Examining the Impact of School Inspection on Teaching and Learning; Dubai Private Schools as a Case Study

تأثير الرقابة المدرسية على التعليم والتعلم: المدارس الخاصة في دبي دراسة ميدانية

By

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Abstract in English

School inspection is one of the most challenging aspects in education; it represents an approach of accountability in teaching and learning. Moreover, school inspection provides policy and decision makers with accurate information about the current state of education in their respective institutions. The main purpose of this study is to examine and determine the impact of school inspection on teaching and learning in Dubai-based private schools, and to give some recommendations into how to conduct effective school inspection that would positively influence teaching and learning. The methodology that used here is largely qualitative, with some elements of a quantitative approach. Questionnaires, interviews, a focus discussion group and documentaries are the main research instruments of this study. This research included 37 participants; 2 inspectors, 4 head-teachers and 31 teachers, from 4 private schools, who follow different types of curricula, from all grades of performance according to inspection reports conducted in the 2014/2015 academic year.

The findings show that school inspection has a significant role in school improvement, especially in teaching and learning. Teachers acknowledge the feedback that inspectors give to them. However, school inspection also has a negative impact on teaching and learning; for instance, it forces some schools to show activities they have never done before. Moreover, the school inspection reports and recommendations, in some cases, are superficial and are not related to the school context; moreover, they often do not show teachers how they can respond to criticism in the reality of their teaching practice. Nevertheless, the relationship between inspectors and teachers is not that positive, especially in some subjects, such as Arabic language and Islamic Studies.

This piece of research suggests some areas for the betterment in school inspection, such as giving more importance for SSE School-Self evaluations, shortening the notice period, visiting schools at different times throughout the academic year, making such visits every three years, as well as ensuring that school inspectors have a high degree in education and in the subject they inspect. Nevertheless, it recommends establishing an independent school inspection system. On the other hand, this study suggests further research on the accountability of teaching and learning in Dubai in specific subjects, such as Arabic and Islamic studies, because reality shows that the recent intervention and policy have not been as fruitful as expected.

Keywords: teaching and learning, accountability, report, feedback, school inspection; school self-evaluation.

Abstract in the Arabic Language

تعتبرعملية الرقابة والتفتيش المدرسي واحدة من أصعب القضايا التربوية، انها تمثل جانب المحاسبة والمسؤولية في عملية التعليم والتعلم، كما أنها تمد صانعي السياسات والقرارات التربوية بالبيانات الدقيقة حول حالة التربية والتعليم في المؤسسات التربوية. يهدف هذا البحث إلى استكشاف مدى تأثير عمليات الرقابة والتفتيش المدرسي على عملية التعليم والتعلم في مدارس دبي الخاصة، كما ويهدف إلى تقديم بعض التوصيات والمقترحات حول كيفية القيام بعملية رقابة مدرسية ذات تأثير إيجابي على عملية التعليم والتعلم. للقيام بهذا البحث تم استخدام كل من طرق البحث النوعية والكمية، لقد تمت الاستعانة بالاستبيان المكتوب واسلوب المقابلة وكذلك تقنية مجموعة المناقشة المركزة، كما وتم استخدام المصادر والمراجع والبيانات المتوفرة في المكتبة. تضمنت هذه الدراسة اجراء بحث ميداني على مامجموعه 37 مشارك ومشاركة، منهم 31 معلم و4 مدراء مدارس ومفتشين تربويين إثنين. لقد تم اختيار هذه العينة من أربع مدارس خاصة في دبي تتبع لمناهج مختلفة ومن مسويات تقييم مختلفة على اساس آخر تقييم قامت به هيئة المعرفة والتنمية البشرية في دبي للعام الدراسي 2014\2015.

بينت نتائج البحث أن للرقابة والتفتيش المدرسي دور بارز في التطوير التربوي، وخاصة في جانب التعليم والتعلم. لقد أثنى المعلمون على التغذية الراجعة والنصائح التي يقدمها المفتشون التربويون لهم. لكن وبالجانب المقابل هناك العديد من النقاط التي تعتبر بها عملية الرقابة والتفتيش المدرسية ذات تأثير سلبي على عملية التعليم والتعلم، منها: أنها تجعل بعض المدارس تعرض أعمال وأنشطة لا تقوم بها في الأحوال العادية، إضافة إلى أنه وفي بعض الأحيان تكون تقارير الرقابة سطحية ولا تمت إلى سياق المدرسة، ناهيك عن أن المفتشين التربويين لا يقدمون في بعض الأحيان للمعلمين إجابات مناسبة ومنسجمة مع الانتقادات التي قدموها هم أثناء التفتيش. كما وأن العلاقة مابين المفتشين والمعلمين ليست جيدة كما ينبغي، وخاصة في بعض المواد الدراسية كمادتي اللغة العربية والتربية الاسلامية.

تأتي هذه الدراسة لتقدم بعض التوصيات والمقترحات لتحسين عملية الرقابة والتفتيش المدرسي، من خلال التنبيه على أهمية إعطاء دور فاعل أكثر لجانب التقييم الذاتي الذي يجب ان تقوم به المدرسة، وكذلك من خلال التشديد على أهمية أن تكون مدة الاشعار بموعد الرقابة قصيرة لا تسمح بتحضير أعمال استعراضية، وكذلك من خلال التركيز على أن عملية الرقابة لابد من أن تتم في أوقات مختلفة من العام الدراسي بدلاً من أن تجري في نفس الوقت من كل عام، وكذلك لابد من تجري عملية الرقابة المدرسية مرة كل سنتين بالنسبة للمدارس المميزة لتسمح لها بتقديم مالديها من ابداعات وابتكارات. كما وتوصي هذه الدراسة على أهمية أن يكون المفتشون التربويون من ذوي الكفاءات العليا في المادة الدراسية ليتمكنوا من تقديم النصائح القيمة، وآخيرا تقترح هذه الدراسة أن يتم استحداث مؤسسة مستقلة لاجراء عمليات الرقابة المدرسية. يقدم الباحث في النهاية توصية لدراسات وبحوث مستقبلية حول أثر التقييم الذاتي للمدارس على تطوير التعليم والتعلم، وكذلك دراسة لأهم الجوانب الاشكالية التي تعيق تقدم عملية التعليم والتعلم في مادتي اللغة العربية والتربية الاسلامية.

كلمات مفتاحية: التعليم والتعلم، المحاسبة، تقرير، تغذية راجعة،الرقابة المدرسية، التقييم الذاتي للمدرسة.

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List of tables

List of figures

List of abbreviations

DSIB – Dubai School Inspection Board

EFA – Education for All

HMCI – Her Majesty Chief Inspector

HMI – Her Majesty's Inspectorate

KHDA – Knowledge and Human Development Authority

MENA – Middle East and North Africa

NCLB – No Child Lift Behind

NBE – National Board of Education

OFSTED – Office for Standards in Education

PISA – The Program for International Student Assessment
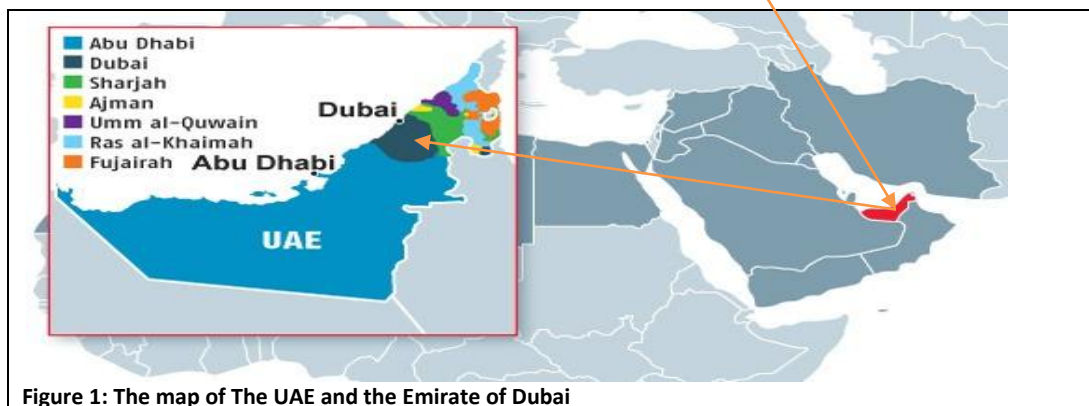
SSE – School Self Evaluation

TIMMS – Trends in International Mathematics and Science

UAE – United Arab Emirates

UK – United Kingdom

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

USA – United States of America

Figure 1: The map of The UAE and the Emirate of Dubai

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

This chapter covers the background of school inspection in general and the experiences of UAE and Dubai in school inspection. Furthermore, this chapter provides the rationale of the study, the problem statement and purpose of the study. Moreover, it covers other areas, such as objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study.

1.1 Background to School Inspection

The concept of accountability in education is not new. School inspection and supervision has been well-known since the early days of public education at the end of 18th century. School inspection was introduced in France by Napoleon's regime (Grauwe, 2007). Ehren and Honingh (2011) state that in 1801 the Dutch Inspectorate of Education was launched, and remains one of the oldest Inspectorates in Europe. Then, in the United Kingdom (UK), in 1839, the first inspection was established by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) (Wilcox, 2000; Macbeath, 2006).

Accountability in education varies; in addition to school inspection as a means of accountability, market choice and the school voucher system also act as accountability mechanisms (Lee & Wong, 2002). The idea behind accountability in education is to enhance the teacher's commitment to provide the pupils with better education (Neave, 1987), and to inform citizens and parents as taxpayers about the quality of education provided (Neave, 1987; Ehren & Visscher, 2006; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007).

For this purpose, and to meet every student's learning needs, the United States of America (USA) has ascertained the concept of accountability in education with the "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB) policy (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). In the Middle East, many countries carried out school inspection services following independence (Grauwe, 2007). However, in many African countries, such as Tanzania, school inspection services were started in 1903 when the country was under German colonial rule (Haule, 2012).

The system of inspection has witnessed continuous improvement and reforms at all levels, from the organization to the goals and purpose, as well as processes. Thus, in the UK, as one of the most developed educational systems and one of the first countries to run inspection services (since 1839 by HMI), the country has replaced the HMI with the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) in 1990. OFSTED has added more factors to the previous HMI system in order to improve the quality of educational inspection. These factors are school self-evaluation (SSE) and school action plans as a consequence of an inspection (Rosenthal, 2004).

1.2 Why do we need school inspection?

School inspection plays a significant role in ensuring the quality of education, as it is almost the sole method by which governments can ensure and evaluate the quality of education. Moreover, governments are unable to implement the national policies and goals without school inspection. Nevertheless, by running school inspection, governments can meet the challenges of globalization by creating a competitive workforce (Wilcox, 2000; Neave, 1987).

Ehren and Honingh (2012) summarized that the purpose of school inspection is to guarantee that schools meet the legal requirements of the state to ensure the legitimacy of the received financial support. Secondly, school inspection has to encourage schools to provide students with a satisfactory level of education, and to increase their capability for student achievement.

1.3 Previous studies on the impact of school inspection

Many studies have been conducted to measure the influence of school inspection on education and school improvement, particularly, teaching and learning. Most of these studies have been done in developed countries, such as the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden. However, fewer studies have been carried out in other regions of the world, for instance, Turkey, Pakistan and Tanzania.

The literature does not show any academic studies on Dubai inspection, although local and international media has reported on Dubai inspection. Local websites and newspapers have published the rating of school inspection alongside articles and discussions about successful stories and experiences. Moreover, many international channels acknowledged the practice of Dubai inspection as a remarkable reform in the region (Cuadra &Thacker, 2014; Swan, 2014; Lewis, 2010; Sankar, 2009).

Some studies on school inspection have claimed that it has no direct impact on teaching and learning, other studies have argued that school inspection has a negative impact on students' performance in exams (Rosenthal, 2004). Furthermore, other studies claimed that the impact of school inspection on teaching and learning is limited (Earley, 1998; Ehren & Visscher, 2006). Other studies demonstrated that inspection has no positive impact on classroom practice (Webb, Vulliamy, Hakkinen & Hamalainen, 1998). A study conducted in Turkey found that school inspection has no positive impact on teachers' emotions. Furthermore, teachers presume that inspectors are fault-hunters, accusatory and coercive (Tunç, İnandı & Gündüz, 2015).

On the other hand, some studies found that there is clear evidence about the impact of inspection on the quality of poorly-performing schools (Matthews and Sammons, 2004). Some studies contended that school inspections apply needless extra work on teachers, which affect their professional development (Webb, Vulliamy, Hakkinen & Hamalainen, 1998). Other studies claimed that school inspections do no more than bring about pressure and fear amongst teachers.

Moreover, inspections divert teachers' focus from their core role of teaching, in order to collect and present superficial work to impress the inspector or their supervisors (Webb, Vulliamy, Hakkinen & Hamalainen, 1998).

Based on the above, this study addresses the gap of a lack of studies about school inspection in the Arab world, particularly in one of the leading Arab countries, namely the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Thus, this research intends to discover the impact of school inspection on teaching and learning in Dubai private schools; and it designed to give enlightenment for better inspection.

1.4 The Education System in the UAE

On the 2nd of December 1971, the world witnessed the birth of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), following the initiative of His Highness Sheikh Zayed Al Nahyan the Ruler of Abu Dhabi, who became the UAE's first President. The UAE comprises the federation of seven Emirates on the Arabian Gulf, namely: Abu Dhabi (the Capital City), Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah and Fujairah. In 2004, HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan succeeded his late father, HH Sheikh Zayed Al Nahyan, as the President of the UAE, and as the Ruler of Abu Dhabi. The UAE's constitution grants power to the central government and to the local governments of each of the seven Emirates (UAE Year Book, 2013).

According to the World Bank, the population of the UAE was 9.086 million in 2014 (World Bank, 2015). In 2008 the total population of the country was estimated to be 4.7 million with 3.8 million being expatriates and 892,000 citizens (UAE Year Book, 2009). Abu Dhabi and Dubai are the most populated Emirates in the UAE; in Abu Dhabi, the population in 2013 was estimated to be 2.45 million (with citizens making up only 495,368 and expatriates 1,957,728) (UAE Year Book, 2009). Whereas in Dubai in 2013 the population was about 2,214,000 (https://www.dsc.gov.ae). In Dubai, today, the private schools include 88% of total students (Cuadra & Thacker, 2014).

Education is a priority for the Dubai government. The education sector in the UAE demonstrates an extreme tolerance towards the diversified population (UAE Year Book, 2009). The educational system in Dubai has witnessed a significant evolution since the declaration of the UAE in 1971. The Dubai education system aims to raise the quality of education provided to meet the international standards. Authority to oversee schools in Dubai has been devolved. The Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) was formed in 2007 by Law No. (30) of 2006, as a public authority with legal, financial and administrative independency. The KHDA is in charge of quality for private schools, and has the power to inspect schools (UAE Year Book, 2013; Cuadra & Thacker, 2014).

According to the KHDA, the total number of private schools in Dubai has increased from 143 in 2008-2009 to 169 private schools in 2014-2015. During this period, the total number of students

enrolled in Dubai's private schools has grown 44%, from 177,587 to 255,208 (KHDA, 2015). Private schools in Dubai provide education to both Emiratis and non-Emiratis in 15 different curricula; these include, UK, US, UAE, Indian, International Baccalaureate and others (Cuadra & Thacker, 2014). In 2015, among the 169 private schools, 52 schools follow the British curriculum and 31 schools follow the American curriculum, followed by 25 schools that adopt the Indian curriculum (KHDA, 2015).

Dubai education has shown a significant outcome worldwide. For example, as a member of *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS), Dubai students learning, in 2011, was at the top of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) participating countries. Whereas, internationally, Dubai students' learning is still below average, which was the same result for The Program for International Student Assessment PISA (Cuadra & Thacker, 2014). These results can be improved by focusing on the quality of education, filling the gap and the variations between public and private schools and across private schools who offer different curricula (Cuadra & Thacker, 2014)

In the Dubai Strategic Plan 2015, KHDA is driven to improve quality of education by Ensuring that Dubai students have access to high quality schools and universities, which provide them with the knowledge and skills required for active contribution in the economy (Cuadra & Thacker, 2014).

The KHDA runs an annual external inspection to measure and evaluate the growth and quality of education in the private schools. The Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) was established in 2007 to monitor schools in Dubai under the shadow of the KHDA (Cuadra & Thacker, 2014). The main roles of DSIB are: to position education quality standards and to set indicators for measuring them; adopt a valuable system to inspect school performance using standards and published reports; adopt the needed measures and mechanisms to help improve low performing schools; carry out and enhance research and studies on education quality; and so on (Cuadra & Thacker, 2014).

The DSIB requests schools to undertake an internal self-evaluation as the starting point of the school inspection process. The scale of school performance during inspection comes in four grades: outstanding; good; acceptable and unsatisfactory (UAE Year Book, 2013; KHDA, 2015).

The Dubai inspection system was developed after consulting with regional and international experts in school inspection systems, such as the UK, Scotland, the Netherlands and New Zealand (Cuadra & Thacker, 2014). Both school inspection and self-evaluation methods play significant roles to improve the outcomes for all pupils and shed light on seven key areas: 1) students' attainment, progress and learning skills; 2) students' personal and social development; 3) teaching and assessment; 4) the curriculum and the educational needs of students; 5) student protection and support; 6) the leadership and management of the school; 7) the school's overall performance (KHDA, 2015)

The organization of school inspections in Dubai is undertaken by the DSIB, which is responsible for inspecting schools once every year by an experienced, expert inspection team put together by the DSIB from a regional and international pool (Cuadra & Thacker, 2014).

Inspection visits are done annually in Dubai. The reason for this is that the KHDA wants to track progress in all private schools (Cuadra & Thacker, 2014). The KHDA informs schools about visits three weeks in advance and to return a self-evaluation report provided by the DSIB. This self-evaluation is done alongside information gathered by surveys from teachers and parents. During the visit to schools, inspectors interview teachers and leaders and listen to students, and they conduct classroom observation and evaluate pupils' work. Then, data to be collected from the sources mentioned above is triangulated and analysed by the inspection team (Cuadra & Thacker, 2014).

As one of the main inspection instruments, reports play a core role by informing schools about the expectations of parents and school communities, and policy and decision makers. These reports are very important for parents in choosing quality education for their children. Furthermore, they play a significant role in improving and monitoring school performance (Cuadra & Thacker, 2014).

Educational decision and policy makers conceive that school inspection is one of the most significant instruments used to ensure that schools are accountable for the services provided through many elements. For instance, accessible data would promote better competition between schools; drive schools to improve service delivery and provision; and improve educational outcomes. In addition, linking school fee increases to performance, and promoting the opportunity for parents to respond to surveys conducted by the KHDA as part of the inspection process would advance student performance and school effectiveness (Cuadra & Thacker, 2014).

In order to achieve its goals, and to improve the inspection system, the KHDA and the DSIB in association with a group of school principals established the *What Works* platform in September 2012. The *What Works* framework contains a series of events where educators and professionals from private schools are invited to share their best practices. *What Works* is fully sponsored by the KHDA and run by schools themselves as they shift from competition to collaboration (Cuadra & Thacker, 2014).

What Works discusses themes proposed by the inspection process as significant topics and subjects. This event starts with a generic event then a discussion about leadership takes place, which is followed by a one-day event about different important themes, such as school governance, special needs education, teaching science, mathematics, Arabic and Islamic education, etc. In these events, teachers and principals from each participant school are invited to present their excellent performance in a specific area (Cuadra & Thacker, 2014)

The positive contribution of education on society and economic outcomes encourages many countries to provide adequate education for each student, and many other countries, such as the USA and UK, to focus on school improvement and education quality. This also encouraged UNESCO to announce that Education For All (EFA) is an imperative (UNESCO, 2004; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). Due to this fact, the need for an external evaluation can improve teacher accountability for monitoring and providing quality education to the students. Therefore, school inspection has been seen as the main tool to serve this purpose (MacBeath, 2006). Moreover, school inspection aids the government in knowing how financial resources can best improve education productivity (Levin, 1989). Furthermore, school inspection provides information and data that make parents, taxpayers, policy and decision-makers see the money invested in education (Neave, 1987; Levin 1991).

1.5 Purpose of the Study

Teaching and learning is one of the core roles of schools. Teachers and school leaders are the main players providing students with adequate levels of education, and school inspection is a device to ensure the quality of education provided in schools. Thus, this study aims to discover the impact of school inspection on teaching and learning in Dubai's private schools. Furthermore, it seeks to identify how teachers and school leaders perceive school inspection in order to provide recommendations on improving school inspection for a positive impact on teaching and learning.

1.6 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

- Examine the impact of school inspections on teaching and learning in Dubai private schools.
- Investigate the views of school teachers and head-teachers on school inspection process.
- Explore and recommend how school inspection should be carried out in order to have a positive impact on teaching and learning in Dubai's private schools.

1.7 Research Questions

This study is conducted to provide answers to three primary questions and a number of sub-questions.

1- **What impact does school inspection have on teaching and learning in Dubai's private schools?**

2- **What are the views of teachers and head-teachers on school inspection in improving teaching and learning in Dubai's private schools?**

a. Do school teachers and head-teachers accept inspection standards and criteria as fair and realistic?
b. Do school teachers and head-teachers see reports and recommendations realistic to school contexts?
c. Do school teachers and head-teachers see inspectors gather the right information?
d. How do school teachers and head-teachers react to school inspections?
e. Are there school inspections effects as perceived by school teachers and leaders?
f. Do school teachers and head-teachers accept the consequences of inspectors' judgment?
g. Do school teachers and head-teachers consider school inspections as a tool for improving teaching practice?

3- How should school inspection be organized in order to have a positive impact on teaching and learning?

a. Do school teachers and head-teachers believe inspections should take place once a year?
b. Do school teachers and head-teachers see the DSIB as an independent organization?

1.8 Significance, Scope and Structure of the Study

The study will provide empirical evidence on the impact of school inspections on teaching and learning in Dubai's private schools, and how teachers and school leaders perceive school inspections. This is expected to be the first academic research exploring school inspections in Dubai, and to be a main source informing policy and decision makers on what improvement is needed for inspections to have a positive impact on teaching and learning. Moreover, this study contributes to the literature as a reference on accountability in education, teaching and learning in Dubai.

This piece of research focuses on private schools in Dubai. The primary data collection was conducted within Dubai's private school sector. The secondary data was collected from different sources. The key subjects of this study are teachers and school leaders as well as school inspectors.

This study is structured in five chapters. The first acts as the introduction of this research to give a background on school inspection, the rationale for the study and the purpose of the study. The objectives of the study and research questions are discussed. Moreover, in this chapter the experience of Dubai's school inspection and scope of the study are provided. The second chapter is devoted to present the literature review and the conceptual framework for school inspection.

Chapter three is focused on research methodology, sampling, instruments, school selection and participants. The methods engaged in this study are: questionnaires, semi-structured interview guide, focus discussion group and documentary review. Moreover, ethical issues, reliability and validity are provided alongside data analysis and delimitations and limitations. Chapter four is focused on research findings and results. Whereas, in chapter five a summary of findings, recommendations, further studies, and conclusions are provided.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a general idea of accountability in education, and illustrates school inspection in general by shedding light on theories underlying school inspection. Moreover, other types of accountability in education would be presented in this chapter; namely: the market choice, voucher system and decentralization in education. Nevertheless, this chapter demonstrates the experience of school inspection in other countries, including the UK, Sweden and Finland. Furthermore, this chapter explains why Dubai needs a school inspection system. Finally, this chapter shows the role of inspection for school improvement and teaching and learning betterment.

2.1 Accountability in education and Underlying Theories of School Inspection

The term of phrase 'public accountability for quality education services' is well-known in the literature, with early studies conducted thirty years ago (Kogan, 1986).

There are three known theories and theoretical frameworks that are underlying school inspection are: Scientific Management theory, Human Relations theory and Critical theory. Shedding light on these theories is so significant and would be useful in helping to understand how school inspection would have a positively influences teaching and learning.

2.1.1 Scientific Management theory

The scientific management theory was created by Fredrick Winston Taylor in the 1880s. The main idea of this theory is how to organize the work professionally and to design a mechanism that improves labour productivity and saves time and monetary resources (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007; Hoyle & Wallace, 2005). However, the scientific theory is criticized for treating workers as machines and killing their creativity (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). Taylor claims that workers need to feel compliance and need to follow the instructions of their superiors (Welsh & McGinn, 1999; Hoyle & Wallace, 2005).

Taylor proposes four approaches to advance worker productivity: breaking down the required job into standardized units; selecting employees carefully and enhance their professional training; using incentives to motivate workers according to their adherence to the work; controlling the work process and linking the wages to the performance. In the USA, this theory was implemented in education in the 1920s, and it was linked with school inspections in the 1980s (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007; Hoyce & Wallace, 2005).

In the UK, the theory was made clear in education, and it has led the government to focus on developing the science of job. Thus, more research on expansion of leadership and management

took place in Her Majesty's Inspection (HMI) and then in OFSTED (Hoyle & Wallace, 2005; Ehren & Visscher, 2006; Ehren & Visscher, 2008).

2.1.2 Human Relations Theory

The theory of Human Relations emerged in the 1930s by Elton Mayo, who claims that meeting the social needs of the employees will increase their productivity (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). Thus, employees should be active members in decision-making formula (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). Human Relations theory depicts that individuals will be self-directed and more committed to work, if their social needs are met. Furthermore, they can be creative when they are motivated (Druker, 1991). Hence, workers' needs for recognition are more important in determining their productivity (Druker, 1991; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007).

Druker (1991) assumes that leaders can improve an employee's productivity and quality by considering the employee's knowledge and experience of the work as the starting point.

In education, teachers are the best placed to know their strengths and weaknesses. Thus, they should be treated as humans rather than as packages of energy. Therefore, school inspectors are expected to support teachers as facilitators and improve their job satisfaction (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) illustrate that school inspection policy-making for better education quality needs to involve teachers in the evaluation process and create a feeling that teachers are significant and useful in improving schools.

2.1.3 Critical Theory

The father of Critical Theory was Habermas and his friends who were socio-political analysts in Frankfurt school (Tripp, 1992; Maclsaac, 1996). This theory is derived from the philosophical approach that endeavours to identify and challenge the idea of the established knowledge (Syque, 2007). Bryman conceives that this established knowledge has a philosophical background based on epistemological and ontological orientations. The former can be argued as the way of building the adequate knowledge (2004).

The epistemological approach that is used to study the social phenomena is positivism, which considers people to be value-free (Bryman, 2004). However, Critical Theory opposes positivism and accepts utilizing different interpretative categories for different social phenomenon, and it gives different theoretical views to illustrate how to solve problems (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

Whereas, the ontological approach shows whether truth is external (objectivism) or internal (constructivism) to human beings (Bryman, 2004). Since objectivism considers an organization as a solid object with parameters and regulation and sets mechanisms to get work done, Critical Theory encourages social scientists to look at human beings as unique with unique feelings and control of their lives (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Bryman, 2004; Cohen, 2007). Therefore, Critical

Theory influences human beings' self-awareness, recognition of problems and consciousness (Tripp, 1992; Maclsaac, 1992).

In education and in school inspection, teachers are humans with total freedom and awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, thus the role of inspectors is to ease the process of teaching and learning, to encourage the teachers to reflect on their performance, and to provide teachers with solutions when facing any difficulty in teaching and learning (Maclsaac, 1996; Tripp, 1992; Druker, 1991).

This relationship between teachers and inspectors creates a common ground for betterment of the students and developing their achievements (Maclsaac, 1996; Leew, 2002). Critical Theory in school inspection context aims at respecting teachers' values, and not to impose solutions. In doing so, the creativity of teachers and student achievement will be enhanced (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

2.2 Forms of Accountability in Education

In addition to school inspections, there are different forms of accountability. This piece of research sheds light on three approaches of accountability in education: market choice, the voucher system and decentralization.

2.2.1 The Market Choice

This approach of accountability is well-known in the USA, UK, Australia and New Zealand. Market Choice expects schools to be responsible for their customers, and it aims to give parents and students greater attention regarding their own choice of the quality of education (Levin, 1991; Friedman, 2005). In the UK, school inspection reports are published and parents have an access to understand and choose the education of their kids (Lee, 1997; Ehren & Visscher, 2008). These published reports create a market choice for parents and students and encourage schools to provide better academic progress in order to attract students, otherwise, schools will be closed (Contreras, 2001; Friedman, 2005; Sammons, 2006).

The advantages of the Market Choice approach vary. First of all, it is expected to lead to a competition between schools, which is proposed to improve students' academic outcomes. Second of all, parents who are satisfied with the education provided are likely to support the school. Thirdly, students in their favourite schools are likely to be more effective. Nevertheless, teachers in the appropriate work setting will be committed to their work effectively (Leithwood, 2001). Whereas, the Market Choice approach has a negative impact on poor students, because they cannot choose the type of education unlike affluent students (Leithwood, 2001; Ball, 2004).

2.2.2 School Voucher System

The School Voucher approach involves an amount of money paid to parents by the government as a financial aid to support their children's educations. The School Voucher approach is similar to the Market Choice approach, wherein parents can choose the education type for their children (i.e., either public or private). However, in the School Voucher system, the same amount of money to every student is offered by the government (Learmonth, 2000, Friedman, 2005).

The profounder of this approach was the American economist Friedman Milton. The School Voucher System is well-known in the USA, UK, Sweden, Chile and Colombia (Contreras, 2002; Lee & Wong, 2002; Gustafsson, 2014). The idea of the School Voucher system is to improve the quality of education by creating competition between schools (Learmonth, 2000, Friedman, 2005). As a consequence, good schools attract more students while low quality schools have to reform or close (Contreras, 2002; Friedman, 2005; Sammons, 2006).

However, the Voucher System affects poor students and families when this amount of money does not cover the school fees; in this case, these students are forced to stay or choose schools at the same range of cost rather than choosing quality of education (Lee & Wong, 2002).

2.2.3 Decentralisation of Education

Decentralization is the process of distributing the role and responsibilities of the central authority to the local communities (Bush, 2003:12; Lauglo, 1995:5). In the education context, in order to implement decentralization, school inspection as an external evaluation is complemented by internal evaluation, which is School Self-Evaluation (SSE) (MacBeath, 2006). This decentralization is well-known in many countries, such as Finland and Sweden (Gustafsson, 2014).

2.3 School Inspection in Other Countries

School inspection is a well-known instrument for evaluating quality of education in schools worldwide. This external evaluation system has attracted education policy and decision-makers in education in many countries, including the UK, USA, France, Scotland, Germany, Sweden, Turkey, Pakistan, Nigeria, Tanzania, the UAE and many others. Each of these countries has its own experience and version of how to inspect schools. So, due to a lack of time and resources, it is hard for this study to cover the experience of all countries in school inspection. Thus, this research will cover only three countries: England and Wales, Finland and Sweden. These three countries have been chosen as they are amongst the leading countries in education in the developed world, and have a lot of research in the literature, particularly in the English language. Exploring the experiences of other countries is very relevant when comparing their inspection systems to that of Dubai. Furthermore, it sheds light on the versions of school inspection

worldwide, allows learning from their experiences, and to identify best practices, which can be applied in other jurisdictions.

2.3.1 England and Wales

School inspection services were introduced in education in England and Wales when OFSTED was established by the Act of 1992 (Learmonth, 2000; Webb & Vulliamy, 1996). However, OFSTED is not the starting point of school inspection in the country. School inspection in the UK actually started in 1839, which was known as Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) (Wilcox, 2000; Macbeath, 2006). OFSTED is an independent non-ministerial organization, it functions under the direction of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI), which has a significant role in controlling school inspection services (Lee, 1997).

In 1991, the Parents' Charter acknowledged the role of OFSTED and the importance of school inspection published reports. Using these up-to-date reports, parents can choose the quality of education for their children (Learmonth, 2000; Webb & Vulliamy, 1996).

The main features of the school inspection system in the UK are many. These include, inspection team visits schools once every four years (Lee, 1997); scheduled classroom observations; the findings of visits are published and publicly accessible via the Internet (Lee, 1997; Ehren & Visscher, 2008). Published reports of school inspection findings give a precise description of schools, and helps in identifying poorly-performing schools, failing schools, that require special measures and those with serious weaknesses, which leads to a plan for improvement (Sammons, 2006).

Schools are obliged to set an action plan according to the previous inspection findings and recommendations that were made to improve teaching and learning (Ehren & Visscher, 2008). OFSTED prepares an action plan for inspected schools to address the main points recommended in the inspection report. However, weak and poor schools would face close follow-up visits and post-inspection intervention. As a result of this special intervention, if the school does not show the required improvement within a particular period of time, it has to be closed (Ehren, *et al.,* 2005; Sammons, 2006).

To achieve the best improvement for schools, OFSTED has distributed the school inspection manual among schools to be the main guide for school self-evaluation (Wilcox, 2000). The OFSTED school inspection system contributed positively to education quality and school performance. Such contributions are very obvious in English language and mathematics performance (Wilcox, 2000; Tymms, Coe & Merrell, 2005; Sammons, 2006). Moreover, OFSTED has a positive impact in improving students' achievements, provision of teaching and learning resources and staff development (Sammons, 2006). However, OFSTED has failed to make underperforming schools high achievers (Thrupp, 1998; Hargreaves, 1995; Wilcox, 2000; Earley, 1998).

2.3.2 Finland

The Finnish method of school quality insurance is different from that of England and Wales. Unlike lots of countries who are attracted by school inspection services, Finland recently implemented its own approach. However, Finland has introduced its school inspection system, and transferred its annual school inspection system to a province-based system. This system was discontinued in 1991 and replaced by the new teacher system (Webb, *et al.,* 1998). As a result of the high level of the Finnish teacher education system teachers' aptitudes and capabilities are trusted by the educational authorities.

Nevertheless, the Finnish educational system has abandoned school visits and there is no more inspection guidance (Webb, *et al.*, 1998; Wilcox, 2000). This has resulted in creating trusted powerful teachers and more support has been given to regional and local leaders and authorities (Gaynor, 1998; Richardson, 2013). The Finnish experience relies on leaders and policy makers who have established a consistent educational system that ensures public trust (Richardson, 2013).

The most remarkable issue in the Finnish experience is the thin curriculum, which offers guidance to teachers to build upon it (Richardson, 2013). According to Richardson (2013), Finland aims to deliver responsibility from the top down to the school and classroom level. Moreover, there is no official programme for novice teachers, which means that teachers will engage with no supervisors, inspectors, tutors or mentors (Richardson, 2013). To be a teacher in Finland is not an easy task, as it is in other countries. Richardson claims that "To teach in Finland now requires a five-year master's degree in education. Admission to a teacher preparation program includes a national entrance exam and a personal interview" (2013).

However, the Finnish National Board of Education (NBE) is facing difficulties in introducing accountability in school monitoring processes. Moreover, there is a need in the country to assure that the provided financial resources to schools are spent as planned (Webb, et al., 1998; MacBeath, 2006; Learmonth, 2000). The Finnish NBE, however, has been looking for ways to run external evaluation methods to assess the impact of the reforms (Gaynor, 1998; Webb, et al., 1998). The main purpose of this required external evaluation is to provide schools with a benchmark to compare and evaluate their own performance against (Webb, et al., 1998).

2.3.3 Sweden

The Swedish National Agency for Education was recognized in 1989 at a time when the school system was centralized and regulated, and there was no need for school inspections as a regular external evaluation system. However, in 1990 the government distributed its educational responsibilities to the municipalities and the board of independent schools as a shift towards decentralization (Gustafsson & Myrberg, 2011; Gustafsson, 2014; Lindgren, 2014).

The main objective of the Swedish school inspection system is to guarantee school improvement by ensuring and enhancing some key elements, including school competitions; parents' free choice over the education provided to their children; school self-evaluation (Gustafsson & Myrberg, 2011; Lindgren, 2014). In 1998, the National Agency for Education produced a board for quality control, which started its school inspection processes in 2003. In this system, schools were to be inspected over a six-year period (Gustafsson & Myrberg, 2011; Gustafsson, 2014; Lindgren, 2014).

In 2008, the government conducted educational reform, which included the establishment of the Schools Inspectorate in parallel with the National Agency for Education. This reform gave the National Agency for Education the responsibility for the national goals, curricula, data collection, schools support and national evaluation. While the School Inspectorate is in charge of school inspection, school approvals and complaints, this organization is a governmental body under the Ministry of Education and research (Gustafsson & Myrberg, 2011; Gustafsson, 2014; Lindgren, 2014).

The School Inspectorate has the right to withdraw approvals and public funding if the school does not meet rules and regulations. The latest reform in Sweden in 2011 gives the School Inspectorate the right to lift sanctions against municipal schools (Gustafsson & Myrberg, 2011; Gustafsson, 2014).

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate depends on: regular supervision for all schools; thematic quality evaluations in particular school subjects or any other functions; investigation of complaints from students or parents; and scrutiny of new school applications (Gustafsson & Myrberg, 2011; Gustafsson, 2014; Lindgren, 2014)

In 2010, the Swedish School Inspectorate conducted a regular inspection process according to a pre-arranged schedule over a four-and-a-half-year period. Two different inspections methods were recognized; the "basic inspection" focuses on schools with available knowledge; and the "widened inspection" is done for schools with uncertainties.

Within the regular supervision all schools of the municipality are inspected. Interviews with principals, leaders, teachers, students, nurses and politicians all take place. In addition, observation of school environments, classrooms and activities that students are involved in are also conducted. Moreover, how closely school activities are in accordance to the regulations is also observed (Gustafsson & Myrberg, 2011; Gustafsson, 2014).

2.4 School Inspection Conceptual Framework for this study

The school inspection tool is a purposeful process that includes different elements; these elements cooperate with each other to form the whole process. Thus, it is highly significant to focus on the role of each of these parts, and to know how they are related and affect each other.

In this section, an adequate identification will be given to the System Thinking Approach, as it is the appropriate method to obtaining a framework that helps to identify the factors that may lead to a school inspection that results in a positive impact on teaching and learning. Then, the main features of the conceptual framework of school inspections will be presented; namely: the school inspection supporting inputs as the external and internal factors; school inspection enabling conditions; and the expected outcomes.

2.4.1 The System Thinking Approach

The System Thinking approach is a very important tool to provide this study with a framework of the factors that help school inspections in improving teaching and learning. The main idea of this approach is to identify the key elements that combine and work with each other to construct the whole process. If any of these elements is not functioning as required, then it will affect the process as a whole. Thus, an action taken effectively in this regard will enhance the performance of this element, and consequently will improve the whole system (Richmond, 1993: Cummings & Lunsford, 1996; Sweeney & Sterman, 2000; Masinde, 2006).

Education is a complex system that has lots of processes and players. These players have a crucial role as integral parts of the system, which produce soft processes for achieving educational goals and objectives (Leew, 2002; Maclsaac, 1996). The main players in education are many, including, government bodies, administrators, teachers, parents and students. So, teachers, as one category of these players, are not the sole players responsible for success or failure (Cummings & Lunsford, 1996:78). Nevertheless, the more understanding and interaction among these players and the best use of resources the more improvement in teachers' performance and students' achievements (Cummings & Lunsford, 1996).

2.4.2 School Inspection Supporting Inputs

The supporting inputs of school inspection regarding school visits can help inspectors to contribute towards positive teaching and learning. These supporting inputs are both external and internal factors.

External factors that aid school inspectors for the betterment of teaching and learning are varied. These may include transportation, accommodation, office equipment, financial support and salaries. When these factors are available they facilitate inspectors' work and performance to inspect the type of education provided in schools. Perhaps most importantly, school inspection performance depends on the financial support devoted to the inspectorate (Earley, 1998). Moreover, availability of external factors improves the inspectors' job satisfaction and enhance their confidence regarding the advice they provide to teachers (Earley, 1998; Ehren & Visscher, 2006).

Similar to external factors, internal factors greatly contribute to the improvement of teaching and learning. These factors include: school inspector academic qualification, proficiency skills of subject inspected, communication fashion with teachers, feedback given to teachers, quality of provided report school performance (Wilcox, 2000; Ehren & Visscher, 2006; Chapman, 2001b).

According to Leeuw (2002), positive relationship and friendly dialogue between the inspectors and teachers enhance the acceptance of teachers for the recommendations and advice given from inspectors (Ehren & Visscher, 2008). Hargreaves argues that school improvement depends on the attitude of school inspectors during the school inspection process (1995). Gaynor claims that when school inspectors lack resources they may not be committed towards their work (1998).

Beside external and internal factors, enabling good conditions play a significant role in improving teaching and learning through school inspection. Moreover, it is more significant to enhance teachers' willingness and commitment toward recommendations and mutual understanding with inspectors, rather than school administrative rules (Wilcox, 2000; Chapman, 2001b). Nevertheless, school inspectors are expected to ensure that classroom observation is run in a manner that best demonstrates teachers' work (Chapman, 2001a; Black & William, 1998; Mathew & Smith, 1995). Wilcox (2000) recommends that school inspectors should be experts and have high academic qualification and knowledge in the subject area.

It is essential, when external and internal factors are meted, and positive conditions are applied, with friendly relationships between teachers and school inspectors then, the expected results of school inspection in improving teaching and learning will be achieved.

2.5 The Importance of School Inspection in Dubai

As noted earlier in this study, the UAE in general, and Dubai in particular, needs school inspections to improve the quality of education provided in domestic schools. In the age of globalization, education systems need to apply sophisticated reforms to meet the contemporary challenges and to provide children with the highly demanding skills of the 21st century knowledge-based economy (Levin, 1991; Downey, Frase & Petters, 1994; Daun & Siminou, 2005; Woolhall & Beeby, 2004; Ball, 2004; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007).

As an Arab and Muslim country, the UAE's constitution, federal government and all local governments enhance the presence of Islam and Arabic language in the culture of the society. However, it is evident that cosmopolitanism is also a remarkable characteristic of UAE society. The diversity in its private schools give the best illustration of cosmopolitanism in the country. In each of Dubai's private schools, one can find children of different national and religious backgrounds.

Moreover, the UAE is one of the richest countries in the world, and it implements many good practices similar to those in the developed countries, such as e-government, economy, education,

use of technology, logistics and the infrastructure required for the operation of society and enterprise.

In the education context, in many countries as well as the UAE, school inspections are an important instrument in ensuring school accountability (Richards, 2001; Hargreaves, 1995; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). Moreover, school inspections provide the government with a factual report of how financial resources devoted to education contribute to producing the desired outcomes (Levin, 1989; 1991; Neave, 1987; Learmonth, 2000).

Teaching and learning are key elements that a school inspection evaluates. The strategies used in teaching and learning play a great role to form and sharpen the skills that students need to effectively meet the challenges of the contemporary world. Thus, the role of educational strategy in the UAE in general, and in Dubai particularly, is expected to improve the quality of teaching and learning by providing, a clear achievable strategic plan, smart rules and regulations, guidance, resources, research centres, benchmarks, and sophisticated school accountability instruments.

As presented earlier in this study, one of the research questions is to observe whether school inspections in Dubai have a positive impact on teaching and learning or not. To serve this purpose, this section is devoted to present why school inspections are important worldwide, and in Dubai particularly.

It is claimed that school inspections are intended to ensure the quality of education provided (Nkinyangi, 2006). Moreover, it is argued that ensuring quality of education provided by school inspections influences parents to empower the education of their children as a worthy investment (UNESCO, 2004). The heart of the education system in the UAE and worldwide is to enhance the achievement of students (Matete, 2009).

School inspection, as an external evaluation, that hold schools accountable for their work, are expected to play a significant role in focusing the governments' attention to the educational performance (Wilcox, 2000; Ehren & Visscher, 2006). However, school inspectors worldwide, and in Dubai particularly, have no direct control and influence over the whole process of school development (Wilcox, 2000; Ehren & Visscher, 2006). Nevertheless, the key influence of school inspectors is presented in their published school reports, which provide feedback and suggested recommendations to improve teaching and learning to stakeholders, schools and the government (Ehren & Visscher, 2006).

Taking the experience of the UK in school inspection into consideration, some studies acknowledged that there is clear evidence regarding the positive impact of school inspections in improving the quality of under-performing schools, and school leaders and teachers believe that school inspection recommendations support them in implementing reforms required to improve

school performance (Matthew & Smith, 1995; Davis & White, 2001; Rosenthal, 2004; Wilcox, 2000; Learmonth, 2000).

However, other studies illustrate the negative impacts of school inspections, whether intended or not. School inspections lead schools to apply more pressure and workload on teachers and they affect innovation by window-dressing to please the inspectors (Webb & Vulliamy, 1996; Webb, *et al.*, 1998; Ehren & Visscher, 2006; Nkinyangi, 2006). Moreover, school inspections often result in teachers preparing their lessons and behaving differently during inspections (Hargreaves, 1995).

Therefore, the question is how can the KHDA inspectors persuade teachers that they are friends and co-workers not judges and fault hunters?

Studies have shown that one of the roles of school inspections is to hold those who are responsible for education accountable (Neave, 1987; Davis & White, 2001; Levin, 1989; Richards, 2001). Neave (1987) argues that school inspections should ensure that schools provide students with the required education to make them active and positive actors in society. Education offers great benefit for children, parents and society (Michelle, 2007). Thus, the role of school inspection is to ensure that teachers follow a proper curriculum and guidelines.

Nkinyangi (2006) argues that school inspection is expected to ensure that schools and teachers are committed to meeting the educational benchmarks that are set by the government (Michelle, 2007). Moreover, school inspection is to ascertain that teachers do not limit their creativity and innovation at the expense of the accomplishment of predetermined learning objectives. Nevertheless, school inspections need to enhance teachers' contributions to students' understandings from reading materials rather than to accomplish the pre-set objectives in textbooks.

Educational systems can be evaluated according to the objectives they deliver. UNESCO (2004) articulates that education aims to provide two sorts of objective: cognitive skills that improve children's productivity in society, and behavioural values (Dimmock and Walker, 2005). School inspectors are expected to monitor whether education is delivered to the students in accordance with the goals and objectives.

In the 21st century, students should be prepared in such a way that allows them to reach their fullest potential (Morphet, Johns & Reller, 1974; UNESCO, 2004). Cummings and Lunsford argue that the goal of education is to accept all pupils, and a school's role is to help students learn and achieve their maximum potential (1996:78). According to UNESCO, the purpose of education is to help students to learn how to solve problems, to enhance team work and the ability to live together (2004). Moreover, education should help students learn how to learn (Lomax, 1996; Coombe, *et al.*, 2006). School inspection should ensure that schools and teachers

use modern effective learning strategies to meet the skills required in the 21st century, including critical thinking and the application of new knowledge in real life (Garrison, 1997).

2.6 School Inspection in General

The word inspection has a long history, and started to find its way into education in the 1800s. School inspection as a general term has been defined in the dictionary as "an official process of checking that things are in the correct condition or that people are doing what they should" (Macmillan, n.d.). It is also defined as "the act of inspecting or viewing, especially carefully or critically" (The Free On-line Dictionary of Computing, n.d.). Crerar (2007) identifies inspection as a "periodic, targeted scrutiny of specific services, to check whether they are meeting national and local performance standards, legislative and professional requirements, and the needs of service users".

In the education context, school inspection and school supervision often overlap and are defined in a similar way as they both describe the external evaluation of the school setting (Haule, 2012; Ehren, *et al*., 2005; Grauwe, 2001; Obiweluozor, *et al*., 2013). School inspection is defined as "the process of assessing the quality and performance of the institutional services, programmers or projects by those (inspectors) who are not directly involved in them and who are usually specially appointed to fulfil these responsibilities (Wilcox, 2000: p.15). According to Wilcox (2000: p.15) school inspection contains visits to monitor schools and it is facilitated by a team of inspectors.

According to Richards, school inspection is "the major way in which many governments call schools to account for the way they conduct the enterprise of education and an important way in which they hold them accountable for outcomes" (Richards, 2001). Moreover, it is the process of monitoring school performance by gathering reliable evidence from different resources and to give a grade and recommendations at the end of the process (Richards, 2001). MacBeath (2006: p.38) identifies school inspectors as "the guardians of educational standards" (Haule, 2012).

In summary, school inspection is an organized external evaluation of the school context. It is run by a team of expert critical *friends* through conducting a visit to the school site to observe its performance according to evidence measured against pre-determined criteria. This is conducted in order to provide the education players with an account about the quality of education provided to the students, so that these players in all levels can plan accordingly.

2.7 School Inspection Roles and Functions

The roles and functions of school inspection are various and are summarized below:

Classroom observation is one of the main instruments that inspectors use to evaluate whether schools meet their targets in raising student outcomes (Matthew & Smith, 1995). According to

Learmonth (2000) "we have the responsibility to provide all children with the best possible education and school inspection is an important source of information about how successfully this aim is being achieved".

Black and William (1998) see the classroom as a black box that must be explored in order to know how education is delivered in schools. This is done by observing the teaching and learning methods practiced in the classroom; discovering students' attainment and progress; and giving a real picture of the quality of education provided (Chapman, 2001; Ehren & Visscher, 2006 & 2008; Wilcox, 2000; Matthew & Smith, 1995; Black, & William, 1998; Obiweluozor, *et al*., 2013).

School inspectors play a great role by supporting teachers and providing them with the methods and skills they need to improve their teaching practice (Ehren & Visscher, 2006 & 2008). Thus, school inspectors need to be competent and experienced in all curriculum issues. However, Nolan and Hoover (2011) argue in their study that some inspectors tend to accentuate the role of accountability at the expense of the role of helping teachers to develop their professional performance.

Teaching and learning can be improved when inspectors act as critical friends, give teachers constructive feedback and listen to them to understand how teachers view the challenges that face them while teaching (Ehren & Visscher (2006:53). According to Chapman (2001b), the acceptance of school inspectors' recommendations depends on whether these recommendations are reliable or not. Moreover, Earley (1998) illustrates that teachers perceive inspectors positively when they perform professionally and when they understand school context.

Nevertheless, school inspectors' recommendations would be highly appreciated by teachers and school leaders when the inspectors present the causes and remedies of the unsatisfactory performance (Ehren, *et al.,* 2005). These productive and useful recommendations given by inspectors are the value-added sort of support as it's called by researchers such as Earley (1998), MacBeath and Martimore (2001) and Wilcox (2005). However, the question is to what extent KHDA school inspectors provide the productive advices and recommendations.

School inspectors' feedback plays a significant role in distinguishing the impact of school inspection on teaching and learning (Ehren, *et al.,* 2005; Wilcox, 2000). There are many pre-requisites for feedback to be considered as productive; in particular, it should be relevant and understandable. Gray and Wilcox, (1995 cited in Ehren, *et al.,* 2005, p. 70) stated that the "feedback from school inspectors has a larger chance of being used when teachers are involved in recommendations and when support is given to school". Moreover, Chapman (2001b) identifies three conditions for feedback to impact positively on teaching and learning development: identifies areas for improvement; effective communication style; teachers' willingness to adopt the suggestions and implement the recommendations.

However, in order for schools to achieve improvement in teaching and learning through feedback given by inspections need to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses by having their own instruments to evaluate their school performance. This internal evaluation is what scholars call School Self-Evaluation (Ehren, *et al.,* 2005; MacBeath and Martimore, 2001; Webb, *et al*., 1998).

2.8 The Main Features of School Inspection

This section will explore the goals and usefulness of school inspections, school inspections criteria and standards/guidelines, school inspections processes and observations and school inspectorate independence.

School inspection in the UK, through OFSTED, aims to achieve four main goals: raising students' achievements in exams; improving the quality of education provided in schools, enhancing the good use of the financial support provided to schools; and developing the ethos in the school (OFSTED, 1995 in Rosenthal, 2004; Ehren & Visscher, 2008).

School inspection, as mentioned earlier, is an external evaluation, that includes criteria, standards and guidelines. In order to conduct a successful inspection process, it is crucial to have criteria that is clear for both inspector and the inspected players (Fidler, 2002). In the UK, OFSTED has announced its criteria and standards and guidelines on its website and in the framework for school inspection (OFSTED, 2010). When school inspection criteria are not clear nor known, a school inspection will be perceived negatively by teachers and school leaders as it affects the required improvement of teaching and learning.

In Dubai, inspection by the KHDA involves criteria and standards guidelines that are presented in its yearly inspection handbook.

2.9 School Inspection Processes and Observations

School inspection as a whole process has three stages: pre-inspection visit, during inspection visit and post-inspection visit. These stages contribute to an effective school inspection (Chapman, 2001 and 2002; Ehren, Leeuw, *et al*., 2005; Ehren & Visscher, 2008).

In the pre-inspection visit stage, school inspectors have many steps to do in order to be prepared for a school visit and observation.

Before conducting a school inspection visit, the inspectorate sends a letter to schools to inform them about the visit date and the required documents to be prepared for the inspection (Ehren, Leeuw, *et al*., 2005). In the UK, schools know about the inspection time up to a year in advance (Rosenthal, 2004). However, in Dubai, schools receive a letter from the KHDA a couple of weeks in advance to inform them about the visit, detailing a specific date and other details and

requirements, such as the handbook, questionnaire and school self-evaluation. However, Dubai private schools which have experienced a school inspection can estimate the approximate time for the following year's inspection, as the schedule of these visits occur almost in the same time of year. This means, if a school was inspected in the first term of the academic year, this school will have the next inspection in the same term of the following academic year (KHDA, 2014).

However, prior notice has been criticized as it leads teachers and school leaders to prepare manipulated documents and rehearse their lessons in order to impress inspectors and to higher their school's grade (Chapman, 2001; De Wolf and Janssens; 2007; Ehren and Visscher, 2006).

School inspection as the instrument used to complement School Self-Evaluation both advances school improvement and enhances the importance of accountability (Matthews & Smith, 1995; Learmonth, 2000). Hargreaves (1995) claims that the combination of both a school inspection and School Self-Evaluation serves the purpose in promoting school improvement (Learmonth, 2000; Wilcox, 2000). According to MacBeath (2006) in order to have better schools, there is a need for external school inspections that provide the criteria that help to make a comparison with School Self-Evaluation.

During a school inspection visit in most countries that practice school inspections, and Dubai in the UAE as one of them, the inspectors conduct a sample of lesson observations, interview teachers, school leaders, principals, directors, students and parents. In doing so, school inspectors obtain a reliable picture of school performance against standards of the inspectorate as is articulated in the handbook of school inspection (Ehren, Leeuw, *et al*., 2005; OFSTED, 2010; MoECS, 2012; Cuadra & Thacker, 2014).

In the Dubai context, school inspectors collect data according to seven key aspects of school performance: students' attainment and progress; pupils' personal and social development; teaching and assessment; curriculum and meeting the educational needs; students' protection and support students; leadership and management; and school overall performance (KHDA, 2014).

During the post-inspection visit stage and at the end of the school visit, the inspector team meets together in the school to discuss their findings and the results with the school board. Then, the inspectors provide the school with oral feedback and a report of the school's overall grade and grades of the inspected factors. In England and other European countries, as well as in Dubai, school inspection reports are published and made available and accessible on organisation websites (Rosenthal, 2004; OFSTED, 2010; MoECS, 2012; Cuadra & Thacker, 2014).

School inspection is an organized process, which deals with different players with different interests and backgrounds. This leads school inspection to have its ethos and etiquettes that disaggregates the nature of the relationship and communication styles between school inspectors and school stakeholders, particularly teachers and school leaders (Ehren, Leeuw, *et al*., 2005;

Ehren & Visscher, 2006; Ehren and Visscher, 2008; Ehren and Swanborn, 2012; Case, Case, *et al*., 2000; Rosenthal, 2004).

In order to achieve a positive impact, a school inspection authority has to create a healthy environment and open interaction with principals and school leaders. Moreover, Ehren and Visscher (2006) claim that a mutual respect and a constructive conversation between inspectors and teachers and school leaders make the school keen to act on the recommendations suggested by the inspection team.

There are different types of school inspectorates worldwide. The first type is a governmental department, which is mostly practiced in developing countries, such as in Hong Kong, Tanzania and the UAE (Wong and Li, 2010; Cuadra & Thacker, 2014). The second type is practiced in some other countries as free organizations under the ministries, such as OFSTED in the UK and the inspectorate of the Netherlands (Case, Case, *et al*., 2000; Rosenthal, 2004; OFSTED, 2010; MoECS, 2012). However, the third type of school inspectorate includes fully registered hired organizations, which are well-known in some countries, such as the USA and the UK, and which are hired to carry out school inspections (Independent Schools Inspectorate, 2012; OFSTED, 2010; Wong & Li, 2010).

School inspection effectiveness is affected by independence in one way or another, and teachers and school leaders trust it; it is also associated with the independence of the inspectorate. In Dubai, the KHDA represents the government of Dubai and it is responsible for running school inspection processes in the private sector. Moreover, the KHDA works to maintain the interests of the government, which may not be linear with the interest of the private schools, which follow international curricula.

Schools may differ from each other according to many aspects. These include private or governmental, funding and facilities availability, curriculum, student social class, the language of teaching against a student's mother language, national or international curriculum, class size, religious or non-religious schools. That is why Grauwe (2007) argues that school inspection methodologies and criteria should be suitable for the school context.

2.10 School Inspection Report

In Dubai, at the end of any school inspection visit, the team of inspectors sum up their findings and recommendations about the school's performance in a briefing report. This report will be delivered to the school board orally at the end of their visit to the school, including the school overall grade with the grades of key areas of school performance. Later on, within a couple of weeks, these reports are published in more detail and are open to schools and the public either in a print copy or via the KHDA website. School inspection reports summarize school performance into seven areas: students' attainment and progress; pupils' personal and social development;

teaching and assessment; curriculum and meeting the educational needs; students' protection and support students; leadership and management; and school overall performance (KHDA, 2015).

However, the DSIB focuses only on five school topics: Islamic Education, Arabic language, English language, Mathematics and Science. School inspection reports neglect any mention of other topics, which may lead the students to disvalue the importance of these subjects in human life, and may also affect teaching and learning in these topics due to the lack of motivation among teachers and students (KHDA, 2015; KHDA, 2014).

The school inspection team announces the school grade after analysing the data collected during the visit. The school inspection overall grade is calculated as the total grades of school performance in the key areas (students' attainment and progress; pupils' personal and social development; teaching and assessment; curriculum and meeting educational needs; students' protection and supporting students; leadership and management) (KHDA, 2015).

The DSIB, like many other inspectorates worldwide such as OFSTED in the UK, has an overall school inspection overall grade system, which has four categories: outstanding, good, acceptable and unsatisfactory. Schools, according to their report grade have the permission of the KHDA to raise tuition fees by a specific percentage.

2.11 School Inspection Reactions and Effects

The nature of the relationships and communication styles from inspectors towards teachers and school leaders influence the acceptance of the feedback given to schools from inspectors (Rosenthal, 2004; Ehren & Visscher, 2006). School inspection feedbacks are very significant in improving school performance, and for more betterment, school leaders are expected to carry out an action plan to implement school inspection recommendations with the required resources (Matthews & Sammons, 2004 in Ehren & Visscher, 2008). In the UK, teachers and school principals perceive OFSTED school inspection as an essential instrument of accountability (Rosenthal, 2004).

Chapman (2001) claims that as a result of OFSTED school inspection, a small percentage of teachers started to change their teaching and learning strategies to develop their professional performance. However, when the school inspections process does not run effectively then it is simply a waste of time and public resources. Therefore, it is essential that communication, feedback, follow-up on recommendations and assessing inspections delivery must be truly efficient and effective.

School inspection recommendations have implications that may result in them being rejected by schools for many reasons. These may include that they work in theory rather in practice; not linear with school contexts; require extra resources; consume time and money; generic; and repetitive from school to school.

School inspections aim to improve education quality. There are three different ways to improve school performance through inspection, namely: improvement of student performance, strategic thinking to improve school policies and classroom performance and capacity building, which continuously improve schools by enhancing all players (Ehren and Visscher, 2006 citing Gray in Visscher, 2002, p. 62).

The intended effects of school inspections aim to improve school performance and achieve a high quality of education, which is defined as the added value of student achievement (Ehren and Honingh, 2012; Ehren, *et al*., 2005). De Wolf and Janssens (2007) sum up school inspection effects as to ensure the quality level of education; compliance with school regulations; and to inspire the overall quality of school improvements (Ehren, *et al*., 2005; MacNab, 2004 in De Wolf and Janssens, 2007). Chapman (2002) finds that school teachers think that their experiences and interactions with school inspection processes lead to a positive impact on developing professional performance. Chapman (2002) advocates that some teachers and school leaders believe that school inspections have a positive impact on teachers' classroom performance, particularly teaching and learning strategies and provide them with the skills they need (Tefera, 2010; De Wolf & Janssens, 2007; Chapman, 2002, 2001; Ouston, *et al*., 1997).

However, inspections have unintended effects. De Wolf and Janssens (2007) argue that there are four unintended effects:

1) Window dressing: which leads to an artificial appearance, and includes false documents, cheating pupils' tests, excluding weak students from exams and getting weak teachers off to prevent their lessons from being observed during inspections (De Wolf & Janssens, 2007; Ehren and Visscher, 2006; Chapman, 2002, 2001; Brimblecombe & Ormston, 1995).

2) Unintended strategic behaviour: when school inspections procedures concentrate on data and documents prepared by teachers, such as scheme of works, lesson plans and syllabi. By doing so, inspections make teachers teach solely for test and inspections (De Wolf & Janssens, 2007; Ehren and Visscher, 2006; Chapman, 2002, 2001; Brimblecombe & Ormston, 1995).

3) Occurrence of stress: teachers and school leaders experience stress and apprehensiveness during school inspections (De Wolf & Janssens, 2007; Ehren and Visscher, 2006; Chapman, 2002, 2001; Brimblecombe & Ormston, 1995).

4) Market forces in education: this happens when schools face the dilemma of teachers and school leaders who shift from poorly-performing schools to schools with better inspection reports.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3. Introduction

This chapter covers the research design and methodology used in this study, the selection of the study site, and the sampling of schools and participants. Moreover, it gives the reason for choosing the area of study, sampling of participants, and the selection of schools as well as research participants. Furthermore, it presents the data collection methods and instruments, and research procedures, including data validation, reliability of the instruments for data collection, cleaning, coding and entry, data analysis plan, consideration of ethical issues, delimitation of the study, and finally the limitations and implications of the study.

3.1. Research methodology

This study combines both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. "The mixed methods approach has emerged as a "'third paradigm' for social research" (Denscombe, 2008, P. 270-283). The qualitative method is the appropriate approach to exploring the views of teachers, school leaders and inspectors with regard to the contribution of school inspection in teaching and learning. Furthermore, the qualitative approach is key in distinguishing between individual perceptions and a complete explanation of the targeted phenomena.

As an exploratory approach, qualitative research enables the researcher to have an open minded view, as it can be more convincing than statistics alone (Patton, 2002). According to Denscombe (2008), the mixed methodology approach is very beneficial for many reasons. For instance, it improves the accuracy of data; creates a complete picture by combining data from complementary sources; compensates specific strengths and weaknesses of particular methods; developing the analysis of the findings using contrasting data.

However, the qualitative approach can normally only be applied with a few participants, which prevent the findings from being representative of a larger population. In order to avoid these weaknesses data collection was triangulated, that is, different data collection approaches are employed to ensure the quality of the findings. To serve this purpose, data would be collected from different informants at different levels in the school inspection process. For example, teachers, head-teachers and school inspectors would be approached. Furthermore, the research methods include questionnaires, interviews, a focus discussion group and a documentary review.

On the other hand, the quantitative approach was employed in this study to collect data through questionnaires from teachers, school principals and school inspectors. These instruments of collecting data through a focus discussion group, interviews and questionnaires were the primary data collection methods of this study. In order to collect the secondary data, the researcher gathered the information from different documents and sources available in libraries and on the internet with respect to the available reports and accounts of the KHDA in various newspapers and websites, particularly the KHDA's official website.

However, it is good to mention that there is no national examination in Dubai for private schools to measure and compare the results of students among private schools to observe the impact of school inspections on student performance. Furthermore, the only available data in this regard is the participation of the students of the private schools in international examinations, such as PISA and MENA (Cuadra & Thacker, 2014).

3.2. Selection of Study Site, Sampling of Schools and Participants

This study has been conducted in the private schools of Dubai. These schools follow different curriculums. Mainly, the UAE ministerial curriculum, British, American, Indian curricula are followed, however, many others are also practiced. All these private schools are under the supervision of the DSIB, which is a part of the KHDA

This study was expected to be carried out in four private schools in Dubai, which follow different curricula and are from different ranking grades of the KHDA inspection report in 2014-2015. These schools have been selected on this basis to make it more representative of the different curriculums and illustrate poor and rich schools. The researcher was supported from the university by addressing a letter of support to these schools and to the KHDA to provide the researcher with the required data and facilitate conducting the research in these schools.

Private school teachers and principals were the primary target participants in this study, for they are the key players in the school inspection process and are responsible for the curriculum implementation. This study also targeted school inspectors for they have a leading significant role in assuring the quality of education in schools. Thus, the researcher hopes that these participants would provide the study with real voice and rich experience of how they perceive the contribution of school inspection to the betterment of teaching and learning.

3.3. Data Collection Methods and Instrumentations

As a result of the use of a mixed research methodology, a triangulation of the data was considered to ascertain the authenticity and validity of the collected data. Thus, four key instruments are used in this study; questionnaires, focus discussion group, semi-structured interviews, and documentary reviews (Appendices A-C).

Interview Guide: This research instrument, as one of the qualitative means, is very significant in this study for many reasons; it allows the interviewer to ask the interviewee more probing questions; and it facilitates interaction between both of them (Fontana & Frey, 1994);

The interview guide enables the researcher to understand the interviewees by entering their world as human beings (Bryman, 2004); it gets the best from the interviewees, as there are individual differences and perspectives since the participants are human, and they have their own experiences; the researcher targeted head-teachers and school inspectors with this instrument.

Questionnaires: Questionnaires, as an instrument of the quantitative methodology, play a significant role in the mixed research method, along with other qualitative instruments as a triangulation of data. This instrument is characterized as a self-completion form to collect data. Moreover, when using questionnaires in research the researcher assures that the participants present their opinions freely, and it saves lots of time for the researcher and the participants. It also gives freedom to the respondents to answer frankly without any fear. However, questionnaires have been criticized as some participants lack the motivation to complete them and they are bored and give superficial responses (Tuckman & Harper, 2012; Phellas, Bloch & Seale, 2011).

Questionnaires in this study target teachers and head-teachers to explore their perceptions about the contribution of school inspection on teaching and learning and what improvement they think that school inspection should implement (Tuckman & Harper, 2012; Phellas & Bloch, Seale, 2011)

The questionnaires contain two sections. The first section consists of general and personal information about the participants. Whereas, the second section consists of questions serving the purpose of the study, that give answers about the impact of school inspection on teaching and learning as it is perceived by teachers and head-teachers. The majority of the questions in these questionnaires were closed ended and employed a Likert scale (Likert, 1932). A scale from 1 to 4 was preferred rather than 1 to 5 to encourage the participants to have a choice and not to be passive participants. The researcher used number 1 for strongly disagree and 4 for strongly agree.

Focus discussion group: One of the qualitative instruments used in this study is the focus discussion group. This instrument is useful to collect data from participants who have a common background and experience regarding the case in hand. This technique has been conducted according to a predetermined interview guide (McNamara, 2006). Moreover, the focus discussion group is similar to interviews as it engages face-to-face interaction. However, in this instrument, a group of teachers are interviewed at the same time (McNamara, 2006; Fontana & Frey, 1994).

In the focus discussion group, five teachers from the same school were interviewed at the same time as a group. This discussion group interview lasted for one hour after school time in one of the observed schools. The five participants in this technique included five teachers, four of whom are subject leaders. All the members of this group have good experience with school inspection for three years at least. The discussion and interaction was beneficial, productive and reshaped the questionnaires and the questions of the interviews.

However, the researcher faced two shortcomings of the focus discussion group. First of all, some members tended to dominate the discussion (McNamara, 2006). Furthermore, some members took the conversation off. In order to overcome these weaknesses, the researcher arranged a list of key questions to start the discussion.

Documentary Review: Beside primary data, which was collected using questionnaires, interviews and a focus discussion group, secondary data was collected by documentary review. The main sources of documentary review collection include; KHDA and UAE official reports and documents; the school inspection literature; books and journals; and newspapers. The importance of written data is that they provide stable historical enlightenments and they are repeatedly scrutinized (Denscombe, 1998; Hodder, 1994).

Data collected by written sources are very beneficial, often more so than verbal data, due to ease of access and being less time and resource consuming (Hodder, 1994). However, written documents as secondary data can be criticized as they might be old and from different backgrounds (Brock-Utne, 2006).

3.4. Research Procedures

The researcher started to conduct this study by reading about the literature from some books and journal articles available in the library of the British University in Dubai, and available reports *and documents from the KHDA website.

After these readings, the researcher organized initiated questionnaires for teachers and head-teachers, and interview guides for head-teachers and school inspectors (Appendices A-C).

Then, the researcher conducted the focus discussion group and explored the questionnaires and interview guides with the group in order to allow the researcher to reshape and rebuild the questions in a better way. Later on, data collected through questionnaires to extract the perceptions of teachers and school principals. These questionnaires were conducted by the Survey Monkey website. This resulted in respondents not facing difficulties to access the questionnaires.

The researcher arranged an appointment with school principals, either by phone or email, to obtain permission to involve the school in the study. After doing so, the researcher paid a visit to the school to interview the head-teacher and to conduct the questionnaires.

Meanwhile, many visits were paid to the KHDA campus to ask for support to encourage schools to participate in the study and to allow the researcher to interview two school inspectors.

Validity and reliability are two significant issues in research methodology. On one hand, the validation of a study is a term that tackles the issue of whether the study is relevant and measures the issue that it claims to assess (Cohen, Manion & Keith, 2005). In qualitative research the validity of the instruments can be measured in different ways, such as, honesty and the depth and richness of the data collected (Cohen, Manion & Keith 2005).

To ascertain the validity of this study, the researcher had the support and aid of seven teachers and school leaders, one school inspector and the research supervisor. Accordingly,

questionnaires and interview guides were defined and reorganized to assure their relevance before applying them in the study.

On the other hand, reliability deals with the issue of consistency, a pre-requisite for validity in research methodology in both quantitative and qualitative research (Brock-Utne 1996). Consistency was assured by piloting the instruments of the study among the above mentioned seven teachers, school leaders, one school inspector and the research supervisor before implementing them in the research. These respective people have good backgrounds in teaching and learning at different levels of education, and they have experience in the Dubai education context. As a result of this help, the researcher has ensured a good level of consistency and reorganized the data in a way that serve the objectives of the study.

The process of ensuring validity and reliability of this study helped the researcher to recognize that the majority of the participants will not be willing to answer extensive questions, and some of them may struggle to comprehend academic language, as many of them are not English native speakers. Thus, the questionnaires and interview guides were modified to have fewer questions and to be more understandable for non-native English speakers.

The data collection process took three months. Access to questionnaires from the Monkey Survey website was available to the participants to complete their answers. Monkey Survey was beneficial in conducting the questionnaires in an appropriate template for data entry and later on for data analysis. In order to clean the data, some open ended questions that returned irrelevant answers were deleted.

As this study employed a mixed research methodology, data were mainly collected by questionnaires and interviews. For data collected from questionnaires, the researcher used codes to the terms and individuals of respective participants, whether they were names of individuals or schools, and data were analysed using the Survey Monkey website tools. These included, statistical package for social sciences, which were supportive to the statistics frequency and percentage.

Whereas, for data collected from interviews and focus discussion group were summarized and put in tables (Chapman, 2002). Then the data were analysed and organized according to the research objectives to present the data as the voices of the participants to support the findings of the quantitative instruments (Chapman, 2001).

3.5. Ethical Considerations

During the stage of preparation for this study as social research, ethical issues were considered as crucial concerns for the researcher (Bryman, 2004; Cozby, 2007). Before and during conducting the study, the researcher ensured that the research operated appropriately. First of all, a letter of support and permission from the British University in Dubai was provided to both the KHDA

and school principals. Then, the researcher tried to obtain a letter of support from the KHDA to introduce the researcher to the schools and to encourage them to participate in the study.

According to Fontana and Frey (1994), agreement with the participants on ethical issues was obtained to ensure that they participated willingly; for instance, names of schools and individuals were undisclosed, and in some cases interview.

Nevertheless, the researcher explained the purpose and objectives of the study prior to the involvement of the participants in the questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were sent by email to the participants and provided be the email address and phone number of the researcher to ascertain that the participants were free to answer when and how they preferred without any pressure. Furthermore, the interviews were conducted at a time and place of the interviewee's choice.

Letters (A, B, C, D) were given to the participating school head teachers, numerical tags (1 and 2) were given to the school inspectors instead of their names to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

3.6. Delimitation of the Study

This study was confined to private schools in the Emirate of Dubai. Few private schools were involved, leaving aside other private schools in Dubai. Furthermore, public schools were not part of the study. Thus, the findings of this research would be affected in that they may not represent all private or public schools in Dubai and in the UAE at large. Nonetheless, this piece of research concentrates on the influence of school inspections on teaching and learning apart from its impact on other aspects of school improvement.

3.7. Limitation and Implications of the Study

The implications of the study were comprised of by many issues. First this study was conducted over only two months, which was a short timeframe. Secondly, the researcher had to attend some schools several times, and resend invitations and the questionnaires many times. Some respondents were busy and had no time to participate effectively, while others were not aware of the importance of the research, which affected the provision of meaningful data.

Chapter Four: Findings & Discussion

4. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research and data analysis guided by the research objectives of the study; namely; to what extent do school inspections impact teaching and learning; to what extent do teachers and head teachers perceive school inspectors as supportive and critical friends; to what extent are school inspections organized so as to impact teaching and learning positively? In line with these objectives, the research questions are:

1. What is the impact of school inspection on teaching and learning in Dubai's private schools?

2. How do teachers and head teachers perceive school inspections in line with their teaching and learning in Dubai's private schools?

3. Are school inspections organized so as to impact teaching and learning positively?

The population of the study: The population of this study included 37 participants: 31 teachers, four head-teachers, and two school inspectors. In addition to participating in the questionnaires, school head-teachers and directors in all four schools were engaged in the interviews. Moreover, five teachers were involved in a focus discussion group (Table 4.1).

	Teachers 31 (85%)	Head Teachers 4 (11%)	School inspectors 2 (4%)
Questionnaires	Yes	Yes	No
Interview	No	No	Yes
Focus discussion group	Yes	No	No

Table 4.1: Population of the study

4.1. Research Findings

The participants of this study included teachers and head-teachers as the implementers of curricula, and school inspectors as the education quality assurance.

Gender Information: As is shown in (Figure 4.1), 22=59.5% of the participants were females, whereas 15=40.5 % were males. Of the 31 teachers, 22 (71%) were females and nine (29%) were males. Three (75%) head-teachers were males and one head-teacher was a female. Both of the two inspectors were males. This indicates that females form the majority of teachers in Dubai's private schools; this can be explained as teaching positions do not typically pay a housing

allowance and most female teachers in Dubai are resident under their husbands' visas and therefore do not require a housing allowance (Figure 4.1).
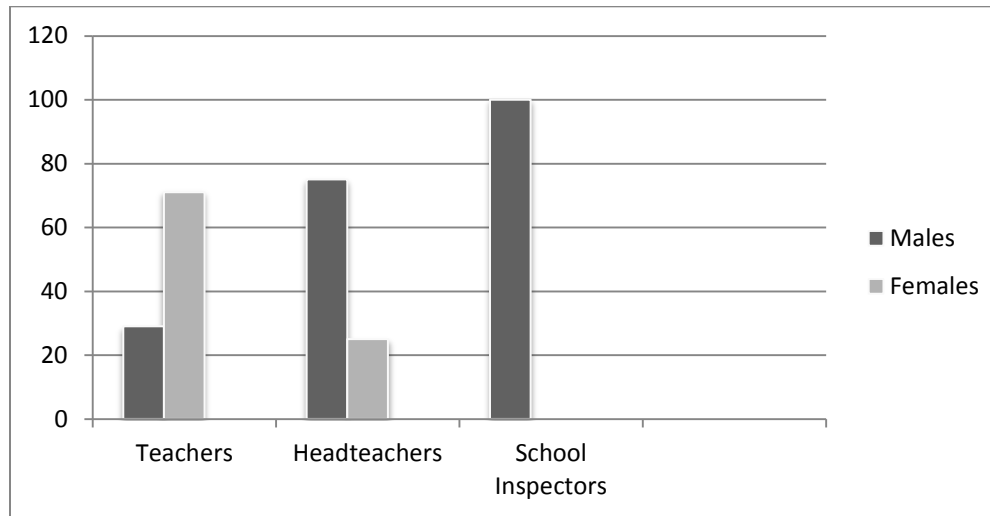
Age range: The data indicated that more than 80% of the participants were between the age of 24 and 50 years, whereas about only 10% were between 18 and 23 years old. Likewise, 10% of the participants were above 51 years old (Table 4.2).

Participants	18-23	24-30	31-40	41-50	More than 51
Teachers	3(9.7%)	9(29%)	9(29%)	7(22.6%)	3(9.7%)
Head-teachers	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4(100%)
School inspectors	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2(100%)
Total	3(8.1%)	9(24.3%)	9(24.3%)	7(19%)	9(24.3%)

Table 2: Age range

Educational level: Table 4.3 illustrates that more than 80% of the respondent teachers have a good qualification (Bachelor, post-graduate and Master degrees) whereas, about 16% have a Diploma, which indicates that some schools are not hiring well qualified teachers who have good knowledge in the subject they teach. On the other hand, 100% of head-teachers and school inspectors had a Master degree. This shows that both head-teachers and school inspectors are well-qualified to know how to lead schools to better education quality. However, school inspectors are expected to have a higher degree than teachers and school principals in order to be welcomed as critical friends who have more knowledge and academic qualification to be able to suggest the best solution for school improvement issues (Table 4.3).

Participants	Diploma	Bachelor Degree	Post-graduation degree	Master	PHD
Teachers	5 (16.1%)	19 (61.3%)	6 (19.4%)	1 (3.2%)	0 (0%)
Head-teachers	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	0 (0%)
School inspectors	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)

Table 4.3: Education Level

Teaching experience: Table 4.4 presents a clear account of participants' experience as teachers. It can be seen that 22.6% of teachers had no experience in teaching and they are new in the career. Moreover, about 29% of teachers have less than 3 years' of experience, and 48% of teachers have good experience in teaching. The data shows that 50% of head-teachers had teaching experience of between 11 and 20 years, and 50% had experience as teachers for more than 20 years. However, for school inspectors, the data presents that 100% of respondents had experience in teaching of between 11 and 20 years.

Participants	No experience	1 to 3 years	4 to 10 years	11 to 20 years	More than 20 years
Teachers	7 (22.6%)	9 (29%)	7 (22.6%)	5 (16.1%)	3 (9.7%)
Head-teachers	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (50%)	2 (50%)
School inspectors	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
Total	7 (18.9%)	9 (24.3%)	7 (18.9%)	9 (24.3%)	5 (13.6%)

Table 4.4: Teaching experience

Experience with school inspection: It is noted in Table 4.5, that about 16% of the teachers had no experience with school inspections, whereas about 42% had experience with school inspections of between 1 to 3 years. Likewise, more than 42% had experience with school inspections of more than 4 years. On the other hand, 100% of head-teachers had experience with school inspections of between 4 and 10 years. However, 50% of school inspectors had experience in their job as inspectors of between 1 to 3 years, and 50% had 4 to 10 years' experience (Table 4.5).

Participants	No experience	1 to 3 years	4 to 10 years	More than 10 years
Teachers	5 (16.1%)	13 (41.9%)	10 (32.3%)	3 (9.7%)
Head-teachers	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	0 (0%)
School	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)

inspectors				
Total	5 (13.5%)	14 (37.8%)	15 (40.5%)	3 (8.2%)

4.2. The Importance and usefulness of School Inspection

In this section, the study intends to analyse how school inspection in Dubai should be organized in order to have a positive impact on teaching and learning in Dubai's private schools. This study also focuses on the relationship between school inspectors and teachers.

4.2.1. School Inspection Feedback and Reports

The study explores to which extent school inspection reports are valuable and supportive of teachers. Data from the questionnaires show that 19 respondents (76%) of teachers and head-teachers see the reports and feedback given by school inspectors to be supportive and useful, even though some head-teachers claimed that these reports do not belong to the school context and they are not practical. One teacher complained that in the inspection report feedback is presented that is actually different from what is given during the inspection visit. One head-teacher (interviewee A) says that sometimes school inspectors give feedback that cannot be implemented because it does not fit with the school context.

Another head-teacher (interviewee B) explained that in some school inspection visits the inspection feedback and reports are not trusted or considered as helpful because some inspectors have their own background, which is different from various school backgrounds and they simply want the schools to follow what they think is right. The respondent gave an example: when an inspector supported the American school system but the school being inspected adopted the British curriculum, or even when inspectors believe that the level of learning Arabic language and Islamic studies should be the same in both Arabic / Islamic schools and non-Arabic / Islamic schools.

On other hand, one school inspector commented: we visit schools and observe school environments and classes and eventually provide these schools with our feedback to help them to improve, by providing them with the best practice worldwide; however, when visiting these same schools, we find the same problems, which means that the schools neglect our reports.

The findings indicate that school inspectors provide feedback and recommendations on what schools should do, however, they do not have the power to implement or encourage the recommended actions. Nevertheless, both school inspectors and head-teachers agreed that sometimes, the recommendations were not implemented.

4.2.2. Information before Visiting the School

With regards to whether or not school inspectors provide schools with information before visiting them, 100% of the teachers and head-teachers agreed that the KHDA inspection provides schools with information about the time of school inspection visits and the key indicators and

criteria of the inspection. The majority of teachers, who make 80% of the respondents, perceive the inspections as opportunities for the teachers and the schools to show how capable they are.

However, 20% think that weak and poor schools and teachers would use this time for preparation and making up their evidence so that the school can be evaluated in a positive way. One of the head-teachers (interviewee A) had this to say: "actually, the KHDA informs us about the inspection visit at the beginning of the academic year just two weeks prior to the inspection visit, and this timing almost is the same for other schools. Furthermore, in each academic year the inspection visit takes place at the same time. So some schools have a short time to prepare and collect evidence, whereas other schools have enough time to be ready for the inspection. In this regard, I see inspection as unfair, rather, the inspections should not be conducted at the same time each year, it should be in different semesters each academic year." Another head-teacher (interviewee B) added: "schools should be informed just three days prior to the inspection visit not more, this will show the reality of school performance."

4.2.3. Classroom Observation
The study further investigated the impact of classroom observation that school inspectors conduct on teaching and learning. The findings indicate that 95% of the respondent teachers and head-teachers said: "Yes, school inspectors do class observation when visiting schools." However, 5% claimed that school inspectors neglect classroom observation. Even though it is clear that the vast majority agreed upon the impact of classroom observation that school inspectors run, it is obvious that sometimes school inspectors do not carry out class observation for certain subjects or even for all teachers in the school.

One head-teacher said: "I understand that school inspectors can't visit all teachers or even all classes, as they are few. But, what I do not understand is why school inspectors ignore specific subjects and only focus on five main subjects! I think they should visit and observe all subjects. What message do they give to teachers and students in a particular subject? Such as history? When the inspectors do not visit history or geography they reveal to the teacher and students that the subject is not important, I think this is wrong, since all subjects are important and have their impact on our lives."

Based on the above findings, it is evident that school inspection conducts classroom observation as a key tool to witness the quality of teaching and learning in schools. However, the KHDA school inspection process focuses on five main subjects (Arabic language, Islamic Studies, Mathematics, Science, and English language), whereas, other subjects are not given that level of importance while running school inspection.

4.2.4. Talking to Pupils
This piece of research aims to find out whether or not school inspection teams offer opportunities to students to give their accounts on the process of teaching and learning. The findings depict that 28 (80%) of the teachers and head-teachers said "Yes". However, seven respondents (20%)

said "No". However, even those who said yes, noted that school inspectors only ask students about their knowledge of the society but not about academic issues. One head-teacher (Interviewee A) had this to say: "School inspectors discuss the academic issues, such as teaching and learning, with teachers and school leaders, and not with the pupils. But, if they speak with students, their conversation is just about the issue of national culture and society, such as the national anthem."

4.2.5. Frequency of School Inspection Visits

The study sought to determine how long the intervals between school inspection visits should be. It is obvious that the KHDA school inspection visits take place once a year in Dubai's private schools. It is found in this study that 20% of the respondents agree with the current timing of once per academic year; whereas, 45% prefer that school inspection visits occur once every two years, and 33% indicated that they are in favour of school inspections occurring once every three years. However, 2% prefer to have school inspections twice per academic year (Figure 4.2).
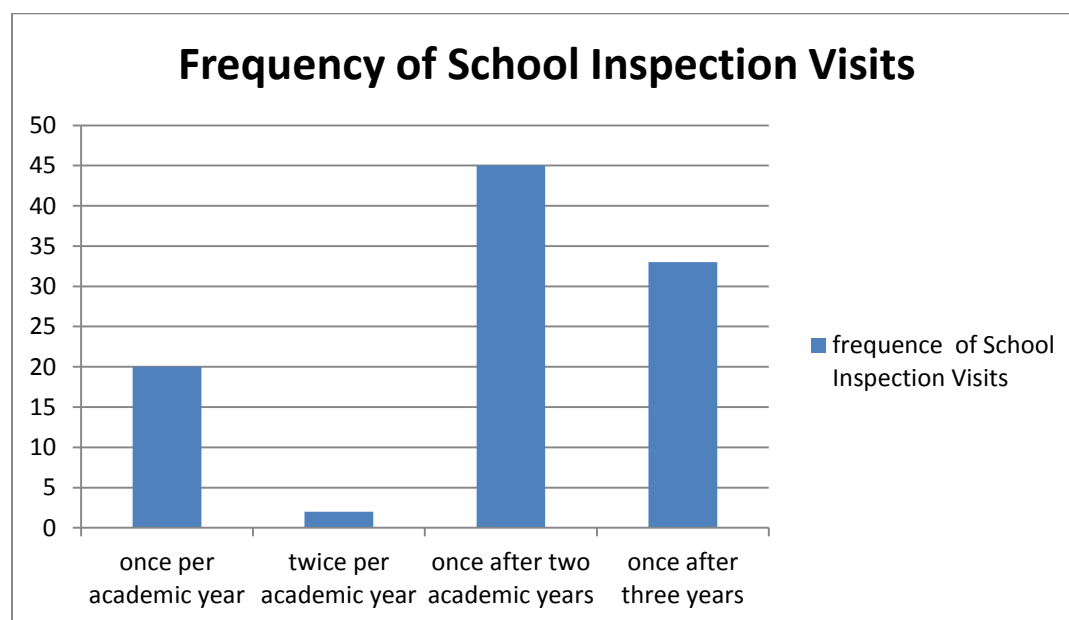

Figure 4.2: Frequency of school inspection visits

It was found from the focus discussion group that school inspections would be more fruitful if they would be once every two years, but with one internal inspection to be conducted every year by school leadership. One head-teacher (interviewee D) had this to offer: "When school inspection visits take place every year this means more stress and tension on schools. Besides, in this case, school inspections force schools to implement the inspection methodology and do not give the opportunity for outstanding schools to show or present in their own methods, which might be better than that of the inspection. So, it is good if KHDA makes the inspection visit

once every two academic years for outstanding schools, and once a year for poor and good schools."

4.2.6.   Communication Style

This study further shed light on the aspect of communication style between school inspectors and teachers during school inspection visits when discussing issues related to teaching and learning with teachers. The data indicate that 21 of the respondents (60%) see that school inspectors present themselves as critical friends by using friendly language with teachers. Whereas, 14 respondents (40%) disagree with this claim. Moreover, the findings from the interviews with head-teachers agree with the above mentioned findings from the questionnaires, with some exceptions when it comes to the school inspectors who inspect and observe both Arabic language and Islamic Studies subjects.

One teacher added: "some school inspectors when observing Arabic language and Islamic Studies come and in their mind they are the only ones who are experts, and that teachers should only listen to them. They have a superiority complex, and furthermore, they do not come as friends, but instead they gossip about those teachers by name." A head-teacher (Interviewee B) offered this account: "Generally speaking, school inspectors communicate with teachers as friends and facilitators. However, when it happens and you hear that the language style between a school inspector and a teacher is not friendly, I think it is due to individual weaknesses they both have."

Another head-teacher had this to add: "From my experience with school inspection here in Dubai, I can categorize school inspectors in two categories; first of all, inspectors who have a worldwide experience in school inspection and the subject they inspect. Secondly, those who do not have that experience as inspectors and they do not belong or have experience in the subject they observe.

In general, data found that the language style between school inspectors and teachers is healthy and friendly. However, the KHDA is expected to encourage all inspectors to be critical friends, especially for those who inspect Arabic language and Islamic Studies, nevertheless, the inspectors of both subjects should have a relevant qualification to be able to observe and suggest any improvements in the same context.

4.3.   School Inspection Contribution on Teachers' Work Performance

In this section, data from the field is presented on the contribution of school inspections to the performance of teachers. For example, teaching and learning improvement, professional support and school inspection feedback.

This study is designed to discover to which extent school inspections impact teaching and learning in Dubai private schools. Data from the questionnaires as indicated in Figure 4.3 demonstrate that 28 respondents (80%) believe that school inspection helps them improve in

teaching and learning. One teacher added that school inspectors offer advice in all teaching and learning areas, including scheme of work, measuring attainment and progress in the lesson, students' abilities differentiation, lesson plan and use of ICT in class.
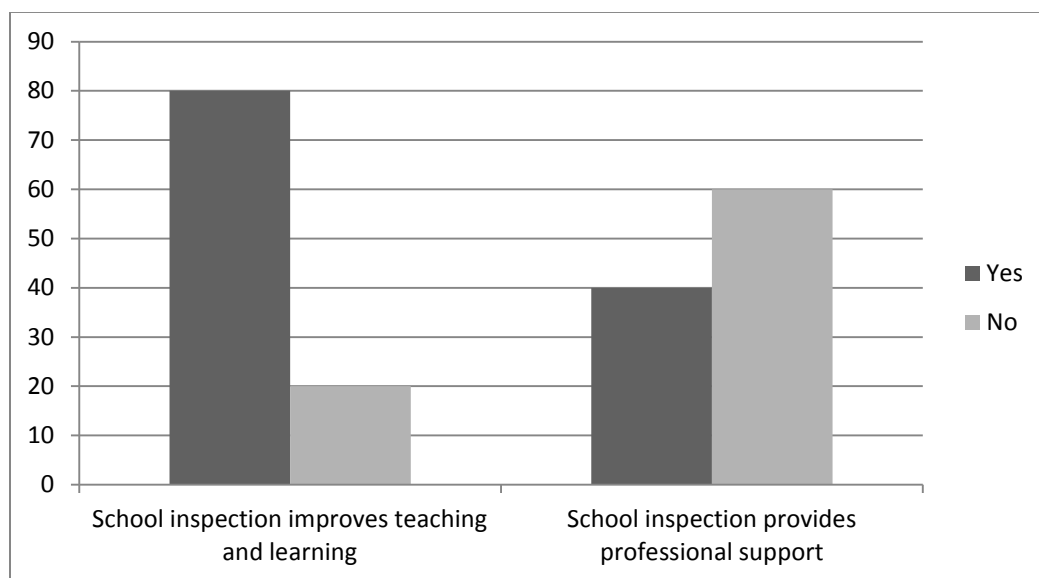

Figure 1.3: School inspection for improvement in teaching and learning

The data of the focus discussion group were linear with the findings of the questionnaires. Teachers in the focus discussion group acknowledged that the role of school inspection is significant in terms of improving teaching and learning. School inspection visitation is an annual competitive occasion for schools and teachers as well. Teachers use this opportunity to improve and show their teaching and learning methodologies to convince school leaders to increase salaries as school inspection reports create a market choice for teachers and schools. Moreover, findings from the interviews support the claim that school inspection is for teaching and learning improvement. One head-teacher had this to say: "School inspection gives outstanding schools an opportunity to show why they are outstanding, by including the best practice of teaching and learning worldwide."

However, the picture is not entirely positive. One head-teacher said that during school inspection visits, inspectors usually collect all the available materials and records of the subject and then they give marks based on that. Furthermore, they sometimes do not provide our teachers or subject leaders with formative feedback or listen to them; instead they just give superficial feedback because they are in a rush and they say that we do not have time to listen to you, this is when you come to Arabic language and Islamic Studies classes. Another head-teacher said, some school inspectors come to schools as judges not as friends, they are here to evaluate not to help in how to improve teaching and learning.

The study further serves a purpose to test whether or not school inspectors provide teachers with professional support. Data indicated that 14 (40%) of the respondents agreed with the claim that

school inspectors provide professional support to teachers (Figure 4.4). However, 21 (60%) disagreed. One teacher from the focus discussion group said "Why don't school inspectors show us or even name how and where we can see this outstanding lesson in all its aspects in order to learn from it? Or why don't school inspectors themselves present a lesson to see whether what they suggest in theory would work in practice, which we can then emulate."
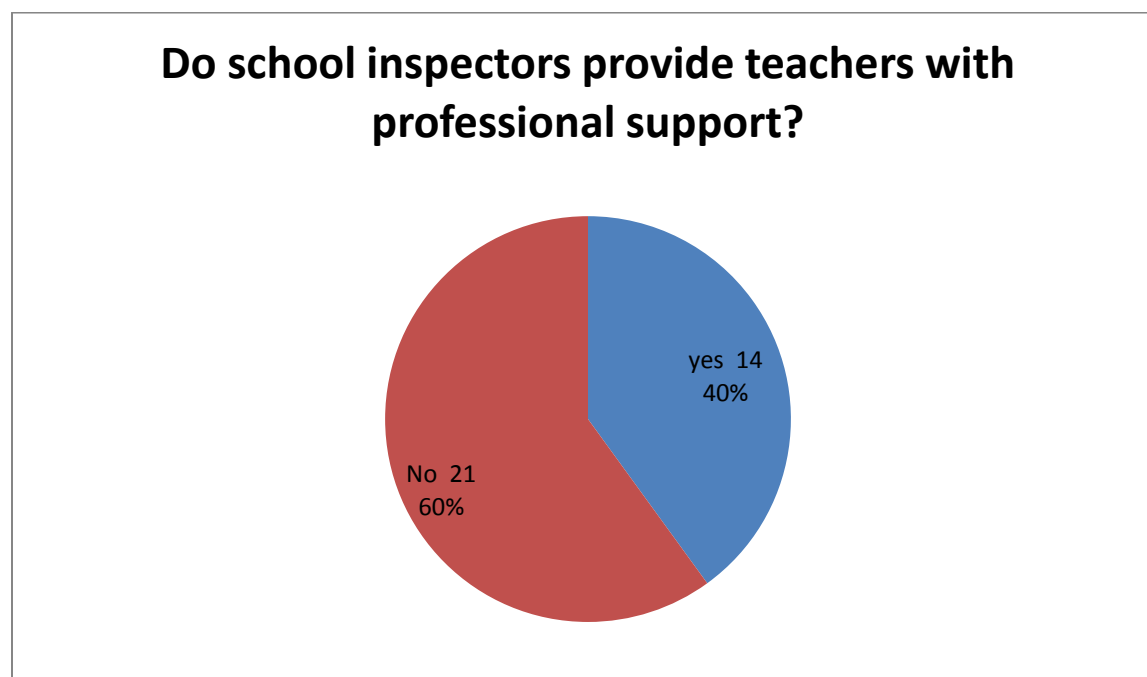

Figure 4.4: Providing professional support

Moreover, one head-teacher said: "The KHDA is really appreciated for the initiative of the What Works event by which the KHDA tries to give schools and teachers the needed professional support by showing them the best practice after finishing the annual school inspection. However, this event should include other activities, such as workshops, and the timing of this event should also be after school time not in the morning when everybody is in school and not everyone is invited to this event."

4.4. Negative Effects of School Inspection

Regarding the point of tension and fear that school inspection brings to schools, this study found that, all of the respondents agreed that school inspection creates an environment of fear and tension before and during school visits. This is due to the fact that teachers' performance will be reported. One teacher explained:

> The problem with school inspection visits is twofold: first of all, school inspectors come to catch our mistakes, and secondly, school leaders will blame the teachers when the school gets a poor report, whereas, outstanding reports will be attributed to school leadership.

The focus discussion group noted that, some school inspectors are not critical friends to teachers but fault hunters. One head-teacher offered that tension and fear is due to poor school preparation and performance. Another head-teacher had this to say: "School inspection is a good opportunity for our school teachers to learn from inspectors and to get formative feedback and to show why we are an outstanding school."

Chapter Five: Conclusions, recommendations and further studies

5. Introduction

This chapter aims to discuss the main findings of this study, present some recommendations and propose areas for further studies.

This piece of research sought to discover the influence of school inspections on teaching and learning in Dubai's private schools. This study was fundamentally a mix-methodology research; the four main methods of data generation employed were questionnaires, interviews, focus discussion group and documentary analysis. The population of the study comprised 37 participants, 31 of whom were teachers who were involved in the questionnaires and focus discussion group, four head-teachers who were involved in questionnaires and interviews and two school inspectors who were involved in interviews.

5.1. Main Findings

The main research questions of this study were:

1) What impact does school inspection have on teaching and learning in Dubai's private schools?

To answer this research question, the study explored the level to which teachers were supported, provided with professional support and whether inspection reports and recommendations were useful to teachers in improving their teaching performance for the betterment of teaching and learning.

The findings of this study showed that 80% of respondents feel school inspections support teachers and help them to improve teaching and learning, 40% of teachers stated that school inspection provided them with professional support on teaching and learning materials and strategies in different subjects. Moreover, 80% of teachers agree that school inspector reports and recommendations are useful for improving teaching and learning.

However, teachers expect school inspections to be more helpful and supportive in particular subjects and areas of teaching and learning practice. Teachers would highly appreciate school inspection support and recommendation if the latter provide teachers with examples of best practice in these areas of concern. Nevertheless, teachers expected school inspectors to understand different school contexts and backgrounds, by indicating their strengths and weaknesses in order to facilitate the implementations of these recommendations.

2) What are the views of teachers and head-teachers on school inspection in improving teaching and learning in Dubai's private schools?

This study was also intended to investigate the view of teachers and head-teachers regarding the impact of school inspection on teachers' work performance. To serve this purpose, many issues of concern were investigated, such as, inspection timing, information before school visits, classroom observation, talking to students and tension during inspections.

The findings of the study show that school inspections provide schools with information before the actual visit to create an environment of transparency between school teachers and inspectors. Moreover, the study found that school inspectors conduct classroom observation; however, these classroom observations are focused just on five subjects, and neglect other topics.

Data from the findings of this study also found that 100 % of teachers think that school inspection create tension amongst teachers. Moreover, the study further found that school inspectors do not talk with pupils regarding academics issues, whereas, they talk to them just about social matters.

3) How should school inspection be organized in order to have a positive impact on teaching and learning?

Under this research question, different issues were investigated, such as, school inspection visits, communication style between inspectors and teachers, and school inspection independence.

The results of this study show that a school inspection team visits schools once per academic year, and no follow-up visits take place to investigate whether or not schools started implementing the recommendations that are presented in the reports.

This study found that school inspectors enhanced a good relationship with teachers, by using friendly language. However, this communication style is not as expected when talking about particular subjects, such as Arabic language and Islamic studies.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher articulated these recommendations:

5.2.1 The quality of school inspectors: Teachers, as educators, like to be supported in their teaching performance, especially when they are subject to the criticism of students, parents, school leaders and inspectors. Thus, the KHDA should hire highly qualified and expert inspectors, who are specialized in the subject that they inspect. In doing so, teachers will obtain useful and significant advice, and a positive communication style will be ensured between teachers and inspectors who should be critical friends rather than judges. Moreover, the level of superficial recommendations will be minimized. Most importantly, the implementation of recommendations will be maximized. Wilcox states that "the good inspector should have appropriate qualification and experience. A hard-pressed teacher of Mathematics is unlikely to

take seriously the judgments of an inspector that she/he suspects as having no academic qualification in the subject and little or no experience in teaching it" (2000: 72).

5.2.2 Enhancing good practice of School Self Evaluation SSE: The KHDA requests private schools to carry out School Self Evaluation (SSE) as a starting point in the process of school inspection. However, teachers are not involved in this process, and school leaders are the only players in the SSE, which is not carried out appropriately. In order to solve this issue, the KHDA should ask schools for evidence of conducting SSE and involving teachers. Ehren *et al.* (2005) state that SSE helps teachers to know their strengths and weaknesses.

A close follow-up inspection should be conducted after the main school inspection to evaluate the level and impact of implementing school inspection recommendations.

5.2.3 The frequency of school inspection: Data from the findings of this study show that conducting school inspections each academic year is too much, and it minimizes the creativity of schools by shifting the innovation in school improvement from school-centred to inspection-centred education. It is obvious that under-performing schools are those who need more support than good and outstanding schools (Ehren and Visscher, 2008; Matete, 2009; Ehren and Visscher, 2006).

Thus, it is recommended that the KHDA change its frequency, for example, to be once per academic year for under-performing schools (unsatisfactory and acceptable), and to be once each two academic years for better performing schools (good and outstanding). This should be complimented with the implementation of a SSE system in the year in which there is no inspection.

5.2.4 School inspection independence: Results from the findings of the study indicate the school inspection system is not independent. It is obvious that the DSIB is a department under the KHDA, which is a governmental body in Dubai, and it is very evident that there is interference from the KHDA's politicians on the criteria and policies running school inspections. Thus, the KHDA is expected to learn from other countries' experiences in this regard. These comparisons could include the Netherlands, England and Hong Kong (Case, Case et al., 2000; Rosenthal, 2003 and OFSTED, 2010; MoECS, 2012; Wong and Li, 2010). In doing so, independent school inspection would be effectively established, by presenting flexible criteria and grading systems, and visiting schools as critical friends whose purpose is to support and help teachers rather than as fault hunters.

5.3.   Further studies

Based on the findings of this study, further studies such as the following areas may be useful for school improvement:

- The impact of School Self Evaluation SSE on school improvement in Dubai schools.
- The need for an independent school inspection system in Dubai, based on the experience of other countries.
- The problematic issues that affect improving teaching and learning in Arabic language and Islamic Studies in Dubai's private schools.

In summary, the KHDA school inspection in Dubai is one of the remarkable features of the development in education in the UAE in general, and in Dubai particularly. It is obvious that the government of Dubai tries its best to provide the educational sector with the best practice of accountability to enhance the quality of education provided in schools. The data has shown that school inspection plays a significant role in improving teaching and learning. This piece of research found that the school inspection system in Dubai is one of the best systems worldwide, and the KHDA empower DSIB by hiring international expertise in education to lead its school inspection teams. Moreover, the KHDA shows some element of innovation in running school inspection, by launching the "what works" event at the end of each academic year, in which it present the best practise in the inspected schools, and to shift schools from competition to collaboration. Nevertheless, the KHDA as governmental authority pays focused attention to promote the quality of teaching and learning of the core subjects in general, and Arabic language and Islamic studies in particular, this is very important to protect the identity of the country as Arabic its official language and Islam is the official religion.

However, there still some areas for improvement, it is recommended that the KHDA encourage schools to conduct an authentic school self-evaluation, it is also recommended that school inspectors should be trained and experienced to play as critical friends. Moreover, there is a need that the school inspection system should deal with outstanding schools in a way not similar to poor performing schools. on other side, there is a need to further studies on the impact of school self-evaluation on school improvement in Dubai schools, and other research on the problematic issues that affect improving the quality of teaching the Arabic language and Islamic Studies in Dubai.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Questionnaires for teachers and Head teachers

Questionnaire for teachers and Head teachers

Dear participant,

Education provided to our children has captured the attention of educators, scientists and policy and decision makers worldwide in this contemporary world. Moreover, how best to assure the quality of teaching and learning is open to debate and the main concern of educators is still to ensure that our children get the required education.

Inspection is one type of teaching and learning accountability process, besides supervision and self-evaluation, etc. However, inspecting schools in Dubai like other inspection worldwide has its pros and cons. Teachers, head teacher and inspectors are the main players in the inspection process, and their perception of this process is crucial if it is to be improved.. The purpose of this questionnaire is to examine the level of contribution that school inspections can make to teaching and learning in the private schools in Dubai.

Dear teachers, the information you shall offer will be used only for the academic purpose of this study and will be kept confidential. So, please do not write your name on this questionnaire.

I believe that your honest and frank answers would be supportive and helpful for the improvement of school inspection so that the quality and standards of teaching and learning could be improved.

Date……………………………………………………………….

Teaching subject………………………………………………….

Your subject level in last inspection ………………………..

Name of your school…………………………………………

School total level in last inspection ………………………….

Your nationality…………………………………………………

Your native language ………………………………………..

A. Background Information

Please answer the following questions by circling your responses or filling the gaps provided

1. Sex

    I-   Female

    II-   Male

2. Your age ………………………years

3. Marital status:

    a. Single

    b. Married

    c. Widow-widower

    d. Separated

    e. Other……………………………...

4. Work experience years;

    a) As a teacher ………………………….

    b) As a head teacher …………………….

    c) As a KS leader………………………..

    d) As a head of department ……………..

5. Your current maximum level of education:

    1. Diploma

    2. Bachelor degree

    3. Postgraduate diploma

    4. Master's degree

    5. Others ……………………………

6. How many school inspections have you been involved in? ……………………..

7. Did you participate in the last school inspection?

1. Yes

2. No

B- Purpose and usefulness of school inspection: Please answer the following questions by giving a number from 1 to 4 (1 for strongly disagree and 4 for strongly agree)

8. School inspections are for holding schools accountable for their actions (they guarantee level of compliance).

1   2   3   4

9. School inspections are for schools improvement

1   2   3   4

10. School inspections are for the professional development of teachers

1   2   3   4

11. School inspections are to guarantee education quality

1   2   3   4

12. School inspections are for public progress reports

1   2   3   4

13. School inspections help parents and students choose their school.

1   2   3   4

C- Criteria and STDs

14. Standards and criteria used in school inspections are fair and realistic

1   2   3   4

15. Standards and criteria used in school inspections make sense according to the school context

1   2   3   4

D- Gathering right information:

16. Inspectors provide enough time to listen to teachers and school leaders during inspections

1   2   3   4

17. Inspectors have enough time to observe teachers in classes

1   2   3   4

18. Inspectors take time to inspect students' work and to listen to students

1   2   3   4

19. School inspectors are looking for faults in schools

1   2   3   4

20. Inspectors get a reliable picture when they visit a school

1   2   3   4

E- **Support and assistance**

21. School inspections are well organized, professional and educative

1   2   3   4

22. School inspections are very supportive and serve to implement changes in schools

1   2   3   4

23. Inspection time is a time for teachers' professional development

1   2   3   4

24. During school inspections schools become lively and active

1   2   3   4

F- **Reaction on processes**

25. We accept the consequences/results of inspectors' judgment during school visits

1   2   3   4

26. I interact easily with inspectors

1   2   3   4

27. I get nervous when asked questions by inspectors while teaching

1   2   3   4

28. Inspectors immediately give feedback to teachers they observe while teaching

1   2   3   4

29. I like the comments given by inspectors regarding my teaching approach

1   2   3   4

30. I feel apprehensive having an inspector in my classroom

1   2   3   4

31. Inspection visits lead to change in behavior of school leaders

1   2   3   4

32. Inspections lead to changes in classroom practices

1   2   3   4

33*. During inspection time, what of these issues concern you the most: (give number for each, higher concern 4, lowest 1)

…..- Students interaction and participation.

……School principal and leaders.

…..Your teaching performance.

…..The presence of inspectors.

G-reaction on findings/reports

34. School inspection recommendations were not according to our school context

1   2   3   4

35. School inspections reports are too bulky and consume time to read

1   2   3   4

36. School inspection reports are not disseminated to schools

1   2   3   4

37. School inspections report meet teachers and school leaders' expectations on their career

1   2   3   4

38. School inspection reports only focus on students' academic performance

1   2   3   4

39. The school inspection feedback/reports prompted to change aspect of teaching practice

1   2   3   4

H- Negative effects

40. School inspection processes increase workload and are very stressful to teachers and school leaders

1   2   3   4

41. School inspections lead to artificial presentation in schools (window dressing) to please inspectors

1   2   3   4

42. School teachers help students to do tests/exams in order to increase the average test scores

1   2   3   4

43. School teachers and leaders exclude weak pupils from tests in order to increase the average test scores (reshaping the test pool)

1   2   3   4

44. Sometimes school leaders or teachers present false documents to inspectors to avoid being reported as a poor performing school

1   2   3   4

45. School inspections lead to schools focusing on teaching to a test/exam or teaching to inspections

1   2   3   4

46. Sometimes schools become reluctant to experiment with new ideas/methods for fear of failing the inspection

1   2   3   4

47. Good performing schools may become over confident, relaxed and work through experience only

1   2   3   4

48. School inspection reports lead to teachers and school leaders shifting from poor performing schools to schools with best reports/results (because of market forces in education)

1   2   3   4

49. Do you think there is inspector bias in school inspection?

Yes   No

50. If yes, where do you find there is a bias in inspector's performance?

……………………………………………………………………………………………….

………………………………………………………………………………………………..

I- **Inspection Independence**

51. School inspections are not independent (free) because they are governmental authorites.

Yes   No

J- **School Teachers and Leaders views/recommendations on improving school inspections**

52. How should school inspection processes be improved?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

53. How should school inspection be managed?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Appendix B

Interview Guide with Head teachers

Main research question: How are school inspections perceived by school head teachers?

Discussion questions:

· How would you describe school inspections with respect to its purposes and usefulness? Can

you give examples?

· What is your opinion on school inspections criteria and standards? Are they realistic? Are

they fair or make sense? How? Why?

· What is your view on school inspections data collection and inspectors observations during

their school visits? Do inspectors gather the right information or get a reliable picture of your

school during school visits? Can you give examples?

· What is your view on the certification of schools as a consequences of inspections? Is it fair?

· Do school inspections have any negative effects ? What are the common

negative effects which are associated with schools inspections?

Main research question: How do school head teachers react and respond to school inspections?

Discussion questions:

· How are school inspections reports received at schools? Are there any areas of teaching

practice that have changed as a result of the reports? Can you give examples? If not why not?

· How do you see school inspections reports and recommendations?

Was the report accurate / fair? Were the reports deep or superficial? Was there any change due

to recommendations?

· In your view, how did the school respond to the recommendations made in the school

inspections reports? Have these responses brought about any changes in the school? Or any

school improvement? Can you give examples? Do you think head teachers/ school accept or reject the findings? Why?

Main research question: *According to school head teachers' views, how should school inspections be improved?*

Discussion questions:

· Would you consider the school inspectorate an independent institution? Why?

· How should/could school inspections be improved?

· How should the inspectorate be improved or managed?

Do you think that there is inspector bias?

If yes, in which areas do you find inspector bias? How can this issue be solved?

Appendix C

Interview Guide with school Inspector of Schools

Main research question: How are school inspections perceived by School inspectors?

Discussion questions:

· Would you consider school inspections to be achieving its purposes? How? Any examples. Do you consider school inspections useful towards improving teaching and learning in schools? Why?

· What is your opinion on school inspections criteria and standards? Are they realistic? Are they fair or make sense? How?

· Do inspectors gather the right information or get a reliable picture of schools during school visits? Can you give examples?

· What is your view on the certification of schools as consequences of inspections? Is it fair? Do you consider the grading of schools as fair as a result of school visits? Why? How would you wish school should be supported?

· Are there observed unintended (negative) effects of school inspections in schools? Give an example. How do they affect schools?

Main research question: How does Chief Inspector of Schools perceive the way school teachers and leaders react and respond to school inspections?

Discussion questions:

· How are school inspections reports received at schools? Are there any areas of teaching practice that have changed as a result of the reports? Can you give examples? If no why?

· Can you tell how teachers and school leaders react to school inspections so as to improve the teaching practices? Are there any significant changes in their teaching practices? Any

examples

· How do school teachers and leaders respond to the findings and recommendations made in the school inspections reports? Are there any significant results/impact? Any examples?

· Do teachers and school leaders work on your comments, recommendations and reports? How?

· Do you consider the grading of schools as fair as a result of school visits? Why?

Main research question: *According to Chief Inspector of Schools views, how should school inspections be improved?*

Discussion questions:

· Would you consider school inspectorate an independent institution? Why?

· How should school inspections be improved?

· How should the inspectorate be improved or managed?

Do you think that there is inspector bias?

If yes, in which areas you find inspector bias? How can this issue be solved?

Appendix D

A letter of recommendation from the BUID to the KHDA

The British University in Dubai
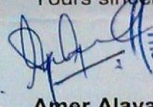الجامعة البريطانية في دبي

16 April 2015

Knowledge and Human Development Authority
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

This is to certify that **Mr Mohammed Ezzat Alkutich – Student ID No. 2013201030** is a registered part-time student on the **Master of Education (following the pathway in Management Leadership and Policy)** programme in **The British University in Dubai**, from **January 2014**.

Mr Alkutich is currently working on a dissertation as part of the programme requirements and his topic is "Impact of School Inspection on Teaching and Learning; Dubai private schools as a case study". He is required to gather data by conducting a questionnaire survey. Any support provided to him in this regard will be highly appreciated.

This letter is issued on Mr Alkutich's request.

Yours sincerely,

PP.

Amer Alaya
Head of Student Administration

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Tel: + 971 4 391 3626 Fax: + 971 4 366 4698
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Appendix E

A letter of recommendation from the BUID to the private schools

The British University in Dubai

16 April 2015

To Whom It May Concern

This is to certify that **Mr Mohammed Ezzat Alkutich – Student ID No. 2013201030** is a registered part-time student on the **Master of Education (following the pathway in Management Leadership and Policy)** programme in **The British University in Dubai,** from **January 2014**.

Mr Alkutich is currently working on a dissertation as part of the programme requirements and his topic is "Impact of School Inspection on Teaching and Learning; Dubai private schools as a case study". He is required to gather data by conducting a questionnaire survey. Any support provided to him in this regard will be highly appreciated.

This letter is issued on Mr Alkutich's request.

Yours sincerely,

Amer Alaya
Head of Student Administration

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