was published by the British Educational Research Association (Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, 2004).

Respondents were, moreover, assured of their rights to personal confidentiality and that all collected data would be treated with strict confidentiality and privacy, with no individual data being disclosed by any means, but confined to research purposes only. As mentioned in design of the data collection instruments above, utmost care was

taken so that no items on the questionnaire, including those pertaining to the semi-structured interviews could be offensive to participants' ethnicity, socio-economic status, job position, religious or political beliefs.

The timeframe and work-load expected for their participation were also explained to participants. A commitment was made to disseminate the collected information back to participants. They were also informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time during the research period. In short, every effort was made, in the words of Cohen et al., (2000:56-57) to *act in such a way as to preserve their [participants] dignity as human beings*. Their checklist of ten ethical considerations for social research was also closely followed before proceeding with this research.

4.9 Sample of the Study

Selecting the right sample is vital to the validity of any research findings. In this study the sampling method for selecting the respondents who participated in the study is summarized in Table 4.1. As noted, all eight PSPs from four different school districts were selected from the administrative unit of the City of Al Madinah because this city is big and most representative of other cities since the establishment of PSPs in Saudi Arabia.

Table 4.1 – Summary of Sample and Data Collection Instruments and Respondents (8 PSPs)			
No.	Three Data Collection Instruments	Four Respondent Categories	Number
1.	Questionnaires	Principals	8 x 1 = 8
		Teachers	8 x 20 = 160
		Students	8 x 20 = 160
		Parents	8 x 8 = 64
TOTAL 1			392
2.	Semi-Structured Interviews	Principals	8 x 1 = 8
TOTAL 2			8
3.	Focus Groups	Teachers	8 x 4 = 32
		Students	8 x 5 = 40
		Parents	8 x 4 = 32
TOTAL 3			104

All eight principals were interviewed. In addition, twenty teachers and twenty students (drawn from grades 2 and 3 according to Saudi Secondary PSP school system, i.e. aged 17-18) and eight parents were randomly selected from each school to fill out questionnaires. For the semi-structured interviews, all eight principals were interviewed, while four randomly selected teachers from each school, five students from each school and four parents from each school were invited to participate in focus group discussions.

The questionnaire instrument was constructed based on the literature regarding the three major strands of SER, as follows:

- **School Effectiveness Research** - studies of the scientific properties of school effects evolving from input-output studies to current research utilizing multilevel models.
- **Effective Schools Research** – research concerned with the processes of effective schooling evolving from case studies of outlier schools through contemporary studies merging qualitative and quantitative methods in the simultaneous study of classrooms and schools.
- **School Improvement Research** – examining the processes whereby schools can be changed utilizing increasingly sophisticated models that have gone beyond simple applications of school effectiveness knowledge to sophisticated ‘multiple level’ models (Reynolds et al., 2000).

Scholars contend that the quality of a research is not based only on the appropriateness of its methodology and instruments used, but also on the suitability of the sample used (Cohen et al., 2000:93; Morrison, 1993). Selection of a suitable sample is based on many considerations but often comprises a proportion of a target population. Cohen et al., (2000:92-93) posit four main factors of sampling are a) sample size, b) the representativeness and parameters of the sample, c) access to the sample, and d) the sampling strategy to be used. In terms of sample size, as long as the minimum number is used to accurately represent the target population, the sample can be said to be valid. As a general rule, the larger the sample size, the greater is the likelihood of it being representative.

As Table 4.1 shows, the study sample and sub-samples from all eight PSP schools in the City of Al Madinah comprised all principals or school directors, with relatively high participation rates for teachers, pupils and parents, randomly selected from each school. Moreover, the sampling was not based on a single instance of data collection as several instruments were used to triangulate the results and findings of the study for greater accuracy and validity.

4.10 Conducting the Study

The study entailed three related but sequential data-collection phases involving: 1) Questionnaire Distribution and Collection; 2) Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews; and 3) Holding Focus Groups.

4.10.1 Questionnaire Distribution and Collection

Researchers have identified several ways of distributing and collecting the survey instruments with clear advantages and disadvantages ascribed to each. The postal service in Saudi is not the best way to distribute and collect survey instruments as many people do not have clear street addresses or even post boxes for mailing. Telephone calls for filling the instruments out are also not reliable, and moreover time consuming and costly. E-mail is an efficient way of distributing questionnaires, but is also not a reliable way of gathering information, as not everybody has direct access to internet services. Given the nature of Saudi society, the questionnaires used in this study were all distributed in person by the researcher to the respective participants and also collected by hand. This was the most effective and efficient method in ensuring safe delivery, confidentiality and full response from the participants. It also served to allow discussion of immediate concerns directly between the researcher and respondents and took about seven weeks to complete.

A total of 392 questionnaires was administered as follows.

1. All the participants were personally contacted by mobile and personally and requested to participate in filling out the questionnaire.
2. Those who agreed were personally given by hand a copy of the cover letters and questionnaire attached together commencing on 20 November 2010.

3. I advised participants of the approximate deadline for the completion of questionnaires: 8 January 2011 and went back to meet respondents personally to collect these.
4. I reminded them that they could decline if they wished but should inform me, and further asked them to contact me if they had any problems answering the questions.
5. Upon collection, I checked the questionnaires and found a few incomplete ones. These were completed on a one-on-one basis personally with a few parents only. It is notable that the principals, teachers and students all submitted completed questionnaires.
6. I again thanked all respondents for their kind and generous participation.

4.10.2 Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews

The second phase of the research process followed in this study involved the use of semi-structured interviews. The average time duration for all interviews was between forty-five minutes to an hour. This was enough to cover all aspects of the set questions adequately. The interviews were designed to add depth and insight to the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires. The interviews took a total of three weeks to complete.

All eight PSP principals were interviewed according to the following procedure.

1. Each was personally contacted by mobile phone personally and requested to participate in the interviews.
2. All agreed to do so and dates were scheduled between 8-31 December 2010 for each principal, with one interview undertaken on a different day.
3. All the interviews were conducted in the principal's office at their respective schools as this was comfortable and convenient for them.
4. With their prior permission, an electronic recorder was used and written notes were taken during the interviews.
5. The same set of interview questions were used, along with many follow-up and supplementary questions to clarify and further elucidate any point as required.
6. At the end, I thanked each interviewee for their concern and valuable participation.

4.10.3 Holding Focus Groups

The average time duration for focus groups was about one and a half hours, with some lasting less and some slightly more. Enthusiasm in some groups could clearly lead to longer time duration but this average time taken was sufficient to discuss the set research questions adequately. I assured the participants of all groups of their absolute independence in thinking and exchange of ideas during the discussion. Three kinds of focus groups were held for qualitative data collection for this study, comprising: 1) teachers focus groups; 2) students focus groups; and 3) parents focus groups. The groups convened at different dates and different times in the respective locations of the different school districts in the City of Al Madinah. A total of 24 focus groups were conducted and took the longest time to arrange of all of the data collection instruments - almost four months from 20 November 2011 to 8 March 2011.

4.10.3.1 Teachers' Focus Groups

Eight focus group discussions for a total of 32 teachers proceeded as follows.

1. They were all contacted by mobile phone and were personally invited to agree to participate in the group discussion.
2. All 4 PSP teachers from each school agreed to meet at their own respective school locations where the focus groups were held, at a fixed time after school hours and taking place between 20 November and 5 January 2011.
3. Teachers were allowed to choose their own group leader and they dealt with a set of pre-determined questions in sequence that I supplied to them in writing.
4. This was an orderly discussion with the researcher's involvement only to clarify some points and occasionally stressing the need to maintain focus of the discussion, given the limited time.
5. After the discussion, the main points agreed upon were summarized in writing and given to me and some of them (former colleagues known to me) enthusiastically volunteered to meet with me again or to be further contacted to address any other request I might have.
6. I thanked them all for their concerns and time and supplied some light refreshments at the end.

4.10.3.2 Students' Focus Groups

The eight focus groups for all 40 students proceeded as follows.

1. Their parents, school principals or teachers were first personally contacted to obtain their prior permission and consent to allow the pupils to participate. The student themselves were all contacted by mobile and personally to agree to participate in the group discussion.
2. As with PSP teachers, all 5 pupils, due to practical considerations, met for focus groups at their respective school locations after class between the period 10 January 2011 and 8 March 2011.
3. Students were allowed to choose their own group leaders for all eight groups, but I had to maintain constant vigil to keep them on track and focused on the issues. They were, nonetheless, an energetic and lively bunch.
4. They dealt with a set of pre-determined questions in the sequence that I supplied to them in writing.
5. This discussion was less orderly than the teachers' focus group. The researcher had to clarify many points on several occasions along the way and maintain control of the timing for each of the questions in order to bring the whole discussion to a sound conclusion.
6. After the discussion, as with the teachers, the main points agreed upon were summarized in writing and given to me.
7. I thanked them all for their participation and again offered some light refreshments at the end. They all wished me luck and enthusiastically welcomed me to come again.

4.10.3.3 Parents' Focus Groups

The eight focus groups for 32 parents and guardians followed a very similar pattern of that of teachers' as follows.

1. All of them were contacted by mobile phone and personally invited to agree to participate in the group discussion. Some receive my initial message through their children at school.
2. All 4 parents agreed to meet at their respective school locations where the focus group was held, at fixed times after school hours and parents' working hours, and took place between 18 February 2011 to 8 March 2011.

3. As with all groups, parents chose their own group leader and they dealt with a set of pre-determined questions in the sequence that I supplied to them in writing.
4. As with the teachers, this was an orderly discussion with my involvement only to clarify some points and occasionally to stress the need to maintain the focus of the discussion, given the limited time. I observed that some parents did not participate as much as others in the discussion, presumably because of lack of proper understanding of the issues or their perceptibly lower educational status.
5. After the discussion, the main points agreed upon were summarized in writing and given to me and some of them pleasantly expressed the wish to see me again.
6. I thanked them all for their concerns and time and provided some light refreshments at the end.

4.11 Problems Encountered in the Data Collection Process

Several anticipated and unanticipated problems were encountered during the process of data collection using the various instruments. The most important concerns revolved around parents or guardians. Some of them were unable to answer some questions in the questionnaires, due to lack of knowledge of the items and inability to read and write proficiently. Unanswered questions had to be taken up on an individual basis with those parents. This required a considerable amount of time and patience on the part of the researcher who really wanted to encourage their full participation. This was the most serious problem encountered in respect of the questionnaire.

Some of the parents or guardians, although they had promised to attend the focus groups, failed to do so because of time constraints and personal commitment elsewhere. However, because they gave prior notice of their circumstances, the researcher was able to make alternative arrangement to replace them with willing participants from among other parents of the PSP.

Clearly some parents or guardians seem less educated than others and were not of much benefit to the data collection process at all levels. However, the educated ones played a very useful role in providing much valuable information to the researcher,

particularly in the focus groups where they expressed themselves openly. Although, the focus group was a good occasion for parents to freely vocalize their concerns regarding public education in Saudi Arabia, the single greatest limitation was their apparent lack of knowledge of how the system truly works and exactly what should be done to improve things.

The next major concern, if not problem, encountered in the data collection process concerned students. For the most part, they did not indicate any real problem in answering the questionnaire, but doubts remain as to how seriously they understood the items and whether their responses were well informed. Regarding the focus groups, as with the parent sub-sample, some could not attend because of personal matters and class or study obligations. However, replacements were very easily made with volunteers and participation was not hampered. Students seemed very concerned with the quality of the education they receive but have very different attitudes among peers towards education, with a wide variance of ideas and opinions. Discussion in the focus group by students easily lost focus and the interviewer was under constant pressure to keep them on track and stay focused. Some of them felt so free in the discussion as to say anything they want without much thought.

Some of the selected teachers could not participate in the focus group, due to their professional commitments based on their teaching schedules. However, they were most helpful in providing other available teachers to ensure that the group discussion went ahead without undue interference. Those who attended the focus group were very cooperative and clearly expressed their desire and commitment to make their schools more effective and were eager to consider strategies for improvement. It was obvious though, that some teachers seemed reserved and unsure of the outcome of the research findings and what implications it might have for them.

Aside from some slight delays in starting the semi-structured interviews with some school principals or directors, everything went fairly smoothly. No principal declined to keeping their appointment, although some were clearly concerned about how long the interview would take and whether their identity would remain anonymous, especially if they were critical of the public educational system in Saudi Arabia. The

researcher assured them that they had nothing to fear and that their participation was vital to the study whose sole aim was to better understand the PSP.

Despite scheduled appointments for the interviews, principals and school directors were clearly very busy people. During the interviews, principals were frequently interrupted by phone calls both by mobile and land lines and some staff/teachers also wanted to see them right away. Out of professional courtesy, they did not allow the interview to be unduly interrupted and apologized each time this happened.

4.12 Data Analysis

In the entire data collection process, the single most challenging, if not daunting, task is to organize the data for all instruments used in the study and perform the analyses. For all instruments, the first order of priority was to translate everything into English, because, as mentioned before, all the instruments were administered in the Arabic language for ease of the target population whose mother tongue is Arabic. There are three main aspects to data analysis in this study involving: 1) Use of Triangulation; 2) Analysis of Questionnaires Data; 3) Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews and Focus Groups Data.

4.12.1 Use of Triangulation

As mentioned above in the methodology selected for this study, two basic types of data were collected, qualitative and quantitative. The multi-method approach adopted permitted triangulation to ensure greater validity in the study. Triangulation in research means *the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behavior* (Cohen et al., 2000:92-93). As stated, this study made use of a variety of research methods. There was not sole reliance on questionnaires for data collection only, even though this is the most dominant and widespread approach in Saudi Arabia.

A combination of both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques was designed so as to maintain a balance between qualitative in-depth data and quantitative data, to establish the extent to which insights can be generalizable to a wider population (Lewin, 1990).

Another reason for the use of triangulation was to make sure that the data generated were not simply artifacts of one specific method of data collection (Yin, 1989). This acts to overcome the problem of *method-boundedness* (Cohen et al., 2000), helps to break down the traditional gap between normative and interpretative approaches and increases the trustworthiness of the data collected (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). The triangulation type used in this study was basically methodological and involved the use of different methods to collect data to study the same phenomenon (Denzin, 1988). According to Cohen et al., triangulation techniques are suitable when a more holistic view of educational research is endeavored (Cohen et al., 2000:115), as with the present study. The methods that were used to collect and analyze the data in this study were based primarily on the principles of qualitative field studies (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Goetz & Le Compte, 1984; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

4.12.2 Analysis of Questionnaires Data

The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires was analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Bryman & Cramer, 1999). Frequency analysis formed the core of the analysis particularly for principals' results, because they are a total of only 8. The semi-structured interviews were analysed qualitatively by following the grounded theory approach in which the greater the number of respondents having the same views was considered with greater weight and more strength in setting a pattern or formulating a theory rather than proving or disproving a thesis or hypothesis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The results are presented in Chapter Five and the discussion takes place in Chapter Six. It should be noted that because the researcher does not have the necessary training and experienced in the SPSS package, he commissioned an expert statistical analyst to conduct only the quantitative analysis for this study.

4.12.3 Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews and Focus Groups Data

Unlike the quantitative data analysis approach which was done for the questionnaire items, analysis of the qualitative data derived from semi-structured interviews and focus groups relied on interpretivism. As Crotty (1998:67) states, the interpretivist approach is best suited for qualitative research because *it looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world*. He contends that natural reality (hard or natural science) and social reality (social science) are in

themselves different kinds of reality requiring different methods. This is a kind of ethnography in which the researcher takes the role of the actor rather than imposing his own biases to the social reality he is studying, as with grounded theory which seeks to ensure that the theory which emerges comes from the data and not from some other source (Crotty, 1998:78). Thus, for Crotty, the distinction or great divide between qualitative and quantitative research occurs at the level of methods, not at the level of epistemology or theoretical perspective. Moreover, for him, a given research can be both qualitative and quantitative, as with the current study, without this being in any way problematic (Crotty, 1998:14-15).

To start with, the transcripts were first informant validated as this process of respondent validation is essential for the credibility of the transcripts by checking with participants if they agreed with what was translated. The next task was to analyze the data through the use of textual analysis. This was done to analyze the responses of semi-structured interviews data and focus group findings. Textual analysis is a process of analysis using the grounded theory approach which does not seek to test hypothesis, theory or make generalizations (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The focus was placed not only on the words or wordings, but on their meanings and connotations, because the meanings and their significance are based on a given context (Bliss et al., 1983). As mentioned at the outset of this study, the main aim of the analysis was not to test hypotheses or make generalizations. Rather, the central aim was to understand what factors affect SESI in PSP secondary institutions in Saudi Arabia.

There are three approaches to qualitative data analysis: interpretivism, social anthropology, and collaborative social research. *Interpretivism* holds that human activity can be seen as “text” which is a collection of symbols expressing layers of meanings which are in turn made both by the social actors and the researcher (Miles & Huberman, 1994:8). *Social anthropology*, on the other hand, stays close to the naturalist profile by extended contact with a given community in mundane, day-to-day events as well as usual one, direct or indirect participation in local activities. *Collaborative and social research* in which collective action is undertaken in a social setting with the researcher closely joining with the actors from the outset, assumes an asking or questioning stance with the possibility of the researcher and actors having

opposing views. In all three approaches, the interpretation of meanings is made both by the actors and researcher (Miles & Huberman, 1994:8-9).

In order to analyse and interpret the data, inter alia, the following main steps are recommended:

- Affixing codes to set a field of notes drawn from observation or interviews.
- Noting reflections or other remarks.
- Sorting and sifting through the materials to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes, distinct differences between subgroups.
- Isolating these patterns and processes, commonalities and differences (Miles & Huberman, 1994:9)

Qualitative data collection, unlike quantitative data collection, relies almost entirely on thick descriptions of mainly, if not exclusively, on words which can lead to data overload and is, therefore, harder to process and interpret. As Miles and Huberman (1994:51) states that in all cases, *we are focusing on words as the basic form in which data are found*, although other forms such as pictures or drawings are also used. Nonetheless, although words are *fatter than numbers*, they render more meaning than numbers alone and can be subject to multiple meanings. For this reason, it is well advised to use some sort of selection or coding which acts as tags or labels that helps the researcher to clarify his research findings, because it is not always the words themselves that matter but their intended meanings.

There are three basic types of codes in qualitative research: *summarizing notation*, *descriptive codes*, and summary of the main points or ideas of the data by abbreviations or short forms. The second describes what the data mean without the need for interpretation, while the last looks for patterns in the data and groups them according to these patterns in order to arrive at a clear understanding of what the data reveal (Miles and Huberman, 1994:57). Moreover, coding can be a highly complex activity that must begin before the research starts and then accordingly adjusted as it progresses along to conclusion.

For this study, all three coding styles were used in some form or another in order to derive the maximum benefits in understanding the data. A summary was made at the end of the collection process of the raw data, highlighting the essential points. A clear description was given for each data set, and a fixed pattern was decided upon based on the specific research questions set out in the Appendix (B1-4) dealing respectively with: 1. The role(s) of an effective school (RES); 2 The factors or elements of an effective school (FES); 3) The effectiveness of your own school (EYOS); and 4) The role of specified factors/elements in the effectiveness of your own school (RSFEYOS). All data collected which pertained to each question set were grouped accordingly with the number of items each set contained. Repetition was noted as a form of stress or a kind of overlap on participants' responses to the issues. A kind of memoing was also done in order to keep track on items and focusing on highlights (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Thus, coding seeks to simplify the data and makes the process of interpreting the data organized, structured and focused. It also made it manageable and controlled preventing the fallouts of data overload and unnecessary loss of time. In addition, I looked for key words or expressions that would clearly indicate how seriously or strongly respondents feel about what they are saying. Thus, for instance, words such as "important", "very important", "necessary", "critical", "vital", "essential", etc. in expressing their views on SESI were noted as a measure of how strongly they feel about that particular issue, factor or element regarding their perceptions of PSPs.

In the semi-structured interviews for principals and focus groups for the other three respondent categories, it was clear through the mode of verbal expressions how strongly respondents felt about the issues discussed. For some items, different respondents repeated the same points to in order to stress their importance and spoke in a strong or firm voice quality to make the points. A great deal of animation was also observed by some respondents when addressing some issues regarding PSPs in Al Madinah. Thus, as part of the data collection process, the researcher tried to make appropriate use of body language, gesticulations and mode of articulation in a further attempt to appreciate how strongly respondents felt when expressing themselves on a given point.

4.13 Conclusion

This chapter began with a discussion of the main research paradigms employed in social science, particular the two dominant theoretical approaches of positivism and interpretivism. The ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions of both were also assessed in order to understand the central features of these two seemingly competing paradigms and how they can be incorporated into a multi-model/ multilevel approach to educational research. The goal was to select precisely such a combined model for conducting the current study of PSP schools in Saudi Arabia, so that the distinct advantages of each paradigm would enhance the validity of the findings through triangulation.

The chapter also discussed the importance of various data collection instruments, i.e., questionnaire design, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups, all of which were first face validated and piloted before being used in the conduct of the actual field work. This gave greater strength to data triangulation for yet greater validity of findings. The theoretical framework of the research project was set out to highlight the dependent or criterion variable(s) under investigation and how it might be illuminated by four specific independent or predictor variables, independently and collectively. The methodological steps and requirements for each stage of the study were presented in detail – administering questionnaires, conducting semi-structured interviews and holding numerous focus groups with four different respondent categories, namely: PSP principals; PSP teachers; PSP students; and parents and guardians of PSP students.

All ethical considerations for conducting the research were closely adhered to and the study was administered in a systematic and professional manner. The problems encountered in the field and how they were satisfactorily resolved were also addressed. Finally, the chapter described the data analysis methods for all aspects of the data collection, involving both quantitative and qualitative datasets. The next chapter will present the data in an organized and discrete manner and chapter six will follow with critical discussion of the findings and their implications for first, PSP in Saudi Arabia and then the body of literature.

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA PRESENTATION AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is a detailed presentation of the analysis and main findings of the study in the three relevant data collection methods used, respectively, to investigate SE and SI, for all four respondent categories – Principals, Teachers, Students, and Parents. It also presents the differences among respondents, as follows: 1) Results of the Questionnaire Data Analysis; 2) Results of the Semi-Structured Interviews of Principals; 3) Results of the Focus Groups; and 4). Differences in Perceptions Among the Respondents on SE and SI.

5.2 Frequency Analysis of the Questionnaire Data

All four respondent categories were served with essentially the same questionnaires (see Appendix A 1-4). The findings are presented here according to the respective categories in order of: 1) Principal; 2) Teachers 3) Students; and 4) Parents.

5.2.1. Principals' Questionnaire Results

All 8 principals answered the questionnaire with different demographic characteristics as shown in Table 5.1. PSP principals do not seem to be very highly educated.

Table 5.1 - Description of Principals' Sample (N=8)		
Category	Sub-category	F*
1	Qualifications.	
	BA.	7
	MA.	1
	PhD.	0
2	Specialization.	
	Literary.	2
	Science.	6
	Other.	0
3	Years of experience.	
	Less than 5 Yrs.	0
	5- Less than 10 Yrs.	0
	10-less than 15 Yrs.	2
4	Years spent in the current school.	
	15 yrs and more.	6
	Less than 5 Yrs.	1
	5- Less than 10 Yrs.	7
5	In-service training to work in pioneer schools.	
	10-less than 15 Yrs.	0
	15 yrs and more.	0
	None.	2
	Once.	0
	Two times.	3
	Three times.	3

*F = frequency or the number of respondents.

The vast majority (7 out of 8) have only BA degrees, only 1 holds an MA qualification and none possesses a PhD. Six are specialized in Science, all of them have over 10 years experience in their fields with most of them are serving in the same schools and six with in-service training. Although, the majority have long experience in their teaching career, it is significant that they do not possess very high qualification for the position they hold as principals.

Table 5.2 – Principals’ Perception of the Role(s) of An Effective School					
STATEMENTS An effective school will... <i>[no significance on any item]</i>		Strongly agree	Agree	Agree to some extent	Disagree
		F	F	F	F
1	provide students with a good understanding of basic academic skills.	3	4	0	1
2	provide students with the skills necessary for work market.	1	4	2	1
3	provide students with the opportunity to develop leadership skills.	2	5	1	0
4	provide students with a caring and supportive environment.	4	2	1	1
5	provide students with the skills necessary to become productive and useful citizens.	1	4	3	0
6	provide students with the skills necessary to develop a healthy understanding of themselves and others.	1	3	3	1
7	provide students with a balanced curriculum that encourages a wide range of learning experiences.	1	1	5	1
8	provide students with the opportunity to develop a value system that reflects the major values of society.	2	2	4	0
9	provide students with teachers who reinforce community values and habits.	3	3	2	0
10	provide students with an opportunity to be involved in the decision making processes within the school.	2	5	1	0
11	use a range of assessment strategies to identify the students' level of achievement.	3	3	2	0
12	provide the parents with regular reports about their children's achievement.	5	2	1	0
13	provide the parents with an opportunity to be involved in the development of school policies and processes.	3	3	2	0
14	respond to the needs of the local community.	1	4	3	0
15	secure high levels of formal attainment by pupils taking account of their capabilities.	1	4	2	1

Analysis on question 1 of the survey on the principals’ perception of the roles of an effective school is shown in Table 5.2. When combining the first two ranks of “Strongly agree” and “Agree” the vast majority of principals believe that all 15 items on this factor are important to school effectiveness, particularly items 1, 3, 10, and 12, except for item 7 (provide students with a balanced curriculum that encourages a wide

range of learning experiences) which surprisingly shows a weak standing for principals with only 2 principals combined.

A further test was done on question 1 to rank the role(s) of an effective school from a scale of 1 to 10 in order of importance for all 15 items. As shown in Table 5.3, all principals indicate their preference, with the highest given to four items only: 1 (provide students with a good understanding of the basic academic skills); 2 (provide students with the skills necessary for work market); 3 (provide students with the opportunity to develop leadership skills); and 5 (provide students with the skills necessary to become productive and useful citizens). The importance of the remaining 11 items was thinly spread from roughly 1 to 10, as shown in the table.

STATEMENTS <i>An effective school will...</i>		RANKING ACCORDING TO IMPORTANCE												
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
1	provide students with a good understanding of basic academic skills.	3				1	1							
2	provide students with the skills necessary for work market.	3			1									1
3	provide students with the opportunity to develop leadership skills.		3	2					1			1		
4	provide students with a caring and supportive environment.		2	1	1									
5	provide students with the skills necessary to become productive and useful citizens.	1		3					1	1				
6	provide students with the skills necessary to develop a healthy understanding of themselves and others.		1		2					1				
7	provide students with a balanced curriculum that encourages a wide range of learning experiences.			1	1	1				1				
8	provide students with the opportunity to develop a value system that reflects the major values of society.		1		2		1					2		
9	provide students with teachers who reinforce community values and habits.			1		2	1	2						1
10	provide students with an opportunity to be involved in the decision making processes within the school.	1							1	2	1	2		
11	use a range of assessment strategies to identify the students' level of achievement.		1			2	2			1	2			
12	provide the parents with regular reports about their children's achievement.				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
13	provide the parents with an opportunity to be involved in the development of school policies and processes.					1	1	1	1					
14	respond to the needs of the local community.							1	1			1	1	
15	secure high levels of formal attainment by pupils taking account of their capabilities'.													2
Total		8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8

Question 2 deals with the issue of principals' perception on the factors/ elements of an effective school. The results indicate a relatively very high level of importance on all 16 items as shown in Table 5.4: between 5 to all 8 principals scored important on all items. Important items factors such as qualified teachers and students success (item

3); belief in student learning (item 5); strong curriculum and instructional methods (item 6); and the active role of teachers in curriculum development (item 14), among others, all surfaced as important factors of an effective school.

Table 5.4 - Principals' Perceptions of the Factors/Elements of an Effective School			
STATEMENTS ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL		Important	Unimportant
		F	F
1	Staff, students and the community know what the school goals are, and are able to express these goals.	8	0
2	Staff, parents and students in the school are given the opportunity to develop leadership skills.	8	0
3	Teachers are well-trained and show the skills of quality teaching. Teachers care about students' success in school, work as a team and exhibit positive their work.	7	1
4	Staff development programs are offered to the school staff that aim to promote the educational process.	6	2
5	Staff and parents believe that all students have the capacity to succeed and that staff and parent cooperation is crucial in student achievement.	7	1
6	The curriculum, instructional methods and assessment procedures within the school are all closely aligned to the basic goals that the students are expected to accomplish.	7	1
7	Teachers allocate a significant amount of time to instruct the students in the basic skills through engagement in planned learning activities.	8	0
8	Feedback on student academic progress is obtained frequently with the aim of improving student performance and assessing the success of the curriculum.	6	2
9	A lot of effort is made to identify and overcome learning difficulties.	6	2
10	The school environment is conducive to teaching and learning, and makes students feel secure.	7	1
11	Staff, students and parents are proud of their school and the people who work within it.	7	1
12	The school encourages parent involvement in decision-making and in following their children up at home.	7	1
13	Most of the decisions relating to school policy are made by the principal, teachers, students and parents.	5	3
14	The principal encourages teachers to take an active role in curriculum and school planning. Teachers provide appropriate activities to enhance students' learning.	7	1
15	The school is supported by the Ministry of Education and the Educational School District for the implementation of school programmes.	7	1
16	Teachers use strategies that will inspire students to learn.	8	0

A further test was done on question 2 to rank principals' perception of the factors/elements of an effective school, as shown in Table 5.5. The results are thinly spread but items 7 (instruction time and planned learning activities) and 15 (compliance with the Ministry of Education programmes) received a low score of 7 by 3 principals each.

Table 5.5 - Principals' Ranking of the Factors/Elements of an Effective School											
STATEMENT ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL		RANKING ACCORDING TO IMPORTANCE									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Staff, students and the community know what the school goals are, and are able to express these goals.	2	1							2	
2	Staff, parents and students in the school are given the opportunity to develop leadership skills.		1	1				1	1		2
3	Teachers are well-trained and show the skills of quality teaching. Teachers care about students' success in school, work as a team and exhibit positive their work.			1	1	1		1			1
4	Staff development programs are offered to the school staff that aim to promote the educational process.	2		1			1				
5	Staff and parents believe that all students have the capacity to succeed and that staff and parent cooperation is crucial in student achievement.		1		1			3	1		
6	The curriculum, instructional methods and assessment procedures within the school are all closely aligned to the basic goals that the students are expected to accomplish.	1			2	2					1
7	Teachers allocate a significant amount of time to instruct the students in the basic skills through engagement in planned learning activities.		1			3	2				1
8	Feedback on student academic progress is obtained frequently with the aim of improving student performance and assessing the success of the curriculum.		1	1	1						
9	A lot of effort is made to identify and overcome learning difficulties.			2				1			
10	The school environment is conducive to teaching and learning, and makes students feel secure.		2			1	2		1		
11	Staff, students and parents are proud of their school and the people who work within it.	1		2		1					2
12	The school encourages parent involvement in decision-making and in following their children up at home.				2		1				2
13	Most of the decisions relating to school policy are made by the principal, teachers, students and parents.						1	1			1
14	The principal encourages teachers to take an active role in curriculum and school planning. Teachers provide appropriate activities to enhance students' learning.	2						1	2		
15	The school is supported by the Ministry of Education and the Educational School District for the implementation of school programmes.				1				3	1	
16	Teachers use strategies that will inspire students to learn.		1				1			1	2
Total		8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8

Questionnaire question 3 deals with nine specified factors or elements in enhancing the effectiveness of their school and making it a pioneer school. As expected, the vast majority (6-8) scored very highly on all the 9 items (to a great extent), on the principals' perception of their own role on the effectiveness of schools, with the exception of item 7 with only 4, as show in Table 5.6. Virtually all of them hold a very high opinion of the school leadership and the vital role they play in the effectiveness of their own schools.

Table 5.6 - Principals' Perceptions of the Role of the School Principal/Administration in the Effectiveness of their Own Schools					
STATEMENTS As a principal I think I...		To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
		F	F	F	F
1	am qualified, competent and experienced in administration.	6	2	0	0
2	provide a leadership model to be followed by the school community.	7	1	0	0
3	strive to improve the school.	6	2	0	0
4	manage resources wisely.	8	0	0	0
5	work co-operatively with staff.	8	0	0	0
6	work co-operatively with parents.	6	2	0	0
7	promote parent participation in school activities and student learning.	4	4	0	0
8	Promote high staff morale.	8	0	0	0
9	promote continuous learning and development of staff.	8	0	0	0

Table 5.7 - Principals' Perceptions of the Role of School Teachers/Staff in the Effectiveness of their Own Schools					
STATEMENTS In my school I think the TEACHERS...		To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
		F	F	F	F
1	are qualified and competent.	5	2	1	0
2	have positive attitudes and high morale.	6	1	1	0
3	are keen on achieving optimal student achievement.	6	0	2	0
4	develop students' critical thinking, problem solving and creativity.	4	3	1	0
5	are sensitive to individual students' needs.	5	2	1	0
6	welcome parent participation.	5	1	2	0
7	are interested in continuous learning and professional development.	5	0	3	0
8	have a wide range of skills.	5	2	1	0
9	collaborate and work as a team.	5	2	1	0

As Table 5.7 shows, the principals' perception of the role of the teachers indicates a relatively very high score (4-6) on all 9 items. Six of them believe that teachers should have a positive attitude and high morale, as well as being keen to realise optimal student achievement, as important elements of an effective school. All other aspects, achieved a high score of 5, with the exception of item 4 with only 4 principals giving great importance to teachers developing students' critical thinking, problem solving skills and creativity.

As Table 5.8 shows, and as expected, principals' perception on the school philosophy on school effectiveness also rank very high with 4 to all 8 of them scoring on "To a great extent". It is noteworthy that none ranked it in the last two categories of "To a weak extent" and "Not at all".

Table 5.8 - Principals' Perceptions of the Role of their School Philosophy/Vision and Message in the Effectiveness of their Own Schools					
STATEMENTS My school's philosophy...		To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
		F	F	F	F
1	involves high expectations for all students and teachers.	8	0	0	0
2	encourages students to work towards their personal best.	6	2	0	0
3	aims to develop the full potential of each individual intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically.	6	2	0	0
4	places an importance on the development of life skills and positive values and relationships.	5	3	0	0
5	recognizes that each student has different needs, background and aspirations.	4	4	0	0
6	values and welcomes students' diverse social and cultural backgrounds.	4	4	0	0
7	recognizes that education is a co-operative effort that involves teachers, students and parents.	4	4	0	0

Table 5.9 - Principals' Perceptions of the Role of their School Environment in the Effectiveness of their Own Schools					
STATEMENTS My school environment...		To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
		F	F	F	F
1	is stimulating for students to learn.	6	2	0	0
2	is secure and welcoming.	7	1	0	0
3	fosters positive relationships between school people.	8	0	0	0
4	promotes a sense of belonging and pride amongst students in the school.	7	1	0	0
5	provides for student participation in aspects of school life.	4	4	0	0
6	has sensible rules that are clearly defined and enforced.	5	3	0	0
7	has effective management practices supported by a strong student affairs system.	6	2	0	0

As Table 5.9 shows, principals' perception on the role of the school environment on school effectiveness ranks very high with 4 to 8 of them placing it "To a great extent". Most pronounced are items 3 (fostering positive relationships between school people) with all 8 principals scoring on the highest rank, and 2 (is secure and welcoming) and 4 (promotes a sense of belonging and pride among students in school), each with 7

principals ranking this item “To a great extent”. Indeed, none of them scored on the last two categories of “To a weak extent” and “Not at all”.

Table 5.10 shows an almost even distribution on the perception of principals on the impact of their schools’ student affairs system on of school effectiveness. A slightly heavier consideration was given to item 3 (is sensitive to individual student’s needs and background), with 5 of them agreeing “To a great extent”. It is interesting that none of them believe that the school’s student affairs system was irrelevant, as shown on the last two ranks of “To a weak extent” and “Not at all” for items 1 (supports the development of students to their full potential) and 2 (addresses difficulties experienced by students effectively and efficiently). This underscores the importance of students themselves in the effectiveness of their schools. The last item (4) was perhaps the least important, though relatively significant in comparison with the first three.

Table 5.10 - Principals' Perceptions of the Role of their School's Student Affairs System in the Effectiveness of their Own Schools					
STATEMENTS		To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
My school has a student affairs system that...		F	F	F	F
1	supports the development of students to their full potential.	4	4	0	0
2	addresses difficulties experienced by students effectively and efficiently.	4	4	0	0
3	is sensitive to individual students' needs and backgrounds.	5	2	1	0
4	links with community support services and resources outside the school.	4	1	2	1

Table 5.11 shows principals’ perceptions on the role of resources on the effectiveness of schools were relatively high. The highest rank was supported by 7 principals for item 3 (the administrative staff know the students and their parents). The second rank of importance was scored on items 5 (the school has other physical and material resources); 8 (class sizes are in line with system-wide guidelines); and 9 (students are satisfied with timetable and subject choice arrangements), with each being supported by 6 principals “To a great extent”. The rest of the results are thinly spread with little or no importance.

STATEMENTS In my school...		To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
		F	F	F	F
1	parents and school board are satisfied with the allocation of resources and expenditure decisions.	4	4	0	0
2	there are sufficient administrative and supportive staff to meet the needs of the school.	4	3	1	0
3	the administrative staff know the students and their parents.	7	0	1	0
4	there is strong IT infrastructure with up-to-date technology.	4	1	2	1
5	the school has other physical and material resources e.g. educational resources, sporting equipment, labs, library books.	6	1	1	0
6	a staff development and appraisal system is in place.	4	3	0	1
7	time is set aside for staff to do planning and program development.	3	3	1	1
8	class sizes are in line with system-wide guidelines.	6	1	1	0
9	students are satisfied with timetable and subject choice arrangements.	6	1	1	0

There was roughly the same distribution for principals' perception that the curriculum is a very important factor in school effectiveness, as shown in Table 5.12 on all 5 items ranked as "To a great extent" and "To an average extent". An effective school must have a strong, relevant and appropriate curriculum for it to be truly effective. It is as well important to note that, as expected, virtually all of them disregarded the last two ranks of "To a weak extent" and "Not at all".

STATEMENTS In my school the curriculum...		To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
		F	F	F	F
1	provides a range of learning experiences within and beyond the key learning areas.	4	4	0	0
2	progresses the social, personal and physical development of students as well as their academic development.	4	4	0	0
3	ensures that students develop a positive attitude to learning.	5	3	0	0
4	provides continuity from year to year and is integrated across learning areas.	3	5	0	0
5	helps students to develop life skills, such as self-esteem, motivation and self-discipline.	4	3	1	0

As with the role of curriculum, slightly more than half (4-5) principals have a strong opinion that assessment and reporting arrangements constitute a priority in school effectiveness on all 5 items, as shown in Table 5.13.

STATEMENTS In my school assessment and reporting arrangements...		To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not At all
		F	F	F	F
1	provide clear and reliable information across the key learning areas and on the social development of students.	4	4	0	0
2	lead to sound decisions about teaching approaches.	4	2	2	0
3	identify problem areas and ways to work on these in partnership with parents.	4	3	1	0
4	allow parents to observe and understand their children's progress.	5	3	0	0
5	are undertaken in ways which support student learning and confidence.	4	4	0	0

As expected, Table 5.14 shows that virtually all principals agree that school policy is important to a great extent on all four items for school effectiveness. It is significant that virtually all disagree that school policy can be ranked in the last two categories of "To a weak extent" and "Not at all".

STATEMENTS The school policy...		To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
		F	F	F	F
1	recognizes that partnerships between parents and teachers lead to better learning outcomes.	7	1	0	0
2	promotes school and teacher responsiveness to parents' views, inquiries and concerns.	7	1	0	0
3	supports the links with other schools, business, and voluntary and government organizations.	7	0	1	0
4	promotes a strong sense of community within the school.	8	0	0	0

Not surprisingly, all 8 principals believe that their schools are the most effective or among the most effective PSPs in Al Madinah Educational Zone, as shown in Table 5.15.

Your rating of your school I think my school would be...		RATING
		F
1	the most effective school in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	4
2	among the most effective schools in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	4
3	as effective as other schools in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	0
4	less effective than most other schools in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	0
TOTAL		8

5.2.2 Teachers' Questionnaire Results

All 160 teachers responded to the questionnaire with different demographic characteristics as shown in Table 5.16. As with principals, the vast majority of teachers (93.1%) in all 8 PSP in Al Madinah Educational District hold primarily a BA degree only, while 7 have achieved MA levels and only 2 have reached PhD status. It should be noted that no one of the 8 principals holds a PhD degree.

	Category	Sub-category	F	%
1	Qualifications.	BA.	149	93.1
		MA.	7	4.4
		PhD.	2	1.3
		Other.	2	1.3
2	Specialization.	Literary.	82	51.3
		Science.	78	48.8
3	Years of experience.	Less than 5 Yrs	20	12.5
		5- Less than 10 Yrs.	35	21.9
		10-less than 15	49	30.6
		15 yrs and more.	56	35.0
4	Years spent in the current school.	Less than 5 Yrs.	63	39.4
		5- Less than 10 Yrs.	55	34.4
		10-less than 15	31	19.4
		15 yrs and more.	11	6.9
5	In-service training to work in pioneer schools.	Once.	33	20.6
		Two times.	39	24.4
		Three times.	52	32.5
		None.	36	22.5

Unlike principals who mostly specialize in Science (75%), roughly half of the teachers specialize in both Literary (51.3%) and Science (48.8%), respectively. A total of 21.9% of teachers have less than 10 years teaching experience, with 30.6% with more than 10 and 35% with more than 15 years on the job. Moreover, the majority (39.4%) spent less than 5 years at the same school, with 34.4% 5-10 years, 19.4% 10-15 years and 6.9% more than 15 years at the same school. In comparison, 25% of principals did not received in-service training and only 22.5% of teachers did not receive in-service training, with well more than half (56.9%) receiving it more than once as shown in the table.

STATEMENTS <i>An effective school will...</i>		Strongly agree		Agree		Agree to some extent		Disagree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	provide students with a good understanding of basic academic skills.	74	46.3	62	38.8	24	15.0
2	Provide students with the skills necessary for work market.	51	31.9	53	33.1	46	28.8	10	6.3
3	provide students with the opportunity to develop leadership skills.	54	33.8	79	49.4	23	14.4	4	2.5
4	Provide students with a caring and supportive environment.	66	41.3	62	38.8	27	16.9	5	3.1
5	provide students with the skills necessary to become productive and useful citizens.	57	35.6	69	43.1	31	19.4	3	1.9
6	provide students with the skills necessary to develop a healthy understanding of themselves and others.	54	33.8	57	35.6	41	25.6	8	5.0
7	provide students with a balanced curriculum that encourages a wide range of learning experiences.	51	31.9	68	42.5	37	23.1	4	2.5
8	provide students with the opportunity to develop a value system that reflects the major values of society.	56	35.0	62	38.8	35	21.9	7	4.4
9	provide students with teachers who reinforce community values and habits.	54	33.8	67	41.9	32	20.0	7	4.4
10	provide students with an opportunity to be involved in the decision making processes within the school.	50	31.3	45	28.1	51	31.9	14	8.8
11	use a range of assessment strategies to identify the students' level of achievement.	48	30.0	65	40.6	44	27.5	3	1.9
12	provide the parents with regular reports about their children's achievement.	64	40.0	53	33.1	37	23.1	6	3.8
13	provide the parents with an opportunity to be involved in the development of school policies and processes.	42	26.3	47	29.4	52	32.5	19	11.9
14	Respond to the needs of the local community.	43	26.9	49	30.6	59	36.9	9	5.6
15	secure high levels of formal attainment by pupils taking account of their capabilities'	49	30.6	58	36.3	48	30.0	5	3.1

As with principals, question 1 of the questionnaire for teachers indicates that although in various strengths, Table 5.17 shows a high level of importance on all 15 items of teachers' perception of the roles of an effective school. The result brings both principals and teachers in line on this vital issue.

Table 5.18 - Teachers' Ranking of the Role(s) of an Effective School											
STATEMENTS <i>An effective school will...</i>		RANKING ACCORDING TO IMPORTANCE									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	provide students with a good understanding of basic academic skills.	77	27	15	14	1	1	1	1		2
2	Provide students with the skills necessary for work market.	23	44	16	11	9	1	4	1	6	2
3	provide students with the opportunity to develop leadership skills.	19	28	29	9	7	9	2	4	3	2
4	Provide students with a caring and supportive environment.	11	19	32	18	10	2	8	2	4	2
5	provide students with the skills necessary to become productive and useful citizens.	7	17	24	23	16	2	6	3	2	4
6	provide students with the skills necessary to develop a healthy understanding of themselves and others.	5	8	16	25	20	13	3	6	3	4
7	provide students with a balanced curriculum that encourages a wide range of learning experiences.	6	4	9	17	18	22	11	9	3	4
8	provide students with the opportunity to develop a value system that reflects the major values of society.	3	5	5	14	27	24	13	10	8	1
9	provide students with teachers who reinforce community values and habits.	3		2	10	19	17	24	13	12	5
10	provide students with an opportunity to be involved in the decision making processes within the school.	1		5	7	12	22	23	19	11	14
11	use a range of assessment strategies to identify the students' level of achievement.		1	2	5	9	25	14	25	12	14
12	provide the parents with regular reports about their children's achievement.	1	2	2	3	4	8	29	21	27	15
13	provide the parents with an opportunity to be involved in the development of school policies and processes.	1	1	2	1	2	9	8	27	28	20
14	Respond to the needs of the local community.	1		1	1	4	2	9	12	30	29
15	secure high levels of formal attainment by pupils taking account of their capabilities'.	2	4		2	2	3	5	7	11	42
Total		160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160

A further test was done to question 2 of the questionnaire for teachers to rank the roles of an effective school. Table 5.18 shows the ranking of the role(s) of an effective school in the order of importance from 1 to 10. Teachers strongly feel that the most import role of an effective school is to provide students with a good understanding of the basic academic skills (item 1). The importance of other roles was also highlighted indicating job market (items 2) and leadership skills (item 3). Items 3 to 7 also ranked fairly important, with the rest of the 8 items not showing any real importance for teachers.

Table 5.19- Teachers' Perceptions of the Factors/Elements of an Effective School					
STATEMENTS ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL		Important		Unimportant	
		F	%	F	%
1	Staff, students and the community know what the school goals are, and are able to express these goals.	151	94.4	9	5.6
2	Staff, parents and students in the school are given the opportunity to develop leadership skills.	145	90.6	15	9.4
3	Teachers are well-trained and show the skills of quality teaching. Teachers care about students' success in school, work as a team and exhibit positive their work.	142	88.8	18	11.3
4	Staff development programs are offered to the school staff that aim to promote the educational process.	129	80.6	31	19.4
5	Staff and parents believe that all students have the capacity to succeed and that staff and parent cooperation is crucial in student achievement.	135	84.4	25	15.6
6	The curriculum, instructional methods and assessment procedures within the school are all closely aligned to the basic goals that the students are expected to accomplish.	125	78.1	35	21.9
7	Teachers allocate a significant amount of time to instruct the students in the basic skills through engagement in planned learning activities.	131	81.9	29	18.1
8	Feedback on student academic progress is obtained frequently with the aim of improving student performance and assessing the success of the curriculum.	136	85.0	24	15.0
9	A lot of effort is made to identify and overcome learning difficulties.	139	86.9	21	13.1
10	The school environment is conducive to teaching and learning, and makes students feel secure.	132	82.5	28	17.5
11	Staff, students and parents are proud of their school and the people who work within it.	133	83.1	27	16.9
12	The school encourages parent involvement in decision-making and in following their children up at home.	125	78.1	35	21.9
13	Most of the decisions relating to school policy are made by the principal, teachers, students and parents.	126	78.8	34	21.3
14	The principal encourages teachers to take an active role in curriculum and school planning. Teachers provide appropriate activities to enhance students' learning.	137	85.6	23	14.4
15	The school is supported by the Ministry of Education and the Educational School District for the implementation of school programmes.	132	82.5	28	17.5
16	Teachers use strategies that will inspire students to learn.	117	73.1	43	26.9

Regarding the elements of an effective school, as with their principal counterparts, the vast majority of teachers consider all 16 items in various strengths as important to an effective school, as shown in Table 5.19. Again in various strengths, a small percentage, though, indicate that the factors are not important.

A further test was done to question 2 of the questionnaire to for teachers to rank the factors/elements of an effective school is shown in Table 5.20, in order of importance from 1 to 10. School goals (item 1) and leadership skills (item 2) ranked the highest

with item 3 (well-trained teachers and, care for students' success) following suit. All the other 13 items did not rank highly for teachers.

STATEMENT ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL		RANKING ACCORDING TO IMPORTANCE									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Staff, students and the community know what the school goals are, and are able to express these goals.	59	19	19	10	6	7	4	4	3	1
2	Staff, parents and students in the school are given the opportunity to develop leadership skills.	12	54	15	13	10	3	9	8	2	4
3	Teachers are well-trained and show the skills of quality teaching. Teachers care about students' success in school, work as a team and exhibit positive their work.	13	20	42	13	10	12	2	5	7	5
4	Staff development programs are offered to the school staff that aim to promote the educational process.	10	6	19	32	17	7	5	3	5	2
5	Staff and parents believe that all students have the capacity to succeed and that staff and parent cooperation is crucial in student achievement.	14	7	13	24	35	8	8	1	3	4
6	The curriculum, instructional methods and assessment procedures within the school are all closely aligned to the basic goals that the students are expected to accomplish.	3	9	7	18	14	22	8	4	5	9
7	Teachers allocate a significant amount of time to instruct the students in the basic skills through engagement in planned learning activities.	12	11	9	12	25	17	11	4	6	6
8	Feedback on student academic progress is obtained frequently with the aim of improving student performance and assessing the success of the curriculum.	2	4	7	14	15	16	15	11	7	4
9	A lot of effort is made to identify and overcome learning difficulties.	4	3	5	10	13	20	23	12	14	2
10	The school environment is conducive to teaching and learning, and makes students feel secure.	4	6	5	4		14	20	22	6	11
11	Staff, students and parents are proud of their school and the people who work within it.	5	5	7	2	7	11	23	16	12	10
12	The school encourages parent involvement in decision-making and in following their children up at home.	10	4	2	2	3	12	14	26	13	14
13	Most of the decisions relating to school policy are made by the principal, teachers, students and parents.	2	7	3		3	5	6	15	22	10
14	The principal encourages teachers to take an active role in curriculum and school planning. Teachers provide appropriate activities to enhance students' learning.	5	3	2	1	1	2	6	21	25	31
15	The school is supported by the Ministry of Education and the Educational School District for the implementation of school programmes.	3	1	4	3	1	1	3	7	21	25
16	Teachers use strategies that will inspire students to learn.	2	1	1	2		3	3	1	9	22
Total		160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160

Question 3 of the questionnaire deals with teachers' perception of the impact of 9 specified factors/elements regarding the principal's role in SE and SI, as shown in Table 5.21. As shown previously, principals themselves expressed the strongest support, in comparison to teachers, for their own role on school effectiveness.

However, the vast majority of teachers agree that the role of the school principal on school effectiveness is important to a great extent. This was further strengthened by ranking the importance of this factor to an average extent, with the smallest numbers scoring in the last two ranks.

STATEMENTS In my school I think the PRINCIPAL is.....		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	qualified, competent and experienced in administration.	93	58.1	56	35.0	7	4.4	4	2.5
2	provides a leadership model to be followed by the school community.	86	53.8	59	36.9	9	5.6	6	3.8
3	strives to improve the school.	95	59.4	53	33.1	11	6.9	1	.6
4	manages resources wisely.	72	45.0	62	38.8	20	12.5	6	3.8
5	works co-operatively with staff.	81	50.6	52	32.5	23	14.4	4	2.5
6	works co-operatively with parents.	81	50.6	58	36.3	15	9.4	6	3.8
7	promotes parent participation in school activities and student learning.	66	41.3	54	33.8	29	18.1	11	6.9
8	promotes high staff morale.	88	55.0	46	28.8	20	12.5	6	3.8
9	promotes continuous learning and development of staff.	82	51.3	52	32.5	20	12.5	6	3.8

STATEMENTS As a teacher I think I ...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	am qualified and competent.	61	38.1	81	50.6	15	9.4	3	1.9
2	have positive attitudes and high morale.	72	45.0	68	42.5	19	11.9	1	.6
3	am keen on achieving optimal student achievement.	92	57.5	47	29.4	16	10.0	5	3.1
4	develop students' critical thinking, problem solving and creativity.	59	36.9	71	44.4	26	16.3	4	2.5
5	am sensitive to individual students' needs.	55	34.4	65	40.6	33	20.6	7	4.4
6	welcome parent participation.	83	51.9	55	34.4	17	10.6	5	3.1
7	am interested in continuous learning and professional development.	62	38.8	67	41.9	25	15.6	6	3.8
8	have a wide range of skills.	56	35.0	73	45.6	30	18.8	1	.6
9	collaborate and work as a team member.	82	51.3	49	30.6	19	11.9	10	6.3

As expected, regarding the second factor, Table 5.22 shows that teachers believe their own role on all 9 items is important to a great extent for the effectiveness of their own schools. This was again supported by a considerable number of them scoring the importance of their own role on school effectiveness "To an average extent."

However, there was an uneven distribution on the 9 items scored against but with a clear showing (57.5%) on item 3 regarding commitment and dedication (am keen on achieving optimal student achievement). This is similar to how principals naturally feel about themselves regarding their own role on school effectiveness.

The third factor, school philosophy, as with school principals, plays an important role for teachers on the effectiveness of their schools, as indicated in Table 5.23. The highest scores were consistently shown for all 7 items on this variable set, both for “To a great extent” and “To an average extent”, respectively. Few thought otherwise.

STATEMENTS My school's philosophy...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	involves high expectations for all students and teachers.	72	45.0	69	43.1	16	10.0	3	1.9
2	encourages students to work towards their personal best.	67	41.9	70	43.8	21	13.1	2	1.3
3	aims to develop the full potential of each individual intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically.	54	33.8	66	41.3	30	18.8	10	6.3
4	places an importance on the development of life skills and positive values and relationships.	54	33.8	79	49.4	23	14.4	4	2.5
5	recognizes that each student has different needs, background and aspirations.	51	31.9	74	46.3	30	18.8	5	3.1
6	values and welcomes students' diverse social and cultural backgrounds.	59	36.9	68	42.5	28	17.5	5	3.1
7	recognizes that education is a co-operative effort that involves teachers, students and parents.	71	44.4	68	42.5	16	10.0	5	3.1

The fourth factor, the role of the school environment on the effectiveness of school is perceived by teachers as very important with varying strengths for all 7 items as shown in Table 5.24. This again makes teachers and principals standing consistently on the same plain on this factor, with principals showing greater strength. The highest scores were distributed between “To a great extent” and “To an average extent”, whereas only a relatively few teachers felt differently as shown on the last two rankings of “To a weak extent” and “Not at all”.

STATEMENTS My school environment...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	F	F	%
		1	is stimulating for students to learn.	65	40.6	72	45.0	16	10.0
2	is secure and welcoming.	79	49.4	64	40.0	14	8.8	3	1.9
3	fosters positive relationships between school people.	63	39.4	69	43.1	23	14.4	5	3.1
4	promotes a sense of belonging and pride amongst students in the school.	64	40.0	64	40.0	27	16.9	5	3.1
5	provides for student participation in aspects of school life.	47	29.4	57	35.6	43	26.9	13	8.1
6	has sensible rules that are clearly defined and enforced.	51	31.9	63	39.4	33	20.6	13	8.1
7	has effective management practices supported by a strong student affairs system.	64	40.0	67	41.9	25	15.6	4	2.5

Table 5.25 shows that the vast majority of teachers again, as with their principal counterparts, felt very strongly on the issue of the school's student affairs system as the fifth factor of an effective school. Again, only a relatively small number of teachers felt otherwise, as shown in last two rankings of "To a weak extent" and "Not at all".

STATEMENTS My school has a student affairs system that...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	supports the development of students to their full potential.	60	37.5	68	42.5	29	18.1
2	addresses difficulties experienced by students effectively and efficiently.	50	31.3	77	48.1	26	16.3	7	4.4
3	is sensitive to individual students' needs and backgrounds.	54	33.8	69	43.1	32	20.0	5	3.1
4	links with community support services and resources outside the school.	47	29.4	68	42.5	34	21.3	11	6.9

As shown in Table 5.26, teachers consistently stand with their principal counterparts on the importance of the role of resources, the sixth factor, in an effective school, again with principals showing greater strength. On all 9 items, with varying strengths, teachers perceive the importance of school resources on school effectiveness for the first two rankings of "To a great extent" and "To an average extent". Just a relatively few of them thought that is not the case.

STATEMENTS In my school...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	parents and school board are satisfied with the allocation of resources and expenditure decisions.	48	30.0	72	45.0	29	18.1
2	there are sufficient administrative and supportive staff to meet the needs of the school.	53	33.1	75	46.9	25	15.6	7	4.4
3	the administrative staff know the students and their parents.	53	33.1	73	45.6	29	18.1	5	3.1
4	there is strong IT infrastructure with up-to-date technology.	48	30.0	71	44.4	35	21.9	6	3.8
5	the school has other physical resources e.g. educational resources, sporting equipment, library books.	75	46.9	63	39.4	19	11.9	3	1.9
6	a staff development and appraisal system is in place.	40	25.0	69	43.1	38	23.8	13	8.1
7	time is set aside for staff to do planning and program development.	36	22.5	62	38.8	46	28.8	16	10.0
8	class sizes are in line with system-wide guidelines.	38	23.8	61	38.1	34	21.3	27	16.9
9	students are satisfied with timetable and subject choice arrangements.	41	25.6	75	46.9	20	12.5	24	15.0

The seventh factor, the role of the curriculum on school effectiveness was, again, considered important, in varying strengths for all 5 items, for teachers as shown in Table 5.27. The highest priority was given to items 1 (provide a range of learning experiences within and beyond the key learning areas); and 3 (ensures that students develop a positive attitude to learning). As seen, principals were again clearly ahead of their teaching staff, with a relatively few of the latter scoring on the last two ranks of “To a weak extent” and “Not at all”, whereas no principal felt that way at all.

STATEMENTS In my school the curriculum...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	provides a range of learning experiences within and beyond the key learning areas.	55	34.4	79	49.4	24	15.0
2	progresses the social, personal and physical development of students as well as their academic development.	41	25.6	79	49.4	36	22.5	4	2.5
3	ensures that students develop a positive attitude to learning.	44	27.5	81	50.6	31	19.4	4	2.5
4	provides continuity from year to year and is integrated across learning areas.	40	25.0	79	49.4	34	21.3	7	4.4
5	helps students to develop life skills, such as self-esteem, motivation and self-discipline.	52	32.5	63	39.4	32	20.0	13	8.1

As Table 5.28 shows, the eighth factor, assessment and reporting systems in the school, is considered important on all 5 items to an effective school, as perceived by teachers. All 5 items, in varying strengths, stand out significantly, as for principals who were clearly ahead of teachers on this factor. Virtually no principal scored on the last two rankings of “To a weak extent” and particular in “Not at all”, whereas a small number of teachers felt so.

STATEMENTS In my school, assessment and reporting arrangements...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	provide clear and reliable information across the key learning areas and on the social development of students.	43	26.9	89	55.6	22	13.8
2	lead to sound decisions about teaching approaches.	38	23.8	87	54.4	32	20.0	3	1.9
3	identify problem areas and ways to work on these in partnership with parents.	43	26.9	73	45.6	39	24.4	5	3.1
4	allow parents to observe and understand their children’s progress.	55	34.4	71	44.4	27	16.9	7	4.4
5	are undertaken in ways which support student learning and confidence.	55	34.4	75	46.9	21	13.1	9	5.6

The last factor, teachers’ perception of the role of school policy on effectiveness again was considered for all 4 items, in varying strengths, as shown in Table 5.29. Again, principals stood stronger grounds on this factor than teachers on all 4 items, as some teachers scored in the last two rankings of “To a weak extent” and “Not at all”, whereas virtually no principal scored in these latter rankings. It is interesting that teachers gave the strongest stance on item 1 (recognizes that partnerships between parents and teachers lead to better learning outcomes).

STATEMENTS The school policy...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	recognizes that partnerships between parents and teachers lead to better learning outcomes.	70	43.8	66	41.3	18	11.3
2	promotes school and teacher responsiveness to parents’ views, inquiries and concerns.	53	33.1	77	48.1	24	15.0	6	3.8
3	supports the links with other schools, business, and voluntary and government organizations.	50	31.3	61	38.1	38	23.8	11	6.9
4	promotes a strong sense of community within the school.	59	36.9	67	41.9	25	15.6	9	5.6

Table 5.30 shows that most teachers (about a high 92.5% combined) perceive the effectiveness of their schools in the first 3 out of 4 items: being most effective; among the most effective; and as effective. Whereas, some teachers expressed reservation about the superiority of their schools' effectiveness (17.5%), only a very small percent (7.5%) see their own schools as sub-standard compared to most other schools. It is interesting, and expected, that all principals scored only on items 1 and 2 and none placed their schools in the last two categories: "as effective as other schools in Al Madinah Educational Zone", and "less effective than most other schools in Al Madinah Educational Zone", respectively. Thus, some teachers were a bit more critical than their principal counterparts in ranking their schools among others.

Table 5.30 - Teachers' Ratings of the Effectiveness of their Own Schools			
Your rating of your school I think my school would be...		RATING	
		F	%
1	the most effective school in Al Madinah Educational Zone.	57	35.6
2	among the most effective schools in Al Madinah Educational Zone.	63	39.4
3	as effective as other schools in Al Madinah Educational Zone.	28	17.5
4	less effective than most other schools in Al Madinah Educational Zone.	12	7.5
Total		160	100%

5.2.3 Students' Questionnaire Results

As shown in Table 5.31, all 160 students answered the questionnaire, with 43.7% drawn from grade 2 and the remaining respondents (56.3%) from grade 3. This sample distribution was justified giving more weight to grade 3 students because they are 18 years old on average and slightly more mature than their grade 2 counterparts who average about 17 years old.

Table 5.31 - Description of Students' Sample (N=160)			
Students' Sample		F	%
1	Grade Two.	70	43.7
2	Grade Three.	90	56.3
Total		160	100%

Regarding question 1 of the questionnaire, the perceptions of students about the role of an effective school is shown in Table 5.32. In varying strengths, the vast majority of students scored markedly higher on all 15 items in the first two rankings of "Strongly agree" and "Agree" than on the latter two, "Agree to some extent" and "Disagree". While their strongest perception was for the attainment of the basic

academic skills and productive and useful citizens (item 1), they were somewhat reluctant when it comes to the work market (item 2). They also indicate a low opinion on the issue of parents' involvement in their school policies (item 13). Thus, it is interesting to note that a fair amount of students did not hold a high perception on the role of an effective school for the various items as reflected in the last two rankings of "Agree to some extent" and "Disagree".

Table 5.32 - Students' Perceptions of the Role(s) of an Effective School

Statements <i>An effective school will...</i>		Strongly agree		Agree		Agree to some extent		Disagree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	provide me with a good understanding of basic academic skills.	43	26.9	71	44.4	42	26.3
2	provide me with the skills necessary for work market.	24	15.0	59	36.9	50	31.3	27	16.9
3	provide me with the opportunity to develop leadership skills.	45	28.1	50	31.3	52	32.5	13	8.1
4	provide me with a caring and supportive environment.	43	26.9	54	33.8	45	28.1	18	11.3
5	provide me with the skills necessary to become productive and useful citizen.	51	31.9	67	41.9	36	22.5	6	3.8
6	provide me with the skills necessary to develop a healthy understanding of myself and others.	35	21.9	58	36.3	56	35.0	11	6.9
7	provide me with a balanced curriculum that encourages a wide range of learning experiences.	36	22.5	64	40.0	50	31.3	10	6.3
8	provide me with the opportunity to develop a value system that reflects the major values of my society.	26	16.3	67	41.9	48	30.0	19	11.9
9	provide me with teachers who reinforce community values and habits.	46	28.8	51	31.9	55	34.4	8	5.0
10	provide me with an opportunity to be involved in the decision making processes within the school.	40	25.0	39	24.4	46	28.8	35	21.9
11	use a range of assessment strategies to identify my level of achievement.	40	25.0	45	28.1	48	30.0	27	16.9
12	provide my parents with regular reports about my achievement.	31	19.4	39	24.4	48	30.0	42	26.3
13	provide my parents with an opportunity to be involved in the development of school policies and processes.	22	13.8	35	21.9	42	26.3	61	38.1
14	respond to the needs of the local community.	29	18.1	51	31.9	57	35.6	23	14.4
15	secure high levels of formal attainment by students taking account of their capabilities.	34	21.3	71	44.4	44	27.5	11	6.9

A further test was done to question 1 of the questionnaire to rank students' perception of the role of an effective is shown in Table 5.33, with the highest rating on the first 5 items, the first and second being more pronounced. All the other 10 items ranked in lesser importance, using the order of 1 to 10. Students are first and foremost serious with their academic skills (item 1), then job market skills (item 2), followed by

leadership skills (items 3), then caring and supportive environment (item 4), and productive and useful citizen (item 5).

Table 5.33 - Students' Ranking of the Role(s) of an Effective School											
STATEMENT <i>An effective school will...</i>		RANKING ACCORDING TO IMPORTANCE									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	provide me with a good understanding of basic academic skills.	66	27	14	10	6	5	3	5	4	3
2	provide me with the skills necessary for work market.	22	55	9	9	8	4	3	2	3	6
3	provide me with the opportunity to develop leadership skills.	16	18	37	15	14	4	5	5	8	3
4	provide me with a caring and supportive environment.	10	9	31	29	13	6	4	5	6	7
5	provide me with the skills necessary to become productive and useful citizen.	11	12	23	30	24	10	5	4	7	6
6	provide me with the skills necessary to develop a healthy understanding of myself and others.	9	10	10	14	25	24	12	5	4	7
7	provide me with a balanced curriculum that encourages a wide range of learning experiences.	5	6	10	12	21	24	30	11	4	3
8	provide me with the opportunity to develop a value system that reflects the major values of my society.	1	5	4	10	12	11	15	19	4	8
9	provide me with teachers who reinforce community values and habits.	6	2	2	11	11	24	25	24	18	4
10	provide me with an opportunity to be involved in the decision making processes within the school.	1	5	4		4	15	17	17	14	18
11	use a range of assessment strategies to identify my level of achievement.	1	1	3	1	7	12	14	14	22	16
12	provide my parents with regular reports about my achievement.	3	2	4	7	2	6	13	17	16	20
13	provide my parents with an opportunity to be involved in the development of school policies and processes.		2	2	4		3	8	11	19	13
14	respond to the needs of the local community.	2	2	4	4	4	5	3	14	16	19
15	secure high levels of formal attainment by students taking account of their capabilities'.	7	4	3	4	9	7	3	7	15	27
Total		160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160

Question 2 of the questionnaire deals with students' perception of the factors/elements of an effective school. The vast majority (74-91%) scored high on all 13 items as important as shown in Table 5.34. The greatest weights are placed on two principal items: 1 (Staff, students and the community know what the school goals are, and are able to express these goals); and 7 (Feedback on my academic progress is obtained frequently with the aim of improving my academic performance).

The seven runner-ups items over 83% are: 2 (Staff, parents and students in the school are given the opportunity to develop leadership skills); 3 (Teachers are well-trained and show the skills of quality teaching. Teachers care about students' success in school, work as a team and exhibit positive their work); 4 (Staff and parents believe

that all students have the capacity to succeed and that staff and parent cooperation is crucial in student achievement); 6 (Teachers allocate a significant amount of time to instruct the students in the basic skills through engagement in planned learning activities); 8 (A lot of effort is made to identify and overcome learning difficulties of students); 9 (The school environment is conducive to learning, and makes me feel secure); and 10 (Staff, students and parents are proud of their school and the people who work within it).

It is, nonetheless, noteworthy that a relatively small but significant number of students did not consider this factor important to school effectiveness, in varying strengths for all 13 items.

ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL		Important		Unimportant	
		F	%	F	%
1	Staff, students and the community know what the school goals are, and are able to express these goals.	146	91.3	14	8.8
2	Staff, parents and students in the school are given the opportunity to develop leadership skills.	140	87.5	20	12.5
3	Teachers are well-trained and show the skills of quality teaching. Teachers care about students' success in school, work as a team and exhibit positive their work.	140	87.5	20	12.5
4	Staff and parents believe that all students have the capacity to succeed and that staff and parent cooperation is crucial in student achievement.	139	86.9	21	13.1
5	The curriculum, instructional methods and assessment procedures within the school are all closely aligned to the basic goals that the students are expected to accomplish.	121	75.6	39	24.4
6	Teachers allocate a significant amount of time to instruct the students in the basic skills through engagement in planned learning activities.	133	83.1	27	16.9
7	Feedback on my academic progress is obtained frequently with the aim of improving my academic performance.	145	90.6	15	9.4
8	A lot of effort is made to identify and overcome learning difficulties of students.	137	85.6	23	14.4
9	The school environment is conducive to learning, and makes me feel secure.	141	88.1	19	11.9
10	Staff, students and parents are proud of their school and the people who work within it.	133	83.1	27	16.9
11	The school encourages my parents to be involved in decision-making and in following me up at home.	121	75.6	39	24.4
12	Most of the decisions relating to school policy are made by the principal, teachers, students and parents.	119	74.4	41	25.6
13	Teachers use strategies that will inspire students to learn.	123	76.9	37	23.1

A further test was done to question 2 of the questionnaire to rank students' perception of the elements of an effective school displayed in Table 5.35, emphasis on the first 4 items out of 13, based on the order of importance from 1 to 10. The first concerns

school goals (item 1), followed by the development of leadership skills (item 2), then well-trained teachers and quality teaching (item 3), and all students have the capacity to succeed (item 4). The other 9 items do not seem to matter much to students.

STATEMENT ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL		RANKING ACCORDING TO IMPORTANCE									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Staff, students and the community know what the school goals are, and are able to express these goals.	51	22	15	12	11	6	5	8	3	9
2	Staff, parents and students in the school are given the opportunity to develop leadership skills.	15	39	28	17	9	4	7	3	7	7
3	Teachers are well-trained and show the skills of quality teaching. Teachers care about students' success in school, work as a team and exhibit positive their work.	22	25	30	19	11	6	2	9	3	4
4	Staff and parents believe that all students have the capacity to succeed and that staff and parent cooperation is crucial in student achievement.	20	15	22	34	13	8	5	2	4	7
5	The curriculum, instructional methods and assessment procedures within the school are all closely aligned to the basic goals that the students are expected to accomplish.	10	9	13	16	21	13	4	5	7	8
6	Teachers allocate a significant amount of time to instruct the students in the basic skills through engagement in planned learning activities.	10	3	13	16	32	22	10	10	5	7
7	Feedback on my academic progress is obtained frequently with the aim of improving my academic performance.	5	14	11	20	21	23	28	5	9	5
8	A lot of effort is made to identify and overcome learning difficulties of students.	3	8	9	8	13	26	27	21	13	5
9	The school environment is conducive to learning, and makes me feel secure.	7	6	3	6	14	21	22	20	23	15
10	Staff, students and parents are proud of their school and the people who work within it.	2	4	6	2	7	16	22	17	19	23
11	The school encourages my parents to be involved in decision-making and in following me up at home.		5	2	4	4	9	14	31	18	19
12	Most of the decisions relating to school policy are made by the principal, teachers, students and parents.	5	4	3	1	2	2	8	25	29	18
13	Teachers use strategies that will inspire students to learn.	10	6	5	5	2	4	6	4	20	33
Total		160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160

Question 3 of the questionnaire deals with the role of school principals on SE and SI on the respondents' schools. Table 5.36 shows that the first 5 items out of 7 are deemed important, with the greatest stress on item with items 3 (strives to improve the school), 5 (works co-operatively with staff) and 1 (is qualified, competent and experienced in administration) being the most important, respectively. It is again interesting to note that students are not very keen to have parents' involvement too

closely aligned with the school, as indicated in the last two items of “To a weak extent” and “Not at all”.

STATEMENTS In my school I think the PRINCIPAL...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	is qualified, competent and experienced in administration.	56	35.0	51	31.9	38	23.8
2	provides a leadership model to be followed by the school community.	49	30.6	58	36.3	38	23.8	15	9.4
3	strives to improve the school.	74	46.3	38	23.8	22	13.8	26	16.3
4	manages resources wisely.	47	29.4	49	30.6	46	28.8	18	11.3
5	works co-operatively with staff.	72	45.0	49	30.6	30	18.8	9	5.6
6	works co-operatively with parents.	37	23.1	43	26.9	42	26.3	38	23.8
7	promotes parent participation in school activities and student learning.	13	8.1	28	17.5	34	21.3	85	53.1

As shown in Table 5.37, students gave full importance to all 8 items regarding the role of teachers/staff in school effectiveness, The highest level of importance was given to item 3 (are keen on achieving optimal student achievement), followed by item 2 (keen on achieving optimal student achievement), item 3 (have positive attitudes and high morale), and item 1 (are qualified and competent). Students' response to the remaining items was not of any real importance, particularly item 5 (are sensitive to individual students' needs). It is interesting that this item was of the lowest importance when other studies value this item highly. Probably students are reacting to how they perceive teachers' actual descriptive role rather than to what they should be doing in a normative sense.

STATEMENTS In my school I think the TEACHERS...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	are qualified and competent.	50	31.3	83	51.9	18	11.3
2	have positive attitudes and high morale.	54	33.8	67	41.9	35	21.9	4	2.5
3	are keen on achieving optimal student achievement.	70	43.8	60	37.5	19	11.9	11	6.9
4	develop students' critical thinking, problem solving and creativity.	28	17.5	56	35.0	43	26.9	33	20.6
5	are sensitive to individual students' needs.	17	10.6	43	26.9	57	35.6	43	26.9
6	welcome parent participation.	46	28.8	58	36.3	31	19.4	25	15.6
7	have a wide range of skills.	36	22.5	72	45.0	37	23.1	15	9.4
8	collaborate and work as a team.	34	21.3	55	34.4	41	25.6	30	18.8

Analysis of the third factor, the role of school philosophy on school effectiveness, is shown in Table 5.38. The single greatest stress was item 1 (high expectations for all students and teachers), followed by item 2 (encourages students to work towards their personal best), and items 3 (aims to develop the full potential of each student intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically) and 7 (recognizes that education is a co-operative effort that involves teachers, students and parents) roughly equally. Items 4, 5, and 6 are more or less evenly distributed.

STATEMENTS My school's philosophy...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	involves high expectations for all students and teachers.	74	46.3	61	38.1	21	13.1
2	encourages students to work towards their personal best.	57	35.6	56	35.0	30	18.8	17	10.6
3	aims to develop the full potential of each student intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically.	46	28.8	36	22.5	49	30.6	29	18.1
4	places an importance on the development of life skills and positive values and relationships.	30	18.8	57	35.6	58	36.3	15	9.4
5	recognizes that each student has different needs, background and aspirations.	38	23.8	41	25.6	46	28.8	35	21.9
6	values and welcomes students' diverse social and cultural backgrounds.	36	22.5	62	38.8	39	24.4	23	14.4
7	recognizes that education is a co-operative effort that involves teachers, students and parents.	48	30.0	61	38.1	31	19.4	20	12.5

Table 5.39 shows the results on the fourth factor which indicates that, generally, students perceive the importance of 7 items of school environment on school effectiveness, but with pronounced stress on items 4 (promotes a sense of belonging and pride amongst students in the school) and 2 (secure and welcoming). Their responses on the remaining items were more or less evenly distributed, with a rather surprising response for item 1 (is stimulating for students to learn).

STATEMENTS My school environment...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	is stimulating for students to learn.	35	21.9	54	33.8	40	25.0
2	is secure and welcoming.	62	38.8	59	36.9	25	15.6	14	8.8
3	fosters positive relationships between school people.	43	26.9	56	35.0	48	30.0	13	8.1
4	promotes a sense of belonging and pride amongst students in the school.	69	43.1	48	30.0	25	15.6	18	11.3
5	provides for student participation in aspects of school life.	35	21.9	54	33.8	47	29.4	24	15.0
6	has sensible rules that are clearly defined and enforced.	39	24.4	59	36.9	36	22.5	26	16.3
7	has effective management practices supported by a strong student affairs system.	41	25.6	61	38.1	31	19.4	27	16.9

The fifth factor, the role of the student affairs system on school effectiveness is shown in Table 5.40. Of the 4 items, the single greatest stress was placed on item 4 (links with community support services and resources outside the school). Again, as with the results above, students did not show any strong preference regarding their own academic and personal needs as seen in the results for items 1, 2, and 3.

STATEMENTS My school has a student affairs system that...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	supports the development of students to their full potential.	36	22.5	64	40.0	42	26.3	18	11.3
2	addresses difficulties experienced by students effectively and efficiently.	27	16.9	69	43.1	42	26.3	22	13.8
3	is sensitive to individual students' needs and backgrounds.	26	16.3	61	38.1	44	27.5	29	18.1
4	links with community support services and resources outside the school.	52	32.5	44	27.5	36	22.5	28	17.5

On the sixth factor, Table 5.41 shows that resources have an impact in all 6 items of school effectiveness, more or less evenly distributed, with focus item 5 (there are other physical resources, such as educational resources, sporting equipment, library books, etc.). It should be of interest that item 6 dealing with timetable and subject choice arrangements showed the highest negative score of over 53%, suggesting that resources are not properly utilized in these areas of primary student concerns.

STATEMENTS In my school...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	parents and school board are satisfied with the allocation of resources and expenditure decisions.	28	17.5	60	37.5	44	27.5	28	17.5
2	there are sufficient administrative and supportive staff to meet the needs of the school.	27	16.9	67	41.9	44	27.5	22	31.8
3	the administrative staff know the students and their parents.	19	11.9	43	26.9	43	26.9	55	34.4
4	there is strong IT infrastructure with up-to-date technology.	19	11.9	46	28.8	47	29.4	48	30.0
5	There are other physical resources, such as. educational resources, sporting equipment, library books, etc.	38	23.8	46	28.8	52	32.5	24	15.0
6	students are satisfied with timetable and subject choice arrangements.	17	10.6	34	21.3	24	15.0	85	53.1

Results of the seventh factor regarding the role of curriculum on school effectiveness are shown in Table 5.42, with the highest importance on items 1 (range of learning experiences within and beyond key learning areas), and 4 (provides continuity from

year to year and is integrated across learning areas), followed by 5 (helps students to develop life skills, such as self-esteem, motivation and self-discipline). Surprisingly, the least important item of this factor is 2 (progresses the social, personal and physical development of students as well as their academic development). This again suggests that either the school is not doing enough or students are simply uninterested in this aspect of their schooling, which is hardly the case.

STATEMENTS In my school the curriculum...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not At all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	provides a range of learning experiences within and beyond the key learning areas.	48	30.0	66	41.3	25	15.6
2	progresses the social, personal and physical development of students as well as their academic development.	23	14.4	61	38.1	51	31.9	25	15.6
3	ensures that students develop a positive attitude to learning.	33	20.6	63	39.4	47	29.4	17	10.6
4	provides continuity from year to year and is integrated across learning areas.	42	26.3	60	37.5	36	22.5	22	13.8
5	helps students to develop life skills, such as self-esteem, motivation and self-discipline.	39	24.4	42	26.3	45	28.1	34	21.3

On the eighth factor of question 3 on the questionnaire, Table 5.43 indicates that assessment and reporting arrangements are important in the last 3 items out of 5, with item 5 being the most important (are undertaken in ways which support student learning and confidence), followed by item 4 (allow parents to observe and understand their children's progress) and item 3 (identify problem areas and ways to work on these in partnership with parents). Item 2 (lead to sound decisions about teaching approaches) was surprisingly weak for students.

STATEMENTS In my school assessment and reporting arrangements...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	provide clear and reliable information across the key learning areas and on the social development of students.	27	16.9	77	48.1	41	25.6
2	lead to sound decisions about teaching approaches.	22	13.8	73	45.6	47	29.4	18	11.3
3	identify problem areas and ways to work on these in partnership with parents.	41	25.6	42	26.3	40	25.0	37	23.1
4	allow parents to observe and understand their children's progress.	45	28.1	54	33.8	29	18.1	32	20.0
5	are undertaken in ways which support student learning and confidence.	47	29.4	57	35.6	31	19.4	25	15.6

The last factor on the last question on the questionnaire, the role of school policy on effectiveness was shown to be important and roughly equal for all 3 items, but with greater stress for item 3 (promotes a strong sense of community within the school) for students, as shown in Table 5.44.

STATEMENTS The school policy ...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not At all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	recognizes that partnerships between parents and teachers lead to better learning outcomes.	47	29.4	51	31.9	34	21.3
2	promotes school and teacher responsiveness to parents' views, inquiries and concerns.	40	25.0	55	34.4	40	25.0	25	15.6
3	promotes a strong sense of community within the school.	51	31.9	44	27.5	38	23.8	27	16.9

Students' rating of the effectiveness of their own schools is seen as important on all 4 items in varying strengths, as shown in Table 5.45. The vast majority of respondents (36.3%) placed their schools among the most effective schools in Al Madinah Educational Zone. This was buttressed by item 1 (the most effective school in Al-Madinah Educational Zone) by 25%, although about 27% consider their schools as effective as others in the said school district. However, about 12% of the student sample was highly critical of the effectiveness of their own schools as seen in item 4 (less effective than most other schools in Al Madinah Educational Zone).

STATEMENTS I think my school would be...		RATING	
		F	%
1	the most effective school in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	40	25.0
2	among the most effective schools in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	58	36.3
3	as effective as other schools in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	43	26.9
4	less effective than most other schools in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	19	11.9
Total		160	100%

5.2.4 Parents' Questionnaire Results

All 64 parents from all 8 PSP in Al Madinah Educational District responded to the questionnaire, as shown in Table 5.46. Half of the parents (50%) attained secondary and below education and the other half are holders of a BA degree.

	Category	Sub-category	F	%
1	Qualifications.	Below intermediate school education.	0	0
		Below secondary school education.	13	20.3
		Secondary Education Certificate.	19	29.7
		BA.	32	50
		Master's degree.	0	0
		Doctorate.	0	0
		Other.	0	0
2	School-Parent Committee Membership.	Member.	13	20.3
		Non-member.	51	79.7
3	Grades your children are in.	Grade two.	30	46.9
		Grade three.	34	53.1

None was below intermediate level and above MA degree educational achievement. Although all parents have children in PSP at both grades (46.9% and 53.1%, respectively), only a relatively small sample hold membership in the school parent committees (20.3%), with the vast majority of almost 80% being non-members. However, being fairly educated, they should hopefully provide for an informed response on the questionnaire items.

Parents' perception of question 1 of the questionnaire, on the role an effective school, indicates importance on all 15 items in varying strengths, as shown in Table 5.47. Combining the first two ranks of "Strongly agree" and "Agree", the strongest concerns are in items 1 (57 parents) (provide my son with good understanding of basic academic skills), 4 (52 parents) (provide my son with a caring and supportive environment), 6 (50 parents) (provide my son with the skills necessary to develop a healthy understanding of themselves and others). Parents' responses for the other items were roughly equally in weight at an over average of over 40 parents combined.

It should be noted that a very small percentage of parents felt otherwise, either because they did not fully understand the import of the items on the role of school effectiveness, or felt that they were not important. This might be the case because about half of the parents did not achieve secondary education or below that grade and therefore did not fully understand the factors that bear on the role of and effective school.

STATEMENTS I think an effective school will...		Strongly agree		Agree		Agree to some extent		Disagree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	provide my son with a good understanding of basic academic skills.	29	45.3	28	43.8	6	9.4
2	provide my son with the skills necessary for work market.	16	25.0	26	40.6	16	25.0	6	9.4
3	provide my son with the opportunity to develop leadership skills.	15	23.4	32	50.0	16	25.0	1	1.6
4	provide my son with a caring and supportive environment.	22	34.4	30	46.9	7	10.9	5	7.8
5	provide my son with the skills necessary to become productive and useful citizens.	27	42.2	19	29.7	15	23.4	3	4.7
6	provide my son with the skills necessary to develop a healthy understanding of themselves and others.	19	29.7	31	48.4	11	17.2	3	4.7
7	provide my son with a balanced curriculum that encourages a wide range of learning experiences.	16	25.0	30	46.9	16	25.0	2	3.1
8	provide my son with the opportunity to develop a value system that reflects the major values of society.	22	34.4	24	37.5	16	25.0	2	3.1
9	provide my son with teachers who reinforce community values and habits.	20	31.3	23	35.9	20	31.3	1	1.6
10	provide my son with an opportunity to be involved in the decision making processes within the school.	22	34.4	21	32.8	15	23.4	6	9.4
11	use a range of assessment strategies to identify my son's level of achievement.	16	25.0	26	40.6	17	26.6	5	7.8
12	provide me with regular reports about my son's achievements.	28	43.8	18	28.1	10	15.6	8	12.5
13	provide me with an opportunity to be involved in the development of school policies and processes.	18	28.1	24	37.5	14	21.9	8	12.5
14	respond to the needs of the local community.	18	28.1	24	37.5	13	20.3	9	14.1
15	secure high levels of formal attainment by students taking account of their capabilities'.	22	34.4	25	39.1	11	17.2	6	9.4

A further test was done to rank the role(s) of an effective school. Parents gave the highest priority to academic skills (item 1), with second weight to item 2 (work market), followed by leadership skills (item 3). All the other 12 items received less importance as shown in Table 5.48.

Table 5.48 - Parents' Ranking of the Role(s) of an Effective School											
	STATEMENTS <i>An effective school will...</i>	RANKING ACCORDING TO IMPORTANCE									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	provide my son with a good understanding of basic academic skills.	35	11	5	3		1	1	2		1
2	provide my son with the skills necessary for work market.	10	24	6	2			1	1	3	1
3	provide my son students with the opportunity to develop leadership skills.	5	10	19	4	2	1	4	1	1	
4	provide my son with a caring and supportive environment.	3	2	15	14	2	1	1	2		2
5	provide my son with the skills necessary to become productive and useful citizens.	3	1	5	8	12	4	4	1	2	4
6	provide my son with the skills necessary to develop a healthy understanding of themselves and others.	2	3	1	14	7	12	1	1	1	2
7	provide my son with a balanced curriculum that encourages a wide range of learning experiences.	1	3	2	3	18	8	7	2	2	2
8	provide my son with the opportunity to develop a value system that reflects the major values of society.		4	2	3	4	13	5	7	2	2
9	provide my son with teachers who reinforce community values and habits.			3	3	7	9	13	4	8	3
10	provide my son with an opportunity to be involved in the decision making processes within the school.		1	1	1	4	4	13	8	7	7
11	use a range of assessment strategies to identify my son's level of achievement.		1	1	2		5	5	12	8	5
12	provide me with regular reports about my son's achievements.		1		3	2	3	7	14	5	5
13	provide me with an opportunity to be involved in the development of school policies and processes.	1		3	2	2	2		5	12	8
14	respond to the needs of the local community.	1	2		1	1	1	1	2	9	10
15	secure high levels of formal attainment by students taking account of their capabilities'.	3	1	1	1	3		1	2	4	12
Total		64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64

Regarding question 2 of the questionnaire, the factors/elements of an effective school, parents perceive all 16 items as significant, as shown in Table 5.49. The four strongest items of concerns are, respectively, 1 (92.2%) (the importance of school goals), and 3 (92.2%) (well-trained, caring staff with positive attitudes), 2 (90.6%) (opportunity to develop leadership skills), and 5 (87.5%) (all students have the capacity to succeed and that staff and parent cooperation is crucial in student achievement). Parents are also concerned with instruction time and planned learning activities (item 7) and meeting Ministry of Education standards in academic programmes (item 15). Other parental concerns are roughly equal in strengths as shown in the table. The results show that parents are very serious with their children's education and the effectiveness of their schools.

Table 5.49 - Parents' Perceptions of the Factors/Elements of an Effective School					
STATEMENTS ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL I think in an effective school...		Important		Unimportant	
		F	%	F	%
1	Staff, students and the community know what the school goals are, and are able to express these goals.	59	92.2	5	7.8
2	Staff, parents and students in the school are given the opportunity to develop leadership skills.	58	90.6	6	9.4
3	Teachers are well-trained and show the skills of quality teaching. Teachers care about students' success in school, work as a team and exhibit positive attitudes towards their work.	59	92.2	5	7.8
4	Staff development programs are offered to the school staff that aim to promote the educational process.	49	76.6	15	23.4
5	Staff and parents believe that all students have the capacity to succeed and that staff and parent cooperation is crucial in student achievement.	56	87.5	8	12.5
6	The curriculum, instructional methods and assessment procedures within the school are all closely aligned to the basic goals that the students are expected to accomplish.	52	81.3	12	18.8
7	Teachers allocate a significant amount of time to instruct the students in the basic skills through engagement in planned learning activities.	54	84.4	10	15.6
8	Feedback on student academic progress is obtained frequently with the aim of improving student performance and assessing the success of the curriculum.	53	82.8	11	17.2
9	A lot of effort is made to identify and overcome learning difficulties.	53	82.8	11	17.2
10	The school environment is conducive to teaching and learning, and makes students feel secure.	50	78.1	14	21.9
11	Staff, students and parents are proud of their school and the people who work within it.	48	75.0	16	25.0
12	The school encourages parent involvement in decision-making and in following their children up at home.	51	79.7	13	20.3
13	Most of the decisions relating to school policy are made by the principal, teachers, students and parents.	51	79.7	13	20.3
14	The principal encourages teachers to take an active role in curriculum and school planning. Teachers provide appropriate activities to enhance students' learning.	53	82.8	11	17.2
15	The school is supported by the Ministry of Education and the Educational School District for the implementation of school programmes.	54	84.4	10	15.6
16	Teachers use strategies that will inspire students to learn.	46	71.9	18	28.1

A further test was done to rank the elements of an effective school. Parents accord the highest priority to the first 3 items in order, as shown in Table 5.50. The highest concern was for item 1 (school goals), followed by leadership skills (item 2) and then item 3 (well-trained teachers, teaching quality and positive attitude).

	STATEMENT ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL	RANKING ACCORDING TO IMPORTANCE									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		1	Staff, students and the community know what the school goals are, and are able to express these goals.	26	7	6	3	4		2	2
2	Staff, parents and students in the school are given the opportunity to develop leadership skills.	9	21	7	4	1	2	1	1	2	2
3	Teachers are well-trained and show the skills of quality teaching. Teachers care about students' success in school, work as a team and exhibit positive attitudes towards their work.	10	7	17	5	3	1	2	2	1	2
4	Staff development programs are offered to the school staff that aim to promote the educational process.	4	9	6	9	3	5	3	1	2	
5	Staff and parents believe that all students have the capacity to succeed and that staff and parent cooperation is crucial in student achievement.	5	2	8	10	11	3	4	2	2	3
6	The curriculum, instructional methods and assessment procedures within the school are all closely aligned to the basic goals that the students are expected to accomplish.	1	5	2	8	10	10	2	4	1	1
7	Teachers allocate a significant amount of time to instruct the students in the basic skills through engagement in planned learning activities.	1	1	3	9	7	12	5	2	3	4
8	Feedback on student academic progress is obtained frequently with the aim of improving student performance and assessing the success of the curriculum.		5	6	2	6	5	8	8	2	
9	A lot of effort is made to identify and overcome learning difficulties.	2	3	2	2		6	11	6	9	1
10	The school environment is conducive to teaching and learning, and makes students feel secure.	1	2	2		4	7	3	9	6	5
11	Staff, students and parents are proud of their school and the people who work within it.	3		1	2	5	2	7	5	5	3
12	The school encourages parent involvement in decision-making and in following their children up at home.			1	2	3	3	4	6	7	11
13	Most of the decisions relating to school policy are made by the principal, teachers, students and parents.		1			3	2	2	8	7	8
14	The principal encourages teachers to take an active role in curriculum and school planning. Teachers provide appropriate activities to enhance students' learning.	1			3	2	3	3	3	12	6
15	The school is supported by the Ministry of Education and the Educational School District for the implementation of school programmes.	1	1	2	3	1	1	5	3	4	6
16	Teachers use strategies that will inspire students to learn.			1	2	1	2	2	2		10
Total		64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64

Question 3 of the questionnaire contains nine specified factors of parents' perception on the role of principals on SE and SI. Table 5.51 indicates parents' perception all 9 items as roughly equally important with slightly greater weight given to the first factor (is qualified, competent and experienced in administration) on the role of school principals in the effectiveness of their children's schools, by combining the first two ranks, "To a great extent" and "To an average extent". For parents, principals have a major and important role to play in school effectiveness.

STATEMENTS In my son's school I think the PRINCIPAL...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	is qualified, competent and experienced in administration.	33	51.6	25	39.1	3	4.7
2	provides a leadership model to be followed by the school community.	29	45.3	27	42.2	6	9.4	2	3.1
3	strives to improve the school.	37	57.8	18	28.1	5	7.8	4	6.3
4	manages resources wisely.	33	51.6	21	32.8	6	9.4	4	6.3
5	works co-operatively with staff.	34	53.1	22	34.4	5	7.8	3	4.7
6	works co-operatively with parents.	34	53.1	18	28.1	7	10.9	5	7.8
7	promotes parent participation in school activities and student learning.	21	32.8	28	43.8	10	15.6	5	7.8
8	promotes high staff morale.	32	50.0	19	29.7	8	12.5	5	7.8
9	promotes continuous learning and development of staff.	33	51.6	22	34.4	6	9.4	3	4.7

STATEMENTS In my school I think the TEACHERS...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	are qualified and competent.	33	51.6	26	40.6	3	4.7
2	have positive attitudes and high morale.	31	48.4	26	40.6	5	7.8	2	3.1
3	are keen on achieving optimal student achievement.	30	46.9	27	42.2	5	7.8	2	3.1
4	develop students' critical thinking, problem solving and creativity.	28	43.8	25	39.1	8	12.5	3	4.7
5	are sensitive to individual students' needs.	19	29.7	33	51.6	9	14.1	3	4.7
6	welcome parent participation.	26	40.6	22	34.4	12	18.8	4	6.3
7	are interested in continuous learning and professional development.	22	34.4	28	43.8	10	15.6	4	6.3
8	have a wide range of skills.	20	31.3	32	50.0	9	14.1	3	4.7

Again, combining the results of the first two rankings, all 9 items of this second factor regarding the role of school teachers in the effectiveness of schools are seen as very important for parents, with the greatest weight given to items 1 (59 parents) (qualified and competent), 2 (57 parents) (positive attitude and high morale, and 3 (57 parents) (keen on achieving optimal student achievement) and being the top most essential, as shown in Table 5.52. All other items of this factor are seen as roughly equal in strength in terms of their importance. As with principals, parents perceive teachers and staff as very important to their children's educational success in effective schools.

On the third factor, Table 5.53 again indicates the perceptions of parents on school philosophy as being important on all 7 items, with the highest importance given to item 1 (involves high expectations for all students and teachers). All other items score roughly the same importance in weight of over 50 parents, when combining the first two ranks of “To a great extent” and “To an average extent”.

Table 5.53 - Parents' Perceptions of the Role of their School Philosophy in the Effectiveness of their Children's Schools									
STATEMENTS My son's school philosophy...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	involves high expectations for all students and teachers.	32	50.0	28	43.8	2	3.1	2	3.1
2	encourages students to work towards their personal best.	27	42.2	26	40.6	7	10.9	4	6.3
3	aims to develop the full potential of each individual intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically.	22	34.4	30	46.9	9	14.1	3	4.7
4	places an importance on the development of life skills and positive values and relationships.	24	37.5	32	50.0	5	7.8	3	4.7
5	recognizes that each student has different needs, background and aspirations.	24	37.5	27	42.2	10	15.6	3	4.7
6	values and welcomes students' diverse social and cultural backgrounds.	26	40.6	27	42.2	8	12.5	3	4.7
7	recognizes that education is a co-operative effort that involves teachers, students and parents.	30	46.9	26	40.6	4	6.3	4	6.3

Table 5.54 - Parents' Perceptions of the Role of their School Environment in the Effectiveness of their Children's Schools									
STATEMENTS My son's school environment...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	is stimulating for students to learn.	33	51.6	26	40.6	2	3.1	3	4.7
2	is secure and welcoming.	29	45.3	31	48.4	2	3.1	2	3.1
3	fosters positive relationships between school people.	28	43.8	27	42.2	7	10.9	2	3.1
4	promotes a sense of belonging and pride amongst students.	30	46.9	26	40.6	6	9.4	2	3.1
5	provides for student participation in aspects of school life.	22	34.4	29	45.3	8	12.5	5	7.8
6	has sensible rules that are clearly defined and enforced.	25	39.1	27	42.2	6	9.4	6	9.4
7	has effective management practices supported by a strong student affairs system.	32	50.0	20	31.3	6	9.4	6	9.4

Analysis of the fourth factor, parents’ perception on the role of school environment is shown in Table 5.54 for all 7 items. The first two being the most prominent: 1 (59 parents) (is stimulating for students to learn), 2 (60 parents) (is secure and welcoming), with items 4 (57 parents) (promotes a sense of belonging and pride amongst students) and 3 (55 parents) (fosters positive relationships between school people) being next. The other items are roughly equal in weight in terms of their importance, by combining the first two ranks of “To a great extent” and “To an

average extent”. In other words, parents strongly believe that the school environment has a very important role to play in school effectiveness.

Combining the first two ranks, the fifth factor, the school’s student affairs system, was seen as important on all 4 items by parents, as shown in Table 5.55. The most pressing concern for parents is item 2 (60 parents) (addresses difficulties experienced by students effectively and efficiently), followed closely by item 1 (59 parents) (supports the development of students to their full potential). The other two are roughly of equal importance. In other words, the role of the school’s student affairs system is important to school effectiveness for parents.

Table 5.55 - Parents' Perceptions of the Role of their School's Student Affairs System in the Effectiveness of their Children's Schools

STATEMENTS My son's school has a student affairs system that...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	supports the development of students to their full potential.	30	46.9	29	45.3	4	6.3	1	1.6
2	addresses difficulties experienced by students effectively and efficiently.	26	40.6	34	53.1	2	3.1	2	3.1
3	is sensitive to individual students' needs and backgrounds.	22	34.4	33	51.6	8	12.5	1	1.6
4	links with community support services and resources outside the school.	25	39.1	26	40.6	9	14.1	4	6.3

Table 5.56 - Parents' Perceptions of the Role of Resources in the Effectiveness of their Children's Schools

STATEMENTS In my son's school...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	parents and school board are satisfied with the allocation of resources and expenditure decisions.	26	40.6	25	39.1	11	17.2	2	3.1
2	there are sufficient administrative and supportive staff to meet the needs of the school.	22	34.4	32	50.0	8	12.5	2	3.1
3	the administrative staff know the students and their parents.	23	35.9	21	32.8	15	23.4	5	7.8
4	there is strong IT infrastructure with up-to-date technology.	25	39.1	25	39.1	8	12.5	6	9.4
5	the school has other physical resources e.g. educational resources, sporting equipment, library books.	27	42.2	24	37.5	12	18.8	1	1.6
6	a staff development and appraisal system is in place.	17	26.6	33	51.6	14	21.9	0	0
7	time is set aside for staff to do planning and program development.	20	31.3	29	45.3	12	18.8	3	4.7
8	class sizes are in line with system-wide guidelines.	21	32.8	30	46.9	8	12.5	5	7.8
9	students are satisfied with timetable and subject choice arrangements.	28	43.8	18	28.1	14	21.9	4	6.3

On the sixth factor, Table 5.56 reveals the perception of parents on the role of resources in the effectiveness of schools in all 9 items. Most prominent is item 2 (54 parents) (sufficient administrative and supportive staff to meet the needs of the school). All the other items are roughly equal in weight by combining the first two ranks of about an average of over 50 parents for each item. This again highlights the importance of resources on school effectiveness as seen by parents.

STATEMENTS In my son's school the curriculum...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	provides a range of learning experiences within and beyond the key learning areas.	27	42.2	29	45.3	4	6.3
2	progresses the social, personal and physical development of students as well as their academic development.	24	37.5	30	46.9	8	12.5	2	3.1
3	ensures that students develop a positive attitude to learning.	22	34.4	31	48.4	8	12.5	3	4.7
4	provides continuity from year to year and is integrated across learning areas.	27	42.2	27	42.2	6	9.4	4	6.3
5	helps students to develop life skills, such as self-esteem, motivation and self-discipline.	21	32.8	32	50.0	8	12.5	3	4.7

The seventh factor, the role of the curriculum is perceived by parents as important on all 5 items, as shown in Table 5.57, with all items being roughly equal in weight and a slight emphasis on item 1 (56 parents) (provides a range of learning experiences within and beyond the key learning areas). As with all other factors of SE and SI, the curriculum is considered a very important factor for parents.

STATEMENTS In my son's school assessment and reporting arrangements...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	provide clear and reliable information across the key learning areas and on the social development of students.	28	43.8	31	48.4	5	7.8
2	lead to sound decisions about teaching approaches.	15	23.4	41	64.1	7	10.9	1	1.6
3	identify problem areas and ways to work on these in partnership with parents.	20	31.3	31	48.4	11	17.2	2	3.1
4	allow parents to observe and understand their children's progress.	23	35.9	27	42.2	11	17.2	3	4.7
5	are undertaken in ways which support student learning and confidence.	25	39.1	28	43.8	8	12.5	3	4.7

On the eighth factor, Table 5.58 also shows that all 5 items on the role of assessment and reporting arrangements are considered important by parents. The most considerable weight was attributed to item 1 (59 parents) (provide clear and reliable information across the key learning areas and on the social development of students), followed by item 2 (56 parents) (lead to sound decisions about teaching approaches), when combining the first two ranks. The other three items being roughly equal in weight in terms of their importance.

The last factor of the last question on the questionnaire, the perceptions of parents on school policy in the effectiveness of schools, again, indicate importance on all 4 items, as shown in Table 5.59. They are roughly equal in weight but with more emphasis on item 1 (recognizes that partnerships between parents and teachers lead to better learning outcomes), when combining the first two ranks of “To a great extent” and “To an average extent”. This last factor, as with all others, consistently underscores the importance parents give to school policy with reference to school effectiveness.

STATEMENTS My son's school policy...		To a great extent		To an average extent		To a weak extent		Not at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	recognizes that partnerships between parents and teachers lead to better learning outcomes.	29	45.3	28	43.8	4	6.3
2	promotes school and teacher responsiveness to parents' views, inquiries and concerns.	21	32.8	32	50.0	8	12.5	3	4.7
3	supports the links with other schools, business, and voluntary and government organizations.	23	35.9	29	45.3	8	12.5	4	6.3
4	promotes a strong sense of community within the school.	26	40.6	27	42.2	3	4.7	8	12.5

As Table 5.60 shows, parents' ratings on the effectiveness of their children's schools indicate that they accord importance to all 4 items, but with much greater weight on item 1 (the most effective school in their zone.) Their vast majority (96.9%) view is that their children's schools are the most effective, among the most effective or as effective with the first 3 items combined. Only a very small percentage (3.1%) believes that their children's school is below the standard of other schools in effectiveness.

	Your rating of your son's school I think my son's school would be...	RATING	
		F	%
1	the most effective school in Al Madinah Educational Zone.	30	46.9
2	among the most effective schools in Al Madinah Educational Zone.	19	29.7
3	as effective as other schools in Al Madinah Educational Zone.	13	20.3
4	less effective than most other schools in Al Madinah Educational Zone.	2	3.1
	Total	64	100%

5.3 Item Analysis of the Semi-Structured Interviews of Principals

All 8 PSP principals were interviewed separately at different times in order to see if they would add new, different or in-depth information or emphasis to the items already contained in the questionnaire. For stress, some of them repeated very similar or the same information on instances on the same items, and some add new or different information to the study. In order to avoid repetition for each principal, the main findings of the semi-structured interviews for all principals will be summarised here according to the four main interview questions. For a summary of the interview results, see Appendix E. Moreover, it is interesting to note considerable overlaps in the principal responses on most questions, i.e., responses given in one question were again repeated for other questions, as will be seen.

Textual or hermeneutics approach were used to analyse the qualitative data obtained outside the questionnaire and accordingly weighted in importance. Regarding question 1 (What do you think is the pioneer schools' main role?), about 12 key concepts were used to define the role of PSPs: 1) provide leadership skills, 2) be a model for future schools, 3) take part in decision making, 4) more attractive than traditional schools, 5) have the best environment with vision and message, 6) utilize modern technology, 7) enhance all aspects of education and instruction, 8) achieve academic excellence, 9) make productive citizens, 10) fulfil society's needs, 11) meet labour market demands, and 12) gear students to meet current and future challenges, nationally and globally.

On question 2 (What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?), about 15 key factors of a PSP are identified: 1) suitable building with all equipment and facilities, 2) clear policy and objectives, 3) purposeful vision, 4) good planning, 5) good leadership, 6) good daily school administration, 7) high quality programmes, 8)

good schedules, 9) advance technology, 10) highly qualified and competent teachers, 11) ideal model professional teachers, staff and students, 12) implementation of quality assurance, 13) high school image and reputation, 14) parents' participation, 15) and adequate financial support.

Question 3 is: What are the factors/criteria that have made your school a pioneer school? Eleven main factors stand out: 1) pioneer distinguished educational leadership, 2) collective decision making, 3) strategic planning, 4) fully utilize potential and resources, 5) appropriate environment, 6) appropriate programmes, 7) highly qualified professional teachers with dedication and positive attitude, 8) state-of-the-art school building with advanced technology, IT and all necessary equipment and facilities, 9) modern and advanced teaching methods and techniques. 10) choice of distinguished students, 11) many students desire to enrol.

The last question (Show the role of the following seven specified elements in enhancing effectiveness and improvement of your school and making it a pioneer school) has 7 elements for which the responses will be presented under each respective heading in order:

a) School Administration

The main elements here are: 1) team work and partnership are central because success depends on all, 2) to understand the needs, psychological, social and practical circumstances of the people working at school, 3) create suitable atmosphere to achieve maximum work productivity, 4) careful selection of highly and educated professional school leadership plays the greatest role to lead and motivate team work, 5) to follow-up and deal with obstacles or problems, 6) democratic and not authoritarian orders, 7) clear, timely and effective communication.

b) Staff

Heavy stress was put on 1) staff must be morally committed, have full cooperation and be aware of students' needs and aspirations, 2) strive for academic excellence, 3) discipline and exemplary with high values, motivated and experienced, 4) make school attractive for students through modern educational methods, 5) the core and foundation of school's success, 6) require continuous professional development of the highest standards, 7)

reduction of teaching load, and 8) provide a bonus system for outstanding staff achievements.

c) Local Community

Pioneer schools need: 1) full cooperation, understanding, open debates and meaningful participation from the local community, 2) must help to eliminate obstacles to education, 3) strong ties between the school and the local community will lead to better results, 4) must lend both moral meaningful financial support to the school as an inseparable part of the community.

d) School Environment

The school environment must: 1) develop a sense of belonging and pride for students, 2) provide opportunities and educational programmes for students and teachers to participate, 3) be attractive and welcoming and be carefully prepared for students of a given age, 4) beautiful, clean, safe and healthy with positive atmosphere for fostering education, 5) be professional state school buildings with all facilities, not hired ones, and must be regularly maintained.

e) Curriculum

Principals believe that the curriculum must be: 1) the essential foundation and plays a key role to develop all aspects of the students' character including proper religious training along with the necessary academic and solid life skills, 2) designed to encourage students to critically analyze and elicit data, for interest and research, 3) not up to standard, needs serious review and updated to meet labour market demands and the challenges students are faced with today, 4) according to Ministry of Education standards.

f) School Vision and Message

Principals believe that the school vision and message should: 1) prepare a useful future generation for the country and international community, 2) have clarity and transparency with sound educational and instructional policy, 3) be presented from day one to students frequently remind them of them, 4) geared for the highest universal standards to prepare students to face future challenges, 5) be well understood by the school leader and staff, 6) must entail electronic teaching (smart class) for a promising generation with distinguishing outcomes.

g) The Educational Management

Principals believe that the educational management in schools: 1) should provide vital aid and assistance at all levels and in all aspects of the school operation with accompanying resources in order to do the best job, 2) is the life-blood of the school without which everything will be frozen, 3) should provide cooperation and hard work in order to make all district schools pioneer schools, 4) its current role is extremely limited and should be strengthened to the greatest extent for pioneer schools, 5) should provide training courses for staff professional development, technical support and financial support.

5.4 Item Analysis of the Focus Groups of Teachers, Students and Parents

The results of the focus groups for all the three remaining categories will be presented respectively: 1) Teachers' Focus Groups; 2) Students' Focus Groups; and 3) Parents' Focus Groups. The main findings will be summarised in order of the four main themes discussed on school effectiveness. For a detail account of the results of the focus groups, see Appendices F-H. Moreover, it is interesting to note considerable overlaps in the responses on most questions, i.e., responses given in one question were again repeated for other questions, as will be seen.

5.4.1 Teachers' Focus Groups Results

Only the main findings of teachers are presented here. For the full results of Teachers' Focus Groups, see Appendix F. Regarding question 1 (What do you think is the pioneer school's main role?), an extensive list of factors emerged. In the main, these include 10 basic items: 1) to apply new educational ideas/innovations in teaching including research; 2) to create an appropriate environment for modern teaching; 3) provide purposeful educational programmes for all aspects of the students' development; 4) embed strong discipline and respect for the opinions of others in open dialogues and debates; 5) provide distinguished students of the highest quality for society with both life and academic skills; 6) make education enjoyable, interesting and fun and support students' aspirations; 7) use of modern teaching and educational technology with all available facilities and resources; 8) cooperation among staff; 9) create beneficial activities and programmes including visits for

students to develop and unveil their hidden talents; 10) enrol only the most qualified students and seek balance between their abilities and needs.

Question 2 deals with the factors/elements that make a pioneer school. There are 14 core factors: 1) loyalty to school philosophy; 2) avoid bureaucratic measures and paper routine; 3) open-minded school administration qualified and well-trained with the necessary skills; 4) highly qualified, competent and motivated teachers; 5) beneficial curricula and non-curricula activities with a strong academic curriculum to match teaching time; 6) a unique school environment with modern building and excellent facilities and resources; 7) a sufficiently qualified support staff; 8) use of a variety of modern teaching methods and teaching aids; 9) the use of modern technology and equipment; 10) a small student number in a class; 11) regular teachers' training programmes; 12) strong support from the regional educational management; 13) strong support from the community/society; and 14) use of MMS and the electronic internet services.

Question 3 addresses what factors/criteria make your school a pioneer school. In the main, the list includes 14 factors: 1) applying the new secondary credit hours system; 2) close cooperation among teachers; 3) good cooperation between the school administration and teachers as one team work; 4) careful selection of students; 5) stable students; 6) teachers' control of the class; 7) new school building with all facilities, modern equipment and available resources, regularly maintained in good condition; 8) the headmaster/principal has the biggest role; 9) then the support the school receives from "The School's Graduates' Society"; 10) then the best teaching staff; 11) an effective school administration; 12) a variety of activities; 13) electronic teaching; 14) and flexible implementation of school regulations.

Question 4 (Show the role of the following seven elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school), addresses 7 items as follows:

a) School Administration

On this item, teachers emphasize 11 points: 1) make available all basic skills for a successful administration and wise utilization of manpower; 2) honesty as opposed to hypocrisy; 3) full awareness of educational and instructional styles; 4) discover and fully utilize the potentials of staff and urge teachers to

utilize technology in teaching; 5) cooperation and suitable work atmosphere; 6) remedy the under-achievement of some teachers by special techniques and training courses; 7) share decision making responsibilities; 8) match student enrolment with classroom size and available number; 9) moral and financial support; 10) mediator between the school and the community; 11) motivate and raise morale of teachers and staff to do their best.

b) Staff

The main concerns about staff are 6: 1) appropriately qualified and competent to deal with high technology teaching methods and aids in a modern classroom; 2) create the best work atmosphere for teachers; 3) do not threaten but trust in them; 4) staff must cooperate with the school administration and always interactive and available to the students; 5) staff must seek continuous professional development, be experienced, experts in their fields of specialization, take related training courses, have positive attitude and avoid traditional teaching methods (teacher-centred approach) and employ student-centred approach in modern teaching; 6) teachers must teach critical thinking, problem solving (emotional (child psychology), social and academic) new experiences to students.

c) Local Community

In the main, there are 5 concerns: 1) the local community should show positive attitude, work side by side, cooperate and offer moral and financial support the school and share in its responsibilities; 2) the school must take an interest as people do not even understand the role of the regular school and do not care, much less the pioneer school; 3) the school itself must meaningfully contribute to the community like the Pilgrim Gift programme to boost the lost dignity of teachers; 4) the School's Graduates' Society should be encouraged to play a big role in supporting the school and improving student grades; and 5) the community should imbibe enthusiasm and encourage the school and staff to pay attention to parents' concerns.

d) School Environment

Four elements are highlighted: 1) an attractive modern building and interactive atmosphere with all facilities, spacious classrooms, fully equipped labs, educational and advanced teaching resources, modern teaching aids, and sports complex that helps students learn; 2) small attractive class size in a safe,

clean and healthy school environment with properly maintained school properties; 3) embed a feeling of pride and affiliation through regulations, posters, and electronic boards; 4) an atmosphere that fosters excellent relations among staff, students and the community.

e) Curriculum

Six considerations include: 1) a comprehensive and dynamic curriculum with the Credit Hour System has a big and noticeable role in motivating the students and orienting them towards knowledge and learning science; 2) geared to the labour market and what benefits students to cope with modern innovations and challenges in life; 3) the curriculum should provide a rich variety of learning experiences and mould rounded student character; 4) an integrated curriculum with strong computer and IT skills of competitive world class standards with clear and definite goals and criteria which are measurable and flexible ; 5) a realistic curriculum to cope with teaching time and syllabus; and 6) practical and geared to develop students' different potentials and aspirations.

f) School Vision and Message

The four elements of vision and message must include: 1) it first emanate from sound Islamic teachings, morality, principles and philosophy to first gain the pleasure of Allah and then to proudly serve the nation and mankind with the highest ideals and values; 2) it should be clear and effective to assign the right person to the right position and prepare students for a bright future; 3) it must promote the highest standards of education integrated in scientific, psychological and behavioural outcomes to reflect the values of the school, society and the whole nation; and 4) it must teach cooperation, team work, loyalty, honesty and hard work to the sons of the nation.

g) The Educational Management

There are three major sets of concerns for the educational management: 1) play a more active and meaningful role and supply the schools with all they need, allocate them greater authority, autonomy and power, close cooperation, continuous follow-ups and evaluations, 2) should motivate and encourage teachers, stop finding faults and devaluing their work, provide updated and useful information, and ensure problems like large class size are solved, remove all obstacles, and support all school programmes; and 3) should be

more professional and sensitive and show flexibility and understanding and not rigidity and unrealistic idealism.

5.4.2 Students' Focus Groups Results

This section presents only the main findings of students. For a detailed account of the results of Students' Focus Groups, see Appendix G. Students addressed basically the same questions set as did principals and teachers, but with the first question being specific to them in choosing their respective schools. Their responses spread to 14 wide elements: 1) their parents made this decision for them; 2) it is close to their homes (home school); 3) other siblings are going there; 4) some of their friends go there; 5) it is the best school; 6) it is a popular school with high reputation; 7) it has a high academic/scientific standard; 8) the English language competency is excellent; 9) appropriate/best school/study environment; 10) it is a high-tech school with smart boards, smart classes, excellent curriculum; 11) it prepares us for going to university to advance ourselves; 12) it has the best teachers, the best building facilities, and the best courses; 13) it has better education than traditional schools; 14) and we were referred to it by the General Educational Management.

Regarding question 2 (What do you think is the pioneer school's main role?), the responses were widely spread to include 16 reasons: 1) to be better than the traditional schools in all respects; 2) to use modern technological teaching methods and resources (smart boards, smart classes, OHPs, computers) to encourage learning; 3) to provide a better selection of courses; 4) to prepare the foundation for higher education at university; 5) to produce distinguished students from the ordinary schools; 6) to be an example for the traditional schools in terms of the advanced educational systems and sophisticated teaching methods; 7) to provide society with students of high calibre to face the real world; 8) to greatly increase the body of knowledge to students; 9) provide an appropriate environment and atmosphere to facilitate learning; 10) to discover students' talents, tendencies, aspirations and skills and develop and employ them constructively; 11) to select only teachers of high competence; 12) to select top quality students only for enrolment in the school; 13) to remove obstacles and solve all problems students face; 14) to limit the number of students to a classroom; 15) to develop and pay close attention to all floors in the school like the first floor; 16) and to abolish the voluntary school fees which is being used influence registration.

Regarding the factors/elements that make a pioneer school (question 3), students posit 12 factors: 1) top selection of distinguished teachers; 2) pioneer schools must discover and develop students' skills and makes them reach their full potentials; 3) distinguished with good policy, good administration and strong organization and discipline; 4) full capacity to attract students and prepare them for university; 5) it should run development programmes; 6) select students with both the best behaviour and highest academic scores; 7) fewer modules and flexibility in course selection and repeating exams; 8) fewer class size; 9) use of advanced technology, modern teaching methods (electronic teaching – smart boards, smart classes, etc.) and excellent facilities and equipment; 10) more extra-curricular activities locally and regionally; 11) a suitable school building, the best environment and atmosphere; and 12) mutual communication and cooperation at all levels.

Question 4 deals with students' perception of the role of 7 elements on school effectiveness. Note that item "f" here and also for parents deals with "school rating" as opposed to "school mission and message" used for both principals and teacher, as follows:

a) School administration

Students perceive the following 8 points for an effective/pioneer school: 1) the administration is the backbone and core of the school and must be very qualified, competent, dedicated, progressive, flexible not too strict or formal and must be caring, kind and helpful; 2) teachers must have strong collegial relationship among themselves and good humanitarian relations with students; 3) the administration must provide staff for all sections in the school and should not cut vital services and must provide and maintain all facilities; 4) the principal is the most important person with cooperation of a qualified staff to run things, he must get out of his office and visit the other floors, not only stay on the first floor and he must delegate authority to staff and not keep it to himself alone; 5) the administration must interact with parents and be open for dialogue and welcoming; 6) the administration has to look after everything in the school operations including management, academics, time table/schedules, health problems, social matters, public affairs, conflicts and any problems the school is faced with; 7) it must attract the most qualified, competent and

experienced teachers and be provided with continual training courses; and 8) it should have an adequate budget so that it will not run out of school supplies.

b) Staff

Teachers must be the best, highly qualified and competent with a high degree of morality and cooperation to work in pioneer schools and they must treat students with respect and dignity; 2) teachers' needs must be met and they must be provided with an appropriate atmosphere and proper facilities and equipment and pre-service training for them to give their best; and 3) teachers should be given incentives and performance awards for excellence, high standards and outstanding performance.

c) Local community

Students express 3 main concerns: 1) the school must keep a close relation and communicate with the parents on a regular basis and not only when there is a problem; 2) close association with community organisations such as the Saudi Red Crescent and local Health Centre are productive and produce positive results; 3) society and all its institutions should play a major role and frequently visit the school through all means of communication and many programmes such as lectures and symposiums.

d) School environment

Students believe that the environment entails 2 main aspects: 1) a suitable building with adequate facilities (labs large classrooms, stocked library, etc.), services and modern equipment, shaded playgrounds, properly maintained without too much emphasis on external physical beauty and attention given only to the first floor while the upper floors are seriously neglected; and 2) smaller number of students in classrooms for a better learning atmosphere.

e) Curriculum

Students need 4 essential ingredients in the curriculum: 1) a good and flexible world-class curriculum with many choices and no errors inside, balanced between literary and scientific subjects, include both academic and non-academic subjects which should prepare students to enter university; 2) it must be modern and relevant to an advance high-tech world; 3) the curriculum must be realistic and match teaching/classroom time for it to be effective and useful; and 4) teachers must be well prepared, given courses and be fully conversant with the curriculum before teaching it.

f) School rating

Students rate their school widely in 4 general ways: 1) they are just like other schools with no difference; 2) they need multiple activities not just academic subjects; 3) some believe their schools are satisfactory, good, even excellent and even the best in the area in all respects; 4) they have too big class sizes and do not fulfil the standards and expectations of a pioneer school.

g) The educational management

Students believe that it is essentially the role of the Ministry of Education and its regional offices to do the following: 1) ensure that the pioneer schools functions properly according to high standards and of world-class; 2) meets all their needs, solves their problems and removes obstacles to education without delay; and 3) not be negative or criticize; 4) provide necessary help, guidance and direction but do not interfere too much in the school.

5.4.3 Parents' Focus Groups Results

As with other respondents, only the main findings of parents are presented here. For the full scope of the results of Parents' Focus Groups, see Appendix G. Regarding question 1 (Why have you registered your son in this school?), parents gave a wide range of answers which can be summarized in 10 points: 1) it has an excellent reputation among some students and parents; 2) it provides important preparations for students to enter university; 3) it has highly competent teachers, staff and a distinguished headmaster; 4) it is close to home and has an active follow-up staff with parents; 5) it has a suitable educational environment with extensive learning resources and innovative methods; 6) it shows due care and support to students not found in ordinary schools; 7) it undertakes important excursions and field visits; 8) it has a high academic level, modern teaching techniques, smart classes, excellent atmosphere and credit hour and examination system; 9) students are disciplined and develop self-confidence, leadership skills and allowed freedom of expression while respecting the opinions others; and 10) some of us teach/work there.

Question 2 deals with parents' perception of the pioneer schools' main role towards their sons. They note 3 focal points: 1) to give them the best, rounded and comprehensive education (academic, scientific, social and moral), the best future, make them effective and useful member of society, and develop themselves and the

country; 2) to start making them academically specialized from the secondary school stage to enter university; and 3) using modern technological resources for the best environment for children to learn and develop at a high level, with self-confidence and leadership skills.

Regarding question 3 (What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?), parents identified 12 sets of factors: 1) humanitarian and caring nature; 2) allow freedom of opinions among students and respect for the views of others; 3) a modern, sophisticated and technologically advanced learning atmosphere with a good building, a variety of educational resources, materials, equipment, and an excellent environment to foster learning and prepare students to enter university; 4) reduce class size to 20 students maximum to produce quality, not quantity with fair evaluation system, because progress in students reflects school effectiveness; 5) only qualified principals, teachers and staff must be chosen, along with only the best students (high social class and academic scores) allowed to enrol; 6) strong financial support from the regional educational management and the broader community; 7) to promote excellence, issue awards and honours to distinguished principals, teachers, staff and students for outstanding performance and accommodate disadvantaged/disabled students with great potentials; 8) lesson teachers' load so that they can perform better; 9) strong curriculum with educational visits to important places; 10) adopt clear policy, vision and goals with cooperative system of strong but flexible administration in discipline and attendance; 11) abolish the term "headmaster/principal" and use "educational leader" instead; and 12) form a school council and a parents' council for them to take part in decision making on all school matters.

Question 4 deals with the perception of parents on seven specified elements that affect school effectiveness as follows:

a) School administration

Four main points are noted: 1) the administration must seek to control the entire internal operations of the school in an effective way: 2) the principal is the main player who should treat everyone well in all respects (administratively, socially and humanely), ensure open communication, seek mutual cooperation and consultation on all important matters, not simply pass orders around, and do only what is right to serve the educational goals in the

interest of teachers, students and society; 3) first carefully select the best principal (highly qualified, competent and experienced) to run the school, and he in turn should carefully select his support staff and the best teachers and provide upgrade training courses to them to enhance their competence; and 4) staff must offer full support to implement school policies and programs.

b) Staff

Parents insist on 3 main comprehensive aspects: 1) highly qualified, competent, dedicated, enthusiastic, experienced and well-disciplined teachers are the backbone of any good school and make it effective; 2) teacher-parent communication is also very important to know how students are doing; 3) teachers, like parents, have a moral and legal responsibility to students, must be exemplary role models, professional, kind respectful and helpful to students and not insult or put them down.

c) Local community

Parents hold 4 broad opinions: 1) because they are too busy with work, their family or social matters, the school must make every effort to be in touch with them on a regular basis through all means of communication for them to know what is happening to play a better role; 2) parents are important because they give substantial financial contributions to schools to help make them effective; 3) students are mature and can take care of themselves which does not need close parental involvement, but a school-parent council is important for parents to meet once every term, increase communication and participate in their children's education because some parents are negative about school cooperation; and 4) the religious bodies, civil institutions, social agencies, the police, fire and health organizations and business community must all be encouraged to play a role in school effectiveness.

d) School environment

Four things stand out: 1) an excellent and beautiful environment (modern building, all facilities, resources and equipment) with students of high social class; 2) the location, landscape, playground, activity areas, cleanliness, safety and health are very important; 3) staff and quality of school administration are all part of the environment; and 4) an attractive environment and enjoyable atmosphere with interesting activities to encourage students to come to school and be proud of their school.

e) Curriculum

Most important are 4 wide aspects: 1) a small modern curriculum (not more than 7 subjects) with improved subjects/courses to lessen students' course load so that they can do better; 2) the curriculum is the most important element and the backbone in educational development and should be adopted only after careful study, planning and evaluation to include mostly analytic and scientific materials with beneficial outcomes; 3) the curriculum should have diversity and flexibility and encourage student creativity with all facilities to support it and tailored to teaching time; 4) it should include enjoyable activities and visits to factories and important places for educational benefits.

f) School rating

Parents hold 2 main concerns: 1) too strict evaluation system is good to a point to force students to study harder but can frustrate them if they do not show improvements or get full marks; and 2) the rating is excellent but needs improvement with regular monthly testing and evaluation systems to monitor students' academic progress.

g) The educational management

There are 7 important concerns: 1) it must have a plan and the mechanisms to implement that plan and make sure all standards are met; 2) the plan should embody providing the school with a distinguished headmaster and competent teachers, and supplying the school with all the necessary equipment, along with a strict follow-up scheme by the general educational management in the area; 3) set minimum teaching load standards for teachers and ensure only a small class size as some classes have in excess of 50 students which harm the education process; 4) to do frequent follow-ups, financially and morally support the school, remove obstacles, solve problems and recognize distinguished teachers and staff; 5) schools should be rated by the educational management among other schools to encourage and promote competition in achieving high standards in education; 6) accord schools more independence and autonomy to function to their full potentials without undue interference; and 7) the Ministry of Education should make sure that all schools are pioneer schools performing at the highest levels and producing the highest results.

5.5 Differences in Perceptions Among the Respondents on SE and SI

This section triangulates the findings of the study by a discussion of all respondents' opinions in two main aspects: 1) Questionnaire Results; and 2) Discussion of Semi-Structured Interviews of Principals, and Focus Groups Results of Teachers, Students and Parents.

5.5.1 Questionnaire Results

The first major notable difference between and among all the respondents, students excluded, is on demographic variables, starting with their educational background and level. Although principals are expected to have the highest educational levels for the position they hold, teachers have an overall higher educational level than their principal counterparts who have basically BA degrees only (Table 5.1). Not a single principal holds a PhD degree and only one holds an MA degree, while 2 teachers hold PhDs and 7 MA degrees (Table 5.16). Of the 64 parents, half are BA graduates and about 30% achieved Secondary School Certificates while the remaining 20% have only less than Secondary level education (Table 5.46). It is of interest that no parent holds an MA or PhD degree. This spread in education level among parents is, however, broadly representative of Saudi society.

The majority of principals were specialized in science, while roughly half of their teacher counterparts specialized in both literary and science. It is remarkable that no principal has less than 10 years experience and most of them boast over 15 years of educational experience. About 65% of teachers also boast 10 years minimum to over 15 years educational experience, with 22% having less between 5 and less than 10 years, while the remainder are recent graduates. It shows that the school selection of qualified and experience teachers is relatively outstanding. Almost a high 80% of qualified teachers had in-service training to work in Pioneer Schools, while only 65% of principals did so. Because of the new pioneering school concept, it would be better if all teachers and principals require in-service training to work in pioneer schools to improve school effectiveness.

Regarding perception of the role of an effective school, the vast majority of principals' believe that 14 out of 15 items tested for (Table 5.2), were considered very important for school effectiveness. As educators, it is not surprising that on all 15

items, teachers also indicated a strong support for this factor's role on SE and SI, (Table 5.17). Even the perception of students showed strong importance on all 15 items (Table 5.32), with a slight showing for the job market item. And as expected parents followed suit (Table 5.47). It should be noted that although overall all four respondent groups are in full agreement on the role of an effective school, some of them gave greater weights to some of the 15 items they scored

Interestingly, principals ranked four out of 15 items (1, 2, 3, and 5) very highly regarding the role of an effective school on SE and SI, with no discernable emphasis on item 4 (caring and supportive environment) (Table 5.3). Teachers on the other hand, ranked the first 5 items highly (Table 5.18), with considerable weight on item one (teachers and students knowledge and expression of school goals). Students' perception on SE role was ranked highest for the first 5 items, as with principals and teachers, but with very pronounced emphasis on items 1 (basic academic skills) and 2 (necessary job market skills) (Table 5.33), while parents rank on SE showed prominence only on the first 3 items, with considerably greater emphasis on item 1 (basic academic skills), followed by item 2 (work market) (Table 5.48).

Regarding the factors/elements of an SE and SI, principals' perceptions indicate strong importance for all 16 items (Table 5.4) with a leading edge over teachers who also showed strong importance for all items of this factor (Table 5.19). Students, perception show significance on all items (Table 5.34), while parents could not agree more (Table 5.49). The results consistently show that there was overall agreement on the importance of this factor but each respondent group gave different weights to different items.

Principals' ranking of the factors/element of an SE and SI, shows no real stress on importance, as the results are thinly spread out, but interestingly, items 5 (instruction time and planned learning activities) and 15 (compliance with the Ministry of Education programmes) received a significantly low score of 7 by 3 principals (Table 5.5). On the same issue, teachers stress 3 items only: 1 (school goals) and 2 (leadership skills) ranked the highest; and 3 (well-trained teachers and, care for students' success) following suit. All the other 13 items did not rank highly for teachers (Table 5.20). Students emphasize the first 4 items: 1 (school goals); 2

(development of leadership skills); 3 (well-trained teachers and quality teaching); and 4 (all students have the capacity to succeed). The other 11 items do not seem to matter much to students (Table 5.35). Parents accord the highest priority to the first 3 items: 1 the highest concern (school goals); followed by 2 (leadership skills); and then 3 (well-trained teachers, teaching quality and positive attitude (Table 5.50). The results again highlight that teachers, students and parents not only have different priorities regarding SE and SI than principals, but may be consistently ahead of them.

Not surprisingly, principals' perception of their own role on SE and SI indicates overwhelmingly strong importance for all 9 items (Table 5.6), with a clear edge over teachers' perception. Teachers consistently indicate strong importance for all the items concerning the role of principals on SE and SI (Table 5.21). As Table 5.36 shows for students, the first 5 items out of 7 are deemed important, with the greatest stress on item with items 3 (strives to improve the school), 5 (works co-operatively with staff) and 1 (is qualified, competent and experienced in administration) being the most important, respectively. As with all other respondents, parents' perception all 9 items is roughly equally in importance with slightly greater weight given to the first factor (is qualified, competent and experienced in administration) on the role of school principals in the effectiveness of their children's schools (Table 5.51). Again, all respondents seem to accord a very high importance on this factor regarding SE and SI.

Principals' perception of the role of the teachers indicates a relatively very high score on all 9 items. Teachers should have a positive attitude and high morale as an important element of an effective school. Other aspects, including proper qualifications and competency are interestingly not considered significant (Table 5.7). As naturally expected, teachers themselves believe their own role on all 9 items is important to a great extent for the effectiveness of their own schools, with a clear showing (57.5%) on item 3 regarding commitment and dedication (am keen on achieving optimal student achievement) (Table 5.22). Along the same lines, students gave full importance to all 8 items regarding the role of teachers/staff in school effectiveness with the highest level of importance was given to item 3 (are keen on achieving optimal student achievement) (Table 5.37). The role of school teachers in the effectiveness of schools is seen as very important for parents, with the greatest

weight given to items 1 (59 parents) (qualified and competent) (Table 5.52). Again, overall, all four respondent categories stressed the importance of this factor on SE and SI.

Principals' perception on the impact of school philosophy on school effectiveness ranks very highly on all 7 items (Table 5.8) Teachers likewise strongly gave school philosophy, for all 7 items, an important role on the effectiveness of their schools (Table 5.23). Students followed suit but with the single greatest stress on item 1 (high expectations for all students and teachers), followed by item 2 (encourages students to work towards their personal best), and items 3 (aims to develop the full potential of each student intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically) and 7 (recognizes that education is a co-operative effort that involves teachers, students and parents) (Table 5.38). The perceptions of parents also indicated strong importance on all 7 items, with the highest importance given to item 1 (involves high expectations for all students and teachers) (Table 5.53).

Of the four respondent categories, the strongest stance was taken by principals' perception on the role of the school environment on SE and SI. Most pronounced are items 3 (fostering positive relationships between school people) and 2 (is secure and welcoming) and 4 (promotes a sense of belonging and pride among students in school) (Table 5.9). As with principals, teachers perceive this factor to be as very important for all 7 items (Table 5.24). Along the same lines, students affirm the importance of school environment on SE and SI, but with pronounced stress on items 4 (promotes a sense of belonging and pride amongst students in the school), and 2 (secure and welcoming) (Table 5.39). For all 7 items of this factor, parents consider the school environment as very important, with the first two items being the most prominent: 1 (is stimulating for students to learn), 2 (is secure and welcoming) (Table 5.54).

All principals are agreed that the school's student affairs system is not irrelevant to SE and SI on all 4 items with a slight heavier consideration was given to item 3 (is sensitive to individual student's needs and background (Table 5.10). Indeed, the vast majority of teachers as with their principal counterparts felt very strongly on the issue of the school's student affairs system on SE and SI, giving the greatest emphasis on

item 1 (supports the development of students to their full potential) (Table 5.25). Of the 4 items, students placed the single greatest stress on item 4 (links with community support services and resources outside the school), and they did not show any strong preference regarding their own academic and personal needs as seen in the results for items (Table 5.40). Parents, as with all other respondent categories, view as important all 4 items. The most pressing concern for them is item 2 (addresses difficulties experienced by students effectively and efficiently), followed closely by item 1 (supports the development of students to their full potential) (Table 5.55).

Principals' perception on the role of resources on the effectiveness of schools were relatively high, particularly for item 3 (the administrative staff know the students and their parents), followed by items 5 (the school has other physical and material resources); 8 (class sizes are in line with system-wide guidelines); and 9 (students are satisfied with timetable and subject choice arrangements) (Table 5.11). Again, teachers consistently stand with their principal counterparts on the importance of the role of resources on SE and SI, but with principals showing greater strength (Table 5.26). Students also believe that all 6 items of school effectiveness, with emphasis on item 5 (there are other physical resources, such as educational resources, sporting equipment, library books, etc.) have an impact on SE and SI. Of interest, though, item 6 dealing with timetable and subject choice arrangements showed the highest negative score of over 53%, suggesting that resources are not properly utilized in these areas of primary student concerns (Table 5.41). Along the same lines, parents also indicate a strong stance on the role of resources in the effectiveness of schools in all 9 items. Most prominent is item 2 (sufficient administrative and supportive staff to meet the needs of the school) (Table 5.56).

Principals hold the very strong perception that the curriculum is a very important factor in school effectiveness on all 5 items. An effective school must have a strong, relevant and appropriate curriculum for it to be truly effective (Table 5.12). Teachers also considered as very important all 5 items, with the highest priority given to items 1 (provide a range of learning experiences within and beyond the key learning areas); and 3 (ensures that students develop a positive attitude to learning), but principals were again clearly ahead of their teaching staff in rating this factor (Table 5.27). Students also gave a strong showing on this factor with the highest importance on

items 1 (range of learning experiences within and beyond key learning areas), and 4 (provides continuity from year to year and is integrated across learning areas), followed by 5 (helps students to develop life skills, such as self-esteem, motivation and self-discipline). Surprisingly, the least important item of this factor is 2 (progresses the social, personal and physical development of students as well as their academic development) (Table 5.42). Not surprising also, parents perceived this factor as important on all 5 items, with a slight emphasis on item 1 (provides a range of learning experiences within and beyond the key learning areas) (Table 5.57).

Principals have a strong opinion that assessment and reporting arrangements constitute a priority in school effectiveness on all 5 items (Table 5.13). Along the same lines, teachers also considered important all 5 items of this factor to an effective school, but principals were clearly ahead of teachers on this factor (Table 5.28). Table 5.43 indicates that for students, the assessment and reporting arrangements are important in the last 3 items out of 5, with item 5 being the most important (are undertaken in ways which support student learning and confidence). Item 2 (lead to sound decisions about teaching approaches) was surprisingly weak for students. Table 5.58 also shows that all 5 items on the role of assessment and reporting arrangements are considered important by parents. The most considerable weight was attributed to item 1 (provide clear and reliable information across the key learning areas and on the social development of students), followed by item 2 (lead to sound decisions about teaching approaches). Thus, all four respondent categories felt strongly about this factor on SE and SI.

Table 5.14 shows that virtually all principals agree that school policy is important to a great extent on all four items for school effectiveness. Teachers also followed suit by considering all 4 policy items as very important. Again, while principals took the lead, it is interesting that teachers gave the strongest stance on item 1 (recognizes that partnerships between parents and teachers lead to better learning outcomes) (Table 5.29). Students joined the ranks of principals and teachers in support of all 3 items of this factor, but with greater stress on item 3 (promotes a strong sense of community within the school) (Table 5.44). Parents also indicated strong importance on all items, but with more emphasis on item 1 (recognizes that partnerships between parents and teachers lead to better learning outcomes) (Table 5.59).

Not surprisingly, all 8 principals believe that their schools are the most effective or among the most effective PSPs in Al Madinah Educational Zone, as shown (Table 5.15). Table 5.30 shows that most teachers perceive the effectiveness of their schools in the first 3 out of 4 items: being most effective; among the most effective; and as effective. Whereas, some teachers expressed reservation about the superiority of their schools' effectiveness only a very small percent see their own schools as were sub-standard than most other schools. Students' rating of the effectiveness of their own schools is seen as important on all 4 items, with the vast majority who placed their schools among the most effective and the most effective school in Al-Madinah Educational Zone. However, about 12% of students perceived their school as less effective than most other schools in Al Madinah Educational Zone) (Table 5.45). Overall, parents' gave a very high rating on the effectiveness of their children's schools on all 4 items, but with much greater weight on the most effective school in their zone, among the most effective or as effective. Only a very small percentage believed that their children's school is below the standard of other schools in effectiveness (Table 5.60).

By and large, while academic achievements remain a constant concern for principals, as the highest ranking school administrator, they, as expected, place stronger emphasis on educational management and administrative issues in PSPs with a focus on the labour market requirements for their graduates. On the other hand, teachers seem more focussed on academic matters, school activities and student concerns in general. This perception was also shared by students themselves who also care about the attention given to school facilities. Parents sought a well-rounded education for their children, not limited to purely academic achievements only and would like to see their children be prepared to enter universities after successfully completing their PSP years.

5.5.2 Discussion of Semi-Structured Interviews of Principals, and Focus Groups Results of Teachers, Students and Parents

To continue the triangulation, four main question sets on SE and SI were discussed with principals, teachers, students and parents. This section examines the differences in perceptions of these respondents, noting that question 1 for principals and teachers are the same, whereas question 1 for students and parents as stakeholders are different

and will be dealt with separately from that of principals and teachers. However question 2 for students and parents are basically the same as question 1 for principals and teachers and will be treated together. Question 2 for principals and teachers correspond to question 3 for students and parents and will be discussed together. Question 3 for principals and teachers are unique to them and will be addressed separately. The last question for all respondents is essentially the same and will be discussed together. To facilitate the discussion, tables will represent the respective positions of the respondent categories for interviews and focus groups respectively with no special ranking of the items. It should be noted that some points are mixed or clustered with others for some respondents, whereas for others they are presented as separate items.

On the issue of the pioneer school's main role (Q1 for principals and teachers and Q2 for students and parents), the principals' interviews and focus groups of the other respondents show pronounced agreement on some items of SE and SI and disagreement of others as shown in Tables 5.61, 5.62, 5.63, and 5.64.

Table 5.61 – Principals' Position on the Pioneer School's Main Role	
Items	Description of Roles
1	provide leadership skills
2	be a model for future schools
3	(for staff to) take part in decision making
4	more attractive than traditional schools
5	have the best environment with vision and message
6	utilize modern technology
7	enhance all aspects of education and instruction
8	achieve academic excellence
9	make productive citizens
10	fulfil society's needs
11	meet labour market demands
12	gear students to meet current and future challenges, nationally and globally

As shown, principals identify 16 main roles of the pioneer schools as elements of SE and SI (Table 5.61) and outstrip teachers who see 10 main roles. As expected, principals stress leadership and administrative roles, among others, whereas teachers focus primarily on academic issues, modern educational practices, programs and activities, and environmental educational factors, while opting to enrol only the best students (Table 5.61). But principals place more emphasis than teachers on the issues

of labour market, national and global requirements, thus highlighting a broader role of PSPs for principals than for teachers.

Table 5.62 – Teachers’ Position on the Pioneer School’s Main Role	
Items	Description of Roles
1	to apply new educational ideas/innovations in teaching including research
2	to create an appropriate environment for modern teaching
3	provide purposeful educational programmes for all aspects of the students’ development
4	embed strong discipline and respect for the opinions of others in open dialogues an debates
5	provide distinguished students of the highest quality for society with both life and academic skills
6	make education enjoyable, interesting and fun and support students’ aspirations
7	use of modern teaching and educational technology with all available facilities and resources
8	cooperation among staff
9	create beneficial activities and programmes including visits for students to develop and unveil their hidden talents
10	enrol only the most qualified students and seek balance between their abilities and needs

Table 5.63 – Students’ Position on the Pioneer School’s Main Role	
Items	Description of Roles
1	to be better than the traditional schools in all respects
2	to use modern technological teaching methods and resources (smart boards, smart classes, OHPs, computers) to encourage learning
3	to provide a better selection of courses
4	to prepare the foundation for higher education at university
5	to produce distinguished students from the ordinary schools
6	to be an example for the traditional schools in terms of the advanced educational systems and sophisticated teaching methods
7	to provide society with students of high calibre to face the real world
8	to greatly increase the body of knowledge to students
9	provide an appropriate environment and atmosphere to facilitate learning
10	to discover students’ talents, tendencies, aspirations and skills and develop and employ them constructively
11	to select only teachers of high competence
12	to select top quality students only for enrolment in the school
13	to remove obstacles and solve all problems students face
14	to limit the number of students to a classroom
15	to develop and pay close attention to all floors in the school like the first floor
16	and to abolish the voluntary school fees which is being used influence registration

As shown in Table 5.63, students perceive 12 main roles of a pioneer school, most of which coincide with principals and teachers, but added: 1) vital preparation to enter university, 2) development of students’ talents,3) lower class size, 4) paying greater attention to the other floors which are not properly maintained and kept, and 5) abolishing fees. Parents identify 3 wide roles, most of which overlap with other respondents, but added a call for early specialization. Their focus is on good rounded, comprehensive modern education at an early stage in PSPs as shown in Table 5.64.

Table 5.64 – Parents’ Position on the Pioneer School’s Main Role	
Items	Description of Roles
1	to give them the best, rounded and comprehensive education (academic, scientific, social and moral), the best future and make them effective and useful member of society and develop themselves and the country
2	to start making them academically specialized from the secondary school stage to enter university
3	using modern technological resources for the best environment for children to learn and develop at a high level, with self-confidence and leadership skills

Regarding question 1 for both students and parents, their slant was based primarily on a different focus, the reasons for enrolling in a pioneer school, as shown in Tables 5.65 and 5.66.

Table 5.65 – What are Your Reasons for Enrolling in a Pioneer School	
Items	Description of Reasons
1	their parents made this decision for them
2	it is close to their homes (home school)
3	other siblings are going there
4	some of their friends go there
5	it is the best school
6	it is a popular school with high reputation
7	it has a high academic/scientific standard
8	the English language competency is excellent
9	appropriate/best school/study environment
10	it is a high-tech school with smart boards, smart classes, excellent curriculum
11	it prepares us for going to university to advance ourselves
12	it has the best teachers, the best building facilities, and the best courses
13	it has better education than traditional schools
14	and we were referred to it by the General Educational Management

Table 5.66 – Why have You Registered Your Son in a Pioneer School	
Items	Description of Reasons
1	it has an excellent reputation among some students and parents
2	it provides important preparations for students to enter university
3	it has highly competent teachers, staff and a distinguished headmaster
4	it is close to home and has an active follow-up staff with parents
5	it has a suitable educational environment with extensive learning resources and innovative methods
6	it shows due care and support to students not found in ordinary schools
7	it undertakes important excursions and field visits
8	it has a high academic level, modern teaching techniques, smart classes, excellent atmosphere and credit hour and examination system
9	students are disciplined and develop self-confidence, leadership skills and allowed freedom of expression while respecting the opinions others
10	some of us teach/work there

Students have generally agreed with their parents' choice or decision to attend a particular school, followed by the fact that it is their home schools or close to home. The enrollment choice is completely in line with expectations of a traditional society where parents play a major role in their children's future. Of significance students add new or different reasons than their parents: 1) other siblings go there, 2) friends go there, 3) it has high English language competency, and 4) referral by the General Educational Management, which is a regional branch of the Ministry of Education.

Of significance, parents highlight discipline, self-confidence, leadership skills and freedom of expression and respecting the opinions others as important reasons that students did not mention. It is, moreover, significant to note that some of these reasons overlap with question 1 for principals and teachers, and question 2 for students and parents regarding their perceptions on the main role of pioneer schools. Indeed, overlaps are common and run right through these qualitative data collection methods. In other words, some views or opinions are common among the respondents.

Items	Description of Factors/Elements
1	suitable building with all equipment and facilities
2	clear policy and objectives
3	purposeful vision
4	good planning
5	good leadership
6	good daily school administration
7	high quality programmes
8	good schedules
9	advance technology
10	highly qualified and competent teachers
11	ideal model professional teachers, staff and students
12	implementation of quality assurance
13	high school image and reputation
14	parents' participation
15	adequate financial support

The results of questions 2 for principals and teachers and 3 for students and parents regarding the factors/elements of SE and SI are presented in Tables 5.67, 5.68, 5.69 and 5.70. Principals identify of 15 factors, teachers 14, and both students and parents 12 each. As expected, principals stress administrative matters among other academic issues and add quality assurance and financial support, whereas teachers stress the management style and attitude of the administration, along with academic issues and

add small class size, regular teachers training programmes, and support from the regional educational management, support from the community, and the use of MMS and the electronic internet services also as important factors.

Table 5.68 – Teachers’ Position on the Factors/Elements of a Pioneer School	
Items	Description of Factors/Elements
1	loyalty to school philosophy
2	avoid bureaucratic measures and paper routine
3	open-minded school administration qualified and well-trained with the necessary skills
4	highly qualified, competent and motivated teachers
5	beneficial curricula and non-curricula activities with a strong academic curriculum to match teaching time
6	a unique school environment with modern building and excellent facilities and resources
7	a sufficiently qualified support staff
8	use of a variety of modern teaching methods and teaching aids
9	the use of modern technology and equipment
10	a small student number in a class
11	regular teachers’ training programmes
12	strong support from the regional educational management
13	strong support from the community/society
14	use of MMS and the electronic internet services

Students concur with most of what principals and teachers have to say, but add: 1) make students reach their full potentials, 2) select the best students, preparing students for university, and 3) provide development programmes for students. Parents concur with some of what all previous respondents say, but add: 1) humanitarian and caring nature, 2) respect for freedom of opinions, 3) highly qualified principals, 4) recognition and honours awards to promote excellence, 5) lesson teachers’ load, and 6) parents share in the decision making process.

Table 5.69 – Students’ Position on the Factors/Elements of a Pioneer School	
Items	Description of Factors/Elements
1	top selection of distinguished teachers
2	pioneer schools must discover and develop students’ skills and makes them reach their full potentials
3	distinguished with good policy, good administration and strong organization and discipline
4	full capacity to attract students and prepare them for university
5	it should run development programmes
6	select students with both the best behaviour and highest academic scores
7	fewer modules and flexibility in course selection and repeating exams
8	fewer class size
9	use of advanced technology, modern teaching methods (electronic teaching – smart boards, smart classes, etc.) and excellent facilities and equipment
10	more extra-curricular activities locally and regionally
11	a suitable school building, the best environment and atmosphere
12	mutual communication and cooperation at all levels

Question 3 for principals and teachers deals with specific factors/criteria that have made their particular schools pioneer schools, as shown in Tables 5.71 and 5.72. This question is unique as it was not addressed to student and parents. Principals cite 11 factors that make their schools pioneer schools stressing: 1) distinguished administration to modern and advanced teaching resources, 2) facilities and methods, 3) distinguished student to high student desire to enrol at their schools. Teachers concur with most of what principals claim, but add: 1) the new credit hours system, 2) close cooperation among teachers, 3) stable students, teachers' control of the class, 4) a variety of activities, and 5) flexible implementation of school regulations.

Table 5.70 – Parents' Position on the Factors/Elements of a Pioneer School	
Items	Description of Factors/Elements
1	humanitarian and caring nature
2	allow freedom of opinions among students and respect for the views of others
3	a modern, sophisticated and technologically advanced learning atmosphere with a good building, a variety of educational resources, materials, equipment, and an excellent environment to foster learning and prepare students to enter university
4	reduce class size to 20 students maximum to produce quality, not quantity with fair evaluation system, because progress in students reflects school effectiveness
5	only qualified principals, teachers and staff must be chosen, along with only the best students (high social class and academic scores) allowed to enrol
6	strong financial support from the regional educational management and the broader community
7	to promote excellence, issue awards and honours to distinguished principals, teachers, staff and students for outstanding performance and accommodate disadvantaged/disabled students with great potentials
8	lessen teachers' load so that they can perform better
9	strong curriculum with educational visits to important places
10	adopt clear policy, vision and goals with cooperative system of strong but flexible administration in discipline and attendance
11	abolish the term "headmaster/principal" and use "educational leader" instead
12	form a school council and a parents' council for them to take part in decision making on all school matters

Table 5.71 – Principals Position on What Factors/Criteria Make <u>Your School</u> a Pioneer School	
Items	Description of Factors/Criteria
1	pioneer distinguished educational leadership
2	collective decision making
3	strategic planning
4	fully utilize potential and resources
5	appropriate environment
6	appropriate programmes
7	highly qualified professional teachers with dedication and positive attitude
8	state-of-the-art school building with advanced technology, IT and all necessary equipment and facilities
9	modern and advanced teaching methods and techniques
10	choice of distinguished students
11	many students desire to enrol

Items	Description of Factors/Criteria
1	applying the new secondary credit hours system
2	close cooperation among teachers
3	good cooperation between the school administration and teachers as one team work
4	careful selection of students
5	stable students
6	teachers’ control of the class
7	new school building with all facilities, modern equipment and available resources, regularly maintained in good condition
8	the headmaster/principal has the biggest role
9	then the support the school receives from “The School’s Graduates’ Society”
10	then the best teaching staff
11	an effective school administration
12	a variety of activities
13	electronic teaching
14	flexible implementation of school regulations

Question 4 is common to all respondents dealing with seven specified elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school, as shown in Tables 5.73, 5.74, 5.75, and 5.76.

Items	Description of the Role of School Administration
1	team work and partnership are central because success depends on all
2	to understand the needs, psychological, social and practical circumstances of the people working at school
3	create suitable atmosphere to achieve maximum work productivity
4	careful selection of highly and educated professional school leadership plays the greatest role to lead and motivate team work
5	to follow-up and deal with obstacles or problems
6	democratic and not authoritarian orders
7	clear, timely and effective communication

Items	Description of the Role of School Administration
1	make available all basic skills for a successful administration and wise utilization of manpower
2	honesty as opposed to hypocrisy
3	full awareness of educational and instructional styles
4	discover and fully utilize the potentials of staff and urge teachers to utilize technology in teaching
5	cooperation and suitable work atmosphere
6	remedy the under-achievement of some teachers by special techniques and training courses
7	share decision making responsibilities
8	match student enrolment with classroom size and available number
9	moral and financial support
10	mediator between the school and the community
11	motivate and raise morale of teachers and staff to do their best

Principals identify 7 items, all of which greatly emphasize beneficial administrative policies, ethics and practices conducive to the creation of a suitable atmosphere for increased productivity. Teachers generally agree but stress and add other roles: 1) make available all resources to do the job, 2) honesty as opposed to hypocrisy, 3) remedy the under-achievements of some teachers, 4) match student enrolment with classroom size and number, 5) moral and financial support, and 6) establish mediator between school and the community.

Items	Description of the Role of School Administration
1	the administration is the backbone and core of the school and must be very qualified, competent, dedicated, progressive, flexible not too strict or formal and must be caring, kind and helpful
2	teachers must have strong collegial relationship among themselves and good humanitarian relations with students
3	the administration must provide staff for all sections in the school and should not cut vital services and must provide and maintain all facilities
4	the principal is the most important person with cooperation of a qualified staff to run things, he must get out of his office and visit the other floors, not only stay on the first floor and he must delegate authority to staff and not keep it to himself alone
5	the administration must interact with parents and be open for dialogue and welcoming
6	the administration has to look after everything in the school operations including management, academics, time table/schedules, health problems, social matters, public affairs, conflicts and any problems the school is faced with
7	it must attract the most qualified, competent and experienced teachers and be provided with continual training courses
8	it should have an adequate budget so that it will not run out of school supplies

Items	Description of the Role of School Administration
1	the administration must seek to control the entire internal operations of the school in an effective way
2	the principal is the main player who should treat everyone well in all respects (administratively, socially and humanely), ensure open communication, seek mutual cooperation and consultation on all important matters, not simply pass orders around, and do only what is right to serve the educational goals in the interest of teachers, students and society
3	first carefully select the best principal (highly qualified, competent and experienced) to run the school, and he in turn should carefully select his support staff and the best teachers and provide upgrade training courses to them to enhance their competence
4	staff must offer full support to implement school policies and programs

While generally agreeing with principals and teachers, students express sweeping and comprehensive administrative roles with emphasis on: 1) dedicated and progressive administration – flexible, not too strict or formal, caring, kind and helpful; 2) provide staff to all sections and not cut vital services and provide and maintain all facilities;

and 3) the principal must get out of his office on the ground floor, be more active and visit the other floors, and delegate authority to staff and not keep it to himself. Along the same lines, parents add: 1) principals must do only what is right to serve the educational goals in the interest of teachers, students and society; and 2) the principal first be carefully chose who in turn will carefully his staff for the best results. There is no doubt the important role of school principals as head and the backbone of administration is clearly acknowledge by all parties, including principals themselves, but SE and SI depends of other several important factors that must be taken into account.

Regarding staff, the views of respondents are presented in Tables 5.77, 5.78, 5.79 and 5.80. Principals place particular emphasis the teaching staff's general moral and professional conduct in their duties. Of interest, is call for reduction of teaching load and a bonus system to recognize outstanding staff. Teachers themselves put more stress on their own qualifications, competence and discipline in their profession in modern teaching, and added: 1) teaching critical thinking and ability to solve all the problems of students, 2) including personal ones and 3) new experiences to them.

Items	Description of the Role of Staff
1	staff must be morally committed, have full cooperation and be aware of students' needs and aspirations
2	strive for academic excellence
3	discipline and exemplary with high values, motivated and experienced
4	make school attractive for students through modern educational methods
5	the core and foundation of school's success
6	require continuous professional development of the highest standards
7	reduction of teaching load
8	provide a bonus system for outstanding staff achievements

Items	Description of the Role of Staff
1	appropriately qualified and competent to deal with high technology teaching methods and aids in a modern classroom
2	create the best work atmosphere for teachers
3	do not threaten (students) but (build) trust in them
4	staff must cooperate with the school administration and always interactive and available to the students
5	staff must seek continuous professional development, be experienced, experts in their fields of specialization, take related training courses, have positive attitude and avoid traditional teaching methods (teacher-centred approach) and employ student-centred approach in modern teaching
6	teachers must teach critical thinking, problem solving (emotional, child psychology, social and academic) new experiences to students

Students basically support the views of both principals and teachers, but add that teachers' need must be met and they must be provided with an appropriate atmosphere and proper facilities and equipment and pre-service training for them to do give best. Parents follow suit but call for greater teacher-parent communication, and for teachers to be exemplary with both legal and moral responsibilities towards their children.

Table 5.79 – Students' Position on the Role of Teachers/Staff on SE and SI at Their Schools	
Items	Description of the Role of Staff
1	Teachers must be the best, highly qualified and competent with a high degree of morality and cooperation to work in pioneer schools and they must treat students with respect and dignity
2	teachers' needs must be met and they must be provided with an appropriate atmosphere and proper facilities and equipment and pre-service training for them to give their best
3	teachers should be given incentives and performance awards for excellence, high standards and outstanding performance

Table 5.80 – Parents' Position on the Role of Teachers/Staff on SE and SI at Their Schools	
Items	Description of the Role of Staff
1	highly qualified, competent, dedicated, enthusiastic, experienced and well-disciplined teachers are the backbone of any good school and make it effective
2	teacher-parent communication is also very important to know how students are doing
3	teachers, like parents, have a moral and legal responsibility to students, must be exemplary role models, professional, kind respectful and helpful to students and not insult or put them down

Respondents' position on the role of the community is shown in Tables 5.81, 5.82, 5.83 and 5.84. Regarding the role of the local community, principals seek 1) cooperation, 2) meaningful participation, 3) help eliminate obstacles, 4) seek strong ties and 5) moral and financial support. Teachers support the basic views of principals but call for the schools' to actively encourage community participation as people are generally not aware of the role of the schools and are too busy, encourage greater role of the School's Graduates' Society and contribute back to the community like the Pilgrims Gift Programme undertaken by one PSP in Al Madinah.

Table 5.81 – Principals' Position on the Role of the Local Community on SE and SI at Their Schools	
Items	Description of the Role of the Local Community
1	full cooperation, understanding, open debates and meaningful participation from the local community
2	must help to eliminate obstacles to education
3	strong ties between the school and the local community will lead to better results
4	must lend both moral meaningful financial support to the school as an inseparable part of the community

Items	Description of the Role of the Local Community
1	the local community should show positive attitude, work side by side, cooperate and offer moral and financial support the school and share in its responsibilities
2	the school must take an interest as people do not even understand the role of the regular school and do not care, much less the pioneer school
3	the school itself must meaningfully contribute to the community like the Pilgrim Gift Programme to boost the lost dignity of teachers
4	the School’s Graduates’ Society should be encouraged to play a big role in supporting the school and improving student grades
5	the community should imbibe enthusiasm and encourage the school and staff to pay attention to parents’ concerns

Students share the general views of principals and teachers but call on the school to keep close relations with community organizations like the Saudi Red Crescent and Health Centre and all other important institutions of society through communication, programmes, lectures and symposiums. Parents are close to students’ views but insist that often they are too busy with work, family and social life. The school must make every effort to reach out to them, some believe that students at PSPs are mature enough to take care of themselves, but call for activation of the school-parent council to meet regularly and increase communication.

Items	Description of the Role of the Local Community
1	the school must keep a close relation and communicate with the parents on a regular basis and not only when there is a problem
2	close association with community organisations such as the Saudi Red Crescent and local Health Centre are productive and produce positive results
3	society and all its institutions should play a major role and frequently visit the school through all means of communication and many programmes such as lectures and symposiums

Items	Description of the Role of the Local Community
1	because they are too busy with work, their family or social matters, the school must make every effort to be in touch with them on a regular basis through all means of communication for them to know what is happening to play a better role
2	parents are important because they give substantial financial contributions to schools to help make them effective
3	students are mature and can take care of themselves which does not need close parental involvement, but a school-parent council is important for parents to meet once every term, increase communication and participate in their children’s education because some parents are negative about school cooperation
4	the religious bodies, civil institutions, social agencies, the police, fire and health organizations and business community must all be encouraged to play a role in school effectiveness

They see the widest scope of community participation involving practically all institutions, organizations and agencies (religious, police, fire, social, health, etc.).

This makes students and particularly parents stronger than principals and teachers on the role of the local community.

The role of the school environment on SE and SI are shown for all respective respondents in Tables 5.85, 5.86, 5.87 and 5.88. Principals espouse five comprehensive points, whereas teachers posit four comprehensive points entailing essentially the same concerns as principals. Students hold two comprehensive views with emphasis that too much attention is given external beauty and to the main floors at the expense of facilities and the other floors that are neglected. Parents support the essential points of all respondents but add location as an important aspect of the school environment.

Items	Description of the Role of the School Environment
1	develop a sense of belonging and pride for students
2	provide opportunities and educational programmes for students and teachers to participate
3	be attractive and welcoming and be carefully prepared for students of a given age
4	beautiful, clean, safe and healthy with positive atmosphere for fostering education
5	be professional state school buildings with all facilities, not hired ones, and must be regularly maintained

Items	Description of the Role of the School Environment
1	an attractive modern building and interactive atmosphere with all facilities, spacious classrooms, fully equipped labs, educational and advanced teaching resources, modern teaching aids, and sports complex that helps students learn
2	small attractive class size in a safe, clean and healthy school environment with properly maintained school properties
3	embed a feeling of pride and affiliation through regulations, posters, and electronic boards
4	an atmosphere that fosters excellent relations among staff, students and the community

Items	Description of the Role of the School Environment
1	a suitable building with adequate facilities (labs large classrooms, stocked library, etc.), services and modern equipment, shaded playgrounds, properly maintained without too much emphasis on external physical beauty and attention given only to the first floor while the upper floors are seriously neglected
2	smaller number of students in classrooms for a better learning atmosphere

Items	Description of the Role of the School Environment
1	an excellent and beautiful environment (modern building, all facilities, resources and equipment) with students of high social class
2	the location, landscape, playground, activity areas, cleanliness, safety and health are very important
3	staff and quality of school administration are all part of the environment
4	an attractive environment and enjoyable atmosphere with interesting activities to encourage students to come to school and be proud of their school

Respondents' position on the curriculum is shown in Tables 5.89, 5.90, 5.91 and 5.92. Principals hold the basic positions that the curriculum is the foundation of learning and should be comprehensive in scope, designed to encourage critical thinking and research interests, and that it should be according to the Ministry of Education standards. However, they acknowledge that the present curriculum in PSPs is not up to standard and needs serious review and update. Teachers completely agree with the basic position of principals but add that the curriculum should be realistic to cope with teaching time and syllabus and geared to develop students' different potentials and aspirations.

Items	Description of the Role of the Curriculum
1	the essential foundation and plays a key role to develop all aspects of the students' character including proper religious training along with the necessary academic and solid life skills
2	designed to encourage students to critically analyze and elicit data, for interest and research
3	not up to standard, needs serious review and updated to meet labour market demands and the challenges students are faced with today
4	according to Ministry of Education standards

Items	Description of the Role of the Curriculum
1	a comprehensive and dynamic curriculum with the Credit Hour System has a big and noticeable role in motivating the students and orientating them towards knowledge and learning science
2	geared to the labour market and what benefits students to cope with modern innovations and challenges in life
3	the curriculum should provide a rich variety of learning experiences and mould rounded student character
4	an integrated curriculum with strong computer and IT skills of competitive world class standards with clear and definite goals and criteria which are measurable and flexible
5	a realistic curriculum to cope with teaching time and syllabus
6	practical and geared to develop students' different potentials and aspirations

Items	Description of the Role of the Curriculum
1	a good and flexible world-class curriculum with many choices and no errors inside, balanced between literary and scientific subjects, include both academic and non-academic subjects which should prepare students to enter university
2	it must be modern and relevant to an advanced high-tech world
3	the curriculum must be realistic and match teaching/classroom time for it to be effective and useful
4	teachers must be well prepared, given courses and be fully conversant with the curriculum before teaching it

Students and parents essentially agree with both principals and teachers but stress the need for a flexible modern curriculum, removal of some mistakes in it and full teachers' preparation before being allowed to teach it.

Items	Description of the Role of the Curriculum
1	a small modern curriculum (not more than 7 subjects) with improved subjects/courses to lessen students' course load so that they can do better
2	the curriculum is the most important element and the backbone in educational development and should be adopted only after careful study, planning and evaluation to include mostly analytic and scientific materials with beneficial outcomes
3	the curriculum should have diversity and flexibility and encourage student creativity with all facilities to support it and tailored to teaching time
4	it should include enjoyable activities and visits to factories and important places for educational benefits

For the position of respondents on school vision and message, see Tables 5.93 and 5.94. It should be noted that only principals and teachers were asked to respond to this item. Students and parents answered a related item in lieu of this one, which will be discussed separately. Principals submit a comprehensive list of 6 points for school vision and message, stressing modern, futuristic and distinguished outcomes.

Items	Description of the Role of School Vision and Message
1	prepare a useful future generation for the country and international community
2	have clarity and transparency with sound educational and instructional policy
3	be presented from day one to students frequently remind them of them
4	geared for the highest universal standards to prepare students to face future challenges
5	be well understood by the school leader and staff
6	must entail electronic teaching (smart class) for a promising generation with distinguishing outcomes

Items	Description of the Role of School Vision and Message
1	it first emanate from sound Islamic teachings, morality, principles and philosophy to first gain the pleasure of Allah and then to proudly serve the nation and mankind with the highest ideals and values
2	it should be clear and effective to assign the right person to the right position and prepare students for a bright future
3	it must promote the highest standards of education integrated in scientific, psychological and behavioural outcomes to reflect the values of the school, society and the whole nation
4	it must teach cooperation, team work, loyalty, honesty and hard work to the sons of the nation

Teachers basically agree, but stress the inclusion of sound Islamic teachings, morality, principles and philosophy to first gain the pleasure of Allah and then to proudly serve the nation and mankind with the highest ideal. This is a significant call from the perspective of a traditional Arab and Muslim country. They also call for the inclusion of cooperation, loyalty, honest and hard work for the sons of the nation, and putting the right people in the right position.

Students and parents' views on rating are shown in Tables 5.95 and 5.96. Students' views on this are widespread from excellent, the best school in the area to those who do not seem to be very satisfied thus relegating the rating of their schools just like other non-PSP schools with too big class size and not meeting the standards of a pioneer school. The main point of contention for parents is the too strict evaluation and grading system which is only good to a point, but frustrates students because they cannot achieve full marks no matter how hard they study.

Table 5.95 - Students' Position on the Role of the School Philosophy/Vision and Message on SE and SI at Their Schools	
Items	Description of the Role of School Rating
1	they are just like other schools with no difference
2	they need multiple activities not just academic subjects
3	some believe their schools are satisfactory, good, even excellent and even the best in the area in all respects
4	they have too big class sizes and do not fulfil the standards and expectations of a pioneer school

Table 5.96 - Parents' Position on the Role of the School Philosophy/Vision and Message on SE and SI at Their Schools	
Items	Description of the Role of School Rating
1	too strict evaluation system is good to a point to force students to study harder but can frustrate them if they do not show improvements or get full mark
2	the rating is excellent but needs improvement with regular monthly testing and evaluation systems to monitor students' academic progress

Table 5.97 - Principals' Position on the Role of the Educational Management on SE and SI at Their Schools	
Items	Description of the Role of Educational Management
1	should provide vital aid and assistance at all levels and in all aspects of the school operation with accompanying resources in order to do the best job
2	is the life-blood of the school without which everything will be frozen
3	should provide cooperation and hard work in order to make all district schools pioneer schools
4	its current role is extremely limited and should be strengthened to the greatest extent for pioneer schools
5	should provide training courses for staff professional development, technical support and financial support

The views of respondents on the educational management are shown in Tables 5.97, 5.98, 5.99 and 5.100. Principals hold 5 comprehensive points for consideration. The regional educational management is severely criticized for failing to provide a range of vital services and resources necessary for the schools to perform at their best. Teachers echo this chorus and ask the educational body to stop its authoritarian role and allow the school autonomy with close cooperation and follow-ups and evaluations. Teachers also feel that the educational management is too harsh in fault finding, instead of motivating and encouraging teachers to do their best. Moreover, the management does not address the problem of large class size and remove all obstacles and support school programs and activities.

Items	Description of the Role of Educational Management
1	play a more active and meaningful role and supply the schools with all they need, allocate them greater authority, autonomy and power, close cooperation, continuous follow-ups and evaluations
2	should motivate and encourage teachers, stop finding faults and devaluing their work, provide updated and useful information, and ensure problems like large class size are solved, remove all obstacles, and support all school programmes and activities
3	should be more professional and sensitive and show flexibility and understanding and not rigidity and unrealistic idealism

Items	Description of the Role of Educational Management
1	ensure that the pioneer schools functions properly according to high standards and of world-class
2	meets all their needs, solves their problems and removes obstacles to education without delay
3	not be negative or criticize
4	provide necessary help, guidance and direction but do not interfere too much in the school

Items	Description of the Role of Educational Management
1	it must have a solid plan and the mechanisms to implement that plan and make sure all standards are met
2	the plan should embody providing the school with a distinguished headmaster and competent teachers, and supplying the school with all the necessary equipment, along with a strict follow-up scheme by the general educational management in the area
3	set minimum teaching load standards for teachers and ensure only a small class size as some classes have in excess of 50 students which harm the education process
4	to do frequent follow-ups, financially and morally support the school, remove obstacles, solve problems and recognize distinguished teachers and staff
5	schools should be rated by the educational management among other schools to encourage and promote competition in achieving high standards in education
6	accord schools more independence and autonomy to function to their full potentials without undue interference
7	the Ministry of Education should make sure that all schools are pioneer schools performing at the highest levels and producing the highest results

Students generally agree with principals and teachers on this issue but call for their schools to operate according to high standards and at a world-class level. Parents have the longest list of 7 points, stressing a solid comprehensive plan and the mechanisms to implement that plan properly. They call for reduction of the teaching load of teachers and suggest that schools should be rated by the educational management with other schools to encourage competition and achieving high standards in education. Parents also call on the Ministry to ensure that schools truly meet pioneer standards.

Triangulation of the results using three different data collection methods (questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups) with the four respondent categories clearly indicate that there are many serious concerns regarding SE and SI in Al Madinah Educational District in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. While principals, as expected, indicate greater concerns for administrative matters with relative consideration for academic issues teachers, students and parents seem more concerned and determined in all aspects of students' education and academic achievements. On the whole, all four respondent categories are in general alignment on what affects SE and SI in their schools.

The results confirm that many factors, elements or criteria were not only mentioned for particular question sets, but interestingly were again repeated as responses for different questions as well. This not only highlights the level of importance of these factors or variables in SE and SI, but that they are strongly interconnected. Thus, for instance, what particular variables constitute the main role of pioneer schools were also seen to be the same factors of SE and SI for all the four main question sets tested. Indeed, the unique question for students and parents as to why they have chosen a particular school also indicate factors of SE and SI as primary considerations, among other practical reasons. The results largely indicate that while there is overall satisfaction with PSPs in Al Madinah, a lot more needs to be done in many areas of SE and SI to make these secondary schools truly pioneer in relation to the PSP's formal goals/objectives.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented a detailed analysis and main findings of the study on SE and SI in Al Madinah PSPs in Saudi Arabia, in three data collection methods for all four respondent categories. The analysis and findings of the first data collection method,

Survey Questionnaire, indicates that the perception of all four respondent categories (principals, teachers, students and parents) feel strongly about the issues, factors and elements of SE and SI in their schools. As expected, principals as providing leadership in education seem slightly ahead of all other participants, with teachers following next. Numerous tables generated by various statistical methods confirm both the range divergence and convergence of perceptions of all respondents. Overall, school teachers seem more educated in terms of their qualifications than their principal counterparts, with parents showing the least overall educational status or achievements.

Indeed, the results of the second data collection instrument, semi-structured interviews of principals, indicate that PSP principals, during their discussion of the issues, elaborated and expressed consistently stronger views and with much greater details on all four question sets that deal with school effectiveness and efficiency than reflected in their questionnaire results. This pattern was also repeated in the focus groups for teachers who also detailed their concerns very strongly on the same set of questions. Students' focus groups' results portray a wide range of views regarding issues pertaining to their perceptions of the kind and quality of education they receive and aspire for distinguished pioneer schools. Indeed, parents joined the chorus with students, teachers and principals in stressing various factors/elements/criteria as necessary if not vital to the attainment of proper comprehensive education for their children in distinguished pioneer schools.

The next chapter undertakes a critical discussion of the main findings and nuances of the results presented in this chapter among respondents for triangulation and in light of the body of literature discussed in Chapter 3 and the theoretical and methodological approaches used in this study as outlined in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER SIX – DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 presents the essential findings of the study. Chapter 6 will discuss these findings in the following aspects: 1) Summary of the Main Findings of the Study; 2) the Findings in Light of the General Body of Literature Discussed in Chapter Three; 3) the Findings in the Context of Arab Countries and Saudi Arabia in Particular; 4) Discussion of the Findings in Light of the Official Aims and Assumptions of the Pioneer Schools Programme; 5) Appropriateness of Theoretical and Methodological Approaches Used; and 6) Strengths and Limitations of Study.

6.2 Summary of the Main Findings of the Study

To be useful, the summary presented here is based on the main questions posed thorough the research instruments in order of sequence. For all data collection methods used, the summary will combine the main findings of each respondent group for each question into respective tables, avoiding cumbersome repetition and redundancy, but attempting to rank the list of items, factors or elements as best as is practically possible. Thus for example, the findings or responses of all respondents for a particular question will be collated and represented in a single table. However, it should be noted and as seen in the data presentation and discussion in Chapter Five, some of the factors cited in one particular question were again repeated as responses to other questions. This highlights stress or importance of those factors or their interrelatedness in different questions regarding SESI.

Regarding question 1 (The main roles of an effective secondary school/pioneer school.), Table 6.1 lists the main roles in some perceived order of importance. It is interesting to note that this question contained only 15 items on the actual questionnaire that was distributed to respondents (see Appendix A1-4) but an accumulated total of 29 were computed as a result of the semi-structured interviews and focus groups as shown in Table 6.1. In other words, 9 additional items were considered important to the pioneer schools main role from these data collection

methods. All four respondent categories placed a high level of importance on the role of pioneer schools.

Table 6.1 – Respondents’ Perception on the Pioneer School’s Main Role	
Items	Description of Roles
1	provide strong leadership skills
2	be a model for future schools in terms of advanced educational systems and sophisticated teaching methods
3	staff must take part in decision making with cooperation among staff
4	be more attractive than traditional schools; to be better than traditional schools in all respects; and to produce distinguished students in comparison to the ordinary schools
5	must have a strong and sound Islamic vision, (mission) and message
6	to select only teachers of the highest competence
7	have the best/appropriate environment and atmosphere to facilitate teaching and learning
8	use only modern teaching and educational technology with all available facilities and resources
9	enrol only the most qualified students and seek balance between their abilities and needs and abolish the voluntary school fees which is being used to influence registration
10	utilize modern technology and resources (smart boards, smart classes, OHPs, computers, etc.) for children to learn and develop at a high level with self-confidence
11	enhance all aspects of education and instruction to the best, rounded and comprehensive education (academic, scientific, social and moral), the best future and make students effective and useful members of society to develop themselves and the country by achieving academic excellence
12	to apply new educational ideas/innovations in teaching including research methods
13	create beneficial activities and programmes including visits and excursions for students to unveil and support and develop their hidden talents, tendencies, aspirations and skills and employ them constructively
14	to start making students academically specialized from the secondary school stage to enter university
15	provide purposeful educational programmes in all aspects for the students’ development
16	to provide a better selection of useful courses and a relevant curriculum
17	make education enjoyable, interesting and fun
18	embed strong discipline and respect for the opinions of others in open dialogues and debates
19	provide productive citizens/ distinguished students of the highest quality for society with both academic and life skills to face the world
20	to limit the number of students to a classroom
21	to remove obstacles and solve all problems students face
22	meet labour market demands
23	to develop and pay close attention to all floors in the school like the first floor
24	to provide students with an opportunity to be involved in the decision making processes within the school
25	to provide the parents with regular reports about their children's achievement
26	gear students to meet current and future challenges, nationally and globally
27	provide students with teachers who reinforce community values and habits
28	to provide the parents with an opportunity to be involved in the development of school policies and processes
29	use a range of assessment strategies to identify the students' level of achievement

The responses for Question 2 (The factors/elements of SESI of a pioneer school.) are presented in Table 6.2. Again, this question contained only 16 items on the actual questionnaire distributed to respondents (see Appendix A1-4), but the other data collection methods generated 14 new but important items as factors of SESI in AI

Madinah pioneer schools. Again, as the results show, all four respondent categories take a high stance on the factors / elements of SESI.

Table 6.2 - Respondents' Perception on the Factors/Elements of a Pioneer School	
Items	Description of Factors/Elements
1	high school image and reputation
2	adopt clear policy and objectives with purposeful vision and goals with
3	loyalty to school philosophy
4	avoid bureaucratic measures and paper routine
5	mutual communication and cooperation at all levels
6	open-minded school administration qualified and well-trained with the necessary skills and cooperative system of strong but flexible administration in discipline and attendance
7	allow freedom of opinions among students and respect for the views of others
8	only qualified principals, teachers and staff must be chosen
9	top selection of highly qualified students, high social class, competent, motivated and with the best behaviour and highest academic scores, but must accommodate disadvantaged/disabled students with great or exceptional potentials
10	good leadership distinguished with good policy, good daily school administration and strong organization and discipline; good planning and good schedules
11	ideal model and sufficiently qualified support staff
12	beneficial curricula and non-curricula activities with a strong academic curriculum to match teaching time; fewer modules and flexibility in course selection and repeating exams
13	provide regular teachers' training and professional development programmes
14	a unique school environment with suitable modern building, the best environment and atmosphere, excellent facilities and all resources; use of advanced technology, modern teaching methods and teaching aids (electronic teaching – smart boards, smart classes, etc.) and excellent facilities and equipment to foster learning
15	a small student number in a class with maximum of 20 students only per class
16	lesson teachers' load so that they can perform better and allocate a significant amount of time to instruct the students in the basic skills through engagement in planned learning activities
17	A lot of effort is made to identify and overcome learning difficulties
18	Staff and parents believe that all students have the capacity to succeed and that staff and parent cooperation is crucial in student achievement
19	to promote excellence by issuing awards and honours to distinguished principals, teachers, staff and students for outstanding performance
20	must discover and develop students' skills and makes them reach their full potentials
21	strong curriculum with high development and high quality programmes with more extra-curricular activities locally and regionally with educational visits to important places
22	full capacity to attract students and prepare them for university
23	give fair evaluation system because progress in students reflects school effectiveness
24	distinguished teachers; ideal model professional teachers
25	humanitarian and caring nature
26	implementation of quality assurance
27	strong financial support from the regional educational management and the broader community
28	parents' participation and strong support from the community/society; form a school council and a parents' council for them to take part in decision making on all school matters
29	use of MMS and the electronic internet services
30	staff, parents and students in the school are given the opportunity to develop leadership skills
31	feedback on student academic progress is obtained frequently with the aim of improving student performance and assessing the success of the curriculum

Question 3 of the semi-structured interviews of principals and focus groups of teachers is unique to them as educators having first-hand knowledge of their particular school system. Accordingly, students and parents were not served with this question

(What are the factors/criteria that have made your school a pioneer school?). Their responses are shown in Table 6.3. Fifteen comprehensive sets of specified factors were identified by educators that in their perception made their particular schools distinguished pioneer schools. Tremendous stress was placed on the high quality of administrative practices, in addition to the requirements of modern education, to the desire of many students to enrol in their schools which is being supported by The School's Graduates' Society. However, in numerical terms, this is just about half the cumulative total number of factors that all respondents, including educators, identify for an effective/pioneer school, as shown in Table 6.2 above.

Table 6.3 – What are the Factors/Criteria that have Made <u>Your</u> School a Pioneer School	
Items	Description of Factors/Criteria
1	pioneer distinguished educational leadership and an effective school administration with the headmaster/principal playing the biggest role
2	flexible implementation of school regulations
3	collective decision making
4	strategic planning
5	good cooperation between the school administration and teachers as one team
6	close cooperation among teachers
7	the best teaching staff with highly qualified professional teachers with dedication and positive attitude
8	teachers' control of the class
9	choice of distinguished students carefully selected and stable
10	appropriate environment with new state-of-the-art school building with all facilities, advanced technology, IT, electronic teaching, modern equipment and available resources; regularly maintained in good condition
11	appropriate programmes with a variety of activities and the new secondary credit hours system
12	modern and advanced teaching methods and techniques
13	fully utilize potential and resources
14	many students desire to enrol
15	support the school receives from "The School's Graduates' Society"

Questions 3 of the questionnaire (Show the role of the following nine specified elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school), and 4 of the semi-structured interviews, and focus groups (Show the role of the following seven specified elements in enhancing effectiveness and improvement of your school and making it a pioneer school) will be combined in order to simplify the presentation, because 5 factors are common to both question sets, with 6 additional or new factors. This will result in a cumulative total of 11 factors combined, instead of 16 if all the factors are presented separately. Table 6.4 shows the responses for the first factor, School principal/Administration. Sixteen comprehensive sets of concerns

were expressed by all participants regarding the role of school principals/ administration for improving their schools and making them pioneer schools.

Items	Description of Role
1	qualified, competent, dedicated, progressive, and experienced in administration; careful selection of highly educated professional school leadership plays the greatest role to lead and motivate team work; must be flexible not too strict or formal and must be caring, kind and helpful
2	provide a leadership model to be followed by the school community
3	the principal as head and core must get out of his office and visit the other floors, not only stay on the first floor and he must delegate authority to staff and not keep it to himself alone; do only what is right to serve the educational goals in the interest of teachers, students and society
4	strive to improve the school in all respects; the administration has to look after everything in the school operations including management, academics, time table/schedules, health problems, social matters, public affairs, conflicts and any problems the school is faced, and by following-up and dealing with obstacles or problems
5	manage resources wisely; make available all basic skills for a successful administration and wise utilization of manpower; discover and fully utilize the potentials of staff and urge teachers to utilize technology in teaching; full awareness of educational and instructional styles; not cut vital services and must provide and maintain all facilities
6	work co-operatively with staff; team work and partnership are central because success depends on all; democratic not authoritarian orders; share decision making responsibilities; create suitable work atmosphere
7	the staff must be carefully selected and must offer full support to implement school policies and programs
8	work co-operatively with parents, interact with them, be open for dialogue and welcoming
9	promote parent participation in school activities and student learning; establish a mediator between the school and the community
10	promote high staff morale and motivation; to understand the needs, psychological, social and practical circumstances of the people working at school; honesty as opposed to hypocrisy
11	it must attract the most qualified, competent and experienced teachers and be provided with continual training courses
12	promote continuous learning and development of staff; remedy the under-achievement of some teachers by special techniques and training courses
13	teachers must have strong collegial relationship among themselves and good humanitarian relations with students
14	create suitable atmosphere to achieve maximum work productivity by clear, timely and effective communication
15	match student enrolment with classroom size and available number
16	strong moral and financial support with an adequate budget so that it will not run out of school supplies

The cumulative responses for the second factor, teacher/staff are shown in Table 6.5. Eleven comprehensive sets of roles are identified for teachers who are considered the core and most important element in pioneer schools. Consistently, all four respondent categories strongly support this factor of SE and SI.

Items	Description of Role
1	are qualified, competent, enthusiastic and well disciplined; have a wide range of skills to deal with high technology teaching methods and aids in a modern classroom
2	must be morally committed, have full cooperation and be aware of and sensitive to students' needs and aspirations; the core and foundation of the school's success; collaborate and work as a team; do not threaten students but build trust in them, interact and always be available to them
3	strive for academic excellence and are keen on achieving optimal student achievement
4	develop students' critical thinking, problem solving and creativity; teach new experiences to students
5	discipline and exemplary with high values, motivated and experienced; have positive attitudes and high morale and treat students with respect and dignity; teachers, like parents, have a moral and legal responsibility to students, must be exemplary role models, professional, kind respectful and helpful to students and not insult or put them down
6	make school attractive for students through modern educational methods and create the best work atmosphere
7	interested in continuous professional learning and development of the highest standards; be experienced, experts in their fields of specialization, take related training courses, have positive attitude and avoid traditional teaching methods (teacher-centred approach) and employ student-centred approach in modern teaching
8	reduction of teaching load
9	teachers' needs must be met and they must be provided with an appropriate atmosphere and proper facilities and equipment and pre-service training for them to give their best
10	welcome parent participation and frequently communicate how students are doing
11	provide a bonus system for outstanding staff achievements; teachers should be given incentives and performance awards for excellence, high standards and outstanding performance

The third factor which deals with the role of school philosophy/vision and message on SESI and Table 6.6 shows the findings. A cumulative of 15 comprehensive items are stressed and listed in some order of priority, with the first order that school philosophy vision and message must naturally emanate from the indigenous religion, culture and tradition as a Muslim nation. This was consistently borne out by all four respondent categories given that the Kingdom is considered the foremost Islamic country with the two most sacred shrines in the Holy Cities of Makkah Al Mukarramah and Al Madinah Al Munawwarah, respectively. Moreover, Islam is the exclusive state religion and the Kingdom is considered the Custodian of those two Holy Islamic Cities.

Items	Description of Role
1	it must first emanate from sound Islamic teachings, morality, principles and philosophy to first gain the pleasure of Allah and then to proudly serve the nation and mankind with the highest ideals and values
2	it should be clear and effective to assign the right person to the right position with transparency and sound educational and instructional policy geared for the highest universal standards to prepare students to face future challenges
3	prepare a useful future generation for the country and international community and values and welcomes students' diverse social and cultural backgrounds
4	it must teach cooperation, team work, loyalty, honesty and hard work to the sons of the nation
5	involves high expectations for all students and teachers and be presented from day one to teachers/staff and students and frequently remind them
6	encourages students to work towards their personal best, recognizes that each student has different needs, background and aspirations
7	aims to develop the full potential of each individual intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically
8	it must promote the highest standards of education integrated in scientific, psychological and behavioural outcomes to reflect the values of the school, society and the whole nation places an importance on the development of life skills and positive values and relationships
9	must entail electronic teaching (smart class) for a promising generation with distinguished outcomes
10	should not have too big class sizes and fulfil the standards and expectations of a pioneer school
11	too strict evaluation system is good to a point to force students to study harder but can frustrate them if they do not show improvements or get full mark
12	recognizes that education is a co-operative effort that involves teachers, students and parents
13	they need multiple activities not just academic subjects
14	satisfactory, good, excellent and even the best in the area in all respects but improvement with regular monthly testing and evaluation systems to monitor students' academic progress
15	they are just like other schools with no difference

Items	Description of Role
1	a suitable modern building with adequate facilities (labs, large classrooms, stocked library, etc.), services and modern equipment, shaded playgrounds, educational and advanced teaching resources, modern teaching aids, and sports complex properly maintained without too much emphasis on external physical beauty and attention given only to the first floor while the upper floors are seriously neglected, that stimulates students to learn
2	location, landscape, playground, activity areas, clean, beautiful, secure, safe, healthy and welcoming and be carefully prepared for students of a given age, with positive and interactive atmosphere for fostering education
3	small attractive class size with properly maintained school properties for a better learning atmosphere
4	embed a feeling of pride and affiliation through regulations, posters, and electronic boards
5	an enjoyable atmosphere that fosters excellent relations among staff, students and the community with interesting activities to encourage students to come to school and be proud of their school
6	promotes a sense of belonging and pride amongst students in the school
7	a school with students of high social class
8	provide opportunities and educational programmes for students and teachers to participate in all aspects of school life
9	staff and quality of school administration are all part of the environment with effective management practices and sensible rules that are clearly defined and enforced
10	supported by a strong student affairs system
11	be professional state school buildings with all facilities, not hired ones, and must be regularly maintained

The fourth factor deals with the role of the school environment on SESI in Al Madinah pioneer schools as shown in Table 6.7. Eleven comprehensive components were identified as playing an important role in pioneer schools. Great stress is placed on adequate schools facilities in a range of areas from school yard to play ground to academics, such as libraries, labs, smart boards and smart classrooms. Class size was another major component affecting school environment, among other factors. Consistently, all respondents support the issue of school environment as important for SESI.

Items	Description of Role
1	supports the development of students to their full potentials
2	addresses difficulties experienced by students effectively and efficiently
3	is sensitive to individual students' needs and backgrounds
4	links with community support services and resources outside the school

The role of the school's student affairs system is a fifth factor of SESI in pioneer schools and contained only 4 items, as shown in Table 6.8. As ranked, all four respondent categories place the strongest importance on them. This factor was not taken up (qualitatively) in the semi-structured interviews of principal or the focus groups for the other respondents. This factor was highly regarded as important for SESI by all participants.

Items	Description of Role
1	the school has other physical and material resources e.g. educational resources, sporting equipment, labs, library books
2	there are sufficient administrative and supportive staff to meet the needs of the school
3	the administrative staff know the students and their parents
4	there is strong IT infrastructure with up-to-date technology
5	parents and school board are satisfied with the allocation of resources and expenditure decisions
6	students are satisfied with timetable and subject choice arrangements
7	a staff development and appraisal system is in place
8	time is set aside for staff to do planning and program development
9	class sizes are in line with system-wide guidelines

As with the school's student affairs system, the role of resources was addressed only by the survey instrument (quantitatively). The 9 items are ranked in order of importance in Table 6.9. Again, all respondents stressed the role of resources in SESI in pioneer schools. Schools cannot function effectively without adequate resources.

Items	Description of Role
1	the essential foundation and backbone for proper education and plays a key role to develop all aspects of the students' character including proper religious training along with the necessary academic and solid life skills such as self-esteem, motivation and self-discipline; provides a range of learning experiences within and beyond the key learning areas
2	a comprehensive and dynamic curriculum with the Credit Hours System has a big and noticeable role in motivating students to develop a positive attitude to learning and orientating them towards knowledge and learning science and develop students' different potentials and aspirations
3	an integrated modern and relevant curriculum to an advance high-tech world with strong computer and IT skills of competitive world class standards with clear and definite goals and criteria which are measurable and flexible
4	progresses the social, personal and physical development of students as well as their academic development designed to encourage students to critically analyze and elicit data, for interest and research
5	a good and flexible world-class curriculum with many choices and no errors inside, balanced between literary and scientific subjects, include both academic and no-academic subjects which should prepare students to enter university; diverse to encourage student creativity with all facilities to support it and tailored to teaching time; it should include enjoyable activities and visits to factories and important places for educational benefits
6	teachers must be well prepared, given courses and be fully conversant with the curriculum before teaching it
7	a small modern curriculum (not more than 7 subjects) with improved subjects/courses to lesson students' course load so that they can do better
8	curriculum according to Ministry of Education standards but practical and realistic to cope with teaching teaching/classroom time for it to be effective and useful
9	not up to standard, needs serious review and updated to meet labour market demands and the challenges students are faced with today and what benefits students to cope with modern innovations and challenges in life
10	provides continuity from year to year and is integrated across learning areas

The seventh factor was the role of the curriculum as shown in Table 6.10. As seen, 10 comprehensive sets of factors describe its important role, by all four respondent categories. A comprehensive set of factors was heavily stressed as essential if not vital for proper education, not simply the mere acquisition of academic excellence, broader life skills, civic responsibilities and citizenship in keeping pace with an ever advancing world.

The cumulative results of the eighth factor, the role of the school's assessment and reporting arrangements, are ranked in order of importance in Table 6.11. This item was limited only to the questionnaire data collection method as it was not addressed the semi-structured interviews of principals and the focus groups of the other respondents. Again, all respondents felt strongly about this factor as important for SESI. Assessment is vital not simply for measuring academic progress and graduation students but vital for comprehensive social developments and important decisions.

Items	Description of Role
1	provide clear and reliable information across the key learning areas and on the social development of students
2	lead to sound decisions about teaching approaches
3	are undertaken in ways which support student learning and confidence
4	allow parents to observe and understand their children's progress
5	identify problem areas and ways to work on these in partnership with parents

As with the role of the school's assessment and reporting arrangements, the role of school policy on SESI, as the ninth factor, was tested for only in the survey instruments and the results are ranked in Table 6.12. Again, all respondent categories felt strongly about the role of school policy on SESI. School policy is vital not only for the attainment of academic excellence, but also for comprehensive links with the larger school community involving teachers, students, parents, other schools, business, voluntary and government organizations. It is the perception of all respondents that good and effective school policy will lead to better outcomes in SESI.

Items	Description of Role
1	recognizes that partnerships between parents and teachers lead to better learning outcomes
2	promotes school and teacher responsiveness to parents' views, inquiries and concerns
3	promotes a strong sense of community within the school
4	supports the links with other schools, business, and voluntary and government organizations

The tenth factor deals with the role the local community on SESI in Al Madinah pioneer schools. The results containing 10 comprehensive items are presented in some order of importance in Table 6.13. The greatest burden is placed on schools to take the responsibility and every needed step to reach out to the local community by every means possible, in particular to parents because they are very busy and do not themselves even know the role of the school. Respondents strongly believe that the school should play a greater visible role in the community in order to encourage the community to play a great role in school affairs and the proper education of its most valuable members - youth. As with policy, respondents believe that some sort of genuine collaboration and cooperation must take place between the school and the larger community for it to be truly making advances in SESI. Communication is considered key to this collaboration and cooperation.

Items	Description of the Role
1	the school must take an interest as people do not even understand the role of the regular school and do not care, much less the pioneer school because they are too busy with work, their family or social matters.,
2	the school must keep a close relation and make every effort to be in touch and communicate with the parents on a regular basis through all means of communication for them to know what is happening to play a better role, not only when there is a problem because strong ties between the school and the local community will lead to better results
3	the school itself must meaningfully contribute to the community like the Pilgrim Gift Programme to boost the lost dignity of teachers
4	the local community should show positive attitude, work side by side, give full cooperation and understanding, have open debates and meaningful participation and offer moral and financial support to the school and share in its responsibilities; parents are important because they give substantial financial contributions to schools to help make them effective
5	the community must help to eliminate obstacles to education
6	the School’s Graduates’ Society should be encouraged to play a big role in supporting the school and improving student grades
7	the community should imbibe enthusiasm and encourage the school and staff to pay attention to parents’ concerns
8	close association with community organisations such as the Saudi Red Crescent and local Health Centre are productive and produce positive results
9	the religious bodies, civil institutions, social agencies, the police, fire and health organizations and business community must all be encouraged to play a role in school effectiveness because society and all its institutions should play a major role and frequently visit the school through all means of communication and many programmes such as lectures and symposiums
10	students are mature and can take care of themselves which does not need close parental involvement, but a school-parent council is important for parents to meet once every term, increase communication and participate in their children’s education because some parents are negative about school cooperation

The results of the last factor dealing with the role of the Regional Educational Management on SESI in Al Madinah pioneer schools are presented in Table 6.14. The findings are obtained only from semi-structured interviews and focus groups, not from the questionnaire instrument. Respondents have a comprehensive list of items that they require the Regional Educational Management of the Ministry of Education should do in order to improve the PSPs and indeed make other traditional or regular schools also pioneer schools. Clearly, there is widespread disenchantment with the educational management in looking after and caring for PSPs in Al Madinah Educational District. All respondents concur that the Regional Educational Management of the Al Madinah Educational District has a great responsibility to ensure that all public schools - both PSPs and regular schools – in the District operate at high standards and expectations in order to be truly effective in their missions as providers of the highest quality and levels of modern education. They are particularly concerned with the perceived negative interference by the Regional Educational Management in the schools with serve to impede school autonomy, independence and

progress. The Ministry of Education should ensure that the Regional Educational Management do the best to contribute directly to SESI in all schools in the district.

Items	Description of the Role
1	is the life-blood of the school without which everything will be frozen and should be more professional and sensitive and show flexibility and understanding and not rigidity and unrealistic idealism, not be negative or criticize
2	have a solid plan to embody providing the school with a distinguished headmaster and competent teachers, along with frequent and strict follow-up schemes by the general educational management in the area
3	set minimum teaching load standards for teachers and ensure only a small class size as some classes have in excess of 50 students which harm the educational process
4	the Ministry of Education should make sure that all schools are pioneer schools performing at the highest levels and producing the highest results with hard work in order to make all district schools pioneer schools
5	its current role is extremely limited and should be strengthened to the greatest extent for pioneer schools; it should play a more active and meaningful role and supply the schools with all they need, allocate them greater authority, autonomy and power, close cooperation, continuous follow-ups and evaluations, and financially and morally support the school
6	should provide vital aid and assistance at all levels and in all aspects of the school operation with accompanying resources in order to do the best job
7	should provide training courses for staff professional development, technical support and financial support, and recognize distinguished teachers and staff
8	should motivate and encourage teachers, stop finding faults and devaluing their work, provide updated and useful information, and ensure problems like large class size are solved, remove all obstacles and solve problems without delay, and support all school programmes and activities
9	ensure that the pioneer schools function properly according to high standards and of world-class and must have a solid plan and the mechanisms to implement that plan and make sure all standards are met
10	participate meaningfully but do not interfere too much in the school; it should accord schools more independence and autonomy to function to their full potentials without undue interference
11	schools should be rated by the educational management among other schools to encourage and promote competition in achieving high standards in education

The summary of the main findings on SE and SI in Al Madinah PSPs indicates that there are many concerns with pioneer schools. The Tables above list a catalogue of factors, elements, criteria and concerns regarding the state of PSPs in Saudi Arabia. Indeed, respondents submit a comprehensive, if not exhaustive list, of items to address SESI in their schools, all of which have serious implications for the present and future operations of PSPs in Saudi Arabia, not least of which is the policy implications from three levels – the school themselves, the community, and the Ministry of Education through its Regional Educational Management.

6.3 The Findings in Light of the General Body of Literature Discussed in Chapter Three

To reiterate from Chapter 3, Section 2, the basic definition of SE is what brings about significant difference in pupils' learning, differences in pupil attainment, attitudes and behaviour. This involves the availability of a combination of factors in a school to provide an atmosphere that enables learning and teaching to take place in a proper way. The literature posits a wide range of factors depending on what is expected and the consequences of outcomes. Multilevel analyses include the physical environment of the school (safety, health, etc.), leadership, curriculum, instructional aids, the teacher supply, actual teaching/training, development and support, links, collaboration and cooperation with society, SES, and accountability mechanisms and processes, quality assurance such as regular checks on the performance of the teaching staff, and support systems such as libraries and resource centres. In short, SESI involves a systematic, sustained effort aimed at change in learning conditions and other related internal conditions in schools with the ultimate aim of accomplishing goals more effectively.

In drawing a distinction between SE and SI, the literature suggests that SER and SIR are different with the former relying on strict analytical methodology and techniques to identify factors, variables or stable characteristics that affect schooling, positively or negatively, whereas improvement projects adopt qualitative methodology and techniques which do not necessarily seek to answer certain questions but seek actual intervention in the school in order to achieve effectiveness. In other words, SE works at the class level, being interested in actual learning and the classroom processes, while SI can be expanded to include restructuring measures to ensure the attainment of effectiveness where it is lacking or deserving.

Using mathematical and multilevel modelling, developed countries like the US and UK study SESI issues with particular focus on human resources, physical school environment and student social background, using standardized test scores as the only indicator of effectiveness at the first stage in SER. However, further studies using a quantitative approach show that a range of other factors impact SESI as confirmed by this study of PSPs in Al Madinah Educational District. As shown in the literature

review in Chapter 3, studies have shown that different schools have different characteristics that affect SESI differently. The main factors are as follows:

1. Strong administrative leadership shouldered by the principal ((Edmonds, 1979; Tomlinson, 1980; Wahlstrom & Louis 2008; Louis et al., 2010; Leithwood & Jantzi (2005)).
2. Pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus (Edmonds, 1979; Tomlinson, 1980).
3. Student violence (Blatchford et al., 2007; Reynolds et al., 2006)., a safe and orderly learning environment (Edmond, 1978 and 1979; Lezotte & Bancoft, 1985).
4. High expectations for student achievement at a desired level based on test score (Edmonds, 1979; Tomlinson, 1980).
5. Using student achievement test data for evaluating the programme and school success (Edmonds, 1979; Tomlinson, 1980).
6. Students' family characteristics and socioeconomic status, students' ethnic composition (Park & Palardy, 2004; Rumberger & Palardy, 2005).
7. Conducive atmosphere and environment (Edmonds, 1981a).
8. Teachers' characteristics (Wayne & Youngs, 2003; Smith et al., 2005).
9. Collaboration at the widest levels – school, community and between schools (Nicolaiou & Petridou, 2011; Hands, 2009; Henderson et al., 2007; Muijs et al., 2004; Epstein et al., 2006; West, 2010; Muijs et al., 2010; Katz & Earl, 2010).
10. Professional development (CD) and continuous professional development (CPD) for staff, particularly teachers (Nicolaidou & Petridou, 2011; Nicolaidou, 2010; Kruger et al., 2007; Muijs & Lindsay, 2008).
11. ISO 9000 registration for consistent universal and international standards in high quality management in education that will lead to SESI (Kanter, 2000; Thonhauser, 2008; Hoyle, 2003).
12. Teacher and classmate support has a positive relationship to SESI (Morgan et al., 2004; Whitlock, 2004; Barber & Olsen, 2004).
13. Close nurturing, emotional and academic support are seen as important to student achievement (Baker, 2006; De Wit et al., 2010).
14. Citizenship, civic and democratic engagements are all now novel aspects of proper education (Homana et al., 2006:2; Isac, et al., 2011).

15. The use of data and data-driven decision-making practices in a modern context can foster and inform on SESI (Mason, 2002; Earl & Katz, 2006).
16. Transition from secondary to tertiary schools (college and university) poses a problem for many students worldwide (Brinkworth, McCann, Matthews, and Nordstrom, 2009).
17. Social class schools as contradistinguished from SES students do have an impact on SESI (Palardy, 2008; Ylimaki et al., 2007).

The current study shows that a wide range of factors impact SESI, some of which include those identified in Western countries. However, the current study challenges some of the claims of Western studies and at the same time adds more factors to the list. For instance the current study, using three different data collection methods for triangulation and the four different respondent groups, did not seem to support the following:

1. General and broadly understood instructional focus (Edmonds, 1979; Tomlinson, 1980) as reported in Western studies such as has not been found to be significant in Al Madinah Educational District. However, respondents generally accord particular attention to modern teaching styles, utilization of sophisticated teaching aids, smart boards, smart class, computer, OHPs, etc., with emphasis on the utilization of only modern and advanced state of the art educational and teaching technology.
2. While supporting family characteristics and social class to some extent as part of a conducive learning atmosphere/environment are reported in Western studies such as Coleman et al., (1966), socioeconomic status and especially ethnic composition or ethnicity were not found to have any impact at all on SESI in Saudi Arabia. Saudi society is somewhat tribal and even that did not make any impression as no respondent brought up this issue at all as part of the findings of this study.
3. The issue of ISO 9000 registration for consistent, universal and international standards in high quality management in education for PSPs in Saudi Arabia that will lead to SESI was never brought up at all in and of the data collection instruments by any of the four respondent categories (Kanter, 2000; Thonhauser, 2008; Hoyle, 2003). This could be because PSPs in Saudi Arabia

have yet to develop a truly unified system nationally that is being rigorously implemented and enforced.

4. Given the nature of its traditional society and cultural sensitivities, the issue of close nurturing and emotional support (though academic) was never seriously addressed by any of the four respondent categories, including students themselves as important to student achievement (Baker, 2006; De Wit et al., 2010).
5. This study did not inform on the use of data and data-driven decision-making practices in a modern context that can foster and inform on SESI (Mason, 2002; Earl & Katz, 2006). This could be because PSPs have yet to develop a reliable and sophisticated data collection system.
6. The concept of social class schools as with SES students did not arise at any time by any of the four respondent categories as having an impact on SESI (Palardy, 2008; Ylimaki et al., 2007). This could be due to the relatively affluent situation schools generally enjoy in the Kingdom because of generous government spending.
7. Though important, high expectations for student achievement at a desired level based on test scores as reported in Western studies such as Edmonds, (1979) and Tomlinson (1980) in itself was not a major consideration in SE or SI in KSA. This never came up as a factor of SE or SI, although some parents expressed concerns that their children find it difficult to achieve full marks due to very strict and inflexible grading systems in PSPs in Al Madinah. However, this shows that PSPs are striving for academic excellence by strict grading systems and higher standards.
8. Based on item 3 above and following logically from it, this study did not use student test or achievement data to evaluate programmes and SE. However, stress was laid on a beneficial curriculum for both academic and real life purposes.

To be set alongside findings in the general body of literature from Western advanced countries such as the US or UK, specific insights from the current study can be summarised as follows:

1. As expected, culture and religion play a major role in the educational system in KSA, by virtue of it being a traditional Arab and conservative Muslim

country. In particular, respondents made pointed reference of the importance of their religion (Islam) and way of life as a valid part of proper public education, the society and the nation, in addition to scientific and academic achievements and excellence aimed for.

2. Although the question of language never surfaced as an issue per se in SESI, respondents, particularly students, believe that achieving a high level in English language competency is a major indication of SE in Saudi Arabia. Notwithstanding the native language being Arabic, if not because of it, this could be explained by the idea of a global village, mass communication, mass media, trade and commerce, advance technological and scientific achievements in virtually every field, the internet, satellite and the relatively free movement of people in the world today, all of which require a suitable lingua franca to do so, English being most suitable. In fact, there is a great push in the Saudi educational system to attain a sufficient level of English language competency particularly at PSPs. Indeed, many Saudis go abroad to study primarily in native English countries such as the US, Canada and the UK.
3. This study shows that essential components to SESI are not limited primarily to personal achievement reflected in test scores, but necessarily include character building and discipline and meeting the demands of the country's job market, contributing positively to society, serving the national interest to make the Kingdom a world-class country, and to play a rightful role in world affairs. Indeed, keeping up and competing with the modern world figure prominently as a hallmark of SE and SI in this study.
4. The study also shows that respondents generally believe that the curriculum should not only be comprehensive and modern in scope, but clearly pointed to teaching useful materials only, limited to fewer subjects than the regular schools, match class time syllabus, geared towards early specialization, and must prepare PSP students to enter university for further studies.
5. Respondents also call for a wide range of beneficial and educational extra-curricula activities that will discover and develop their talents, abilities and potentials fully that will also make it enjoyable and encourage them to like going to school and study.

6. A strong call was made for wide collaboration, communication and participation of the local community, involving virtually every spectrum – parents, religious bodies, the police, fire, health, social clubs and other institutions and organizations – to support the school morally and financially. It was also acknowledge that the school must play an active role to inform the local community of its role and invite them to get involved as with other advanced countries
7. Respondents also call for a humanitarian and benevolent system in the PSPs as an important factor of SESI in Saudi Arabia. The school must be considerate and cater to differences in students’ learning styles, background, aspirations and abilities.
8. School atmosphere and environment was dealt with in the widest sense to include school policies, administrative style and practices, morale, quality of principals, support staff, teachers, modern curriculum, kind of building, facilities, equipment, material and financial resources, modern state of the art teaching and educational technology, class size, quality of students and social class, and even the physical location of the school itself. Respondents believe that all these constitute important elements of PSPs.
9. This study also adds significant contributions regarding school vision and message that it plays an important role on how the school is perceived and rated. Respondents believe that the school must have clear, transparent, sound, Islamic, societal, and national vision and an inspiring message in order to produce the best students for themselves, society and the nation.
10. The study shows that the Regional Educational Management, representing the Ministry of Education, must play a greater, instrumental, positive and constructive role to support pioneer schools in every respect to operate successfully, without unduly imposing itself on or compromising the schools’ autonomy and independence.
11. Regarding differences in respondents’ perceptions on the items examined on SESI, it is clear that the same weight is not given to every item by all respondents. Some put greater emphasis on some items while downgrading or ignoring others. In other words, there was no homogeneous or unanimous response on the items, although many overlaps were clearly evident from the findings.

6.4 The Findings in the Context of Arab Countries in General and Saudi Arabia in Particular

To recall the literature review in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3, Arab countries draw their perspectives of SESI from the US and UK models, with Egypt as the leader, followed closely by the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Arab researchers such as Idrees (2000); Brookover (1979) and the Ministry of Education (2003) identify 9 variable sets for SER and SIR:

1. The school mission and vision
2. The learner (students)
3. The learning climate (environment and atmosphere)
4. Effective school management (school administration)
5. Continual professional development (pre-and in-training programmes for teachers to teach in PSPs)
6. Community partnership and accountability
7. Use of information and telecommunication
8. Assuring quality and accountability
9. Ideal utilization of the school building

The findings of this study echo basically most of those variable sets, but with the following differences:

1. This study examined primarily school mission and message, with little emphasis on vision. The findings indicate the need for a clear and sound mission with a strong message and future vision based on local culture, religion and modern education.
2. The findings of the current study emphasised the need to select the best students for PSPs in order to foster the best environment and atmosphere for the best outcome. This was particularly stressed by students themselves. This basically means high academic achievement and character in order to maintain a high standard of education. However, this could raise questions of discrimination and equity issues if some students in the community are not given equal access to PSPs.
3. The learning climate was covered under appropriate environment and school atmosphere in much detail from the principal, staff, facilities, equipment,

resources including building requirements. Heavy stress was placed on the latter items.

4. The school administration, with the principal as head, was seen as key and the most important aspect by essentially all respondent groups in formulating and implementing school policies and programmes for a successful school, requiring consultation, cooperation, decentralization of power away from the principal, etc.
5. Community collaboration and partnership was discussed to include a wide spectrum of participation from the local community, but the stress was to involve parents 'as the primary stakeholders, since their children's future hinge on what happens at school. Although the local community have high expectations of the schools regarding their children's education, the question of accountability did not arise at all in the data generated for this study.
6. In this study, the use of information and telecommunication technology was focused on making contacts with parents through a variety of media such as telephone, e-mail, SIM, etc.
7. The study did point to the need for quality assurance in the schools' performance and practices, but again did not discuss or examine the issue of accountability in failing to do so, except perhaps by the regional educational management of the Ministry of Education.
8. This study did not examine as aspects of SE and/or SI, utilization of the school building. However, it draws serious attention to the fact that the main or first floor receives the best attention to the neglect of the upper floors and deplore class size with excessive amount of students inside a single class.

Important gaps in the literature can be said to be modestly filled by this study which adds two clear variable sets to the larger Arab studies from the perspectives of the key members of the school community: principals, teachers, students and parents.

1. The employment of modern teaching techniques, methods, aids, resources, equipment, facilities, buildings, materials, smart boards, smart classes, OHPs, and state of the art technology in education and teaching. Respondents regard this as a major issue for PSPs in Al Madinah Educational District.
2. It insists that the regional educational management is an important element of SESI and must accordingly play its full role in assisting PSPs to perform at the

highest standards. Teachers were foremost in depicting the weakness, if not the failure of this body to do its job properly in ensuring that schools function properly in all respects.

With regard to Saudi Arabia in particular, as seen in the literature review, most researchers measured the effectiveness of school leadership and teaching processes, using the survey type questionnaire (Al Semadi & Al Nahar, 2001; Al Thubaiti, 2003; Sharaz, 2006; Al Yawer, 2008; Al Ammar, 2008). Studies were also done by the use of Computer Assisted Teaching (CAT) but this method depended on “scoring” or “outcomes” as a criterion for effectiveness. The appropriateness of the classroom environment in light of global standards and the effectiveness of the programmes designed for disabled children in Saudi Arabia are also among previous studies done in KSA (Ibraheem, 2006; and Mousa, 1992). Perspective on the effectiveness of the examination system is based on whether it achieves the instructional objectives, not necessarily represented by the students, scores, but by comprehensive factors and the assumption that the more strictly the school implements quality assurance measures, the more effective will be its outcomes. Also previous studies include SE by exploring and caring about gifted and disabled students who hold a high potential level of mental processing and activities in light of multi intelligence approaches (Al Thubaiti, 2003; Al Semadi & Al Nahar, 2001; Leibowits & Starens, 1993).

6.5 Discussion of the Findings in Light of the Official Aims and Assumptions of the Pioneer Schools Programme

To recall from Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1, the Saudi Ministry of Education defined the PSP as an effective school led by an able principal supported by a highly qualified staff. They are responsible for planning, managing and administrating quality programs in line with the educational policy of the Kingdom. The government calls for a flexible curriculum based on the Islamic *Shari'ah* (Islamic Law) and relevant to the challenging demands and requirements of contemporary life in partnership between teacher and student. PSPs are required to employ the most effective teaching methods, resources and advanced technology in order to realize the goals and objectives of the schools. The primary goals of such as schools are, inter alia, to prepare a generation that is able to self-develop and is empowered to deal confidently and effectively with domestic requirements as well as contributing positively to the

international community. Thus, the PSP concept was to be not only pioneering in secondary education in Saudi Arabia, but to impact significantly on the wider society.

Findings from this study are now discussed in light of six key official policy declarations. It is clear that these are broad policy objectives which serve only as a guide for distinguishing pioneer schools as unique, in comparison to other regular schools in the Kingdom. The policy objectives are:

1. Clarity of vision.
2. Internal system of quality monitoring.
3. Comprehensive evaluation of students' achievement and progress.
4. Systematic organization.
5. Clarity and specification of roles and positions, including duties and responsibilities.
6. Keen interest on the part of school administration and local community to provide high quality educational service (Ministry of Education, 2003; Al Ammar, 2008)).

6.5.1 Clarity of Vision

The study did not expressly measure respondents' perceptions on the clarity of vision per se. Rather it examined the mission statement and message of PSPs and its broader philosophical underpinnings based first and foremost on Islam as the national state religion and the local culture. The findings indicate that pioneer schools in Saudi Arabia need to clarify their mission and formulate an appropriate message as part of school philosophy as a framework for their operation and success. Respondents, nonetheless, mention that it is necessary for the pioneer schools to set a unique standard which entails that they should adhere strictly to the national religion with a sound futuristic vision that is transparent in order to be truly meaningful as effective pioneer schools. In other words, academic excellence must be couched within solid moral and religious values.

Thus, the findings indicate that PSPs are yet to come up with an acceptably clear, concrete and sound school philosophy (mission statement, message and vision) that will impress and attract the public. In this sense, the assumed principal and his allegedly qualified staff did not as yet responded fully to the Ministry's number one

official policy objective in clarifying the vision of their school since its first establishment in the year 2000. It is time, if not overdue, that school officials address the issue of school vision in clear, transparent and concrete terms.

6.5.2 Internal System of Quality Monitoring

The results of this study strongly indicate that there is a need to strengthen the internal system of quality assurance through proper and systematic monitoring, overlooked particularly by the Regional Educational Office. Lack of systematic quality assurance is the primary cause for attributing weaknesses to the quality of education and some respondents, particularly students, tended to relegate some pioneer schools to just the same status as other schools, without any unique or distinguished characteristics. However, teachers complain that the Regional Educational Management is either too lax or too harsh in assessing the operators and performance of pioneer schools in Al Madinah. This suggests the need for a clear and systematic internal quality assurance system in all PSPs in Al Madinah, again, another official objective of the Ministry that is yet to be fully realized in PSPs since their establishment.

6.5.3 Comprehensive Evaluation of Students' Achievement and Progress

The scope of this study did not include consideration of evaluation instruments of students, whether it be, frequent quizzes, regular tests or final examinations, because in studying the effectiveness and improvement of PSPs in Al Madinah, the uniqueness of this study is to depart from the old paradigm which uses test scores and examination results as indices of measurement of SESI. However, respondents, particularly students and more so parents call for a comprehensive, rounded and useful curriculum that would be clearly beneficial to students both in the academic world and in real life. Parents make the point that the tests and grading system are too stringent thus frustrating students from achieving very high and full marks, because of the level of difficulty. The study therefore cannot objectively inform on this issue of comprehensive evaluation of students' achievement and progress, but would assume that each school has such a system in place, as a mandatory requirement of the Ministry of Education and probably this needs revisiting in terms of setting a good balance between student motivation and standard-setting.

6.5.4 Systematic Organization

In one form or another, the findings of the study indicate that there are problems with the organisation of PSPs in Al Madinah. This issue was alluded to by the frequent shortages of educational materials, laboratory equipment and materials that are either unusable or inadequate. This issue points to an inventory control problem rather than one of resource scarcity. Excessive student numbers in a single class also shows that some PSPs are really not organized to deal with the realities they are faced with. Meanwhile, teachers, students and parents all call for the organization of more extra-curricula activities, including planned school visits to various places of educational interest and the visit of officials to the schools in a systematic way. As repeatedly noted by students, only the ground floor is given full attention to the neglect of the upper floors in pioneer schools. A more organized and regularized system in operating the schools would clearly meet more comprehensively the official policy objectives of the Ministry to the satisfaction of all parties. Here, again, the Regional Educational Management needs to step to the forefront. More careful planning and effective management strategies are needed in this area.

6.5.5 Clarity and Specification of Roles and Positions, Including Duties and Responsibilities

As expected, this study shows that principals are clearly at the helm and the pivotal point of school administration, policy and management. They are the engine that drives the PSP system in Al Madinah and are very concerned about the success of their schools. As expected also, second to principals, teachers were also seen as playing vital roles in PSPs particularly at the classroom level in daily instruction. Although the study did not delve specifically into the classification and definition of specific roles and duties of staff, it can be safely assumed that PSPs must have a system in place to specify clearly defined roles, positions, duties and responsibilities for all staff members, including principals. This constitutes standard operating procedures for all schools. What is worth mentioning here though, is that respondents clearly see the need to have a more decentralised, consultative, participatory and democratic system to include all staff members in a collaborative decision making process and policy deliberations of the pioneer schools in Saudi Arabia. Again, as the leadership, school principals need to focus more on this concern and engage the Regional Educational Management to work towards help ensuring compliance with

extant official policy directives and accord schools to operate with greater autonomy and independence.

6.5.6 Keen Interest on the Part of the School Administration and the Local Community to Provide a High Quality Educational Service

The study indicates that PSPs have a strong administrative system from the perspective of their day to day operations. However, there is a lingering call for schools to assume a more active and positive role in enlisting greater participation of the local community. The whole focus of this study was to ensure that PSPs are effective and where they fall short, to suggest improvements in order to provide high quality education to students. Indeed, all respondents are firmly entrenched in the view that the unique and distinguished characteristics of pioneer schools are to produce academic excellence, first and foremost, along with a solid and rounded education to make productive and progressive citizens. The officials would be well advised that, based on findings of this study, a lot more needs to be done in order to realise their official policy objectives for pioneer schools in Saudi Arabia. In other words, the study underscores the importance of the participation and support of the local community in its broadest sense to include not only parents, but other important official organizations and institutions with both moral and financial backings.

6.6 Appropriateness of Theoretical and Methodological Approaches Used

The current study did not attempt to repeat extant studies done in Saudi Arabia on SE and SI by virtue of its unique methodological approach and the areas of focus. The focus of this study was wide-ranging and comprehensive which utilized the multi methods approach and triangulation. This methodology was quite specific and only one among a number that could have been chosen. However, it sought a more comprehensive approach to research involving multi-levels that hopefully include most aspects of SESI. To repeat, its focus was exclusively on PSPs in Al Madinah Educational District. Thus, for instance, parents' qualifications were not used to see if they have an impact on SE or SI, but only to see if their responses would vary due to differences in educational background. This is also true of all other respondents, including principals and teachers themselves.

Similarly, parents' employment, family size, multi-marriages and the way parents treat their children were not part of the research. Neither were such demographic factors assessed within the student, principal or teacher groups. All these factors were beyond the scope and domain of the current study. However, although the socio-economic status of the family was also not specifically tested for, this study indicates that some respondents are of the view that the higher their social class, the greater expectations lay for SE and SI in their children's schools. Student self-motivation was seen as a major factor of SE and SI and it was suggested that the school itself, in all aspects (environment, facilities, programs, etc.), including teachers in particular, and not parents, are directly responsible and have much to do with this and progress in their studies.

The multi-level approach used in this study to examine a range of primary and secondary factors in SESI in pioneer schools in Saudi Arabia necessarily involved the utilization of three distinct data collection methods for triangulation of the results and findings of the study. From this perspective, the study, ambitious in scope, achieved gains as seen from the discussions in the various sections above.

Since also the theoretical and methodical approach incorporates two dominant theoretical and methodical constructs – positivism and constructivism – that are widely and popularly used in the social sciences, including educational research, it can be safely said that the choice to combine quantitative and qualitative research methods is helpful to the research outcome of this study. Through triangulation, it was seen that the essential findings were corroborated for all four respondents, even though the statistical analysis of principals' survey results was not very impressive due to a rather small sample size of only 8 total, in comparison to their counterparts – teachers, students and parents – on all SE and SI items based on the four main question sets.

Moreover, since the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm was essentially an alternative rather than a critical challenge to jettison outright the positivist paradigm, combining both theoretical and methodical approaches served to strengthen the study. In other words, the weakness in one approach was compensated or overcome by the other in a symbiotic manner working in concert to improve both validity and

reliability of the study. Triangulation of the findings using different but appropriate research methods can only be achieved in multiple approaches. Quantitative method alone is not sufficient to account for social science issues and it can likewise be argued that qualitative methods alone are insufficient. Thus, the two methods used here are both necessary and sufficient at the same time.

A major goal of the study was triangulation for achieving maximum validity and reliability and this requires not only a mixed method approach but also the utilization of diverse data collection instruments. For the questionnaire usage of this study, all items were essentially fixed with no room for elaboration. This perceived shortcoming was completely overcome by the use of semi-structured interviews for school principals and focus groups for the other participants – teachers, students and parents. It is in these latter instruments that extensive discussions were engaged in, in order to tackle all important aspects of SESI in Al Madinah PSPs. While SPSS was used for statistical analysis of the questionnaire data, hermeneutics involving negotiating or constructing the meaning of textual information was heavily and fully utilized. The semi-structured interviews and focus groups were guided by set questions with clear objectives to include, cover and freely discuss items not covered or addressed adequately in the questionnaire, noting that all respondents who completed the questionnaires were also included in the semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

Of course, time constraint was a major challenge in this research which precludes the possibility for personal in-depth interviews with all participants. In such a framework, the discussion would have been more open and free, not bounded by the constraints of group or peer pressure. However, the atmosphere in both semi-structured interviews and focus groups did not at all indicate that respondents were constrained, restricted or otherwise prevented from freely and openly expressing themselves and discussing the issues. It is believed that they say what they wanted and what they mean.

6.7 Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The first major strength of this study is the careful selection and meticulous application of the multi-methods approach used in this study. This highlights the second strength which enables triangulation. The details and nuances that could not be brought out in quantitative research alone (survey instruments/questionnaires) were

amply realised through additional data collection methods involving semi-structured interviews and focus groups. A third strength is the fact that this is the first known study on PSPs in Saudi Arabia and the first in Al Madinah Educational District. A fourth strength or advantage of this study is the fact that the researcher is himself a Saudi, not a foreigner, and a resident and teacher in the Al Madinah Educational District itself, all of which enables him to easily access the target population and obtain the required information. Not only are his residence and vocation direct assets but his native Arabic language serves as a natural advantage for conducting this study. Finally, the findings of this study may be used to answer and address SE and SI issues in other PSP schools in Saudi Arabia, particularly boys' schools in that of big cities. In the final analysis, the study has modestly contributed to the literature by adding new factors of SESI and elaborating and taking a different perspective on others. While this study may have direct implications for policy and the operations of PSP schools in Saudi Arabia, it may also serve to inform other Arab countries, most especially neighbouring Gulf States, and possibly also for the UK and USA.

However, there are very clear limitations to this study. First and foremost is the fact that a significant target population was not addressed at all. Female PSPs were not included in the study because of strong cultural and religious constraints prohibiting the researcher from accessing that segment of the school population. All the same, this is a major weakness in the sense that the current study cannot presume with any degree of certainty that the findings in the male PSPs truly represent their female gender counterparts on all the issues of SESI in the same Educational District of Al Madinah. Although, the chosen educational district is from a major Saudi city and its findings may inform on other PSPs across the Kingdom, it may be appropriate to conduct another SESI studies particularly for small cities and remote areas of the country to see if the findings are comparable. From the researcher's own personal perspective, the study turned out to be very demanding as it included all eight PSP schools in Al Madinah and the utilization of extensive data collection methods which consumed significant resources and extensive time to complete. This, however, can be argued as constituting a significant methodological strength.

It can be also argued that the eight items, or some of them at least, that this study did not support from a Western perspective, as noted above, can be explored in a future study of PSPs in Saudi Arabia to check for its suitability and implications.

Maybe a less modest and ambitious study would suffice. Also, given the difficulties the researcher faced in translating the documents back and forth from Arabic to English, this can be perceived as a limitation or an unduly cumbersome task of the study as well. Last but not least, this is a single study and however hopeful or ambitious its aims, it cannot pretend to solve all PSP issues of SE and SI in Saudi Arabia permanently; time series analysis may be required to see if the recommendations and suggestions made by this study are implemented and given a chance to work before conducting further studies.

6.8 Implications of the Findings of the Study

The implications of the findings of this study are primarily related to the whole concept of the Saudi government establishing a new family of superior breed of secondary State schools, called PSPs, that are supposed to be, not only different from traditional or regular schools, but highly distinguished in all respects for producing top quality education and therefore first class students, in a modern, advanced and highly competitive world. In the past, the educational system of the Kingdom has for long been concerned mainly with quantity rather than quality. This neglect is due to factors such as the process of indigenization or Saudization of the teaching manpower in order to lessen heavy dependence of a huge foreign labour force. As a result, educational enterprise in the Kingdom departed from quality and meaningful representation to primarily one of quantity.

There is a stark realization that the government educational policies of the Kingdom needs revision and change as there is now a growing need to catch up with the worldwide movement of SESI. The Saudi interest in the development of effective secondary schools can be justified in a number of ways, amongst which is the fact that the secondary stage is a crucial stage upon which the completion of both the academic and professional career of the secondary school graduate is determined and it is the foundation for students to enter university. The Educational Development Centre insists that the primary aim is to realize the best possible learning outcomes to achieve

comprehensive education and make rounded students in all aspects – academic excellence, skills, discipline, attitudes, values, self-develop and empowered to deal confidently and effectively with domestic requirements as well as contributing to global civilization This is what the new school system aims to achieve in the Saudi educational context. In other words, State school must deliver the “educational goods”.

In Kingdom, a great deal of official concerns is expressed regarding the need to improve the quality of state schools at all levels so as to provide an acceptable educational service that is realistic to the demands of a dynamic and rapidly advancing society. It is realized that social equality, a strong economy, a highly skilled and motivated workforce and advanced health provision services can be realized by means of sound education. As a result, developing countries require schools to teach students essential skills in a useful, flexible and pragmatic curriculum, which includes literacy, numeracy communications and problem-solving skills. Research has shown that differences in pupil attainment, attitudes and behaviour cannot be explained simply by what happens at home in the life of students; State schools have a major role to play and some schools are clearly more effective than others, hence the need for SE and SI.

Despite the laudable and ambitious policy statements backed up by massive financial allocations to establish the *Pioneer Secondary Schools Programme*, school effectiveness and school improvement lag seriously behind. In other words, there is a huge gap between the declared official policy and laudable intentions for high quality secondary education and actual outcomes for high school graduates.

Thus, this study underscores three basic concerns:

1. The role of pioneer schools to produce quality students with basic academic skills and prepared for entering university to pursue higher education in a bid to offset a high expatriate force in the Kingdom in virtually every sector, including the educational sector.
2. To engender indigenous national social justice, a highly motivated work force, economic growth and comprehensive development in all sectors with an advanced and highly educated civic population at a world class level.

3. To keep up with world trends in making education an essential tool to realize prosperity for its citizens and the Kingdom in a vastly competitive world.

Although the findings indicate an overwhelming high rating of PSPs from the majority of respondents, with the exception of a small minority, there are serious problems manifested in State pioneer schools in a number of crucial areas that impact SESI. The following is a basic checklist in order of perceived importance:

1. The number of students in a single classroom is too large, thus seriously affecting the quality of instruction and learning.
2. Some classrooms are too small and under-equipped, even without a basic desk for the teacher.
3. The curriculum is mostly rated as different from non-pioneer schools, but needs serious revisiting in a number of specific areas:
 - a) It needs to be flexible, practical and tailored to match teaching time allotted for the class.
 - b) It needs to be more relevant to the needs, aspirations and desires of students as some subjects are not considered useful and should be replaced by useful ones.
 - c) It should remain small with no more than a maximum number of seven subjects in order to allow teachers to prepare better and students more time to study better.
 - d) The curriculum must be sophisticated, be able to compete at the highest academic level and keep up with the growing innovative trends in the modern world.
 - e) The curriculum does not contain a sufficient variety of educational and extra curricula activities involving visits, excursions and programmes to discover and develop students' talents, potentials and aspirations.
4. Only the best most qualified, competent, dedicated, caring, experienced and top professional teachers should teach in PSPs, some of them are not flexible and respectful and deemed to be too strict by students and parents.
5. Teachers are not adequately prepared to teach PSP curriculum.
6. Teachers need both professional development (CD) and continuous professional development (CPD), pre-service, in-service training at PSPs and additional courses to keep up to date and perform at their best.

7. As with teachers, PSP principals are not among the most qualified, though clearly competent, caring and experienced in running the school and dealing with all members of the school community – support staff, teaching staff, students, parents and the larger local community.
8. Habitually, principals do not leave their office on the first or main floor and regularly visit the upper floors to make sure that attention is given equally to all segments of the school.
9. Some principals are authoritarian: they just pass orders around and feel themselves proud or arrogant because of their position.
10. The school administration does not always display a cooperative, democratic, consultative, and harmonious spirit and system in order for the school to have the best atmosphere.
11. Generally speaking, the school has not done much to educate, parents in particular who are usually busy and other important members and institutions of the larger local community, about the role of the school and solicit their valued participation.
12. Materials, supplies and some equipment in some schools are not properly maintained with some being spoiled, short and in a bad state of repair.
13. The school building is not regularly maintained and undue preference is notably given to the first or ground floor where the school administration is located to the utter disregard of the upper floors which are seriously neglected.
14. Some schools require a voluntary fee which is being used as a tool to manipulate admission and enrolment of students.
15. No all PSPs boast a high calibre of academic students, disciplined (and high social class) as they should as distinguished schools.
16. Although to some extent present, PSPs generally lack state of the art schools with modern facilities, equipment and resources, such as smart boards, smart classes, etc. for an attractive and appropriate learning environment.
17. Freedom of opinions, thoughts and ideas are not always welcome in PSPs in Al Madinah.
18. The regional educational management representing the Ministry of Education is clearly disappointing in virtually all respects to its duties and responsibilities to the proper maintenance of PSPs in Al Madinah Educational District.

Moreover, this body is largely seen as inflexible, disrespectful and dictatorial thus compromising the autonomy and independence of PSPs.

In the final analysis, although the State secondary schools or PSPs in particular in Saudi Arabia have started the march and are well on their way towards meeting the Kingdom's educational objectives and concerns, they are yet a far cry way from doing so, based on the findings of this study. Too many perceived weaknesses are still plaguing the system, clearly because of a number of reasons highlighted, including the fact that primarily PSPs in the Kingdom are largely experimental and can be said to still be in their developmental, if not embryonic stage.

6.9 Recommendations for PSPs Based on the Study

Following logically from the major identified weaknesses of the state of PSPs in Al Madinah Educational District, according to this study, the following suggestions or recommendations may prove helpful to ensure the effectiveness and improvement of Pioneer Secondary Schools in Saudi Arabia:

1. Seriously review and drastically reduce the number of students in a single class.
2. Ensure fully equipped and adequate class room size.
3. Serious review in the curriculum in all five areas noted.
4. Seriously review and hire only the best qualified teachers in all respects to work in PSPs.
5. Teachers must be adequately trained before being allowed to teach a unique PSP curriculum.
6. Teachers need continuous professional development to keep up with the rising demands of PSPs.
7. Seriously review and hire only the most qualified principal in all respects to run PSPs.
8. Principals must pay full attention to all segments of the schools' operations without favouring any at the expense of others.
9. Principals should seriously review their administrative style in running the school and made it more participatory.
10. The school should seriously review its administrative style and practices in all respects to account for full cooperation, employ collective decision making

procedures, and support genuine democratic practices leading to a congenial and best atmosphere.

- 11.** PSPs must play a sustained and determined role to reach out to parents and the larger local community for them to truly appreciate the role of the schools and participate meaningfully by both moral and financial support. The school must also contribute to more community projects to become recognized and win popular public support.
- 12.** The school administration should have a competent staff to check on the inventory of all materials and supplies and ensure that all equipment and facilities are in good and safe working condition.
- 13.** There must be a regular building maintenance staff and schedule to ensure all aspects of the school property are maintained regularly and properly and without neglect to any part.
- 14.** PSPs should seriously review and abolish the voluntary school fees which do not always attract the best and most qualified students to enter the pioneer schools.
- 15.** The researcher fully supports the idea of PSPs as distinguished schools to enrol only a high calibre of academic students and disciplined students, but he has very serious problems with the idea that only a high social class of students should be allowed to attend the school.
- 16.** All PSPs must be seriously reviewed to ensure that they are equipped with only the latest and state of the art modern teaching facilities – smart boards, smart class, high-tech labs, IT, computer systems, etc. But it must ensure that staff are fully conversant in using them effectively and efficiently.
- 17.** PSPs should review their policies regarding freedom of opinions, thoughts and ideas and allow greater freedom in these areas.
- 18.** The regional educational management of the Ministry of Education needs to assume greater responsibility in the diligent discharge of its duties to ensure that PSPs in particular and indeed all State public schools operate not only according to the Ministry's guidelines but at the highest level. Moreover, this body must re-examine its policies and practices regarding flexibility, respectful and dictatorial or authoritarian attitudes which compromise the autonomy and independence of PSPs for them to function properly.

From a larger SER and SIR perspective, two main recommendations are in order:

1. There needs to be another study on PSPs in Saudi Arabia for girls' schools in Al Madinah to make a similar assessment (and probably a comparison) as done in this study.
2. There needs to be a time series study, say 10 years down the road, to further assess what changes have occurred if the recommendations and suggestions offered here for SESI of boys' PSPs are implemented.

6.10 Conclusion

Overall, regarding analysis of the questionnaire results on SESI issues, principals focused mostly on administrative and management issues with academic concerns clearly in mind and formed the vital administrative key for PSPs. Their counterparts – teachers, students and parents – all feel strongly regarding all four main questions sets on SESI in Al Madinah PSPs. It should be noted that principals are not that highly qualified although they boast considerable experience in education. Both from the questionnaire instrument and the findings from the semi-structured interviews, principals believe that, qualitatively, they have a more nuanced, stronger and serious position regarding their schools as distinguished pioneer schools than all respondents. However, the same can be said of the other respondents who show sustained congruity between the questionnaire results and the focus groups findings. All participants are serious about making their schools truly PSPs and highly reputable.

All respondents rate their schools highly from being the best to among the best, few thought otherwise. Yet, it is instructive that they all have serious concerns regarding the state of such schools, the main role of such schools and the factors of effective schools. Many concerns expressed with regard to one question were again repeated in the responses of other questions, thereby highlighting the importance of these items and the interconnectedness of the factors or elements of SESI between and among questions. It is noteworthy that respondents do not necessarily view test scores as the sole measure of SESI and insist that pioneer schools must meet the standards of modern education and at the level of world class excellence as they perceive this. Emphasis is given to rounded, useful/purposeful education beneficial to the students, the society, the nation and even the world. In a nutshell, that is more or less how SE is

defined, not merely by test scores. For them, there needs to be significant improvement first before they can truly focus on issues of SE.

It is clear from the findings that this study contributed, albeit modestly to the existing body of literature discussed in Chapter Three, in affirming extant factors, throwing light on new ones and giving a new perspective to SER and SIR in traditional societies. It added insights on SESI for the Arab World in general and suggested specific antidotes for SESI in Saudi Arabia. Without stretching the pendulum too far, the study may very well have implications for the USA and UK and indeed the Western world as well.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A1: PRINCIPALS' QUESTIONNAIRE

PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IN AL MADINA AL MUNAWWARAH EDUCATIONAL DISTRICT

PhD RESEARCH PROJECT

By

Yasin Salim Al Johani

University of Exeter

School of Education

This is a fullscale research study that aims to ascertain perspectives about *effective schools*, *school effectiveness* and *school improvement* in Saudi Arabia, grounded on perceptions from the school community, namely : a) school head masters, b) teachers, c) parents and d) students. Because your school has been honoured this title "Effective School", it was selected to conduct our research in. Access and acceptance from the General Directorate of Education in Madinah was taken. We appreciate your permission and acceptance to access your school questing for the truth as detailed in the questionnaires and interviews questions. Privacy, anonimity and confidentiality will be strictly guaranteed. In addition, results and conclusions of this research will be anonymously revealed to participants in case they want to benefit from gleaning the others' perspectives.

The researcher,
Yasin Salim Al-Johani

**PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE
(PRINCIPALS' QUESTIONNAIRE)**

Dear School Principal,

This questionnaire is part of a field study aiming to collect data about effective schools and school improvement in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah Educational Zone. The questionnaire aims to collect data as to principals' perceptions of effective schools in Saudi Arabia. More specifically, it aims to ascertain your perceptions of:

- 1. The possible roles of an effective secondary school.**
- 2. The important elements contributing to the effectiveness of a school.**
- 3. The effectiveness of your own school.**

Since school principals and their roles and voices are crucial in the educational enterprise, it was seen necessary to direct this questionnaire to you in order to obtain an essential part of the information necessary for the success of this research project. Consequently, your cooperation is essential.

Please, read the items of the questionnaire and respond to each item in a way that reflects your perception best. The information that you give and your responses to both close-ended and open-ended questions will be confidential and will not be accessed by anyone except the researcher. Moreover, the information and responses will be used for research purposes only. Reporting of the results will be undertaken in a way that will make it impossible for you or your institution to be identified through the answers that you have given. Your school is one of a sample of eight to be included in the research.

I express my gratitude and appreciation for the time you spend and the effort you devote to responding to this questionnaire. In case you have a query, please, do not hesitate to contact me personally via my personal phone number or via email.

The researcher,
Yasin Salim Al-Johani
PhD student
University of Exeter
Mobile: **0565154050**
email: yaseenjohani@yahoo.com

SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please tick (✓) where appropriate

1. **Qualifications:** BA MA PhD Other

2. **Specialization:**

3. **Years of experience:** Less than 5 Yrs
 5- Less than 10 Yrs.
 10-less than 15
 15 yrs and more

4. **Years spent in this school:**
 Less than 5 Yrs
 5- Less than 10 Yrs.
 10-less than 15
 15 yrs and more

5. **Have you received any in-service training on pioneer school principalship?**
 Once
 Two times
 Three times
 None

SECTION TWO: THE ROLE(S) OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL

Please indicate your level of agreement and show your opinion as to the degree of importance you attach to each statement by ticking (✓) the appropriate columns. IN THE RIGHT HAND COLUMN please put "1" next to the element you consider most important, "2" next to the second most important, etc. down to "10" next to the least important element in the list.

No.	Statements An effective school will...	Degree of agreement				Priority Ranking 1 to 10
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree to some extent	Disagree	
1.	provide students with a good understanding of basic academic skills.					
2.	provide students with the skills necessary for work market.					
3.	provide students with the opportunity to develop leadership skills.					
4.	provide students with a caring and supportive environment.					
5.	provide students with the skills necessary to become productive and useful citizens.					
6.	provide students with the skills necessary to develop a healthy understanding of themselves and others.					
7.	provide students with a balanced curriculum that encourages a wide range of learning experiences.					
8.	provide students with the opportunity to develop a value system that reflects the major values of society.					
9.	provide students with teachers who reinforce community values and habits.					
10.	provide students with an opportunity to be involved in the decision making processes within the school.					
11.	use a range of assessment strategies to identify the students' level of achievement.					
12.	provide the parents with regular reports about their children's achievement.					
13.	provide the parents with an opportunity to be involved in the development of school policies and processes.					
14.	respond to the needs of the local community.					
15.	secure high levels of formal attainment by pupils taking account of their capabilities'					

SECTION THREE: ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL

1- Please, tick the appropriate box IN THE LEFT-HAND COLUMN to indicate which ONE of the following statements you agree with most. If you do not agree with any, could you please indicate which?

2- How important are these elements? Please give your opinion on the TOP TEN most important elements and rank them in order of importance. IN THE RIGHT HAND COLUMN please put "1" next to the element you consider most important, "2" next to the second most important, etc., down to "10" next to the LEAST important element in the list.

No.	ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL	Important	Priority ranking 1 to 10
1.	Staff, students and the community know what the school goals are, and are able to express these goals.		
2.	Staff, parents and students in the school are given the opportunity to develop leadership skills.		
3.	Teachers are well-trained and show the skills of quality teaching. Teachers care about students' success in school, work as a team and exhibit positive their work.		
4.	Staff development programs are offered to the school staff that aim to promote the educational process.		
5.	Staff and parents believe that all students have the capacity to succeed and that staff and parent cooperation is crucial in student achievement.		
6.	The curriculum, instructional methods and assessment procedures within the school are all closely aligned to the basic goals that the students are expected to accomplish.		
7.	Teachers allocate a significant amount of time to instruct the students in the basic skills through engagement in planned learning activities.		
8.	Feedback on student academic progress is obtained frequently with the aim of improving student performance and assessing the success of the curriculum.		
9.	A lot of effort is made to identify and overcome learning difficulties.		
10.	The school environment is conducive to teaching and learning, and makes students feel secure.		
11.	Staff, students and parents are proud of their school and the people who work within it.		
12.	The school encourages parent involvement in decision-making and in following their children up at home.		
13.	Most of the decisions relating to school policy are made by the principal, teachers, students and parents.		
14.	The principal encourages teachers to take an active role in curriculum and school planning. Teachers provide appropriate activities to enhance students' learning.		
15.	The school is supported by the Ministry of Education and the Educational School District for the implementation of school programmes.		
16.	Teachers use strategies that will inspire students to learn.		

SECTION FOUR: (A) EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR OWN SCHOOL

Please, read the following items and tick (√) where you think appropriate.

1	As a principal I think I...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
1.1	am qualified, competent and experienced in administration.				
1.2	provide a leadership model to be followed by the school community.				
1.3	strive to improve the school.				
1.4	manage resources wisely.				
1.5	work co-operatively with staff.				
1.6	work co-operatively with parents.				
1.7	promote parent participation in school activities and student learning.				
1.8	Promote high staff morale.				
1.9	promote continuous learning and development of staff.				
2	In my school I think the TEACHERS...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
2.1	are qualified and competent.				
2.2	have positive attitudes and high morale.				
2.3	are keen on achieving optimal student achievement.				
2.4	develop students' critical thinking, problem solving and creativity.				
2.5	are sensitive to individual students' needs.				
2.6	welcome parent participation.				
2.7	are interested in continuous learning and professional development.				
2.8	have a wide range of skills.				
2.9	collaborate and work as a team.				
3	My school's philosophy...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
3.1	involves high expectations for all students and teachers.				
3.2	encourages students to work towards their personal best.				
3.3	aims to develop the full potential of each individual intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically.				
3.4	places an importance on the development of life skills and positive values and relationships.				
3.5	recognizes that each student has different needs, background and aspirations.				
3.6	values and welcomes students' diverse social and cultural backgrounds.				
3.7	recognizes that education is a co-operative effort that involves teachers, students and parents.				

4	My school environment...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
4.1	is stimulating for students to learn.				
4.2	is secure and welcoming.				
4.3	fosters positive relationships between school people.				
4.4	promotes a sense of belonging and pride amongst students in the school.				
4.5	provides for student participation in aspects of school life.				
4.6	has sensible rules that are clearly defined and enforced.				
4.7	has effective management practices supported by a strong student affairs system.				
5	My school has a student affairs system that...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
5.1	supports the development of students to their full potential.				
5.2	addresses difficulties experienced by students effectively and efficiently.				
5.3	is sensitive to individual students' needs and backgrounds.				
5.4	links with community support services and resources outside the school.				
6	In my school...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
6.1	parents and school board are satisfied with the allocation of resources and expenditure decisions.				
6.2	there are sufficient administrative and supportive staff to meet the needs of the school.				
6.3	the administrative staff know the students and their parents.				
6.4	there is strong IT infrastructure with up-to-date technology.				
6.5	the school has other physical resources e.g. educational resources, sporting equipment, library books.				
6.6	a staff development and appraisal system is in place.				
6.7	time is set aside for staff to do planning and program development.				
6.8	class sizes are in line with system-wide guidelines.				
6.9	students are satisfied with timetable and subject choice arrangements.				

7	In my school, the curriculum...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
7.1	provides a range of learning experiences within and beyond the key learning areas.				
7.2	progresses the social, personal and physical development of students as well as their academic development.				
7.3	ensures that students develop a positive attitude to learning.				
7.4	provides continuity from year to year and is integrated across learning areas.				
7.5	helps students to develop life skills, such as self-esteem, motivation and self-discipline.				
8	In my school, assessment and reporting arrangements...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
8.1	provide clear and reliable information across the key learning areas and on the social development of students.				
8.2	lead to sound decisions about teaching approaches.				
8.3	identify problem areas and ways to work on these in partnership with parents.				
8.4	allow parents to observe and understand their children's progress.				
8.5	are undertaken in ways which support student learning and confidence.				
9	The school policy...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
9.1	recognizes that partnerships between parents and teachers lead to better learning outcomes.				
9.2	promotes school and teacher responsiveness to parents' views, inquiries and concerns.				
9.3	supports the links with other schools, business, and voluntary and government organizations.				
9.4	promotes a strong sense of community within the school.				

(B) Please indicate your rating of your school by ticking one of the four options given:

No.	Your rating of your school I think my school would be...	Put a tick (✓) where appropriate
1.	the most effective school in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	
2.	among the most effective schools in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	
3.	as effective as other schools in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	
4.	less effective than most other schools in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	

PS: The researcher might need to contact you for further information which might require conducting personal face-to-face interview. In case you agree, please write your contact number below:

Phone no. 0565154050

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX A2: TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IN AL MADINA AL MUNAWWARAH EDUCATIONAL DISTRICT

PhD RESEARCH PROJECT

By

Yasin Salim Al Johani

University of Exeter

School of Education

This is a full scale research study that aims to ascertain perspectives about *effective schools*, *school effectiveness* and *school improvement* in Saudi Arabia, grounded on perceptions from the school community, namely : a) school head masters, b) teachers, c) parents and d) students. Because your school has been honoured this title "Effective School", it was selected to conduct our research in. Access and acceptance from the General Directorate of Education in Madinah was taken. We appreciate your permission and acceptance to access your school questioning for the truth as detailed in the questionnaires and interviews questions. Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality will be strictly guaranteed. In addition, results and conclusions of this research will be anonymously revealed to participants in case they want to benefit from gleaning the others' perspectives.

The researcher,
Yasin Salim Al-Johani

PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE
(TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE)

Dear Teacher,

This questionnaire is part of a field study aiming to collect data about effective schools and school improvement in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah Educational Zone. More specifically, the questionnaire aims to collect data on the teachers' perceptions of effective schools in Saudi Arabia. More specifically, it aims to ascertain your perceptions of:

- 1. The possible roles of an effective secondary school.**
- 2. The important elements contributing to the effectiveness of a school.**
- 3. The effectiveness of your own school.**

Since teachers and their voices are crucial in the educational enterprise, it was seen necessary to direct this questionnaire to you in order to obtain an essential part of the information necessary for the success of this research project. Consequently, your cooperation is essential.

Please, read the items of the questionnaire and respond to each item in a way that reflects your perception best. The information that you give and your responses to both close-ended and open-ended questions will be confidential and will not be accessed by anyone except the researcher. Moreover, the information and responses will be used for research purposes only. Reporting of the results will be undertaken in a way that will make it impossible for you or your institution to be identified through the answers that you have given. Your school is one of a sample of eight to be included in the research.

I express my gratitude and appreciation for the time you spend and the effort you devote to responding to this questionnaire. In case you have a query, please, do not hesitate to contact me personally via my personal phone number or via email.

The researcher,
Yasin Salim Al-Johani
PhD student
University of Exeter
Mobile: **0565154050**
email: yaseenjohani@yahoo.com

SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please tick (√) where appropriate

1. **Qualifications:** BA MA PhD Other

2. **Specialization:**

3. **Years of experience:** Less than 5 Yrs
 5- Less than 10 Yrs.
 10-less than 15
 15 yrs and more

4. **Years spent in this school:**
 Less than 5 Yrs
 5- Less than 10 Yrs.
 10-less than 15
 15 yrs and more

5. **Have you received any in-service training to be a pioneer school teacher?**
 Once
 Two times
 Three times
 None

SECTION TWO: THE ROLE(S) OF AND EFFECTIVE SCHOOL

Please indicate your level of agreement and show your opinion as to the degree of importance you attach to each statement by ticking (✓) the appropriate columns. IN THE RIGHT HAND COLUMN please put "1" next to the element you consider most important, "2" next to the second most important, etc. down to "10" next to the least important element in the list.

No.	Statements An effective school will...	Degree of agreement				Priority Ranking 1 to 10
		Strongly agree	Agree	Agree to some extent	Disagree	
1.	provide students with a good understanding of basic academic skills.					
2.	provide students with the skills necessary for work market.					
3.	provide students with the opportunity to develop leadership skills.					
4.	provide students with a caring and supportive environment.					
5.	provide students with the skills necessary to become productive and useful citizens.					
6.	provide students with the skills necessary to develop a healthy understanding of themselves and others.					
7.	provide students with a balanced curriculum that encourages a wide range of learning experiences.					
8.	provide students with the opportunity to develop a value system that reflects the major values of society.					
9.	provide students with teachers who reinforce community values and habits.					
10.	provide students with an opportunity to be involved in the decision making processes within the school.					
11.	use a range of assessment strategies to identify the students' level of achievement.					
12.	provide the parents with regular reports about their children's achievement.					
13.	provide the parents with an opportunity to be involved in the development of school policies and processes.					
14.	respond to the needs of the local community.					
15.	secure high levels of formal attainment by pupils taking account of their capabilities'					

SECTION THREE: ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL

1- Please, tick the appropriate box IN THE LEFT-HAND COLUMN to indicate which ONE of the following statements you agree with most. If you do not agree with any, could you please indicate which?

2- How important are these elements? Please give your opinion on the TOP TEN most important elements and rank them in order of importance. IN THE RIGHT HAND COLUMN please put "1" next to the element you consider most important, "2" next to the second most important, etc., down to "10" next to the LEAST important element in the list.

No.	ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL	Important	Priority ranking 1 to 10
1.	Staff, students and the community know what the school goals are, and are able to express these goals.		
2.	Staff, parents and students in the school are given the opportunity to develop leadership skills.		
3.	Teachers are well-trained and show the skills of quality teaching. Teachers care about students' success in school, work as a team and exhibit positive their work.		
4.	Staff development programs are offered to the school staff that aim to promote the educational process.		
5.	Staff and parents believe that all students have the capacity to succeed and that staff and parent cooperation is crucial in student achievement.		
6.	The curriculum, instructional methods and assessment procedures within the school are all closely aligned to the basic goals that the students are expected to accomplish.		
7.	Teachers allocate a significant amount of time to instruct the students in the basic skills through engagement in planned learning activities.		
8.	Feedback on student academic progress is obtained frequently with the aim of improving student performance and assessing the success of the curriculum.		
9.	A lot of effort is made to identify and overcome learning difficulties.		
10.	The school environment is conducive to teaching and learning, and makes students feel secure.		
11.	Staff, students and parents are proud of their school and the people who work within it.		
12.	The school encourages parent involvement in decision-making and in following their children up at home.		
13.	Most of the decisions relating to school policy are made by the principal, teachers, students and parents.		
14.	The principal encourages teachers to take an active role in curriculum and school planning. Teachers provide appropriate activities to enhance students' learning.		
15.	The school is supported by the Ministry of Education and the Educational School District for the implementation of school programmes.		
16.	Teachers use strategies that will inspire students to learn.		

SECTION FOUR: (A) EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR OWN SCHOOL

Please, read the following items and tick (✓) where you think appropriate.

1	In my school I think the PRINCIPAL is...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
1.1	qualified, competent and experienced in administration.				
1.2	provides a leadership model to be followed by the school community.				
1.3	strives to improve the school.				
1.4	manages resources wisely.				
1.5	works co-operatively with staff.				
1.6	works co-operatively with parents.				
1.7	promotes parent participation in school activities and student learning.				
1.8	promotes high staff morale.				
1.9	promotes continuous learning and development of staff.				
2	As a teacher I think I...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
2.1	am qualified and competent.				
2.2	have positive attitudes and high morale.				
2.3	am keen on achieving optimal student achievement.				
2.4	develop students' critical thinking, problem solving and creativity.				
2.5	am sensitive to individual students' needs.				
2.6	welcome parent participation.				
2.7	am interested in continuous learning and professional development.				
2.8	have a wide range of skills.				
2.9	collaborate and work as a team member.				
3	My school's philosophy...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
3.1	involves high expectations for all students and teachers.				
3.2	encourages students to work towards their personal best.				
3.3	aims to develop the full potential of each individual intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically.				
3.4	places an importance on the development of life skills and positive values and relationships.				
3.5	recognizes that each student has different needs, background and aspirations.				
3.6	values and welcomes students' diverse social and cultural backgrounds.				
3.7	recognizes that education is a co-operative effort that involves teachers, students and parents.				

4	My school environment...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
4.1	is stimulating for students to learn.				
4.2	is secure and welcoming.				
4.3	fosters positive relationships between school people.				
4.4	promotes a sense of belonging and pride amongst students in the school.				
4.5	provides for student participation in aspects of school life.				
4.6	has sensible rules that are clearly defined and enforced.				
4.7	has effective management practices supported by a strong student affairs system.				
5	My school has a student affairs system that...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
5.1	supports the development of students to their full potential.				
5.2	addresses difficulties experienced by students effectively and efficiently.				
5.3	is sensitive to individual students' needs and backgrounds.				
5.4	links with community support services and resources outside the school.				
6	In my school...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
6.1	parents and school board are satisfied with the allocation of resources and expenditure decisions.				
6.2	there are sufficient administrative and supportive staff to meet the needs of the school.				
6.3	the administrative staff know the students and their parents.				
6.4	there is strong IT infrastructure with up-to-date technology.				
6.5	the school has other physical resources e.g. educational resources, sporting equipment, library books.				
6.6	a staff development and appraisal system is in place.				
6.7	time is set aside for staff to do planning and program development.				
6.8	class sizes are in line with system-wide guidelines.				
6.9	students are satisfied with timetable and subject choice arrangements.				

7	In my school the curriculum...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
7.1	provides a range of learning experiences within and beyond the key learning areas.				
7.2	progresses the social, personal and physical development of students as well as their academic development.				
7.3	ensures that students develop a positive attitude to learning.				
7.4	provides continuity from year to year and is integrated across learning areas.				
7.5	helps students to develop life skills, such as self-esteem, motivation and self-discipline.				
8	In my school assessment and reporting arrangements...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
8.1	provide clear and reliable information across the key learning areas and on the social development of students.				
8.2	lead to sound decisions about teaching approaches.				
8.3	identify problem areas and ways to work on these in partnership with parents.				
8.4	allow parents to observe and understand their children's progress.				
8.5	are undertaken in ways which support student learning and confidence.				
9	The school policy...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
9.1	recognizes that partnerships between parents and teachers lead to better learning outcomes.				
9.2	promotes school and teacher responsiveness to parents' views, inquiries and concerns.				
9.3	supports the links with other schools, business, and voluntary and government organizations.				
9.4	promotes a strong sense of community within the school.				

(B) Please indicate your rating of your school by ticking one of the four options given:

No.	Your rating of your school I think my school would be...	Put a tick (✓) where appropriate
1.	the most effective school in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	
2.	among the most effective schools in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	
3.	as effective as other schools in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	
4.	less effective than most other schools in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	

PS: The researcher might need to contact you for further information which might require conducting personal face-to-face interview. In case you agree, please write your contact number below:

Phone no. 0565154050

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX A3: STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IN AL MADINA AL MUNAWWARAH EDUCATIONAL DISTRICT

PhD RESEARCH PROJECT

**By
Yasin Salim Al Johani**

**University of Exeter
School of Education**

This is a full scale research study that aims to ascertain perspectives about *effective schools*, *school effectiveness* and *school improvement* in Saudi Arabia, grounded on perceptions from the school community, namely : a) school head masters, b) teachers, c) parents and d) students. Because your school has been honoured this title "Effective School", it was selected to conduct our research in. Access and acceptance from the General Directorate of Education in Madinah was taken. We appreciate your permission and acceptance to access your school questing for the truth as detailed in the questionnaires and interviews questions. Privacy, anonimity and confidentiality will be strictly guaranteed. In addition, results and conclusions of this research will be anonymously revealed to participants in case they want to benefit from gleaning the others' perspectives.

The researcher,
Yasin Salim Al-Johani

PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE
(STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE)

Dear Student,

This questionnaire is part of a field study aiming to collect data about effective schools and school improvement in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah Educational Zone. More specifically, the questionnaire aims to collect data as to students' perceptions of effective schools in Saudi Arabia. More specifically, it aims to ascertain your perceptions of:

- 1. The possible roles of an effective secondary school.**
- 2. The important elements contributing to the effectiveness of a school.**
- 3. The effectiveness of your school**

Since school students and their roles and voices are crucial in the educational enterprise that you are experiencing, it was seen necessary to direct this questionnaire to you in order to obtain an essential part of the information necessary for the success of this research project. Consequently, your cooperation is essential.

Please, read the items of the questionnaire and respond to each item in a way that reflects your perceptions best. The information that you give and your responses to both close-ended and open-ended questions will be confidential and will not be accessed by anyone except the researcher. Moreover, the information and responses will be used for research purposes only. Reporting of the results will be undertaken in a way that will make it impossible for you or your institution to be identified through the answers that you have given. Your school is one of a sample of eight to be included in the research.

I express my gratitude and appreciation for the time you spend and the effort you devote to responding to this questionnaire. In case you have a query, please, do not hesitate to ask.

The researcher,
Yasin Salim Al-Johani
PhD student
University of Exeter
Mobile: **(0565154050)**

email: yaseenjohani@yahoo.com

SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please tick (✓) the box you think appropriate

Grade

a. Grade two ()

b. Grade three ()

SECTION TWO: THE ROLE(S) OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL.

Please indicate your level of agreement and show your opinion as to the degree of importance you attach to each statement by ticking (✓) the appropriate columns. IN THE RIGHT HAND COLUMN please put "1" next to the element you consider most important, "2" next to the second most important, etc. down to "10" next to the least important element in the list.

No.	Statements An effective school will...	Degree of agreement				Priority Ranking 1 to 10
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree to some extent	Disagree	
1.	provide me with a good understanding of basic academic skills.					
2.	provide me with the skills necessary for work market.					
3.	provide me with the opportunity to develop leadership skills.					
4.	provide me with a caring and supportive environment.					
5.	provide me with the skills necessary to become productive and useful citizen.					
6.	provide me with the skills necessary to develop a healthy understanding of myself and others.					
7.	provide me with a balanced curriculum that encourages a wide range of learning experiences.					
8.	provide me with the opportunity to develop a value system that reflects the major values of my society.					
9.	provide me with teachers who reinforce community values and habits.					
10.	provide me with an opportunity to be involved in the decision making processes within the school.					
11.	use a range of assessment strategies to identify my level of achievement.					
12.	provide my parents with regular reports about my achievement.					
13.	provide my parents with an opportunity to be involved in the development of school policies and processes.					
14.	respond to the needs of the local community.					
15.	secure high levels of formal attainment by students taking account of their capabilities'					

SECTION THREE: ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL

1- Please, tick the appropriate box IN THE LEFT-HAND COLUMN to indicate which ONE of the following statements you agree with most. If you do not agree with any, could you please indicate which?

2- How important are these elements? Please give your opinion on the TOP TEN most important elements and rank them in order of importance. IN THE RIGHT HAND COLUMN please put "1" next to the element you consider most important, "2" next to the second most important, etc., down to "10" next to the LEAST important element in the list.

No.	ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL	Important	Priority ranking 1 to 10
1	Staff, students and the community know what the school goals are, and are able to express these goals.		
2	Staff, parents and students in the school are given the opportunity to develop leadership skills.		
3	Teachers are well-trained and show the skills of quality teaching. Teachers care about students' success in school, work as a team and exhibit positive their work.		
4	Staff and parents believe that all students have the capacity to succeed and that staff and parent cooperation is crucial in student achievement.		
5	The curriculum, instructional methods and assessment procedures within the school are all closely aligned to the basic goals that the students are expected to accomplish.		
6	Teachers allocate a significant amount of time to instruct the students in the basic skills through engagement in planned learning activities.		
7	Feedback on my academic progress is obtained frequently with the aim of improving my academic performance.		
8	A lot of effort is made to identify and overcome learning difficulties of students.		
9	The school environment is conducive to learning, and makes me feel secure.		
10	Staff, students and parents are proud of their school and the people who work within it.		
11	The school encourages my parents to be involved in decision-making and in following me up at home.		
12	Most of the decisions relating to school policy are made by the principal, teachers, students and parents.		
13	Teachers use strategies that will inspire students to learn.		

SECTION FOUR: (A) EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR OWN SCHOOL

Please, read the following items and tick (✓) where you think appropriate.

1	In my school I think the PRINCIPAL...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
1.1	is qualified, competent and experienced in administration.				
1.2	provides a leadership model to be followed by the school community.				
1.3	strives to improve the school.				
1.4	manages resources wisely.				
1.5	works co-operatively with staff.				
1.6	works co-operatively with parents.				
1.7	promotes parent participation in school activities and student learning.				
2	In my school I think the TEACHERS...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
2.1	are qualified and competent.				
2.2	have positive attitudes and high morale.				
2.3	are keen on achieving optimal student achievement.				
2.4	develop students' critical thinking, problem solving and creativity.				
2.5	are sensitive to individual students' needs.				
2.6	welcome parent participation.				
2.7	have a wide range of skills.				
2.8	collaborate and work as a team..				
3	My school's philosophy...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
3.1	involves high expectations for all students and teachers.				
3.2	encourages students to work towards their personal best.				
3.3	aims to develop the full potential of each student intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically.				
3.4	places an importance on the development of life skills and positive values and relationships.				
3.5	recognizes that each student has different needs, background and aspirations.				
3.6	values and welcomes students' diverse social and cultural backgrounds.				
3.7	recognizes that education is a co-operative effort that involves teachers, students and parents.				

4	My school environment...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
4.1	is stimulating for students to learn.				
4.2	is secure and welcoming.				
4.3	fosters positive relationships between school people.				
4.4	promotes a sense of belonging and pride amongst students in the school.				
4.5	provides for student participation in aspects of school life.				
4.6	has sensible rules that are clearly defined and enforced.				
4.7	has effective management practices supported by a strong student affairs system.				
5	My school has a student affairs system that...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
5.1	supports the development of students to their full potential.				
5.2	addresses difficulties experienced by students effectively and efficiently.				
5.3	is sensitive to individual students' needs and backgrounds.				
5.4	links with community support services and resources outside the school.				
6	In my school...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
6.1	parents and school board are satisfied with the allocation of resources and expenditure decisions.				
6.2	there are sufficient administrative and supportive staff to meet the needs of the school.				
6.3	the administrative staff know the students and their parents.				
6.4	there is strong IT infrastructure with up-to-date technology.				
6.5	There are other physical resources, such as educational resources, sporting equipment, library books, etc.				
6.6	students are satisfied with timetable and subject choice arrangements.				
7	In my school the curriculum...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
7.1	provides a range of learning experiences within and beyond the key learning areas.				
7.2	progresses the social, personal and physical development of students as well as their academic development.				
7.3	ensures that students develop a positive attitude to learning.				
7.4	provides continuity from year to year and is integrated across learning areas.				
7.5	helps students to develop life skills, such as self-esteem, motivation and self-discipline.				

8	In my school assessment and reporting arrangements...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
8.1	provide clear and reliable information across the key learning areas and on the social development of students.				
8.2	lead to sound decisions about teaching approaches.				
8.3	identify problem areas and ways to work on these in partnership with parents.				
8.4	allow parents to observe and understand their children's progress.				
8.5	are undertaken in ways which support student learning and confidence.				
9	The school policy...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
9.1	recognizes that partnerships between parents and teachers lead to better learning outcomes.				
9.2	promotes school and teacher responsiveness to parents' views, inquiries and concerns.				
9.3	promotes a strong sense of community within the school.				

(B) Please indicate your rating of your school by ticking one of the four options given:

No.	Your rating of your school I think my school would be...	Put a tick (√) where appropriate
1.	the most effective school in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	
2.	among the most effective schools in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	
3.	as effective as other schools in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	
4.	less effective than most other schools in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	

PS: The researcher might need to contact you for further information which might require conducting personal face-to-face interview. In case you agree, please write your contact number below:

Phone no. 0565154050

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX A4: PARENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IN AL MADINA AL MUNAWWARAH EDUCATIONAL DISTRICT

PhD RESEARCH PROJECT

**By
Yasin Salim Al Johani**

**University of Exeter
School of Education**

This is a full scale research study that aims to ascertain perspectives about *effective schools*, *school effectiveness* and *school improvement* in Saudi Arabia, grounded on perceptions from the school community, namely : a) school head masters, b) teachers, c) parents and d) students. Because your school has been honoured this title "Effective School", it was selected to conduct our research in. Access and acceptance from the General Directorate of Education in Madinah was taken. We appreciate your permission and acceptance to access your school questing for the truth as detailed in the questionnaires and interviews questions. Privacy, anonimity and confidentiality will be strictly guaranteed. In addition, results and conclusions of this research will be anonymously revealed to participants in case they want to benefit from gleaning the others' perspectives.

The researcher,
Yasin Salim Al-Johani

**PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE
(PARENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE)**

Dear Sir,

This questionnaire is part of a field study aiming to collect data about effective schools and school improvement in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah Educational Zone. More specifically, the questionnaire aims to collect data as to parents' perceptions of effective schools in Saudi Arabia. More specifically, it aims to ascertain parents' perceptions of:

- 1. The possible roles of an effective secondary school.**
- 2. The important elements contributing to the effectiveness of a school.**
- 3. The reasons for enrolling your son in the present secondary school.**

Since school students' parents and their roles and voices are crucial in the educational enterprise that your son is experiencing, it was seen necessary to direct this questionnaire to you in order to obtain an essential part of the information necessary for the success of this research project. Consequently, your cooperation is essential. Please, read the items of the questionnaire and respond to each item in a way that reflects your perception best. The information that you give and your responses to both close-ended and open-ended questions will be confidential and will not be accessed by anyone except the researcher. Moreover, the information and responses will be used for research purposes only. Reporting of the results will be undertaken in a way that will make it impossible for you or your institution to be identified through the answers that you have given. Your son's school is one of a sample of eight to be included in the research.

I express my gratitude and appreciation for the time you spend and the effort you devote to responding to this questionnaire. In case you have a query, please, do not hesitate to contact me personally via my personal phone number or via email.

The researcher,
Yasin Salim Al-Johani
PhD student
University of Exeter
Mobile: **0565154050**
email: yaseenjohani@yahoo.com

SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please tick (✓) the box you think appropriate

1. Qualifications:

<input type="checkbox"/>	a. Below intermediate school education
<input type="checkbox"/>	b. Below secondary school education
<input type="checkbox"/>	c. Secondary Education Certificate
<input type="checkbox"/>	d. Bachelor's degree
<input type="checkbox"/>	e. Master's degree
<input type="checkbox"/>	f. Doctorate
<input type="checkbox"/>	g. Other. (Please, specify).....

2. Are you a member of your son's School Parent Council.

<input type="checkbox"/>	a. member
<input type="checkbox"/>	b. non member

3. How many children do you have at this school and at which grades?

No. of children

Grades

SECTION TWO: THE ROLE(S) OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL

Please indicate your level of agreement and show your opinion as to the degree of importance you attach to each statement by ticking (✓) the appropriate columns. IN THE RIGHT HAND COLUMN please put "1" next to the element you consider most important, "2" next to the second most important, etc. down to "10" next to the least important element in the list.

No.	Statements An effective school will...	Degree of agreement				Priority Ranking 1 to 10
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree to some extent	Disagree	
1.	provide my son with a good understanding of basic academic skills.					
2.	provide my son with the skills necessary for work market.					
3.	provide my son students with the opportunity to develop leadership skills.					
4.	provide my son with a caring and supportive environment.					
5.	provide my son with the skills necessary to become productive and useful citizens.					
6.	provide my son with the skills necessary to develop a healthy understanding of themselves and others.					
7.	provide my son with a balanced curriculum that encourages a wide range of learning experiences.					
8.	provide my son with the opportunity to develop a value system that reflects the major values of society.					
9.	provide my son with teachers who reinforce community values and habits.					
10.	provide my son with an opportunity to be involved in the decision making processes within the school.					
11.	use a range of assessment strategies to identify my son's level of achievement.					
12.	provide me with regular reports about my son's achievements.					
13.	provide me with an opportunity to be involved in the development of school policies and processes.					
14.	respond to the needs of the local community.					
15.	secure high levels of formal attainment by students taking account of their capabilities'					

SECTION THREE: ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL

1- Please, tick the appropriate box **IN THE LEFT-HAND COLUMN** to indicate which **ONE** of the following statements you agree with most. If you do not agree with any, could you please indicate which?

2- How important are these elements? Please give your opinion on the **TOP TEN** most important elements and rank them in order of importance. **IN THE RIGHT HAND COLUMN** please put "1" next to the element you consider most important, "2" next to the second most important, etc., down to "10" next to the **LEAST** important element in the list.

No.	ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL	Important	Priority ranking 1 to 10
1.	Staff, students and the community know what the school goals are, and are able to express these goals.		
2.	Staff, parents and students in the school are given the opportunity to develop leadership skills.		
3.	Teachers are well-trained and show the skills of quality teaching. Teachers care about students' success in school, work as a team and exhibit positive attitudes towards their work.		
4.	Staff development programs are offered to the school staff that aim to promote the educational process.		
5.	Staff and parents believe that all students have the capacity to succeed and that staff and parent cooperation is crucial in student achievement.		
6.	The curriculum, instructional methods and assessment procedures within the school are all closely aligned to the basic goals that the students are expected to accomplish.		
7.	Teachers allocate a significant amount of time to instruct the students in the basic skills through engagement in planned learning activities.		
8.	Feedback on student academic progress is obtained frequently with the aim of improving student performance and assessing the success of the curriculum.		
9.	A lot of effort is made to identify and overcome learning difficulties.		
10.	The school environment is conducive to teaching and learning, and makes students feel secure.		
11.	Staff, students and parents are proud of their school and the people who work within it.		
12.	The school encourages parent involvement in decision-making and in following their children up at home.		
13.	Most of the decisions relating to school policy are made by the principal, teachers, students and parents.		
14.	The principal encourages teachers to take an active role in curriculum and school planning. Teachers provide appropriate activities to enhance students' learning.		
15.	The school is supported by the Ministry of Education and the Educational School District for the implementation of school programmes.		
16.	Teachers use strategies that will inspire students to learn.		

SECTION FOUR: (A) Reasons for enrolling your son in the present school (Please, read the following items and tick (√) where you think appropriate).

1	In my son's school I think the PRINCIPAL ...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
1.1	is qualified, competent and experienced in administration.				
1.2	provides a leadership model to be followed by the school community.				
1.3	strives to improve the school.				
1.4	manages resources wisely.				
1.5	works co-operatively with staff.				
1.6	works co-operatively with parents.				
1.7	promotes parent participation in school activities and student learning.				
1.8	promotes high staff morale.				
1.9	promotes continuous learning and development of staff.				
2	In my son's school I think the TEACHERS.....	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
2.1	are qualified and competent.				
2.2	have positive attitudes and high morale.				
2.3	are keen on achieving optimal student achievement.				
2.4	develop students' critical thinking, problem solving and creativity.				
2.5	are sensitive to individual students' needs.				
2.6	welcome parent participation.				
2.7	are interested in continuous learning and professional development.				
2.8	have a wide range of skills.				
2.9	collaborate and work as a team.				
3	My son's school philosophy....	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
3.1	involves high expectations for all students and teachers.				
3.2	encourages students to work towards their personal best.				
3.3	aims to develop the full potential of each individual intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically.				
3.4	places an importance on the development of life skills and positive values and relationships.				
3.5	recognizes that each student has different needs, background and aspirations.				
3.6	values and welcomes students' diverse social and cultural backgrounds.				
3.7	recognizes that education is a co-operative effort that involves teachers, students and parents.				

4	My son's school environment...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
4.1	is stimulating for students to learn.				
4.2	is secure and welcoming.				
4.3	fosters positive relationships between school people.				
4.4	promotes a sense of belonging and pride amongst students.				
4.5	provides for student participation in aspects of school life.				
4.6	has sensible rules that are clearly defined and enforced.				
4.7	has effective management practices supported by a strong student affairs system.				
5	My son's school has a student affairs system that...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
5.1	supports the development of students to their full potential.				
5.2	addresses difficulties experienced by students effectively and efficiently.				
5.3	is sensitive to individual students' needs and backgrounds.				
5.4	links with community support services and resources outside the school.				
6	In my son's school ...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
6.1	parents and school board are satisfied with the allocation of resources and expenditure decisions.				
6.2	there are sufficient administrative and supportive staff to meet the needs of the school.				
6.3	the administrative staff know the students and their parents.				
6.4	there is strong IT infrastructure with up-to-date technology.				
6.5	the school has other physical resources e.g. educational resources, sporting equipment, library books.				
6.6	a staff development and appraisal system is in place.				
6.7	time is set aside for staff to do planning and program development.				
6.8	class sizes are in line with system-wide guidelines.				
6.9	students are satisfied with timetable and subject choice arrangements.				

7	In my son's school the curriculum...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
7.1	provides a range of learning experiences within and beyond the key learning areas.				
7.2	progresses the social, personal and physical development of students as well as their academic development.				
7.3	ensures that students develop a positive attitude to learning.				
7.4	provides continuity from year to year and is integrated across learning areas.				
7.5	helps students to develop life skills, such as self-esteem, motivation and self-discipline.				
8	In my son's school assessment and reporting arrangements....	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
8.1	provide clear and reliable information across the key learning areas and on the social development of students.				
8.2	lead to sound decisions about teaching approaches.				
8.3	identify problem areas and ways to work on these in partnership with parents.				
8.4	allow parents to observe and understand their children's progress.				
8.5	are undertaken in ways which support student learning and confidence.				
9	My son's school policy ...	To a great extent	To an average extent	To a weak extent	Not at all
9.1	recognizes that partnerships between parents and teachers lead to better learning outcomes.				
9.2	promotes school and teacher responsiveness to parents' views, inquiries and concerns.				
9.3	supports the links with other schools, business, and voluntary and government organizations.				
9.4	promotes a strong sense of community within the school.				

(B) Please indicate your rating of your son's school by ticking one of the four options given:

No.	Your rating of your son's school I think my son's school would be...	Put a tick (✓) where appropriate
1.	the most effective school in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	
2.	among the most effective schools in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	
3.	as effective as other schools in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	
4.	less effective than most other schools in Al-Madinah Educational Zone.	

PS: The researcher might need to contact you for further information which might require conducting personal face-to-face interview. In case you agree, please write your contact number below:

Phone no. 0565154050

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX B1: PRINCIPALS' QUESTIONS FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

A) Questions related to the possible roles of an effective secondary school.

1. Based on your experience in this school, can you explain what you think the role of an effective school is?
2. Can you tell me what characterizes an effective from an ineffective school? (In terms of school policy, quality of teachers, school environment, parent-home relationship, resources available, etc.?)
3. Can you relate a personal experience that you had in your school to demonstrate your idea?
4. In your opinion, what do you think is the role of an effective school towards students?
5. In your opinion, what do you think is the role of an effective school towards teachers?
6. In your opinion, what is the role of an effective school towards the local community?
7. What do you think is the major role of an effective school?

B) Questions related to the important factors/elements contributing to the effectiveness of a school.

1. In your opinion, what makes a good school?
2. What are the elements of an effective school?
3. What do you think is the role of school mission in school effectiveness?
4. What do you think is the role of the school administration in school effectiveness?
5. What is the role of staff members in school effectiveness?
6. What is the role of the school curriculum in school effectiveness?
7. What is the role of the school environment school effectiveness?
8. What do you think is the role of local educational authority in your school effectiveness?

C) Questions related to the effectiveness of your own school.

1. In your opinion, what do you think about your school? To what extent it is good?
2. Do you think it can be considered an 'effective school'? Why?
3. Was it your choice to be a principal for this school? How?
4. Were you trained for the position and tasks of an effective school principal? If yes, How? How did you benefit from this training?
5. How do you evaluate your school compared to other schools?
6. Tell me about the environment within the school you are running? Does it have a role in your school's effectiveness? How? Give examples?
7. What about the school activities? What kind of school activities that make your school different from other schools? Tell me about the impact of these activities on your school's effectiveness?
8. How was your school evaluated by external reviewers? What aspects of evaluation that mattered most for the evaluation committee?
9. What about the evaluation system followed in your school? Are you happy with it? How?
10. What about the role of your school towards the local community? Do you think it is functioning significantly?
11. Tell me about the partnership, if any, between your school and parents?
12. Tell me how you feel working in this particular school? The work load? Morale?
13. What benefits can you get by working in this particular school?

D) Show the role of the following elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

1. School administration
2. Staff
3. Local community
4. School environment
5. School curriculum
6. School vision and message
7. The educational management

APENDIX B2: TEACHERS' QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS

A) Questions related to the possible roles of an effective secondary school.

1. Based on your experience in this school, can you explain what you think the role of an effective school is?
2. Can you tell me what characterizes an effective from an ineffective school? (In terms of school policy, quality of teachers, school environment, parent-home relationship, resources available, etc.?)
3. Can you relate a personal experience that you had in your school to demonstrate your idea?
4. In your opinion, what do you think is the role of an effective school towards students?
5. In your opinion, what do you think is the role of an effective school towards teachers?
6. In your opinion, what is the role of an effective school towards the local community?
7. What do you think is the major role of an effective school?

B) Questions related to the important factors/elements contributing to the effectiveness of a school.

1. In your opinion, what makes a good school?
2. What are the elements of an effective school
3. What do you think is the role of school mission in school effectiveness?
4. What do you think is the role of school administration in school effectiveness?
5. What is the role of staff members (including both teaching staff and administrative staff) in school effectiveness?
6. What is the role of the school curriculum in school effectiveness?
7. What is the role of the school environment school effectiveness?
8. What do you think is the role of the local community in your school effectiveness?
9. What do you think is the role of local educational authority in your school effectiveness?

C) Questions related to the effectiveness of your own school.

1. In your opinion, what do you think about your school? To what extent do you think your school is effective or not?
2. Do you think it can be considered an 'effective school? Why?
3. Was it your choice to work in this school? How?
4. Have you had special training to work as a teacher in an effective school? If yes, How? How did you benefit from this training? Does this apply to all teachers? How?
5. How do you evaluate your school compared to other schools?
6. Tell me about the environment within your school. Does it have a role in your school's effectiveness? How? Give examples?
7. What about the school activities? What kind of school activities that make your school different from other schools?
8. Tell me about the impact of these activities on your school's effectiveness?
9. Was the school subjected to evaluation from the educational authorities? How was your school evaluated? What aspects of evaluation that mattered most in the evaluation of your school performance?
10. What criteria are stressed in the evaluation of your school?
11. What about the evaluation system followed in your school? Are you happy with it? How?
12. What about the role of your school towards the local community?
13. **Tell me about the partnership, if any, between your school and parents?**
14. Tell me about how you feel working in this particular school? The teaching load? morale?
15. What benefits can you get by working in this particular school?

D) Show the role of the following elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

1. School administration
2. Staff
3. Local community
4. School environment
5. School curriculum
6. School vision and message
7. The educational management

APPENDIX B3: STUDENTS' QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS

A) Why have you registered in this school? State your reasons.

B) Questions related to the possible roles of an effective secondary school.

1. Based on your experience in this school, can you explain what you think the role of an effective school is?
2. Can you tell me what characterizes an effective from an ineffective school?
3. Can you relate a personal experience that you had in your school to demonstrate your idea?
4. In your opinion, what do you think is the role of an effective school towards you as a student?
5. In your opinion, what do you think is the role of an effective school towards your teachers?
6. In your opinion, what is the role of an effective school towards the local community?
7. What do you think is the major role of an effective school?

C) Questions related to the important factors/elements contributing to the effectiveness of a school.

1. In your opinion, what makes a good school?
2. What are the elements of an effective school?
3. What do you think is the role of the school administration in school effectiveness?
4. What do you think is the role of teachers in its effectiveness?
5. What do you think is the role of the school curriculum in its effectiveness?
6. What do you think is the role of the school environment in your school effectiveness?
7. What do you think is the role of the local community in your school effectiveness?

D) Show the role of the following elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

1. School administration
2. Staff
3. Local community
4. School environment
5. School curriculum
6. School rating
7. The educational management

APPENDIX B4: PARENTS'S QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS

A) Why have you registered your son in this school? State your reasons.

B) Questions related to the possible roles of an effective secondary school towards your son.

1. Based on your and your son's experience in this school, can you explain what you think the role of an effective school is?
2. Can you tell me what characterizes an effective from an ineffective school? (In terms of school policy, quality of teachers, school environment, parent-home relationship, resources available, etc.?)
3. Can you relate a personal experience that you had in your son's school to demonstrate your idea?
4. In your opinion, what do you think is the role of an effective school towards students?
5. In your opinion, what do you think is the role of an effective school towards teachers?
6. In your opinion, what is the role of the effective school towards the local community?
7. What do you think is the major role of an effective school?

C) Questions related to the important elements contributing to the effectiveness of a school.

1. In your opinion, what do you think makes a good school?
2. What are the elements of an effective school?
3. What do you think is the role of school mission in school effectiveness?
4. What do you think is the role of school administration in school effectiveness?
5. What is the role of staff members in school effectiveness?
6. What is the role of the school curriculum in school effectiveness?
7. What is the role of the school environment school effectiveness?
8. What do you think is the role of local educational authority in school effectiveness?

D) Show the role of the following elements in enhancing effectiveness of your son's school and making it a pioneer school:

1. School administration
2. Staff
3. Local community
4. School environment
5. School curriculum
6. School rating
7. The educational management

APPENDIX C1: LETTERS OF APPROVAL/PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH

(Translated from Arabic into English)



**Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Higher Education
Taibah University
15/11/1431**

College of Education

His Excellency the General Manager of Education for Boys in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah: Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon you.

*In accordance with the existing cooperation between us and your respectful management, I would like to introduce to your Excellency **Mr. Yasin Salim Al Safrani Al johani** as a postgraduate student, doing the doctorate stage with the specialization of (Educational Management) at a British University (Exeter).*

He is conducting a research study with the title: Effective (Pioneer) Schools and School Improvement in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah District and is using interviews as a research instrument.

I am looking forward to your acceptance to give him permission to access Pioneer Schools in Madinah and to do your best to facilitate his research task.

Best regards,

(Signed): Dr. Nayef Muhammad Al-Harbi

Deputy Dean of college of Education

for Postgraduate Studies and Research

APPENDIX C1: LETTERS OF APPROVAL/PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH
(Original Arabic Version)

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
Ministry of Higher Education
TAIBAH UNIVERSITY

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم العالي
جامعة طيبة
رمزه (٠٣٩)

كلية التربية


سعادة مدير عام إدارة التربية والتعليم بمنطقة المدينة المنورة بسين حفظه الله
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد ...

بناءً على التعاون القائم بيننا وبين إدارتكم الموقرة ، فإنه يطيب لي إفادة
سعادتكم بأن الأستاذ / ياسين سالم الصفراني ، أحد طلاب الدراسات العليا
لمرحلة الدكتوراه (تخصص إدارة تربوية) ، بكلية التربية بأحد الجامعات البريطانية
وحيث أنه بصدد تطبيق أدوات الدراسة المعنونه بـ (دور المدارس الرائدة وعناصر
تحسينها بمنطقة المدينة المنورة التعليمية) .

عليه ... نأمل التفضل بالموافقة وتعميد من يلزم نحو تسهيل مهمة الباحث .

وتفضلوا سعادتكم بقبول خالص تحياتي ،،،

وكيل الكلية للدراسات العليا والبحث العلمي



د. نايف بن محمد الحرابي

الرقم : ٤٢٢ / ١٤٣١ / ١١ / ١٥ التاريخ : ١٤٣١ / ١١ / ١٥ الصفحات : ١

تلفون : ٨٤٥٤٨٠١ ، فاكس : ٨٤٥٤٨٠٢ ، ص.ب. ٣٠٠٠٣ المدينة المنورة
Tel : 8454801 - Fax : 8454802 - P. O. Box : 30003 Madinah Al-Munawarah

APPENDIX C2: LETTER OF APPROVAL/PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH

(Translated from Arabic into English)



Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Education
General Management of Education for
Boys in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah
Department of Planning and Development

Number: 1002
Date: 18/11/1431 H.
Files joint: 4 Questionnaires
Subject: Facilitating Researcher

Circular to all Secondary and Intermediate Pioneer Schools in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah

From: General Manager of Education for Boys in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah

To : Secondary and Intermediate Pioneer Schools Headmasters

Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon you.

With reference to the official letter from the Deputy Dean for Postgraduate Studies and Research at the College of Education, Taibah University, number: 143183328/333, dated: 15/11/1431 H., the researcher: Yasin Salim Al Safrani Al Johani is intending to conduct a research study with the title: Effective (Pioneer) Schools and School Improvement in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah district, and requesting to apply interviews as research instrument as part of the Ph.D. requirements.

Thus, we hope you give the researcher access to your school and facilitate his task. The study includes interviews with: students, parents, headmasters and teachers; and contributes in developing the educational and teaching processes.

We are sure you are concerned in the educational research.

Best regards,

(Signed): Dr Saoud Hussain Al- Zahrani

General Manager of Education for Boys

in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah

APPENDIX C2: LETTER OF APPROVAL/PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH

(Original Arabic Version)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

السوم : ١٠٠٢
التاريخ : ١٤٣١/١١/١٨ هـ
المرفقات : ٢ - ١ - ١

الملككة العربية السعودية
وزارة التربية والتعليم
(٢٨٠)
الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم
بمنطقة المدينة المنورة
إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

موضوع : تسهيل مهمة الباحث / ياسين الصفراني

تعميم إلى جميع المدارس الرائدة المتوسطة والثانوية داخل المدينة

إلى : سعادة مدير /
من : المدير العام للتربية والتعليم بمنطقة المدينة المنورة

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته .

في إشارة إلى خطاب وصيف الكلية للدراسات العليا والبحث العلمي بجامعة طيبة رقم ٣٣٣/١١٣١٨٣٢٨ بتاريخ ١٤٣١/١١/١٥ هـ. المتضمن رؤية الباحث / ياسين سالم الصفراني في تطبيق أدوات دراسته التي بعنوان " دور المدارس الرائدة وعناصر تحسينها بمنطقة المدينة المنورة التعليمية " وذلك ضمن متطلبات الحصول على درجة الدكتوراه.

عليه ذامل منكم تسهيل مهمة الباحث عند زيارته لكم حيث أن دراسته تتكون من إستبانة للطلاب وإستبانة لولي أمر الطالب، وإستبانة للمدير، وإستبانة للمعلم، ونحن على ثقة باهتمامكم بالبحث التربوي الذي يسهم في تطوير العملية التربوية والتعليمية.

وتقبلوا وافر التحية والتقدير.

المدير العام للتربية والتعليم
بمنطقة المدينة المنورة (بين)
د . سعود بن كعسين الزهراني
١١/١٣

صورة المديرة
صورة المساعد على المدير : yaseerjohan@yahoo.com
صورة إدارة التخطيط والتطوير
صورة لكتلة الدراسات العليا

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APPENDIX D: CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL RESEARCH APPROVAL



STUDENT HIGHER-LEVEL RESEARCH

Graduate School of Education

Certificate of ethical research approval

STUDENT RESEARCH/FIELDWORK/CASEWORK AND DISSERTATION/THESIS

You will need to complete this certificate when you undertake a piece of higher-level research (e.g. Masters, PhD, EdD level).

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, then have it signed by your supervisor and by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: <http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/guides.php> and view the School's statement in your handbooks.

Your name: Yasin Salim AlJohani

Your student no: 570038318

Degree/Programme of Study: Doctorate in Educational (4- year PhD programme)

Project Supervisor(s): William Richardson

Your email address: yas201@exeter.ac.uk

Tel: 07767294450

Title of your project:

"Effective Schools and School Improvement in Saudi Arabian Secondary Schools: An Exploration of Perceptions"

Brief description of your research project:

Investment in education has received much attention in both developed and less developed countries in order to realize a prosperous future, focusing on quality. Saudi educational professionals have a faith in education as a tool that can facilitate social change. Research on school effectiveness has suggested that some schools are more successful than others, which provokes questions about what is success/effectiveness, what are the factors that contribute to effectiveness; and thus how might educationalists establish a basis for improvement of schools. Each society has its own interpretation of 'educational goods' that bring effectiveness. Research in school effectiveness has been lagging behind. One of the areas that requires investigation in Saudi Arabia is the quality of secondary schooling in general and secondary school effectiveness in particular. An example of the interest to upgrade the educational enterprise is the "Pioneer Schools Programme".

This was triggered by the official interest to catch up with the worldwide movement of school effectiveness and improvement. The research project in hand is an **exploratory research to investigate the perceptions held by Saudi educational society (headmasters, teachers, students and parents) about possible roles of an effective secondary school, important elements contributing to the effectiveness of a school, and the effectiveness of their own schools.** This research also studies secondary school people's attitudes towards the 'pioneer schools programme', experimentally implemented in Saudi Arabia. The study attempts to answer three major questions:

* What are the perceptions held by members of the pioneer secondary school communities in relation to possible roles of an effective secondary school; important elements contributing to the effectiveness of a school; and the effectiveness of their own schools?

* To what extent do such perceptions coincide with the parameters of the officially stated model of effective school in Saudi Arabia?

* To what extent do those perceptions cope with or reflect the worldwide contemporary models of effective schools?

Purpose of the study:

The research project will after all give a more holistic picture about how effective education in Saudi Arabia is; to what extent it coincides with the parameters of the officially stated model of effective school in Saudi Arabia; and to what extent it copes with or reflect the worldwide contemporary models of effective schools. In addition, it highlights aspects in schooling that desperately need improvement. Thus, it provides for Saudi educationalists and policy makers a road map to establish a basis for improvement of schools.

Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

The study will make use of questionnaires which will be administered to school headmasters /principals (n=8), teachers (n=160), students (n=160) and parents (n=64); and semi structured interviews which will be conducted with sub-samples drawn from the questionnaires samples. Headmasters, teachers and parents must be middle aged; estimated by the researcher as between (30 to 45), since younger/less experienced teachers are not appointed in pioneer schools, subject of the study. Questionnaires and interviews will also be administered to students: second and third secondary-level students. These in Saudi Arabia are aged between 17 and 20. The overall number of participants will be 392. The questionnaire items and interview questions were carefully revised, edited and re-edited as to cause no mental, psychological or cultural harm.

Give details regarding the ethical issues of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) a blank consent form can be downloaded from the SELL student access on-line documents:

I will be following the Code of Ethics and Conduct set out by the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2006). Though the educational research project in hand is not ethically sensitive, necessary ethical precautions will be taken into consideration and given due care. Informed consent, anonymity, privacy, respect and confidentiality are among the ethical issues born in the researcher's mind to be taken for granted at all the research stages:

1- Participants will be informed about the purpose, process and data collection procedures. Informed consents and necessary permissions to access pioneer schools will be obtained from the official educational authorities at four educational zones in Saudi Arabia prior to commencing the fieldwork; (some of these have already been obtained).

2- The researcher's full awareness that anonymity of participants and sites in qualitative research contexts is always under great risk of being discovered. Thus, techniques to guarantee privacy and anonymity will be strictly followed.

3- Respondents in both phases of the study (the questionnaire and the interviews) will be assured confidentiality. Data will be treated with strict confidentiality and privacy that no individual information can be disclosed by all means but for research purposes.

4- A special care has been given to the content of the questionnaire items and the topics of the interviews so as to become inoffensive to participants' ethnicity, socio-economic status, job position, etc.

5- Participants will also be informed that participation is voluntary, so withdrawal is always their choice at any time during the research period.

The researcher will take guidance from the full list of the "Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research". Among these guidelines is presentation of the research proposal to the Ethics Committee of the Graduate School of Education, and submission of this document requesting Certificate of Ethical Research Approval.

Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:

Paradigm/Methodology

Based on the exploratory nature of the present study, the interpretive constructivist research paradigm appears to be appropriate for this study. In this study, participants are understood from the constructivist perspective to be theory builders who develop hypotheses, notice patterns, and construct theories of action from their life experience.

An important aspect of qualitative method, adopted in this research study, is its concern with context. Data is accessed and collected in a natural setting. In order to explore "*the views that the school community give to their subjective experiences*", the researcher makes use of a hermeneutic methodology. The researcher is seeking a better understanding of different kinds of social reality aiming to ascertain the perceptions of the tasks and goal of an effective secondary school of members of the Saudi secondary school community. Social reality within a social context (the pioneer school community) to represent as closely as possible how people feel, what they know, and what their concerns, beliefs, perceptions and understandings are.

Method

In spite of commitment of this study to the qualitative mode of inquiry and the interpretive-constructivist research paradigm; it does not solely depend on qualitative data collection methods. The data collection process in this study will make use of a variety of data collection instruments and procedures. A mixed methods approach is used in this study because in combination the data collection instruments provide the best opportunity to address the questions set. The study makes the triangulation of the evidence possible, since various methods complement each other in investigating the research issues.

Three types of data collection instruments are to be used: (1) questionnaires, (2) semi-structured interviews (3) focus groups. This study will adopt a two stage approach as follows:

Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):

During the data collection, data analysis and write up, data (questionnaires, audio recordings, interview data and individual data) will be securely stored in a locked cabinet in a secure building. Electronic information will only be accessed by the researcher with their username and password. Electronic information will also be stored on a secure system, within a locked building with recognised virus protection. It will be used only by the researcher and for research purposes only; then destroyed.

Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

Informed consent and permission to access schools is particularly significant; thus, they must be strictly adhered to. Furthermore they usually take longer time in Saudi Arabia. Saudi people (subject of this study) are comparatively more sensitive than others and less motivated to participate in a research task; it is the responsibility of the researcher to raise their concerns and motivate them. Respect and confidentiality are two major ethical issues in this concern; otherwise a lot of withdrawals are likely to happen.

This form should now be printed out, signed by you below and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's Research Support Office for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.

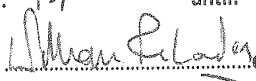
I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given above and that I undertake in my dissertation / thesis (delete whichever is inappropriate) to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed: date:.....

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

This project has been approved for the period: 1/9/10 until: 28/2/11

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): date: 15.8.10.....

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occurs a further form is completed.

SELL unique approval reference: 9/11/12/16

Signed: date: 24/11/2011
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

Headmasters’ Interview Response No. 1

Q1. How do you think of the pioneer schools’ main role?

Answer: It is the school that provides its students with the leadership skills they need to be the future generation, to be useful and productive for their nation and society. It should also provide them with the skills that help them understand the labour market, and the state’s need for future plans, and to take part in decision making.

Q2. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: Clarity of the general work policy, availability of high quality training programmes with clear objectives, and encouraging school community (teachers and students) to be distinguished and ideal model.

Q3. What are the factors/criteria that have made your school a pioneer school?

Answer: Everyone takes part in decision making, an appropriate environment for instructional and educational processes, and providing appropriate programmes.

Q4. Show the role of the following elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: To work as one team and the feeling that all are important in the success of the school, to understand the needs, psychological, social and practical circumstances of the people working at school, and to build a suitable atmosphere to attain maximum productivity.

b) Staff:

Answer: To keep committed to the teaching job’s morality and be keen on participation in and cooperation with the school administration, and awareness of the individual student’s needs and future vision/aspirations.

c) Local community:

Answer: Cooperation of any kind and in all circumstances and understanding the role of pioneer schools, and open debates and clear discussion channels, showing negatives and positives for the work to succeed.

d) School environment:

Answer: Developing a sense of belonging and pride within the students, and providing opportunities and programmes for students and teachers to participate.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: The essential foundation to develop all aspects of the individual’s character, including proper religious training and to provide students with the necessary academic and solid life skills.

f) School vision and message:

Answer: To build a useful future generation for the country and the international community, with clarity and transparency of decisions and sound educational and instructional policy.

g) The educational management:

Answer: Must aid and provide support at all levels and in all aspects of the school operation with the necessary resources for doing the work at its best.

Headmasters’ Interview Response No. 2

Q1. How do you think of the pioneer schools’ main role?

Answer: To enhance the students’ academic outcome/achievements, and offer a range of different specialization of society’s needs.

Q2. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: A suitable building with all equipment and facilities; good educational leadership; good daily school administration; and highly qualified and competent teachers.

Q3. What are the factors/criteria that have made your school a pioneer school?

Answer: Highly qualified professional teachers and pioneer educational leadership are the factors that have made my school a pioneer school.

Q4. Show the role of the following elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: Successful school leadership plays the greatest role in its effectiveness.

b) Staff:

Answer: The basis of a pioneer school is availability of ambitious cooperative teachers who endeavour to enhance the school's academic level with excellence.

c) Local community:

Answer: No one denies the local community's role represented by some parents. Recognizing the importance of this role we feel the need for more parent participation.

d) School environment:

Answer: It's very important to have a school environment that is attractive and welcoming. So it should be carefully prepared to be appropriate for our children.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: It seems that the curriculum in the pioneer schools is not different from that in the traditional schools.

f) School vision and message:

Answer: To have a vision and message is necessary for every institution whether public or private. So the pioneer school's vision and message must be clear and be presented to the student as early as the first moment at school with frequent reminders.

g) The educational management:

Answer: The educational management functions like the life-blood for the human body. It supports, treats and feeds the pioneer schools in particular and all schools in general. Without such support everything is frozen.

Headmasters' Interview Response No. 3

Q1. How do you think of the pioneer schools' main role?

Answer: Its main role is to enhance all aspects of the educational and instructional processes, and to make use of modern technology, in order to facilitate the teaching and learning processes for the teachers and students.

Q2. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: There are many factors, including: good planning; good school schemes and techniques that guarantee the smooth run of educational process at school; good distribution of work schedules and tasks; utilizing all advance technology for the teaching/learning process; and implementing quality assurance criteria.

Q3. What are the factors/criteria that have made your school a pioneer school?

Answer: There are many factors that make my school a pioneer school: the technical equipment (technology) available; the teachers' dedication and positive reaction to change; and our choice of distinguished students.

Q4. Show the role of the following elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: To follow up and deal with the obstacles or problems that might intercept the educational process, and to adopt the "partnership" style in formulating and implementing the general plan.

b) Staff:

Answer: Discipline, exemplary, cooperation, help to eliminate obstacles for the students, to make the school attractive for them through modern educational methods.

c) Local community:

Answer: Building up communication bridges of all types with the school, and support the school through the business community.

d) School environment:

Answer: The school environment plays a big role in school effectiveness. Aspects of such environment are beauty, cleanliness, safety and general health care.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: The new development in the school curriculum witnessed nowadays has had the greatest role in the school effectiveness, since the present curriculum focuses on the student's ability to critically analyze and elicit information/data, in addition to developing other skills within the student, such as interest in knowledge and scientific research.

f) School vision and message:

Answer: Endeavour for distinguished and effective outcomes of the highest universal standards, to make students capable to face future challenges.

g) The educational management:

Answer: Cooperation, working hard, and doing the best to make all the district's schools pioneer schools.

Headmasters' Interview Response No. 4

Q1. How do you think of the pioneer schools' main role?

Answer: Its main role is educational/instructional, represented in a qualitative and quantitative framework. In addition, it must play a social role for the local community.

Q2. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: A state-of-the-art school building that is well-equipped with the necessary school equipment and facilities, along with loyal professional human resources: a staff that spares no effort to develop the educational and instructional processes.

Q3. What are the factors/criteria that have made your school a pioneer school?

Answer: Availability of an appropriate building, availability of adequate equipment, and availability of sufficient and well-qualified manpower.

Q4. Show the role of the following elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school?

a) School administration:

Answer: Its role is distinguished.

b) Staff:

Answer: Their role is vital.

c) Local community:

Answer: It has no role.

d) School environment:

Answer: It has a very important role.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: It has a key role.

f) School vision and message:

Answer: Its role is distinguished.

g) The educational management:

Answer: It has a major role.

Headmasters' Interview Responses No. 5

Q1. How do you think of the pioneer schools' main role?

Answer: To provide students with the necessary information, and to build up an educated generation able to cope with current and future developments and challenges nationally and globally. Pioneer schools are of distinguished type and we hope all our schools are truly model pioneer schools.

Q2. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: These elements are numerous, but the most important are: purposeful vision, careful planning that occurs after real diagnosis, and making society appreciate the school's importance through high reputation and image.

Q3. What are the factors/criteria that have made your school a pioneer school?

Answer: The increasing number of people wanting to enroll at the school; the distinguished educational management; qualified and competent staff; students and parents' satisfaction with the school's programmes and objectives; and the school's capability to cope with progress and development in the

different educational fields through the ideal and effective utilization of technology and information technology.

Q4. Show the role of the following elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: It is the central point in the success of any project.

b) Staff:

Answer: They are the core and foundation for the success of the whole educational process.

c) Local community:

Answer: When given the opportunity to participate, it plays an effective role.

d) School environment:

Answer: It has an important role in the students' motivation and attraction to school.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: It has an effective role when it is updated to cope with developments that go in harmony with the labour market. Otherwise, it hasn't got any role.

f) School vision and message:

Answer: Vision and message are the two most important elements for the educational leader and staff. So these should be clear right at the beginning.

g) The educational management:

Answer: It currently has an extremely limited role but it should supposedly play the greatest role in education.

Headmasters' Interview Response No. 6

Q1. How do you think of the pioneer schools' main role?

Answer: Pioneer schools should by all means be so attractive that the student can find what he cannot in traditional schools.

Q2. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: The teacher, then the teacher, then the teacher. I repeat this three times because of the great importance of the teacher in the educational process.

Q3. What are the factors/criteria that have made your school a pioneer school?

Answer: Modern and advanced educational/teaching methods and techniques, and the school's ability to fully utilize the potentials/resources available.

Q4. Show the role of the following elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school?

a) School administration:

Answer: It plays a big role in school effectiveness, especially when such an administration is modern and democratic: an administration that is neither loose nor imposes authority over others.

b) Staff:

Answer: The teaching staff has a strong effect. This can be obvious in the respect and high value the staff have towards the work they are doing.

c) Local community:

Answer: The school is an inseparable part of the society. So the stronger the ties between the two parties, the more effective the results.

d) School environment:

Answer: It plays a big role in school effectiveness, especially when an educational/instructional atmosphere appropriate for this particular age group is included.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: The current curriculum is not really up to standard: the standard that reflects developments and challenges students are facing today. Hence, all aspects of the curriculum need to be seriously reviewed.

f) School vision and message:

Answer: A pioneer school must have a clear vision and a purposeful educational message.

g) The educational management:

Answer: The role of the educational management is not at the level we have hoped it to be. We hope that PSP principals recognize this.

Headmasters' Interview Response No. 7

Q1. How do you think of the pioneer schools' main role?

Answer: To be the model for future schools, and the school that high leadership is looking forward to as a model.

Q2. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: Several factors: an administrative leader who has the leadership skills; a professional work team that is fully aware of their work; a vision and future objectives to be made by all the school community parties and external society, represented by parents and different institutions; a teaching staff capable to achieve the school's vision and objectives; and lastly, adequate financial support to make all the above possible.

Q3. What are the factors/criteria that have made your school a pioneer school?

Answer: A suitable and well-equipped state building; a well-qualified and cooperative work team; and right strategic planning.

Q4. Show the role of the following elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: Its role is represented by the availability of an highly educated and professional leader who is able to lead and motivate a work team; a leader who is fully aware of the humanitarian relationships and is able to communicate clearly, effectively and in a timely manner. Hence, such educational leadership must be carefully selected.

b) Staff:

Answer: Continual professional development at the highest standards, whether internal (self development) or external contribute to the school effectiveness. In addition, minimizing the teaching load and establishing a bonus system for outstanding staff achievement.

c) Local community:

Answer: Its role lies in the extent to which the external society is aware of the role the pioneer school can play, and the services it provides to the society. In addition, the society must lend the necessary moral and financial support in accordance with the school council's decisions in this respect.

d) School environment:

Answer: To avail professional state school buildings, not hired ones, along with all necessary facilities that serve the school community: students and teachers. In addition, there must be continual maintenance for such facilities.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: All state school courses achieve good cognitive development for our students.

f) School vision and message:

Answer: These have a significant role. A school that does not have a clear vision and message, in my opinion, is a traditional school.

g) The educational management:

Answer: Its role is represented by supporting all school needs and at all levels: training courses for the staff to enhance their professional level, technical support, and financial support.

Headmasters' Interview Response No. 8

Q1. How do you think of the pioneer schools' main role?

Answer: To prepare the best school environment in accordance with the school vision and message. In addition, it should be able to produce beneficial outcomes.

Q2. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: An educational leadership that works as one team, unified procedures for achieving stated school goals; application of appropriate technology, working on enhancing the professional level of all staff and providing training courses as required.

Q3. What are the factors/criteria that have made your school a pioneer school?

Answer: The availability of advanced electronic teaching methods/aids, having a highly selected group of teachers and top administrators.

Q4. Show the role of the following elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: Its role lies in its ability to work as one team, and create the appropriate educational atmosphere.

b) Staff:

Answer: It depends on how much they are prepared, motivated, qualified and experienced to work at a pioneer school.

c) Local community:

Answer: I think the local community is aware of my school's role and it supports the school through its positive communication.

d) School environment:

Answer: The environment here in my school is very suitable. It has a noticeably positive atmosphere which plays effective role on education.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: As long as it fulfills the desired educational purposes by Ministry standards.

f) School vision and message:

Answer: The vision is to be pioneer in electronic teaching (smart class) of the best type for the promising generation, while the message is to produce distinguished outcomes.

g) The educational management:

Answer: To a certain extent it has a positive role.

APPENDIX F – TEACHERS’ FOCUS GROUPS

Group 1: Teachers’ Focus Group

Q1. What do you think is the pioneer schools’ main role?

Answer: To be schools in which new educational ideas can be applied and preparing an appropriate school instructional environment for modern innovations. Then this school is to convey innovative ideas to other schools to activate purposeful educational programmes to develop all students’ mental and scientific potential abilities. Its role is to embed a strong moral discipline within the students and teach them dialogue and respect for the opinion of others. The main role of the pioneer school is to provide distinguished education/instruction to society. Its role lies in stopping the state of boredom of learning and creating a sense of entertainment and enjoyment in learning which will attract students to school. There are classes for students to entertain in which they can play billiards in a special hall.

Q2. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: Loyalty; avoiding bureaucratic measures and paper routine, having a school administration that has open-minded educational administrative skills, and having highly motivated teachers for learning and teaching. Beneficial activities should be activated. This is what we hope for because the more the students practice creative activities the more they are motivated to come to school. Moreover, practicing such activities discover some hidden talents of students.

Q3. What are the factors/criteria that have made your school a pioneer school?

Answer: Applying the new secondary system (the credit hours systems), close teachers’ cooperation, careful selection of students, and cooperation of administration with the teachers. It is excellent in comparison to the other schools. It is definitely a pioneer school and it has top quality selection of administrators, teachers and students. This has affected the school reputation that more students want to enrol in it, which in turn caused a problem by an increase in the class size.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: Make available all basic skills needed for a successful administration, honesty as opposed to hypocrisy, full awareness of educational and instructional styles, and productive interaction between the administration, teachers and students. It has a big role in discovering the potential abilities and talents of both its staff and students and employing these in favour of the educational process. The school administration is excellent and the educational leader always endeavours to work as a team. He treats everybody well, in a humanitarian way.

b) Staff:

Answer: How much they are appropriately qualified and motivated, their ability to develop, to avail the best educational atmosphere for them, and never actually threatening them with the regulations, but trusting them and their work.

c) Local community:

Answer: To effectively contribute to the school projects and support them, especially by the educated class and businessmen to show positive cooperation. The community must support the school morally and financially, and be aware of the essential role the school is taking. Al Madinah’s prince’s sons, for example, are studying at our school. So the prince supported the school by preparing a class room with full electronic equipment which cost SR 120.

d) School environment:

Answer: All facilities, such as extended class rooms, equipped laboratories, teaching resources, and sports halls must be available: unless these things are available, we cannot call a school a pioneer school. The school environment is of vital importance. The more it is interactive and well-prepared, the more positive aspects are reflected and thus effectiveness.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: A comprehensive and dynamic curriculum has a big and noticeable role in motivating the students and orientating them towards knowledge and learning science.

f) School vision and message:

Answer: This matter must emerge from sound religious (Islamic) teachings, morality, principles and philosophy to gain Allah’s pleasure and then to proudly serve the nation and mankind, with the highest ideals and values, and lastly, to avoiding hypocrisy and double standards as long as a particular matter attains educational benefit.

g) The educational management:

Answer: To supply such schools with all that they need, and give them greater authority, autonomy and power along with continuous follow-ups and evaluations, taking into consideration encouragement and motivation. Through our contact with the educational supervisors we found them extremely arrogant. Their role is just fault-finding and not developing or conveying their own knowledge, experience and updated information.

Group 2: Teachers' Focus Group

Q1. What do you think is the pioneer schools' main role?

Answer: In fact, it is like other schools' role which lies in the extent it is able to use the modern technology and employ it in favour of education, availability of the necessary equipment, cooperation of the educational staff, the students' number in class, care about the school environment, continual training for the staff, non-class (authentic) activities, activating the student's role at school, and wise school administration. In an ordinary school, a student is just a container to be stuffed with information, while in a pioneer school the student is able to analyze, take part and give his opinion.

Q2. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: We do not know anything in particular that makes our school a pioneer school but we believe that it is a unique school environment. It has all qualified teaching staff, a variety of teaching methods, uses modern technology, and small student number in a class. There is no difference between the role of the pioneer school and non-pioneer school towards the students based on our experience in both types of school. A teacher must take training courses to be well-prepared and enhance his level for teaching in a pioneer school. Because we have never taken any pre-service training courses, the school should take this role to clarify the idea of the pioneer school through training courses to us. We found ourselves in a pioneer school which is a continuation of an ordinary school we used to work in.

Q3. What are the factors/criteria that have made your school a pioneer school?

Answer: There is nothing more than the data and show machines. We thank the administration for these. The way adopted at this school is that the student is stable and the teacher is the one who controls: meaning that each teacher has his own classroom, and the student has to attend the specific class in accordance with his timetable.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven specified elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: It is concerned with the physical appearance on the expenses of content. In other words, they have made the show of appearances their basic goal, while the core purpose was marginalized to be a secondary goal. To ensure a suitable work atmosphere and cooperation which gives wonderful productivity and the educational leader is the motor for this.

b) Staff:

Answer: The question is different here: some are interested to self develop themselves through training courses and attempts to utilize the data show in teaching, while others do not care about such equipment, ignoring it altogether. All staff must cope with the scientific/academic and technical development.

c) Local community:

Answer: Few people in society understand the school's role. We have to call for and encourage development to support pioneer schools. It nearly does not exist to the extent that we sometimes call for a parent more than once, but he still does not come. We can say that a parent who visits the school and asks about his son's progress is well known to everybody, but this is rare.

d) School environment:

Answer: It has some equipment, but it needs a lot more.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: It is not up to the satisfactory standard. It seems that changing the curriculum came only for the sake of change, not to for improving. In addition, presentation of the lessons is inappropriate. In fact, the curriculum was new to us and we were surprised that we had to apply such curriculum without precautions. We had better have been introduced to such curriculum, or at least been given a "Teacher's Book", so that we are not surprised with it. Notwithstanding, there are errors included in parts of the curriculum.

f) School vision and message:

Answer: To assign the appropriate person in the appropriate position.

g) The educational management:

Answer: Correctly evaluate the educational outcomes, not the appearances. There are a lot of requirements that are not reported to the ministry, such as large student numbers in a class. An educational supervisor should provide us with updated and useful information. In his two visits during the four-month semester he can never properly evaluate the teacher, especially when a visit lasts no more than thirty minutes.

Group 3: Teachers' Focus Group

Q1. What do you think is the pioneer schools' main role?

Answer: To adopt teaching methods based on the most modern ones, in respect of scope and content. Up-bring its students and develop their skills, apply comprehensive quality assurance in different aspects of education, and provide a high level educational outcomes. The pioneer school's system is based on putting the student in a state of "research for knowledge". In addition, several educational visits to different places the school arranges, there are must be a lot more programmes, activities and excursions, so that the students' talents and skills are uncovered.

Q2. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: The building age – new modern building with excellent facilities, a well-trained and successful administrative staff, availability of modern equipment, and the teaching staff full awareness and understanding of this new philosophy of pioneer schools. To be considered a pioneer school, there is supposed to be some educational practices on the students, apart from what is included in the ministry's courses. For example, the school should provide remedial programmes to avoid students taking courses privately from outside tutors. In addition to other services, the school should also provide such programmes to be considered a pioneer school.

Q3. What are the factors/criteria that have made your school a pioneer school?

Answer: The building age: this school is a new building and is equipped with modern equipment and all available resources.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven specified elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: To take care of the school's capacity of enrolled students, to find out ways, techniques and training courses to remedy the under-achievement of some teachers, and to work on activating the internal committee and giving it a chance in decision making responsibilities. It spent considerable effort and did its best as to make success and make a pioneer school. It encouraged the teachers to grow professionally and established criteria for students' admission in accordance with the classroom size and number available.

b) Staff:

Answer: To cooperate with the school administration, to know all about the newest in education and teaching methods, and to be enrolled in related training courses. To work very hard to be able to self develop and to have enough experience to deal with educational issues. Staff must use modern technology properly and employ this in favour of educational work.

c) Local community:

Answer: To return back teachers' long lost dignity, to take a more effective role in supporting the educational process and to avoid destructive criticism from the community. We had several programmes. For example, we had "A Pilgrim's Gift" last year, a programme that included 40 students. Each was given a present (a copy of the Qur'an, prayer rug, some dates, and a CD about the school). We went with the students to Quba Mosque where we gave these presents to the pilgrims. We also went to the disabled children school where a group from our school gave some presents to the disabled children.

d) School environment:

Answer: To take into consideration the students number in a class, to avail entertaining and attracting means and facilities, and to have a safe, clean and healthy school environment.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: Its suitability to the labour market and concentration on what benefits the students to cope with modern innovations and challenges in life.

f) School vision and message:

Answer: To work on producing integrated outcomes scientifically, psychologically and behaviourally to reflect the values of the school, society, and the whole nation.

g) The educational management:

Answer: To cooperate with the school and the staff closely, to meet all the school needs without any obstacles, to show flexibility and understanding in treatment and avoid false or unrealistic idealism. The role of the General Educational Management is a big role, but unfortunately this role is sometimes negative. For example, when some educational supervisors visit the school, they devalue the teachers' or the administration's efforts, and this reflects negatively on morale and performance.

Group 4: Teachers' Focus Group

Q1. What do you think is the pioneer schools' main role?

Answer: Sorry to say we have no idea at all until the school had been transferred into a pioneer school. We know nothing about the role or components of a pioneer school. Four school administrations took over and the idea discussed frequently had been to change some traditional classes into electronic classes, whose equipment started with local efforts by the teachers to care about comprehensive quality assurance in academic achievements. Pioneer schools are not doing their role as effectively as they should do; they need to put an appropriate vision for themselves. So, up till now, we cannot see any differences between these schools and the ordinary schools, because the role of the pioneer schools lie in improving the educational environment through electronic classes, applying suitable activities and raising all aspects of the educational level, but there is no difference in the role of a pioneer school in comparison to a non-pioneer school. For example, we have no desks in the staff room, which is already overcrowded. Of the big mistakes is that the school building is originally designed as a preparatory school and is used now as a secondary school. You can imagine how bad the situation is in terms of the lack of enough laboratories and lack of necessary requirements. There are only limited teachers and this is not enough. The materials available in the labs are the same for ages and some were ruined or expired. In addition, there is the problem of overloaded classes. A class size sometimes reaches 57 students which adversely affects the teacher's performance and students' academic progress.

Q2. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: Implementing the pioneer schools' system as planned, availability of moral and financial support, a qualified head master, competent teachers, support staff, distinguished students, the environment, the educational management, and the society. The quality of parents is special. If they are of the educated class, they are easy going. It is natural to have distinguished students descending from an educated class of parents.

Q3. What are the factors/criteria that have made your school a pioneer school?

Answer: No doubt, the headmaster has the biggest role, then the support the school receives from "The School's Graduates' Society" established years ago, then the best teaching staff, and finally good equipment. The extra resources available at the school, the well-prepared building and well-equipped sports facilities are outstanding. In short, it is a model school in all respects.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: No doubt, the school administration has the biggest role in school effectiveness, through its moral and financial support to the school and its attempt to improve the teachers' situation first, then the students. Management of appropriate training courses for the teachers aiming at enhancing their professionalism. Decisions in the school administration are taken after consulting all parties, which is reflected positively on the teachers and their performance. It is a good relationship because the school provides us with all that we need.

b) Staff:

Answer: My school has got the top selection of teachers which has had the biggest effect on improving the different aspects of the school such as using a variety of modern teaching methods and aids. Teachers must be experts in their fields of specialization.

c) Local community:

Answer: In fact the community should have a big role in this respect, but unfortunately it did not pay much attention to this respect except "The School's Graduates' Society" which was

established in the past and has got a top selection from the society who support the school morally and financially every year. This is uniquely true in our school.

d) School environment:

Answer: The present environment is all right, but we hope it will be better.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: We did not notice a major difference between the two systems until recently, when the “Credit Hour System” coincided with the “Developed Schools”. The “Credit Hour System”, adopted at the pioneer schools is excellent. To what extent it can cope with the requirements of the current time we are living in is an essential question, but the present curriculum do not match with the student’s abilities and aspirations.

f) School vision and message:

Answer: An effective education and effective outcomes with a bright future accompanied by loyalty and hard working.

g) The educational management:

Answer: It is the corner stone in this respect. Its role needs to be activated. Educational management is supposed to play a bigger role than the current state of affairs, especially towards the teachers.

Group 5: Teachers’ Focus Group

Q1. What do you think is the pioneer schools’ main role?

Answer: To provide its students with a balanced curriculum and learning experiences, and to develop all aspects of the educational process. A pioneer school is the school that has more powerful potentiality and available resources than an ordinary school. More modern teaching or electronic learning ability or even more data show machines should be used.

Q2. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: To be supported by the educational management; to concentrate mainly on morality and behaviourism and character of the learners. An effective leadership that is supportive of the idea of a pioneer school, availability of capable man power and technical resources, availability of distinguished teachers, support from the regional educational management to the school, the students’ quality, and their ability to deal with the modern technology.

Q3. What are the factors/criteria that have made your school a pioneer school?

Answer: To be supported by the educational management/ administration, the “Graduates’ Society”, the school environment, teachers’ competency, distinguished students and using the most updated educational technology. In the educational aspect, the school’s outcomes in the last three years were noted as excellent: some graduates come back to visit the school to show their gratitude to the teachers. But with this big number of the class size now, we do not know the consequences.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven specified elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: To spare no effort to continuously improve the school, to wisely manage the human power, to encourage continual development and learning of the staff, and to urge the teachers to utilize the present technology in teaching. School-teachers cooperation is vital to meet their needs, support and encouragement for all staff.

b) Staff:

Answer: To have positive attitudes towards the teaching job, to go on a continual professional development, to be qualified and highly competent, to use dialogue (student-centred approach) as a style for instruction rather than traditional teaching methods (teacher-centred approach), loyalty at work, and to avoid traditional teaching methods.

c) Local community:

Answer: To imbibe enthusiastic feelings, and to encourage the school and staff to respond to the parents’ concerns, but in the last years we did not notice arrangements of any conferences for parents which means that there is almost no relationship between the two parties.

d) School environment:

Answer: To embed a feeling of pride in and affiliation to the school within the students, to urge the students to commit themselves to the school regulations through posters, electronic

boards, and other educational tools, to support positive relations among the school community members, and to make available school equipment and facilities.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: To provide a rich variety of learning experiences, (outcome) appropriateness to the labour market, ability to develop students' rounded character, and assisting students to develop life skills.

f) School vision and message:

Answer: To concentrate on upbringing the students educationally first before the academic aspect, and to support the school-parent partnership all of which will lead to educational outcome improvement and a better future.

g) The educational management:

Answer: To effectively support implementation of the school programmes, to give more authority to the school headmasters, to ensure all needs and equipment necessary for the school, and to continually communicate with the school teaching staff.

Group 6: Teachers' Focus Group

Q1. What do you think is the pioneer schools' main role?

Answer: To be an attractive place for students, to be able to attain the highest level of students' academic achievement, to give students chance to take part in decision making, to provide students with the necessary skills to understand themselves and others, and the scientific/academic skills they need. Students' admission in such schools is not done randomly. These schools should only accept highly-graded students of 90% and above, with some exemptions for those who have special skills and to exploit and develop the students' full potentials and talents. For example, last year some students were accepted because they master English, despite their overall grade of 85%.

Q2. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: A competent teaching staff which enjoy variety of teaching skills, a society who understands the basic role of the school and the importance of this role to the students, collaborative efforts of the school administration and the staff to insure guarantee success of the school policy, belief in a thought that all students have the potential to succeed, and ideal utilization of the teaching technology. In pioneer schools there should be extensive activities and extensive follow-up systems through the use of MMS messages to the parents. Such things are not present in non-pioneer schools. One more thing that distinguishes this school is the electronic net. Each student has his own computer through which his home assignments are received and then corrected.

Q3. What are the factors/criteria that have made your school a pioneer school?

Answer: Competency of the school administration, well-qualified teachers, staff-administration collaboration, and finally the school's good reputation.

Q4. Show the role of the following elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: The leading skills and administrative qualification the school has, its ability to effectively work in the surrounding environment, the role it plays as a mediator between the school and the community, motivating the teachers, and preparing appropriate work atmosphere. All work with high spirits and morale here because of four main reasons: a developed open-minded educational administration which always works for the best; distinguished teachers; distinguished students; and distinguished educated parents.

b) Staff:

Answer: To be qualified with a high level of competence, able to work as one team, to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills, to provide students with new experiences and to use modern teaching technology.

c) Local community:

Answer: No doubt, involving the local community in the educational process will develop positive relations between the school and home, which will help the school provide better service to students. However, as a matter of fact the local community is not aware of even the role of a traditional school. How then can it understand the role of the pioneer school?

d) School environment:

Answer: To have an encouraging environment which attracts the students and helps them learn, and an environment that supports excellent relations among staff, students and the community.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: It is an integrated curriculum of competitive world class standards that copes with data development and strong computer and IT skill, with clear and definite goals and criteria which are measurable and flexible. It should enable teachers to use variety of teaching methods that consequently benefit students.

f) School vision and message:

Answer: Establishing an integrated model in a comprehensive effective educational environment through a cooperative work team which will develop both students' cognitive and scientific thoughts.

g) The educational management:

Answer: To effectively support and evaluate the school and remove all obstacles that might face the school and to facilitate school missions. In fact, we haven't been informed of any evaluations. We do not know about them. Most of the supervisors' sons work here and this always gives a positive impression about the school and its level.

Group 7: Teachers' Focus Group

Q1. What do you think is the pioneer schools' main role?

Answer: It's the school that achieves the educational goals at their highest level according to specified criteria, cares about students both mentally and scientifically; builds student's character in all aspects, and cares about and support to students aspirations.

Q2. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: Electronic teaching, a variety of learning sources, continual motivation to both teacher and student, a healthy building, and well-qualified teaching staff. The curriculum is key to a successful school, but in the pioneer schools it is much smaller than they are in the non-pioneer schools: there are seven courses in session one and seven in session two. There are many teaching methods in the pioneer school. There is, for example, the "cooperative method" or the "cooperative learning", in which students sit in groups. This method develops the leadership skills within the students, on the one hand, since they lead the group in turn, and on the other hand, they utilize different kinds of technology, such as the net, smart board, data show, OHP and the computer

Q3. What are the factors/criteria that have made your school a pioneer school?

Answer: The distinguished administration, the creative teachers, and the ideal use of modern technology. Group cooperation, administrative encouragement, a variety of activities, the one-team work, and electronic teaching all make our school distinguished.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven specified elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: It is the corner stone in the educational process and the essential player for achieving its goals. So it should cooperate with the teachers and respond to their needs, give the teachers and the students the dignity they deserve, be strong in character to combine strictness and flexibility, and encourage staff to work to their full potentials.

b) Staff:

Answer: To have good qualifications and long experience, to master the art of child psychology in dealing with students with various mental abilities and individual differences.

c) Local community:

Answer: To work side by side with the school and share its burden and responsibilities.

d) School environment:

Answer: An appropriate environment provided with modern teaching aids and advanced learning resources.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: Realist to match teaching time and syllabus is a major factor and to cope with the modern age.

f) School vision and message:

Answer: Provide the highest standards of education, loyalty, honesty, and hard work to the sons of the nation for the sake of getting creative and productive outcomes.

g) The educational management:

Answer: To follow up the schools and respond to their needs, to motivate and encourage the teachers and the students, and to follow up on all working staff professional progress.

Group 8: Teachers' Focus Group

Q1. What do you think is the pioneer schools' main role?

Answer: To provide the society with high educational outcomes, to put educational goals and work hard to achieve them, to make a balance between the students' abilities and needs, and to discover students' talents and endeavour to develop them.

Q2. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: A high quality administration, a highly competent staff, educational workshops, distinguished students, supporting positives and avoiding negatives, and ignoring physical or cosmetic features. The curriculum is of critical importance. There is no harmony between the curriculum and the class period as the curriculum has a large amount of information to be covered. This harmony between the class time and the teaching/learning material is badly needed. This problem has led some of us to skip some parts of the curriculum.

Q3. What are the factors/criteria that have made your school a pioneer school?

Answer: The school's administration's high competence, a good curriculum, the school's flexible implementation of regulations, and the school's recognition of the importance of the physical building facilities and regular maintenance in good condition.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven specified elements in enhancing effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: It is the first and main pillar of the school. So a successful administration is that which gives its teachers self confidence and properly employs the school's resources in favour of the educational process. In this particular school there is no role of effectiveness whatsoever that can be attributed to the school. Its role is no different from an ordinary school. The school is so crowded with students and that causes a real problem in the morning assembly and which also leads some students and teachers to be late.

b) Staff:

Answer: It has a big role that cannot be ignored: to convey knowledge to students and to show creativity in modern teaching methods. Staff must be proactive, interactive and enthusiastic in order to promote the school to be pioneer, and to care about the continual cognitive growth.

c) Local community:

Answer: The home-school cooperation contributes to its effectiveness. So it is necessary to build home-school cooperation for promoting the students level and to support the school morally and financially.

d) School environment:

Answer: It has a positive role in educating students and increasing their knowledge. It must have the necessary equipment, and prepare an appropriate atmosphere for pioneering. It is essential to keep the school clean, safe and healthy and to properly maintain school properties.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: Geared to develop the students' different potentials and aspirations to cope with modern civilization and match the practical life. The new curriculum is good, but the teachers must take a course about it before applying it in order to guarantee appropriateness of application.

f) School vision and message:

Answer: The school message and future vision must be clear to the entire school community; the vision must be progressive and long term.

g) The educational management:

Answer: To facilitate removal of whatever obstacles the educational work might have. Supporting the school and fulfilling all its needs along with continual and accurate follow up to see how the school is progressing and be more sensitive to the needs of the school.

APPENDIX G – STUDENTS’ FOCUS GROUPS

Group 1: Students Focus Group

Q1. Why have you registered in this school?

Answer: Our parents wanted us to go to this school, some of our friends go there, it is close to home and it is the best school for the best education. We like this school because it is popular.

Q2. What do you think is the pioneer school’s main role?

Answer: Its role is better than the traditional schools. Education in it is electronic: the lesson is presented through the OHP. This technology is new to the students but it encourages them to understand more. To develop whatever skills the student has got and to direct and determine his academic tendency before he starts the university. It has got a better selection of courses which have positive outputs on the students’ achievement. It is the foundation for higher education at universities.

Q3. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: The top selection of distinguished teachers. In addition, the students in a pioneer school can acquire skills or learn things he cannot gain in non-pioneer schools. The pioneer school must discover and develop students’ skills and makes them reach their full potential. However, of the pioneer school’s negative aspects show that it cares about the physical features more than the essential things: it cares about decorations on the expenses of the educational process. In regard of the administration we do not consider it pioneer at all, due to central policy of the administration and its inability to manage properly.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven elements in enhancing the effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: The school administration is too strict with the teachers. The relationship among the teachers themselves is not strong. We noticed this in comparison with the last administration. The state of affairs before was better in terms of the humanitarian and collegial treatment on among both students and teachers themselves. For example, in the past we used to go to the learning resources room, but not any more. It is closed now because there is no teacher for Learning Resources: the present administration does not have such a teacher any more.

b) Staff:

Answer: In fact some teachers enjoy a high degree of morality and cooperation with the students, but unfortunately others are so bad that if one student in the class is bad the whole class is affected: the teacher punishes all students because of this one case. For instance, he reduces the marks of the whole class, not only the guilty one. Some teachers treat us so strictly and arrogantly, such as the computer teacher. You notice the difficulty he suffers while presenting a lesson: his inability to convey the teaching material and his disregard of the humanitarian aspect in treating the students with respect and dignity.

c) Local community:

Answer: It must produce a selection of highly competent students, but unfortunately, we did not notice any relationship between the school and the local community. There is no such relationship. For example, if the student is absent for a whole week, the school does not notify the parent about this, except very rarely.

d) School environment:

Answer: It is very comfortable as a general environment, but the interest in physical features is exaggerated: interest is concentrated on the first floor only; the upper floors are not given such care. The computer lab, for example, is too small and does not go with the big number of students. This fact negatively affects students’ comprehension and learning. The playground is too small also: it is not spacious enough for the student number in a PE class. Moreover, the available laboratories are too bad with old equipment and are not completed. This makes it impossible for the teacher to do the experiments properly in the Chemistry and Biology classes.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: The curriculum is bad and the classes are too crowded, one after the other. We are in a pioneer school, but our curriculum follows the traditional system. We have 18 courses in which scientific subjects’ classes come one after the other and they are mostly late in the school day. The curriculum itself is not that powerful and even the teachers themselves

complain about this. The Biology teacher, for example, declared this once in a class. He said this lesson had some errors and he corrected them. Curriculum in the pioneer schools must be better than what it is now, in order to contribute to the effectiveness of the school, leading it to be really pioneer.

f) School rating:

Answer: It is just like other schools with no difference.

g) The educational management:

Answer: The Ministry of Education is like the parent of the schools and it must care and look after it with the same level of responsibility to make sure everything is ok. Otherwise, the school will be left to do whatever it wants if it is not given proper guidance and control. But it must not dominate the school.

Group 2: Students' Focus Group

Q1. Why have you registered in this school?

Answer: Some of us came to this school for its good reputation, others came for its nearness to their houses, while others came here because their fathers had studied at this school. It has a high academic/scientific standard and the English language competency is excellent.

Q2. What do you think is the pioneer school's main role?

Answer: Its role is embodied in producing students distinguished from the ordinary schools' in terms of everything, this is the expected role; otherwise, it is not a pioneer school.

Q3. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: There is nothing that distinguishes the pioneer schools from the non-pioneer schools. The pioneer school is supposed to have the full capacity to prepare the student academically for the university to attract him to the educational process, and run development programmes.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven elements in enhancing the effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: With a good school administration, many things can go right, but the principal is the most important person to run things with the cooperation of a qualified staff. The school administration's role lies in the teachers' association. The present head master rarely goes up to the second floor and his relationship with the teachers is so formal. He is often in his office, careless of what is going on at his school. He never traces the students' needs or respects them, because he thinks his talk with the students and teachers will decrease his false pride and dignity at the school. He also keeps all authorities strictly to himself, to the extent that his administrative assistants do not have the slightest authority to decide on an issue or solve a dilemma of the simplest type.

b) Staff:

Answer: All the teachers' needs must be fulfilled and an appropriate environment should be prepared to them, in order to enable them to give their best. When this is ensured for the teacher, he can give what is required as required to his students. Few of them are different, but the majority is the same. Here, reference should be made of the fact that among the present teachers, are MA degree holders, which was not there before at previous times.

c) Local community:

Answer: There is no communication between the school and the parents. They only call a parent when there is a problem a student has done. For instance, a student cannot get sick-leave without calling his parent. The community must be involved by the school's actions and the school must keep a close relation and communicate with parents on a regular basis.

d) School environment:

Answer: The environment is not in the desired state of affairs. The school play grounds, for example, are not shaded: we suffer from the severely hot weather through the long break or in the PE classes, especially in the summer. Concern is centered on the external physical features of the school, especially the first floor where the administration offices are and because this represents the public relations front where visitors are received. Whereas the class rooms, WCs or the upper stairs are not given the same care and interest. So we can say that the school environment needs to be reviewed.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: It is like an ordinary school's curriculum, while it is supposed as a pioneer school to concentrate on the students' tendencies and embed in them the desired specialization in order to prepare them for the university stage. This school has two sections: the scientific one and the literary one. Not only this, but we as scientific students have to study literary subjects so intensively in spite of opting previously for the scientific section whose focus should be only the scientific subjects.

f) School rating:

Answer: The school activities are very limited. As a pioneer school it should have multiple activities, but we see nothing of such activities, to the extent that we do not enjoy/feel the "Open Day" because it is not applied appropriately. This also depends on the student's activity and to what extent he can master a subject and is able to correctly answer the exam questions.

g) The educational management:

Answer: The school is a product of the Ministry of Education and the latter must play a big role to make sure the school is functioning well. We must meet high standards and be very competitive as a pioneer school, but we do not know the exact role of the educational management.

Group 3: Students' Focus Group

Q1. Why have you registered in this school?

Answer: Some joined the school because of its reputation, others because of its nearness to their houses, some because their brothers were here before so they wanted to be in it. In addition, it has an appropriate school environment and the general public appreciates the school.

Q2. What do you think is the pioneer school's main role?

Answer: To be an example for the traditional schools in terms of advanced educational systems and sophisticated teaching methods. In addition to its ability to provide society with high caliber students since the pioneer schools, unlike traditional schools, have advanced teaching methods. It must take care of students and provide them with the greatest amount of knowledge and science by providing an appropriate learning environment.

Q3. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: Organization in the pioneer schools is what distinguishes them from the non-pioneer schools. Students' behaviour is also different. The reason lies originally in their admission system: there are strict principles and standards for students' acceptance in the pioneer school. Among these is the student's score in "Behaviour and Attendance" as a module in the intermediate stage. Yes there are differences in everything, especially the teachers and students: the teachers here are better and the students' quality and morality are better.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven elements in enhancing the effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: To be interactive with the students. The present administration is bad because it does not communicate with the students. The headmaster is strict with the students and not welcoming: dialogue with him is impossible, while the acting (deputy) headmasters are so flexible. All three deputy headmasters are generally good. The principal needs good public relations skills.

b) Staff:

Answer: To provide an appropriate atmosphere for the teacher to enable him to produce well. We really notice the teachers' care about the students' interest. They are rarely absent and when they are, they compensate for the missing period. Generally speaking, this relationship is good, but this does not include all staff members. Some teachers treat the students so roughly that they dislike this course, while others welcome us and try their best to help us. The more cooperative the teacher is with the student, the more effectiveness is reflected on the school quality.

c) Local community:

Answer: To communicate with all communal institutions making use of them in the way that benefits the students as much as possible. For example, the students can take a course in "First Aid" in cooperation with the Saudi Red Society or the local Health Centre. The biggest role

for the pioneer school lies in producing highly qualified outcomes: the higher the level of these outcomes, the more effective the role of the school towards the community gets.

d) School environment:

Answer: The environment is somehow alright. The laboratories here are only partially equipped and the available equipment and materials are mostly invalid. So, we study most of the courses only theoretically. Generally speaking, the school environment needs to be given more care. The school library, for example, does not have new books. The books it has are so old and the computer lab has got only four old computers.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: Curriculum needs major modifications in terms of the number of modules and distribution of the content. In addition to the great amount of data included, most of it is unnecessary. Thus our evaluation of the curriculum is no more than “satisfactory to good”.

f) School rating:

Answer: Excellent, above good, satisfactory, intermediate, good, very good. Some teachers’ evaluation is good, but others are too strict.

g) The educational management:

Answer: We do not know much about it, but the regional educational people should work very hard with the schools to make them the best – all schools, not only pioneer schools.

Group 4: Students’ Focus Group

Q1. Why have you registered in this school?

Answer: Most of us came here for many reasons: it is our parents’ decision, closeness to our homes, it is the best school, some of our friends are here, this is a high-tech school with smart boards, smart classes, excellent curriculum and it prepares us for going to university to advance ourselves.

Q2. What do you think is the pioneer school’s main role?

Answer: The main role is to include developed teaching methods, electronic teaching in particular. Few teachers in our school use this. Education in the pioneer schools should differ from that in the traditional schools in terms of properly using the technology. In addition, the school should discover the students’ talents, tendencies, aspirations and skills and develop and employ them constructively.

Q3. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: What distinguishes it is fewer modules. If a student fails one module, he can do this the next year, and there is no need to repeat the whole year and its courses, as if he is at the university. In addition, a student can finish school in a shorter time – two and a half years instead of three years - if he takes summer courses. The smaller class size is another characteristic that features a pioneer school. This fact facilitates the students’ understanding of the lessons, in addition to the use of advanced technology with excellent facilities. However, unfortunately for us, though a pioneer school, it has 51 students in a single class. No doubt this is reflected negatively on both students and teachers. A pioneer school is distinguished by carefully selecting top students and the variety of school activities. It is a well organized and disciplined school. It should be able to participate in the activities at the regional or the local levels. To use electronic educational methods and to include the so-called early student specialization in which the students opt for a certain specialization right at the beginning and according to his tendency and abilities.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven elements in enhancing the effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: The principal controls everything and his staff supports him. The administration has to look after everything in the school operations: management, academics, time table/schedules, health problems, social matters, public affairs, conflicts and any problems the school is faced with. This is how the school will be distinguished.

b) Staff:

Answer: To work for attracting/ bringing competent teachers only. Then, to enroll them in special training courses and familiarize them with the latest in the educational field so that a greater effect on their students is achieved.

c) Local community:

Answer: It is not that strong relation. It is supposed to be stronger. In our school there are excursions but they are done outside the city. Relations and communication should be

established with the local community and its institutions. In turn, the society and all its institutions should play a positive role towards the school through institutions' visits to the school where lectures and symposiums are arranged, such as those connected to health, safety or religion issues. Communication is mostly done through the school electronic website. A parent can follow up his son's progress accessing that site using the student's civil registration number. Doing this he can see all that he wants to know about his son.

d) School environment:

Answer: We can say that an appropriate school environment is only available on the ground floor. According to the promises the school administration has launched, they will do the same reforms in the whole school which will contribute greatly to school effectiveness and will reflect positively on the educational process.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: There is an activity at our school was distinguished in the *Gulf Poet*. A student in our school has won the first position at the Gulf countries level. The school was also the first in the Group Recitation activity and the second at the Kingdom level in the Off-hand Recitation activity. The competitions in which the school has won were mostly external ones. Thus, the curriculum must include both academic and non-academic activities and training.

f) School rating:

Answer: We consider it pioneer only in regard to some but not all aspects because some teachers are not distinguished teachers. In addition, the student number in a class is too big. It does not fulfill the standards and expectations of a pioneer school system and not better than other schools.

g) The educational management:

Answer: We believe that this is the job of the Ministry of Education who has to make sure that the school functions well and has everything at its disposal to do so. They must help not be negative and criticize.

Group 5: Students' Focus Group

Q1. Why have you registered in this school?

Answer: Our parents have a big role in this, but we are happy because the school has a good reputation, the best teachers, the best facilities, the best courses, the best study environment, some of our friends are here, and it is close to where we live.

Q2. What do you think is the pioneer school's main role?

Answer: To give more care about the students, their talents and potential abilities. To have all that makes an appropriate environment for the student. Also to have teachers of high level of competence, and to carefully select top quality students only. Low performance students will damage the school.

Q3. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: Quality administration, teachers, students, teaching methods and styles, the school environment, the number of courses, equipment, facilities, and electronic teaching.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven elements in enhancing the effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: The principal is always in charge and his staff supports him. Their role is vital to the proper operation of the school in all respects and they should be caring, kind and most helpful to everyone.

b) Staff:

Answer: To arrange training courses for them in order to enhance their educational level and these in turn will benefit their students.

c) Local community:

Answer: To communicate with all communal institutions and businessmen and give them an idea about the school and what educational services and other roles it provides to the students.

d) School environment:

Answer: The school environment here is moderately acceptable. No doubt it plays a big role in school effectiveness.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: Definitely curriculum plays a big role. The current curriculum is satisfactory in terms of quality and quantity. It is seven courses; while in the traditional schools it is composed of fifteen courses. It must be modern and relevant to an advance high-tech world.

f) School rating:

Answer: Because it has some distinguished teachers, distinguished and effective headmaster with regard to all aspects, it has a high rating. Yes, there are big differences. The teachers here are much better than those in the previous times. It is considered an excellent school in comparison with other pioneer or non-pioneer school. We evaluate it as the best in the area: it has the top quality of administrators, teachers and students.

g) The educational management:

Answer: The regional educational management should provide the necessary help, direction and guidance, but not interfere too much in the school if everything is going fine, but if something is wrong, they should not wait or delay to solve it. For the most part, the school administration can do its work well if they have everything from the Ministry.

Group 6: Students' Focus Group

Q1. Why have you registered in this school?

Answer: Our fathers choose it for us, but we like it because it has a good reputation, the best teachers, the best facilities, the best courses, it is high-tech, the best building facilities, some of our friends are here, and it is close to our homes. But some of will still not choose it if we had the chance because not all of us like it.

Q2. What do you think is the pioneer school's main role?

Answer: The pioneer school's role lies in facilitating the educational process to the students and presents it to them in a simple way, in respect to the courses studied. Also it must have a uniquely distinguished system different from that in an ordinary school.

Q3. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: A pioneer school differs from other types of schools in the study schedule and plan. Originally, it gives the student a chance to choose the subject and the teacher he likes to study with. But unfortunately for us, this does not exist in our school due to the huge number of students. The pioneer school should include all that makes it distinguishable from regular schools with the best environment and atmosphere.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven elements in enhancing the effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: Like a human body, the school administration is the head from which all other functions emanate. It must be the most competent and progressive to do its work properly with a truly qualified principal who is well experienced with genuine concerns and dedication for his school, and not simply for his status and position.

b) Staff:

Answer: Must undergo suitable pre-service training courses for them so they are more capable of conveying knowledge to the students. They must detect weakness areas in them and attempt to remedy them, and areas of strength and support them. Teachers have the second greatest role in school effectiveness, the first being the administration. The higher are the teachers' qualification and competence to convey knowledge to and communicate with the students, the more school effectiveness is reflected, and hence reputation. Teachers differ in terms of lesson presentation. Some are very clear, but others are too bad to the extent that they get angry if a student expressed his dissatisfaction about their teaching style. However, we dare not declare this to them face to face. We inform the headmaster requesting to change the teacher.

c) Local community:

Answer: The role is made clear through the good portrait the school can provide or reflect to the local community. Because "not all that glitters is gold".

d) School environment:

Answer: The environment has a big role in school effectiveness. But the huge number of students in class at the school stops us from feeling the school environment is a pioneer school. We need small class size for a better learning atmosphere.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: Some of it has a big but useless content, and some is so compressed that it does not suit the classroom/teaching time and term time. Some teachers complained about this but denied this error in the curriculum. For example, some modules are extremely easy that they do not cope with the secondary stage we are at, the second or the third. There isn't any activity worth mentioning. We couldn't even celebrate the National Day as other schools do.

f) School rating:

Answer: At the moment, we do not consider it pioneer at all in respect to content. However, formally speaking as a name, it IS called pioneer. This is due to several matters: the general atmosphere, the school environment, the big student number and teachers' quality. It is like other schools, even intermediate.

g) The educational management:

Answer: We have nothing to do with it, but they should be serious to see if the school is really performing as a pioneer school; after all, they set the standards.

Group 7: Students' Focus Group

Q1. Why have you registered in this school?

Answer: Joining this school was mostly our own choice based on its reputation. We expected to find better education in it than the state of affairs in the traditional schools.

Q2. What do you think is the pioneer school's main role?

Answer: Its main role is to qualify us for the university and the university situation in respect to "adding/ dropping modules." This, in our opinion is the most important role. Another role is to be distinguished in all aspects, in order to have this reflected on the students' achievement because pioneering means distinction. To avail study atmosphere for the students, such as a school environment and variety of curriculum that gives students opportunity to opt at the time of registration. In other words, to work for the students' satisfaction and teach them how to face the real world.

Q3. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: The pioneer school should be integrated and all aspects be perfectly complete. We mean the equipment and the basic needs of the school: IT and different types of teaching aids. In addition to minimizing the students number to have no more than 25 five students in a class. Furthermore, it should have strict conditions and standards for admission, including, for example, the students having an average score of 95% and above in the intermediate stage. To insure a general study atmosphere for both students and teachers. To keep a good school building suitable for the age group and the educational stage.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven elements in enhancing the effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: This role lies in its flexibility and ability to fulfill the students' requirements.

b) Staff:

Answer: To attract/employ highly competent teachers and to develop such competencies through continual training courses and programmes. The teachers here are excellent both academically and morally. Especially the scientific subject teachers: they are highly qualified. We don't like the teacher to only give us marks. We need a teacher who educates us well: from whom we understand and gain knowledge, and at the same time he gives us marks.

c) Local community:

Answer: To work hard as to strengthen the links with the local community; and support effective educational outcomes. Communication is very weak. It is restricted to my parent's personal visit only when he wants to know anything about me.

d) School environment:

Answer: School environment is the basic part of the school effectiveness in its different aspects. For example, our school building is designed originally as a primary school. Using it now as a secondary school means failing to fulfill the present stage's requirements. Lack of such basic requirements is also represented in the air conditioning, availability of laboratories and the size of the playground which does not go with the students' number.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: The curriculum is new to us and to the teachers as well. This is the Ministry's fault. They did not give the teachers any previous idea about the curriculum. Teachers should be well prepared, given courses and be fully conversant with the curriculum before they are forced to teach it. Nevertheless, the new curriculum is well organized. We notice that the traditional schools' students at the end of the year get higher scores in the Ability Measurement Exam than the pioneer students. This could be due to the exam writers' concentration on the old curriculum and ignoring the new curriculum. This of course have a negative effect on the students; since the Ability Measurement Exam scores are adopted at the university, with less care about the secondary certificate scores.

f) School rating:

Answer: It is only 50% pioneer. Evaluation includes student's participation and the monthly tests.

g) The educational management:

The Ministry of Education should play a big role in ensuring that all schools, especially pioneer schools have everything they need to deliver world-class education because we are living in a very competitive world today and if we do not keep up, we will fall behind; we are actually behind; that's the fact.

Group 8: Students' Focus Group

Q1. Why have you registered in this school?

Answer: Some of us have been referred to the school by the General Educational Management after finishing the intermediate stage. In other words, we were obliged to be at this school. Others have chosen this school because of its reputation. However, there are students who were transferred from an out-city school to an in-city school. Some of us joined it because of its reputation and the teachers' reputation. Others did because their fellows appreciated it. What we heard about the school at the intermediate stage was the motive that led us to register here. It is considered of the best schools in Madinah Educational Area.

Q2. What do you think is the pioneer school's main role?

Answer: To develop the students' abilities in different aspects and to facilitate removal of all obstacles and solve all problems they might face. We do not feel this school is much different from other schools. We remember the time when the teacher was stable and the students used to move. But now with the huge number of students, they stopped this system: the traditional style is applied with the only difference in the lesser number of courses. The school got crowded with a huge number of students: a class can count 50 students. This was a result of personal relations and unfair favouritism at admission. There are tuition fees to be paid voluntarily and only once, but we all were forced to pay it in order to facilitate our admission. These amounts are claimed to be used for the school development, but as we can see it is restricted to the ground floor only. The other floors are not given due care and attention and they are badly neglected.

Q3. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: Mutual communication and cooperation at all levels as students is the greatest benefit we had from this school. In addition, we have benefited from some teachers whose communication with us has a great effect on us: they were so nice with us, and they were academically so competent. However, these are unfortunately few: they were teachers in the class and friends outside the class. There were distinguished teachers at the previous stages. As well, this school has competently distinguished teachers. Thus it is difficult to judge which is better. The administration and the potential roles it can play. The teaching staff and the scientific thoughts and experience they hold. Serious and distinguished students who are keen on learning. The teaching methods adopted at the school. The school building and environment. The way they treat the students and teachers and their strategy of preparing the student to deal with the university situation in the future.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven elements in enhancing the effectiveness of your school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: The school administration is the backbone and core of any good school. With the principal at the head, he must be an expert in human resources management, not just academic

matters, and select the best support staff, facilities and equipment to do his job properly. He should be given a budget to make purchases as needed and not run out of supplies, etc.

b) Staff:

Answer: The best teachers are the only important thing in a good school. If they do not care for their job and students, the results will be poor, but if they are real pros, we will have the best outcomes. So they should be given incentives and recognition awards for excellent performance, high standards and outstanding work.

c) Local community:

Answer: The relationship is good. We must excuse the school for the huge number of students. To say the truth, when a parent visits the school, he is warmly entertained and answered about all his enquiries.

d) School environment:

Answer: A modern building with all facilities, equipment, resources and services will make an excellent environment and good atmosphere for us to study hard and make great achievements.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: Today the world is advancing very fast and we cannot afford to be left behind. We need a strong curriculum that is directly relevant to our needs and aspirations to go on to universities and advance ourselves. Without this preparation, we are wasting our time. The curriculum must be world class.

f) School rating:

Answer: Generally speaking the evaluation is very good.

g) The educational management:

Answer: How this works, we do not really know, but we know that all schools fall under the Ministry of Education. So, they have a high responsibility to make sure that all schools perform at the highest level, without exception. What is education without being properly educated?

APPENDIX H – PARENTS’ FOCUS GROUPS

Group 1: Parents’ Focus Group

Q1. Why have you registered your son in this school?

Answer: Because the school has an excellent reputation among some students and other parents who appreciate it. In addition, it provides important preparation for students to enter university because they can prepare proper lessons and are trained to self-reliance. There are highly competent teachers at this school and the school headmaster is one of the most distinguished characters. Also, the school is close to home and has an active follow-up staff with parents.

Q2. What do you think is the pioneer schools’ main role towards your son?

Answer: Pioneer school is excellent: the student learns to become an effective and useful member of society. We hope that students are academically specialized as early as the secondary stage in order to go to university and avoid stuffing them with useless information. The human mind at this age is so active and effective, so the school’s main role should focus on specialized study as early as the first secondary level, because in highly developed and advanced countries, students start to academically specialized at the early scholastic stages.

Q3. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: The humanitarian and caring nature for and treating students which characterizes 80% of the whole situation. Allow free opinions of students and respect for the views of others which brings students to a better learning environment. A modern, sophisticated and technologically advanced learning atmosphere in the pioneer schools is what distinguishes such schools from others. Moreover, an excellent school environment is essential to foster participation and learning. School-parent communication is considered very important as parents take the initiative to communicate with the school and are warmly welcome. A big number of students in a class is not very good: a class with 20 students maximum will completely differ from a class of 50 students. Your son’s progress and level of learning are vital to an effective school. It is not logically acceptable to produce certificate-holders who are of a bad quality. We would rather produce quality, not quantity.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven elements in enhancing the effectiveness of your son’s school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: This is a system applied in all schools and the school administration is like a family who can control everything inside the home but not outside effectively. Thus, the role of the headmaster or the school administration lies in his liveliness and open communication with all, and his insistence to do what is correct and what serves the educational process to improve the school goals. All this must be done in the sole interest of students and the society.

b) Staff:

Answer: Highly qualified, experienced and well-disciplined teachers are the backbone in any good school. Low quality teachers will produce low quality students and a backward nation.

c) Local community:

Answer: We need to know more about the school and get more involved in what is happening because we are too busy and the school must make every effort reach out to us regularly.

d) School environment:

Answer: The school has an educational environment that is better than others and must be exciting place. It has the best students and the top social class that our children mix with.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: Definitely the curriculum has a big role. It is a good step taken by the pioneer schools to minimize the curriculum to include only seven courses, while in other schools it is as big as twelve different courses. This will encourage students to enhance their learning outcomes without carrying a big burden.

f) School rating:

Answer: Very good and looking forward to be excellent. Children must be frequently tested, assessed and counselled to do better.

g) The educational management:

Answer: The educational management functions like a father and mother to schools. It is everything and it affects all scholastic aspects, since it has the necessary support from the

government shadowed by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. However, we don't know why they are reluctant to fully take their role.

Group 2: Parents' Focus Group

Q1. Why have you registered your son in this school?

Answer: There is more than one reason in this school in particular. Priority in education for our children is number one. In fact, they do not benefit so much. The first basis for quality education lies in suitable educational environment. It is very difficult to put your son in any educational environment of certain quality of students, teachers, community and geographical area. Also, being close to home is an advantage for both students and parents in many ways.

Q2. What do you think is the pioneer schools' main role towards your son?

Answer: A pioneer school is like other schools with a major difference in the school environment. So, it should have the best environment for our children to learn and develop at a high level. Also, the school must be flexibility, comfortable communicate by holding activities, and parties to strengthen ties with the society, especially because parents contribute and support such parties financially. Moreover, the e-mail service is available on parents' mobile telephones to facilitate communication. This is to acquaint the parent with his son's level, activities run at the school and all newsletters. It is worth mentioning that some schools only hold the name of pioneer schools without any content. The school must concentrate on the educational and scientific achievements of students. That is why they are there.

Q3. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: Initially, headmasters, teachers and staff must be carefully chosen. In addition, only the best students were enrolled in such schools which were equipped with all that they need. The manpower must undertake a training course with follow-up done after training. All these things enhance this school's achievement and make it a pioneer school, much distinguished from other schools. A pioneer school should have a band of components: quality administration, such as the headmaster, acting headmaster and support staff. Also having highly qualified, competent and experienced teachers is part of the school success. In addition, the school environment plays a big role. Availability of materials, embodied in the technical equipment – computer labs, science labs, learning sources, electronic system, co-operative learning system and the educational administration system - are all elements when well-activated and utilized to make a school that can be called a pioneer school.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven elements in enhancing the effectiveness of your son's school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: The school headmaster is the main player in it, because his role does not only affect the students but also the teachers. If he succeeds with the teachers: treating them well administratively, socially and humanely and enhancing their level of competence through enrolling them in training programmes, a natural consequence will be success that will reflect on the students and the school reputation.

b) Staff:

Answer: Teachers make the nerves of the school. How competent, how qualified, how much and well they are able to deliver their duties are important and effective elements. When these elements exist, naturally the teachers' role will be effective and distinguished.

c) Local community:

Answer: There is no such relationship. In general, the school-parent relationship in pioneer schools is poorer than that in ordinary schools. The reason is rareness of problems in pioneer schools since the quality of the students is much better and thus there is no reason for the parents' frequent visits to schools. Most of the students in pioneer schools' are of excellent quality who do not make problems or have difficulties of the kind that necessitates calling their parents. Generally speaking, the headmasters' morality and their communication skills are sophisticated and parents' opinions are respectfully listened to. This is attributed to the parents' financial contribution in this school. Such amounts are utilized in the school equipment, which in turn benefits the students. These financial aids are optional and are spent on different aspects at the school: on maintenance, various requirements, gifts for outstanding students and anything for the school or students. All that strengthens the ties between the two parties: the school and parents.

d) School environment:

Answer: By school environment, we mean the buildings, all facilities, resources and equipment. At this school every classroom is equipped with a data show and a computer. This is, enough to distinguish it from other schools. Also distinguished are: the extended area of the class rooms, cleanliness, students' quality, the school administration and modern laboratories.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: There is a difference between the pioneer schools and the improved schools' curriculum. So when we talk about the subjects/courses, we mean those in the improved schools where the subjects/courses are less than those in the other (traditional) schools in terms of quantity, but are the same in terms of quality. However, some pioneer schools include such improved subjects/courses for some classes. So the program is divided into two sessions or over two years

f) School rating:

Answer: The evaluation system is excellent in general; especially when all its tools are used properly. We notice that a student does not get 100% in the evaluation process, due to absence or lack of precision in social studies. This forces students to work too hard and can be frustrating if they do not get full marks. However, there are other matters that count in such evaluation such as strength or weakness of relationship and level of respect between the teacher and student.

g) The educational management:

Answer: The essence of the role lies in availability of a plan and mechanism for implementing this plan. This is embodied in providing the school with a distinguished headmaster and competent teachers, and supplying the school with all the necessary equipment, along with a strict follow-up scheme by the general educational management in the area. We have no doubt that any school seriously reviewed and followed up by the regional educational management must succeed.

Group 3: Parents' Focus Group

Q1. Why have you registered your son in this school?

Answer: In fact, there are many reasons. On top of these is the fact that some of our sons had studies done at the intermediate stage at a previous pioneer school, we like him to continue in a pioneer secondary school. This was our demanded from the general educational management to have a pioneer secondary in our area. In pioneer schools students find due care and support which do not exist in ordinary schools. For example, implementation of cooperative learning and some skills students learns from their teachers which develop self-confidence, leadership and freedom of expressing opinion within the students. In addition, pioneer schools arrange excursions and visits to some factories, important places, universities, etc. Such excursions and visits are not heard of in ordinary schools. Back to the example of the cooperative learning where students sit at a round table instead of individual desks, the teacher asks questions, students try to cooperate/consult each other within one group and present the answer through their group leader who changes in turn. This method supports respect for diverse opinions and promotes strong leadership skills. Students learn many other skills. The skill of respectfully listening to others and consulting them is another educational skill the students learn. We can say that my desire to continue in the same stream, in addition to the good reputation the school enjoys, the high academic level it has, the credit hours system which can be the bridge stone for the university life, are behind our decision to register my son in this school. It has good education/teaching, good school environment, good teaching staff, updated teaching technology and close to home.

Q2. What do you think is the pioneer schools' main role towards your son?

Answer: Our children are there for the best education, to prepare them for the best future and to build themselves and the nation; nothing else, nothing less. They should have rounded and comprehensive education: academic, social, moral and respectful personality.

Q3. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: First of all is an educational leader keen to implement pioneer schools' superior programs. Along with quality teachers ready to apply their leadership's schemes and parents to cooperate with the school. External support from the regional educational management, exemplified by the financial support, to sort out any difficulties is very important. Without reasonable budget the school cannot work properly. The theoretical side is not enough. The practical side is what matters. Of the pioneer school's tasks, is to find community partners to provide the necessary financial support, in order to issue awards and honours to distinguished headmasters, teachers, staff and students. Because if you

deal with both the hard working and the lazy workers in the same way, the hard workers will feel oppressed- punished for his sincerity, and the lazy one will continue to abuse the system. Also among these elements is “teacher preparation”, i.e., training programmes to prepare him for the concept of a pioneer school. Unless the teacher fully understands what a pioneer school is all about, he will not be able to work well: he is the one to implement the ideas of the project. So he should have enough pre-service training courses. We have heard about some teachers who moved from outside Madinah, having no idea about pioneer schools and are working there now. This situation will affect such schools negatively and take them backwards. In addition, the pioneer school teacher’s teaching load must be less than a teacher in other types of schools. The pioneer school teacher’s teaching load should be minimized to 12 hours instead of 24 hours a week in order to devote more time and encourage him to work harder to prepare better for his lesson presentations.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven elements in enhancing the effectiveness of your son’s school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: No doubt, it plays the main role. When the educational leadership is fully competent with and dedicated, he will do his best to make success. An educational leader cannot work individually on his own, but he is the starting point. However, there must a good support staff to assist him to implement policies and programmes on a day to day operation. School administration is the body and the soul. This is why an educational leader (the soul) should be carefully chosen and all staff working in the pioneer schools should be specially chosen. They should take certain exams and only distinguished teachers who can lead a team and have the potential to develop the educational process should be selected.

b) Staff:

Answer: A highly qualified, competent, dedicated and experience teaching staff is required especially in pioneer schools. For example, we see some teaching aids in the pioneer school, such as the smart boards, smart class, TVs, play stations, data shows, etc., that are not there in others. This is an excellent environment, in contrast to the prison-like one in regular schools. It helps the learning process better. Teacher-parent communication is very important, in order to be acquainted with what skills are required and what is to be done or mastered right at the beginning of the year. The teacher must be professional, respectful and enthusiastic in his job, be kind and love his students and not insult them or put them down.

c) Local community:

Answer: There is good communication. However, the nature of this stage does not require much reviewing or follow-up by parents, because students are mature enough and prefer some independence and self-dependence away from parents’ interference. He is capable of solving his own problems. However, there should be a parents’ council to meet once every term, with the purpose of increasing the school-parent communication, because the educational process is never fruitful unless an effective school-parents communication is established. Unfortunately, a lot of parents are so negative in respect of cooperation with the school. Few people ask about their children. This attitude with the school can be attributed to the parents’ poor knowledge about the school and their role in education.

d) School environment:

An advanced and progressive environment in keeping with modern technology, teaching methods, facilities and resources is a must. Everything in the school such as building facilities, resources (human and material), equipment services, landscape, safety, cleanliness, health and beauty are all integral parts of the environment that should make pioneer schools distinguished from other schools.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: No doubt, the courses studied at school play an important role. But before that, we should look at the qualified teacher who can teach such courses. Suppose the course is excellent but the teacher is not so interested or qualified, what will happen is inability to convey the course content to students because of the teacher’s inappropriate method. We do not know of any real difference in the curriculum between the pioneer schools and the ordinary schools in terms of content. However, quantitatively speaking, the pioneer school’s curriculum is smaller. This could be one reason why students excel the pioneer schools, since they feel psychologically comfortable and have wider opportunity to study having lesser number of courses – not more than seven.

f) School rating:

Answer: We feel it is very good, if not excellent, but can be improved in the future. Regular testing and examination systems are needed to ensure that teachers, students and parents know exactly how the school is really doing.

g) The educational management:

Answer: It has a big role embodied in choosing the headmaster and staff that have enough enthusiasm to implement the idea of a pioneer school. A second point is setting minimizing the teaching load standards. A third point is minimizing the class size, because when we talk about 48 or 55 students in a class, how can we imagine the teacher being effective and the level of students comprehension? In this school some of our sons are in a class that has 55 students with 45 minutes class period. It is extremely difficult to guarantee equal opportunity, in comparison with a small class size. However, the reason for these overcrowded classes is the pressure the educational management practices over the school headmaster in order to accept more and more students, though they already know the capacity of the school. We can say that the educational management is negative in some aspects and positive in some aspects.

Group 4 – Parents’ Focus Group

Q1. Why have you registered your son in this school?

Answer: The good reputation the school has got. In addition, some of us teach at this school, the fact that enables us to closely follow up our son’s academic progress. A third reason is the credit hours system applied at the school. It is our home school and easy to commute.

Q2. What do you think is the pioneer schools’ main role towards your son?

Answer: Using modern technological resources, the school embeds interest in and care about knowledge/education, developing love for science and knowledge within the students, training the students to use the different sources of data, and how to gather the information he is looking for. The school provides excellent educational outcomes.

Q3. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: The good academic programmes provided by the school, the strong administrative system followed, the good teacher-student relations, the wise school policy, the use of modern teaching technology, good school building, a variety of learning/educational sources, and a variety of teaching methods. The school building along with the equipment includes qualified teachers, reasonable class size, good administrative and teaching staff, good teaching methods, and a fair evaluation system.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven elements in enhancing the effectiveness of your son’s school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: Administration is the engine and core of how the school is run and managed in all aspects of education. It is key to everything because even with the best resources (human and material, financial, etc.) and facilities, you cannot achieve much without a good administration.

b) Staff:

Answer: To follow up the students’ academic progress, to be able to self develop, and to be highly professional and respectful in dealing with both students parents. Teachers should be exemplary role models.

c) Local community:

Answer: The community must know what is happening through the parents’ council in which information about the students’ academic progress is provided. Communication is also done through the SMS messages on the mobile telephones. The more the community knows what is happening, the more they can play a better role.

d) School environment:

Answer: Environment is comprehensive to mean modern school building and adequate facilities (classrooms, labs, sports hall, libraries, play and activities ground, etc.), resources (human and financial), safe, clean, healthy and attractive to encourage learning. The location is also important.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: Good curriculum adopted after careful study, planning and evaluation play a big role in school effectiveness. This is what we see in the present curriculum

f) School rating:

Answer: As parents, we do not know about the evaluation system except the results of it at the end of the term (the mark sheet). We hope that schools explain to us the way and techniques of such evaluation system and whether they are effective tools of evaluation.

g) The educational management:

Answer: To follow up all school matters, to financially and morally support the school, to encourage distinguished teachers and remove all obstacles and problems in the school. They should also rate the school's standing among other school to encourage and promote competition in achieving high standards in education.

Group 5 – Parents' Focus Group

Q1. Why have you registered your son in this school?

Answer: The school has a good reputation, the education system is distinguished, because it is a pioneer school and one of the best schools in Al Madinah Al Munawwarah. The school administration and staff are distinguished, and finally, because it adopts innovative and modern teaching methods.

Q2. What do you think is the pioneer schools' main role towards your son?

Answer: To embed self-confidence, leadership and love for school within the students, to interact with the community through the school message system. This is in fact what we hope all schools do, not only this school, and above all we want the best outcome for our children in all respects (academic, well-disciplined, respectful and productive children) to build the best country in the world.

Q3. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: School administration, teaching staff, equipment, curriculum, laboratories, visits, entertainment, scientific excursions, use of modern technology, ability for innovation, teaching methods, and clear policy. Applying special care for gifted students and accommodate disadvantaged/disabled students with great potentials.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven elements in enhancing the effectiveness of your son's school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: The principal or headmaster is the most important in school administration. He must first be carefully selected and then he must also carefully select both his support and teaching staff. His role is very big for efficient and good school operation.

b) Staff:

Answer: What we see is an active role by the teachers. They do their best to attain innovation reach a level of creativity. Thus, their role is vital in school effectiveness and in achieving the school goals.

c) Local community:

Answer: Community communication is necessary through all possible channels such as the internet, parents' conferences, telephones/mobile telephones, written letters, flyers and pamphlets conveyed via students. So there is need for good relation as each party complements the other. However, sometimes parents are blamed as they do not activate such relationship, being always busy at work, with family matters or social affairs and having no time to visit the school whose office hours coincide with his work time.

d) School environment:

Answer: The environment is like your home. If it is good, you will like it, and if it is bad, you will not and may what to even change it. Therefore, the pioneer school is not an ordinary school and must have the best environment in all respects to encourage students to come to school and learn.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: Curriculum is the most important element in educational development. It definitely contributes to a great extent in school effectiveness, especially when the curricula are adopted after a careful study. They should be void of any propaganda and indoctrinating material, but rich with analytical and scientific materials that encourage students' creativity.

f) School rating:

Answer: It is an excellent system we can trust, because it is based on trustworthiness, honesty and validity. However, we hope that parents are given a chance to view their sons' academic progress periodically or on monthly basis, through e-mail messages to the parents. We also hope that tests and home assignments are increased, because they are the best way to assess students' performance. All that we know is the result which is represented by our sons' monthly or term test results.

g) The educational management:

Answer: Support, orientation, and follow up. Schools must be given more authority and independence and managerial centralization should be decreased so that school administrative staff and students' creativity, talents and bright ideas are given chance to develop and flourish without undue interference.

Group 6 – Parents' Focus Group

Q1. Why have you registered your son in this school?

Answer: Distinguished school administration and staff; discipline and seriousness of work, the school's short distance to my home, high reputation, and an attempt to avail a better education for my son.

Q2. What do you think is the pioneer schools' main role towards your son?

Answer: Good orientation for the student, urging him to follow good behavior and discipline, provide the student with science and knowledge that benefits him and the community.

Q3. What are the factor/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: A good administrator who can deal with the staff, using modern teaching aids, adopting institutional work, clear vision and goals, clear plan, encouragement of cooperative participation, flexibility in dealing with changes, cooperation with all, and school environment. The school policy which adopts a balanced tendency, good staff quality, a comfortable school environment, disciplined attendance, and control of school departure time.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven elements in enhancing the effectiveness of your son's school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: The principal or headmaster is the most critical person in the school administration, then comes the support staff who are there to serve the teachers and students, including the public.

b) Staff:

Answer: Most of the teachers are good. They depend on student-student interaction/dialogue, which contributes to the school's effectiveness.

c) Local community:

Answer: Yes, there is community participation, but to a very limited extent. It only appears when the student is absent when then the parent is notified about it. We hope that some time is allotted to parents so that school-parent relationship is strengthened and parents are able to follow up their son's academic progress. Nowadays, people are very busy.

d) School environment:

Answer: Today environment is a big thing. The school has to provide the best environment conducive to learning, growth and development for all. It must be beautiful, clean, safe and healthy to attract students to come to school and be proud of their school.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: The modern curriculum is excellent, well-directed, well-printed, with a good scientific content. Generally speaking, it is based on students eliciting, a fact that makes its role so effective. Yes we trust it. Because it is based on scientific principles

f) School rating:

Answer: The school has a good rating and that is why we send our children there.

g) The educational management:

Answer: To provide what the school needs: staff and equipment, to supervise and follow up, and to support the school financially and morally.

Group 7 – Parents' Focus Group

Q1. Why have you registered your son in this school?

Answer: We have registered our son in this school not because we merely like pioneer schools, but because pioneer was the first reason. The second reason, is the credit hours (courses) system and its positive effect on the students, the exam system where the students have one exam every other day, and the duration and flexibility of the school day are examples of such good aspects that lead to much psychological comfort on behalf of the students with this system than with the other. The teachers' sophisticated treatment with their students, the follow-up system used, and the administration's taking care of the slightest matters. It is also close to home.

Q2. What do you think is the pioneer schools' main role towards your son?

Answer: The school has many responsibilities and roles for our children, but the first and foremost is to give them the best education with proper discipline to face the modern world with many challenges in order to succeed in life. All parents want the best for their children.

Q3. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: I am sorry to say that when a school has a high social class of students it is considered a pioneer school. Take this school's students for example, they are of the most sophisticated social class having high morals and degree of respect. Included are the physical appearance of the student, style of speech, cleanliness of classrooms, air-conditioners and the students' respect for their teachers. This school is different in its plan to prepare the student for the future in all aspects. For example, it prepares him for the university through instructing him on how to register and choose modules to study. It enhances his self confidence. If he is somewhere else, for example, he can be deviated to smoking or other bad things, especially because he is a teenager.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven elements in enhancing the effectiveness of your son's school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: The principal must take full responsibilities for all that is happening in the school because he is the head. Therefore, he must be most qualified, competent and experienced to run the school administration. He must seek mutual cooperation and consultation on all important matters of the school and education and not simply pass orders or issue threats. It is an *amana* (legal and moral obligation) for him.

b) Staff:

Answer: As parents, we feel that teachers are the most important staff members in the school because without highly qualified, competent and experienced teachers, our children will be neglected and not learn properly. Teachers too, like parents, have an *amana* (legal and moral obligations) towards the students' well-being.

c) Local community:

Answer: The most important local community are the parents who send their children to the school. The school must have the best relations and communications with them to know exactly what is happening to their children's future. The religious community, social and business communities must all be encouraged to play their roles, but today everybody is very busy.

d) School environment:

Answer: If the school is attractive, it will encourage students to come and they will take pride and do their best. But the school must also have all facilities, equipment and resources in order to be effective. Safety, discipline, cleanliness, health and an enjoyable atmosphere in a modern school building will produce great results.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: This is the backbone of any effective school. It must have diversity, flexibility, and modern with all facilities and resources to deliver the highest quality of education to our children. Today high technology in computer, IT, smart boards and smart classes are vital to effective teaching and learning.

f) School rating:

Answer: As for attendance/absence matter, a mobile message is sent to the parent whenever his son is absent. The student's progress can be known through the school's electronic web site. Monthly test papers and students' copy books can be shown by a visit to the school. So we feel school is trying to do its best; it is a very good school

g) The educational management:

Answer: The regional educational management is very important to ensure that all standards are fully met in all aspects of the operation of the school. But we do not really know if that is being done. The school should look into that and let us know. We do even know how some

things work in the school/educational system. The Ministry of Education should educate people about what is going on.

Group 8 – Parents’ Focus Group

Q1. Why have you registered your son in this school?

Answer: The distinguished administration, smart classes, excellent students quality, the gifted students care programme, cleanliness, equipment, rareness of behavioural and discipline problems, and the extensive learning sources. Despite all that we still need improvements in order to keep a level of excellence and develop to the best situation.

Q2. What do you think is the pioneer schools’ main role towards your son?

Answer: A pioneer school is not an ordinary school and must therefore be the best in all respects to produce the best graduates, useful to themselves, society and the nation. That’s we want for our children.

Q3. What are the factors/elements that make a pioneer school?

Answer: First, there shouldn’t be what they call a “headmaster/principal”. He should be an “educational leader”. Second, it should have a school council and a parents’ council which must take part in the school decisions. Furthermore, full authority should be given to the school in financial matters. The regional educational supervision should not supervise the pioneer schools since they are fully acquainted with their mission and responsibilities.

Q4. Show the role of the following seven elements in enhancing the effectiveness of your son’s school and making it a pioneer school:

a) School administration:

Answer: Starting with the principal, the staff must serve the needs of students, teachers and parents first. That’s their job.

b) Staff:

Answer: Teachers are the most important among staff members in any educational institution. We need the best qualified, competent, respectful, kind, dedicated and experienced teachers to teach our children, not only in pioneer schools but in all schools.

c) Local community:

Answer: The community is too wide to be all involved at one time. Parents come first, then the religious authorities, social organizations, civil institutions, the police, fire and health organizations and the business community – all must play a role.

d) School environment:

Answer: It plays a big role. Learning cannot be forced, so the environment should be developed to encourage students to do their best. Interesting activities will make learning and the school lovable, especially when the students know that his school is having some activities that are not held elsewhere. This attracts the students to their school, in addition to the benefits they gain from such activities.

e) School curriculum:

Answer: Without a proper curriculum there can be no progress in our children’s education. We need a modern curriculum with state of the art resources, teaching methods and teaching aids with international standards, otherwise we will be left behind. Also, activities add new and enjoyable experiences to students. An example is school visits to some factories and other institutions and important places of interests and educational benefits.

f) School rating:

Answer: It is a good school. There are periodical tests that motivate students to continually study if he is continually followed up and assessed on each subject. The results of these assessments are good, as far as we think. It is excellent and we hope your research will benefit it. Another merit in this school is the students’ consultation council established to get students to participate and be consulted about the school’s state of affairs. This increases students’ self confidence and esteem because they will feel they are valued.

g) The educational management:

Answer: This is the job of the Ministry of Education who should make sure that all schools, not only pioneer schools, are performing at the highest level and produce the highest results. They must solve the school’s problems and remove obstacles to make everyone happy.

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